MISSION AUSTRALIA | together we stand

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10 December 2020

Department of Premier and Cabinet
1, Treasury Place,
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Via email: youth@dpc.vic.gov.au

To whom it may concern,

# Victorian Youth Strategy 2020

Mission Australia is a national, non-denominational Christian charity that has been helping vulnerable people move towards independence for more than 160 years. In the 2019-20 financial year, we supported over 167,000 individuals through 483 programs and services across Australia.[1] This included over 11,000 individuals in Victoria supported through 37 services. These services include a number of youth services including Communities for Children, Navigator, Transition to work, social enterprises such as Charcoal Lane, and a range of other services supporting children and young people. Our goal is to end homelessness and to ensure people and communities in need can thrive.

This is a critical time for young people in Victoria and requires well designed and long-term policies and strategies to ensure that they have the necessary supports and services in place to have a smooth transition to adulthood. Mission Australia is encouraged by the current processes in place to engage young people and their representative organisations in developing the strategy. It is vital that they continue to be engage them for ongoing implementation of the strategy.

Our submission covers the findings of Mission Australia's 19th annual *Youth Survey*, which reveals the major concerns, values and activities of young people around Australia. Our focus here is on the results for young people from Victoria. A copy of the complete *Youth Survey Report 2020* is attached for your information.

## Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2020

Mission Australia has been conducting an annual survey of young Australians for the past 19 years. The *Youth Survey Report 2020*[2] has revealed that young Australians have significant concerns relating to equity and discrimination, COVID-19, mental health, education and employment. With 25,800 young people surveyed across the nation, including 5,826 young people from Victoria, this

[1] Mission Australia, Annual Report, 2019-20, accessible at: https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2020
[2] Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report 2020, 2020, accessible at: https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/youth-survey

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report provides evidence collected during the COVID-19 pandemic about young people's most pressing concerns.

Following are some of the key findings from Victoria.

## What young people value

Young people from Victoria were asked how important a number of items had been in their lives over the past year. The three most highly valued items for respondents from Victoria were friendships (other than family), family relationships and school or study satisfaction. The next most highly valued items were mental health and physical health.

- Friendships (other than family) were considered extremely or very important by 86.7% of respondents from Victoria (extremely important: 46.8%; very important: 39.9%).
- Over eight in 10 (82.7%) respondents from Victoria highly valued family relationships (extremely important: 46.4%; very important: 36.3%).
- Around seven in 10 respondents from Victoria placed a high value upon school or study satisfaction (73.1%), mental health (72.3%) and physical health (69.8%)

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

Young people were asked to indicate how concerned they were about a number of issues over the past year. The top three issues of personal concern for young people from Victoria were coping with stress, body image and mental health. The next most concerning issues were school or study problems and physical health.

- Coping with stress was the top issue of concern, with almost half (46.8%) of respondents from Victoria indicating they were extremely or very concerned about this issue.
- Close to four in 10 respondents from Victoria were extremely or very concerned about body image (39.2%) and mental health (37.7%).
- More than one third (35.4%) of Victoria respondents were extremely or very concerned about school or study problems.

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

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. In 2020, the top three issues identified by young people from Victoria were COVID-19, equity and discrimination and mental health.

- Around four in 10 young people from Victoria reported that COVID-19 (41.9%) and equity and discrimination (39.7%) were important issues in Australia today.

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- One third (33.6%) of respondents from Victoria reported that mental health was an important national issue.
- Since 2019, the proportion of those from Victoria reporting equity and discrimination as a key national issue has increased from 25.4% to 39.7%. Conversely, concerns about alcohol and drugs and the environment have decreased since 2019.

## Young people's experience of unfair treatment

Focus questions are added to explore young people's experiences every year and in 2020 unfair treatment was one of these focus questions. Young people were asked whether they had been treated unfairly because of their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. One quarter (25.5%) of young people from Victoria reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A higher proportion of Victoria females than males reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (28.7% compared with 18.3%).

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify reasons for being treated unfairly from a list of suggested items. Of the 25.5% of Victoria respondents who had been treated unfairly in the past year, over four in 10 (41.5%) reported the unfair treatment was due to their gender. Three in 10 (30.9%) indicated they were treated unfairly due to their race/cultural background, while close to one quarter (23.1%) stated they were treated unfairly due to their mental health.

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

Respondents were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives.

- Friend/s (86.2%), parent/s or guardian/s (71.1%) and relative/family friend (54.2%) were the three most frequently cited sources of help for young people from Victoria.
- Around half of young people from Victoria indicated they would go to the internet (53.8%) or their brother/sister (49.3%) for support with important issues in their lives.

## Happiness and the future

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole The majority (61.4%) of young people from Victoria indicated they felt happy or very happy overall with their lives. A notably higher proportion of males from Victoria reported feeling happy/very happy with their lives as a whole (67.5% compared with 58.8% of females), whereas a slightly greater proportion of females indicated they felt very sad/sad (10.1% compared with 7.1% of males).

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Young people were asked to describe their feelings when they thought about the future. The majority of young people from Victoria felt either very positive or positive about the future.

- Close to six in 10 (57.6%) felt either very positive (11.9%) or positive (45.7%) about the future.
- Close to one in seven (13.4%) young people from Victoria indicated they felt negative (10.4%) or very negative (3.0%) about the future.
- Higher proportions of males from Victoria reported feeling very positive or positive about the future (62.8% compared with 55.4% of females).

A series of national recommendations were made based on the findings. Mission Australia encourages the Victorian Government to consider these and their potential application in the Victorian context in the development of the Youth Strategy:

1. Replicate and fund flexible and alternative learning options for young people.
2. End the digital divide by ensuring all young people have access to reliable internet and devices to support online education, enable them to seek support and maintain social connections.
3. Develop a comprehensive national approach to supporting youth employment.
4. Focus on mental health prevention and early intervention measures, including online and mental health outreach services.
5. Implement a permanent increase to income support payments to keep young people and their families out of poverty and support them to maintain housing and a stable connection with education and employment.
6. Replicate and fund early intervention services that prevent young people becoming homeless before they reach crisis point.
7. Fund youth-specific social housing that provides the appropriate levels of support that young people need.
8. Develop a new National Anti-Racism Strategy with guiding principles and measurable outcomes, which includes a commitment to partnering with young people on initiatives to address racism and enhance social cohesion.
9. Put young people at the centre of service design and development.

## YACVic's COVID-19 Recovery Plan for Young People

Mission Australia has endorsed the COVID-19 Recovery Plan for Young People developed by Youth Affairs Council Victoria.[3] This plan has been developed with young people, business leaders, economists, health experts, industry groups and youth workers to revive their future and restores

[3] Youth Affairs Council Victoria, COVID-19 Recovery Plan for Young People, 2020, accessible at: https://www.yacvic.org.au/advocacy/covid-19-recovery/

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hope and optimism in young people's lives.[4] Mission Australia encourages adoption of these recommendations as part of the Youth Strategy.

## Housing and homelessness

Mission Australia congratulates the Victorian Government on its recent expansion of the Home Stretch program, which now offers support for all young people leaving out-of-home care to the age of 21, as well as the additional investment in the Better Futures program. One of the likely implementation issues of this program expansion will be the need to find safe, secure and affordable housing for a larger number of young people. The need for youth-specific housing that enables young people to remain connected to their community and offers them comprehensive wraparound support is an ongoing issue of vital importance.

Mission Australia has warmly welcomed the Victorian Government's recently announced investment of $5.3 billion in social housing. In developing the housing aspects of the Youth Strategy, we urge the Government to consider the particular needs of young people in social housing and how to remove barriers to access, including young people's generally lower and less secure incomes, as well as specific allocations of social housing for young people within the new stock to be built over the coming years.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this further.

Yours faithfully,



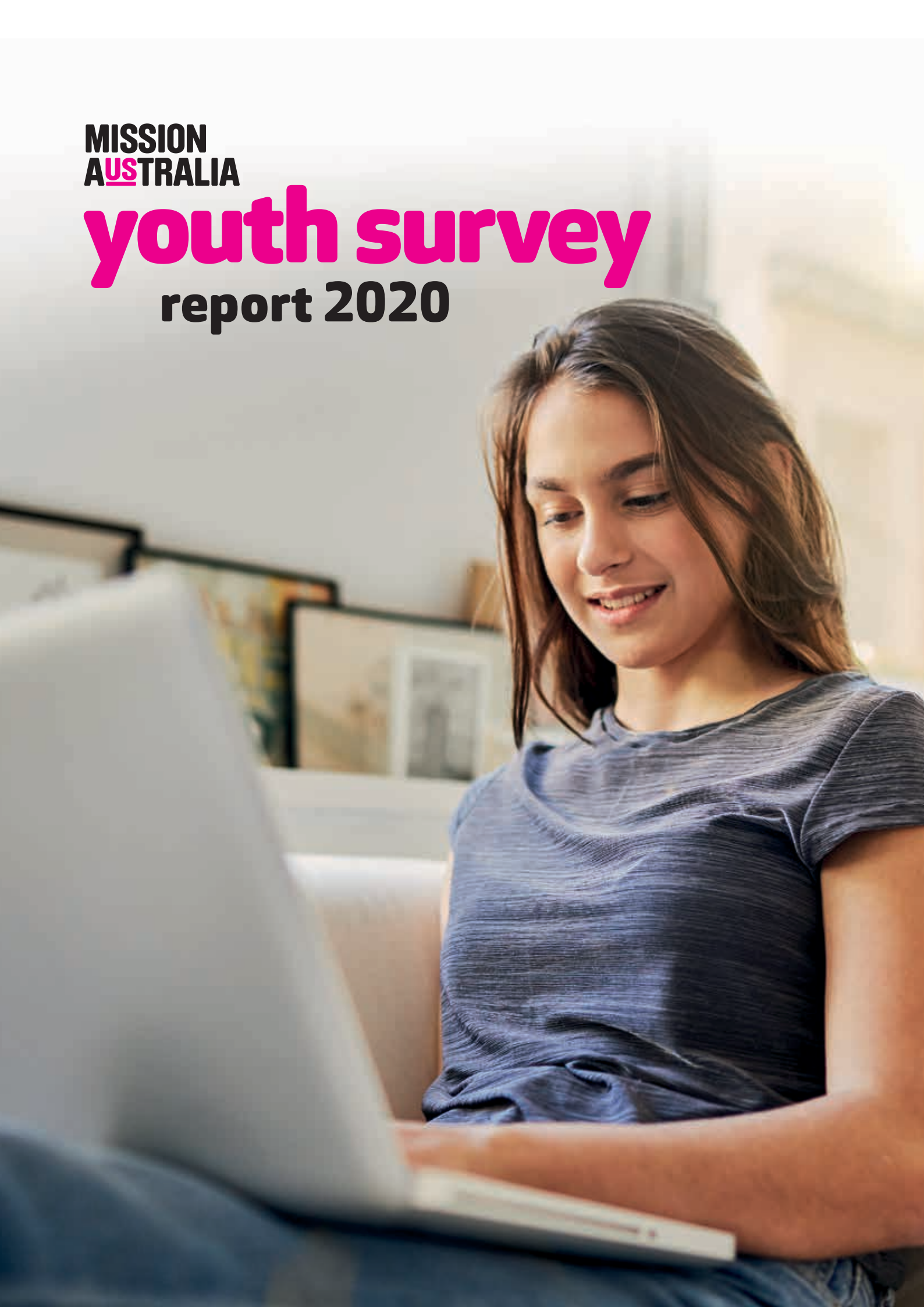
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[4] Youth Affairs Council Victoria, COVID-19 Recovery Plan for Young People, 2020, accessible at: https://www.yacvic.org.au/advocacy/covid-19-recovery/

MISSION AUSTRALIA

# youth survey

## report 2020



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


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# CEO's message

## We are delighted that 25,800 young people participated in our 19th annual *Youth Survey*, despite it being launched during a global pandemic.

This has been a year like no other, punctuated by rapid change and numerous challenges, which is why we are very thankful to all the young people who took the time to share their experiences and concerns with us. I would like to express my deep gratitude to every young person who participated, as well as the schools, families and our sector colleagues who encouraged and equipped young people to respond to our *Youth Survey* during these challenging times.

This landmark report provides Mission Australia, schools, non-government organisations, policy and decision makers with evidence collected during the pandemic about young people's hopes, feelings and concerns. The findings reinforce that now is a critical time to ensure young people are heard and to advocate alongside them for the policy responses and services they need.

In positive news, this year's survey showed that many young people are happy with their lives, are optimistic about their future and have good relationships with their families. Most young Australians are engaged with education and feel confident they can achieve their work and study goals.

However, the *Youth Survey* has also identified significant issues and concerns for young people. This year, *equity and discrimination* rose steeply to become the most important national issue according to young people, increasing substantially by more than 60% between 2019 and 2020. I am extremely concerned that a quarter of those surveyed had been unfairly treated in the past year, most commonly due to their *gender* – with far more females than males citing this – or because of their *race or cultural background*.

We are hearing loud and clear that our young people are concerned about unfair treatment. Gender inequality remains a major issue in Australia and we must also do better to support our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning or asexual (LGBTIQA+) young people. Government responses are part of the solution, as is early education on the rights of women and LGBTIQA+ people. We all have a part to play in ensuring we create welcoming environments that are sensitive to the gender-specific needs of all people.

Young people are also highlighting the racial injustice they experience and see around them. Their own experience of this injustice, alongside escalating media coverage, public dialogue and grassroots movements such as Black Lives Matter, are evidently affecting young people's thoughts about the state of Australia and the world around them.

Racism has no place in Australia. Everyone – from our national leadership, to community members – has a role in enacting solutions and efforts to end discrimination and racism. Our country needs a new National Anti-Racism Strategy which includes a commitment to partnering with young people to harness their voices and create effective initiatives that will help eradicate racism and discrimination and fortify inclusion across our country.

As echoed in our *Youth Survey 2020* results, we know that COVID-19 is disproportionately affecting our young people, with negative impacts already seen on their mental health, education and employment. We are very concerned that without the right supports and policy changes in place, this virus will continue to have a ripple effect on many aspects of young people's lives for years to come.

Following *equity and discrimination* and *COVID-19*, young people identified *mental health* as the third most important national issue. Young people's top three areas of personal concern were also closely related to mental health: *coping with stress*, *mental health* and *body image*. Additionally, we found that four in 10 young people felt stressed either *all of the time* or *most of the time*.

Even with increased government investment this year, there are significant gaps in the mental health ecosystem that have been further exposed by COVID-19. Additional funding and strategies are needed to improve the mental health and wellbeing of our young Australians. This should include more age-appropriate prevention and early intervention mental health services for our young people – created in consultation with them about their specific needs, including online and outreach services.

This year has seen substantial interruptions to young people's education and employment. We learned from our survey that a smaller proportion of young people were studying full-time in 2020 than in 2019, and that more than one third of young people saw *education* as their biggest personal issue.

*'This landmark report provides Mission Australia, schools, non-government organisations, policy and decision makers with evidence collected during the pandemic about young people's hopes, feelings and concerns. The findings reinforce that now is a critical time to ensure young people are heard and to advocate alongside them for the policy responses and services they need.'*

There remains a critical need to fund flexible and alternative learning options to connect young people with pathways to further education or employment. Governments must also double down on efforts to end the digital divide by ensuring young people have access to reliable internet and the required devices so they can learn online, access vital services and strengthen their social connections.

At a time where youth unemployment has increased due to COVID-19, young people told us they most need *flexible working hours*, *more jobs in their area*, more *work experience* as well as access to *training and skill development programs*. This points to the critical need to create a national approach to supporting youth employment that provides meaningful and secure work for every young Australian. A permanent increase to income support payments would also go a long way towards alleviating financial stress and keeping our most vulnerable young people and their families out of poverty and homelessness.

Young Australians are seeking positive change. They are also the experts when it comes to creating and advising on solutions that will address the issues affecting them, their peers and our country.

Within our *Youth Survey 2020*, it is heartening to see remarkable examples of resilience and strength shown by young people while facing the trials of 2020. However, particularly in the wake of the pandemic, we must all stand by our young people and ensure they have adequate opportunities to access education, jobs and support services when they need them, advocate for the changes they're telling us are greatly needed, and ensure they have a say in all of it.

Young people deserve every opportunity to not just survive, but to thrive and be heard. Ultimately, how the young people of today fare will determine our country's collective wellbeing in the future.

**James Toomey**
CEO, Mission Australia



*'This year, equity and discrimination rose steeply to become the most important national issue according to young people. We are hearing loud and clear that our young people are concerned about unfair treatment.*

*We all have a part to play in ensuring we create welcoming environments that are sensitive to the gender-specific needs of all people, and that we enact solutions and efforts to end racism.'*

# Executive summary

## Demographic profile of respondents

A total of 25,800 young people between the ages of 15 and 19 responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2020*. The largest number of responses came from New South Wales (25.7%), Victoria (22.6%) and Queensland (19.4%). Close to six in 10 (56.2%) respondents were female and 41.2% were male. Over one in seven (15.0%) respondents were born overseas and one in five (19.9%) young people spoke a language other than English at home. In 2020, 6.6% of respondents identified as living with disability. While the vast majority of respondents were studying full-time (86.6%), this was lower than the 2019 results (93.3%). Four in 10 (40.5%) respondents were working part-time and more than one third (34.7%) indicated they were looking for work, which is consistent with previous years.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

A total of 1,129 (4.4%) respondents to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2020* identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 949 (3.7%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 92 (0.4%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.3% identified as both). Nearly half (48.4%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents identified as female and 42.5% identified as male. Around one in eight (12.7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents identified as living with disability. In total, one in six (16.2%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported speaking a language other than English at home, the most common languages other than English were Indigenous languages, Chinese and Spanish.

The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported they were studying full-time (71.1%), this is much lower than the 2019 results (83.1%). Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents intended to complete year 12 (92.1%), and indicated they were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their studies (57.7%). Close to four in 10 (37.8%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported plans to *go to university* and over one third (34.3%) had plans to *get a job* after finishing school. A further breakdown of results can be found in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander summary.

## Young people and plans for study and training

Young people were asked about their future plans for education and training following school. Of those still at school, 97.3% stated they intended to complete Year 12. A slightly higher proportion of males than females indicated they did not intend to complete Year 12 (3.8% compared with 1.7%).

When asked what they were planning to do after school, *go to university* was the most frequent option indicated by young people (64.1%). Many respondents planned to *get a job* (29.9%) or had *travel/gap year* plans (23.2%) after school. One in 10 young people planned to *go to TAFE or college* (10.2%) or *get an apprenticeship* (9.6%). While a greater proportion of females indicated they planned to *go to university* after school (69.9% compared with 56.6% of males), more than four times the proportion of males indicated they were intending to *get an apprenticeship* (17.3% compared with 3.8% of females).

## Confidence in achieving study/work goals after school

Respondents were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. Almost half (48.6%) of respondents indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study/work goals: 9.7% indicated they were *extremely confident* and 38.9% indicated they were *very confident*. Over four in 10 (41.4%) reported feeling *somewhat confident*. However, one in 10 (10.0%) young people were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals: 7.6% reported feeling *slightly confident* and 2.4% *not at all confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. A notably higher proportion of male respondents reported feeling *extremely* or *very confident* (54.9% compared with 44.5% of females).

## Young people and employment

Young people were asked whether they currently had paid employment. A very small proportion of respondents who reported paid employment were employed full-time (0.6%), which is unsurprising given the high proportion of respondents still at school. Four in 10 (40.5%) young people were employed part-time, while nearly six in 10 (58.9%) were not in paid employment: 34.7% stated they were looking for work and 24.2% were neither working nor looking for work.

Respondents who were looking for work were asked what factors might help them secure a job. Three quarters (75.0%) of young people felt *flexible working hours* would help them secure a job. Close to six in 10 (58.7%) reported *more jobs in my local area* was a factor to securing a job and more than four in 10 (42.4%) saw *work experience* as helping them secure a job.

## What young people value

Young people were asked to indicate how important a number of items have been in their lives over the past year. The three most highly valued items nationally were *friendships (other than family)* (82.5%), *family relationships* (78.9%) and *school or study satisfaction* (67.5%). Close to two thirds of respondents also placed a high value upon *mental health* (65.9%) and *physical health* (65.4%).

## Issues of personal concern

Young people were asked to indicate how concerned they had been about a number of issues over the past year. The responses for the top three concerns were: *coping with stress* (42.5%), *mental health* (33.9%) and *body image* (33.0%). Close to one third (32.4%) of respondents indicated they were either *extremely* or *very concerned* about *school or study problems*. Nearly one quarter (24.3%) of young people were either *extremely* or *very concerned* about *physical health*. The proportion of females concerned about these issues (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

## Biggest personal issue

Young people were asked to make a free text response regarding their biggest personal issue in the past year. In 2020, the top three biggest personal issues identified by young people were *education* (34.2%), *mental health* (17.2%) and *COVID-19* (9.3%).

To understand the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people, further analysis was undertaken of those who responded that *COVID-19* was their biggest personal issue. Of the 9.3% of respondents who reported *COVID-19,* the top three related concerns were around *education* (32.5%), *COVID-19 in general* (31.2%) and *isolation* (20.7%). One in six (17.0%) young people were concerned about *COVID-19 and mental health*.

## Young people's experiences of unfair treatment

Young people were asked whether they had been treated unfairly because of their *age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. Over one quarter (27.0%) of young people reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. Of the 27.0% who had been treated unfairly, four in 10 (41.0%) reported the unfair treatment was due to their *gender*. Three in 10 (30.4%) reported they were treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background,* while over one quarter (26.0%) were treated unfairly due to their *mental health*. More than double the proportion of females were treated unfairly due to their *gender* (48.0% compared with 22.5% of males), whereas higher proportions of males were treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background* (35.4% compared with 28.8% of females).

Young people were also asked whether they had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year. Over half (55.3%) of young people reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year. Of the 55.3% of young people who had witnessed unfair treatment, 62.0% reported it was due to a person's *race/cultural background*. Almost half (49.4%) indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality*. Four in 10 (40.5%) respondents who had witnessed unfair treatment reported it was due to a person's *gender*. A much higher proportion of females than males reported witnessing unfair treatment due a person's *sexuality* (54.2% compared with 39.5%) and a person's *gender* (43.6% compared with 33.5%).

## Where young people go for help with important issues

Young people were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. As in previous years, *friend/s* (83.5%), *parent/s or guardian/s* (71.7%) and *relative/family friend* (55.3%) were the three most frequently cited sources of help for young people. Around half of young people indicated they would go to their *brother/sister* (49.6%) or the *internet* (48.2%) for support with important issues in their lives. Results were generally similar for females and males across the majority of items, although higher proportions of females than males would turn to *mobile apps* (30.7% compared with 18.9%), the *internet* (51.4% compared with 43.9%) or *social media* (20.1% compared with 14.4%) for support with important issues in their lives.

## Most important issues in Australia today

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. In 2020, the top three issues identified by young people were *equity and discrimination, COVID-19* and *mental health*. Around four in 10 young people identified *equity and discrimination* (40.2%) and *COVID-19* (38.8%) as important issues in Australia today. Three in 10 respondents reported *mental health* (30.6%) and *the environment* (29.8%) as important national issues. Since 2019, the proportion of those reporting *equity and discrimination* as a key national issue has increased from 24.8% to 40.2%. Conversely, concerns about *alcohol and drugs* and *mental health* have decreased since 2019.

Compared with males, a greater proportion of female respondents identified *equity and discrimination* (45.1% compared with 34.1%) and *mental health* (35.1% compared with 25.0%) as important issues in Australia today. Conversely, higher proportions of males than females reported *COVID-19* (42.7% compared with 36.4%) and *politics* (10.1% compared with 5.4%) as key issues in Australia.

## Activities young people were involved in

The top three activities for young people in 2020 were *sports (as a participant)* (70.7%), *sports (as a spectator)* (62.1%) and *arts/cultural/music activities* (43.9%). A higher proportion of males than females reported participating in *sports (as a spectator)* (70.0% compared with 57.0%) and *sports (as a participant)* (74.7% compared with 68.6%) in the past year, whereas a greater proportion of females participated in *arts/cultural/music activities* (50.1% compared with 35.3% of males) in the past year.

## How stressed are young people?

For the first time in 2020, young people were asked to report on how much of the time they felt stressed in the past four weeks. More than four in 10 (42.6%) young people felt stressed either *all of the time* or *most of the time*. Double the proportion of female respondents felt stressed *all of the time* or *most of the time* (53.9% compared with 26.8% of males). Conversely, more than double the proportion of males felt stressed *a little of the time* or *none of the time* (38.7% compared with 15.2% of females).

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

Respondents were asked to rate their family's ability to get along with one another. The majority of respondents rated their family's ability to get along very positively: 22.5% rated it *excellent* and 32.1% rated it *very good*. More than one in five young people did not report such a positive experience of family relationships, rating their family's ability to get along as either *fair* (14.6%) or *poor* (6.9%).

## Happiness and the future

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole. The majority of young people (58.6%) indicated they felt *very happy/happy* with their lives overall. A greater proportion of males reported feeling *very happy/happy* with their lives as a whole (65.6% compared with 54.4% of females)

Young people were asked to describe their feelings when they thought about the future. Nearly six in 10 (55.5%) felt either *very positive* (12.3%) or *positive* (43.2%) about the future. Three in 10 (30.5%) young people felt *neither positive nor negative* about the future, while close to one in seven (13.9%) young people felt either *negative* (10.5%) *very negative* (3.4%) about the future.

# MISSION AUSTRALIA | YOUTH SURVEY 2020

**Mission Australia conducted its 19th annual survey of young people aged 15-19 in 2020.** The survey aims to identify young people's values, aspirations and concerns. This year's survey had a special focus on young people's experiences of unfair treatment and COVID-19.

**25,800**
**RESPONDENTS**
aged 15-19 years



**56%** Female **41%** Male **2%** Gender Diverse

**4%** identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

**20%** spoke a language other than English at home

## Top 3 factors to securing a job:

1. **Flexible working hours** 75%
2. **More jobs in my local area** 59%
3. **Work experience** 42%

## Top 3 personal concerns:

1. **Coping with stress** 43%
2. **Mental health** 34%
3. **Body image** 33%



**More than double the proportion of females were extremely/very concerned about coping with stress** (56% compared with 25% of males)

## Top 3 most important issues in Australia today:

**Equity and discrimination** 40%

**COVID-19** 39%

**Mental health** 31%

Since 2019, the % of young people identifying **EQUITY** and **DISCRIMINATION** as an issue of national importance has increased from **25% to 40%**

## COVID-19

**Young people were asked to comment on their biggest personal issue experienced in the past year.** In 2020, the top 3 biggest personal issues were:

1. **Education** 34%
2. **Mental health** 17%
3. **COVID-19** 9%

Of the **9%** of young people who felt **COVID-19** was their biggest personal issue:

- **33%** were concerned about COVID-19 and education
- **31%** were concerned about COVID-19 in general
- **21%** were concerned about COVID-19 and isolation
- **17%** were concerned about COVID-19 and mental health
- **7%** were concerned about COVID-19 and financial problems

## Young people were asked about their experiences of unfair treatment. In the past year:

**Experienced unfair treatment**
27%

**Witnessed unfair treatment**
55%

**39% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents had experienced unfair treatment** compared with 29% of non-Indigenous respondents

## Of those who experienced unfair treatment:

**41%**
had experienced unfair treatment due to their gender

**30%**
had experienced unfair treatment due to their race/cultural background

**26%**
had experienced unfair treatment due to their mental health

## Of those who witnessed unfair treatment:

**62%**
reported it was due to a person's race/cultural background

**49%**
reported it was due to a person's sexuality

**41%**
reported it was due to a person's gender

*"Discrimination, seen in both race and sexual or gender preference. I myself have not been victim to this discrimination but I have seen those close to me be affected by it. People should be more educated about LGBTIQA+ and race issues."* **F, 17, TAS**

## Recommendations:

- Replicate and fund flexible and alternative learning options for young people.
- End the digital divide and ensure access to reliable internet and devices for young people.
- Focus on mental health prevention and early intervention measures, including online and outreach.
- Implement a permanent increase to income support payments for young people and their families.
- Replicate and fund early intervention services to prevent youth homelessness.
- Fund youth-specific social housing.
- Develop a new National Anti-Racism Strategy and partner with young people on anti-racism initiatives.
- Put young people at the centre of service design and development.
- Develop a national approach to supporting youth employment.

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

**To download the report:** missionaustralia.com.au/youthsurveyreport

# Mission Australia's Youth Survey

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

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

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

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

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

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

6 **Supported and resourced** – young people and those around them such as their peers, family and relatives must have access to services to meet their needs. Mission Australia believes support is essential for young people whether this be universal or more targeted support. Young people need to be at the centre of service design and development and should be supported to lead the development of solutions alongside their communities, recognising and respecting the differences that young people bring to this work. These need to be quality services which are holistic and improve outcomes over time. A holistic approach considers all life domains including: housing, recreation, social participation, employment, finances, legal, education, child and family relationships, health and mental health, alcohol and other drug use, cultural and personal identity. Services should produce evidence which helps improve service delivery.

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

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

# About the survey

## Background

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

## Participation

In 2020, 25,800 young Australians aged 15 to 19 years participated in the *Youth Survey*. Of these, 25,206 participants completed the survey online (97.7%) and 594 completed the survey on paper (2.3%).

## Areas of focus

As well as collecting valuable socio-demographic data, the *Youth Survey 2020* sought to capture the views and perspectives of young people on a broad range of issues. Topics covered by the survey include education and employment, factors to securing a job, participation in community activities, general wellbeing, values and concerns, preferred sources of support, as well as feelings about the future. Focus questions were added to explore young people's experiences of unfair treatment, financial difficulties and help seeking behaviours.

## Methodology

The *Youth Survey* was open between April and August 2020. Young people were engaged via schools, community organisations, and through Mission Australia services. Following approval from State and Territory Education Departments, as well as Catholic Education Offices, secondary school principals were approached via email with information about the survey and how to get involved. Information about the *Youth Survey* was also distributed to Mission Australia services, local government organisations and networks, Federal, State and Territory Departments, youth organisations and peak bodies.

In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic we were not able to approach schools at the same time, instead we had a staged and staggered approach based on State and Territory Educational Department requirements.

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

Mission Australia is committed to child and youth safety and has extended this responsibility to the young people who participated in the *Youth Survey 2020*. In line with the research approvals obtained from State and Territory Education Departments and Catholic Education Offices, Mission Australia reported re-identifiable information to participating schools if a young person's responses to the Kessler 6 question indicated psychological distress, or if any free-text response indicated the young person was at potential risk of harm, abuse or neglect. To implement this reporting mechanism, date of birth is a mandatory item in the survey. For any survey respondents whose responses indicated potential risk of harm or psychological distress, the date of birth, gender and postcode (where provided) were reported back to school principals on a weekly basis. Where possible, principals were asked to re-identify the young person and provide appropriate support or services. More than 120 cases of potential risk of harm were reported back to participating schools in 2020, and more than 220 psychological distress reports were forwarded to schools across the five-month data collection period. These two forms of reporting were not required by the Western Australian Department of Education and the Western Australian Catholic Education Office; as such, the collection of date of birth and the reporting methods were not implemented for responses from this state.

In 2019, the Research and Evaluation team conducted a comprehensive review of the free-text responses and the coding frame for the question asking respondents to list the three most important issues in Australia today. New or existing terms were identified and/or re-classified through the review, which enabled responses to be analysed and reported more accurately. This process allowed us to better reflect young people's concerns in our reporting, policy and advocacy. In 2020, this was reviewed and re-written based on the responses to COVID-19.

Given the impact of COVID-19 on young people during 2020, for the first time, a special feature is included in the national summary. Data for this feature comes from analysing free-text responses to the question regarding the '*biggest issue you have been dealing with in the past year*'. Responses mentioning COVID-19 (or other associated terms) were categorised into nine subcategories: *COVID-19 and discrimination, education, family relationships, financial security, isolation, mental health, physical health* and *general COVID-19 related issues*.

## Survey design and changes in 2020

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

- The options for gender identity were expanded to improve inclusiveness for non-cisgender identifying respondents. The response options now include, *female, male, a-gender/non-gendered, non-binary gender, transgender, not listed* and *prefer not to say*.

- The list of items for the question regarding sources of support was amended this year. The list of items included were: *brother/sister, community service, friend/s, GP or health professional, internet, mobile apps, parent/s or guardian/s, relative/family friend, school counsellor, social media, spiritual/religious mentor* and *teacher*.
- A new question was added asking whether one or both of the young person's parents were born overseas.
- Young people were asked if they currently had paid work. If they responded 'no, but I am looking for work', respondents were prompted to indicate from a number of items the factor/s that may help them secure a job. The items included: *flexible working hours (to work around school etc.), improved skills in resume writing/interviews, job services/agencies, mentors, more jobs in my local area, more parent/family support, more school support, networking, training/skill development programs, volunteering opportunities* and *work experience*.

Focus questions were also added this year:

- A series of questions on unfair treatment were included in 2020. The questions asked respondents whether they had experienced and/or witnessed unfair treatment in the past year. If the response was 'yes', respondents were asked to identify the reason/s for the unfair treatment. The reasons were: *age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion* and *sexuality*.
- Questions were added to further capture how young people felt about their mental health and wellbeing. The questions included were: *in general, how would you rate your mental health and wellbeing; how much control do you feel you have over your life* and *in the past four weeks, how much of the time did you feel stressed*? Responses for each question were rated on a 5-point scale.
- Respondents were asked to indicate on average, how many hours they *spent in front of screens each day, sleep each night* and *exercise each week*.
- A question was included about the barriers young people face when seeking help for important issues. Respondents were asked to select from a range of items regarding what makes it hard for them to get the help they need. Another question was included this year asking respondents whether they thought the services provided in the community were appropriate for their needs in relation to their: *age, culture, disability, financial status, gender* and *sexuality*.
- Two questions were included regarding financial concerns. The first question asked respondents to select from a list of items whether they or their family had experienced the situation due to money concerns, in the past year. Items included were: *could not afford public transport, could not pay bills, could not pay for petrol or car expenses, could not pay for rent/mortgage, family conflict/violence, gone without a meal/s, sought assistance from welfare organisations, sought financial help from family or friends, spent time in a refuge/transitional housing*. The second question asked respondents to select from a list of items if they or their family had gone without the item/experience due to money concerns, in the past year. Items included were: *a holiday with family, a meal out with family once a month, attending community events, buying new clothes if I need them, extracurricular activities at school, going on school excursions or trips, going out with friends, having the internet at home and playing sport/joining a club*.

Please note that not all questions included in the survey questionnaire are presented in this report. These questions will inform other research publications to be released throughout 2021.

## This report

This report contains an executive summary, the policy context, a national summary, a summary of findings for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and a summary of findings for each State and Territory.

The national summary is the only place we have analysed the responses to the '*biggest issue that you have been dealing with*'. This is to provide a deeper understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on young people.

Each State and Territory summary compares the state-level findings against the national data, contains a breakdown of key data by gender and, where appropriate, compares 2020 findings with results from previous years. In addition, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander summary compares the responses of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people with non-Indigenous respondents.

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

Care needs to be taken when interpreting and generalising the results for certain States and Territories due to the small sample size and the imbalance between the number of females and males who participated in the survey. We are only able to include gender breakdowns for those who responded female and male due to the limited responses from gender diverse respondents and to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

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

# Policy context

25,800 young people across Australia took part in Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2020*. Their responses provide critical information on the experiences, hopes and concerns of young people in 2020 and are vital to include in the development and refinement of policies and services for young people.

Young people responded to the *Youth Survey 2020* as the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were felt around the world. Encouragingly, the majority of respondents felt *very positive* or *positive* about the future and *happy* or *very happy* about their life as a whole. However, their responses point to some challenges that highlight the need for further supports as they transition into adulthood. These challenges are likely to be further complicated as a result of COVID-19.

*Equity and discrimination* was identified as the most important issue facing Australia in 2020. In addition, the *Youth Survey 2020* asked young people a question about whether they had been treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason. Over one quarter (27.0%) of young people reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. The elevation of *equity and discrimination* as a prominent issue for young people reflects this high incidence of discrimination and unfair treatment, as well as ongoing public discussion about gender and racial discrimination.

*COVID-19* was identified both as an important issue facing Australia as well as an issue of personal concern. Young people who identified *COVID-19* as a personal concern reported being worried about a range of issues including its impact on education, isolation and mental health.

Mental health issues continued to be identified as areas of personal concern by survey respondents. The top three personal concerns identified by respondents were all related to this: *coping with stress*, *mental health* and *body image*. More than four in 10 (42.6%) respondents indicated they feel stressed either *all of the time* or *most of the time*. Nearly one third of respondents identified *mental health* as the most important issue in Australia. Additionally, *mental health* was a reported cause of unfair treatment either experienced or witnessed by young people.

As in previous years, responses to the *Youth Survey 2020* reveal some key differences between the experiences and concerns of young females and young males. This includes plans after leaving school, concerns about *coping with stress*, *body image*, *mental health* and *family conflict* and unfair treatment due to *gender*.

Some key differences in *Youth Survey* results were also evident for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people when compared to non-Indigenous respondents. While the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were participating in education, valued their family and friends and felt positive about the future, they also reported a range of challenges including being less likely to feel *happy* or *very happy* with their lives than non-Indigenous respondents. Particularly concerning is the higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who reported having been treated unfairly in the past year compared with non-Indigenous respondents (39.0% compared with 26.5%). Half (50.3%) of those who had been treated unfairly said the reason was *race/cultural background*, as did 60.2% of those who had witnessed unfair treatment.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, policy responses for young people have become even more important. COVID-19 is likely to have a disproportionate effect on the lives of young people, including negative impacts on education, employment and mental health. Government and community action should focus on securing positive social, economic and health outcomes for young people now and into the future.

**Recommendations:**

- Replicate and fund flexible and alternative learning options for young people.
- End the digital divide by ensuring all young people have access to reliable internet and devices to support online education, enable them to seek support and maintain social connections.
- Develop a comprehensive national approach to supporting youth employment.
- Focus on mental health prevention and early intervention measures, including online and mental health outreach services.
- Implement a permanent increase to income support payments to keep young people and their families out of poverty and support them to maintain housing and a stable connection with education and employment.
- Replicate and fund early intervention services that prevent young people becoming homeless before they reach crisis point.
- Fund youth-specific social housing that provides the appropriate levels of support that young people need.
- Develop a new National Anti-Racism Strategy with guiding principles and measurable outcomes, which includes a commitment to partnering with young people on initiatives to address racism and enhance social cohesion.
- Put young people at the centre of service design and development.

## Education

The majority of respondents (86.6%) were studying full-time, a smaller proportion than the 93.3% of respondents who were doing so in 2019. The majority of respondents reported they were either *very satisfied* (10.4%) or *satisfied* (56.7%) with their studies, with only a small proportion indicating they were either *dissatisfied* (5.7%) or *very dissatisfied* (1.5%).

Of those who were still at school, 97.3% intended to complete Year 12. More than double the proportion of male than female respondents indicated that they did not plan to complete Year 12 (3.8% compared with 1.7%).

Of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who responded to the survey, 71.1% were studying full-time (compared with 87.5% of non-Indigenous young people) and the majority were either *very satisfied* (7.2%) or *satisfied* (50.5%) with their studies. One in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated they were either *dissatisfied* (6.5%) or *very dissatisfied* (3.9%).

Of those who were still at school, 92.1% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents intended to complete Year 12. Nearly double the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males indicated that they did not plan to complete Year 12 (9.2% compared with 5.5% of females).

COVID-19 has led to significant interruptions to young people's education during 2020, as reflected in the personal issues identified by *Youth Survey 2020* respondents. Half of the national school student population is at risk of having their learning and wellbeing significantly compromised by not being at school during COVID-19 because they are in a vulnerable group, either due to their young age, social disadvantage, specific needs or family employment context.[1]

**"The biggest issue for me this year, is probably doing online school at home. I think we should be taught in class face to face with a teacher instead of sitting in front of a computer screen."**

***(16, M, VIC)***

It is important that young people at risk of disengaging from education are able to access holistic support to prevent early school leaving and those who do disengage are provided with alternative pathways to further education and employment.

**Navigator (VIC)**

Navigator is a Victorian Government initiative that provides support for disengaged young people, aged 12-17 years, to re-engage with an education or training pathway. Navigator services seek out disengaged learners and actively work with them and their support networks, providing the support required for a successful return to education. An evaluation of the Navigator program found that it was achieving short-term outcomes around young people's increased readiness for education, with the majority of young people reporting increased levels of wellbeing, such as a sense of control over their future and a greater sense of purpose in their lives.[2]

The digital divide in Australia has significant negative implications for the education of young people who are experiencing disadvantage. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools and universities are rapidly transforming their courses and curricula, aiming to deliver education online.[3] In addition to education delivered through online platforms, young people are increasingly seeking support from internet-based sources, with nearly half of respondents to the *Youth Survey 2020* (48.2%) indicating that the *internet* was a source of support.

Students from low-income households will continue to need affordable broadband and devices, even after the pandemic has passed, in order to access modern educational resources.[4] Urgent steps should be taken to end the digital divide by ensuring all young people have access to affordable and reliable devices and internet, to support online education, access to services and social connection.[5]

## Economic wellbeing

Four in 10 (40.5%) respondents reported they were employed part-time. Nearly six in 10 (58.9%) respondents indicated they were not in paid employment: 34.7% indicated they were looking for work, while 24.2% were neither working nor looking for work.

The rate of youth unemployment and underemployment across Australia has increased in recent years, with the youth unemployment rate more than double that of the general population. The casualisation of the workforce, a rise in part-time work and job insecurity has led to increased employment risks especially for young people.[6] These challenges for young people have been exacerbated by the labour market changes that have resulted from the impact of COVID-19.

Rates of youth unemployment are likely to rise even further in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the recession, as young people will be making the transition from education to work at a time when there are few jobs on offer.[7] Young Australians are among the groups that will be hit the hardest by COVID-19 related unemployment, because they are more likely to be employed in occupations and industries most affected by COVID-19.[8] Based on modelling from the last Global Financial Crisis, young people experiencing disadvantage are likely to be particularly adversely affected.[9]

1 Brown, N., Te Riele, K., Shelley, B. and J. Woodroffe (2020) Learning at home during COVID-19: Effects on vulnerable young Australians. Independent Rapid Response Report. Hobart: University of Tasmania, Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment.

2 Department of Education Victoria (2018) The Navigator Pilot Program: Evaluation Snapshot, accessible at https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/NavigatorEvaluationSnapshotJune2018.docx

3 J. Barraket and C. Wilcon (2020) Digital Inclusion and COVID-19, Centre for Social Impact, accessible at https://www.csi.edu.au/media/uploads/csi-covid_factsheet_digitalinclusion.pdf

4 Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) (2020) Select Committee Inquiry into Australian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, accessible at http://accan.org.au/files/Submissions/COVID-19%20Senate%20Select%20Committee%20submission_FINAL.pdf

5 Youth Affairs Council Victoria (2020) COVID-19 Recovery Plan for Young People, accessible at https://www.yacvic.org.au/advocacy/covid-19-recovery/

6 Youth Action (2019) A NSW for Young People: Beyond 2019, accessible at http://www.youthaction.org.au/a_safe_and_affordable_home

7 Borland, J. (2020) The next employment challenge from coronavirus: how to help the young. The Conversation, accessible at https://theconversation.com/the-next-employment-challenge-from-coronavirus-how-to-help-the-young-135676

8 Coates, B., Cowgill, M., Chen, T. and W. Mackey (2020) Shutdown: estimating the COVID-19 employment shock, Grattan Institute, accessible at https://grattan.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Shutdown-estimating-the-COVID-19-employment-shock-Grattan-Institute.pdf

9 Borland, J. (2020) The next employment challenge from coronavirus: How to help the young, in The Conversation, accessible at https://theconversation.com/the-next-employment-challenge-from-coronavirus-how-to-helpthe-young-135676

> **"Unemployment, I have been applying to a vast amount of places. The common problem seems to be my lack of work experience, which is annoying because how is it possible to gain work experience if every place is turning you down for lack of experience. I have worked for family, friends and volunteer services but it doesn't seem to be enough to secure a job."**
>
> ***(17, M, ACT)***

Respondents to the *Youth Survey 2020* who were looking for work were asked what would help them secure a job. They indicated that *flexible working hours* (75.0%), *more jobs in my local area* (58.7%) and *work experience* (42.4%) were the top factors. Over one third (34.4%) of respondents saw *improved skills in resume writing/interviews* as an important factor in helping them secure a job.

A range of measures are required to help young people with the issues they have identified. These include expanding quality career guidance and support services to help young people entering the workforce, building local employment and skills development partnerships,[10] developing a national approach to youth employment in light of COVID-19[11] and implementing a permanent increase to income support payments to keep young people and their families out of poverty during times of unemployment.

When asked about their post-school plans, nearly two thirds (64.1%) of respondents planned to *go to university* after school. One in three (29.9%) respondents reported plans to *get a job* after school and one in 10 young people planned to *go to TAFE or college* (10.2%) or to *get an apprenticeship* (9.6%).

While a much smaller proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents than non-Indigenous respondents reported plans to *go to university* after school (37.8% compared with 65.4%), a larger proportion planned to *get a job* (34.3% compared with 29.7%), to *get an apprenticeship* (19.2% compared with 9.2%) or to *go to TAFE or college* (14.9% compared with 10.0%).

A range of post-school pathways need to be available to young people to meet their different preferences. Early supports and career guidance would enable young people to make informed choices about their future and successfully navigate the post-school transition.

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

[10] ACOSS (2020) *Recovering jobs briefing paper*, accessible at https://www.acoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/200717-Recovering-Jobs-Briefing-Paper-FINAL.pdf

[11] Youth Affairs Council Victoria (2020) COVID-19 Recovery Plan for Young People, accessible at https://www.yacvic.org.au/advocacy/covid-19-recovery/

**Synergy Auto Repairs (VIC)**

Synergy Auto Repairs is a Mission Australia social enterprise based in North Melbourne that offers customers a full suite of smash repair services, while providing a flexible accredited training program and support for young people aged 16-20 years with a history of motor vehicle related offences. Synergy Auto Repairs has been in operation for five years, supported over 100 young people during this period and repaired over 3,000 vehicles.

The program supports young people who have engaged in repeated vehicle offences, harnessing their interest in cars and aiming to help them build a career in a field that matches their interests. The social enterprise equips participants with the skills to commence a smash repairs apprenticeship. The initiative is an Australian-first partnership between Mission Australia, the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council (NMVTRC), Kangan Institute and Suncorp Group. Young people are referred to the program through Mission Australia services, Victoria Police, Youth Justice and other social service organisations.

The training program runs for six months and gives students the practical experience and skills needed to start a panel beating or spray-painting apprenticeship. Participants also work toward completing an industry-recognised accreditation in panel beating or spray painting. All students gain on-the-job training and work experience from qualified auto industry professionals, supported by a team of tradespeople and a fulltime Student Support Coordinator.

An independent evaluation of Synergy found participants experience strong improvements in overall wellbeing, social stability and a willingness to work and stay away from negative influences during their time at Synergy, in addition to developing the skills needed to build a sustainable career pathway.[12]

## Health

Encouragingly, nearly six in 10 (58.6%) respondents to the *Youth Survey* were *very happy* or *happy* with their lives as a whole, and more than half (55.5%) reported feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future. However, around one in 10 (10.7%) young people indicated that they were either *sad* or *very sad* with their lives as a whole, and one in seven (13.9%) felt *negative* or *very negative* about the future. In a concerning finding, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were much less likely than non-Indigenous young people to feel *very happy* or *happy* with their lives (45.4% compared with 59.3%).

This is likely to be an indication of the range of significant personal challenges many young people are experiencing. It is imperative that community services, supports and youth

[12] Thielking, M., Pfeifer, J., Nolan K., & Boyce C., (2016) Synergy Automotive Repairs Program: Process Evaluation Report. Melbourne, accessible at https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/research/young-people

programs are easily accessible, navigable and culturally appropriate for young people and cater to their specific needs as and when they arise.

### Wellbeing of young people accessing Mission Australia services

As part of its Impact Measurement program, Mission Australia has been collecting outcomes data across a range of its services to support continuous service improvement. One of the key sets of questions we ask clients is a validated measure of subjective wellbeing, the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI).[13] This index is designed to be sensitive to fluctuations in a person's circumstances and encompasses the constructs of satisfaction with the following domains: standard of living, health, achieving, relationships, safety, community and future security.

Young people entering Mission Australia services often have low levels of personal wellbeing. On average, young people aged 15 – 19 who enter Mission Australia services score below the Australian normative range on all PWI domains except *community connectedness*. When they leave Mission Australia, their average PWI exit scores are higher than they were on entry across all domains, including increases in average scores for *life as a whole* and *standard of living* of 17%.

**Average entry and exit PWI scores for young people aged 15 – 19 years across Mission Australia services**

| Domain | Average Entry Score | Average Exit Score | % Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Standard of living | 6.0 | 7.0 | 17% |
| Personal health | 6.1 | 6.9 | 13% |
| Achievement in life | 6.2 | 7.0 | 13% |
| Personal relationships | 7.2 | 7.8 | 8% |
| Personal safety | 7.6 | 8.2 | 8% |
| Community connectedness | 7.0 | 7.5 | 7% |
| Future security | 6.1 | 7.1 | 16% |
| Life as a whole | 6.0 | 7.0 | 17% |

Source: Mission Australia Impact Measurement surveys completed by participants aged 15 – 19 (18/08/2015 to 18/09/2020). This includes data from Homelessness; Education Training and Employment; Mental Health; and Alcohol and Other Drug services. Entry surveys n=3,106, exit surveys=974.

Mental health continues to be a significant issue for young people, especially in the context of COVID-19, and requires a strong response from the community and policy-makers. It is encouraging that Federal, State and Territory Governments have invested in mental health responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 has caused multiple stresses 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.[14] Young people who were previously experiencing mental health challenges are also likely to face an exacerbation of their mental health conditions.[15]

Mental health concerns were also raised in a number of different areas of the *Youth Survey 2020*. Three in 10 (30.6%) young people indicated that *mental health* is an important issue in Australia, making it one of the top three national issues for young people. The top three issues of personal concern for young people nationally were also closely linked with mental health: *coping with stress*, *mental health* and *body image*. These were also the top three concerns of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

> **"Mental health. Mainly the stress around schoolwork. There is so much expected of students. It needs to be recognised that students need a pause every so often."**
>
> ***(17, F, QLD)***

For the first time in 2020, young people were asked to report on how much of the time they felt stressed in the past four weeks. More than four in 10 (42.6%) young people responded that they felt stressed either *all of the time* or *most of the time*.

Supporting young people's mental health during this time is critical. Some young people may not reach out for support due to stigma or lack of awareness about services. Governments must increase funding to youth mental health services to deliver outreach to young people who are not seeking help or who are experiencing barriers to remaining engaged with services.

> **"I think there should be more low-key places where teens could go to talk about mental health problems without there being a stigma. Kids in my area think you're weird if you're seen going to the headspace building or school counsellor."**
>
> ***(16, F, QLD)***

Shifting the focus to prevention and early intervention is another key strategy, including resourcing schools to support young people's mental health and wellbeing, providing strategies to support young people to cope with stress, boost self-esteem and improve mental health literacy.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, mental health is a crucial part of social and emotional wellbeing. Community-led programs that build on cultural determinants of social and emotional wellbeing, including culturally shaped

[13] International Wellbeing Group (2013), Personal Wellbeing Index: 5th Edition, Melbourne: Australian Centre on Quality of Life, Deakin University, http://www.acqol.com.au/instruments#measures

[14] Dolgin, R. (2020) The impact of Covid-19 on suicide rates, accessible at https://www.psycom.net/covid-19-suicide-rates

[15] International Wellbeing Group (2013), Personal Wellbeing Index: 5th Edition, Melbourne: Australian Centre on Quality of Life, Deakin University, http://www.acqol.com.au/instruments#measures

connections to family, kin, community and Country, are needed to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people with protective factors against mental health challenges.[16]

Gender-sensitive mental health services are important in responding to the concerns, challenges and support preferences of young females and males. Compared with male respondents, notably higher proportions of female respondents were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *coping with stress* (55.5% compared with 24.8%), *body image* (45.9% compared with 15.7%), *mental health* (43.4% compared with 20.7%) and *school or study problems* (40.5% compared with 21.4%). Similar gendered trends were also present among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

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

### Happy Healthy Minds Program (NSW)

Mission Australia's Happy Healthy Minds Program (also known as Liverpool Family Mental Health Support Program) provides a range of flexible, responsive, non-clinical mental health support services to meet the needs of young people aged 8–18 years, affected by, or at risk of mental illness. The service offers holistic case management, information and referrals to other services, practical and home based support, education and community development as well as programs and group work activities.

## Housing

A supportive and stable home is critical for young people's physical and psychological wellbeing. When young people have early experiences of homelessness, it has impacts on their education, mental health, confidence and wellbeing.

Family conflict and mental health issues are key contributors to youth homelessness.[17] As noted above, mental health concerns were reported by many young people throughout the *Youth Survey 2020*. Additionally, nearly three in 10 (29.5%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and one in five (21.2%) non-Indigenous respondents indicated their family's ability to get along was either *fair* or *poor*. *Family conflict* and *domestic/family violence* were also of concern to some respondents, with young women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents more likely to identify these as concerns.

Early intervention is particularly crucial for young people at risk of homelessness through models such as Reconnect, a community based early intervention and prevention program for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and their families. Reconnect aims to intervene early with young people when they are experiencing homelessness, to stabilise their housing situation and improve their engagement with family, education, training, employment and their local community to prevent future instances of homelessness. Early intervention efforts like Reconnect are critical responses to youth homelessness and governments must continue to support them.

### Outcomes for young people in Mission Australia's Reconnect services

On average, young people entering Mission Australia's Reconnect services have low levels of personal wellbeing as measured by the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI). However, their PWI exit scores are much higher across all domains, indicating the program helps young people improve their wellbeing. Average scores improve in each of the wellbeing domains for young people in Reconnect programs, with average scores in *life as a whole* improving by 40%.

On average young people entering Reconnect do not feel they have much control over their lives, with an average score of 5.4 out of 10. However, this also improves at exit by 41% to an average score of 7.6 out of 10.

At entry to Reconnect around two thirds (67%) of participants rate their family's ability to get along as *poor* or *fair*, but at exit less than half (40%) give their family functioning low ratings.

Nearly all (95%) young people surveyed when exiting Reconnect feel more confident to deal with the issues they sought support with.

**Average entry and exit PWI scores for young people aged 15 – 19 years across Mission Australia services**

| Domain | Average Entry Score | Average Exit Score | % Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Standard of living | 5.6 | 7.6 | 36% |
| Personal health | 5.6 | 7.3 | 30% |
| Achievement in life | 5.9 | 7.4 | 25% |
| Personal relationships | 6.8 | 8.1 | 19% |
| Personal safety | 7.0 | 8.5 | 21% |
| Community connectedness | 7.0 | 8.1 | 16% |
| Future security | 6.1 | 7.1 | 29% |
| Life as a whole | 5.3 | 7.4 | 40% |

Source: Mission Australia Reconnect services Impact Measurement surveys, completed by participants aged 15 – 19 (21/09/2016 to 18/09/2020). Entry surveys n=357, exit surveys n=180.

[16] Lindstedt, S., Moeller-Saxone, K., Black, C., Herrman, H. and J. Szwarc (2017) Realist Review of Programs, Policies and Interventions to Enhance the Social, Emotional and Spiritual Well-Being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People Living in Out-of-Home Care, in International Indigenous Policy Journal 8, no. 3, accessible at http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/iipj/vol8/iss3/5/

[17] Roche, Barker and Turton (2017) Understanding family conflict as it relates to young people experiencing homelessness. Parity, 30 (10), 28-30

Where a young person cannot remain with their family, finding safe, secure and affordable housing is crucial. Although social housing is a good option for many young people, they account for only 2.9% of principal tenants in social housing in Australia.[18] Low welfare payment rates for young people, and thus the low rents they can afford, makes it difficult to grow social housing for young people. In addition to increased government investment in social housing, youth-specific social housing options are needed that provide appropriate levels of support.[19]

Private market housing can be a good option for some young people, with separate support provided if needed. However, there is a severe lack of affordable rental properties available for young people, particularly those who are reliant on income support. Even with the additional Coronavirus Supplement payment of $550/fortnight, as originally introduced by the Federal Government in March 2020, only 624 (or less than 1%) of available rental properties around Australia were affordable to single young people receiving Youth Allowance.[20] Given this, government subsidies – such as RentChoice Youth in NSW – are required and should be provided in all jurisdictions.

Once young people have entered into homelessness, effective, targeted and culturally appropriate supports are required to help them move out of homelessness and into stable housing. Some will need supported accommodation coupled with intensive case management. For young people who require less intensive support, Youth Foyers are an effective model.

### Youth Foyer model

The Youth Foyer model assists young people, usually aged 16-24 years, to engage in education and employment, and gradually to reduce their dependence on social services. Youth Foyers generally have self-contained accommodation, onsite support workers, education programs, variable levels of support where a young person can progress to more independent living, onsite facilities and employment supports. Participation in education, training and employment is a condition of the accommodation. In these ways and because of their focus on independence, Youth Foyers are different from traditional supported accommodation models and suit a specific cohort of young people who are ready to intensively engage with education and employment. Evaluations have demonstrated Youth Foyers and supported housing models result in sustained positive outcomes for young people in educational qualifications and continued participated in education and employment after exit.[21]

[18] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2018) Housing assistance in Australia. accessible at https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/housing-assistance/housing-assistance-in-australia-2018/contents/housing-in-australia

[19] MacKenzie, D., Hand, T., Zufferey, C., McNelis, S., Spinney A. and D. Tedmanson (2020) Redesign of a homelessness service system for young people, AHURI Final Report 327, accessible at http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/327, doi: 10.18408/ahuri-5119101

[20] Anglicare Australia (2020) Anglicare Rental Affordability Snapshot, accessible at https://www.anglicare.asn.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/rental-affordability-snapshot-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=4

[21] Coddou, M., Borlagden, J. and S. Mallett (2019) Starting a future that means something to you: Outcomes from a longitudinal study of Education First Youth Foyers, accessible at: http://library.bsl.org.au/jspui/bitstream/1/11369/1/Coddou_etal_Starting_a_future_Education_First_Youth_Foyers_outcomes_2019.pdf

## Inclusion and cohesion

Young people highly value their friendships and family, with both *friendships (other than family)* and *family relationships* considered *extremely* or *very important* by around eight in 10 young people (82.5% and 78.9% respectively) and more than seven in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (70.5% and 72.4% respectively). It is important that programs that work with young people have the flexibility to work with their families and social networks.

Despite the close family and friendship networks indicated by survey respondents, ensuring social inclusion for all remains a significant challenge for Australia. Young people responding to the *Youth Survey* highlighted *equity and discrimination* as the biggest issue in Australia, with 40.2% of young people identifying it as an important issue. The proportion of young people reporting *equity and discrimination* as a national issue rose substantially between 2019 and 2020, from 24.8% to 40.2%, an increase of 62%. The *Youth Survey 2020* also asked whether young people had been treated unfairly or badly in the last year, with over one quarter (27.0%) indicating they had personally experienced unfair treatment.

*Gender* was the top reason reported nationally for being treated unfairly (41.0%), and was reported by more than twice the proportion of females than males (48.0% compared with 22.5%). Gender inequality continues to be a significant issue in Australia, with persistent gender pay gaps and overrepresentation of women in casual and insecure work,[22] as well as more experiences of domestic and family violence, a greater chance of living below the poverty line, greater involvement in unpaid care work and a lack of representation among political leadership.[23] The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the challenges faced by women, particularly young women, who are expected to be among those most vulnerable to prolonged unemployment.[24, 25]

Supporting gender equality is of critical importance, not only as a response to the economic and employment issues exacerbated by COVID-19,[26] but also to reducing violence against and unfair treatment of women. Education about gender equality at an early age through whole-of-school programs is a critical measure, as is promoting a gendered analysis of new government policies to ensure that they do not further disadvantage women.

[22] Equality Rights Alliance (2020) *Submission of Equality Rights Alliance to the Select Committee on COVID-19 inquiry into the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic*, accessible at http://www.equalityrightsalliance.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Final-ERA-Submission-Select-Committee-on-COVID19-.pdf

[23] Equality Rights Alliance (2016) *Gender equality in Australia* webpage, accessible at https://www.equalityrightsalliance.org.au/who-we-are/gender-equality-in-australia/

[24] ACOSS(2020) *Recovering jobs* briefing paper, accessible at https://www.acoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/200717-Recovering-Jobs-Briefing-Paper-FINAL.pdf

[25] Equality Rights Alliance (2020) *Submission of Equality Rights Alliance to the Select Committee on COVID-19 inquiry into the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic*, accessible at http://www.equalityrightsalliance.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Final-ERA-Submission-Select-Committee-on-COVID19-.pdf

[26] Listo, R. (2020) *Why gender equality would mean resilience against COVID-19,* accessible at http://www.broadagenda.com.au/home/why-gender-equality-would-mean-resilience-against-covid-19/

Discrimination against young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning or asexual (LGBTIQA+) was also identified as an issue by survey respondents. The implications of this discrimination are significant. People who identify as LGBTIQA+ are six times more likely to attempt to end their life compared to their peers.[27] Discrimination, prejudice, isolation and family rejection because of their sexuality and gender identity may increase the risk of suicide and suicidal ideation.

Schools are an important site of efforts to eradicate this discrimination and ensure young people of different gender identities are safe and included. LGBTIQA+ people should be specifically recognised and included in the development of strategies, programs and policies for young people. It is also important that services and supports including physical and mental health professionals, community services and other sports and recreation services create welcoming environments sensitive to the needs of LGBTIQA+ young people.

**"My biggest issue is dealing with my gender dysphoria, coming out to my parents didn't go too well and they tell me that I'm too young and haven't experienced life yet, which I get but it still hurts being called the wrong pronouns and being scolded for doing things that make me more comfortable in my identity. Going to a school that isn't homophobic but avoids these issues makes people in the young LGBTQ+ community feel more shunned and avoided. I wish the topic of gender was mentioned more and parents can learn how to treat transgender children without making them feel unwanted. "**

***(15, Transgender, VIC)***

Nationally, *race/cultural background* was the top reason reported by males for being treated unfairly (35.4%) and the top reason reported by both female and male respondents for the unfair treatment they witnessed (64.1% and 59.4% respectively). It was also the top reason reported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people for being treated unfairly (50.3%) and witnessing unfair treatment (60.2%).

Racial discrimination can affect an individual's education, employment, health, wellbeing and sense of agency.[28, 29] It is a major issue facing young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people,[30] as well as for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, for whom targeted and specialist approaches are needed to support their full and equal participation in society.[31]

Public discussions on the need to address systemic, structural and institutional racism and discrimination have been prominent in Australia during 2020. The Black Lives Matter movement has become a major touchpoint of conversation and action. Many young people have become involved in activism around the issues highlighted by the movement in Australia, including the disparities and discrimination faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the significant number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths in custody without accountability and Australia's treatment of people seeking asylum.

There have also been public discussions about racial abuse linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, with one third of all racism-related complaints received by the Australian Human Rights Commission since the start of February 2020 relating to COVID-19.[32]

At such a vital moment, further investment is needed in community, organisational and media interventions to combat racial discrimination across Australia. Introducing education initiatives into schools is also a critical mechanism for addressing the attitudes and behaviours of young people directly, and schools have a vital role to play in the elimination of discrimination and unfair treatment.

**Racism. It Stops With Me**

*Racism. It Stops With Me* is a national campaign that provides tools and resources to help people and organisations learn about racism and stand against it by acting for positive change. Led by the Australian Human Rights Commission, the campaign has developed resources to support organisations, schools, students and advocates in opposing racism and contributing towards a more inclusive society.

National political leadership is also needed. Dedicated funding for a previous National Anti-Racism Strategy came to an end in 2015. The Australian Human Rights Commission continues some aspects of the Strategy including the *Racism. It Stops With Me* campaign, but limited resources have been available to support a national, comprehensive approach to anti-racism. The Federal Government should build on existing resources and programs to develop a new National Anti-Racism Strategy with measurable outcomes and actions and which embeds a commitment to working with young people to improve social cohesion.

[27] Rosenstreich, G. (2013) *LGBTI People Mental Health and Suicide*. Revised 2nd Edition. National LGBTI Health Alliance. Sydney

[28] Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2018) Prejudice and discrimination: Barriers to social inclusion, Social Development Brief #4, United Nations.

[29] Zubrick, S., Dudgeon, P., Gee, G., Glaskin, B., Kelly, K., Paradies, Y., Scrine, C., and R. Walker (2004) Social determinants of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing, Working together, p.75.

[30] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2018) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adolescent and youth health and wellbeing 2018, AIHW, Canberra.

[31] Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia, Human Rights Law Centre, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Centre and Refugee Council of Australia (2018) Australia's Compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, accessible at https://myan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/coalitioncerdreport-2017.pdf

[32] Australian Human Rights Commission (2020) Where's all the data on COVID-19 racism?, accessible at https://humanrights.gov.au/about/news/opinions/wheres-all-data-covid-19-racism

**"Racism in everyday life. From my personal experience (not directed at me) I was shocked to realise how casual and ingrained racism is in our society. I think that school should provide more education on what racism is, and a range of examples. Like what's going on at the moment with the coronavirus and how people are using it as an excuse to discriminate ... I think it needs to be highlighted and taught from a young age that these casual racist comments are not ok."**

***(17, F, NSW)***

## Safety

It is essential for young people's wellbeing that they feel safe in their homes, schools and communities. However, nearly one in 10 (9.3%) respondents identified *crime, safety and violence* as an important issue facing Australia, and 15.5% of respondents were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *personal safety*. This was higher for females than males (17.9% compared with 11.6%) and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, of whom one in five (20.3%) reported they were either *extremely* or *very concerned* about it.

More needs to be done to build feelings of safety both at home and in the community for all young people, with particular regard to the higher concerns about safety raised by young females and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

In a survey of Australian young women aged 15-19 commissioned by Plan International and Our Watch, 30% of respondents agreed with the statement that 'girls should not be out in public places after dark.'[33] There is much work to be done to ensure young females feel safe and are safe.

Collaboration between individuals, community organisations and governments within shared public spaces is an important way of creating safer communities and improving outcomes for females.[34] Increased investment in place-based initiatives that strengthen local communities is a key response. Collaborative community strengthening approaches should be co-designed with young people to ensure they meet the needs of young people from all gender identities.

We also need to ensure young people are living in safe homes. Nationally, nearly one in five female respondents identified *family conflict* as a personal concern (19.7% compared with 9.9% of male respondents) as did over one in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (21.0%). Female respondents were also slightly more likely than male respondents to identify *domestic/family violence* as a personal concern (8.6% compared with 5.6%), and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were more likely than non-Indigenous respondents to voice their concern about it (16.2% compared with 7.6%).

**"Stress, there is so much pressure on school work and so much family conflict as there are so many people who are arguing and many family issues and drama at the moment."**

***(17, F, SA)***

Domestic and family violence has risen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic[35, 36] while simultaneously making it more difficult to seek help.[37] Governments have responded to this with extra funding for domestic and family violence services, but this remains insufficient to meet the increasing demand.

Respectful relationships and violence prevention education should be universally provided to prevent ongoing cycles of domestic and family violence. It is important the safety, recovery and wellbeing of those who have experienced domestic and family violence is supported and that repeat violence is prevented through integrated service provision. Services should be co-designed with people who have been affected by violence.

In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, new approaches to domestic and family violence include a focus on social and emotional wellbeing that draws on connection with law, cultures and spirituality as protective factors against the occurrence of family violence and putting Elders (male and female) at the centre of interventions wherever possible.[38]

**"Family conflict and domestic violence. A lot more awareness and activism needs to be done about DV. The laws need to be changed to make the court system easier for women to navigate and get justice. Campaigns for women's safety should be started. "**

***(17, F, SA)***

[33] Plan International Australia (2016) A Right to the Night. Australian Girls on Their Safety in Public Places, accessible at https://www.plan.org.au/~/media/plan/documents/resources/a-right-to-the-night.pdf

[34] Moore, T., H. McHugh-Dillon, K. Bull, R. Fry, B. Laidlaw and S. West (2014) The Evidence: What We Know about Place-Based Approaches to Support Children's Wellbeing. Parkville, VIC: Murdoch Children's Research Institute, accessible at https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccch/CCCH_Collaborate_for_Children_Report_The_Evidence_Nov2014.pdf

[35] Wagers, S. (2020) Domestic violence growing in wake of coronavirus outbreak, The Conversation, accessible at https://theconversation.com/domestic-violence-growing-in-wake-of-coronavirus-outbreak-135598

[36] Women's Safety NSW (2020) Media Release: New Domestic Violence Survey Shows Impact of COVID-19 on the Rise, 2 April 2020, accessible at https://www.womenssafetynsw.org.au/impact/article/new-domestic-violence-survey-shows-impact-of-COVID-19-on-the-rise/

[37] Pfitzner, N., Fitz-Gibbon, K. and J. True (2020) Responding to the 'shadow pandemic': practitioner views on the nature of and responses to violence against women in Victoria, Australia during the COVID-19 restrictions. Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre, Monash University, Victoria, Australia

[38] Blagg, H., Williams, E., Cummings, E., Hovane, V., Torres, M. and K. Nangala Woodley (2018) Innovative models in addressing violence against Indigenous women: Key findings and future directions, ANROWS, Sydney, accessible at https://www.anrows.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/4.3-Blagg-Key-Findings-and-Future-Directions.pdf

## Supports and resources

Young people need to feel confident in seeking help and know whom they can speak to and trust. *Friend/s* (83.5%), *parent/s or guardian/s* (71.7%), *relative/family friend* (55.3%) and *brother/sister* (49.6%) were the four most frequently cited sources of help for young people nationally, as they were for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

We need to equip these informal sources of help, on whom young people most frequently rely, with the knowledge and skills to help them with important issues in their lives. This includes equipping friends and family with the skills and confidence to talk with young people about race or gender discrimination they may experience or witness, coming to terms with their sexuality, coping with the stresses of school and other issues they seek to discuss.

As families are often going through multiple challenges together as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including financial instability and isolation, supports should be targeted at the whole family. This could include increasing the number of family focused workers and family peer support workers in youth mental health services who can provide direct support, resources, lived experience perspectives and family counselling.[39]

Health and education professionals were also important sources of advice for many respondents. A large proportion of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander as well as non-Indigenous young people identified *GP or health professional* (41.8% and 45.0% respectively), *teacher* (35.5% and 36.3% respectively) and *school counsellor* (28.6% and 30.3% respectively) as sources of advice.

Health and education professionals therefore also need to be aware of appropriate services they can link young people to in times of need and be confident discussing the range of concerns young people have including concerns around their mental health.

The internet is also an important source of support for young people and can be used to provide information and deliver evidence-based programs. Around half of the non-Indigenous young people who responded to the *Youth Survey 2020* nationally indicated that they would seek help via the *internet* (48.5%), as did 41.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. *Mobile apps* and *social media* were also identified as sources of support.

Federal as well as State and Territory Governments have increased funding to community and health services to improve their online service delivery capabilities to meet the needs of people as a result of COVID-19. It is important that young people are able to access services both online and in person depending on their personal preference.

## Connection and participation

The top three activities identified by young people nationally were *sports as a participant* (70.7%), *sports as a spectator* (62.1%) and *arts/cultural/music activities* (43.9%), closely followed by *volunteer work* (43.3%). These were the same top activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents, although they were less likely than non-Indigenous young people to be involved in *sports as a spectator* and more likely to be involved in *arts/cultural/music activities* and *volunteer work*.

Participating in activities improves physical and mental health, brings people together and is important in forming support systems for young people. It is encouraging that a significant proportion of young people who responded to the *Youth Survey 2020* were participating in sports and other activities. However, COVID-19 has had a dramatic impact on sport in Australia and throughout the world,[40] and the impact of this on young people needs to be carefully monitored.

An important part of being connected and participating is young people being able to have a say on issues that affect them. The involvement of young people in, for example, the climate change and Black Lives Matter movements demonstrate their determination to have their voices heard on issues affecting them and their future. Young people need to be at the centre of policy and service design and development, to bring their unique perspective to bear on issues affecting them and the development of solutions.

**"The largest issue I have been dealing with in the past year is using my voice in a way that it is heard and understood for both personal issues such as mental health and issues I wish to advocate for such as climate change. I believe young people need to be given more a voice in the media which is validated and not brushed off."**

***(16, F, NSW)***



[39] Youth Affairs Council Victoria (2020) COVID-19 Recovery Plan for Young People, accessible at https://www.yacvic.org.au/advocacy/covid-19-recovery/

[40] Australian Sports Foundation (2020) Impact Of COVID-19 on Community Sport, accessible at https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2020-07/apo-nid306997.pdf

# National summary

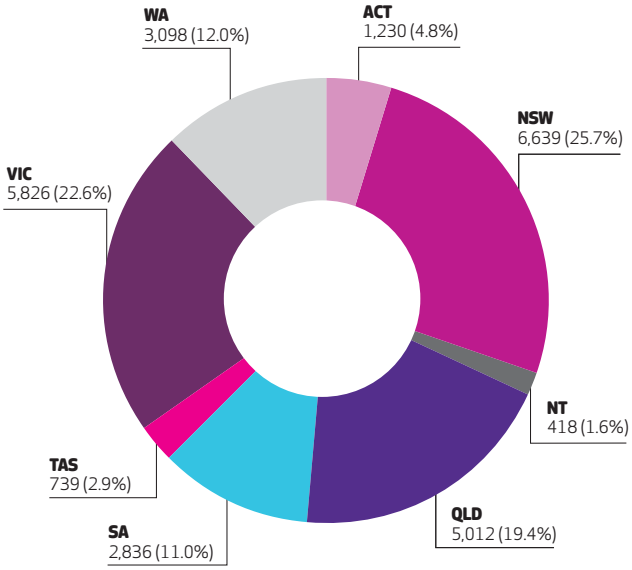


## Profile of respondents

### State and territory distribution

A total of 25,800 young people aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2020*. Respondents came from across Australia, Figure 1.1 indicates the number and proportion of responses from each Australian state and territory.

Figure 1.1: Percentage of respondents by state/territory




### Gender breakdown

Around six in 10 (56.2%) respondents were female, 41.2% were male, 1.6% were gender diverse and 1.1% preferred not to say.

### Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 1,129 (4.4%) respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 949 (3.7%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 92 (0.4%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.3% identified as both). A slightly higher proportion of male respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (4.6% compared with 3.8% of females).

### Cultural background other than English

A total of 3,823 (15.0%) respondents stated they were born overseas and 5,061 (19.9%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 100 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Filipino/Tagalog, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic and Mandarin.

Four in 10 (39.9%) respondents stated that one or both of their parents were born overseas.

### Disability

A total of 1,658 (6.6%) respondents identified as living with disability. A greater proportion of males than females reported they were living with disability (7.7% compared with 5.2%). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): autism, learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), physical disabilities and anxiety disorder.

## Education

As indicated in Table 1.1, 86.6% of respondents were studying full-time, which is lower than the 93.3% of respondents studying full-time in 2019. A higher proportion of females reported studying full-time (90.0% compared with 83.0% of males). Conversely, a higher proportion of males reported studying part-time (8.5% compared with 4.8% of females) or not studying (8.5% compared with 5.2% of females).

Table 1.1: Participation in education

| | National % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Studying full-time | 86.6 | 90.0 | 83.0 |
| Studying part-time | 6.5 | 4.8 | 8.5 |
| Not studying | 6.8 | 5.2 | 8.5 |

Respondents who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in previous years, the majority of respondents reported they were either *very satisfied* (10.4%) or *satisfied* (56.7%) with their studies. Less than one in 10 indicated they were *dissatisfied* (5.7%) or *very dissatisfied* (1.5%). As shown in Table 1.2, a higher proportion of females reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* (69.4% compared with 65.3% of males), while a slightly higher proportion of males indicated they felt *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* (7.4% compared with 6.7% of females).

Table 1.2: Satisfaction with studies

| | National % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 10.4 | 10.2 | 10.9 |
| Satisfied | 56.7 | 59.2 | 54.4 |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 25.6 | 23.9 | 27.3 |
| Dissatisfied | 5.7 | 5.6 | 5.6 |
| Very dissatisfied | 1.5 | 1.1 | 1.8 |

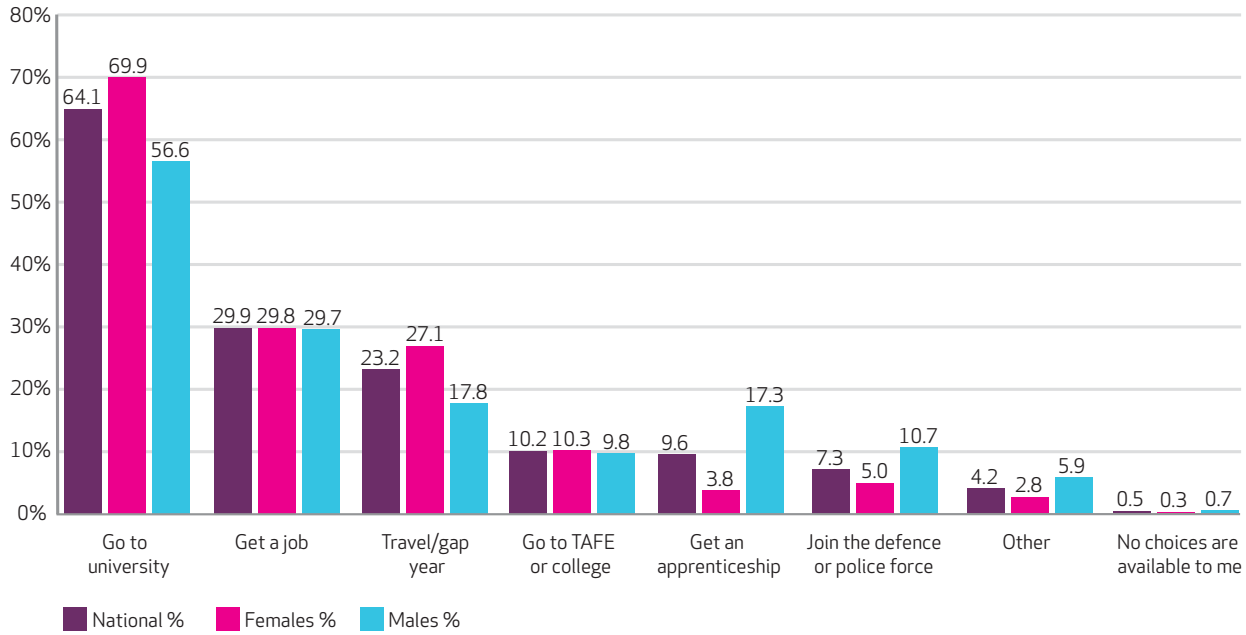
Of those still at school, the majority (97.3%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. More than double the proportion of males indicated they did not plan to complete Year 12 (3.8% compared with 1.7% of females).

Respondents who were studying at school were asked what they planned to do after leaving school. Figure 1.2 shows that nearly two thirds (64.1%) of respondents planned to *go to university* after school. Three in 10 (29.9%) respondents reported plans to *get a job* after school and close to one quarter (23.2%) indicated *travel/gap year* plans. Overall, around one in 10 young people planned to *go to TAFE or college* (10.2%) and to *get an apprenticeship* (9.6%), while 7.3% reported plans to *join the defence or police force*. A small minority (0.5%) of respondents indicated that *no choices are available to me* after finishing school.

## Gender differences

While the most frequently reported plan among both female and male respondents was to *go to university* after finishing school, a much higher proportion of females indicated they planned to do so (69.9% compared with 56.6% of males). A greater proportion of female respondents also reported *travel/gap year* plans after leaving school (27.1% compared with 17.8% of males). Conversely, more than four times the proportion of males indicated they were planning to *get an apprenticeship* after school (17.3% compared with 3.8% of females).

Figure 1.2: Plans after leaving school

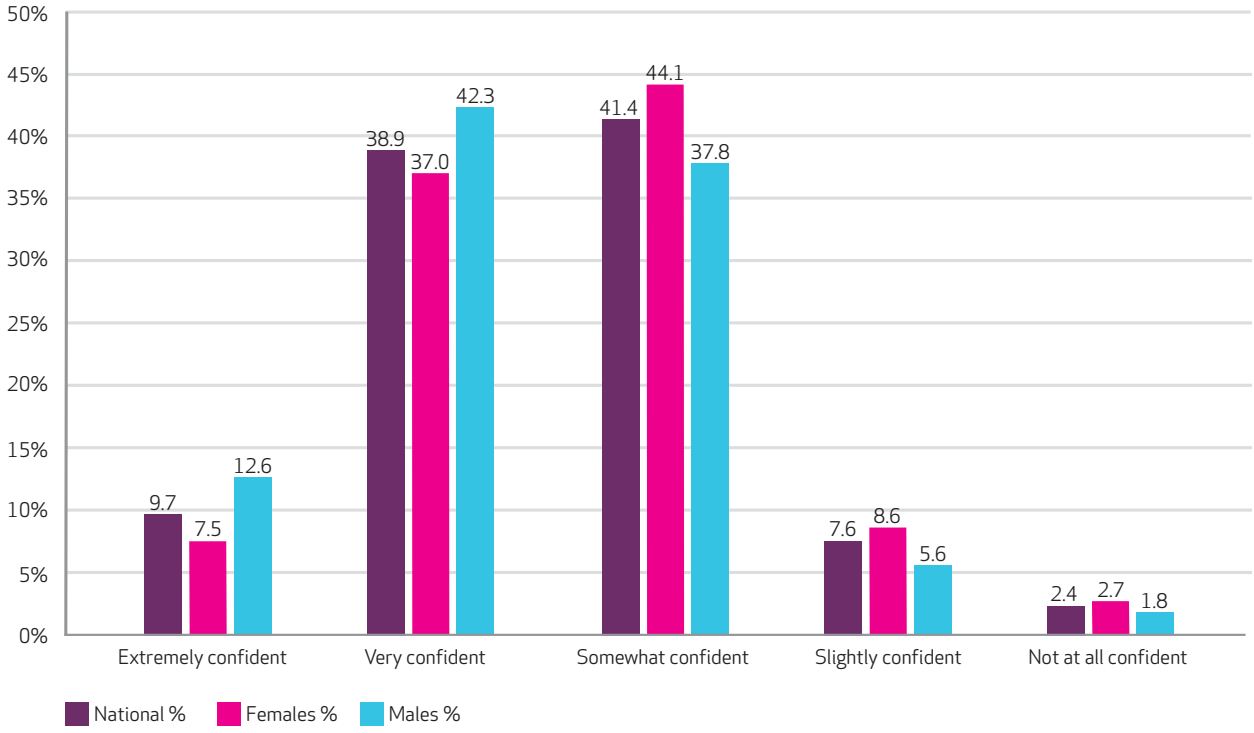



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

## How confident are young people in achieving their study/work goals?

Respondents were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after finishing school. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. As shown in Figure 1.3, nearly half (48.6%) of respondents indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study/work goals: 9.7% reported they were *extremely confident* and 38.9% stated they were *very confident*. However, one in 10 (10.0%) young people were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals: 7.6% of young people indicated they were *slightly confident*, while 2.4% were *not at all confident*. A notably higher proportion of male respondents reported they were *extremely* or *very confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school (54.9% compared with 44.5% of females).

Figure 1.3: Confidence in achieving study/work goals




## Employment

Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average how many hours they worked per week. Table 1.3 shows participation in paid employment among respondents nationally. A very small proportion of young people who reported paid employment were employed full-time (0.6%). This is unsurprising given the high proportion of respondents to the *Youth Survey* who were still at school. Four in 10 (40.5%) respondents reported they were employed part-time. Nearly six in 10 (58.9%) respondents indicated they were not in paid employment: 34.7% stated they were looking for work, while 24.2% were neither working nor looking for work. The proportion of respondents in part-time employment in 2020 is slightly less than in 2019 (40.5% compared with 43.0% respectively).

### Gender differences

A slightly higher proportion of male respondents reported full-time employment (0.9% compared with 0.3% of females). A higher proportion of female respondents were employed part-time (42.8% compared with 37.3% of males). Conversely, a greater proportion of male respondents were looking for work (36.3% compared with 33.3% of females).

Table 1.3: Participation in paid employment

| | National % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Employed full-time | 0.6 | 0.3 | 0.9 |
| Employed part-time | 40.5 | 42.8 | 37.3 |
| Not in paid employment, looking for work | 34.7 | 33.3 | 36.3 |
| Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work | 24.2 | 23.6 | 25.5 |

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

## What would help young people secure a job?

Respondents who were looking for work were asked to indicate from a number of items what might help them secure a job, as shown in Figure 1.4.

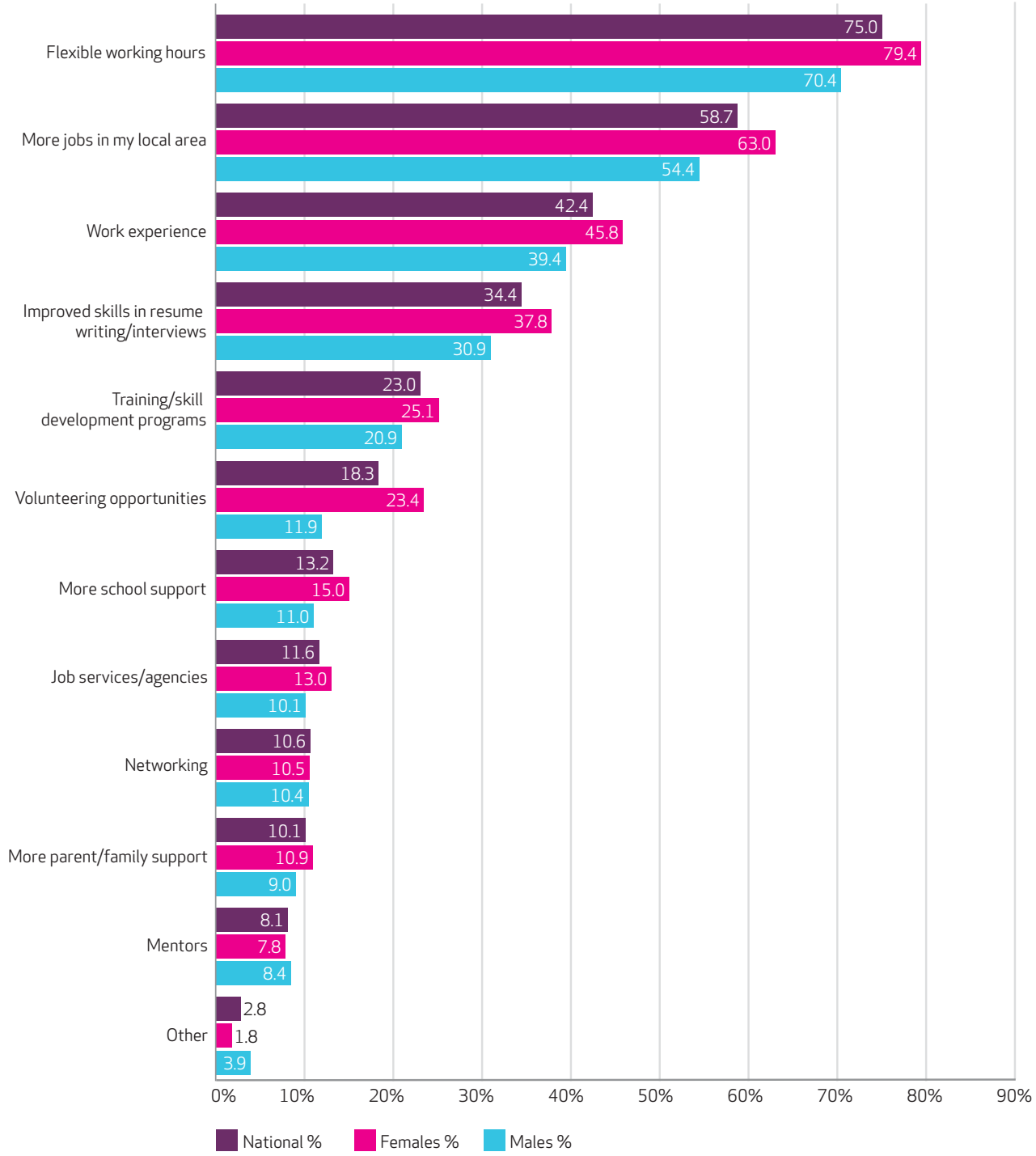
- *Flexible working hours* (75.0%), *more jobs in my local area* (58.7%) and *work experience* (42.4%) were the top factors to helping young people secure a job.
- Over one third (34.4%) of respondents saw *improved skills in resume writing/interviews* as an important factor in helping them secure a job.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 1.4, the top three factors to securing work for both females and males were *flexible working hours*, *more jobs in my local area* and *work experience*.

- Almost double the proportion of female respondents saw *volunteering opportunities* as a factor to securing a job (23.4% compared with 11.9% of males).
- Notably higher proportions of females than males reported *flexible working hours* (79.4% compared with 70.4%) and *more jobs in my local area* (63.0% compared with 54.4%) were factors to securing a job.

Figure 1.4: Factors to securing a job




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

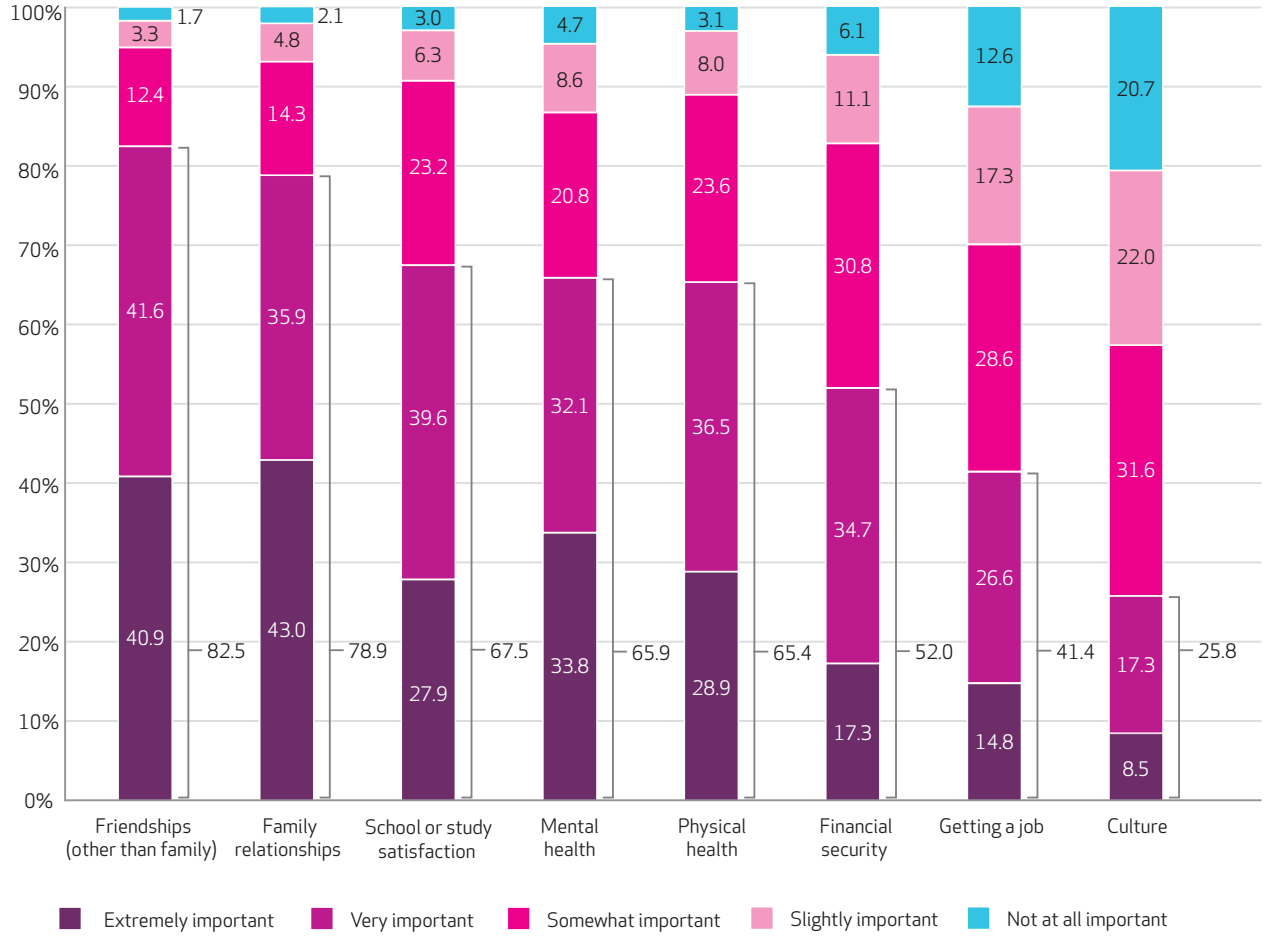
## What do young people value?

Young people were asked how important a number of items had been in their lives over the past year. Responses for these items were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely important* to *not at all important*.

The three most highly valued items nationally were *friendships (other than family)*, *family relationships* and *school or study satisfaction*. The next most highly valued items were *mental health* and *physical health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were considered *extremely* or *very important* by 82.5% of respondents (*extremely important*: 40.9%; *very important*: 41.6%).
- Close to eight in 10 (78.9%) respondents highly valued *family relationships* (*extremely important*: 43.0%; *very important*: 35.9%).
- Nearly two thirds of respondents placed a high value upon *school or study satisfaction* (67.5%), *mental health* (65.9%) and *physical health* (65.4%).

Figure 1.5: What young people value




Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

## Gender differences

*Friendships (other than family)* and *family relationships* were rated as the two most important items by both females and males, as shown in Table 1.4. The third top item for females was *school or study satisfaction*, while for males the third most highly valued item was *physical health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were rated *extremely* or *very important* by eight in 10 females (84.4%) and males (80.7%).
- Notably higher proportions of females than males placed a high value upon *school and study satisfaction* (73.4% compared with 60.7%) and *mental health* (70.7% compared with 60.3%).

Table 1.4: What young people value by gender

| Females | Extremely important % | Very important % | Somewhat important % | Slightly important % | Not at all important % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **44.3** | **40.1** | 11.4 | 3.2 | 1.1 |
| **Family relationships** | **47.8** | **34.0** | 12.5 | 4.3 | 1.4 |
| **School or study satisfaction** | **32.8** | **40.6** | 19.7 | 5.2 | 1.7 |
| Mental health | 37.6 | 33.1 | 18.9 | 7.7 | 2.6 |
| Physical health | 28.2 | 36.6 | 24.3 | 8.4 | 2.4 |
| Financial security | 17.7 | 36.1 | 30.6 | 10.8 | 4.9 |
| Getting a job | 14.0 | 27.6 | 29.0 | 17.5 | 11.8 |
| Culture | 8.7 | 18.1 | 31.6 | 22.2 | 19.4 |

Table 1.4: What young people value by gender (continued)

| Males | Extremely important % | Very important % | Somewhat important % | Slightly important % | Not at all important % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **36.6** | **44.1** | 13.8 | 3.4 | 2.0 |
| **Family relationships** | **37.3** | **39.0** | 16.3 | 5.0 | 2.5 |
| School or study satisfaction | 21.8 | 38.9 | 27.7 | 7.6 | 4.0 |
| Mental health | 28.7 | 31.6 | 23.3 | 9.8 | 6.6 |
| **Physical health** | **30.1** | **37.2** | 22.3 | 7.2 | 3.2 |
| Financial security | 16.3 | 33.4 | 31.1 | 11.6 | 7.5 |
| Getting a job | 15.4 | 25.4 | 28.4 | 17.5 | 13.2 |
| Culture | 7.9 | 16.2 | 32.2 | 22.0 | 21.7 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

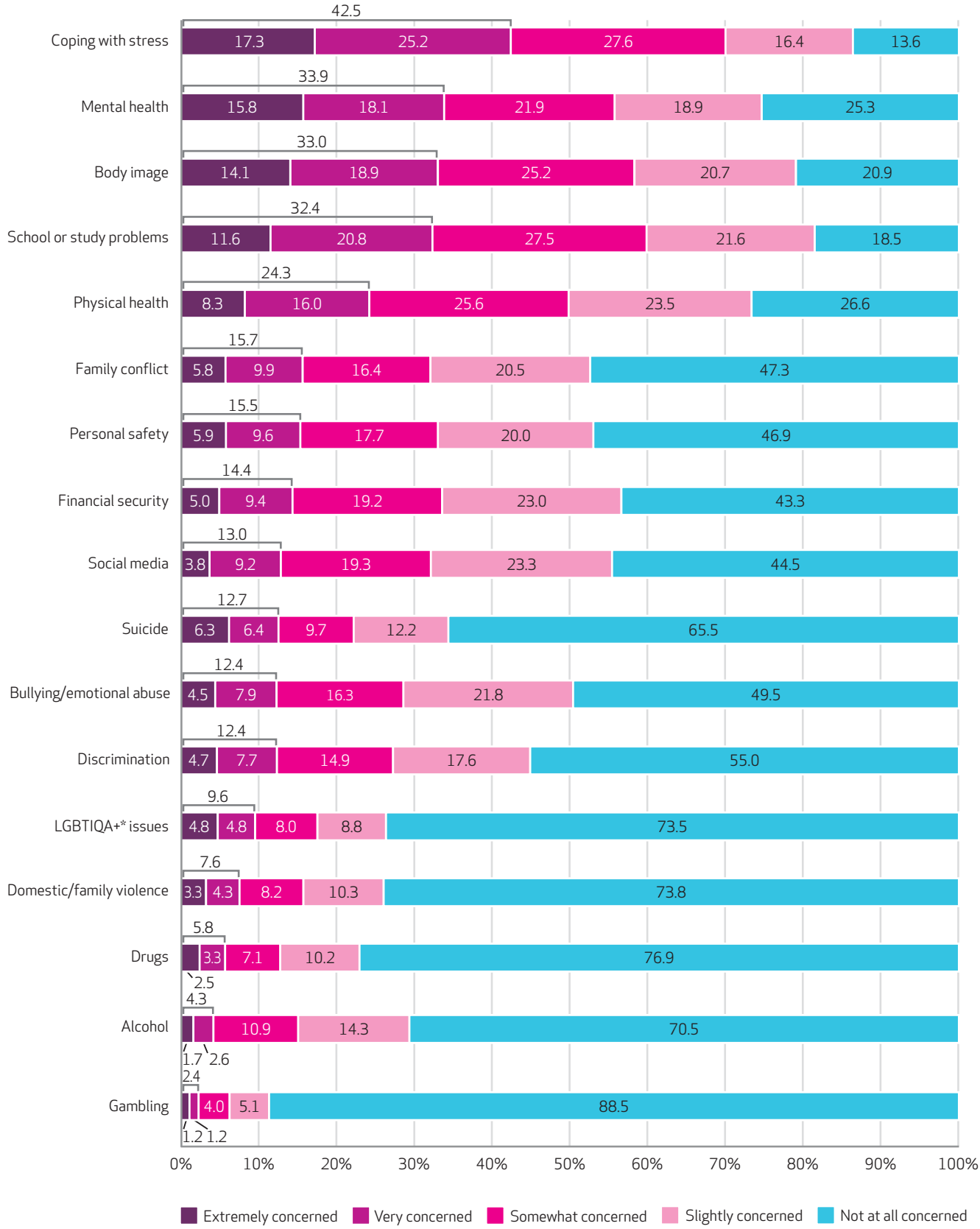
## What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Young people were asked to indicate how concerned they were about a number of issues over the past year, as shown in Figure 1.6. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*.

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

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with more than four in 10 (42.5%) respondents indicating they were *extremely* or *very concerned* about this issue.
- Around one third of respondents were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *mental health* (33.9%), *body image* (33.0%) and *school or study problems* (32.4%)
- Close to one quarter (24.3%) of respondents were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *physical health*.

Figure 1.6: Issues of personal concern to young people




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

## Gender differences

*Coping with stress* was the top issue of personal concern for both females and males, as shown in Table 1.5. For females, the second and third most concerning personal issues were *body image* and *mental health*. For males the second and third most concerning personal issues were *school or study problems* and *mental health*. The proportion of female respondents concerned about these issues (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- *Coping with stress* was a major issue of concern for more than half (55.5%) of females, compared with around one quarter (24.8%) of males.
- Notably higher proportions of females than males were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *body image* (45.9% compared with 15.7%), *mental health* (43.4% compared with 20.7%) and *school or study problems* (40.5% compared with 21.4%).
- Double the proportion of females were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *family conflict* (19.7% compared with 9.9% of males).

Table 1.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

| Females | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **23.4** | **32.1** | 27.2 | 12.1 | 5.1 |
| **Mental health** | **20.5** | **22.9** | 23.3 | 17.9 | 15.5 |
| **Body image** | **20.4** | **25.5** | 27.5 | 17.4 | 9.3 |
| School or study problems | 14.9 | 25.6 | 28.7 | 19.6 | 11.2 |
| Physical health | 9.1 | 18.5 | 28.5 | 24.2 | 19.7 |
| Family conflict | 7.1 | 12.6 | 18.9 | 22.7 | 38.7 |
| Personal safety | 6.7 | 11.2 | 19.0 | 21.2 | 41.9 |
| Financial security | 5.5 | 10.9 | 21.4 | 24.7 | 37.5 |
| Social media | 4.7 | 12.2 | 23.3 | 25.0 | 34.8 |
| Suicide | 6.9 | 7.7 | 10.8 | 13.7 | 60.9 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 5.0 | 10.1 | 18.6 | 23.5 | 42.8 |
| Discrimination | 4.9 | 9.7 | 16.5 | 19.8 | 49.1 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 4.9 | 6.4 | 9.6 | 11.2 | 67.9 |
| Domestic/family violence | 3.6 | 5.0 | 8.7 | 11.0 | 71.7 |
| Drugs | 2.0 | 3.4 | 7.0 | 10.9 | 76.7 |
| Alcohol | 1.3 | 2.7 | 11.9 | 15.4 | 68.8 |
| Gambling | 0.7 | 0.9 | 3.2 | 4.7 | 90.5 |

Table 1.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

| Males | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **8.4** | **16.4** | 28.5 | 22.5 | 24.2 |
| **Mental health** | **8.6** | **12.1** | 20.4 | 20.9 | 38.1 |
| Body image | 5.3 | 10.4 | 22.3 | 25.9 | 36.1 |
| **School or study problems** | **6.9** | **14.5** | 26.4 | 24.6 | 27.6 |
| Physical health | 6.6 | 13.0 | 22.0 | 23.0 | 35.3 |
| Family conflict | 3.6 | 6.3 | 13.3 | 18.0 | 58.9 |
| Personal safety | 4.2 | 7.4 | 15.7 | 18.9 | 53.7 |
| Financial security | 3.7 | 7.5 | 16.3 | 21.5 | 51.1 |
| Social media | 2.3 | 5.1 | 14.4 | 21.0 | 57.2 |
| Suicide | 4.6 | 4.4 | 8.0 | 10.2 | 72.8 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 3.1 | 5.0 | 13.2 | 19.9 | 58.8 |
| Discrimination | 3.4 | 5.2 | 12.6 | 15.2 | 63.6 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 3.0 | 2.2 | 5.8 | 6.1 | 82.9 |
| Domestic/family violence | 2.4 | 3.4 | 7.3 | 9.5 | 77.5 |
| Drugs | 2.7 | 3.1 | 7.1 | 9.4 | 77.8 |
| Alcohol | 1.9 | 2.5 | 9.2 | 13.0 | 73.5 |
| Gambling | 1.4 | 1.6 | 4.9 | 5.5 | 86.7 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of national frequency.
*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

## Biggest personal concern

Young people were able to make a free text response to their biggest personal concern in the past year. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 1.6.

In 2020, the top three issues identified by young people were *education* (34.2%), *mental health* (17.2%) and *COVID-19* (9.3%).

- *Education* was the biggest personal concern for both males and females (36.6% and 33.1% respectively).
- A higher proportion of females than males were concerned about *mental health* (20.0% compared with 12.6%) and *body image* (9.3% compared with 2.9%).

Table 1.6: Biggest personal concern

| | National % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Education | **34.2** | **33.1** | **36.6** |
| Mental health | **17.2** | **20.0** | **12.6** |
| COVID-19 | **9.3** | **10.4** | **8.8** |
| Body image | 6.8 | 9.3 | 2.9 |
| Relationships | 5.8 | 5.6 | 5.9 |

To further understand the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people, analysis was undertaken of those who responded that *COVID-19* was their biggest personal concern. Table 1.7 shows that of the 9.3% of respondents who reported *COVID-19*, the top three related concerns were around *education* (32.5%), *COVID-19* in *general* (31.2%) and *isolation* (20.7%). One in six (17.0%) respondents were concerned about *COVID-19* and *mental health*.

- A much higher proportion of males than females reported *general* concerns relating to *COVID-19* (41.4% compared with 23.2%).
- A higher proportion of females than males reported *mental health* (22.2% compared with 9.9%) and *education* (36.4% compared with 27.5%) as concerns relating to *COVID-19*.

Table 1.7: Biggest personal concern: COVID-19 related responses

| | National % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **COVID-19 and education** | **32.5** | **36.4** | **27.5** |
| **COVID-19 general** | **31.2** | **23.3** | **41.4** |
| **COVID-19 and isolation** | **20.7** | 19.7 | **22.0** |
| COVID-19 and mental health | 17.0 | **22.2** | 9.9 |
| COVID-19 and financial problems | 7.0 | 8.0 | 5.3 |
| COVID-19 other | 3.7 | 4.1 | 3.5 |
| COVID-19 and physical health | 1.7 | 1.8 | 1.5 |
| COVID-19 and discrimination | 0.8 | 1.2 | 0.3 |
| COVID-19 and family relationships | 0.7 | 0.9 | 0.5 |

Many young people took the opportunity to provide more detail about their concerns around COVID-19. The quotes below represent many of the concerns young people voiced.

**"My biggest concern in the past year has been coping with study related stress and how external events, more specifically how the coronavirus pandemic will affect my education. Additionally, I am concerned that measures taken to relieve such disturbances may backfire and cause even more damage. Students also need to be given techniques to handle stressors such as mindfulness strategies. Teenagers don't automatically know how to deal with stress. This is a skill they need to be taught. I have found education in mental wellbeing particularly lacking in my years at school. In my opinion teaching students strategies to deal with stress should be an absolute must in all schools."**

***(17, F, QLD)***

**"Mental health, especially during COVID-19. Further initiatives to reach out to people who may be affected and creating a general understanding of how such isolation and disconnection can impact people will be beneficial to the community and should be done."**

***(16, M, NSW)***

**"With the isolation due to COVID-19, I have been lonely and stressed. I think there should be more ways to connect and not feel lonely."**

***(16, F, TAS)***

**"My biggest concern in the past year has been emotional abuse and my mental health. I would see a counsellor but due to COVID-19 it's hard."**

***(19, F, NSW)***

**"Stress with school and social issues, struggling with quarantine loneliness."**

***(16, NS, VIC)***

## Have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people were asked whether they had been treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Over one quarter (27.0%) of young people reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A much higher proportion of females than males reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (31.6% compared with 19.7% respectively).

## Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were then asked to identify reasons for being treated unfairly from a list of suggested items. Table 1.8 shows that, of the 27.0% of respondents who had been treated unfairly in the past year, four in 10 (41.0%) reported the unfair treatment was due to their *gender*. Three in 10 (30.4%) indicated they were treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background*, while around one quarter (26.0%) stated they were treated unfairly due to their *mental health*.

### Gender differences

There were some notable differences in female and male responses to the question regarding the reasons for unfair treatment, as shown in Table 1.8. Of the 27.0% of young people who had been treated unfairly in the past year:

- More than double the proportion of females had been treated unfairly due to their *gender* (48.0% compared with 22.5% of males).
- A notably higher proportion of females than males reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *mental health* (27.5% compared with 19.8%) and their *age* (23.0% compared with 16.3%).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of males reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background* (35.4% compared with 28.8% of females).

Table 1.8: Reasons for being treated unfairly

| | National % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | **41.0** | **48.0** | **22.5** |
| **Race/cultural background** | **30.4** | **28.8** | **35.4** |
| **Mental health** | **26.0** | **27.5** | **19.8** |
| Age | 21.0 | 23.0 | 16.3 |
| Sexuality | 19.4 | 17.6 | 16.2 |
| Other | 14.4 | 11.6 | 19.4 |
| Religion | 13.8 | 12.7 | 16.1 |
| Financial background | 9.0 | 8.0 | 10.3 |
| Disability | 7.5 | 5.0 | 10.6 |

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

## Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Young people were asked whether they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly because of their *age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Over half (55.3%) of young people reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year. A much higher proportion of females than males reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (61.8% compared with 46.4%).

## What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

Young people who reported they had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year were asked to identify from a list of reasons why the person was being treated unfairly. Table 1.9 shows that, of the 55.3% of respondents who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 62.0% reported they witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *race/cultural background*. Almost half (49.4%) indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality*. Four in 10 (40.5%) respondents who had witnessed unfair treatment reported it was due to a person's *gender*. Almost one third (32.2%) of young people reported witnessing unfair treatment due to a person's *disability*.

### Gender differences

There were some differences in female and male responses to the question regarding the reasons they had witnessed unfair treatment take place, as shown in Table 1.9. Of the 55.3% of respondents who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year:

- Six in 10 female (64.1%) and male (59.4%) respondents had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *race/cultural background*.
- A notably higher proportion of females than males reported they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality* (54.2% compared with 39.5%) and due to a person's *gender* (43.6% compared with 33.5%).

Table 1.9: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

| | National % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Race/cultural background** | **62.0** | **64.1** | **59.4** |
| **Sexuality** | **49.4** | **54.2** | **39.5** |
| **Gender** | **40.5** | **43.6** | **33.5** |
| Disability | 32.2 | 33.4 | 29.4 |
| Mental health | 28.9 | 30.2 | 25.2 |
| Religion | 28.8 | 30.0 | 26.5 |
| Financial background | 18.7 | 18.9 | 17.5 |
| Age | 17.5 | 18.0 | 16.1 |
| Other | 5.3 | 3.9 | 7.0 |

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

## Where do young people go for help with important issues?

Respondents were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 1.7 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated they would go to the particular source for support.

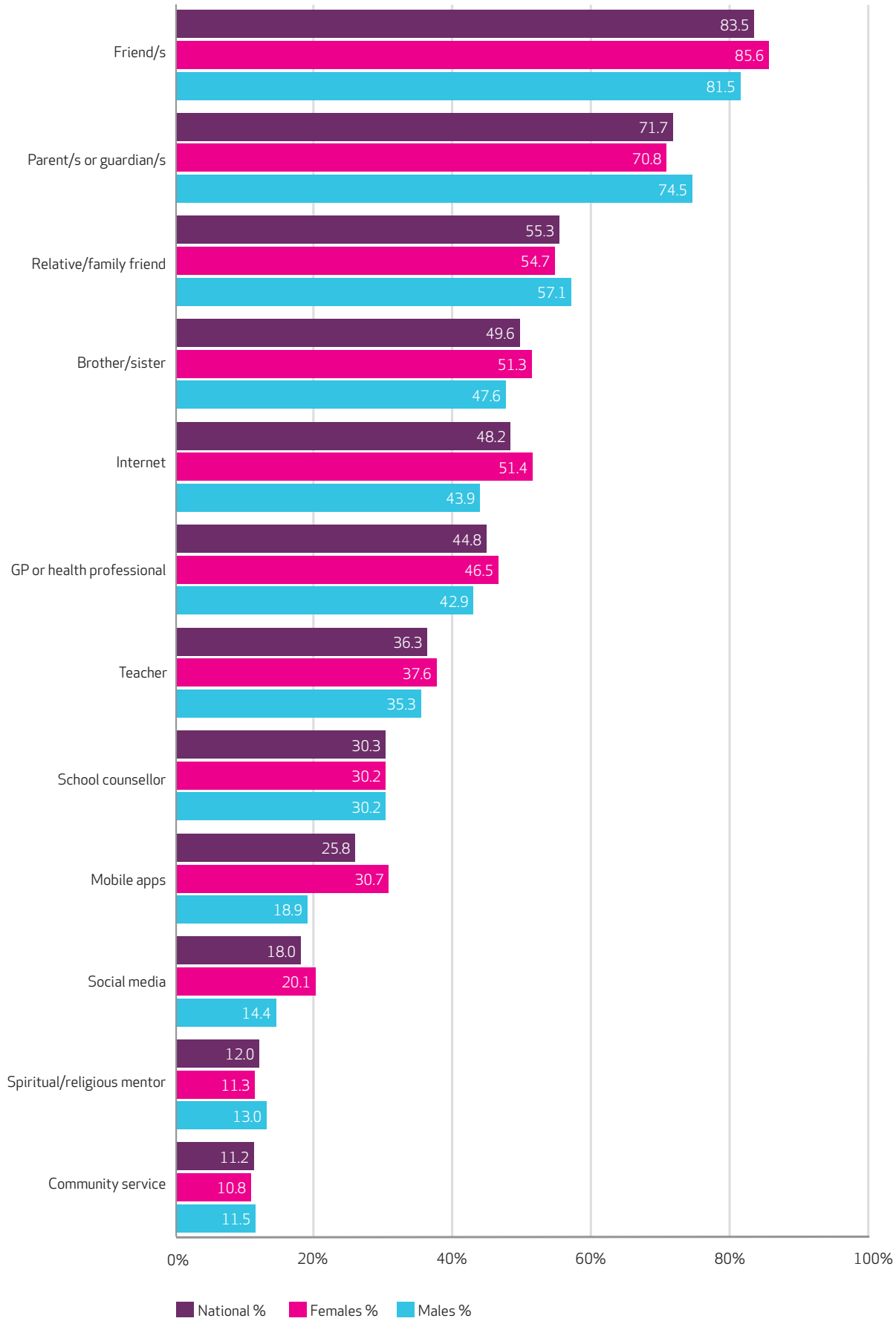
- *Friend/s* (83.5%), *parent/s or guardian/s* (71.7%) and *relative/family friend* (55.3%) were the three most frequently cited sources of help for young people.
- Around half of young people indicated they would go to their *brother/sister* (49.6%), the *internet* (48.2%) or a *GP or health professional* (44.8%) for support with important issues in their lives.
- More than one third (36.3%) of young people would turn to a *teacher* as a source of help with important issues.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 1.7, the top three sources of help for both genders were consistent with the national results.

- A slightly higher proportion of females than males indicated they would turn to their *friend/s* for help with important issues (85.6% compared with 81.5%), whereas slightly higher proportions of males than females stated they would go to their *parent/s or guardian/s* (74.5% compared with 70.8%) or to a *relative/family friend* (57.1% compared with 54.7%).
- A notably higher proportion of females than males said they would turn to *mobile apps* (30.7% compared with 18.9%) or the *internet* (51.4% compared with 43.9%) for support with important issues in their lives.

Figure 1.7: Where young people go for help with important issues




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

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

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 1.10. In 2020, the top three issues identified by young people were *equity and discrimination*, *COVID-19* and *mental health*.

- Four in 10 young people cited *equity and discrimination* (40.2%) and *COVID-19* (38.8%) as important issues in Australia today.
- Three in 10 (30.6%) young people cited *mental health* as a national issue.
- Since 2019, the proportion of those reporting *equity and discrimination* as a key national issue has increased from 24.8% to 40.2%. Conversely, concerns about *alcohol and drugs*, *mental health* and *the environment* have decreased since 2019.

### Gender differences

The most important national issues for females were *equity and discrimination*, *COVID-19* and *mental health*. For males, the top three most important issues were *COVID-19*, *equity and discrimination* and *the environment*.

- Notably higher proportions of females than males identified *equity and discrimination* (45.1% compared with 34.1%), *mental health* (35.1% compared with 25.0%) and *the environment* (33.4% compared with 25.3%) as important issues facing Australia today.
- Conversely, higher proportions of males than females regarded *COVID-19* (42.7% compared with 36.4%), *the economy and financial matters* (18.3% compared with 13.3%) and *politics* (10.1% compared with 5.4%) as key issues in Australia.

Table 1.10: Most important issues in Australia today

| | National 2020 % | Females % | Males % | National 2019 % | National 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Equity and discrimination** | **40.2** | **45.1** | **34.1** | **24.8** | **23.4** |
| **COVID-19** | **38.8** | **36.4** | **42.7** | - | - |
| **Mental health** | **30.6** | **35.1** | 25.0 | **36.2** | **43.0** |
| The environment | 29.8 | 33.4 | **25.3** | **34.2** | 9.2 |
| The economy and financial matters | 15.3 | 13.3 | 18.3 | 14.5 | 11.6 |
| Alcohol and drugs | 10.5 | 9.3 | 12.0 | 20.8 | **28.7** |
| Crime, safety and violence | 9.3 | 9.8 | 8.6 | 12.2 | 13.5 |
| Homelessness/housing | 8.3 | 9.2 | 7.2 | 7.9 | 9.2 |
| Employment | 7.5 | 6.2 | 9.6 | 7.6 | 7.9 |
| Politics | 7.5 | 5.4 | 10.1 | 10.9 | 5.3 |

Note: Items are listed in order of national frequency.

## What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities they had been involved in over the past year from the list of options shown in Table 1.11.

- The top three activities for young people were *sports (as a participant)* (70.7%), *sports (as a spectator)* (62.1%) and *arts/cultural/music activities* (43.9%).
- More than four in 10 (43.3%) respondents reported they had participated in *volunteer work* in the past year.
- More than one third (34.0%) of young people indicated they had taken part in *student leadership activities*.

### Gender differences

In line with national results, *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)* were the top two activities for both females and males. While *arts/cultural/music activities* was the third most reported activity for females, *volunteer work* was the third highest for males.

- Higher proportions of males than females reported taking part in *sports (as a spectator)* (70.0% compared with 57.0%) and *sports (as a participant)* (74.7% compared with 68.6%) in the past year.
- Conversely, higher proportions of females than males participated in *arts/cultural/music activities* (50.1% compared with 35.3%) and *student leadership activities* (37.3% compared with 30.0%) in the past year.

Table 1.11: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

| | National % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Sports (as a participant)** | **70.7** | **68.6** | **74.7** |
| **Sports (as a spectator)** | **62.1** | **57.0** | **70.0** |
| **Arts/cultural/music activities** | **43.9** | **50.1** | 35.3 |
| Volunteer work | 43.3 | 46.1 | **40.1** |
| Student leadership activities | 34.0 | 37.3 | 30.0 |
| Youth groups/activities | 25.6 | 26.6 | 24.1 |
| Religious groups/activities | 23.6 | 25.8 | 21.2 |
| Environmental groups | 14.8 | 16.4 | 12.2 |
| Political groups/organisations | 8.8 | 9.1 | 7.8 |

Note: Items are listed in order of national frequency.

## How stressed are young people?

For the first time in 2020, young people were asked to report on how much of the time they felt stressed in the past four weeks. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *all of the time* to *none of the time*. Table 1.12 shows that four in 10 (42.6%) young people felt stressed either *all of the time* or *most of the time*.

- Double the proportion of female respondents felt stressed *all of the time* or *most of the time* (53.9% compared with 26.8% of males).
- Conversely, more than double the proportion of males felt stressed *a little of the time* or *none of the time* (38.7% compared with 15.2% of females).

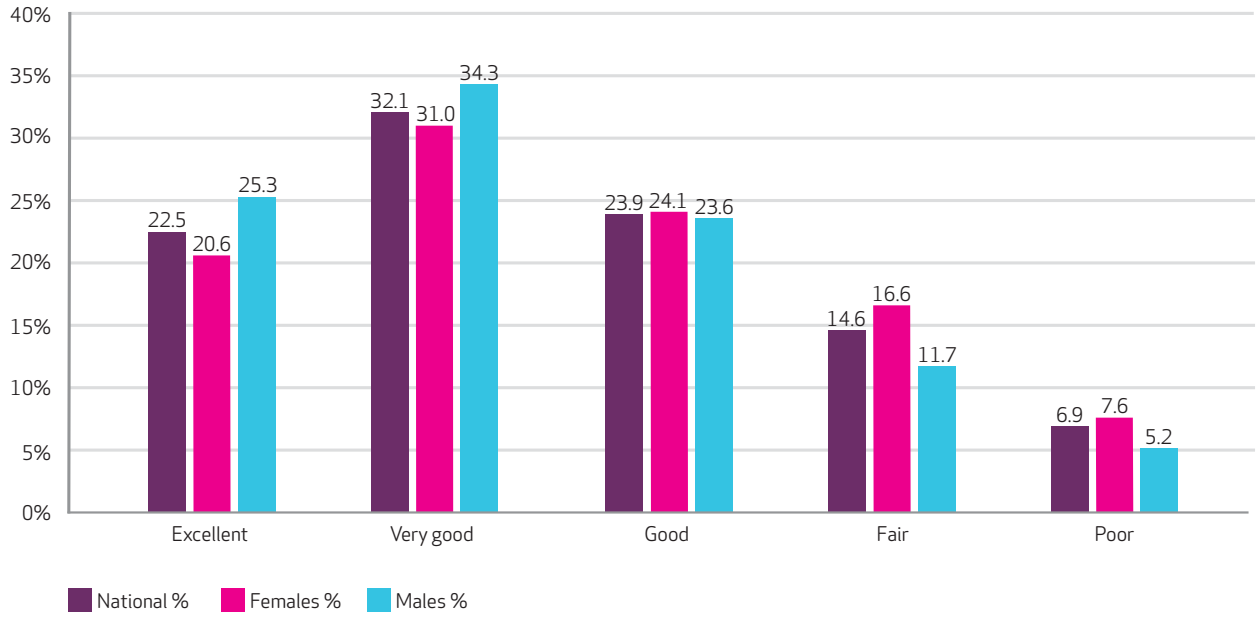
Table 1.12: How stressed are young people?

| | National % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|
| All of the time | 11.6 | 15.4 | 5.9 |
| Most of the time | 31.0 | 38.5 | 20.9 |
| Some of the time | 32.4 | 30.9 | 34.5 |
| A little of the time | 19.7 | 13.2 | 29.2 |
| None of the time | 5.3 | 2.0 | 9.5 |

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

Respondents were asked to rate their family's ability to get along with one another. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 1.8 shows that the majority of respondents rated their family's ability to get along very positively: 22.5% rated it as *excellent* and 32.1% rated it as *very good*. However, more than one in five (21.5%) young people indicated their family's ability to get along was either *fair* (14.6%) or *poor* (6.9%). A higher proportion of male respondents rated their family's ability to get along as *excellent* or *very good* (59.6% compared with 51.6% of females), while a higher proportion of females rated their family's ability to get along as *fair* or *poor* (24.2% compared with 16.9% of males).

Figure 1.8: Family's ability to get along with one another




## How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 indicates that they felt *very sad* and 10 indicates that they felt *very happy*. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100, in which 100 is the happiest. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes *happy/very happy;* 40-60 signifies *not happy or sad;* and 0-30 indicates *very sad/sad*. As Table 1.13 shows, the majority (58.6%) of young people responded in the 70-100 range, which indicates most young people felt happy overall with their lives. A notably higher proportion of males reported feeling *happy/very happy* with their lives as a whole (65.6% compared with 54.4% of females), whereas a slightly greater proportion of females indicated they felt *very sad/sad* (12.0% compared with 7.9% of males).

Table 1.13: How happy are young people?

| | National % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Happy/very happy (70-100) | 58.6 | 54.4 | 65.6 |
| Not happy or sad (40-60) | 30.7 | 33.6 | 26.5 |
| Very sad/sad (0-30) | 10.7 | 12.0 | 7.9 |

## How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked to describe their feelings when they thought about the future. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 1.14 shows that the majority of young people felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future.

- More than half (55.5%) felt either *very positive* (12.3%) or *positive* (43.2%) about the future.
- One in seven (13.9%) young people indicated they felt *negative* (10.5%) or *very negative* (3.4%) about the future.
- A higher proportion of males reported feeling *very positive* about the future (15.5% compared with 10.0% of females).

Table 1.14: Feelings about the future

| | National 2020 % | Females % | Males % | National 2019 % | National 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very positive | 12.3 | 10.0 | 15.5 | 13.3 | 15.5 |
| Positive | 43.2 | 42.6 | 45.2 | 45.0 | 46.7 |
| Neither positive nor negative | 30.5 | 32.2 | 28.1 | 29.5 | 27.9 |
| Negative | 10.5 | 11.9 | 8.4 | 8.8 | 6.8 |
| Very negative | 3.4 | 3.2 | 2.9 | 3.4 | 3.1 |

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander summary

## Profile of respondents

A total of 1,129 (4.4%) respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 949 (3.7%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 92 (0.4%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.3% identified as both).

### Gender breakdown

Nearly half (48.4%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were female, 42.5% were male, 6.5% gender diverse and 2.6% preferred not to say.

### Cultural background

A total of 104 (9.5%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents stated they were born overseas and 180 (16.2%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 30 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Indigenous languages, Chinese and Spanish.

Approximately one in five (21.7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents stated that one or both of their parents were born overseas.

### Disability

A total of 139 (12.7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents identified as living with disability. A greater proportion of males than females reported living with disability (15.1% compared with 7.0%). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning disabilities, physical disabilities, deafness or hearing impairment and mental illness or psychiatric disabilities.

## Education

As indicated in Table 2.1, 71.1% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were studying full-time, which was lower than the 83.1% of respondents studying full-time in 2019. A much lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were studying full time compared to non-Indigenous respondents (71.1% compared with 87.5%).

A slightly higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported studying full-time (73.9% compared with 71.0% of males). Whereas, similar proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and males reported they were studying part-time (13.3% and 13.2% respectively). A slightly higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported they were not studying (15.8% compared with 12.7% of females).

Table 2.1: Participation in education

| | Non-Indigenous respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Studying full-time | 87.5 | 71.1 | 73.9 | 71.0 |
| Studying part-time | 6.2 | 12.8 | 13.3 | 13.2 |
| Not studying | 6.3 | 16.1 | 12.7 | 15.8 |

Respondents who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As shown in Table 2.2, the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported they were either *very satisfied* (7.2%) or *satisfied* (50.5%) with their studies. One in 10 indicated they were *dissatisfied* (6.5%) or *very dissatisfied* (3.9%) with their studies.

- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported feeling *very satisfied* (7.9% compared with 5.9% of females), while a higher proportion of females reported feeling *satisfied* (53.1% compared with 50.4% of males).
- Similar proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and males reported feeling either *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* with their studies (8.9% and 8.6% respectively).

Table 2.2: Satisfaction with studies

| | Non-Indigenous respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 10.6 | 7.2 | 5.9 | 7.9 |
| Satisfied | 57.1 | 50.5 | 53.1 | 50.4 |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 25.2 | 31.9 | 32.1 | 33.1 |
| Dissatisfied | 5.7 | 6.5 | 6.2 | 6.2 |
| Very dissatisfied | 1.4 | 3.9 | 2.7 | 2.4 |

Of those still at school, the majority (92.1%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. Nearly double the proportion of males indicated they did not plan to complete Year 12 (9.2% compared with 5.5% of females).

Respondents who were studying at school were asked what they planned to do after leaving school. Figure 2.1 shows that close to four in 10 (37.8%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents planned to *go to university* compared with 65.4% of non-Indigenous respondents.

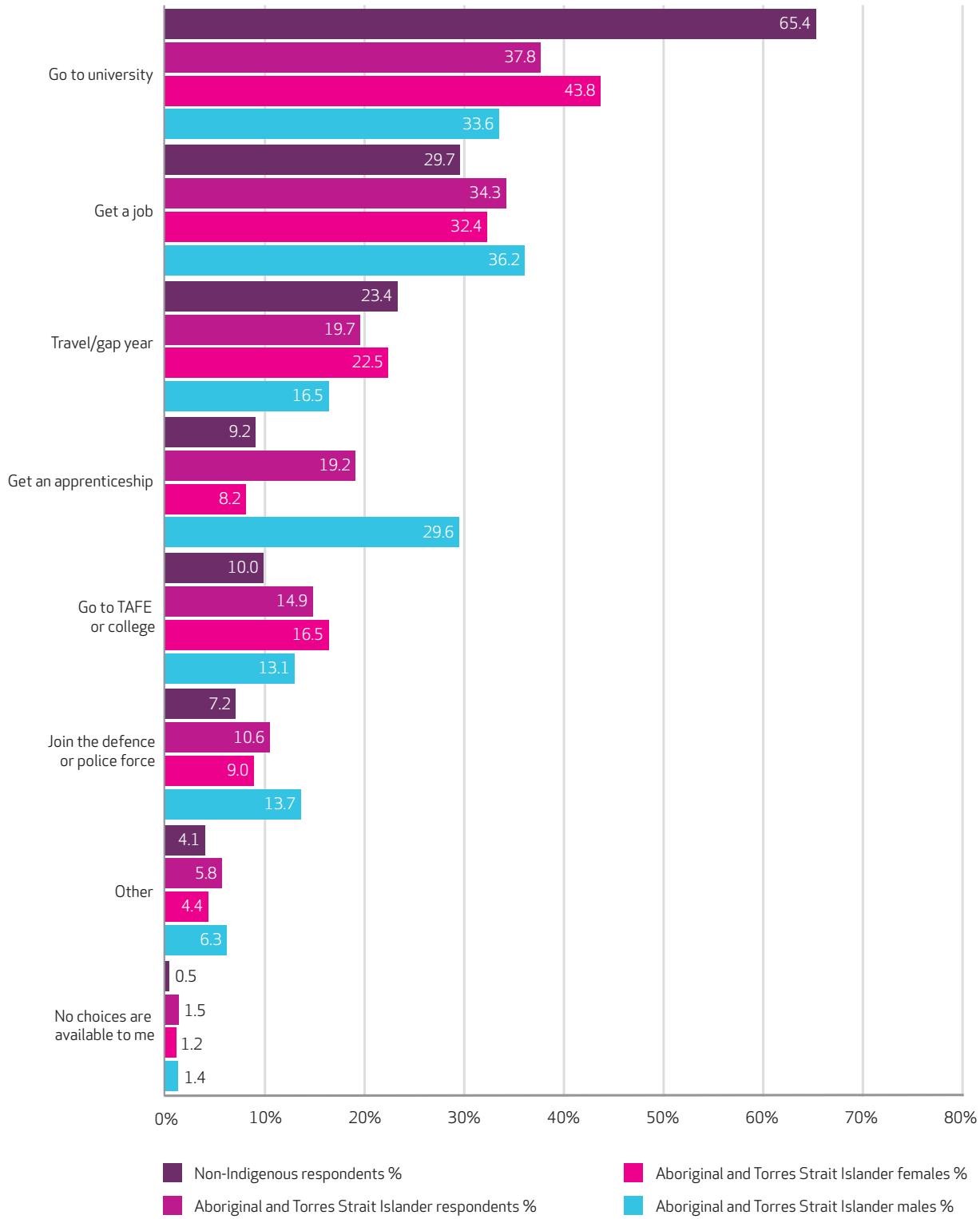
Over one third (34.3%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents planned to *get a job* after school. One in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported *travel/gap year* plans (19.7%) or plans to *get an apprenticeship* (19.2%). Overall, just over one in seven young people planned *go to TAFE or college* (14.9%), and one in 10 (10.6%) reported plans to *join the defence or police* force. A small minority (1.5%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that *no choices are available to me* after finishing school.

## Gender differences

The most frequently reported plan among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females was to *go to university* after finishing school, while for males it was to *get a job*.

A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females indicated they planned to *go to university* (43.8% compared with 33.6% of males). While a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males planned to *get a job* after leaving school (36.2% compared with 32.4% of females). Close to four times the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males indicated they were planning to *get an apprenticeship* after school (29.6% compared with 8.2% of females).

Figure 2.1: Plans after leaving school

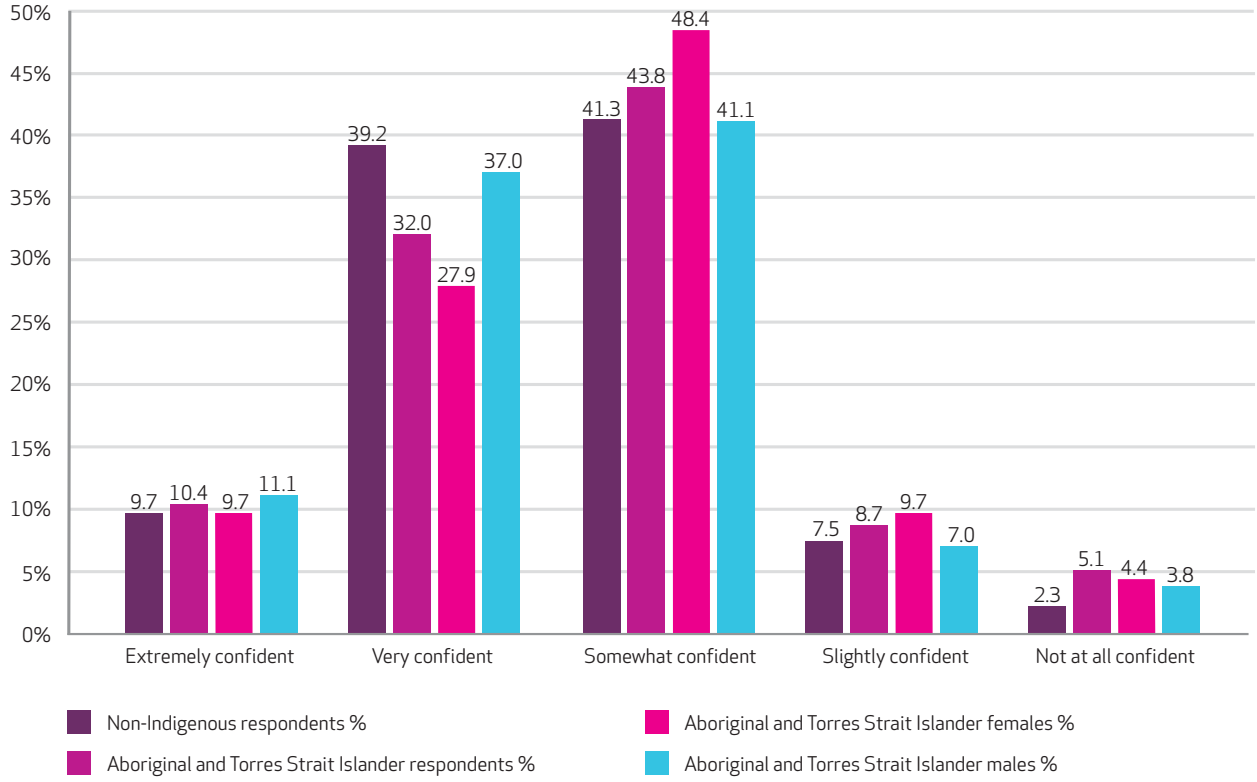



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of frequency amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

## How confident are young people in achieving their study/work goals?

Respondents were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after finishing school. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. As shown in Figure 2.2, over four in 10 (42.4%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study/work goals: 10.4% reported they were *extremely confident* and 32.0% stated they were *very confident*. However, close to one in seven (13.8%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals: 8.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they were *slightly confident*, while 5.1% were *not at all confident*. A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported they were *extremely* or *very confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school (48.1% compared with 37.6% of females).

Figure 2.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals




## Employment

Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average how many hours they worked per week. Table 2.3 shows participation in paid employment among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous respondents nationally. In line with national results, only a small minority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who reported paid employment were employed full-time (1.3% compared with 0.6% of non-Indigenous respondents). This is unsurprising given the high proportion of respondents to the *Youth Survey* who were still at school. Over one third (35.3%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported they were employed part-time. Over six in 10 (63.3%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated they were not in paid employment: 41.2% stated they were looking for work, while 22.1% were neither working nor looking for work. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who indicated they were looking for work was higher than for non-Indigenous respondents (41.2% compared with 34.4%).

### Gender differences

A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were employed part-time (38.8% compared with 32.6% of males). Conversely a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males were not employed and not looking for work (24.6% compared with 19.3% of females).

Table 2.3: Participation in paid employment

| | Non-Indigenous respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employed full-time | 0.6 | 1.3 | 1.0 | 0.9 |
| Employed part-time | 40.7 | 35.3 | 38.8 | 32.6 |
| Not in paid employment, looking for work | 34.4 | 41.2 | 41.0 | 41.8 |
| Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work | 24.3 | 22.1 | 19.3 | 24.6 |

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

## What would help young people secure a job?

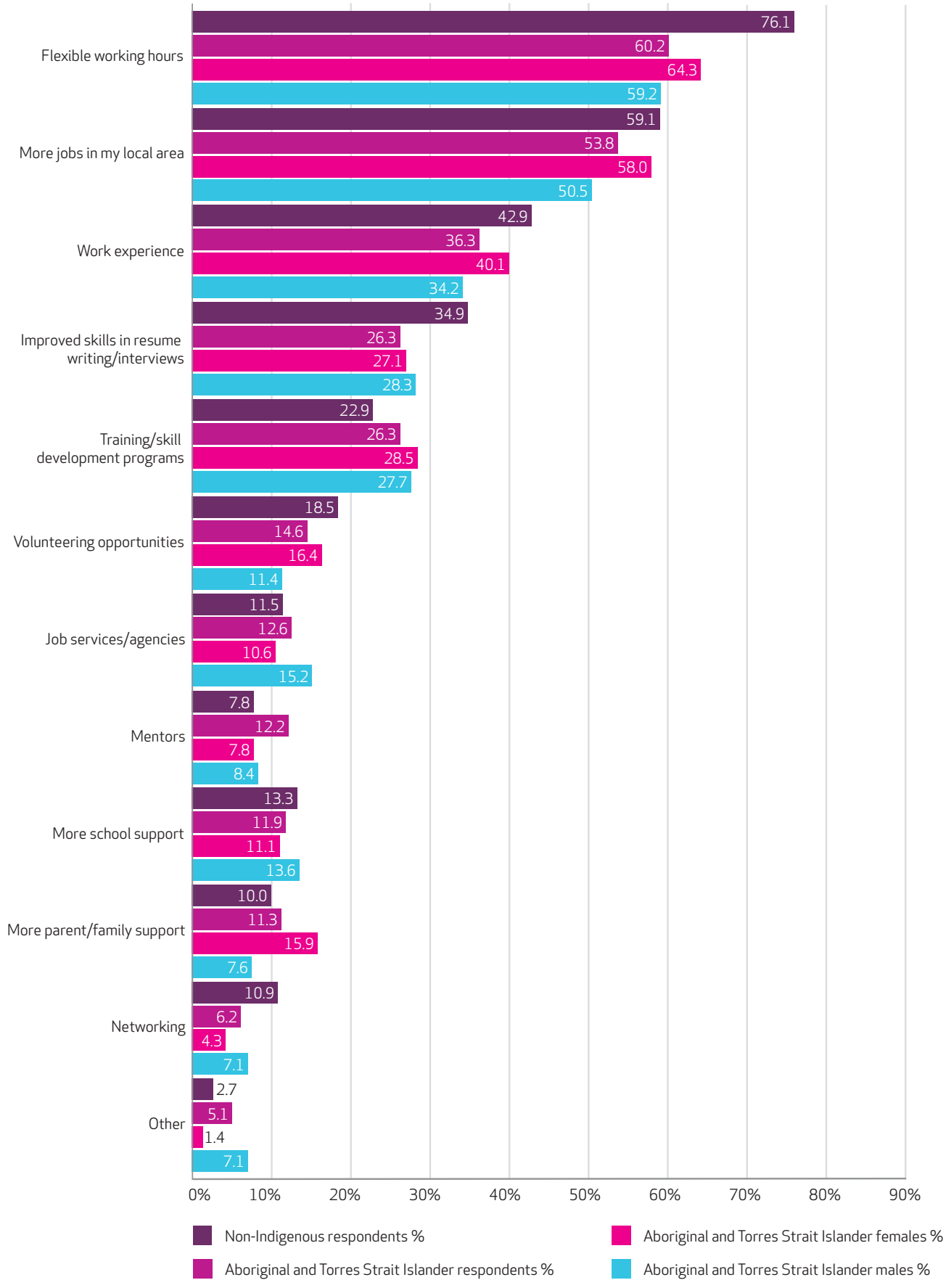
Respondents who were looking for work were asked to indicate from a number of factors, what might help them secure a job, as shown in Figure 2.3. *Flexible working hours* (60.2%), *more jobs in my local area* (53.8%) and *work experience* (36.3%) were the top three factors to helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people secure a job. The top three factors to securing a job were consistent between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents and non-Indigenous respondents.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 2.3 the top three factors to securing work for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and males were consistent with the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander results.

- A total of 15.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female respondents saw *more parent/family support* as a factor to securing a job (compared with 7.6% of males).
- Higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females than males also reported *more jobs in my local area* (58.0% compared with 50.5%) and *work experience* (40.1% compared with 34.2%) were factors to securing a job.
- Conversely, a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported *job services/agencies* as a factor to securing a job (15.2% compared with 10.6% of females).

Figure 2.3: Factors to securing a job




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

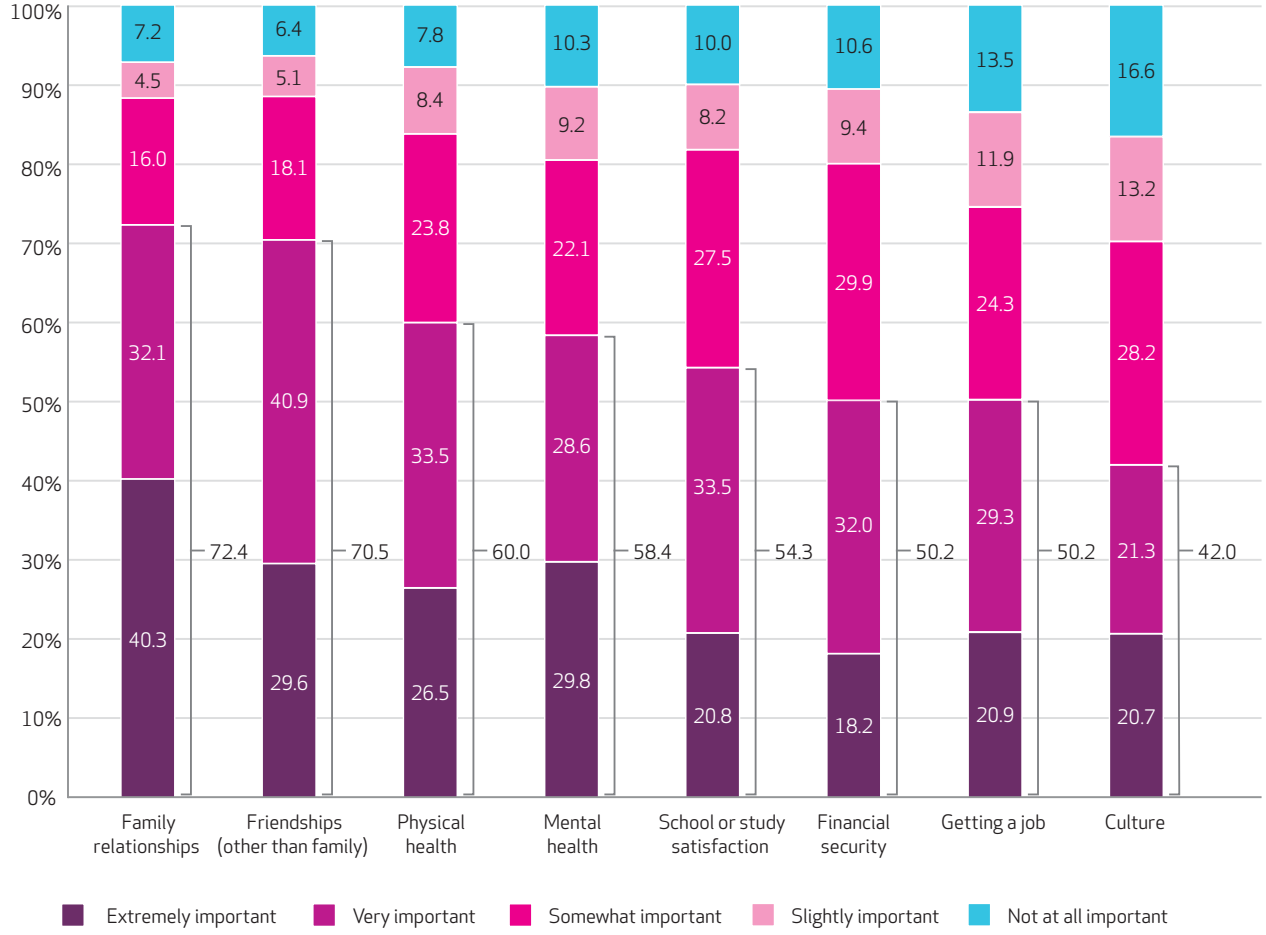
## What do young people value?

Young people were asked how important a number of items had been in their lives over the past year. Responses for these items were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely important* to *not at all important*.

As shown in Figure 2.4, the three most highly valued items reported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were *family relationships*, *friendships (other than family)* and *physical health*. The next most highly valued items were *mental health* and *school or study satisfaction*.

- More than seven in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents considered *family relationships* (72.4%) and *friendships (other than family)* (70.5%) *extremely or very important*.
- Six in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people highly valued *physical health* (60.0%) and *mental health* (58.4%).
- Over half (54.3%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents placed a high value upon *school or study satisfaction*.

Figure 2.4: What young people value




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

### Gender differences

As shown in Table 2.4 the three most valued items for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were *family relationships* (76.8%), *friendships (other than family)* (70.5%) and *mental health* (66.2%). Whereas, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males it was *friendships (other than family)* (73.9%), *family relationships* (73.7%) and *physical health* (61.8%).

- Notably higher proportions of females than males placed a high value upon *mental health* (66.2% compared with 55.5%) and *school or study satisfaction* (60.2% compared with 51.8%).

Table 2.4: What young people value by gender

| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females | Extremely important % | Very important % | Somewhat important % | Slightly important % | Not at all important % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Family relationships** | **46.4** | **30.4** | 15.0 | 4.9 | 3.4 |
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **30.4** | **40.1** | 20.6 | 5.7 | 3.2 |
| Physical health | 26.6 | 35.8 | 24.8 | 9.4 | 3.3 |
| **Mental health** | **35.0** | **31.2** | 18.8 | 9.5 | 5.5 |
| School or study satisfaction | 25.8 | 34.4 | 26.6 | 7.8 | 5.5 |
| Financial security | 17.7 | 36.6 | 29.9 | 9.8 | 5.9 |
| Getting a job | 19.3 | 31.2 | 26.7 | 12.8 | 10.0 |
| Culture | 23.0 | 21.6 | 30.6 | 14.0 | 10.7 |
| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males** | **Extremely important %** | **Very important %** | **Somewhat important %** | **Slightly important %** | **Not at all important %** |
| **Family relationships** | **36.7** | **37.0** | 17.1 | 3.8 | 5.3 |
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **27.8** | **46.1** | 16.9 | 4.7 | 4.5 |
| **Physical health** | **27.1** | **34.7** | 23.3 | 7.6 | 7.4 |
| Mental health | 25.3 | 30.2 | 25.5 | 9.3 | 9.8 |
| School or study satisfaction | 16.3 | 35.5 | 30.8 | 7.8 | 9.6 |
| Getting a job | 21.8 | 29.2 | 24.9 | 11.1 | 12.9 |
| Financial security | 17.0 | 31.8 | 30.9 | 8.5 | 11.7 |
| Culture | 18.4 | 23.5 | 27.7 | 14.0 | 16.4 |

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

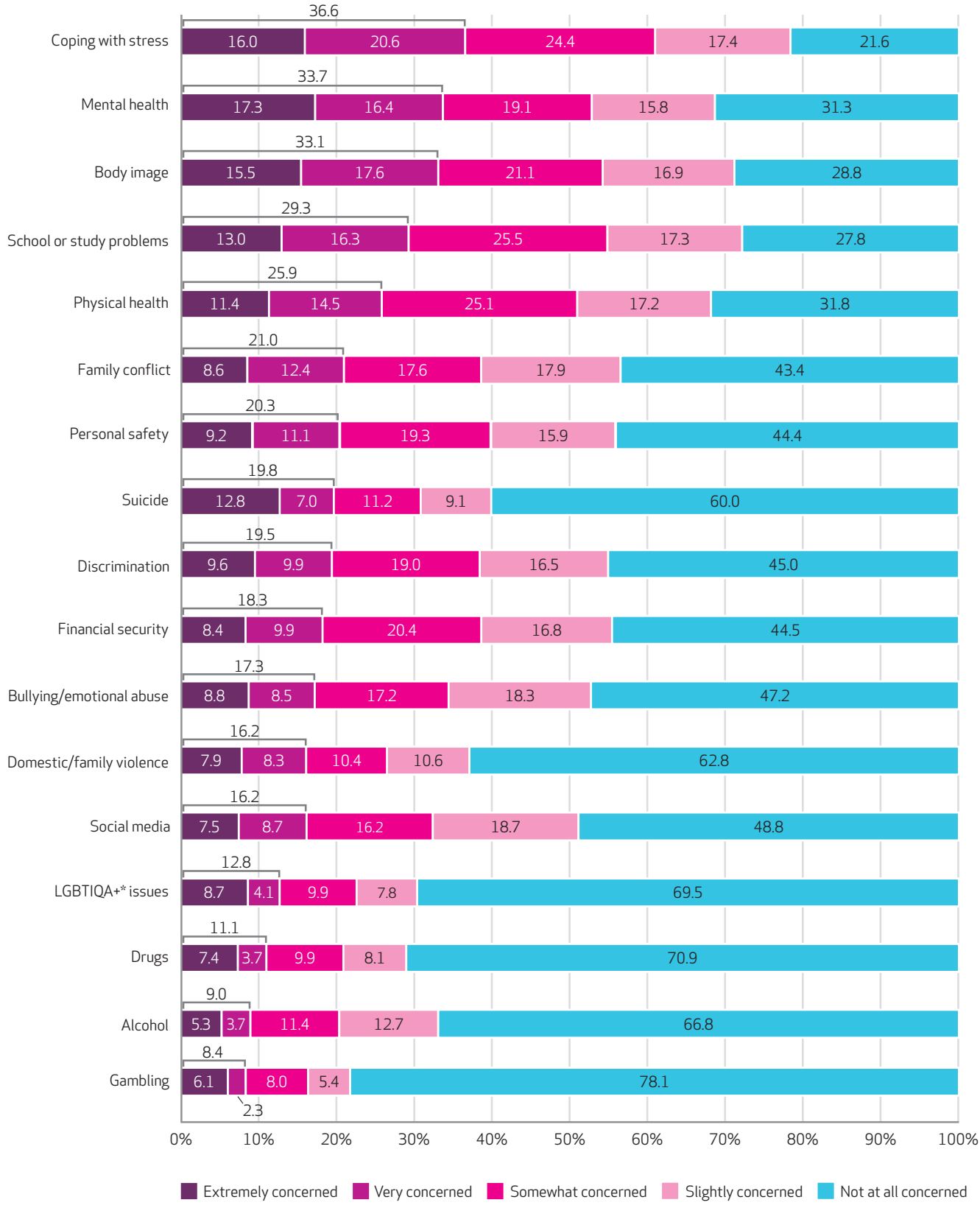
## What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Young people were asked to indicate how concerned they were about a number of issues over the past year, as shown in Figure 2.5. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*.

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

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with more than one third (36.6%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicating they were *extremely* or *very concerned* about this issue.
- One third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *mental health* (33.7%) and *body image* (33.1%).
- Three in 10 (29.3%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *school or study problems*.

Figure 2.5: Issues of personal concern to young people




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

## Gender differences

As shown in Table 2.5, *coping with stress*, *body image* and *mental health* were the top issues of person concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males, the top three issues were *coping with stress, mental health* and *physical health.* The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female respondents who were concerned about these issues (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- Three times the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *body image* (47.2% compared with 15.7% of males).
- *Coping with stress* was a major issue of concern for nearly half (47.3%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females, compared with around one quarter (24.6%) of males.
- Notably higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *mental health* (42.6% compared with 22.7% of males), *school or study problems* (36.3% compared with 21.2% of males) and *bullying/emotional abuse* (21.4% compared with and 8.7% of males).

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

| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **20.0** | **27.3** | 27.7 | 16.2 | 8.9 |
| **Mental health** | **21.7** | **20.9** | 21.1 | 15.6 | 20.7 |
| **Body image** | **21.7** | **25.5** | 24.3 | 13.2 | 15.2 |
| School or study problems | 14.3 | 22.0 | 25.5 | 20.6 | 17.6 |
| Physical health | 10.1 | 17.0 | 33.1 | 16.2 | 23.6 |
| Family conflict | 8.7 | 15.1 | 22.1 | 21.1 | 33.0 |
| Personal safety | 7.8 | 13.7 | 22.1 | 18.3 | 38.2 |
| Suicide | 12.8 | 8.1 | 13.8 | 10.8 | 54.4 |
| Discrimination | 8.0 | 12.7 | 22.1 | 20.9 | 36.4 |
| Financial security | 6.9 | 12.2 | 21.5 | 19.9 | 39.4 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 9.6 | 11.8 | 20.7 | 20.7 | 37.2 |
| Domestic/family violence | 6.3 | 10.1 | 11.2 | 12.0 | 60.4 |
| Social media | 6.5 | 12.2 | 19.2 | 21.0 | 41.2 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 5.5 | 6.1 | 11.5 | 9.9 | 66.9 |
| Drugs | 5.3 | 3.1 | 11.8 | 8.3 | 71.5 |
| Alcohol | 2.7 | 3.7 | 12.9 | 15.9 | 64.8 |
| Gambling | 2.0 | 1.6 | 8.1 | 5.1 | 83.2 |

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

| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **9.4** | **15.2** | 23.0 | 19.9 | 32.6 |
| **Mental health** | **10.0** | **12.7** | 18.0 | 16.2 | 43.1 |
| Body image | 5.3 | 10.4 | 19.9 | 22.3 | 42.0 |
| School or study problems | 9.4 | 11.8 | 26.8 | 15.6 | 36.4 |
| **Physical health** | **9.1** | **12.2** | 19.6 | 18.3 | 40.8 |
| Family conflict | 5.3 | 8.7 | 15.1 | 17.4 | 53.5 |
| Personal safety | 7.4 | 8.7 | 18.2 | 13.7 | 52.0 |
| Suicide | 7.9 | 5.9 | 7.9 | 7.5 | 70.8 |
| Discrimination | 7.4 | 7.8 | 16.8 | 13.9 | 54.0 |
| Financial security | 6.1 | 7.4 | 20.4 | 15.0 | 51.1 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 4.7 | 4.0 | 14.5 | 17.1 | 59.7 |
| Domestic/family violence | 5.8 | 5.8 | 9.7 | 10.1 | 68.5 |
| Social media | 5.4 | 4.5 | 13.6 | 18.1 | 58.5 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 5.2 | 1.1 | 7.4 | 6.1 | 80.2 |
| Drugs | 5.6 | 4.0 | 8.0 | 7.8 | 74.7 |
| Alcohol | 3.8 | 4.0 | 10.2 | 10.4 | 71.7 |
| Gambling | 5.4 | 3.4 | 7.4 | 5.6 | 78.3 |

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

## Have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people were asked whether they had been treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Almost four in 10 (39.0%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (compared with 26.5% of non-Indigenous respondents). A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females than males reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (40.7% compared with 31.5%).

## Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify reasons for being treated unfairly from a list of suggested items. Table 2.6 shows that, of the 39.0% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who had been treated unfairly in the past year, half (50.3%) reported the unfair treatment was due to their *race/cultural background* compared with three in 10 (29.1%) non-Indigenous respondents. Just over one third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they were treated unfairly due to their *mental health* (35.9%) and their *gender* (34.8%).

### Gender differences

As shown in Table 2.6, of the 50.3% of young people who had been treated unfairly in the past year:

- Over half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female (51.2%) and male (54.2%) respondents had been treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background*.
- A notably higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males than females reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *disability* (26.8% compared with 5.8%).

- Conversely, a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *gender* (35.3% compared with 23.2% of males).

Table 2.6: Reasons for being treated unfairly

| | Non-Indigenous respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race/cultural background** | **29.1** | **50.3** | **51.2** | **54.2** |
| **Mental health** | **25.5** | **35.9** | **37.7** | **31.7** |
| **Gender** | **41.5** | **34.8** | **35.3** | 23.2 |
| Age | 20.5 | 27.2 | 24.6 | 24.6 |
| Sexuality | 19.0 | 26.5 | 19.8 | 21.1 |
| Financial background | 8.2 | 21.1 | 19.3 | 18.3 |
| Disability | 6.6 | 19.7 | 5.8 | **26.8** |
| Other | 14.2 | 18.3 | 13.0 | 19.7 |
| Religion | 13.7 | 14.4 | 6.8 | 16.9 |

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

## Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Young people were asked whether they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Almost six in 10 (58.4%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year. A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females than males reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (64.5% compared with 50.0%).

## What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

Young people who reported they had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year were asked to identify from a list of reasons why the person was being treated unfairly. Table 2.7 shows that, of the 58.4% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 60.2% reported they witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *race/cultural background*. Nearly half (48.1%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality*. Close to four in 10 (39.0%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who had witnessed unfair treatment reported it was due to a person's *gender*.

### Gender differences

There were some differences in female and male responses to the question regarding the reasons they had witnessed unfair treatment take place, as shown in Table 2.7. The two most frequently witnessed reasons for unfair treatment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and males were consistent with the national results, while the third most commonly reported reason for unfair treatment differed: for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females it was due to a person's *gender* (41.3%), whereas for males it was due to a person's *disability* (31.8%).

- More than six in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female (62.4%) and male (60.1%) respondents had witnessed unfair treatment due to *race/cultural background* in the past year.
- A notably higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females than males reported they witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality* (54.7% compared with 35.9%) and *gender* (41.3% compared with 30.9%).

Table 2.7: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

| | Non-Indigenous respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race/cultural background** | **62.1** | **60.2** | **62.4** | **60.1** |
| **Sexuality** | **49.5** | **48.1** | **54.7** | **35.9** |
| **Gender** | **40.6** | **39.0** | **41.3** | 30.9 |
| Disability | 32.0 | 35.7 | 36.7 | **31.8** |
| Mental health | 28.6 | 33.7 | 34.3 | 30.5 |
| Religion | 29.0 | 25.7 | 26.3 | 22.0 |
| Financial background | 18.4 | 23.6 | 24.2 | 17.5 |
| Age | 17.3 | 22.5 | 21.1 | 17.9 |
| Other | 5.1 | 9.9 | 6.1 | 8.5 |

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

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

Respondents were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 2.6 shows the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who indicated they would go to a particular source for support.

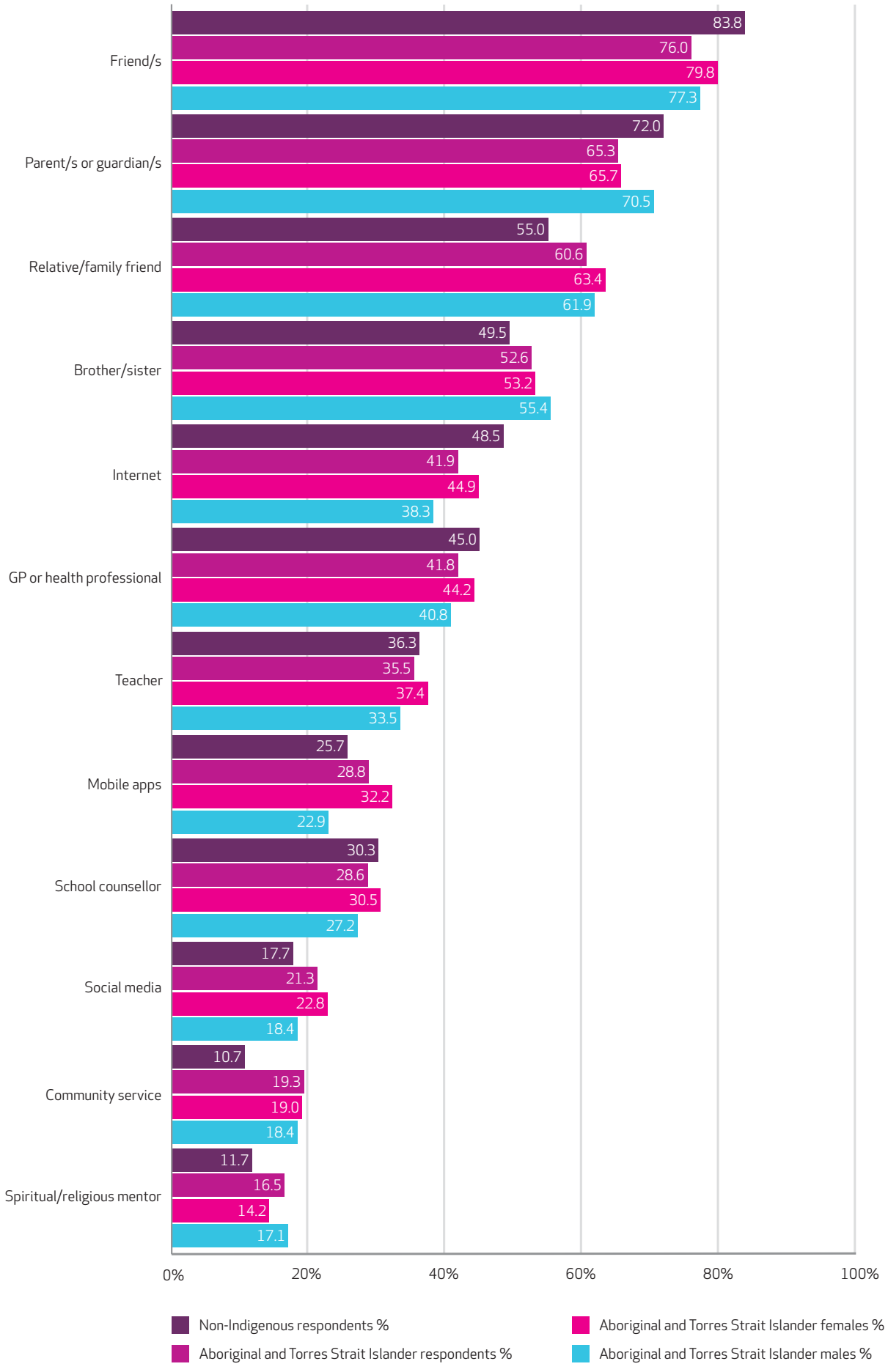
- *Friend/s* (76.0%), *parent/s or guardian/s* (65.3%) and *relative/family friend* (60.6%) were the three most frequently cited sources of help for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. These results were consistent with the top three sources of support for non-Indigenous young people.
- More than half (52.6%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they would go to their *brother/sister* for support with important issues in their lives.
- Four in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents would turn to the *internet* (41.9%) or a *GP or health professional* (41.8%) as a source of help with important issues.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 2.6, the top three sources of help for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and males were consistent with the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander results.

- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females than males indicated they would turn to *mobile apps* (32.2% compared with 22.9%), the *internet* (44.9% compared with 38.3%) and *social media* (22.8% compared with 18.4%) for help with important issues.
- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males than females would turn to their *parent/s or guardian/s* (70.5% compared with 65.7%), *spiritual/religious mentor* (17.1% compared with 14.2%) or their *brother/sister* (55.4% compared with 53.2%) for support with important issues in their lives.

Figure 2.6: Where young people go for help with important issues




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

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

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 2.8. In 2020, the top three issues identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were *equity and discrimination*, *COVID-19* and *mental health*. These issues were consistent with the top three issues identified by non-Indigenous young people.

- Close to four in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people cited *equity and discrimination* (37.9%) and *COVID-19* (37.6%) as important issues in Australia today.
- Close to one quarter (23.6%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait respondents regarded *mental health* as an important national issue.
- Since 2019, the proportion of those reporting *equity and discrimination* as a key national issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people has increased from 24.3% to 37.9%. Conversely, concerns about *alcohol and drugs* have decreased since 2019.

### Gender differences

In line with the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander results, *equity and discrimination, COVID-19* and *mental health* were the top three most important issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males, the most important issues were *COVID-19*, *equity and discrimination* and *mental health*.

- Notably higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female than male respondents identified *equity and discrimination* (45.9% compared with 31.0%) and *mental health* (30.4% compared with 19.1%) as important issues facing Australia today.
- Conversely, higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males than females regarded *alcohol and drugs* (17.0% compared with 10.4%) and *COVID-19* (41.8% compared with 36.9%) as key issues in Australia.

Table 2.8: Most important issues in Australia today

| | Non-Indigenous respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2020 % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2019 % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Equity and discrimination** | **40.4** | **37.9** | **45.9** | **31.0** | **24.3** | **20.6** |
| **COVID-19** | **38.8** | **37.6** | **36.9** | **41.8** | - | - |
| **Mental health** | **31.0** | **23.6** | **30.4** | **19.1** | **28.9** | **35.5** |
| The environment | 30.3 | 18.5 | 20.0 | 17.0 | **23.7** | 6.8 |
| Alcohol and drugs | 10.4 | 12.9 | 10.4 | 17.0 | 28.1 | **32.3** |
| The economy and financial matters | 15.4 | 12.3 | 13.2 | 11.6 | 10.5 | 11.4 |
| Crime, safety and violence | 9.2 | 11.1 | 12.1 | 10.0 | 14.4 | 14.6 |
| Politics | 7.4 | 7.9 | 6.0 | 9.7 | 10.1 | 4.9 |
| Bullying | 6.4 | 7.6 | 9.3 | 5.7 | 13.4 | 18.0 |
| Employment | 7.5 | 6.8 | 7.0 | 7.3 | 7.9 | 9.1 |

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

## What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities they had been involved in over the past year from the list of options shown in Table 2.9.

- The top three activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were *sports (as a participant)* (66.3%), *sports (as a spectator)* (60.8%) and *arts/cultural/music activities* (49.5%).
- Close to four in 10 (37.3%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported they had participated in *volunteer work* in the past year.
- One third (33.1%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they had taken part in *youth groups/activities*.

### Gender differences

In line with the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander results, *sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *arts/cultural/music activities* were the top three activities for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and males.

- Higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males than females reported taking part in *sports (as a spectator)* (70.3% compared with 56.3%) and *sports (as a participant)* (72.6% compared with 65.6%) in the past year.
- Conversely, higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females than males participated in *arts/cultural/music activities* (55.8% compared with 44.2%) and *volunteer work* (42.8% compared with 34.4%) in the past year.

Table 2.9: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

| | Non-Indigenous respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sports (as a participant)** | **70.9** | **66.3** | **65.6** | **72.6** |
| **Sports (as a spectator)** | **62.2** | **60.8** | **56.3** | **70.3** |
| **Arts/cultural/music activities** | **43.7** | **49.5** | **55.8** | **44.2** |
| Volunteer work | **43.7** | 37.3 | 42.8 | 34.4 |
| Youth groups/activities | 25.3 | 33.1 | 35.1 | 31.2 |
| Student leadership activities | 34.2 | 32.0 | 34.3 | 30.8 |
| Religious groups/activities | 23.7 | 22.7 | 21.9 | 22.8 |
| Environmental groups | 14.7 | 17.6 | 16.2 | 16.4 |
| Political groups/organisations | 8.6 | 13.8 | 12.7 | 12.5 |

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

## How stressed are young people?

For the first time in 2020, young people were asked to report on how much of the time they felt stressed in the past four weeks. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *all of the time* to *none of the time*. Table 2.10 shows that more than four in 10 (43.7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt stressed either *all of the time* or *most of the time*.

- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females than males felt stressed *all of the time* or *most of the time* (52.2% compared with 30.4%).
- Conversely, more than double the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males than females felt stressed *a little of the time* or *none of the time* (38.2% compared with 19.5%).

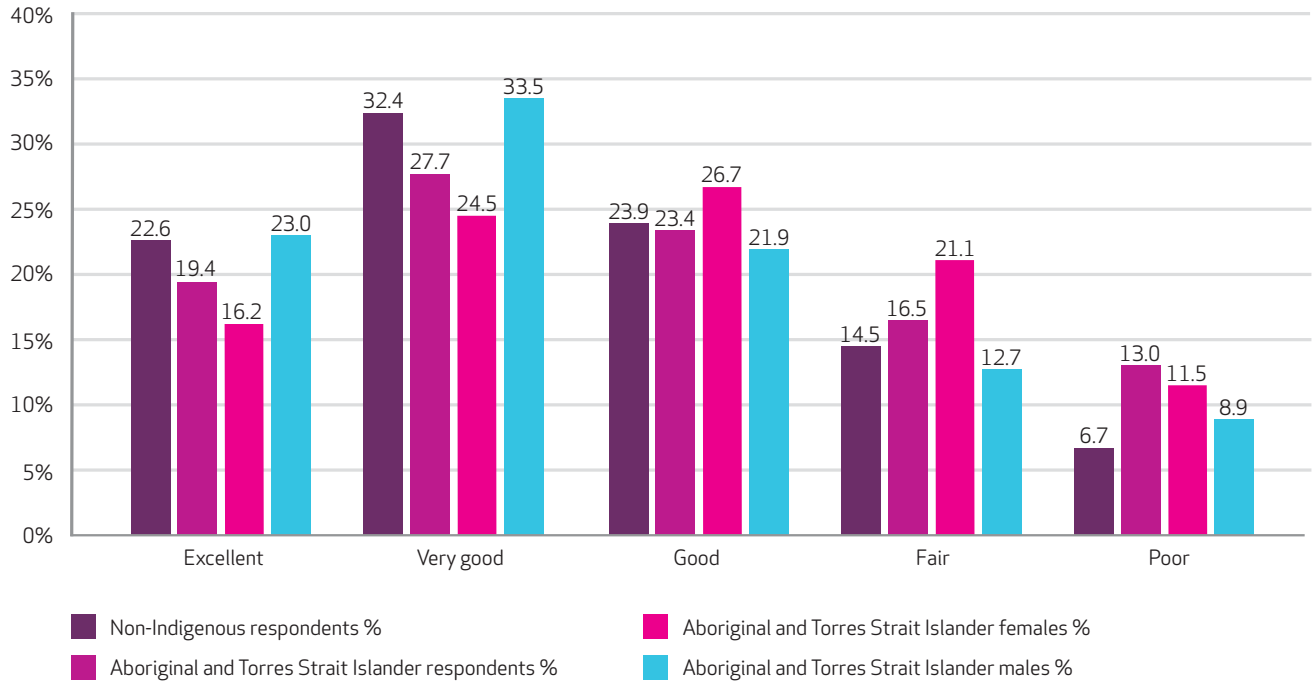
Table 2.10: How stressed are young people?

| | Non-Indigenous respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| All of the time | 11.3 | 17.4 | 17.6 | 11.4 |
| Most of the time | 31.3 | 26.3 | 34.6 | 19.0 |
| Some of the time | 32.5 | 29.2 | 28.3 | 31.3 |
| A little of the time | 19.7 | 17.9 | 14.6 | 25.7 |
| None of the time | 5.1 | 9.1 | 4.9 | 12.5 |

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

Respondents were asked to rate their family's ability to get along with one another. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 2.7 shows that almost half (47.1%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents rated their family's ability to get along very positively: 19.4% rated it as *excellent* and 27.7% rated it as *very good*. However, three in 10 (29.5%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated their family's ability to get along was either *fair* (16.5%) or *poor* (13.0%). A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male respondents rated their family's ability to get along as *excellent* or *very good* (56.5% compared with 40.7% of females), while a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females rated their family's ability to get along as *fair* or *poor* (32.6% compared with 21.6% of males).

Figure 2.7: Family's ability to get along with one another



## How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 indicates that they felt *very sad* and 10 indicates that they felt *very happy*. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100, in which 100 is the happiest. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes *happy/very happy*; 40-60 signifies *not happy or sad*; and 0-30 indicates *very sad/sad*. As Table 2.11 shows, close to half (45.4%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people responded in the 70-100 range, which indicated that half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt happy overall with their lives. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who indicated they were *happy/very happy* was much lower than for non-Indigenous respondents (45.4% compared with 59.3%).

A notably higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported feeling *happy/very happy* with their lives as a whole (51.8% compared with 43.8% of females), whereas a slightly greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females indicated they felt *very sad/sad* (17.2% compared with 14.4% of males).

Table 2.11: How happy are young people?

| | Non-Indigenous respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Happy/very happy (70-100) | 59.3 | 45.4 | 43.8 | 51.8 |
| Not happy or sad (40-60) | 30.4 | 36.1 | 38.9 | 33.8 |
| Very sad/sad (0-30) | 10.3 | 18.6 | 17.2 | 14.4 |

## How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked to describe their feelings when they thought about the future. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 2.12 shows that nearly half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future.

- Nearly half (48.8%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents felt either *very positive* (13.5%) or *positive* (35.3%) about the future.
- One in five (19.8%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they felt *negative* (11.7%) or *very negative* (8.1%) about the future.
- A higher proportion of males reported feeling *very positive* about the future (15.4% compared with 10.2% of females).

Table 2.12: Feelings about the future

| | Non-Indigenous respondents % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2020 % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2019 % | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very positive | 12.2 | 13.5 | 10.2 | 15.4 | 13.1 | 18.1 |
| Positive | 43.6 | 35.3 | 38.5 | 36.9 | 39.0 | 38.2 |
| Neither positive nor negative | 30.5 | 31.3 | 33.2 | 31.1 | 31.6 | 29.0 |
| Negative | 10.5 | 11.7 | 14.3 | 8.7 | 8.5 | 7.0 |
| Very negative | 3.2 | 8.1 | 3.9 | 7.8 | 7.8 | 7.8 |

# Australian Capital Territory



## Profile of respondents

A total of 1,230 young people from the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2020*.

### Gender breakdown

Over six in 10 (61.1%) respondents from the ACT were male, 35.0% were female, 1.7% gender diverse and 2.1% preferred not to say.

### Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 48 (4.0%) respondents from the ACT identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. A slightly higher proportion of female respondents from the ACT identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (3.5% compared with 2.9% of males).

### Cultural background

A total of 110 (9.1%) respondents from the ACT stated they were born overseas and 181 (14.9%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 40 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Italian, Filipino/Tagalog, German and Vietnamese.

Almost one third (32.5%) of respondents from the ACT stated that one or both of their parents were born overseas.

### Disability

A total of 81 (6.7%) respondents from the ACT identified as living with disability. A greater proportion of males than females reported living with disability (6.7% compared with 5.3%). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning disabilities, autism, anxiety disorder and physical disabilities.

## Education

As indicated in Table 3.1, 88.8% of respondents from the ACT were studying full-time, which is lower than the 94.4% of respondents studying full-time in 2019. A higher proportion of females than males from the ACT reported studying full-time (94.5% compared with 86.7%). Conversely, a higher proportion of males than females from the ACT reported they were studying part-time (8.6% compared with 3.3%) or not studying (4.7% compared with 2.3%).

Table 3.1: Participation in education

| | National % | ACT % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Studying full-time | 86.6 | 88.8 | 94.5 | 86.7 |
| Studying part-time | 6.5 | 6.5 | 3.3 | 8.6 |
| Not studying | 6.8 | 4.7 | 2.3 | 4.7 |

Respondents from the ACT who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in previous years, the majority of respondents from the ACT reported they were either *very satisfied* (9.0%) or *satisfied* (61.1%) with their studies. A small proportion indicated they were *dissatisfied* (4.0%) or *very dissatisfied* (1.3%). As shown in Table 3.2, a higher proportion of females from the ACT reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* (74.1% compared with 68.7% of males), while a slightly higher proportion of males indicated they felt *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* (5.0% compared with 4.3% females).

Table 3.2: Satisfaction with studies

| | National % | ACT % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 10.4 | 9.0 | 6.7 | 10.0 |
| Satisfied | 56.7 | 61.1 | 67.4 | 58.7 |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 25.6 | 24.7 | 21.5 | 26.4 |
| Dissatisfied | 5.7 | 4.0 | 3.8 | 3.9 |
| Very dissatisfied | 1.5 | 1.3 | 0.5 | 1.1 |

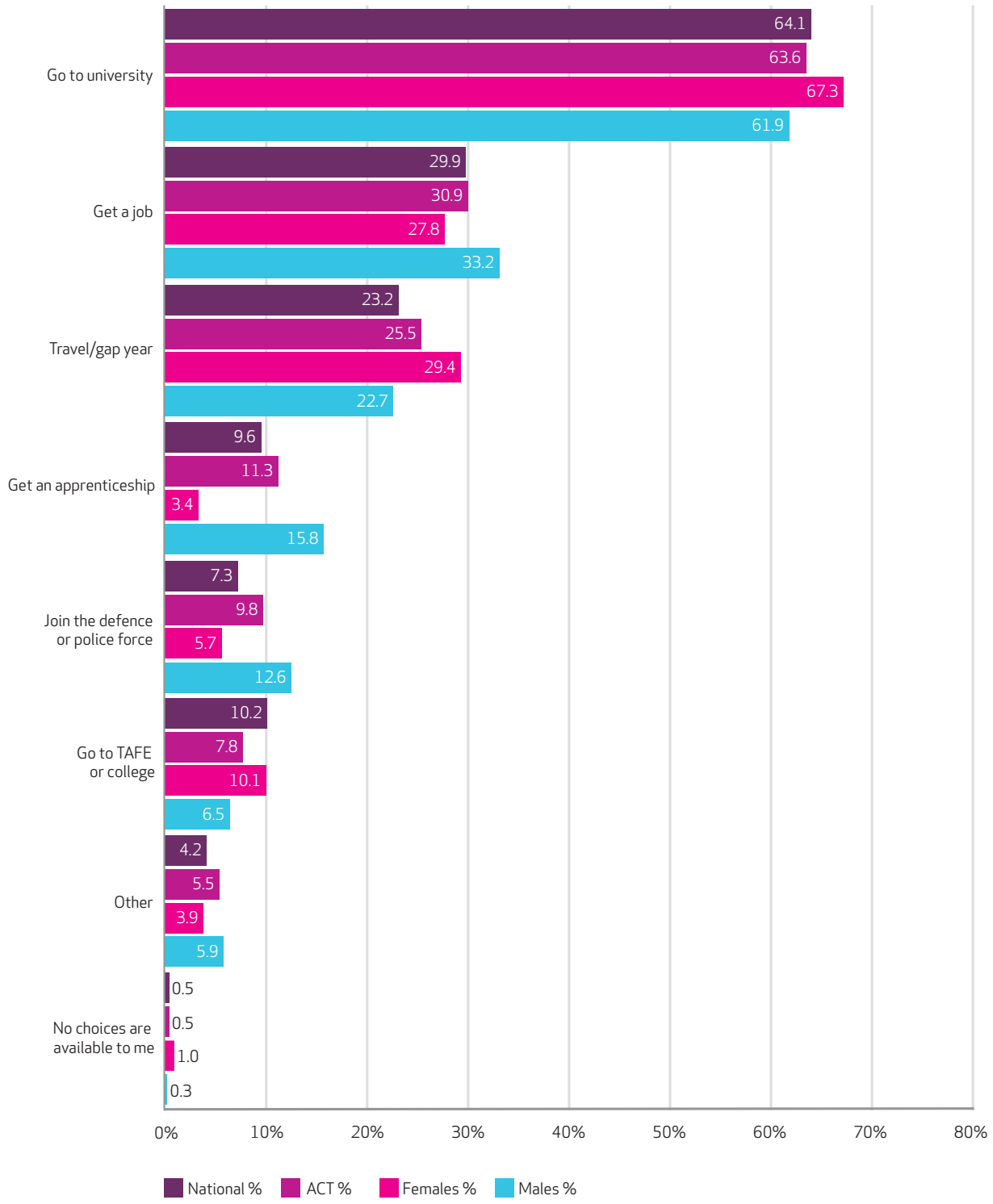
Of those still at school, the majority (99.0%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. A slightly higher proportion of males indicated they did not plan to complete Year 12 (1.5% compared with 0.3% of females).

Respondents from the ACT who were studying at school were asked what they planned to do after leaving school. Figure 3.1 shows that nearly two thirds (63.6%) of respondents from the ACT planned to *go to university* after school. Three in 10 (30.9%) respondents from the ACT reported plans to *get a job* after school and one quarter (25.5%) indicated *travel/gap year* plans. Overall, around one in 10 young people planned to *get an apprenticeship* (11.3%) or *join the defence or police force* (9.8%), while 7.8% had plans to *go to TAFE or college*. A small minority (0.5%) of respondents indicated that *no choices are available to me* after finishing school.

## Gender differences

While the most frequently reported plan among both female and male respondents from the ACT was to *go to university* after finishing school, a higher proportion of females indicated they planned to do so (67.3% compared with 61.9% of males). A greater proportion of females from the ACT also reported *travel/gap year* plans after leaving school (29.4% compared with 22.7% of males). Conversely, more than four times the proportion of males from the ACT indicated they were planning to *get an apprenticeship* after school (15.8% compared with 3.4% of females).

Figure 3.1: Plans after leaving school

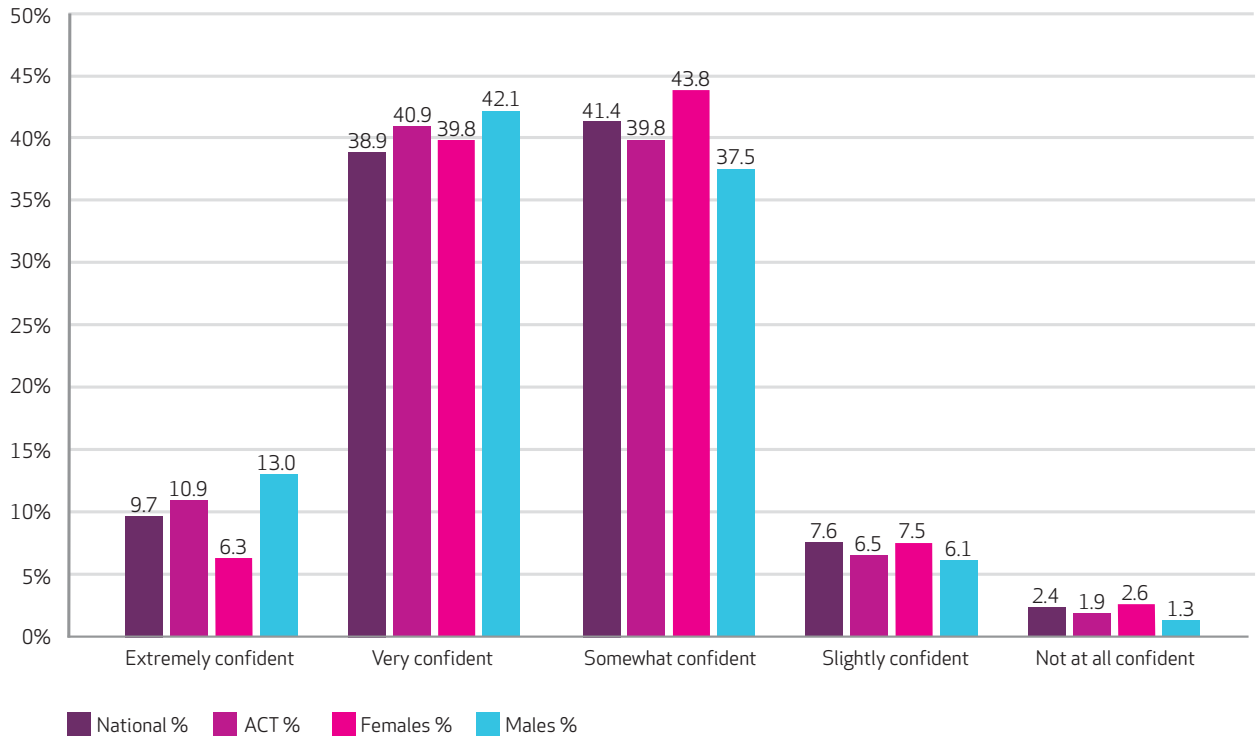



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of ACT frequency.

## How confident are young people in achieving their study/work goals?

Respondents from the ACT were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after finishing school. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. As shown in Figure 3.2, over half (51.8%) of ACT respondents indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study/work goals: 10.9% reported they were *extremely confident* and 40.9% stated they were *very confident*. However, fewer than one in 10 (8.4%) young people from the ACT were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals: 6.5% of young people indicated they were *slightly confident*, while 1.9% were *not at all confident*. A notably higher proportion of male respondents reported they were *extremely* or *very confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school (55.1% compared with 46.1% females).

Figure 3.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals




## Employment

Respondents from the ACT were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average how many hours they worked. Table 3.3 shows participation in paid employment among respondents from the ACT. A very small proportion of young people from the ACT who reported paid employment were employed full-time (0.7%). This is unsurprising given the high proportion of respondents to the *Youth Survey* who were still at school. Over half (53.2%) of respondents from the ACT reported they were employed part-time. While nearly half (46.1%) of respondents indicated they were not in paid employment: 30.0% stated they were looking for work, while 16.1% were neither working nor looking for work. The proportion of respondents from the ACT in part-time employment in 2020 is slightly lower than in 2019 (53.2% compared with 55.8%).

### Gender differences

Similar proportions of male and female respondents from the ACT reported full-time employment (0.6% and 0.5% respectively). A higher proportion of female respondents were employed part-time (57.7% compared with 51.1% of males). Whereas, a greater proportion of male respondents indicated they were looking for work (31.3% compared with 27.9% of females).

Table 3.3: Participation in paid employment

| | National % | ACT % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employed full-time | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.5 | 0.6 |
| Employed part-time | 40.5 | 53.2 | 57.7 | 51.1 |
| Not in paid employment, looking for work | 34.7 | 30.0 | 27.9 | 31.3 |
| Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work | 24.2 | 16.1 | 13.8 | 17.0 |

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

## What would help young people secure a job?

Respondents from the ACT who were looking for work were asked to indicate from a number of factors, what might help them secure a job, as shown in Figure 3.3.

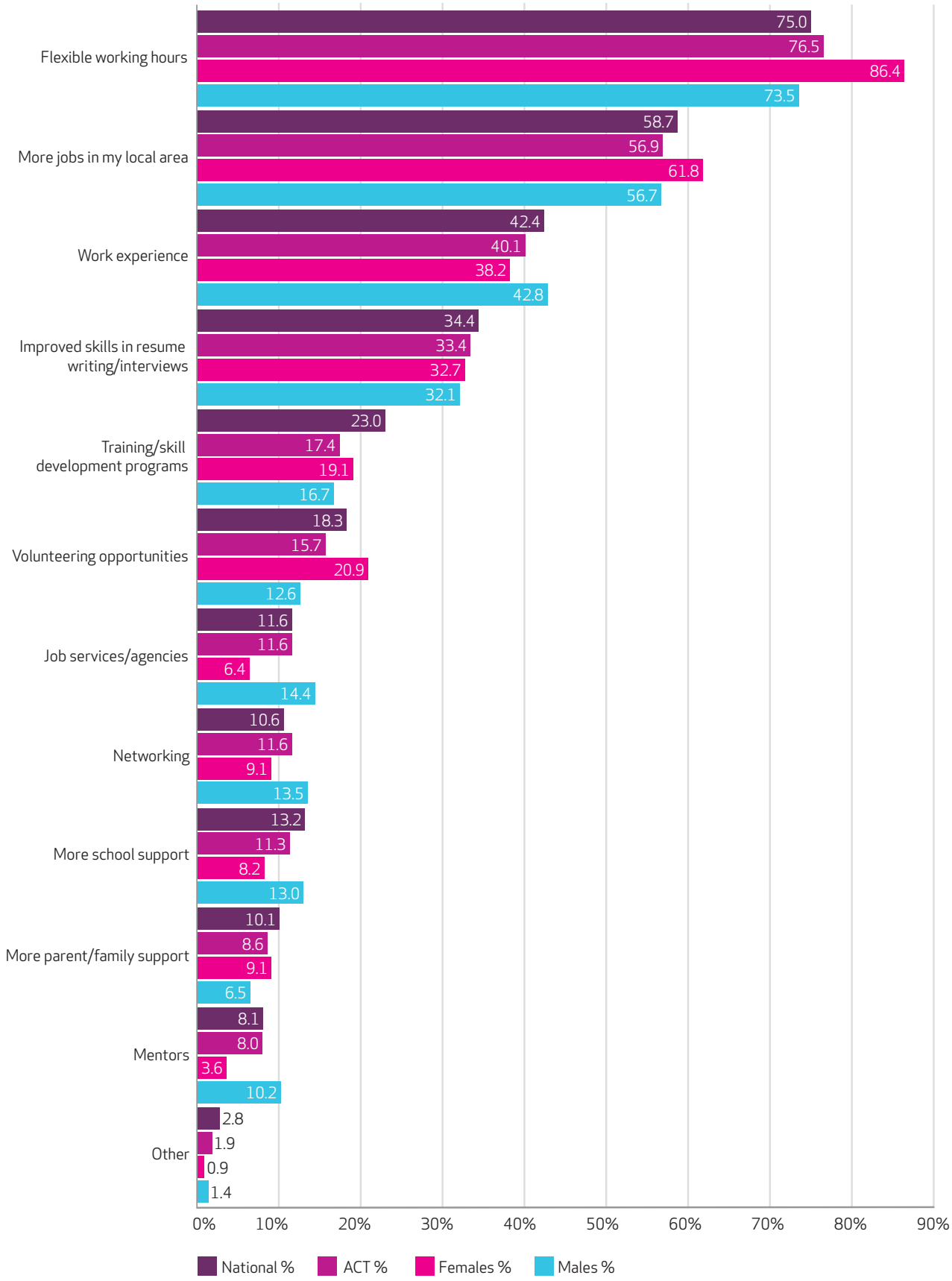
- *Flexible working hours* (76.5%), *more jobs in my local area* (56.9%) and *work experience* (40.1%) were the top factors in helping young people from the ACT secure a job.
- One third (33.4%) of respondents from the ACT saw *improved skills in resume writing/interviews* as an important factor in helping them secure a job.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 3.3, the top three factors to securing work for both females and males from the ACT were *flexible working hours, more jobs in my local area* and *work experience*.

- Higher proportions of ACT females than males reported *flexible working hours* (86.4% compared with 73.5%), *volunteering opportunities* (20.9% compared with 12.6%) and *more jobs in my local area* (61.8% compared with 56.7%) were factors to securing a job.
- Higher proportions of ACT males than females reported *job services/agencies* (14.4% compared with 6.4%), *more school support* (13.0% compared with 8.2%) and *work experience* (42.8% compared with 38.2%) were important factors in securing a job.

Figure 3.3: Factors to securing a job




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

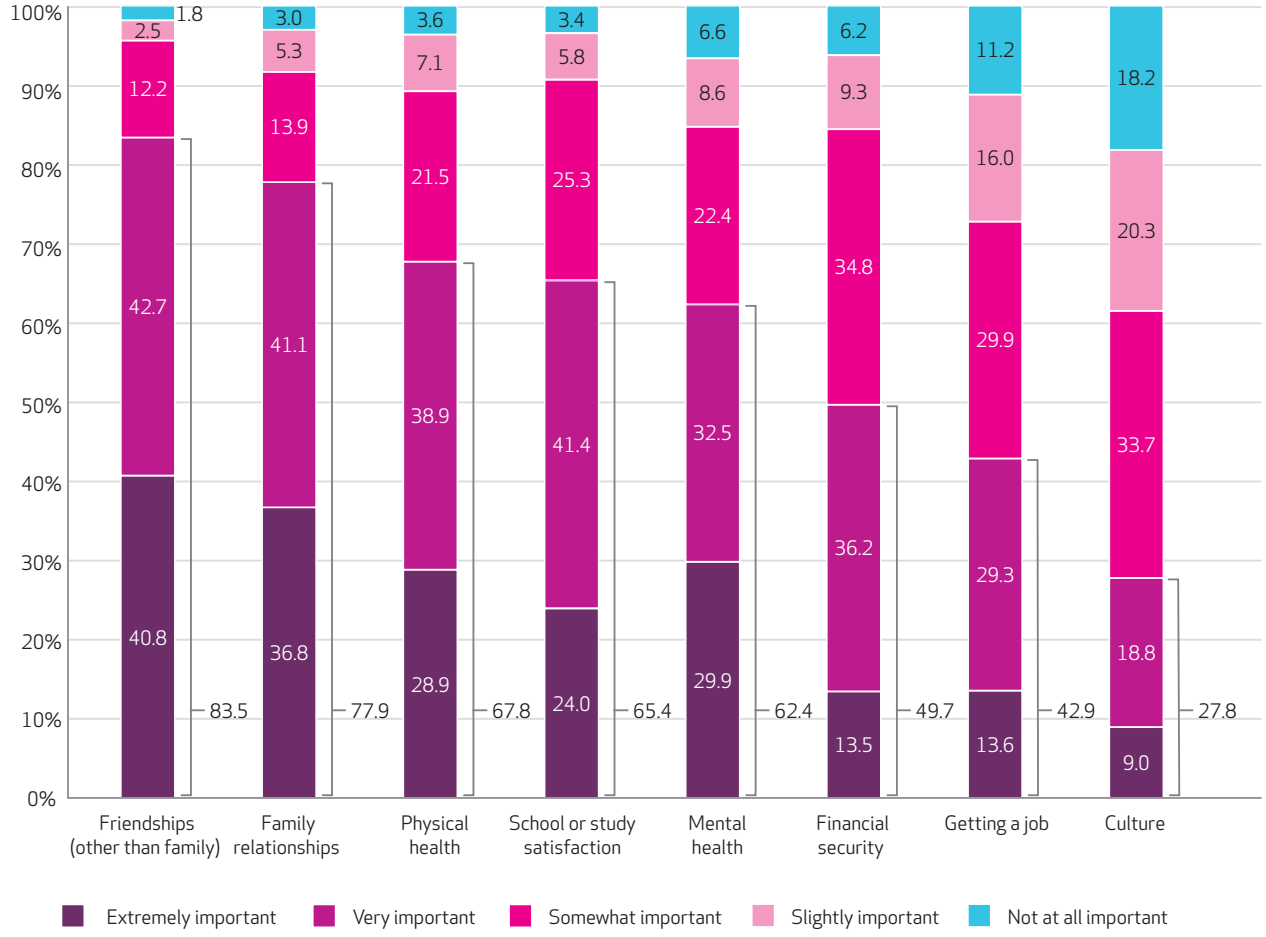
## What do young people value?

Young people from the ACT were asked how important a number of items had been in their lives over the past year. Responses for these items were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely important* to *not at all important*.

As shown in Figure 3.4, the three most highly valued items for respondents from the ACT were *friendships (other than family)*, *family relationships* and *physical health*. The next most highly valued items were *school or study satisfaction* and *mental health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were considered *extremely* or *very important* by 83.5% of respondents from the ACT (*extremely important*: 40.8%; *very important*: 42.7%).
- Close to eight in 10 (77.9%) respondents from the ACT highly valued *family relationships* (*extremely important*: 36.8%; *very important*: 41.1%).
- Around two thirds of respondents from the ACT placed a high value upon *physical health* (67.8%) and *school or study satisfaction* (65.4%).

Figure 3.4: What young people value




Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

### Gender differences

*Friendships (other than family)* and *family relationships* were rated as the two most important items by both ACT females and males, as shown in Table 3.4. The third top item for females was *school or study satisfaction*, while for males the third most highly valued item was *physical health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were rated *extremely* or *very important* by more than eight in 10 females (86.0%) and males (84.0%) from the ACT.
- Notably higher proportions of ACT males than females placed a high value upon *physical health* (72.1% compared with 62.3%) and *culture* (30.8% compared with 21.8%).

Table 3.4: What young people value by gender

| Females | Extremely important % | Very important % | Somewhat important % | Slightly important % | Not at all important % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **43.5** | **42.5** | 11.8 | 1.5 | 0.8 |
| **Family relationships** | **41.2** | **38.2** | 12.1 | 6.0 | 2.5 |
| Physical health | 25.6 | 36.7 | 25.8 | 8.6 | 3.3 |
| **School or study satisfaction** | **28.5** | **42.3** | 23.0 | 4.8 | 1.5 |
| Mental health | 34.5 | 33.0 | 21.3 | 8.0 | 3.3 |
| Financial security | 13.5 | 37.8 | 35.3 | 8.8 | 4.8 |
| Getting a job | 11.8 | 33.8 | 31.3 | 12.3 | 11.0 |
| Culture | 5.8 | 16.0 | 37.6 | 22.6 | 18.0 |
| **Males** | **Extremely important %** | **Very important %** | **Somewhat important %** | **Slightly important %** | **Not at all important %** |
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **40.3** | **43.7** | 12.0 | 2.9 | 1.1 |
| **Family relationships** | **35.5** | **44.2** | 14.1 | 3.9 | 2.3 |
| **Physical health** | **31.8** | **40.3** | 19.3 | 6.5 | 2.2 |
| School or study satisfaction | 22.7 | 41.0 | 26.3 | 6.6 | 3.4 |
| Mental health | 28.7 | 32.4 | 23.1 | 9.2 | 6.7 |
| Financial security | 13.7 | 36.8 | 33.1 | 10.5 | 5.9 |
| Getting a job | 14.7 | 27.0 | 29.9 | 18.1 | 10.3 |
| Culture | 11.0 | 19.8 | 32.9 | 19.2 | 17.1 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of ACT frequency.

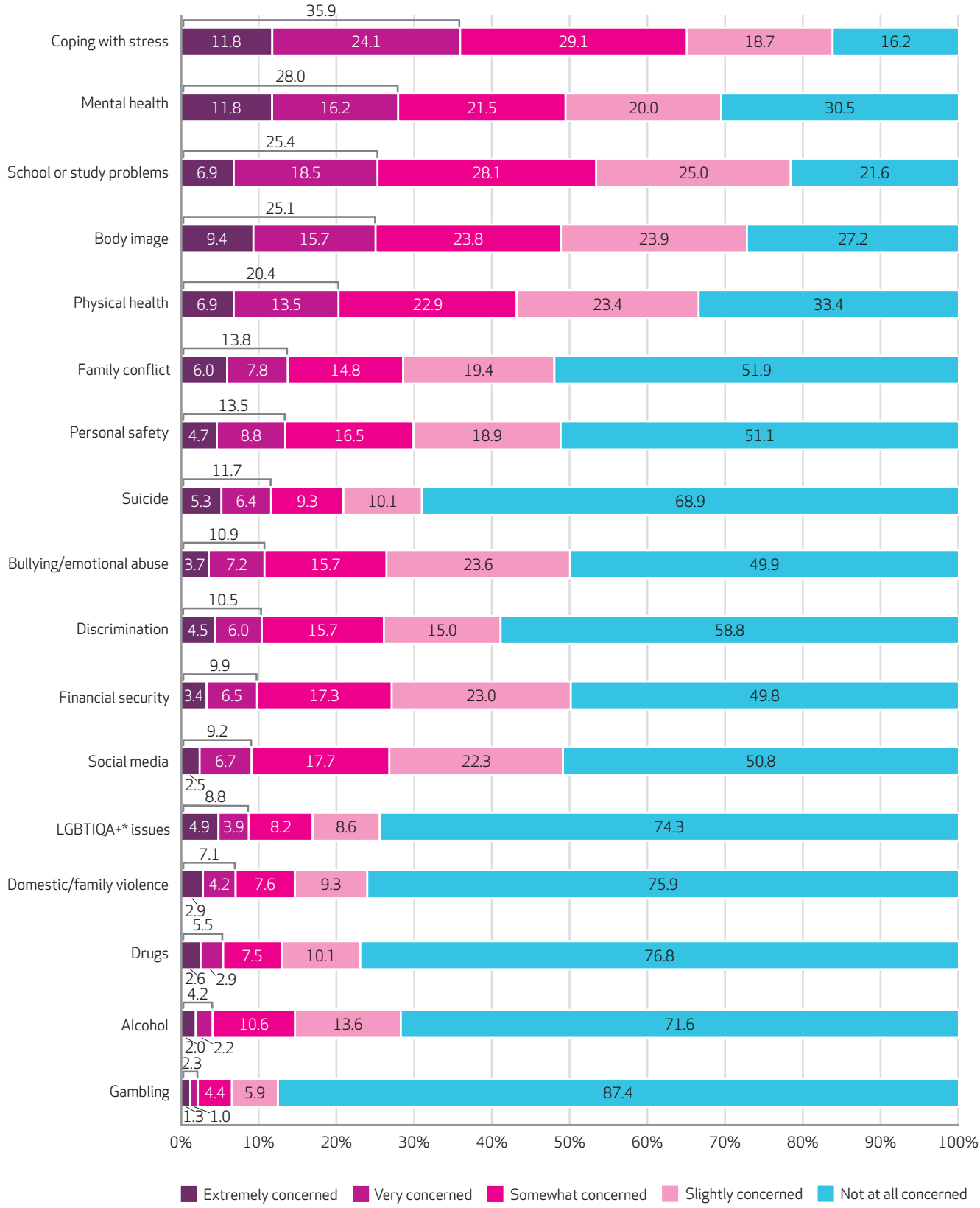
## What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Young people were asked to indicate how concerned they were about a number of issues over the past year, as shown in Figure 3.5. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*.

The top three issues of personal concern for young people from the ACT were *coping with stress, mental health* and *school or study problems*. The next most concerning issues were *body image* and *physical health*.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with over one third (35.9%) of respondents from the ACT indicating they were *extremely* or *very concerned* about this issue.
- Close to three in 10 (28.0%) respondents from the ACT were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *mental health*.
- One quarter of ACT respondents were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *school or study problems* (25.4%) or *body image* (25.1%).

Figure 3.5: Issues of personal concern to young people




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

## Gender differences

*Coping with stress* was the top issue of personal concern for both females and males from the ACT, as shown in Table 3.5. For females from the ACT, the second and third most concerning personal issues were *body image* and *mental health*. For ACT males the second and third most concerning personal issues were *mental health* and *school or study problems*. The proportion of female respondents from the ACT who were concerned about these issues (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- More than triple the proportion of females from the ACT were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *body image* (44.2% compared with 13.7% of males).
- Double the proportion of females than males from the ACT were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *coping with stress* (52.3% compared with 26.2%) and *mental health* (40.6% compared with 20.6%).
- Higher proportions of females were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *school or study problems* (34.8% compared with 20.0% of males).

Table 3.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

| Females | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **18.3** | **34.0** | 31.8 | 12.3 | 3.8 |
| **Mental health** | **16.8** | **23.8** | 26.1 | 17.0 | 16.3 |
| School or study problems | 8.5 | 26.3 | 30.8 | 24.0 | 10.5 |
| **Body image** | **14.6** | **29.6** | 28.9 | 16.3 | 10.6 |
| Physical health | 8.5 | 14.3 | 28.4 | 23.1 | 25.6 |
| Family conflict | 6.8 | 13.8 | 21.0 | 22.5 | 36.0 |
| Personal safety | 4.5 | 13.8 | 18.5 | 19.5 | 43.6 |
| Suicide | 6.5 | 6.8 | 13.8 | 11.5 | 61.4 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 4.0 | 9.5 | 19.5 | 26.8 | 40.1 |
| Discrimination | 4.5 | 8.8 | 18.1 | 17.9 | 50.6 |
| Financial security | 3.3 | 8.3 | 23.4 | 23.4 | 41.7 |
| Social media | 3.3 | 11.8 | 21.7 | 21.7 | 41.6 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 5.0 | 8.8 | 11.5 | 12.3 | 62.5 |
| Domestic/family violence | 4.3 | 4.8 | 9.5 | 11.0 | 70.4 |
| Drugs | 2.3 | 3.8 | 7.0 | 11.6 | 75.4 |
| Alcohol | 1.3 | 2.3 | 12.3 | 12.8 | 71.5 |
| Gambling | 0.5 | 1.0 | 3.8 | 5.0 | 89.7 |

Table 3.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

| Males | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **7.7** | **18.5** | 28.6 | 22.9 | 22.3 |
| **Mental health** | **8.3** | **12.3** | 18.8 | 22.1 | 38.5 |
| **School or study problems** | **5.5** | **14.5** | 25.9 | 25.9 | 28.2 |
| Body image | 5.4 | 8.3 | 20.1 | 29.4 | 36.8 |
| Physical health | 5.6 | 13.5 | 18.3 | 24.5 | 38.0 |
| Family conflict | 4.6 | 4.7 | 11.6 | 17.2 | 61.9 |
| Personal safety | 3.7 | 6.6 | 14.7 | 18.5 | 56.5 |
| Suicide | 3.9 | 5.5 | 6.6 | 9.3 | 74.7 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 2.9 | 5.6 | 13.9 | 21.6 | 56.0 |
| Discrimination | 3.0 | 4.2 | 14.6 | 12.7 | 65.6 |
| Financial security | 2.4 | 5.7 | 13.6 | 22.7 | 55.5 |
| Social media | 1.6 | 4.3 | 15.1 | 22.5 | 56.5 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 2.9 | 1.3 | 5.6 | 6.3 | 84.0 |
| Domestic/family violence | 1.9 | 3.6 | 5.3 | 8.5 | 80.7 |
| Drugs | 2.4 | 2.7 | 7.3 | 9.3 | 78.2 |
| Alcohol | 1.4 | 2.2 | 9.8 | 14.4 | 72.3 |
| Gambling | 0.7 | 1.2 | 4.7 | 5.6 | 87.8 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of ACT frequency.
*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

## Have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people were asked whether they had been treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Close to one quarter (23.4%) of young people from the ACT reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A higher proportion of ACT females than males reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (29.5% compared with 17.5%).

## Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify reasons for being treated unfairly from a list of suggested items. Table 3.6 shows that, of the 23.4% of ACT respondents who had been treated unfairly in the past year, nearly half (46.0%) reported the unfair treatment was due to their *gender*. Close to three in 10 (29.8%) ACT young people indicated they were treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background* and 24.6% reported unfair treatment due to their *mental health*.

### Gender differences

There were some notable differences in female and male responses to the question regarding the reasons for unfair treatment, as shown in Table 3.6. Of the 23.4% of young people from the ACT who had been treated unfairly in the past year:

- Notably higher proportions of ACT females than males reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *gender* (63.2% compared with 26.4%) and their *age* (25.6% compared with 15.7%).
- Conversely, more than double the proportion of males than females from the ACT reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background* (36.4% compared with 16.2%) and their *religion* (16.5% compared with 6.0%).

Table 3.6: Reasons for being treated unfairly

| | National % | ACT % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | **41.0** | **46.0** | **63.2** | **26.4** |
| **Race/cultural background** | **30.4** | **29.8** | 16.2 | **36.4** |
| **Mental health** | **26.0** | **24.6** | **25.6** | **21.5** |
| Sexuality | 19.4 | 22.5 | 17.9 | 19.0 |
| Age | 21.0 | 21.4 | **25.6** | 15.7 |
| Other | 14.4 | 16.5 | 9.4 | 19.8 |
| Religion | 13.8 | 13.3 | 6.0 | 16.5 |
| Financial background | 9.0 | 8.1 | 4.3 | 6.6 |
| Disability | 7.5 | 7.0 | 2.6 | 7.4 |

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

## Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Young people were asked whether they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Over half (53.2%) of young people from the ACT reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year. A much higher proportion of ACT females than males reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (63.0% compared with 47.4%).

## What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

Young people who reported they had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year were asked to identify from a list of reasons why the person was being treated unfairly. Table 3.7 shows that, of the 53.2% of respondents from the ACT who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 60.9% reported they witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *race/cultural background*. Over half (52.2%) of respondents from the ACT indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality*. Four in 10 (42.5%) respondents from the ACT who had witnessed unfair treatment reported it was due to a person's *gender*.

### Gender differences

The three most frequently witnessed reasons for unfair treatment for ACT females and males were consistent with the ACT results.

- Similar proportions of ACT females and males had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *race/cultural background* (62.2% and 60.4% respectively).
- A notably higher proportion of ACT females than males reported they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality* (64.7% compared with 41.1%) and due to a person's *gender* (53.8% compared with 31.0%).

Table 3.7: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

| | National % | ACT % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race/cultural background** | **62.0** | **60.9** | **62.2** | **60.4** |
| **Sexuality** | **49.4** | **52.2** | **64.7** | **41.1** |
| **Gender** | **40.5** | **42.5** | **53.8** | **31.0** |
| Disability | 32.2 | 35.5 | 39.8 | 30.4 |
| Mental health | 28.9 | 28.8 | 32.5 | 23.6 |
| Religion | 28.8 | 27.4 | 28.5 | 25.8 |
| Age | 17.5 | 16.2 | 14.9 | 15.0 |
| Financial background | 18.7 | 15.3 | 13.7 | 15.0 |
| Other | 5.3 | 5.1 | 2.4 | 6.7 |

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

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

Respondents were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 3.6 shows the percentage of respondents from the ACT who indicated they would go to the particular source for support.

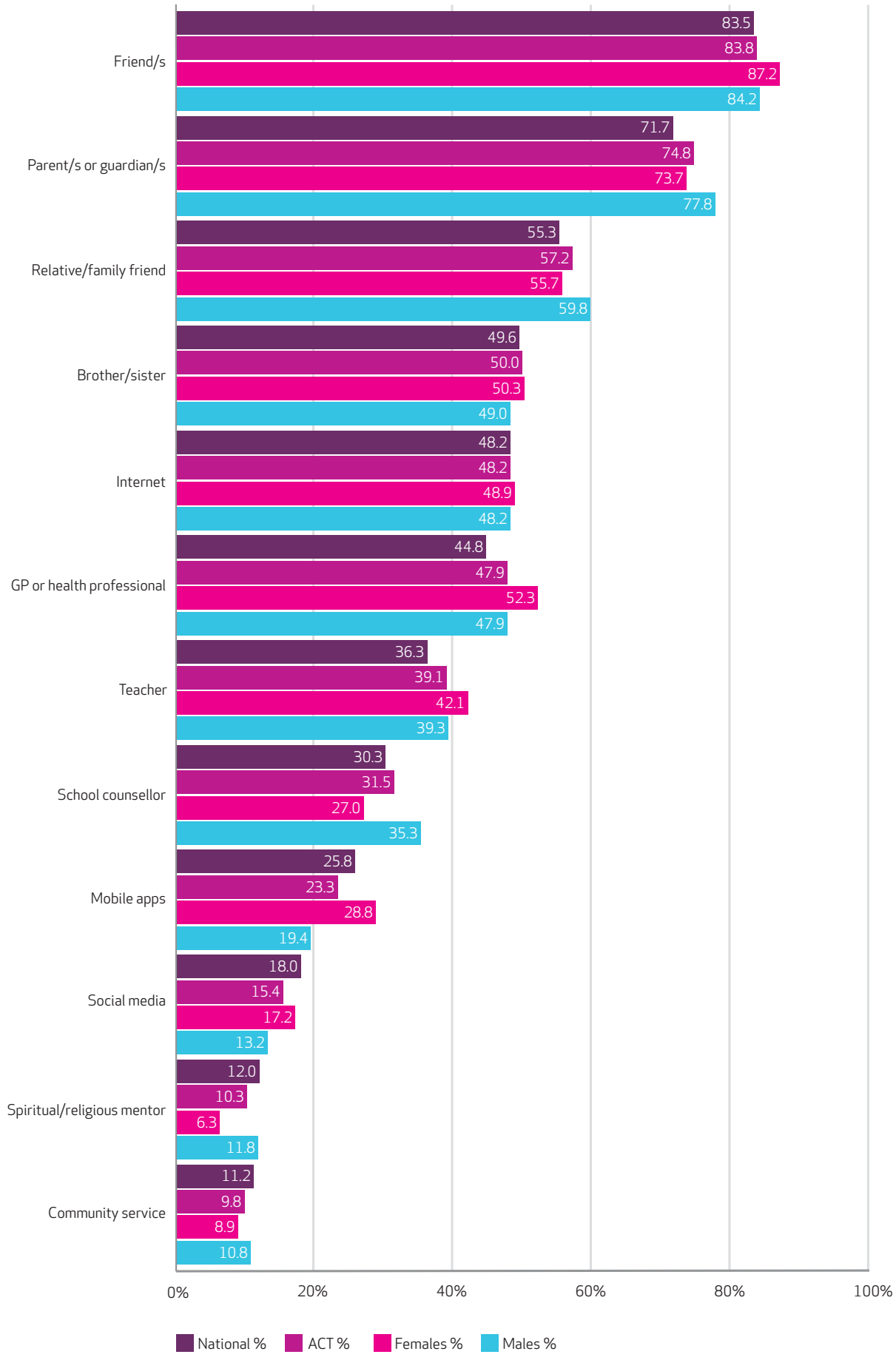
- *Friend/s* (83.8%), *parent/s or guardian/s* (74.8%) and *relative/family friend* (57.2%) were the three most frequently cited sources of help for young people from the ACT.
- Half (50.0%) of young people from the ACT indicated they would go to their *brother/sister* for support with important issues in their lives.
- Close to half of young people from the ACT would turn to the *internet* (48.2%) or a *GP or health professional* (47.9%) as a source of help with important issues.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 3.6, the top three sources of help for both genders were consistent with the ACT results.

- A higher proportion of males than females from the ACT indicated they would turn to a *school counsellor* (35.3% compared with 27.0%) or a *spiritual/religious mentor* (11.8% compared with 6.3%).
- A higher proportion of females than males from the ACT would turn to *mobile apps* (28.8% compared with 19.4%), a *GP or health professional* (52.3% compared with 47.9%) or *social media* (17.2% compared with 13.2%) for support with important issues in their lives.

Figure 3.6: Where young people go for help with important issues




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

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

Young people were asked to list the three issues most important in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 3.8. In 2020, the top three issues identified by young people from the ACT were *equity and discrimination*, *COVID-19* and *the environment*.

- Around four in 10 young people from the ACT indicated *equity and discrimination* (42.4%) and *COVID-19* (37.7%) are important issues in Australia today.
- Over one third (34.3%) of respondents from the ACT reported *the environment* as an important national issue.
- Since 2019, the proportion of those from the ACT reporting *equity and discrimination* as a key national issue has increased from 20.6% to 42.4%. Conversely, concerns about *the environment* and *mental health* have decreased since 2019.

### Gender differences

The most important issues for females from the ACT were *equity and discrimination*, *the environment* and *mental health*. For males, the top three most important issues were *COVID-19*, *equity and discrimination* and *the environment*.

- Notably higher proportions of ACT females than males identified *equity and discrimination* (50.9% compared with 38.4%), *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues* (15.0% compared with 4.7%) and *mental health* (33.8% compared with 25.2%) as important issues facing Australia today.
- Conversely, higher proportions of ACT males than females identified *COVID-19* (44.1% compared with 27.2%), *the economy and financial matters* (21.7% compared with 11.3%) and *politics* (10.3% compared with 3.8%) as key issues in Australia.

Table 3.8: Most important issues in Australia today

| | National 2020 % | ACT 2020 % | Females % | Males % | ACT 2019 % | ACT 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Equity and discrimination** | **40.2** | **42.4** | **50.9** | **38.4** | **20.6** | **19.3** |
| **COVID-19** | **38.8** | **37.7** | 27.2 | **44.1** | - | - |
| **The environment** | 29.8 | **34.3** | **38.2** | **33.5** | **53.1** | 10.0 |
| Mental health | **30.6** | 28.3 | **33.8** | 25.2 | **35.0** | **40.9** |
| The economy and financial matters | 15.3 | 17.7 | 11.3 | 21.7 | 15.7 | 10.4 |
| Homelessness/Housing | 8.3 | 10.4 | 14.7 | 8.4 | 10.8 | 16.7 |
| Alcohol and drugs | 10.5 | 9.2 | 9.2 | 9.0 | 11.9 | **23.4** |
| Politics | 7.5 | 8.5 | 3.8 | 10.3 | 10.3 | 6.7 |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Issues | 6.2 | 8.1 | 15.0 | 4.7 | 4.9 | 6.3 |
| Crime, safety and violence | 9.3 | 7.4 | 8.7 | 7.0 | 8.4 | 13.5 |

Note: Items are listed in order of ACT frequency.

## What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities they had been involved in over the past year from the list of options shown in Table 3.9.

- The top three activities for young people from the ACT were *sports (as a participant)* (76.1%), *sports (as a spectator)* (68.1%) and *volunteer work* (39.2%).
- Close to four in 10 (38.2%) respondents from the ACT reported they had participated in *arts/cultural/music activities* in the past year.
- Nearly three in 10 (27.5%) young people from the ACT indicated they had taken part in *student leadership activities*.

### Gender differences

In line with ACT results, *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)* were the top two activities for both ACT females and males. While *arts/cultural/music activities* was the third most reported activity for females from the ACT, *volunteer work* was the third highest for males.

- Higher proportions of male than female respondents from the ACT reported taking part in *sports (as a spectator)* (75.9% compared with 57.4%) and *sports (as a participant)* (82.9% compared with 66.3%).
- Conversely, higher proportions of females from the ACT participated in *arts/cultural/music activities* (43.6% compared with 34.5% of males).

Table 3.9: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

| | National % | ACT % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sports (as a participant)** | **70.7** | **76.1** | **66.3** | **82.9** |
| **Sports (as a spectator)** | **62.1** | **68.1** | **57.4** | **75.9** |
| **Volunteer work** | 43.3 | **39.2** | 39.0 | **40.5** |
| Arts/cultural/music activities | **43.9** | 38.2 | **43.6** | 34.5 |
| Student leadership activities | 34.0 | 27.5 | 24.3 | 29.0 |
| Youth groups/activities | 25.6 | 21.1 | 16.7 | 22.5 |
| Religious groups/activities | 23.6 | 20.1 | 18.9 | 21.0 |
| Environmental groups | 14.8 | 10.0 | 9.4 | 9.2 |
| Political groups/organisations | 8.8 | 6.9 | 6.6 | 6.4 |

Note: Items are listed in order of ACT frequency.

## How stressed are young people?

For the first time in 2020, young people were asked to report on how much of the time they felt stressed in the past four weeks. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *all of the time* to *none of the time*. Table 3.10 shows that three in 10 (30.5%) young people from the ACT felt stressed either *all of the time* or *most of the time*.

- Almost double the proportion of female respondents from the ACT felt stressed *all of the time* or *most of the time* (43.5% compared with 22.3% of males).
- Conversely, close to double the proportion of males from the ACT felt stressed *a little of the time* or *none of the time* (44.6% compared with 24.5% of females).

Table 3.10: How stressed are young people?

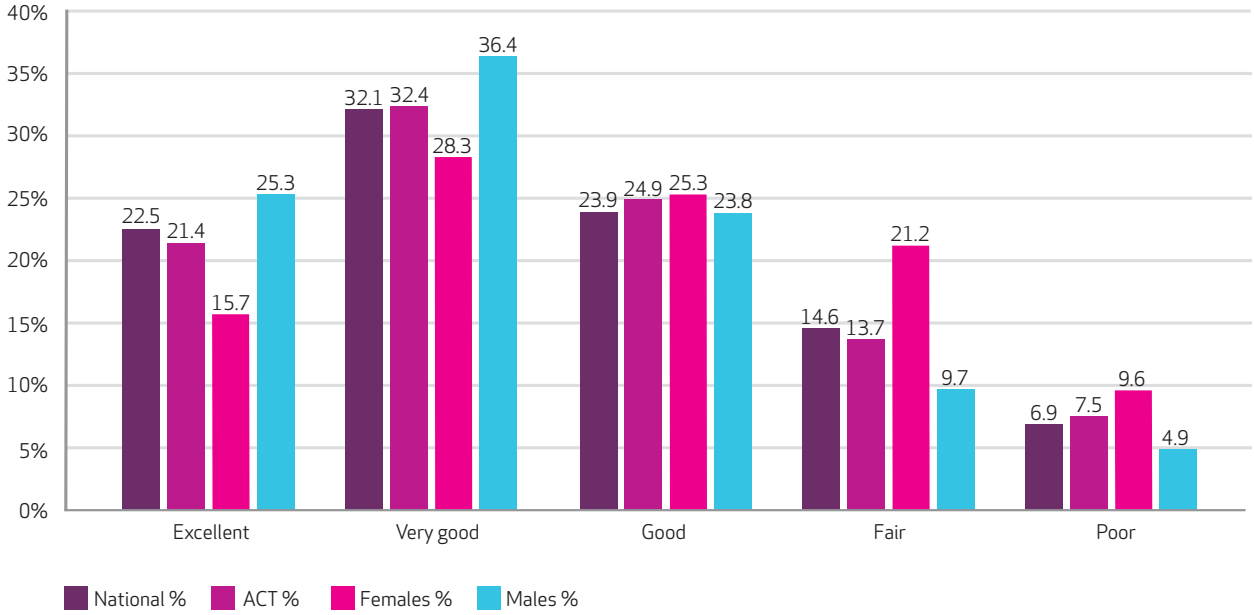
| | National % | ACT % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| All of the time | 11.6 | 7.8 | 11.4 | 4.9 |
| Most of the time | 31.0 | 22.7 | 32.1 | 17.4 |
| Some of the time | 32.4 | 32.8 | 32.1 | 33.1 |
| A little of the time | 19.7 | 26.3 | 20.7 | 30.6 |
| None of the time | 5.3 | 10.4 | 3.8 | 14.0 |

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

Respondents were asked to rate their family's ability to get along with one another. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 3.7 shows that the majority of respondents from the ACT rated their family's ability to get along very positively: 21.4% rated it as *excellent* and 32.4% rated it as *very good*. However, more than one in five (21.2%) young people from the ACT indicated their family's ability to get along was either *fair* (13.7%) or *poor* (7.5%).

A higher proportion of ACT male respondents rated their family's ability to get along as *excellent* or *very good* (61.7% compared with 44.0% of females), while a higher proportion of females rated their family's ability to get along as *fair* or *poor* (30.8% compared with 14.6% of males).

Figure 3.7: Family's ability to get along with one another




## How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 indicates that they felt *very sad* and 10 indicates that they felt *very happy*. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100, in which 100 is the happiest. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes *happy/very happy;* 40-60 signifies *not happy or sad;* and 0-30 indicates *very sad/sad*. As Table 3.11 shows, the majority (60.9%) of young people from the ACT responded in the 70-100 range, which indicates most young people felt happy overall with their lives.

A notably higher proportion of males from the ACT reported feeling *happy/very happy* with their lives as a whole (66.0% compared with 55.3% of females), whereas a slightly greater proportion of females indicated they felt *very sad/sad* (9.8% compared with 7.7% of males).

Table 3.11: How happy are young people?

| | National % | ACT % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Happy/very happy (70-100) | 58.6 | 60.9 | 55.3 | 66.0 |
| Not happy or sad (40-60) | 30.7 | 29.6 | 34.9 | 26.3 |
| Very sad/sad (0-30) | 10.7 | 9.5 | 9.8 | 7.7 |

## How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked to describe their feelings when they thought about the future. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 3.12 shows that the majority of young people from the ACT felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future.

- More than half (57.2%) felt either *very positive* (12.5%) or *positive* (44.7%) about the future.
- One in eight (12.6%) young people from the ACT indicated they felt *negative* (9.2%) or *very negative* (3.4%) about the future.
- More than double the proportion of males from the ACT reported feeling *very positive* about the future (15.3% compared with 7.0% of females).

Table 3.12: Feelings about the future

| | National 2020 % | ACT 2020 % | Females % | Males % | ACT 2019 % | ACT 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very positive | 12.3 | 12.5 | 7.0 | 15.3 | 8.7 | 15.5 |
| Positive | 43.2 | 44.7 | 46.1 | 45.5 | 36.5 | 46.7 |
| Neither positive nor negative | 30.5 | 30.2 | 35.3 | 26.8 | 31.7 | 27.9 |
| Negative | 10.5 | 9.2 | 9.5 | 9.4 | 18.3 | 6.8 |
| Very negative | 3.4 | 3.4 | 2.0 | 3.0 | 4.8 | 3.1 |

# New South Wales



## Profile of respondents

A total of 6,639 young people from New South Wales (NSW) aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2020*.

### Gender breakdown

Nearly two thirds (65.1%) of respondents from NSW were female, 32.4% were male, 1.6% gender diverse and 0.9% preferred not to say.

### Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 400 (6.1%) respondents from NSW identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 360 (5.5%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 17 (0.3%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.4% identified as both). A slightly higher proportion of male respondents from NSW identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (7.9% compared with 4.8% of females).

### Cultural background

A total of 773 (11.8%) respondents from NSW stated they were born overseas and 1,498 (23.0%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 80 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Arabic, Chinese, Mandarin, Cantonese and Filipino/Tagalog.

Over four in 10 (43.0%) respondents from NSW stated that one or both of their parents were born overseas.

### Disability

A total of 421 (6.5%) respondents from NSW identified as living with disability. A greater proportion of males than females reported living with disability (8.2% compared with 5.2%). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, learning disabilities, physical disabilities and anxiety disorder.

## Education

As indicated in Table 4.1, 85.3% of respondents from NSW were studying full-time, which is lower than the 93.3% of respondents studying full-time in 2019. A higher proportion of females from NSW reported studying full-time (89.6% compared with 77.2% of males). Conversely, a higher proportion of males than females from NSW reported they were studying part-time (10.5% compared with 4.7%) or not studying (12.3% compared with 5.7%).

Table 4.1: Participation in education

| | National % | NSW % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Studying full-time | 86.6 | 85.3 | 89.6 | 77.2 |
| Studying part-time | 6.5 | 6.7 | 4.7 | 10.5 |
| Not studying | 6.8 | 8.0 | 5.7 | 12.3 |

Respondents from NSW who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in previous years, the majority of respondents from NSW reported they were either *very satisfied* (9.5%) or *satisfied* (55.3%) with their studies. Less than one in 10 indicated they were *dissatisfied* (6.3%) or *very dissatisfied* (2.2%). As shown in Table 4.2, a higher proportion of females than males from NSW reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* (66.8% compared with 62.4%), while a slightly higher proportion of males than females indicated they felt *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* (8.4% compared with 8.0%).

Table 4.2: Satisfaction with studies

| | National % | NSW % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 10.4 | 9.5 | 9.6 | 9.2 |
| Satisfied | 56.7 | 55.3 | 57.2 | 53.2 |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 25.6 | 26.7 | 25.1 | 29.2 |
| Dissatisfied | 5.7 | 6.3 | 6.3 | 5.5 |
| Very dissatisfied | 1.5 | 2.2 | 1.7 | 2.9 |

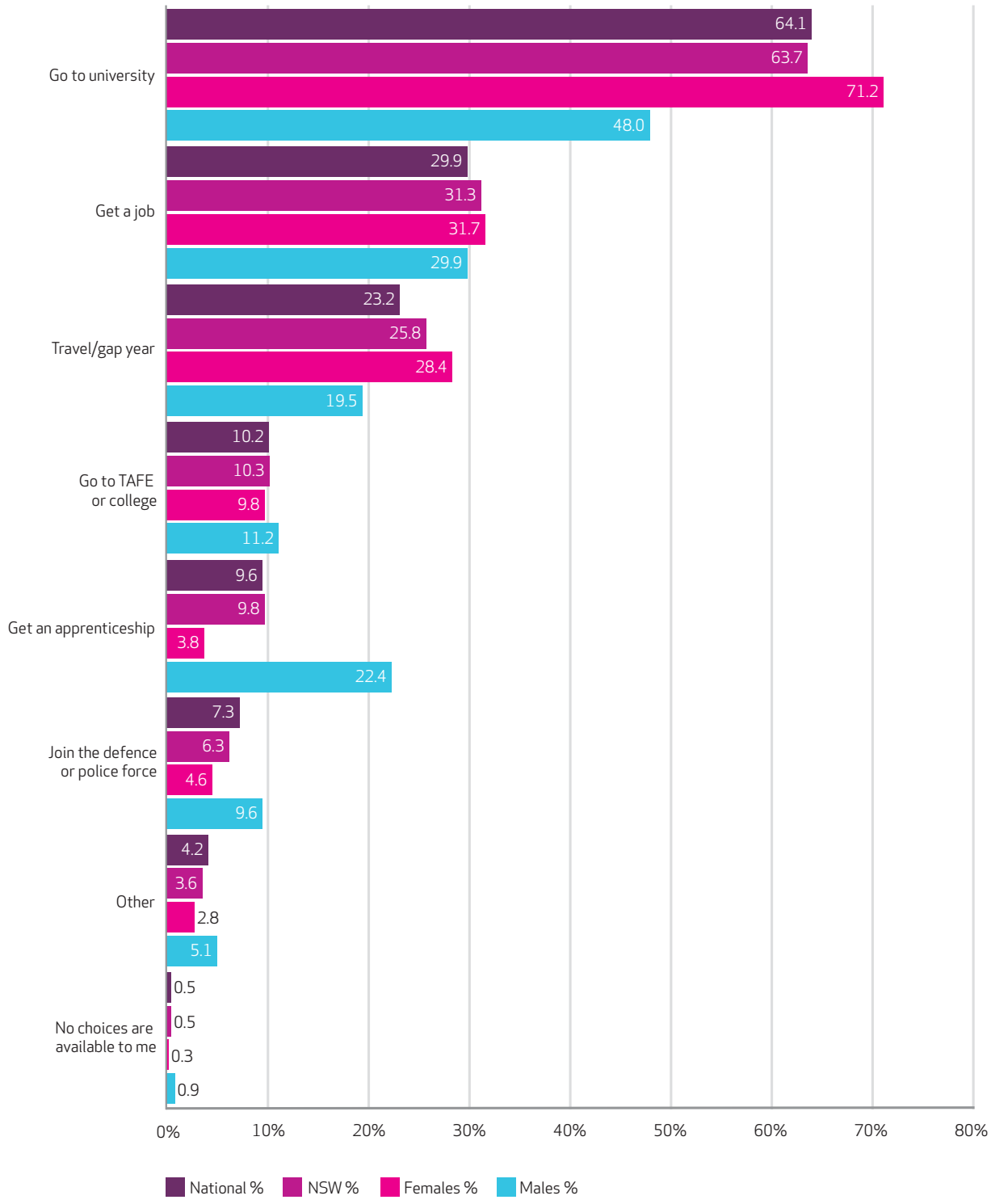
Of those still at school, the majority (96.1%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. Four times the proportion of males indicated they did not plan to complete Year 12 (7.6% compared with 1.9% of females).

Respondents from NSW who were studying at school were asked what they planned to do after leaving school. Figure 4.1 shows that nearly two thirds (63.7%) of respondents from NSW planned to *go to university* after school. Over three in 10 (31.3%) respondents from NSW reported plans to *get a job* after school and one quarter (25.8%) indicated *travel/gap year* plans. Overall, around one in 10 young people planned to *go to TAFE or college* (10.3%) and to *get an apprenticeship* (9.8%), while 6.3% reported plans to *join the defence or police force*. A small minority (0.5%) of respondents indicated that *no choices are available to me* after finishing school.

## Gender differences

While the most frequently reported plan among both female and male respondents from NSW was to *go to university* after finishing school, a much higher proportion of females indicated they planned to do so (71.2% compared with 48.0% of males). A greater proportion of females from NSW also reported *travel/gap year* plans after leaving school (28.4% compared with 19.5% of males). Conversely, more than five times the proportion of males from NSW indicated they were planning to *get an apprenticeship* after school (22.4% compared with 3.8% of females).

Figure 4.1: Plans after leaving school

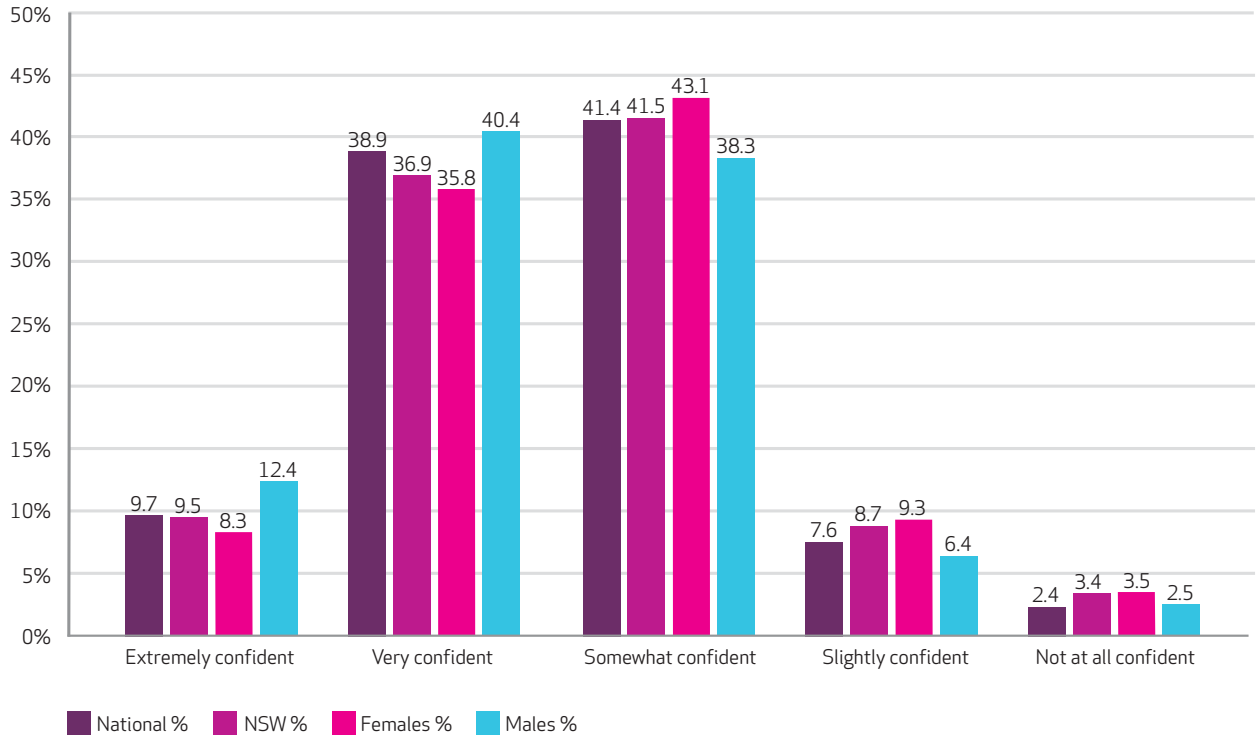



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of NSW frequency.

## How confident are young people in achieving their study/work goals?

Respondents from NSW were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after finishing school. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. As shown in Figure 4.2, nearly half (46.4%) of NSW respondents indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study/work goals: 9.5% reported they were *extremely confident* and 36.9% stated they were *very confident*. However, over one in 10 (12.1%) young people from NSW were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals: 8.7% of young people indicated they were *slightly confident*, while 3.4% were *not at all confident*. A notably higher proportion of male respondents reported they were *extremely* or *very confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school (52.8% compared with 44.1% of females).

Figure 4.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals




## Employment

Respondents from NSW were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average how many hours they worked per week. Table 4.3 shows participation in paid employment among respondents from NSW. A very small proportion of young people from NSW who reported paid employment were employed full-time (0.7%). This is unsurprising given the high proportion of respondents to the *Youth Survey* who were still at school. Four in 10 (40.5%) respondents from NSW reported they were employed part-time. Nearly six in 10 (58.8%) respondents indicated they were not in paid employment: 30.6% stated they were looking for work, while 28.2% were neither working nor looking for work. The proportion of respondents from NSW in part-time employment in 2020 is slightly lower than in 2019 (40.5% compared with 44.7%).

### Gender differences

A slightly higher proportion of male respondents from NSW reported full-time employment (1.1% compared with 0.3% of females). Similar proportions of female and male respondents were employed part-time (40.5% and 40.0% respectively). A greater proportion of male respondents were looking for work (32.9% compared with 29.7% of females).

Table 4.3: Participation in paid employment

| | National % | NSW % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employed full-time | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.3 | 1.1 |
| Employed part-time | 40.5 | 40.5 | 40.5 | 40.0 |
| Not in paid employment, looking for work | 34.7 | 30.6 | 29.7 | 32.9 |
| Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work | 24.2 | 28.2 | 29.5 | 26.0 |

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

## What would help young people secure a job?

Respondents from NSW who were looking for work were asked to indicate from a number of factors, what might help them secure a job, as shown in Figure 4.3.

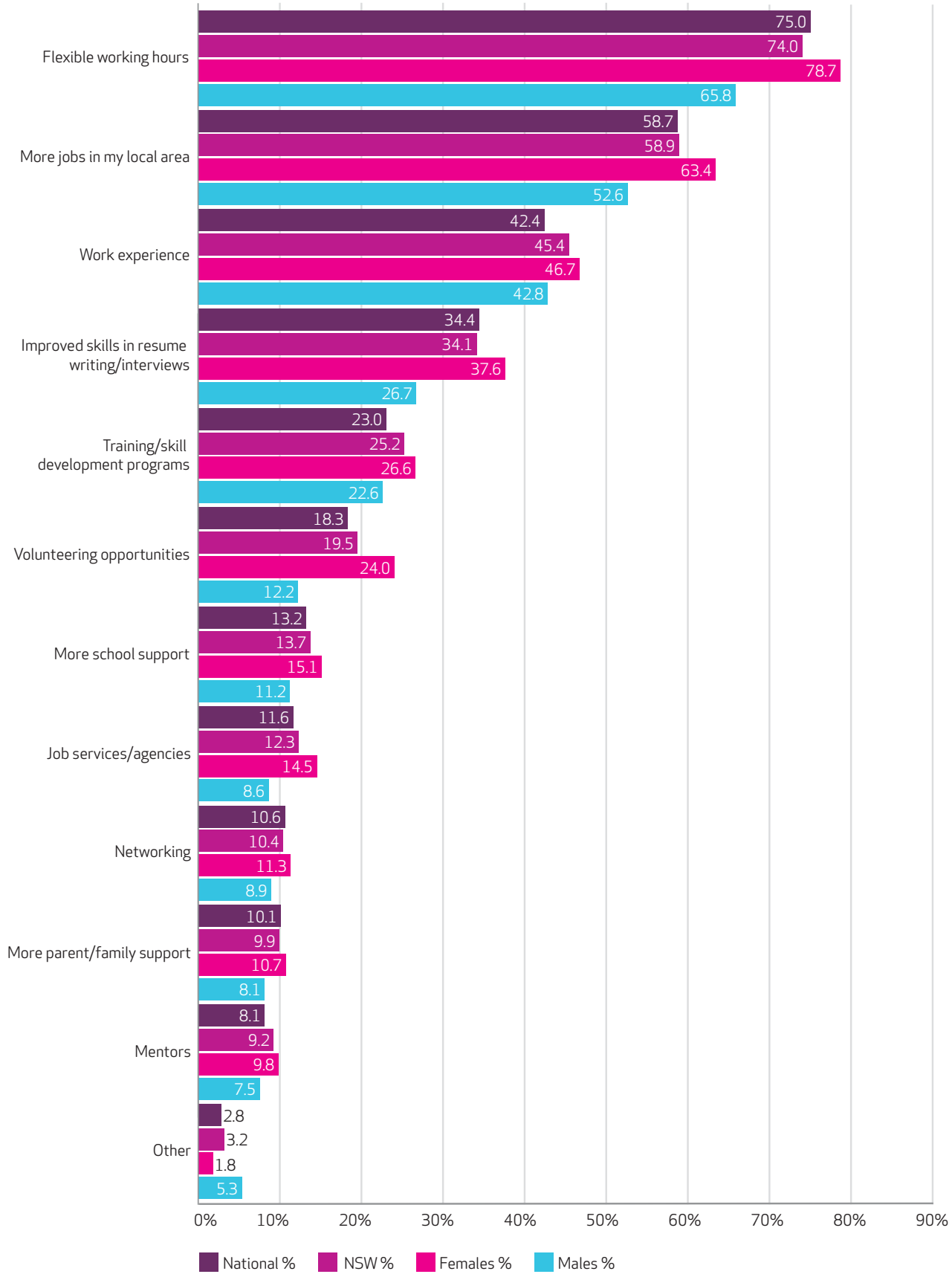
- *Flexible working hours* (74.0%), *more jobs in my local area* (58.9%) and *work experience* (45.4%) were the top factors to helping young people from NSW secure a job.
- Over one third (34.1%) of respondents from NSW saw *improved skills in resume writing/interviews* as an important factor in helping them secure a job.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 4.3, the top three factors to securing work for both females and males from NSW were *flexible working hours*, *more jobs in my local area* and *work experience*.

- Double the proportion of female respondents from NSW saw *volunteering opportunities* as a factor to securing a job (24.0% compared with 12.2% of males).
- Notably higher proportions of NSW females than males reported *flexible working hours* (78.7% compared with 65.8%) and *improved skills in resume writing/interviews* (37.6% compared with 26.7%) were factors to securing a job.

Figure 4.3: Factors to securing a job




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

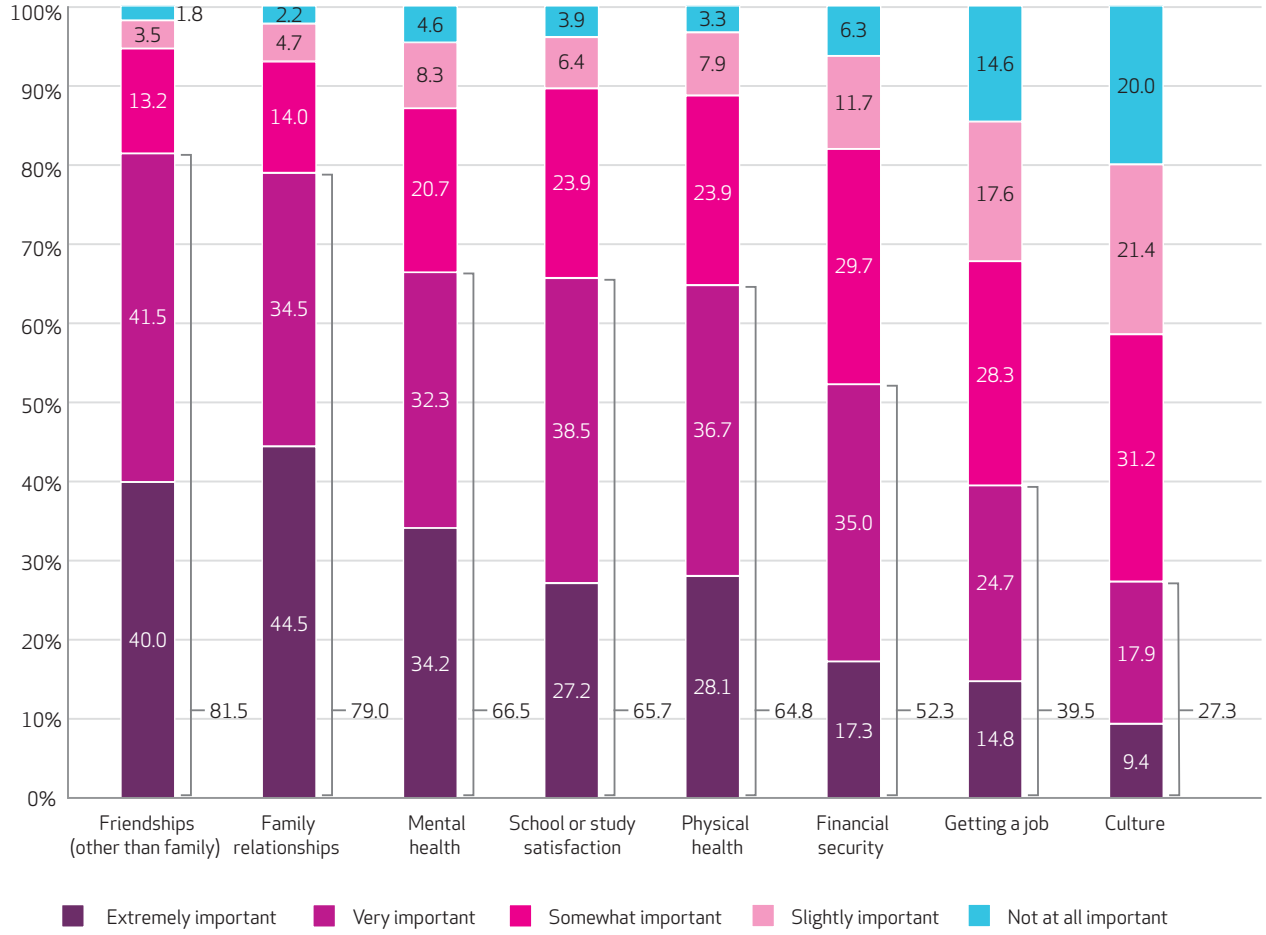
## What do young people value?

Young people from NSW were asked how important a number of items had been in their lives over the past year. Responses for these items were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely important* to *not at all important*.

As shown in Figure 4.4, the three most highly valued items for respondents from NSW were *friendships (other than family)*, *family relationships* and *mental health*. The next most highly valued items were *school or study satisfaction* and *physical health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were considered *extremely* or *very important* by 81.5% of respondents from NSW (*extremely important*: 40.0%; *very important*: 41.5%).
- Close to eight in 10 (79.0%) respondents from NSW highly valued *family relationships* (*extremely important*: 44.5%; *very important*: 34.5%).
- Two thirds of respondents from NSW placed a high value upon *mental health* (66.5%), *school or study satisfaction* (65.7%) and *physical health* (64.8%).

Figure 4.4: What young people value




Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

### Gender differences

*Friendships (other than family)* and *family relationships* were rated as the two most important items by both NSW females and males, as shown in Table 4.4. The third top item for females was *school or study satisfaction*, while for males the third most highly valued item was *physical health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were rated *extremely* or *very important* by around eight in 10 females (84.0%) and males (77.4%) from NSW.
- Notably higher proportions of NSW females than males valued *school and study satisfaction* (71.8% compared with 54.2%) and *mental health* (71.0% compared with 59.0%).

Table 4.4: What young people value by gender

| Females | Extremely important % | Very important % | Somewhat important % | Slightly important % | Not at all important % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **44.0** | **40.0** | 12.0 | 3.2 | 0.8 |
| **Family relationships** | **48.7** | **33.2** | 12.5 | 4.2 | 1.4 |
| Mental health | 37.8 | 33.2 | 19.0 | 7.8 | 2.3 |
| **School or study satisfaction** | **31.4** | **40.4** | 20.5 | 5.4 | 2.2 |
| Physical health | 27.8 | 36.9 | 24.6 | 8.3 | 2.3 |
| Financial security | 17.6 | 36.2 | 29.7 | 11.7 | 4.8 |
| Getting a job | 13.1 | 24.4 | 29.5 | 18.3 | 14.7 |
| Culture | 10.3 | 18.9 | 31.1 | 21.7 | 18.1 |
| **Males** | **Extremely important %** | **Very important %** | **Somewhat important %** | **Slightly important %** | **Not at all important %** |
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **33.0** | **44.4** | 15.9 | 3.7 | 3.0 |
| **Family relationships** | **37.4** | **37.6** | 16.3 | 5.4 | 3.2 |
| Mental health | 26.9 | 32.1 | 23.1 | 9.8 | 8.1 |
| School or study satisfaction | 18.8 | 35.4 | 30.6 | 9.0 | 6.2 |
| **Physical health** | **28.9** | **37.5** | 22.1 | 6.9 | 4.6 |
| Financial security | 16.8 | 33.3 | 29.3 | 11.5 | 9.2 |
| Getting a job | 17.7 | 25.5 | 26.4 | 16.5 | 13.9 |
| Culture | 7.5 | 16.2 | 31.5 | 21.3 | 23.5 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of NSW frequency.

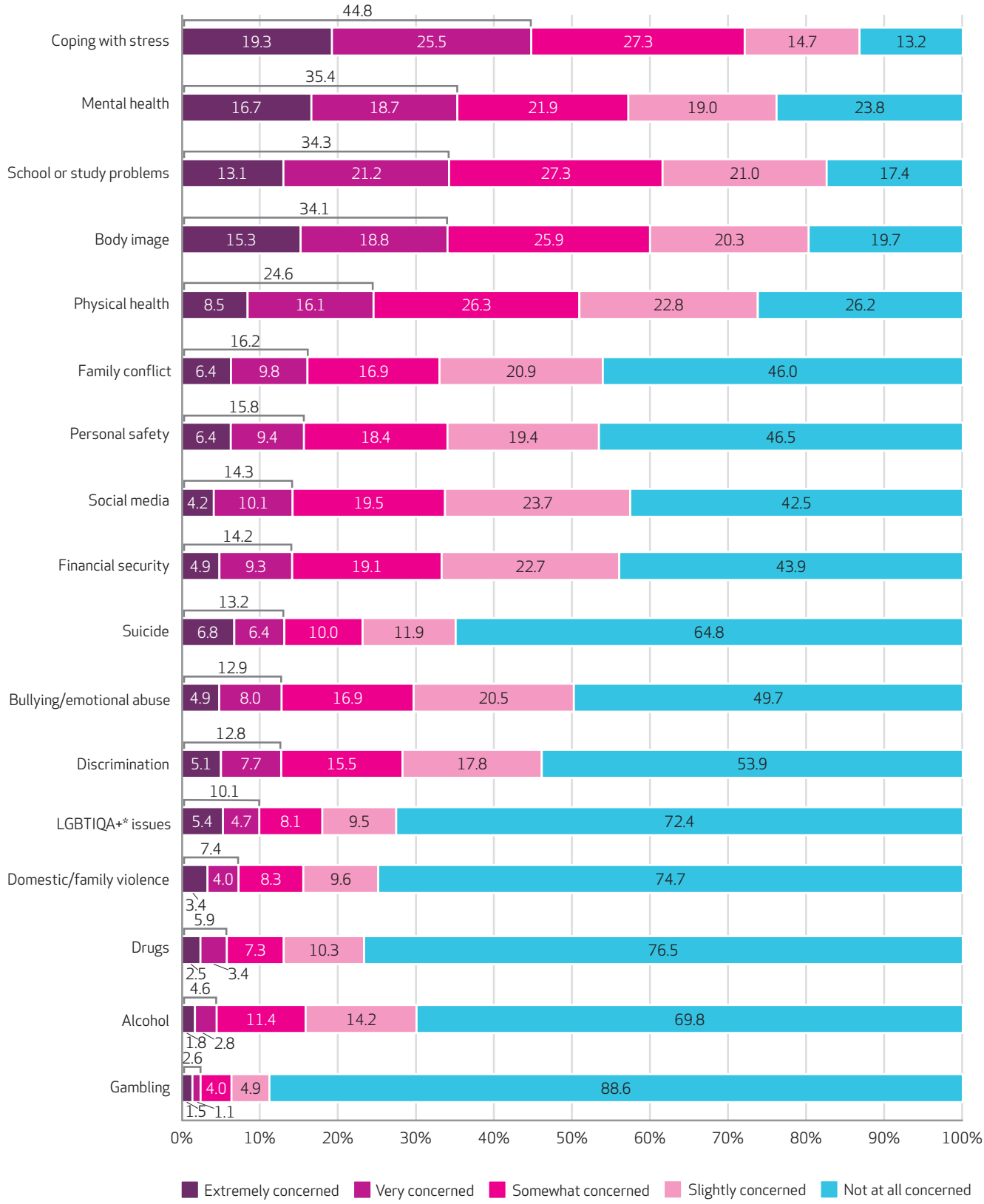
## What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Young people were asked to indicate how concerned they were about a number of issues over the past year, as shown in Figure 4.5. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*.

The top three issues of personal concern for young people from NSW were *coping with stress*, *mental health* and *school or study problems*. The next most concerning issues were *body image* and *physical health*.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with more than four in 10 (44.8%) respondents from NSW indicating they were *extremely* or *very concerned* about this issue.
- Around one third of respondents from NSW were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *mental health* (35.4%), *school or study problems* (34.3%) and *body image* (34.1%).
- Close to one quarter (24.6%) of NSW young people were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *physical health*.

Figure 4.5: Issues of personal concern to young people




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

## Gender differences

*Coping with stress* was the top issue of personal concern for both females and males from NSW, as shown in Table 4.5. For females from NSW, the second and third most concerning personal issues were *body image* and *mental health*. For NSW males the second and third most concerning personal issues were *mental health* and *school or study problems*. The proportion of female respondents from NSW who were concerned about these issues (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- More than double the proportion of females from NSW reported *coping with stress* was a major issue of concern (54.2% compared with 25.4% of males).
- Notably higher proportions of females than males were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *body image* (43.3% compared with 14.9%), *mental health* (42.1% compared with 20.9%) and *school or study problems* (40.7% compared with 20.1%).

Table 4.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

| Females | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **24.1** | **30.1** | 28.2 | 12.1 | 5.5 |
| **Mental health** | **20.3** | **21.8** | 23.2 | 19.2 | 15.5 |
| School or study problems | 16.2 | 24.5 | 28.2 | 19.8 | 11.3 |
| **Body image** | **19.9** | **23.4** | 28.3 | 18.5 | 9.8 |
| Physical health | 8.9 | 18.1 | 28.4 | 24.1 | 20.5 |
| Family conflict | 7.4 | 11.4 | 18.8 | 22.7 | 39.7 |
| Personal safety | 6.9 | 10.3 | 18.8 | 20.4 | 43.6 |
| Social media | 4.8 | 12.1 | 23.1 | 25.3 | 34.7 |
| Financial security | 5.1 | 10.2 | 20.6 | 24.2 | 39.9 |
| Suicide | 6.9 | 7.3 | 10.7 | 13.2 | 61.9 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 5.2 | 9.5 | 18.4 | 22.1 | 44.8 |
| Discrimination | 5.3 | 8.7 | 17.0 | 19.1 | 49.7 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 5.4 | 5.7 | 9.5 | 11.9 | 67.5 |
| Domestic/family violence | 3.3 | 4.2 | 8.4 | 10.0 | 74.1 |
| Drugs | 1.9 | 3.4 | 6.7 | 10.5 | 77.5 |
| Alcohol | 1.2 | 2.7 | 11.8 | 15.2 | 69.0 |
| Gambling | 0.9 | 0.8 | 3.0 | 4.2 | 91.1 |

Table 4.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

| Males | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **8.8** | **16.6** | 26.2 | 20.3 | 28.2 |
| **Mental health** | **8.0** | **12.9** | 19.6 | 18.8 | 40.8 |
| **School or study problems** | **6.3** | **13.8** | 25.7 | 24.7 | 29.6 |
| Body image | 5.3 | 9.6 | 22.1 | 23.9 | 39.1 |
| Physical health | 7.1 | 12.3 | 22.0 | 20.7 | 37.9 |
| Family conflict | 3.7 | 6.4 | 13.0 | 17.6 | 59.2 |
| Personal safety | 4.5 | 7.3 | 17.3 | 17.6 | 53.2 |
| Social media | 2.6 | 5.3 | 12.7 | 20.0 | 59.4 |
| Financial security | 4.0 | 7.4 | 15.7 | 20.4 | 52.4 |
| Suicide | 5.4 | 3.9 | 8.6 | 9.4 | 72.8 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 3.3 | 4.9 | 13.7 | 17.8 | 60.4 |
| Discrimination | 3.6 | 5.3 | 12.6 | 15.7 | 62.8 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 3.2 | 2.0 | 5.2 | 5.4 | 84.3 |
| Domestic/family violence | 2.5 | 3.5 | 7.6 | 8.7 | 77.7 |
| Drugs | 3.1 | 3.4 | 7.9 | 9.6 | 76.0 |
| Alcohol | 2.2 | 2.6 | 10.2 | 12.7 | 72.4 |
| Gambling | 2.0 | 1.4 | 5.5 | 6.1 | 85.1 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of NSW frequency.
*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

## Have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people were asked whether they had been treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Nearly three in 10 (28.2%) young people from NSW reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A higher proportion of NSW females than males reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (31.5% compared with 20.0%).

## Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify reasons for being treated unfairly from a list of suggested items. Table 4.6 shows that, of the 28.2% of NSW respondents who had been treated unfairly in the past year, four in 10 (41.9%) reported the unfair treatment was due to their *gender*. Over one third (34.5%) indicated they were treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background*, while more than one quarter (26.2%) stated they were treated unfairly due to their *mental health*.

### Gender differences

There were some notable differences in female and male responses to the question regarding the reasons for unfair treatment, as shown in Table 4.6. Of the 28.2% of young people from NSW who had been treated unfairly in the past year:

- More than double the proportion of females from NSW had been treated unfairly due to their *gender* (47.2% compared with 20.9% of males).
- A notably higher proportion of NSW females than males reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *mental health* (26.0% compared with 20.2%) and their *age* (21.7% compared with 17.0%).
- Conversely, double the proportion of males from NSW reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *disability* (10.8% compared with 5.3% of females).

Table 4.6: Reasons for being treated unfairly

| | National % | NSW % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | **41.0** | **41.9** | **47.2** | **20.9** |
| **Race/cultural background** | **30.4** | **34.5** | **34.8** | **38.7** |
| **Mental health** | **26.0** | **26.2** | **26.0** | **20.2** |
| Age | 21.0 | 21.0 | 21.7 | 17.0 |
| Sexuality | 19.4 | 18.4 | 16.3 | 17.0 |
| Religion | 13.8 | 16.3 | 15.5 | **20.2** |
| Other | 14.4 | 12.4 | 10.1 | 18.5 |
| Financial background | 9.0 | 8.0 | 7.2 | 8.9 |
| Disability | 7.5 | 7.5 | 5.3 | 10.8 |

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

## Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Young people were asked whether they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Nearly six in 10 (56.9%) young people from NSW reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year. A much higher proportion of NSW females than males reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (62.2% compared with 45.8%).

## What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

Young people who reported they had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year were asked to identify from a list of reasons why the person was being treated unfairly. Table 4.7 shows that, of the 56.9% of respondents from NSW who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 64.8% reported they witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *race/cultural background*. Almost half (49.0%) of respondents from NSW indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality*. Four in 10 (39.3%) respondents from NSW who had witnessed unfair treatment reported it was due to a person's *gender*.

### Gender differences

As shown in Table 4.7, the three most frequently witnessed reasons for unfair treatment for NSW females and males were consistent with NSW results.

- A notably higher proportion of NSW females than males reported they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality* (53.0% compared with 37.1%), due to a person's *gender* (41.7% compared with 30.7%) and due to a person's *race/cultural background* (67.9% compared with 58.1%).

Table 4.7: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

| | National % | NSW % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race/cultural background** | **62.0** | **64.8** | **67.9** | **58.1** |
| **Sexuality** | **49.4** | **49.0** | **53.0** | **37.1** |
| **Gender** | **40.5** | **39.3** | **41.7** | **30.7** |
| Disability | 32.2 | 31.2 | 32.3 | 27.6 |
| Religion | 28.8 | 31.2 | 32.9 | 27.3 |
| Mental health | 28.9 | 30.5 | 31.5 | 26.3 |
| Financial background | 18.7 | 19.6 | 20.4 | 16.4 |
| Age | 17.5 | 17.6 | 17.8 | 15.6 |
| Other | 5.3 | 4.6 | 3.7 | 6.4 |

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

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

Respondents were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 4.6 shows the percentage of respondents from NSW who indicated they would go to the particular source for support.

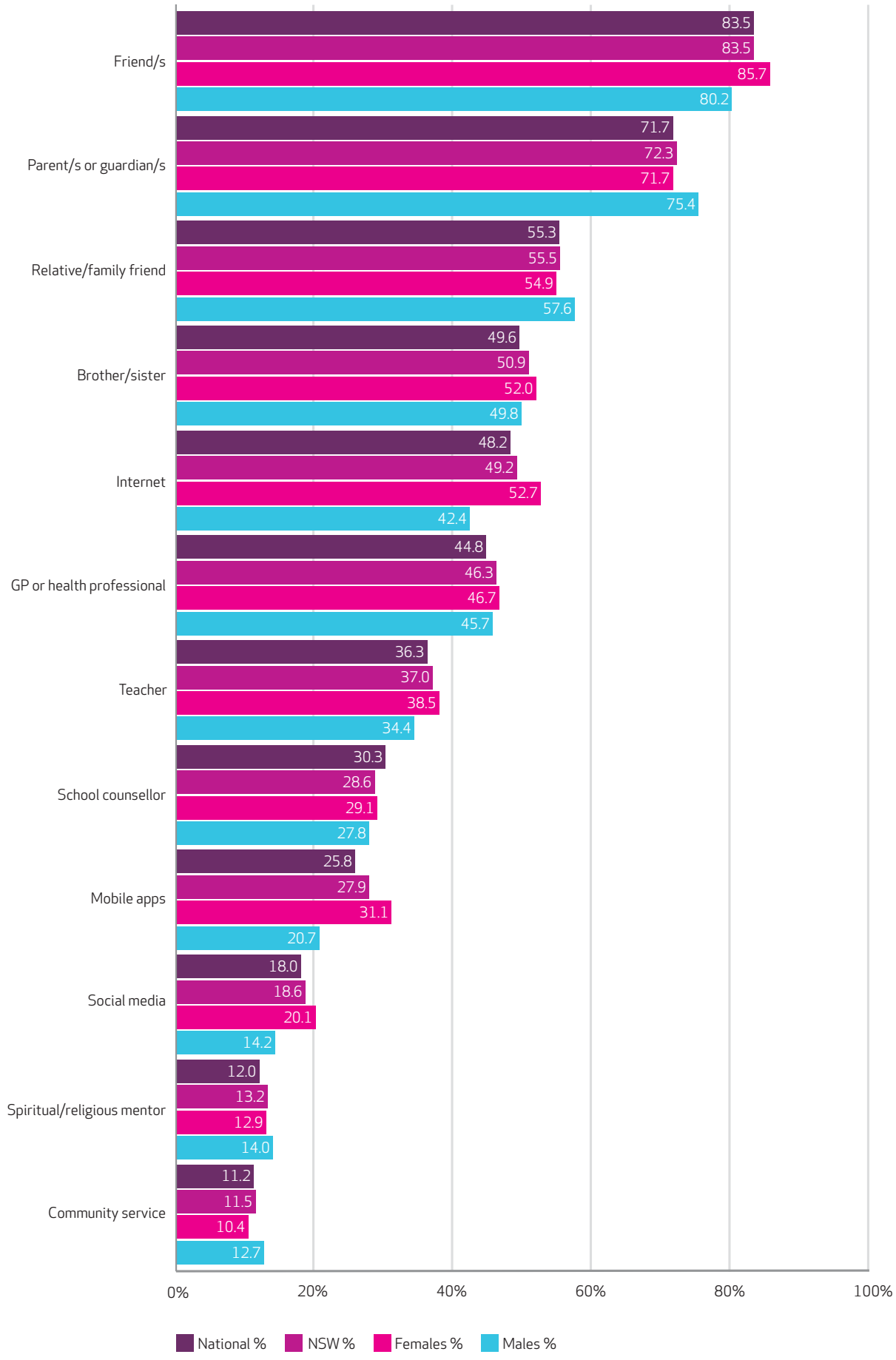
- *Friend/s* (83.5%), *parent/s or guardian/s* (72.3%) and *relative/family friend* (55.5%) were the three most frequently cited sources of help for young people from NSW.
- Half of young people from NSW indicated they would go to their *brother/sister* (50.9%), the *internet* (49.2%) or a *GP or health professional* (46.3%) for support with important issues in their lives.
- Almost four in 10 (37.0%) young people from NSW would turn to a *teacher* as a source of help with important issues

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 4.6, the top three sources of help for both genders were consistent with the NSW results.

- A higher proportion of females from NSW indicated they would turn to their *friend/s* for help with important issues (85.7% compared with 80.2% of males), whereas slightly higher proportions of NSW males than females stated they would go to their *parent/s or guardian/s* (75.4% compared with 71.7%) or to a *relative/family friend* (57.6% compared with 54.9%).
- A higher proportion of females than males from NSW would turn to *mobile apps* (31.1% compared with 20.7%) or the *internet* (52.7% compared with 42.4%) for support with important issues in their lives.

Figure 4.6: Where young people go for help with important issues




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

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

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 4.8. In 2020, the top three issues identified by young people from NSW were *equity and discrimination*, *COVID-19* and *the environment*.

- Four in 10 (42.5%) young people from NSW indicated that *equity and discrimination* is an important issue in Australia today.
- One third of respondents from NSW reported *COVID-19* (36.2%), *the environment* (32.7%) and *mental health* (32.6%) were important national issues.
- Since 2019, the proportion of those from NSW reporting *equity and discrimination* as a key national issue has increased from 23.8% to 42.5%. Conversely, concerns about *alcohol and drugs* and *mental health* have decreased since 2019.

### Gender differences

The most important issues for females from NSW were *equity and discrimination*, *mental health* and *the environment*. For males, the top three most important issues were *COVID-19*, *equity and discrimination* and *the environment*.

- Notably higher proportions of NSW females than males identified *equity and discrimination* (46.7% compared with 33.5%), *mental health* (37.0% compared with 24.7%) and *the environment* (36.2% compared with 26.4%) as important issues facing Australia today.
- Conversely, higher proportions of NSW males than females regarded *COVID-19* (42.8% compared with 33.4%) and *alcohol and drugs* (13.4% compared with 7.9%) as key issues in Australia.

Table 4.8: Most important issues in Australia today

| | National 2020 % | NSW 2020 % | Females % | Males % | NSW 2019 % | NSW 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Equity and discrimination** | **40.2** | **42.5** | **46.7** | **33.5** | **23.8** | **22.1** |
| **COVID-19** | **38.8** | **36.2** | 33.4 | **42.8** | - | - |
| **The environment** | 29.8 | **32.7** | **36.2** | **26.4** | **36.0** | 9.6 |
| Mental health | **30.6** | 32.6 | **37.0** | 24.7 | **38.8** | **45.3** |
| The economy and financial matters | 15.3 | 14.6 | 13.6 | 17.0 | 14.6 | 12.1 |
| Alcohol and drugs | 10.5 | 9.6 | 7.9 | 13.4 | 19.6 | **26.1** |
| Crime, safety and violence | 9.3 | 9.0 | 9.1 | 8.5 | 12.0 | 12.9 |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues | 6.2 | 8.3 | 10.3 | 4.1 | 2.6 | 3.8 |
| Education | 7.0 | 7.3 | 7.3 | 7.6 | 9.2 | 8.6 |
| Politics | 7.5 | 7.3 | 5.9 | 10.3 | 10.4 | 5.3 |

Note: Items are listed in order of NSW frequency.

## What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities they had been involved in over the past year from the list of options shown in Table 4.9.

- The top three activities for young people from NSW were *sports (as a participant)* (71.1%), *sports (as a spectator)* (59.2%) and *arts/cultural/music activities* (46.7%).
- Close to half (46.4%) of respondents from NSW reported they had participated in *volunteer work* in the past year.
- Almost four in 10 (37.5%) young people from NSW indicated they had taken part in *student leadership activities*.

## Gender differences

In line with NSW results, *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)* were the top two activities for both NSW females and males. While *arts/cultural/music activities* was the third most reported activity for females from NSW, *volunteer work* was the third highest for males.

- Higher proportions of male respondents from NSW reported taking part in *sports (as a spectator)* (66.1% compared with 56.0% of females).
- Conversely, higher proportions of females than males from NSW participated in *arts/cultural/music activities* (52.5% compared with 35.2%) and *student leadership activities* (41.7% compared with 29.7%) in the past year.

Table 4.9: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

| | National % | NSW % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sports (as a participant)** | **70.7** | **71.1** | **71.4** | **71.5** |
| **Sports (as a spectator)** | **62.1** | **59.2** | **56.0** | **66.1** |
| **Arts/cultural/music activities** | **43.9** | **46.7** | **52.5** | 35.2 |
| Volunteer work | 43.3 | 46.4 | 49.8 | **40.3** |
| Student leadership activities | 34.0 | 37.5 | 41.7 | 29.7 |
| Youth groups/activities | 25.6 | 27.7 | 28.8 | 25.7 |
| Religious groups/activities | 23.6 | 27.6 | 29.9 | 23.3 |
| Environmental groups | 14.8 | 15.2 | 16.4 | 12.0 |
| Political groups/organisations | 8.8 | 10.1 | 10.5 | 8.6 |

Note: Items are listed in order of NSW frequency.

## How stressed are young people?

For the first time in 2020, young people were asked to report on how much of the time they felt stressed in the past four weeks. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *all of the time* to *none of the time*. Table 4.10 shows that almost half (45.5%) of young people from NSW felt stressed either *all of the time* or *most of the time*.

- More than double the proportion of female respondents from NSW felt stressed *all of the time* or *most of the time* (54.3% compared with 26.8% of males).
- Conversely, more than double the proportion of males from NSW felt stressed *a little of the time* or *none of the time* (39.7% compared with 14.6% of females).

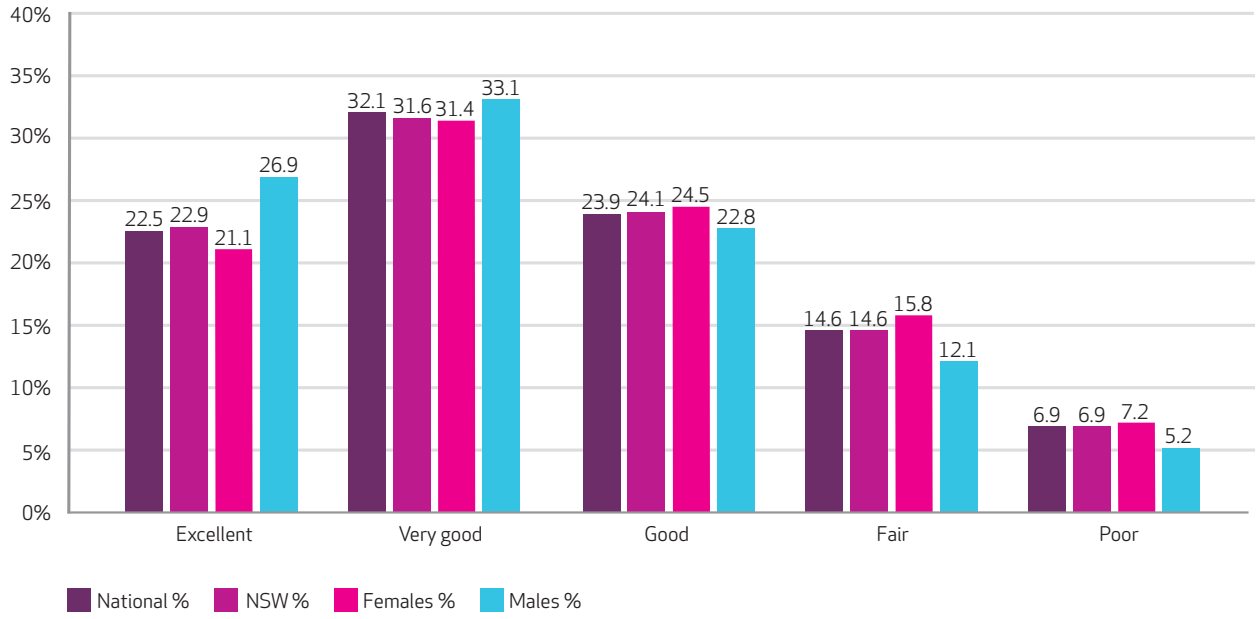
Table 4.10: How stressed are young people?

| | National % | NSW % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| All of the time | 11.6 | 13.3 | 15.7 | 7.4 |
| Most of the time | 31.0 | 32.2 | 38.6 | 19.4 |
| Some of the time | 32.4 | 32.0 | 31.2 | 33.5 |
| A little of the time | 19.7 | 18.1 | 13.0 | 29.7 |
| None of the time | 5.3 | 4.5 | 1.6 | 10.0 |

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

Respondents were asked to rate their family's ability to get along with one another. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 4.7 shows that the majority of respondents from NSW rated their family's ability to get along very positively: 22.9% rated it as *excellent* and 31.6% rated it as *very good*. However, more than one in five (21.5%) young people from NSW indicated their family's ability to get along was either *fair* (14.6%) or *poor* (6.9%). A higher proportion of male respondents rated their family's ability to get along as *excellent* or *very good* (60.0% compared with 52.5% of females), while a higher proportion of females rated their family's ability to get along as *fair* or *poor* (23.0% compared with 17.3% of males).

Figure 4.7: Family's ability to get along with one another




## How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 indicates that they felt *very sad* and 10 indicates that they felt *very happy*. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100, in which 100 is the happiest. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes *happy/very happy*; 40-60 signifies *not happy or sad*; and 0-30 indicates *very sad/sad*. As Table 4.11 shows, the majority (57.9%) of young people from NSW responded in the 70-100 range, which indicates most young people felt happy overall with their lives. A notably higher proportion of males from NSW reported feeling *happy/very happy* with their lives as a whole (64.4% compared with 55.7% of females), whereas a slightly greater proportion of females indicated they felt *very sad/sad* (11.6% compared with 8.5% of males).

Table 4.11: How happy are young people?

| | National % | NSW % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Happy/very happy (70-100) | 58.6 | 57.9 | 55.7 | 64.4 |
| Not happy or sad (40-60) | 30.7 | 31.0 | 32.7 | 27.2 |
| Very sad/sad (0-30) | 10.7 | 11.1 | 11.6 | 8.5 |

## How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked to describe their feelings when they thought about the future. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 4.12 shows that the majority of young people from NSW felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future.

- More than half (54.9%) felt either *very positive* (12.2%) or *positive* (42.7%) about the future.
- Over one in seven (15.4%) young people from NSW indicated they felt *negative* (11.5%) or *very negative* (3.9%) about the future.
- A higher proportion of males from NSW reported feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future (61.1% compared with 52.8% of females).

Table 4.12: Feelings about the future

| | National 2020 % | NSW 2020 % | Females % | Males % | NSW 2019 % | NSW 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very positive | 12.3 | 12.2 | 10.0 | 16.8 | 13.3 | 16.0 |
| Positive | 43.2 | 42.7 | 42.8 | 44.3 | 44.6 | 45.2 |
| Neither positive nor negative | 30.5 | 29.8 | 30.8 | 27.1 | 29.9 | 28.7 |
| Negative | 10.5 | 11.5 | 13.1 | 7.8 | 9.2 | 7.0 |
| Very negative | 3.4 | 3.9 | 3.3 | 3.9 | 3.1 | 3.1 |

# Northern Territory



## Profile of respondents

A total of 418 young people from the Northern Territory (NT) aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2020*.

### Gender breakdown

Close to six in 10 (58.0%) respondents from the NT were female, 37.8% were male, 2.7% gender diverse and 1.5% preferred not to say.

### Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 43 (10.5%) respondents from the NT identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. A higher proportion of female respondents from the NT identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (12.8% compared with 5.4% of males).

### Cultural background

A total of 89 (21.8%) respondents from the NT stated they were born overseas and 106 (26.2%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 30 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Filipino/Tagalog, Greek, Indonesian, Malayalam and Shona.

Just under half (45.0%) of respondents from the NT stated that one or both of their parents were born overseas.

### Disability

A total of 28 (6.9%) respondents from the NT identified as living with disability. A higher proportion of males reported living with disability (8.9% compared with 5.2% of females). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, deafness or hearing impairment, learning disabilities and physical disabilities.

## Education

As indicated in Table 5.1, 79.6% of respondents from the NT were studying full-time, which is lower than the 88.0% of respondents studying full-time in 2019. A higher proportion of females from the NT reported studying full-time (87.6% compared with 71.9% of males). Conversely, a higher proportion of males than females from the NT reported they were studying part-time (12.4% compared with 5.6%) or not studying (15.7% compared with 6.9%).

Table 5.1: Participation in education

| | National % | NT % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Studying full-time | 86.6 | 79.6 | 87.6 | 71.9 |
| Studying part-time | 6.5 | 8.9 | 5.6 | 12.4 |
| Not studying | 6.8 | 11.5 | 6.9 | 15.7 |

Respondents from the NT who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in previous years, a majority of respondents from the NT reported they were either *very satisfied* (8.8%) or *satisfied* (50.3%) with their studies. One in 10 indicated they were *dissatisfied* (7.7%) or *very dissatisfied* (2.2%) with their studies. As shown in Table 5.2, a higher proportion of males than females from the NT reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* (64.5% compared with 57.9%), while a slightly higher proportion of females than males indicated they felt *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* (9.8% compared with 7.9%).

Table 5.2: Satisfaction with studies

| | National % | NT % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 10.4 | 8.8 | 4.2 | 17.3 |
| Satisfied | 56.7 | 50.3 | 53.7 | 47.2 |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 25.6 | 31.0 | 32.4 | 27.6 |
| Dissatisfied | 5.7 | 7.7 | 7.9 | 5.5 |
| Very dissatisfied | 1.5 | 2.2 | 1.9 | 2.4 |

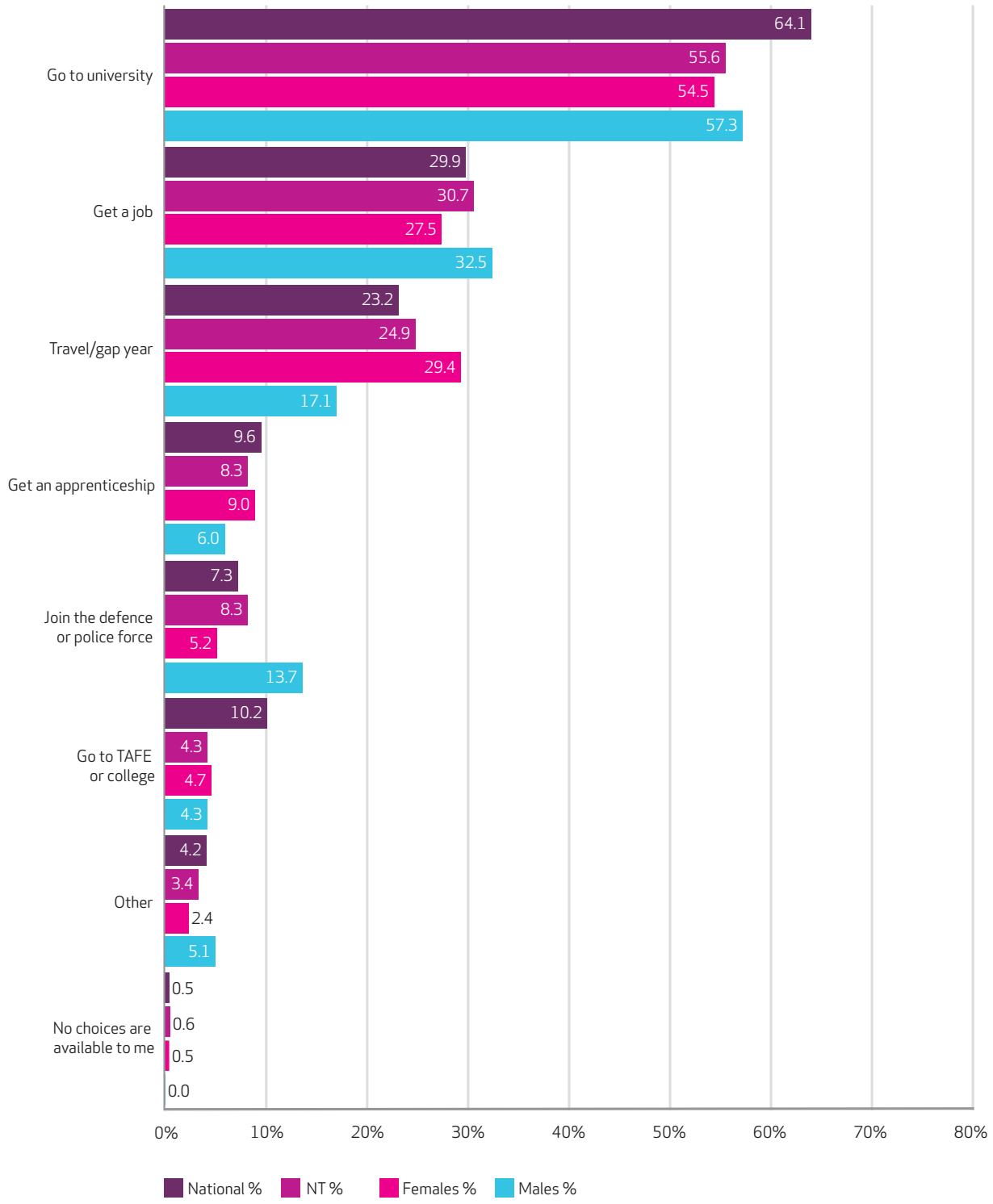
Of those still at school, the majority (96.3%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. A slightly higher proportion of males reported they did not intend to complete Year 12 (5.1% compared with 3.4% of females).

Respondents from the NT who were studying at school were asked what they planned to do after leaving school. Figure 5.1 shows that over half (55.6%) of respondents from the NT planned to *go to university* after school. Three in 10 (30.7%) respondents from the NT reported plans to *get a job* after school and one quarter (24.9%) indicated *travel/gap year* plans. A small proportion of young people planned to *get an apprenticeship* (8.3%) or *join the defence or police force* (8.3%), while 4.3% reported plans to *go to TAFE or college*. A minority (0.6%) of respondents indicated that *no choices are available to me* after finishing school.

## Gender differences

While the most frequently reported plan among both female and male respondents from the NT was to *go to university* after finishing school, a slightly higher proportion of males indicated they planned to do so (57.3% compared with 54.5% of females). A greater proportion of females than males from the NT reported *travel/gap year* plans (29.4% compared with 17.1%) or plans to *get an apprenticeship* (9.0% compared with 6.0%) after leaving school. Conversely, a greater proportion of males reported plans to *get a job* (32.5% compared with 27.5% of females). Almost three times the proportion of males from the NT indicated they were planning to *join the defence or police force* after school (13.7% compared with 5.2% of females).

Figure 5.1: Plans after leaving school

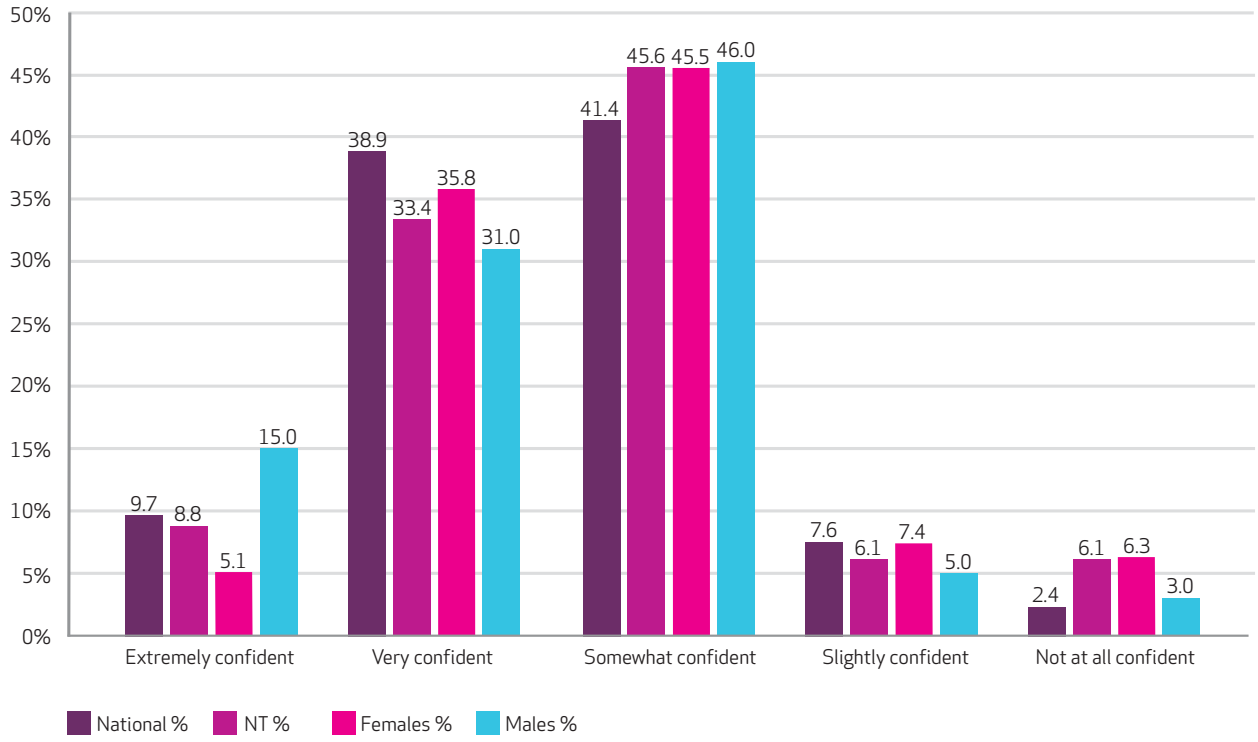



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of NT frequency.

## How confident are young people in achieving their study/work goals?

Respondents from the NT were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after finishing school. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. As shown in Figure 5.2, around four in 10 (42.2%) NT respondents indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study/work goals: 8.8% reported they were *extremely confident* and 33.4% stated they were *very confident*. However, one in eight (12.2%) young people from the NT were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals: 6.1% of young people indicated they were *slightly confident*, while 6.1% were *not at all confident*. A higher proportion of male respondents reported they were *extremely* or *very confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school (46.0% compared with 40.9% of females).

Figure 5.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals




## Employment

Respondents from the NT were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average how many hours they worked per week. Table 5.3 shows participation in paid employment among respondents from the NT. A very small proportion of young people from the NT who reported paid employment were employed full-time (1.2%). This is unsurprising given the high proportion of respondents to the *Youth Survey* who were still at school. Close to half (46.4%) of respondents from the NT reported they were employed part-time. Over half (52.4%) of respondents indicated they were not in paid employment: 31.4% stated they were looking for work, while 21.0% were neither working nor looking for work. The proportion of respondents from the NT in full-time employment in 2020 is slightly lower than in 2019 (1.2% compared with 2.6%).

### Gender differences

A higher proportion of female respondents from the NT reported part-time employment (53.8% compared with 38.0% of males). Female and male respondents were employed full-time at the same proportions (1.3% for both). A greater proportion of male respondents from the NT were not employed (60.6% compared with 44.9% of females).

Table 5.3: Participation in paid employment

| | National % | NT % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employed full-time | 0.6 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.3 |
| Employed part-time | 40.5 | 46.4 | 53.8 | 38.0 |
| Not in paid employment, looking for work | 34.7 | 31.4 | 27.1 | 35.3 |
| Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work | 24.2 | 21.0 | 17.8 | 25.3 |

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

## What would help young people secure a job?

Respondents from the NT who were looking for work were asked to indicate from a number of factors, what might help them secure a job, as shown in Figure 5.3.

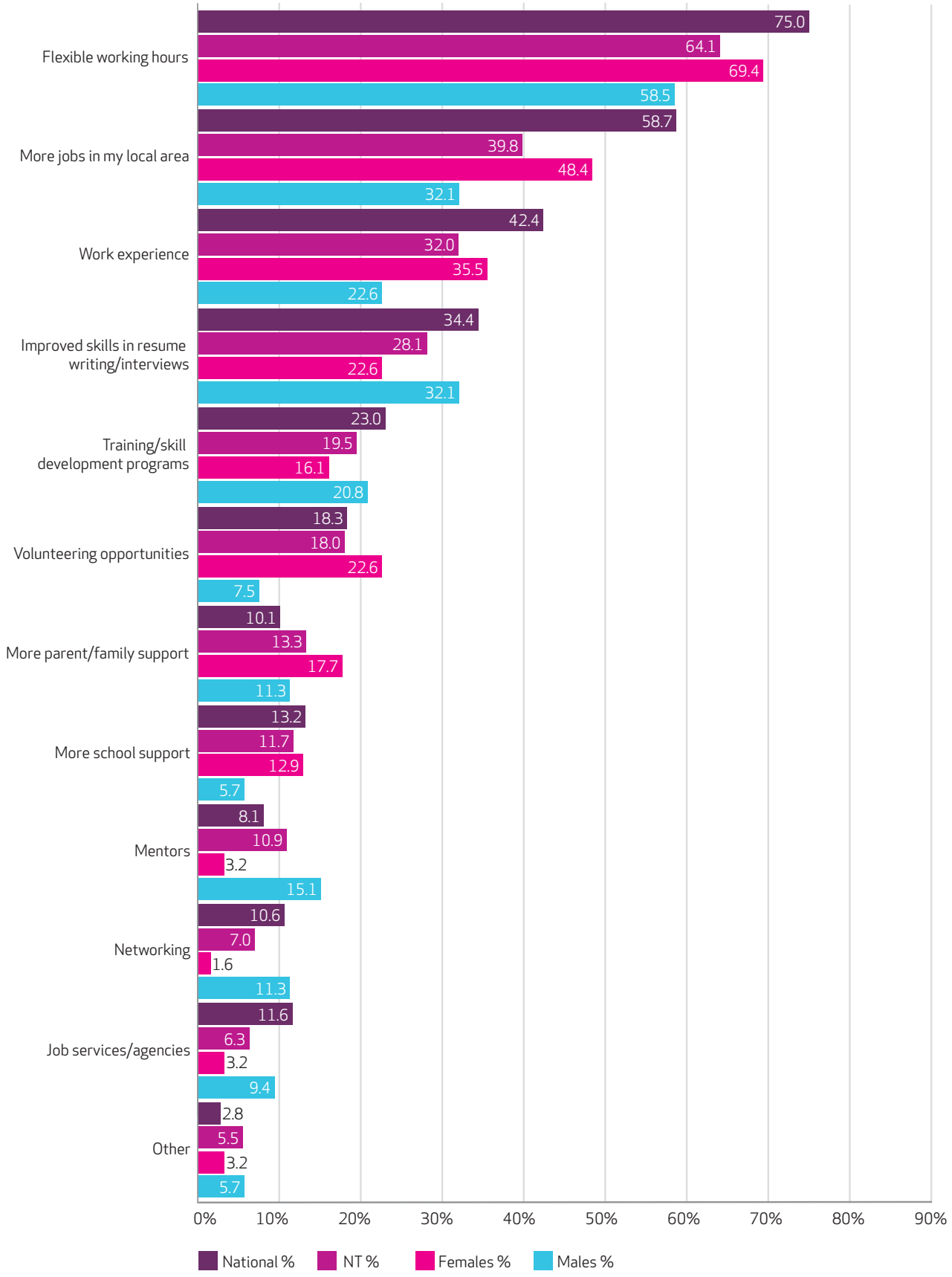
- *Flexible working hours* (64.1%), *more jobs in my local area* (39.8%) and *work experience* (32.0%) were the top factors in helping young people from the NT secure a job.
- Close to three in 10 (28.1%) respondents from the NT saw *improved skills in resume writing/interviews* as an important factor in helping them secure a job.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 5.3, the top three factors to securing work for females from the NT were *flexible working hours* (69.4%), *more jobs in my local area* (48.4%) and *work experience* (35.5%). For males the top factors were *flexible working hours* (58.5%), *improved skills in resume writing/interviews* (32.1%) and *more jobs in my local area* (32.1%).

- Three times the proportion of female respondents from the NT saw *volunteering opportunities* as a factor to securing a job (22.6% compared with 7.5% of males).
- Higher proportions of NT males than females reported *mentors* (15.1% compared with 3.2%) and *networking* (11.3% compared with 1.6%) were factors to securing a job.

Figure 5.3: Factors to securing a job




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

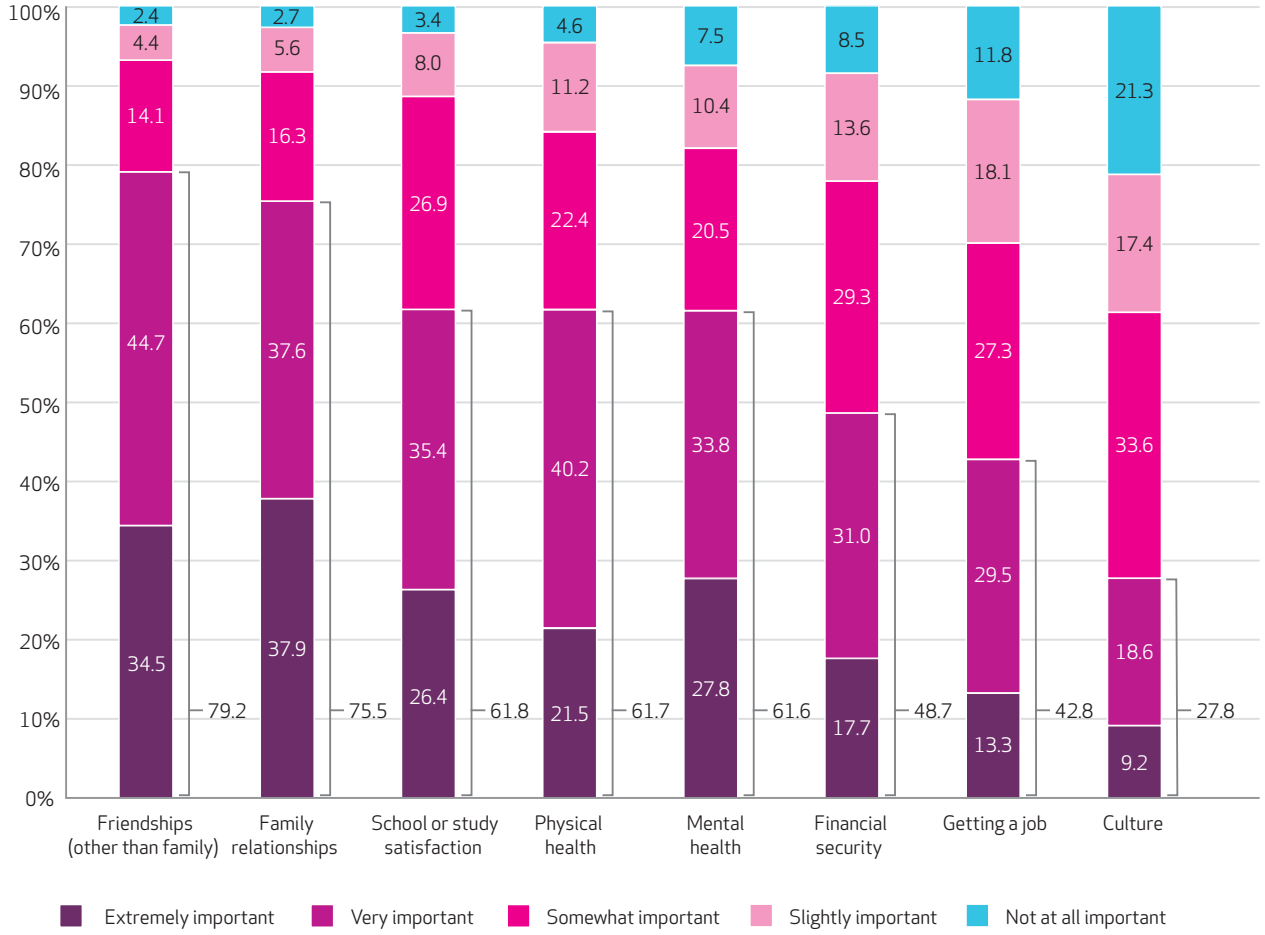
## What do young people value?

Young people from the NT were asked how important a number of items had been in their lives over the past year. Responses for these items were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely important* to *not at all important*.

As shown in Figure 5.4, the three most highly valued items for respondents from the NT were *friendships (other than family)*, *family relationships* and *school or study satisfaction*. The next most highly valued items were *physical health* and *mental health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were considered *extremely* or *very important* by 79.2% of respondents from the NT (*extremely important*: 34.5%; *very important*: 44.7%).
- Three quarters (75.5%) of respondents from the NT highly valued *family relationships* (*extremely important*: 37.9%; *very important*: 37.6%).
- Around six in 10 respondents from the NT placed a high value upon *school or study satisfaction* (61.8%), *physical health* (61.7%) and *mental health* (61.6%).

Figure 5.4: What young people value




Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

### Gender differences

*Friendships (other than family)* and *family relationships* were rated as the two most important items by both NT females and males, as shown in Table 5.4. The third most highly valued item for females was *mental health*, while for males it was *physical health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were rated *extremely* or *very important* by more than eight in 10 (82.4%) females and more than seven in 10 (74.7%) males from the NT.
- Higher proportions of NT females than males valued *culture* (31.6% compared with 21.9%) and *family relationships* (79.0% compared with 69.8%).
- A greater proportion of NT males placed a high value on *physical health* (67.5% compared with 58.6% of females).

Table 5.4: What young people value by gender

| Females | Extremely important % | Very important % | Somewhat important % | Slightly important % | Not at all important % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **35.8** | **46.6** | 11.2 | 5.6 | 0.9 |
| **Family relationships** | **39.1** | **39.9** | 15.0 | 4.3 | 1.7 |
| School or study satisfaction | 28.3 | 34.3 | 29.2 | 7.3 | 0.9 |
| Physical health | 19.8 | 38.8 | 24.1 | 15.1 | 2.2 |
| **Mental health** | **26.1** | **37.2** | 22.2 | 10.7 | 3.8 |
| Financial security | 15.4 | 33.8 | 29.9 | 13.7 | 7.3 |
| Getting a job | 11.1 | 33.3 | 27.4 | 19.2 | 9.0 |
| Culture | 10.7 | 20.9 | 32.5 | 19.2 | 16.7 |
| **Males** | **Extremely important %** | **Very important %** | **Somewhat important %** | **Slightly important %** | **Not at all important %** |
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **30.7** | **44.0** | 18.7 | 2.7 | 4.0 |
| **Family relationships** | **35.6** | **34.2** | 18.8 | 8.1 | 3.4 |
| School or study satisfaction | 26.7 | 34.0 | 24.0 | 9.3 | 6.0 |
| **Physical health** | **24.3** | **43.2** | 19.6 | 6.8 | 6.1 |
| Mental health | 28.7 | 28.7 | 21.3 | 10.0 | 11.3 |
| Financial security | 18.8 | 26.8 | 30.2 | 13.4 | 10.7 |
| Getting a job | 17.3 | 24.0 | 28.0 | 14.7 | 16.0 |
| Culture | 7.3 | 14.6 | 33.1 | 17.9 | 27.2 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of NT frequency.

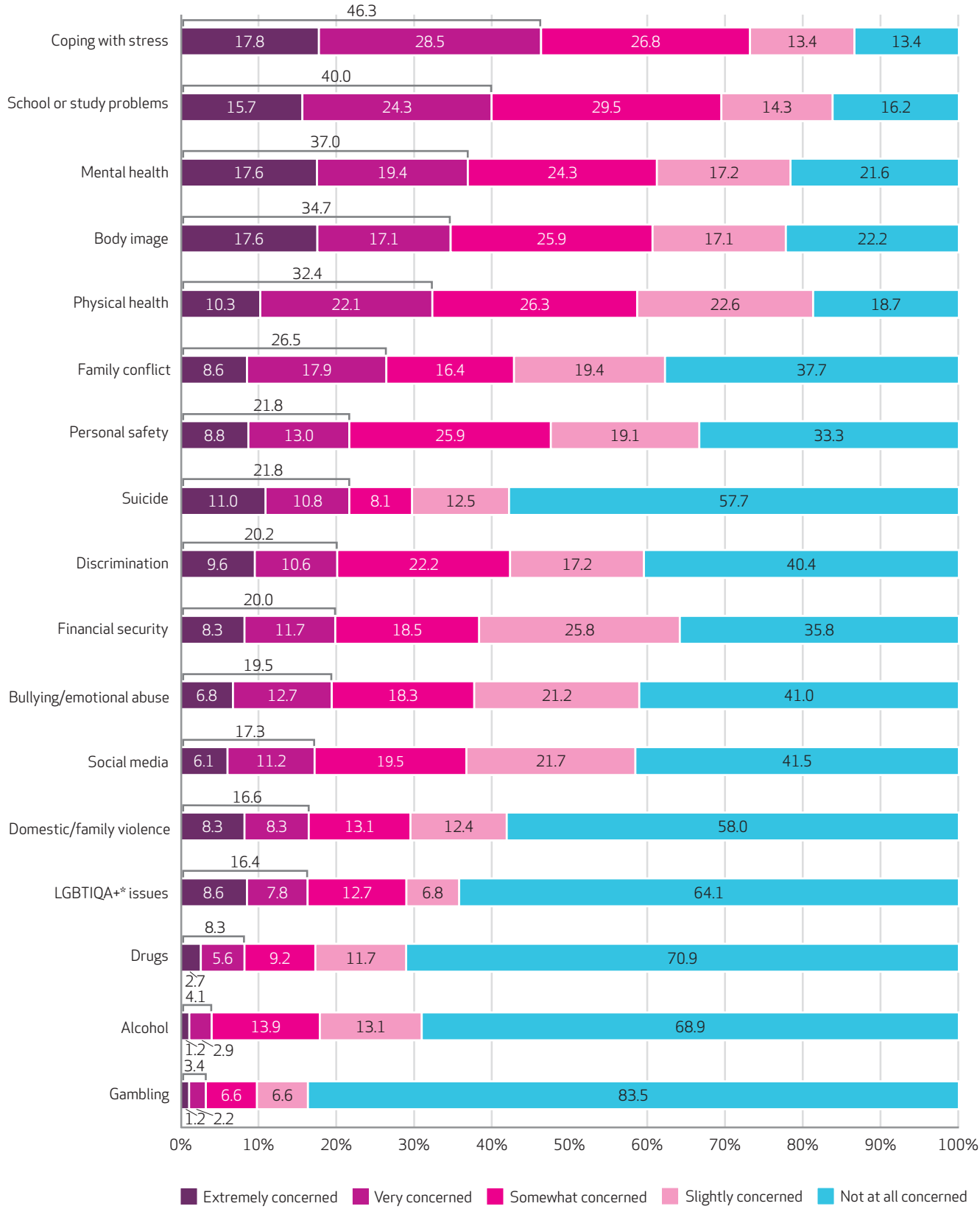
## What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Young people were asked to indicate how concerned they were about a number of issues over the past year, as shown in Figure 5.5. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*.

The top three issues of personal concern for young people from the NT were *coping with stress, school or study problems* and *mental health*. The next most concerning issues were *body image* and *physical health*.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with close to half (46.3%) of respondents from the NT indicating they were *extremely* or *very concerned* about this issue.
- Around four in 10 respondents from the NT were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *school or study problems* (40.0%) and *mental health* (37.0%).
- Around one third of NT young people were concerned about *body image* (34.7%) and *physical health* (32.4%).

Figure 5.5: Issues of personal concern to young people




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

## Gender differences

*Coping with stress* was the top issue of personal concern for both females and males from the NT, as shown in Table 5.5. For females from the NT, the second and third most concerning personal issues were *body image* and *mental health*. For NT males the second and third most concerning personal issues were *physical health* and *school or study problems*. The proportion of female respondents from the NT who were concerned about these issues (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- A higher proportion of females from the NT reported *coping with stress* was a major issue of concern (53.6% compared with 36.7% of males).
- Notably higher proportions of NT females than males were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *body image* (45.7% compared with 16.9%), *mental health* (43.6% compared with 25.0%), *discrimination* (26.1% compared with 10.2%) and *domestic/family violence* (21.3% compared with 8.8%).

Table 5.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

| Females | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **23.0** | **30.6** | 28.9 | 10.6 | 6.8 |
| School or study problems | 18.6 | 24.7 | 30.7 | 15.2 | 10.8 |
| **Mental health** | **19.0** | **24.6** | 24.6 | 15.5 | 16.4 |
| **Body image** | **24.1** | **21.6** | 27.6 | 14.7 | 12.1 |
| Physical health | 8.7 | 22.1 | 29.9 | 24.2 | 15.2 |
| Family conflict | 10.3 | 21.1 | 19.4 | 23.3 | 25.9 |
| Personal safety | 8.2 | 12.9 | 28.4 | 19.8 | 30.6 |
| Suicide | 11.2 | 12.5 | 9.5 | 13.4 | 53.4 |
| Discrimination | 10.9 | 15.2 | 25.7 | 17.4 | 30.9 |
| Financial security | 6.4 | 14.1 | 18.8 | 27.8 | 32.9 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 8.5 | 15.4 | 25.2 | 20.1 | 30.8 |
| Social media | 7.7 | 12.0 | 23.2 | 23.2 | 33.9 |
| Domestic/family violence | 9.8 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 17.4 | 49.8 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 8.6 | 9.9 | 12.9 | 8.6 | 59.9 |
| Drugs | 3.0 | 5.5 | 8.1 | 15.7 | 67.7 |
| Alcohol | 0.4 | 5.1 | 14.9 | 14.9 | 64.7 |
| Gambling | 1.3 | 1.3 | 6.0 | 7.7 | 83.8 |

Table 5.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

| Males | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **10.2** | **26.5** | 22.4 | 17.7 | 23.1 |
| **School or study problems** | **10.9** | **23.1** | 28.6 | 14.3 | 23.1 |
| Mental health | 13.5 | 11.5 | 24.3 | 19.6 | 31.1 |
| Body image | 7.4 | 9.5 | 23.0 | 22.3 | 37.8 |
| **Physical health** | **12.9** | **21.8** | 21.1 | 21.1 | 23.1 |
| Family conflict | 5.4 | 14.3 | 11.6 | 13.6 | 55.1 |
| Personal safety | 8.8 | 14.2 | 20.9 | 18.9 | 37.2 |
| Suicide | 10.8 | 8.1 | 6.8 | 9.5 | 64.9 |
| Discrimination | 5.4 | 4.8 | 15.0 | 19.0 | 55.8 |
| Financial security | 10.1 | 8.1 | 18.2 | 23.0 | 40.5 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 4.1 | 8.8 | 7.5 | 21.1 | 58.5 |
| Social media | 4.1 | 10.1 | 16.2 | 18.2 | 51.4 |
| Domestic/family violence | 5.4 | 3.4 | 14.9 | 6.1 | 70.3 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 5.4 | 2.7 | 11.5 | 5.4 | 75.0 |
| Drugs | 2.7 | 4.7 | 10.1 | 6.8 | 75.7 |
| Alcohol | 2.7 | 0.0 | 11.6 | 10.9 | 74.8 |
| Gambling | 1.4 | 4.1 | 7.4 | 5.4 | 81.8 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of NT frequency.
*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

## Have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people were asked whether they had been treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Over one third (36.6%) of young people from the NT reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A much higher proportion of NT females reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (43.0% compared with 26.4% of males).

## Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify reasons for being treated unfairly from a list of suggested items. Table 5.6 shows that, of the 36.6% of NT respondents who had been treated unfairly in the past year, four in 10 (40.4%) reported the unfair treatment was due to their *gender*. Over one third (35.1%) indicated they were treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background*, while close to one quarter (22.5%) stated they were treated unfairly due to their *sexuality*.

### Gender differences

As shown in Table 5.6, of the 36.6% of young people from the NT who had been treated unfairly in the past year:

- More than double the proportion of females from the NT had been treated unfairly due to their *gender* (46.5% compared with 17.9% of males).
- A higher proportion of NT females than males reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *age* (26.7% compared with 5.1%), their *race/cultural background* (40.6% compared with 30.8%) and their *mental health* (21.8% compared with 12.8%).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of males than females from the NT reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *financial background* (12.8% compared with 6.9%), *religion* (25.6% compared with 19.8%) and *disability* (7.7% compared with 3.0%).

Table 5.6: Reasons for being treated unfairly

| | National % | NT % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | **41.0** | **40.4** | **46.5** | 17.9 |
| **Race/cultural background** | **30.4** | **35.1** | **40.6** | **30.8** |
| **Sexuality** | 19.4 | **22.5** | 18.8 | **20.5** |
| Age | 21.0 | 20.5 | **26.7** | 5.1 |
| Religion | 13.8 | 20.5 | 19.8 | **25.6** |
| Mental health | **26.0** | 19.9 | 21.8 | 12.8 |
| Other | 14.4 | 11.3 | 8.9 | **20.5** |
| Financial background | 9.0 | 8.6 | 6.9 | 12.8 |
| Disability | 7.5 | 4.0 | 3.0 | 7.7 |

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

## Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Young people were asked whether they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Almost two thirds (65.4%) of young people from the NT reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year. A much higher proportion of NT females than males reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (76.1% compared with 47.6%).

## What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

Young people who reported they had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year were asked to identify from a list of reasons why the person was being treated unfairly. Table 5.7 shows that, of the 65.4% of respondents from the NT who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 60.4% reported they witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *race/cultural background*. More than half (53.4%) of respondents from the NT reported they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality*. Four in 10 (41.0%) respondents from the NT who had witnessed unfair treatment reported it was due to a person's *gender*.

### Gender differences

As shown in Table 5.7, the three most frequently witnessed reasons for unfair treatment for NT females and males were consistent with NT results.

- The proportion of female respondents from the NT who reported witnessing unfair treatment was higher across all categories compared with males.
- Higher proportions of NT females than males reported they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality* (57.3% compared with 40.0%), a person's *disability* (31.5% compared 21.4%) and a person's *gender* (42.7% compared with 34.3%).

Table 5.7: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

| | National % | NT % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race/cultural background** | **62.0** | **60.4** | **61.8** | **58.6** |
| **Sexuality** | **49.4** | **53.4** | **57.3** | **40.0** |
| **Gender** | **40.5** | **41.0** | **42.7** | **34.3** |
| Disability | 32.2 | 29.9 | 31.5 | 21.4 |
| Religion | 28.8 | 29.9 | 31.5 | 27.1 |
| Mental health | 28.9 | 29.1 | 30.3 | 22.9 |
| Age | 17.5 | 16.4 | 18.0 | 14.3 |
| Financial background | 18.7 | 16.4 | 16.9 | 14.3 |
| Other | 5.3 | 4.9 | 5.6 | 2.9 |

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

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

Respondents were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 5.6 shows the percentage of respondents from the NT who indicated they would go to the particular source for support.

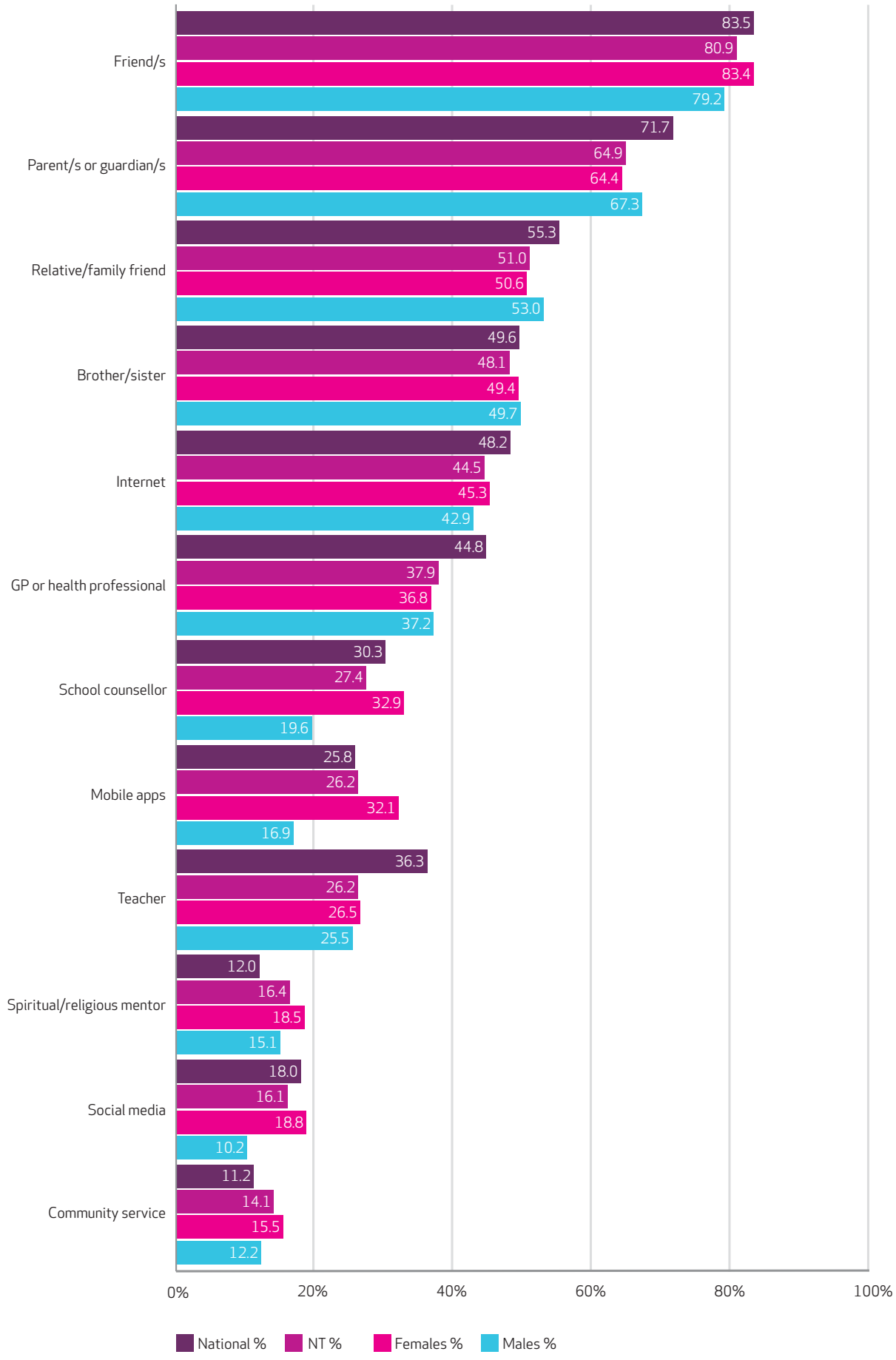
- *Friend/s* (80.9%), *parent/s or guardian/s* (64.9%) and *relative/family friend* (51.0%) were the three most frequently cited sources of help for young people from the NT.
- Close to half (48.1%) of young people from the NT indicated they would go to their *brother/sister* for support with important issues in their lives.
- Over four in 10 (44.5%) young people from the NT would turn to the *internet* as a source of help with important issues.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 5.6, the top three sources of help for both genders were consistent with the NT results.

- A higher proportion of females from the NT reported that they would turn to their *friend/s* for help with important issues (83.4% compared with 79.2% of males), whereas slightly higher proportions of NT males than females stated they would go to their *parent/s or guardian/s* (67.3% compared with 64.4%) or a *relative/family friend* (53.0% compared with 50.6%).
- Notably higher proportions of NT females than males would turn to *mobile apps* (32.1% compared with 16.9%) or a *school counsellor* (32.9% compared with 19.6%) for support with important issues in their lives.

Figure 5.6: Where young people go for help with important issues




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

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

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 5.8. In 2020, the top three issues identified by young people from the NT were *equity and discrimination*, *COVID-19* and *the environment*.

- Four in 10 (39.9%) young people from the NT reported that *equity and discrimination* is an important issue in Australia today.
- Over one third of respondents from the NT reported that *COVID-19* (35.0%) and *the environment* (34.7%) are important national issues.
- The proportion of those from the NT reporting *equity and discrimination* and *the environment* as key national issues has increased since 2019. Conversely, concerns about *alcohol and drugs* and *crime, safety and violence* have decreased since 2019.

### Gender differences

The most important issues for females from the NT were *equity and discrimination, the environment* and *COVID-19*. For males, the top three most important issues were *COVID-19*, *the environment* and *mental health*.

- More than double the proportion of NT females identified *equity and discrimination* as an important national issues (48.7% compared with 23.7% of males).
- Higher proportions of NT females than males reported *the environment* (37.2% compared with 31.4%) and *bullying* (8.0% compared with 2.5%) as important issues facing Australia today.
- Conversely, higher proportions of NT males than females regarded *education* (12.7% compared with 6.5%), *politics* (12.7% compared with 7.0%) and *alcohol and drugs* (13.6% compared with 8.0%) as key issues in Australia.

Table 5.8: Most important issues in Australia today

| | National 2020 % | NT 2020 % | Females % | Males % | NT 2019 % | NT 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Equity and discrimination** | **40.2** | **39.9** | **48.7** | 23.7 | **27.3** | **25.0** |
| **COVID-19** | **38.8** | **35.0** | **34.7** | **37.3** | - | - |
| **The environment** | 29.8 | **34.7** | **37.2** | **31.4** | **27.3** | 10.3 |
| Mental health | **30.6** | 26.8 | 27.6 | **24.6** | **29.5** | **39.7** |
| The economy and financial matters | 15.3 | 16.0 | 15.6 | 18.6 | 14.7 | 10.3 |
| Alcohol and drugs | 10.5 | 9.6 | 8.0 | 13.6 | **28.1** | **32.8** |
| Education | 7.0 | 9.6 | 6.5 | 12.7 | 7.6 | 11.2 |
| Crime, safety and violence | 9.3 | 9.0 | 9.5 | 9.3 | 18.3 | 16.4 |
| Politics | 7.5 | 8.5 | 7.0 | 12.7 | 9.4 | 5.2 |
| Bullying | 6.4 | 6.4 | 8.0 | 2.5 | 14.7 | 17.2 |
| Health | 6.5 | 6.4 | 7.5 | 5.1 | 5.8 | 6.9 |

Note: Items are listed in order of NT frequency.

## What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities they had been involved in over the past year from the list of options shown in Table 5.9.

- The top three activities for young people from the NT were *sports (as a participant)* (66.7%), *sports (as a spectator)* (57.2%) and *arts/cultural/music activities* (52.1%).
- Around four in 10 respondents from the NT reported they had participated in *volunteer work* (44.7%) and had taken part in *youth groups/activities* (38.9%) in the past year.

### Gender differences

In line with NT results, *sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *arts/cultural/music activities* were the top three activities for both NT females and males.

- A higher proportion of NT females reported participating in almost all activity types, except for *sports (as a spectator)* (58.4% compared with 58.5% of males).
- Higher proportions of NT females than males reported taking part in *arts/cultural/music activities* (56.9% compared with 42.5%) and *religious groups/activities* (37.4% compared with 24.1%).

Table 5.9: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

| | National % | NT % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sports (as a participant)** | **70.7** | **66.7** | **67.4** | **66.7** |
| **Sports (as a spectator)** | **62.1** | **57.2** | **58.4** | **58.5** |
| **Arts/cultural/music activities** | **43.9** | **52.1** | **56.9** | **42.5** |
| Volunteer work | 43.3 | 44.7 | 48.7 | 39.7 |
| Youth groups/activities | 25.6 | 38.9 | 41.3 | 34.2 |
| Student leadership activities | 34.0 | 34.6 | 36.6 | 34.7 |
| Religious groups/activities | 23.6 | 31.4 | 37.4 | 24.1 |
| Environmental groups | 14.8 | 23.2 | 26.0 | 17.1 |
| Political groups/organisations | 8.8 | 12.6 | 13.5 | 11.0 |

Note: Items are listed in order of NT frequency.

## How stressed are young people?

For the first time in 2020, young people were asked to report on how much of the time they felt stressed in the past four weeks. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *all of the time* to *none of the time*. Table 5.10 shows that more than four in 10 (42.1%) young people from the NT felt stressed either *all of the time* or *most of the time*.

- A higher proportion of female respondents from the NT felt stressed *all of the time* or *most of the time* (49.4% compared with 27.3% of males).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of males from the NT felt stressed *a little of the time* or *none of the time* (38.0% compared with 24.5% of females).

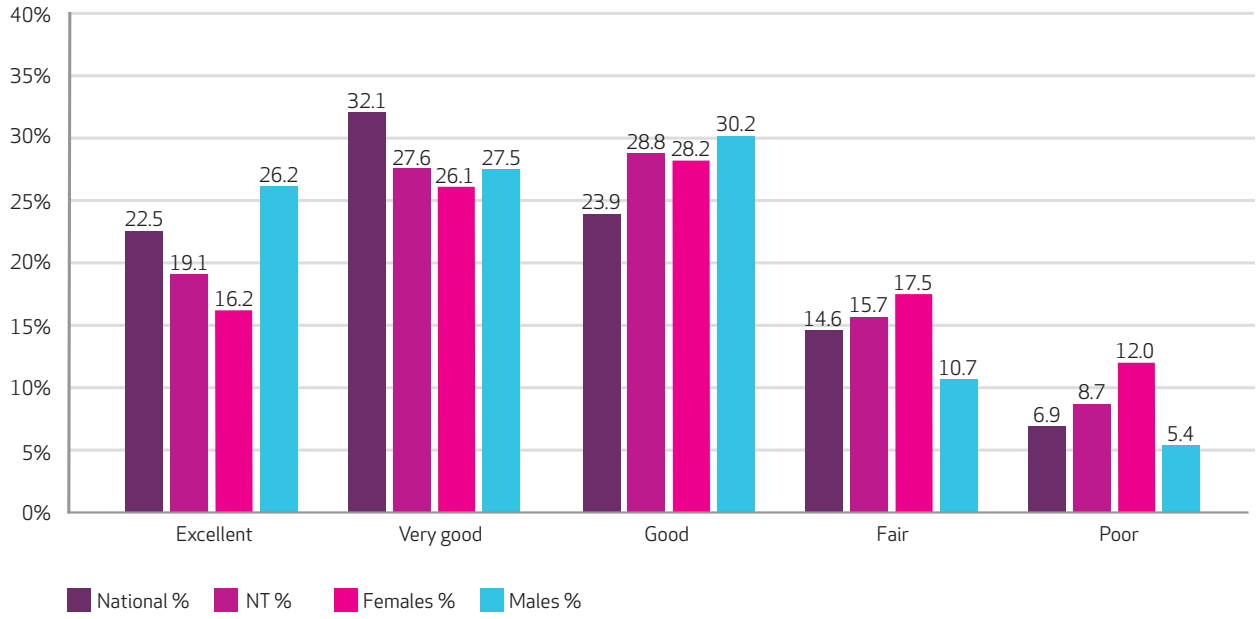
Table 5.10: How stressed are young people?

| | National % | NT % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| All of the time | 11.6 | 13.3 | 17.2 | 5.3 |
| Most of the time | 31.0 | 28.8 | 32.2 | 22.0 |
| Some of the time | 32.4 | 28.8 | 26.2 | 34.7 |
| A little of the time | 19.7 | 20.6 | 17.2 | 28.0 |
| None of the time | 5.3 | 8.5 | 7.3 | 10.0 |

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

Respondents were asked to rate their family's ability to get along with one another. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 5.7 shows that a large proportion of respondents from the NT rated their family's ability to get along very positively: 19.1% rated it as *excellent* and 27.6% rated it as *very good*. However, close to one quarter (24.4%) of young people from the NT indicated their family's ability to get along was either *fair* (15.7%) or *poor* (8.7%). A higher proportion of male respondents rated their family's ability to get along as *excellent* or *very good* (53.7% compared with 42.3% of females), while a higher proportion of females rated their family's ability to get along as *fair* or *poor* (29.5% compared with 16.1% of males).

Figure 5.7: Family's ability to get along with one another




## How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 indicates that they felt *very sad* and 10 indicates that they felt *very happy*. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100, in which 100 is the happiest. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes *happy/very happy*; 40-60 signifies *not happy or sad*; and 0-30 indicates *very sad/sad*. As Table 5.11 shows, the majority (52.8%) of young people from the NT responded in the 70-100 range, which indicates most young people felt happy overall with their lives. A higher proportion of males from the NT reported feeling *happy/very happy* with their lives as a whole (61.7% compared with 49.1% of females), whereas a greater proportion of females indicated they felt *very sad/sad* (16.2% compared with 8.1% of males).

Table 5.11: How happy are young people?

| | National % | NT % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Happy/very happy (70-100) | 58.6 | 52.8 | 49.1 | 61.7 |
| Not happy or sad (40-60) | 30.7 | 33.9 | 34.6 | 30.2 |
| Very sad/sad (0-30) | 10.7 | 13.3 | 16.2 | 8.1 |

## How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked to describe their feelings when they thought about the future. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 5.12 shows that a large proportion of young people from the NT felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future.

- Just under half (48.5%) of young people felt either *very positive* (13.1%) or *positive* (35.4%) about the future.
- Just under one in five (18.7%) young people from the NT reported that they felt *negative* (13.1%) or *very negative* (5.6%) about the future.
- A higher proportion of males from the NT reported feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future (53.7% compared with 47.8% of females).

Table 5.12: Feelings about the future

| | National 2020 % | NT 2020 % | Females % | Males % | NT 2019 % | NT 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very positive | 12.3 | 13.1 | 11.5 | 16.1 | 11.9 | 21.2 |
| Positive | 43.2 | 35.4 | 36.3 | 37.6 | 39.7 | 40.9 |
| Neither positive nor negative | 30.5 | 32.9 | 35.0 | 28.2 | 37.8 | 29.9 |
| Negative | 10.5 | 13.1 | 12.0 | 12.8 | 5.1 | 4.4 |
| Very negative | 3.4 | 5.6 | 5.1 | 5.4 | 5.4 | 3.6 |

# Queensland



## Profile of respondents

A total of 5,012 young people from Queensland (QLD) aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2020*.

### Gender breakdown

Over half (51.1%) of respondents from QLD were female, 46.0% were male, 1.4% gender diverse and 1.4% preferred not to say.

### Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 288 (5.7%) respondents from QLD identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 221 (4.4%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 31 (0.6%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.7% identified as both). Similar proportions of female and male respondents from QLD identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (5.9% and 5.3% respectively).

### Cultural background

A total of 715 (14.4%) respondents from QLD stated they were born overseas and 698 (14.1%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 70 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Chinese, Filipino/Tagalog, Afrikaans, Samoan and Mandarin.

Over one third (34.9%) of respondents from QLD stated that one or both of their parents were born overseas.

### Disability

A total of 338 (6.9%) respondents from QLD identified as living with disability. A greater proportion of males than females reported living with disability (7.8% compared with 5.6%). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): autism, learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), physical disabilities, anxiety disorder and mental illness or psychiatric disabilities.

## Education

As indicated in Table 6.1, 85.1% of respondents from QLD were studying full-time, which is lower than the 92.2% of respondents studying full-time in 2019. A higher proportion of females than males from QLD reported studying full-time (88.0% compared with 82.3%). Conversely, a higher proportion of males than females from QLD reported they were studying part-time (8.4% compared with 4.9%) or not studying (9.3% compared with 7.1%).

Table 6.1: Participation in education

| | National % | QLD % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Studying full-time | 86.6 | 85.1 | 88.0 | 82.3 |
| Studying part-time | 6.5 | 6.7 | 4.9 | 8.4 |
| Not studying | 6.8 | 8.2 | 7.1 | 9.3 |

Respondents from QLD who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in previous years, the majority of respondents from QLD reported they were either *very satisfied* (11.1%) or *satisfied* (57.3%) with their studies. Less than one in 10 indicated they were *dissatisfied* (5.5%) or *very dissatisfied* (1.2%). As shown in Table 6.2, a higher proportion of females from QLD reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* (70.8% compared with 66.8% of males), while a slightly higher proportion of males indicated they felt *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* (6.9% compared with 6.0% of females).

Table 6.2: Satisfaction with studies

| | National % | QLD % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 10.4 | 11.1 | 11.3 | 11.4 |
| Satisfied | 56.7 | 57.3 | 59.5 | 55.4 |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 25.6 | 25.0 | 23.1 | 26.4 |
| Dissatisfied | 5.7 | 5.5 | 5.3 | 5.4 |
| Very dissatisfied | 1.5 | 1.2 | 0.7 | 1.5 |

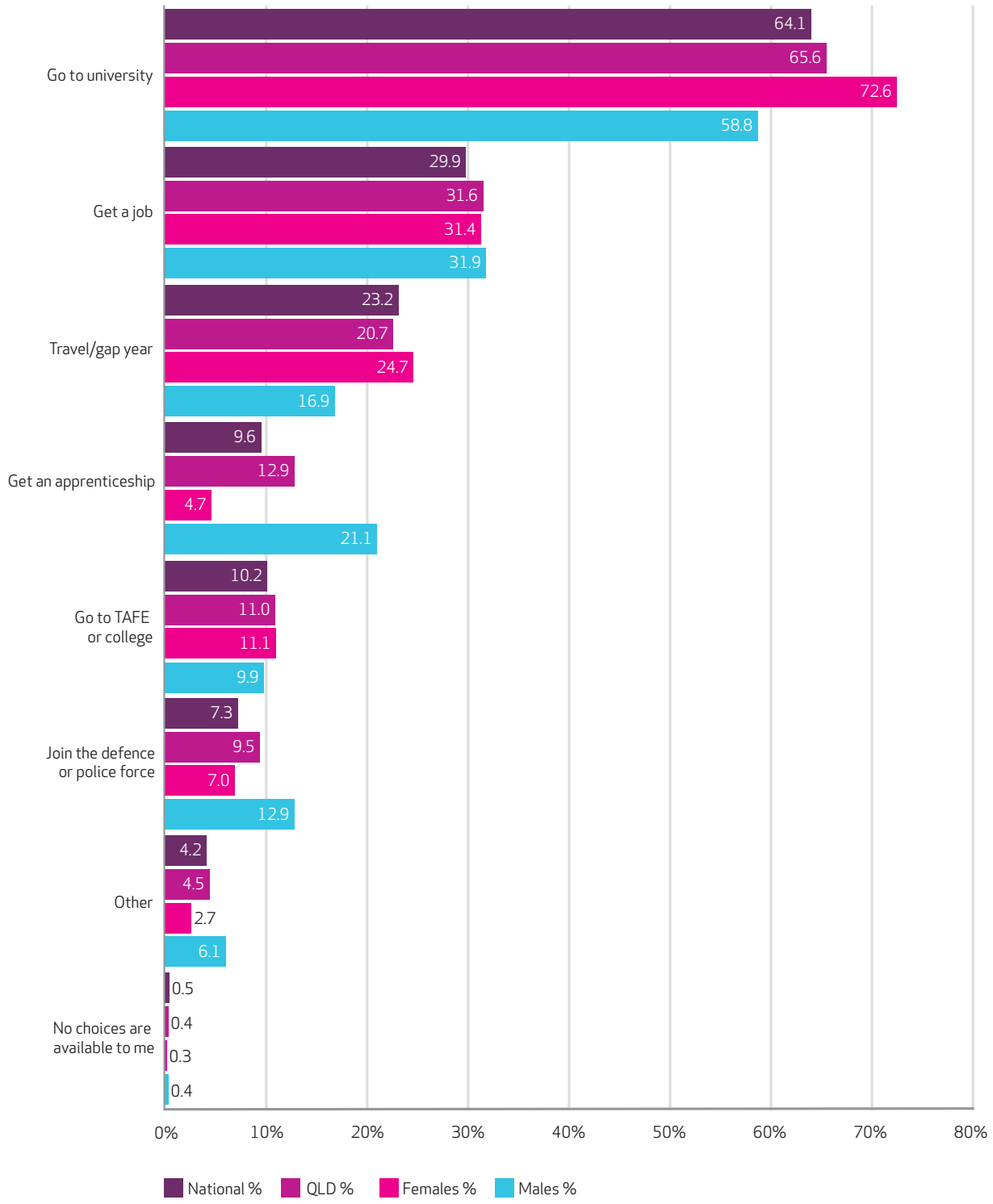
Of those still at school, the majority (98.5%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. A slightly higher proportion of males indicated they did not plan to complete Year 12 (2.0% compared with 0.7% of females).

Respondents from QLD who were studying at school were asked what they planned to do after leaving school. Figure 6.1 shows that nearly two thirds (65.6%) of respondents from QLD planned to *go to university* after school. Over three in 10 (31.6%) respondents from QLD reported plans to *get a job* after school and one in five (20.7%) indicated *travel/gap year* plans. Overall, around one in 10 young people planned to *get an apprenticeship* (12.9%), *go to TAFE or college* (11.0%) or *join the defence or police force* (9.5%). A small minority (0.4%) of respondents indicated that *no choices are available to me* after finishing school.

## Gender differences

While the most frequently reported plan among both female and male respondents from QLD was to *go to university* after finishing school, a much higher proportion of females indicated they planned to do so (72.6% compared with 58.8% of males). A greater proportion of females from QLD also reported *travel/gap year* plans after leaving school (24.7% compared with 16.9% of males). Conversely, more than four times the proportion of males from QLD indicated they were planning to *get an apprenticeship* after school (21.1% compared with 4.7% of females).

Figure 6.1: Plans after leaving school

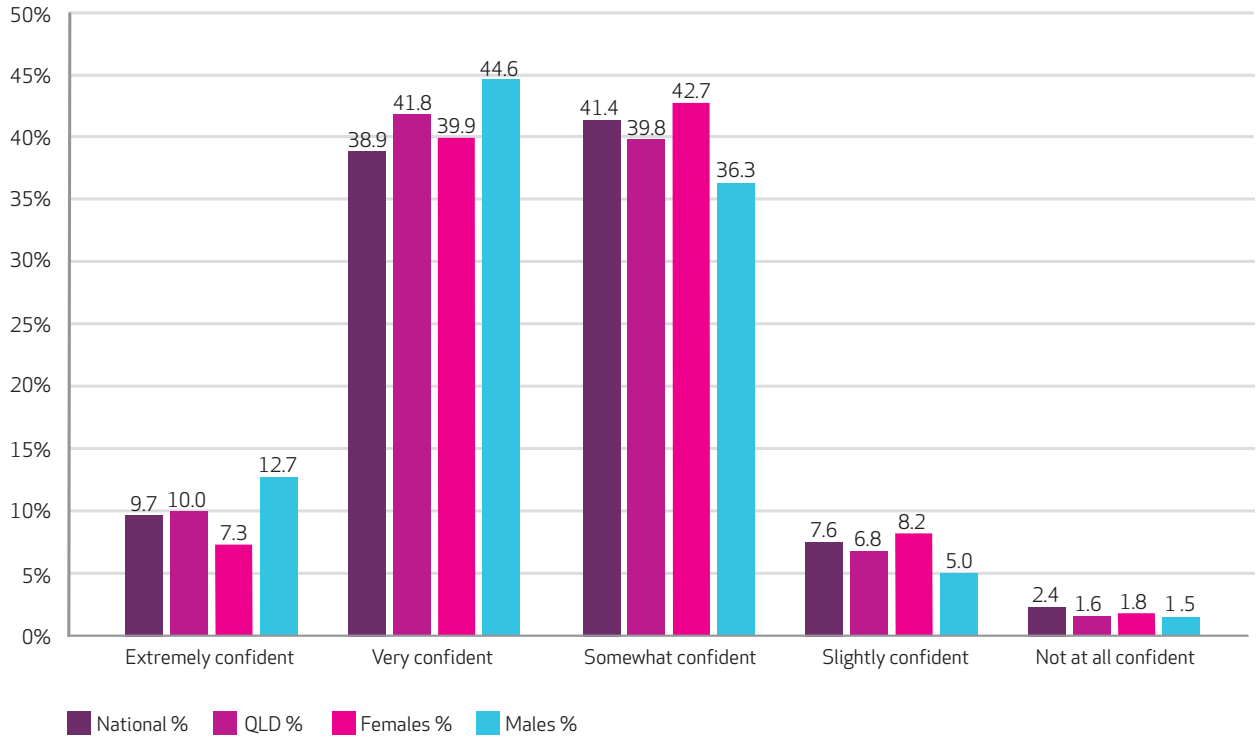



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of QLD frequency.

## How confident are young people in achieving their study/work goals?

Respondents from QLD were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after finishing school. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. As shown in Figure 6.2, over half (51.8%) of QLD respondents indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study/work goals: 10.0% reported they were *extremely confident* and 41.8% stated they were *very confident*. However, less than one in 10 (8.4%) young people from QLD were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals: 6.8% of young people indicated they were *slightly confident*, while 1.6% were *not at all confident*. A notably higher proportion of male respondents reported they were *extremely* or *very confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school (57.3% compared with 47.2% of females).

Figure 6.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals




## Employment

Respondents from QLD were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average how many hours they worked per week. Table 6.3 shows participation in paid employment among respondents from QLD. A very small proportion of young people from QLD who reported paid employment were employed full-time (1.1%). This is unsurprising given the high proportion of respondents to the *Youth Survey* who were still at school. Four in 10 (40.3%) respondents from QLD reported they were employed part-time. Nearly six in 10 (58.6%) respondents indicated they were not in paid employment: 37.3% stated they were looking for work, while 21.3% were neither working nor looking for work. The proportion of respondents from QLD in part-time employment in 2020 is slightly lower than in 2019 (40.3% compared with 42.1%).

### Gender differences

A slightly higher proportion of male respondents from QLD reported full-time employment (1.4% compared with 0.5% of females). Whereas, a higher proportion of female respondents were employed part-time (43.5% compared with 37.4% of males). A slightly greater proportion of male respondents were looking for work (37.6% compared with 36.2% of females).

Table 6.3: Participation in paid employment

| | National % | QLD % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employed full-time | 0.6 | 1.1 | 0.5 | 1.4 |
| Employed part-time | 40.5 | 40.3 | 43.5 | 37.4 |
| Not in paid employment, looking for work | 34.7 | 37.3 | 36.2 | 37.6 |
| Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work | 24.2 | 21.3 | 19.8 | 23.6 |

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

## What would help young people secure a job?

Respondents from QLD who were looking for work were asked to indicate from a number of factors, what might help them secure a job, as shown in Figure 6.3.

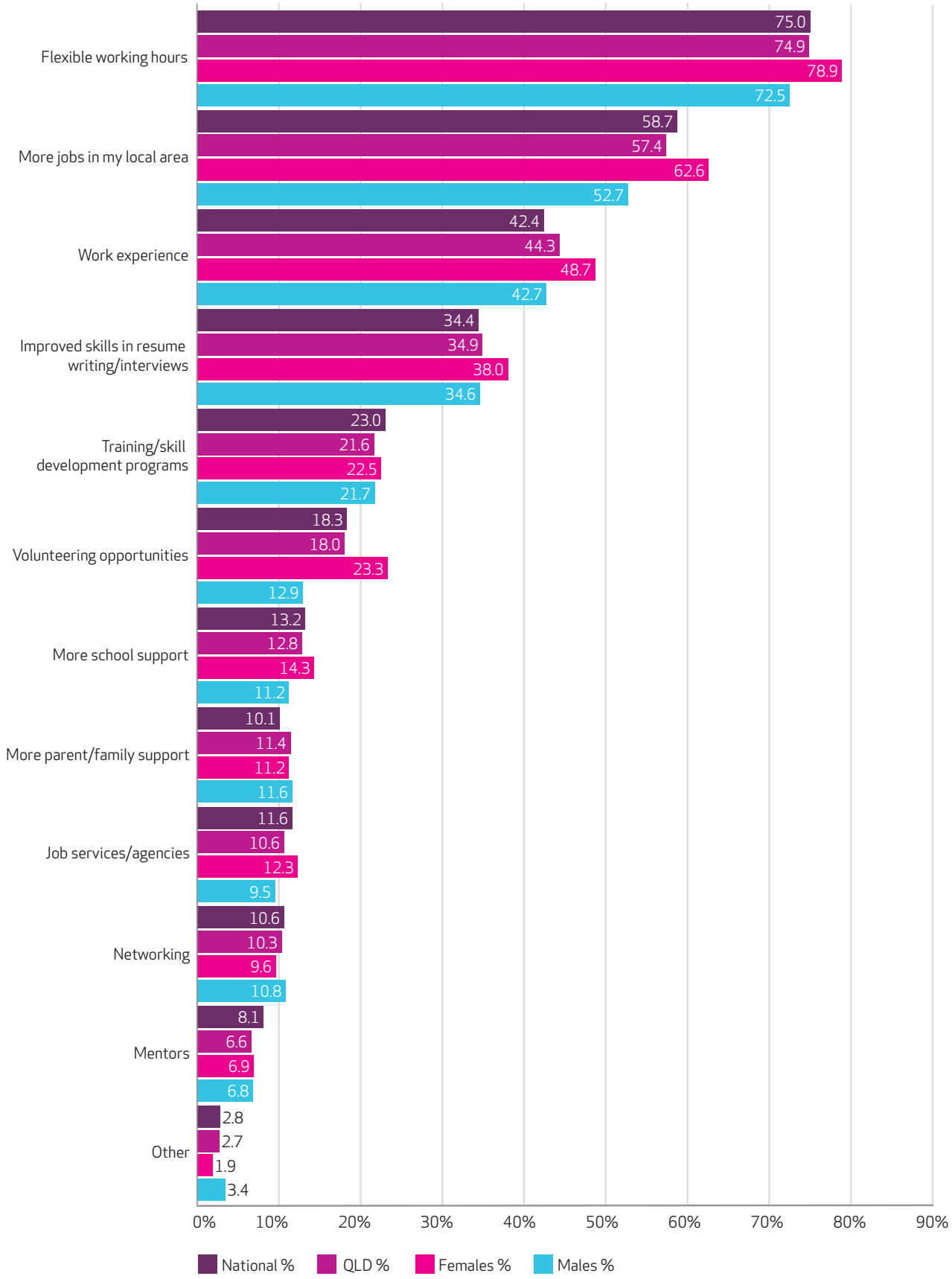
- *Flexible working hours* (74.9%), *more jobs in my local area* (57.4%) and *work experience* (44.3%) were the top factors to helping young people from QLD secure a job.
- Over one third (34.9%) of respondents from QLD saw *improved skills in resume writing/interviews* as an important factor in helping them secure a job.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 6.3, the top three factors to securing work for both females and males from QLD were *flexible working hours, more jobs in my local area* and *work experience*.

- Close to double the proportion of female respondents from QLD saw *volunteering opportunities* as a factor to securing a job (23.3% compared with 12.9% of males).
- Notably higher proportions of QLD females than males reported *more jobs in my local area* (62.6% compared with 52.7%), *flexible working hours* (78.9% compared with 72.5%) and *work experience* (48.7% compared with 42.7%) were factors to securing a job.

Figure 6.3: Factors to securing a job




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

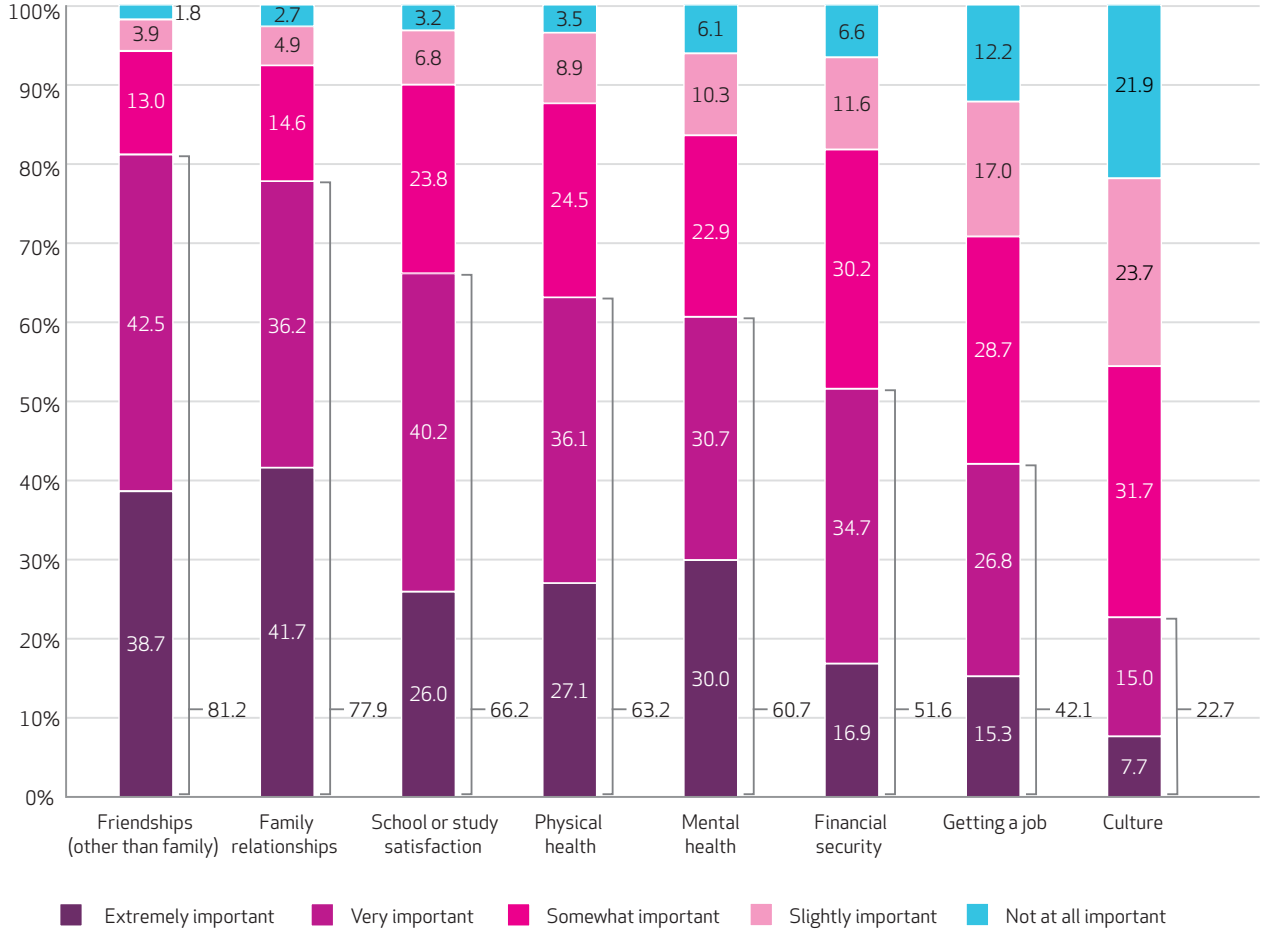
## What do young people value?

Young people from QLD were asked how important a number of items had been in their lives over the past year. Responses for these items were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely important* to *not at all important*.

As shown in Figure 6.4, the three most highly valued items for respondents from QLD were *friendships (other than family)*, *family relationships* and *school or study satisfaction*. The next most highly valued items were *physical health* and *mental health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were considered *extremely* or *very important* by 81.2% of respondents from QLD (*extremely important*: 38.7%; *very important*: 42.5%).
- Close to eight in 10 (77.9%) respondents from QLD highly valued *family relationships* (*extremely important*: 41.7%; *very important*: 36.2%).
- Two thirds of respondents from QLD placed a high value upon *school or study satisfaction* (66.2%) and *physical health* (63.2%).

Figure 6.4: What young people value




Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

### Gender differences

*Friendships (other than family)* and *family relationships* were rated as the two most important items by both QLD females and males, as shown in Table 6.4. The third top item for females was *school or study satisfaction*, while for males the third most highly valued item was *physical health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were rated *extremely* or *very important* by around eight in 10 females (82.9%) and males (80.3%) from QLD.
- Notably higher proportions of QLD females than males placed a high value upon *school and study satisfaction* (71.8% compared with 61.1%) and *mental health* (65.9% compared with 55.8%).

Table 6.4: What young people value by gender

| Females | Extremely important % | Very important % | Somewhat important % | Slightly important % | Not at all important % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **41.7** | **41.2** | 12.3 | 3.5 | 1.3 |
| **Family relationships** | **48.1** | **33.4** | 12.1 | 4.6 | 1.7 |
| **School or study satisfaction** | **30.0** | **41.8** | 20.9 | 5.8 | 1.4 |
| Physical health | 25.9 | 38.0 | 24.2 | 8.9 | 2.9 |
| Mental health | 33.1 | 32.8 | 21.0 | 9.1 | 3.9 |
| Financial security | 17.8 | 36.4 | 30.6 | 10.4 | 5.0 |
| Getting a job | 14.8 | 27.8 | 28.8 | 17.6 | 11.1 |
| Culture | 8.2 | 15.6 | 32.6 | 24.7 | 18.9 |
| **Males** | **Extremely important %** | **Very important %** | **Somewhat important %** | **Slightly important %** | **Not at all important %** |
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **35.7** | **44.6** | 13.7 | 4.0 | 2.1 |
| **Family relationships** | **34.9** | **39.8** | 16.9 | 5.3 | 3.2 |
| School or study satisfaction | 21.5 | 39.6 | 26.9 | 7.5 | 4.4 |
| **Physical health** | **28.5** | **35.0** | 24.0 | 9.0 | 3.6 |
| Mental health | 26.7 | 29.1 | 25.0 | 11.2 | 8.0 |
| Financial security | 15.1 | 33.9 | 29.6 | 12.7 | 8.6 |
| Getting a job | 15.2 | 25.4 | 29.1 | 16.8 | 13.5 |
| Culture | 7.2 | 14.1 | 31.9 | 22.4 | 24.4 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of QLD frequency.

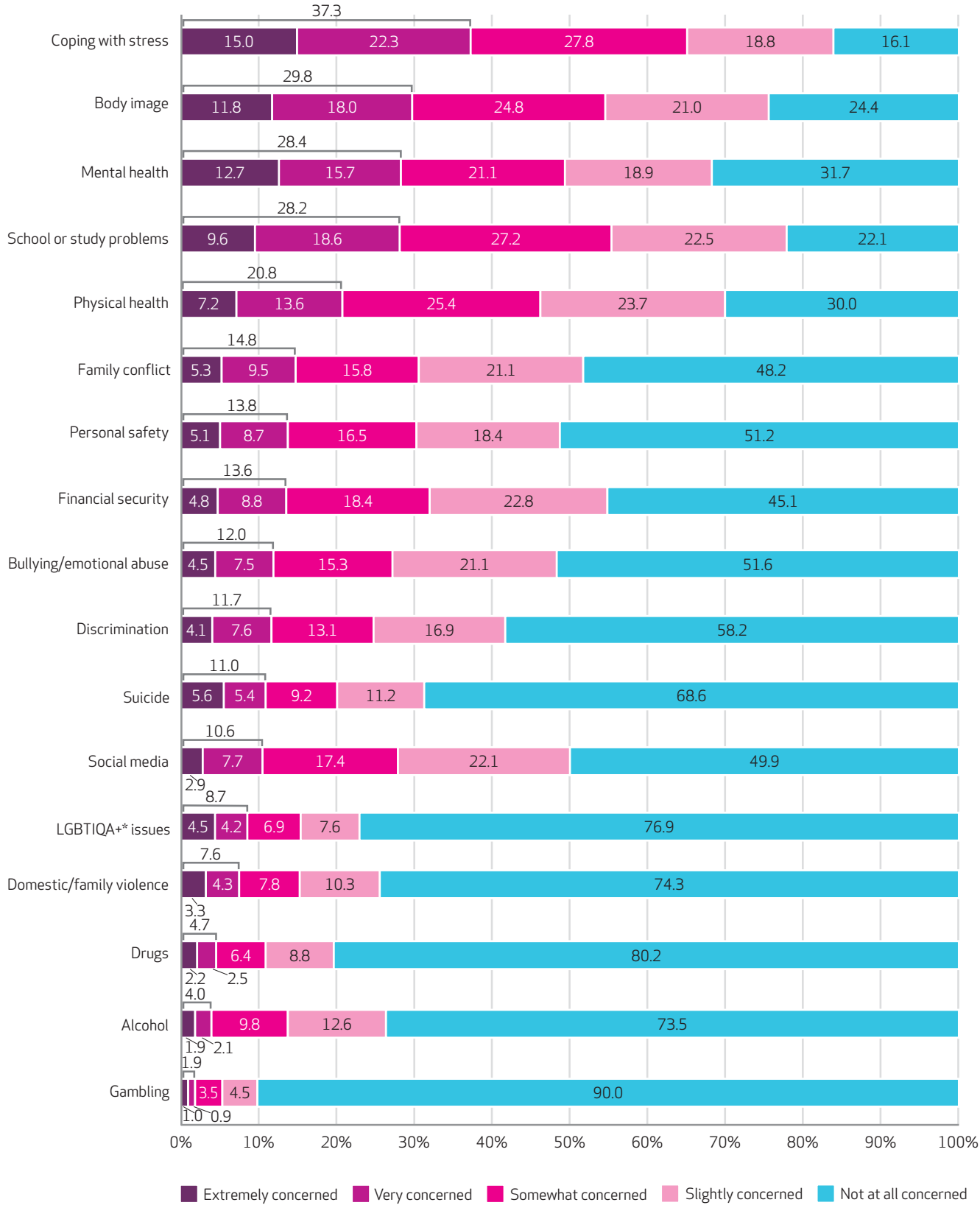
## What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Young people were asked to indicate how concerned they were about a number of issues over the past year, as shown in Figure 6.5. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*.

The top three issues of personal concern for young people from QLD were *coping with stress, body image* and *mental health*. The next most concerning issues were *school or study problems* and *physical health*.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with almost four in 10 (37.3%) respondents from QLD indicating they were *extremely* or *very concerned* about this issue.
- Around three in 10 respondents from QLD were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *body image* (29.8%), *mental health* (28.4%) and *school or study problems* (28.2%).
- One in five (20.8%) QLD respondents were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *physical health*.

Figure 6.5: Issues of personal concern to young people




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

## Gender differences

*Coping with stress* was the top issue of personal concern for both females and males from QLD, as shown in Table 6.5. For females from QLD, the second and third most concerning personal issues were *body image* and *mental health*. For QLD males the second and joint third most concerning personal issues were *school or study problems*, *mental health* and *physical health*. The proportion of female respondents from QLD who were concerned about these issues (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- More than double the proportion of females from QLD reported *coping with stress* was a major issue of concern (53.3% compared with 19.9% of males).
- Notably higher proportions of females than males were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *body image* (43.8% compared with 14.4%), *mental health* (38.9% compared with 16.6%) and *school or study problems* (37.3% compared with 18.7%).

Table 6.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

| Females | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **22.3** | **31.0** | 26.9 | 13.7 | 6.1 |
| **Body image** | **17.8** | **26.0** | 28.5 | 17.2 | 10.4 |
| **Mental health** | **17.5** | **21.4** | 23.3 | 18.4 | 19.4 |
| School or study problems | 13.0 | 24.3 | 28.8 | 20.9 | 13.0 |
| Physical health | 8.2 | 17.0 | 28.3 | 24.5 | 22.0 |
| Family conflict | 7.1 | 12.8 | 18.1 | 23.2 | 38.8 |
| Personal safety | 6.0 | 11.0 | 18.1 | 20.5 | 44.4 |
| Financial security | 5.7 | 11.2 | 21.3 | 24.7 | 37.2 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 5.5 | 10.2 | 18.4 | 22.9 | 43.0 |
| Discrimination | 4.7 | 10.5 | 14.5 | 20.0 | 50.2 |
| Suicide | 6.6 | 7.0 | 10.6 | 13.2 | 62.6 |
| Social media | 3.8 | 11.2 | 21.5 | 24.9 | 38.7 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 4.6 | 6.0 | 8.5 | 10.3 | 70.5 |
| Domestic/family violence | 3.8 | 5.5 | 8.6 | 11.4 | 70.8 |
| Drugs | 2.0 | 2.7 | 6.7 | 10.0 | 78.6 |
| Alcohol | 1.6 | 1.9 | 11.6 | 14.6 | 70.4 |
| Gambling | 0.7 | 0.7 | 2.8 | 4.6 | 91.2 |

Table 6.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

| Males | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **6.1** | **13.8** | 29.2 | 24.5 | 26.5 |
| Body image | 4.5 | 9.9 | 20.7 | 26.0 | 38.9 |
| **Mental health** | **6.5** | **10.1** | 18.8 | 20.5 | 44.1 |
| **School or study problems** | **5.9** | **12.8** | 26.3 | 24.2 | 30.7 |
| **Physical health** | **5.8** | **10.8** | 22.8 | 22.9 | 37.7 |
| Family conflict | 3.2 | 5.8 | 14.0 | 19.0 | 58.1 |
| Personal safety | 3.5 | 6.8 | 15.2 | 16.5 | 58.0 |
| Financial security | 3.3 | 6.5 | 15.7 | 21.5 | 52.9 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 2.8 | 4.9 | 12.0 | 19.0 | 61.4 |
| Discrimination | 2.9 | 4.9 | 11.2 | 13.9 | 67.1 |
| Suicide | 3.8 | 3.8 | 7.9 | 9.3 | 75.3 |
| Social media | 2.0 | 4.2 | 12.9 | 19.2 | 61.7 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 2.6 | 2.1 | 5.0 | 5.1 | 85.2 |
| Domestic/family violence | 2.1 | 3.2 | 6.9 | 9.5 | 78.3 |
| Drugs | 2.2 | 2.2 | 6.2 | 7.6 | 81.8 |
| Alcohol | 2.0 | 2.2 | 7.8 | 10.4 | 77.6 |
| Gambling | 1.1 | 1.3 | 4.2 | 4.5 | 88.8 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of QLD frequency.
*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

## Have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people were asked whether they had been treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Over one quarter (27.2%) of young people from QLD reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A higher proportion of QLD females than males reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (33.3% compared with 20.7%).

## Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify reasons for being treated unfairly from a list of suggested items. Table 6.6 shows that, of the 27.2% of QLD respondents who had been treated unfairly in the past year, four in 10 (40.1%) reported the unfair treatment was due to their *gender*. Over one quarter of QLD young people indicated they were treated unfairly due to their *mental health* (27.9%) and their *race/cultural background* (27.1%).

### Gender differences

There were some notable differences in female and male responses to the question regarding the reasons for unfair treatment, as shown in Table 6.6. Of the 27.2% of young people from QLD who had been treated unfairly in the past year:

- More than double the proportion of females from QLD had been treated unfairly due to their *gender* (48.5% compared with 23.8% of males).
- A notably higher proportion of QLD females than males reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *mental health* (31.1% compared with 20.9%) and their *age* (25.7% compared with 20.0%).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of males from QLD reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background* (34.1% compared with 24.0% of females).

Table 6.6: Reasons for being treated unfairly

| | National % | QLD % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | **41.0** | **40.1** | **48.5** | **23.8** |
| **Mental health** | **26.0** | **27.9** | **31.1** | **20.9** |
| **Race/cultural background** | **30.4** | **27.1** | 24.0 | **34.1** |
| Age | 21.0 | 22.8 | **25.7** | 20.0 |
| Sexuality | 19.4 | 19.9 | 19.3 | 15.8 |
| Other | 14.4 | 15.8 | 12.5 | 19.8 |
| Religion | 13.8 | 12.8 | 11.9 | 15.3 |
| Financial background | 9.0 | 10.9 | 10.0 | 13.4 |
| Disability | 7.5 | 7.9 | 4.8 | 12.5 |

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

## Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Young people were asked whether they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Over half (55.3%) of young people from QLD reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year. A much higher proportion of QLD females than males reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (62.9% compared with 47.2%).

## What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

Young people who reported they had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year were then asked to identify from a list of reasons why the person was being treated unfairly. Table 6.7 shows that, of the 55.3% of respondents from QLD who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 62.1% reported they witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *race/cultural background*. Over half (51.1%) of respondents from QLD indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality*. Four in 10 (41.6%) respondents from QLD who had witnessed unfair treatment reported it was due to a person's *gender*.

### Gender differences

As shown in Table 6.7, the three most frequently witnessed reasons for unfair treatment for QLD females and males were consistent with QLD results.

- Similar proportions of QLD females and males had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *race/cultural background* (63.6% and 61.9% respectively).
- A notably higher proportion of QLD females than males reported they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *gender* (46.0% compared with 34.7%) and due to a person's *sexuality* (55.2% compared with 44.1%).

Table 6.7: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

| | National % | QLD % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race/cultural background** | **62.0** | **62.1** | **63.6** | **61.9** |
| **Sexuality** | **49.4** | **51.1** | **55.2** | **44.1** |
| **Gender** | **40.5** | **41.6** | **46.0** | **34.7** |
| Disability | 32.2 | 33.2 | 34.4 | 32.4 |
| Mental health | 28.9 | 29.0 | 29.8 | 27.2 |
| Religion | 28.8 | 27.7 | 28.2 | 26.5 |
| Financial background | 18.7 | 21.0 | 20.6 | 21.8 |
| Age | 17.5 | 18.8 | 19.1 | 19.0 |
| Other | 5.3 | 5.6 | 3.7 | 7.1 |

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

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

Respondents were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 6.6 shows the percentage of respondents from QLD who indicated they would go to the particular source for support.

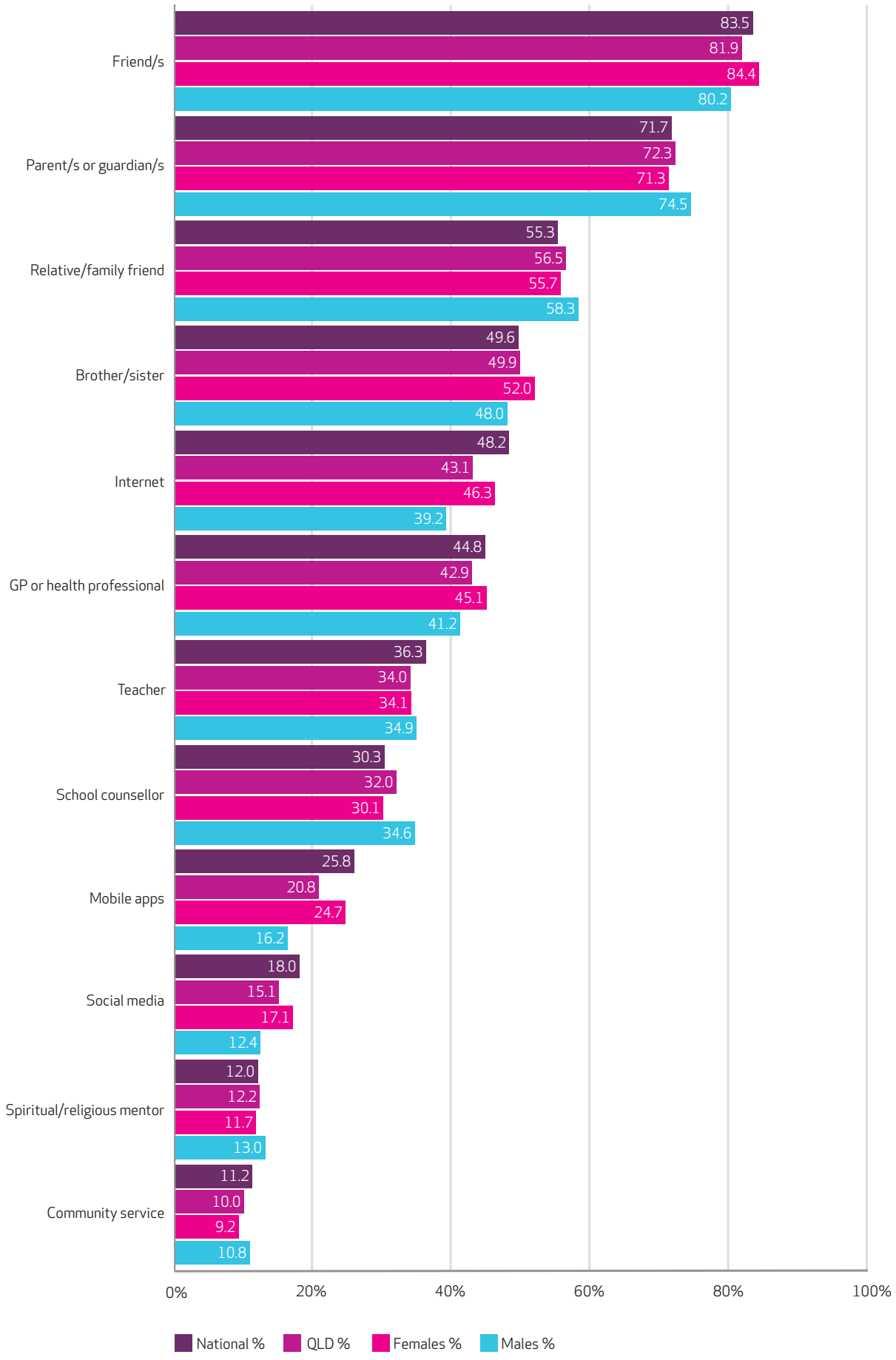
- *Friend/s* (81.9%), *parent/s or guardian/s* (72.3%) and *relative/family friend* (56.5%) were the three most frequently cited sources of help for young people from QLD.
- Half (49.9%) of young people from QLD indicated they would go to their *brother/sister* for support with important issues in their lives.
- More than four in 10 young people from QLD would turn to the *internet* (43.1%) or a *GP or health professional* (42.9%) as a source of help with important issues.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 6.6, the top three sources of help for both genders were consistent with the QLD results.

- A higher proportion of females from QLD indicated they would turn to their *friend/s* for help with important issues (84.4% compared with 80.2% of males), whereas slightly higher proportions of QLD males than females stated they would go to their *parent/s or guardian/s* (74.5% compared with 71.3%) or to a *relative/family friend* (58.3% compared with 55.7%).
- A higher proportion of females than males from QLD would turn to *mobile apps* (24.7% compared with 16.2%), the *internet* (46.3% compared with 39.2%) or *social media* (17.1% compared with 12.4%) for support with important issues in their lives.

Figure 6.6: Where young people go for help with important issues




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

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

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 6.8. In 2020, the top three issues identified by young people from QLD were *COVID-19*, *equity and discrimination* and *mental health*.

- Nearly four in 10 young people from QLD indicated that *COVID-19* (38.7%) and *equity and discrimination* (36.9%) are important issues in Australia today.
- Close to three in 10 respondents from QLD reported that *mental health* (29.2%) and *the environment* (26.5%) are important national issues.
- Since 2019, the proportion of those from QLD reporting *equity and discrimination* as a key national issue has increased from 23.1% to 36.9%. Conversely, concerns about *alcohol and drugs* and *mental health* have decreased since 2019.

### Gender differences

The most important issues for females from QLD were *equity and discrimination*, *COVID-19* and *mental health*. For males, the top three most important issues were *COVID-19*, *equity and discrimination* and *mental health*.

- Notably higher proportions of QLD females than males identified *equity and discrimination* (41.3% compared with 31.7%), *the environment* (31.1% compared with 21.8%) and *mental health* (33.8% compared with 24.7%) as important issues facing Australia today.
- Conversely, higher proportions of QLD males than females regarded *politics* (11.1% compared with 5.3%), *the economy and financial matters* (18.6% compared with 13.8%) and *COVID-19* (41.2% compared with 37.6%) as key issues in Australia.

Table 6.8: Most important issues in Australia today

| | National 2020 % | QLD 2020 % | Females % | Males % | QLD 2019 % | QLD 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **COVID-19** | **38.8** | **38.7** | **37.6** | **41.2** | - | - |
| **Equity and discrimination** | **40.2** | **36.9** | **41.3** | **31.7** | **23.1** | **20.8** |
| **Mental health** | **30.6** | **29.2** | **33.8** | **24.7** | **34.7** | **42.8** |
| The environment | 29.8 | 26.5 | 31.1 | 21.8 | **31.2** | 8.8 |
| The economy and financial matters | 15.3 | 16.0 | 13.8 | 18.6 | 14.8 | 11.5 |
| Crime, safety and violence | 9.3 | 12.8 | 13.7 | 12.0 | 13.7 | 15.7 |
| Alcohol and drugs | 10.5 | 12.1 | 10.9 | 13.7 | 21.0 | **29.5** |
| Employment | 7.5 | 8.8 | 7.2 | 11.2 | 7.8 | 7.7 |
| Politics | 7.5 | 8.2 | 5.3 | 11.1 | 11.5 | 6.2 |
| Homelessness/Housing | 8.3 | 7.0 | 8.0 | 6.3 | 5.6 | 5.6 |

Note: Items are listed in order of QLD frequency.

## What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities they had been involved in over the past year from the list of options shown in Table 6.9.

- The top three activities for young people from QLD were *sports (as a participant)* (71.5%), *sports (as a spectator)* (63.4%) and *arts/cultural/music activities* (44.7%).
- More than four in 10 (43.2%) respondents from QLD reported they had participated in *volunteer work* in the past year.
- Over one third (34.2%) of young people from QLD indicated they had taken part in *student leadership activities*.

### Gender differences

In line with QLD results, *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)* were the top two activities for both QLD females and males. While *arts/cultural/music activities* was the third most reported activity for females from QLD, *volunteer work* was the third highest for males.

- Higher proportions of male than female respondents from QLD reported taking part in *sports (as a spectator)* (68.8% compared with 59.4%) and *sports (as a participant)* (75.0% compared with 69.7%).
- Conversely, higher proportions of females than males from QLD participated in *arts/cultural/music activities* (52.5% compared with 35.9%) and *religious groups/activities* (27.2% compared with 21.9%) in the past year.

Table 6.9: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

| | National % | QLD % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sports (as a participant)** | **70.7** | **71.5** | **69.7** | **75.0** |
| **Sports (as a spectator)** | **62.1** | **63.4** | **59.4** | **68.8** |
| **Arts/cultural/music activities** | **43.9** | **44.7** | **52.5** | 35.9 |
| Volunteer work | 43.3 | 43.2 | 45.3 | **41.8** |
| Student leadership activities | 34.0 | 34.2 | 37.2 | 32.2 |
| Youth groups/activities | 25.6 | 26.4 | 27.9 | 25.1 |
| Religious groups/activities | 23.6 | 24.0 | 27.2 | 21.9 |
| Environmental groups | 14.8 | 12.8 | 14.2 | 11.1 |
| Political groups/organisations | 8.8 | 7.4 | 7.3 | 6.9 |

Note: Items are listed in order of QLD frequency.

## How stressed are young people?

For the first time in 2020, young people were asked to report on how much of the time they felt stressed in the past four weeks. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *all of the time* to *none of the time*. Table 6.10 shows that four in 10 (39.3%) young people from QLD felt stressed either *all of the time* or *most of the time*.

- More than double the proportion of female respondents from QLD felt stressed *all of the time* or *most of the time* (52.6% compared with 23.6% of males).
- Conversely, more than double the proportion of males from QLD felt stressed *a little of the time* or *none of the time* (41.6% compared with 16.1% of females).

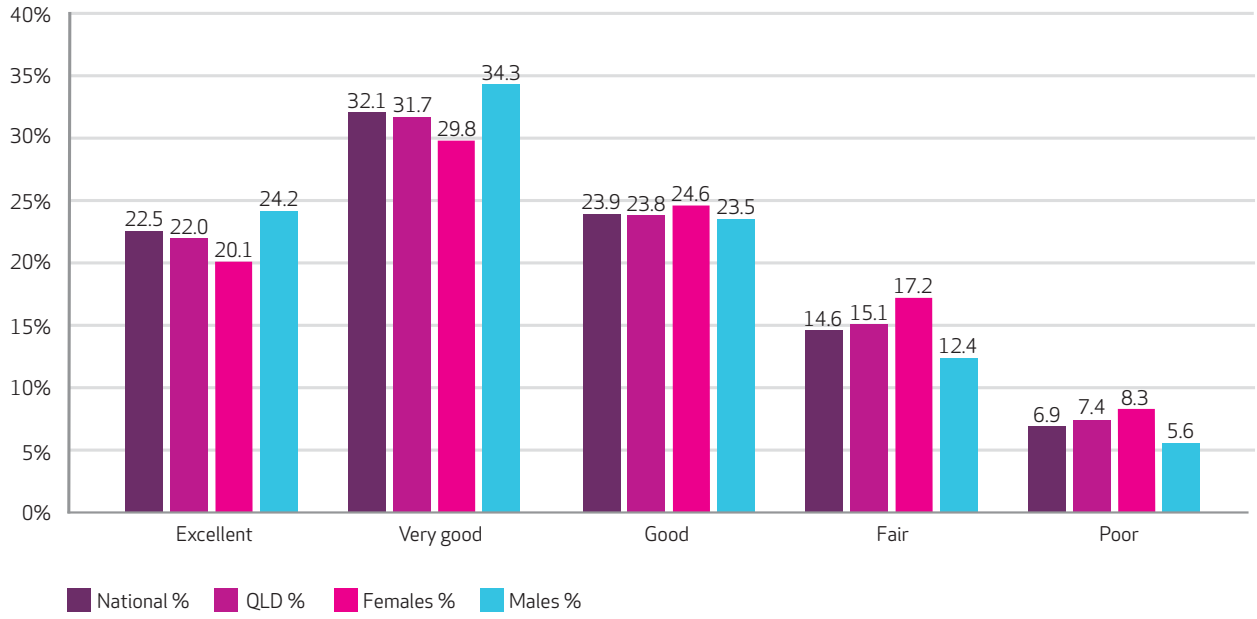
Table 6.10: How stressed are young people?

| | National % | QLD % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| All of the time | 11.6 | 10.9 | 15.9 | 4.8 |
| Most of the time | 31.0 | 28.4 | 36.7 | 18.8 |
| Some of the time | 32.4 | 32.9 | 31.2 | 34.8 |
| A little of the time | 19.7 | 21.3 | 13.3 | 30.9 |
| None of the time | 5.3 | 6.6 | 2.8 | 10.7 |

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

Respondents were asked to rate their family's ability to get along with one another. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 6.7 shows that the majority of respondents from QLD rated their family's ability to get along very positively: 22.0% rated it as *excellent* and 31.7% rated it as *very good*. However, more than one in five (22.5%) young people from QLD indicated their family's ability to get along was either *fair* (15.1%) or *poor* (7.4%). A higher proportion of male respondents rated their family's ability to get along as *excellent* or *very good* (58.5% compared with 49.9% of females), while a higher proportion of females rated their family's ability to get along as *fair* or *poor* (25.5% compared with 18.0% of males).

Figure 6.7: Family's ability to get along with one another




## How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 indicates that they felt *very sad* and 10 indicates that they felt *very happy*. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100, in which 100 is the happiest. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes *happy/very happy*; 40-60 signifies *not happy or sad*; and 0-30 indicates *very sad/sad*. As Table 6.11 shows, the majority (59.1%) of young people from QLD responded in the 70-100 range, which indicates most young people felt happy overall with their lives.

A notably higher proportion of males from QLD reported feeling *happy/very happy* with their lives as a whole (66.0% compared with 53.9% of females), whereas a slightly greater proportion of females indicated they felt *very sad/sad* (11.8% compared with 7.9% of males).

Table 6.11: How happy are young people?

| | National % | QLD % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Happy/very happy (70-100) | 58.6 | 59.1 | 53.9 | 66.0 |
| Not happy or sad (40-60) | 30.7 | 30.5 | 34.3 | 26.1 |
| Very sad/sad (0-30) | 10.7 | 10.3 | 11.8 | 7.9 |

## How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked to describe their feelings when they thought about the future. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 6.12 shows that the majority of young people from QLD felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future.

- More than half (56.7%) felt either *very positive* (13.4%) or *positive* (43.3%) about the future.
- One in eight (12.4%) young people from QLD indicated they felt *negative* (9.5%) or *very negative* (2.9%) about the future.
- A higher proportion of males from QLD reported feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future (61.3% compared with 53.6% of females).

Table 6.12: Feelings about the future

| | National 2020 % | QLD 2020 % | Females % | Males % | QLD 2019 % | QLD 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very positive | 12.3 | 13.4 | 10.5 | 17.0 | 13.6 | 16.5 |
| Positive | 43.2 | 43.3 | 43.1 | 44.3 | 46.1 | 48.7 |
| Neither positive nor negative | 30.5 | 30.8 | 32.7 | 28.7 | 29.5 | 26.2 |
| Negative | 10.5 | 9.5 | 11.0 | 7.7 | 8.0 | 6.0 |
| Very negative | 3.4 | 2.9 | 2.8 | 2.3 | 2.8 | 2.6 |

# South Australia



## Profile of respondents

A total of 2,836 young people from South Australia (SA) aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2020*.

### Gender breakdown

Over half (53.3%) of respondents from SA were female, 43.5% were male, 2.1% were gender diverse and 1.1% preferred not to say.

### Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 98 (3.5%) respondents from SA identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 89 (3.2%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 5 (0.2%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.1% identified as both). A slightly higher proportion of male respondents from SA identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (3.8% compared with 2.5% of females).

### Cultural background

A total of 434 (15.5%) respondents from SA stated they were born overseas and 469 (16.8%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 50 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Vietnamese, Italian, Filipino/Tagalog, Chinese and German.

Nearly one third (31.9%) of respondents from SA stated that one or both of their parents were born overseas.

### Disability

A total of 199 (7.2%) respondents from SA identified as living with disability. A greater proportion of males than females reported living with disability (8.9% compared with 4.8%). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): autism, learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), physical disabilities and anxiety disorder.

## Education

As indicated in Table 7.1, 89.7% of respondents from SA were studying full-time, which is lower than the 93.2% of respondents studying full-time in 2019. A higher proportion of females from SA reported studying full-time (91.1% compared with 88.9% of males). Conversely, a slightly higher proportion of males than females from SA reported they were studying part-time (6.0% compared with 5.5%) or not studying (5.1% compared with 3.4%).

Table 7.1: Participation in education

| | National % | SA % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Studying full-time | 86.6 | 89.7 | 91.1 | 88.9 |
| Studying part-time | 6.5 | 5.9 | 5.5 | 6.0 |
| Not studying | 6.8 | 4.4 | 3.4 | 5.1 |

Respondents from SA who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in previous years, the majority of respondents from SA reported they were either *very satisfied* (11.7%) or *satisfied* (55.7%) with their studies. Less than one in 10 indicated they were *dissatisfied* (5.3%) or *very dissatisfied* (1.3%). As shown in Table 7.2, a higher proportion of females than males from SA reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* (71.4% compared with 64.0%), while nearly double the proportion of males than females indicated they felt *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* (8.1% compared with 4.6%).

Table 7.2: Satisfaction with studies

| | National % | SA % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 10.4 | 11.7 | 12.1 | 11.9 |
| Satisfied | 56.7 | 55.7 | 59.3 | 52.1 |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 25.6 | 25.9 | 23.9 | 28.1 |
| Dissatisfied | 5.7 | 5.3 | 3.9 | 6.7 |
| Very dissatisfied | 1.5 | 1.3 | 0.7 | 1.4 |

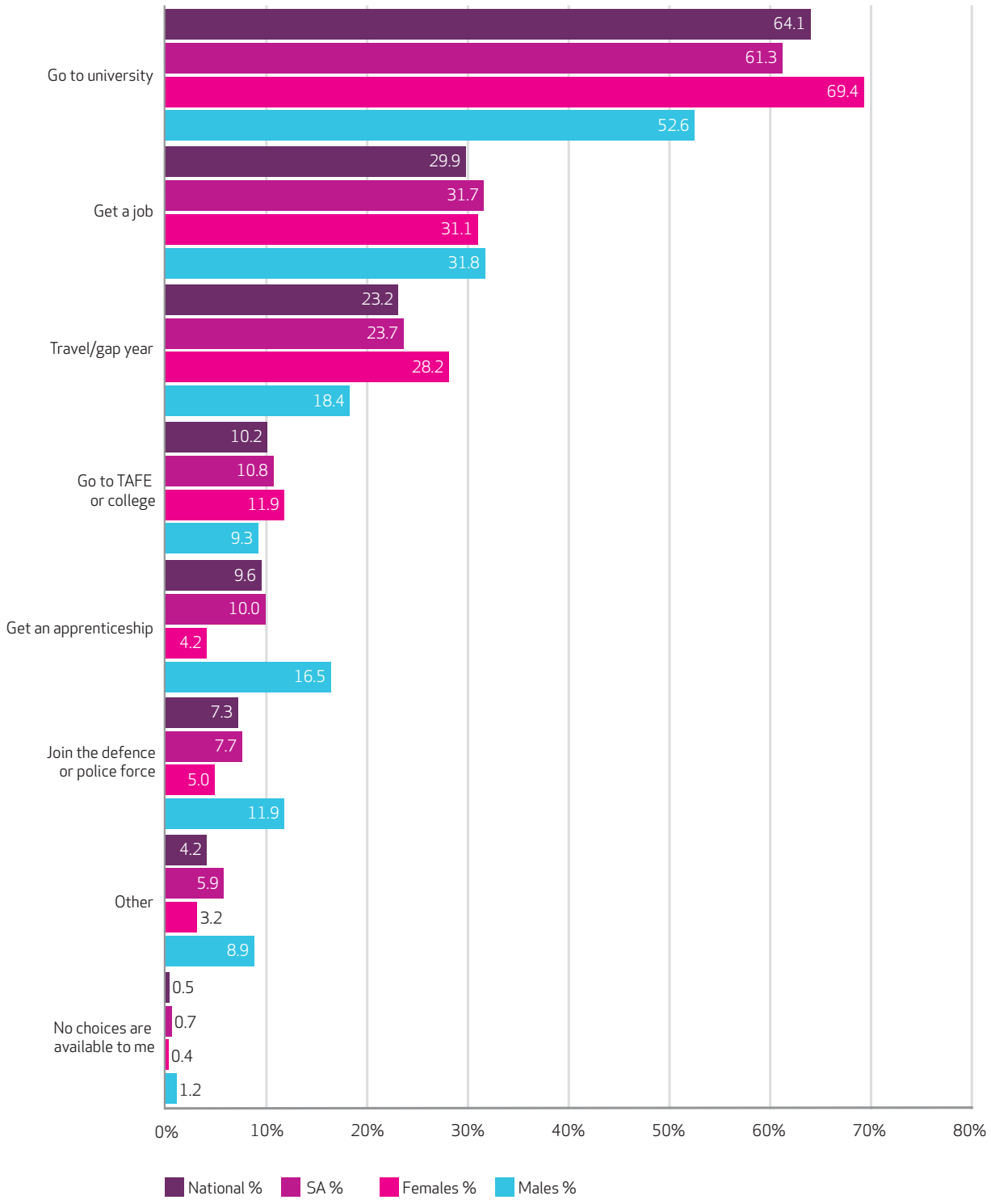
Of those still at school, the majority (96.4%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. Nearly double the proportion of males indicated they did not plan to complete Year 12 (4.7% compared with 2.4% of females).

Respondents from SA who were studying at school were asked what they planned to do after leaving school. Figure 7.1 shows that over six in 10 (61.3%) respondents from SA planned to *go to university* after school. Close to one third (31.7%) of respondents from SA reported plans to *get a job* after school and almost one quarter (23.7%) indicated *travel/gap year* plans. Overall, around one in 10 young people planned to *go to TAFE or college* (10.8%) and to *get an apprenticeship* (10.0%), while 7.7% reported plans to *join the defence or police force*. A small minority (0.7%) of respondents indicated that *no choices are available to me* after finishing school.

## Gender differences

While the most frequently reported plan among both female and male respondents from SA was to *go to university* after finishing school, a much higher proportion of females indicated they planned to do so (69.4% compared with 52.6% of males). A greater proportion of female respondents from SA also reported *travel/gap year* plans after leaving school (28.2% compared with 18.4% of males). Conversely, nearly four times the proportion of males from SA indicated they were planning to *get an apprenticeship* after school (16.5% compared with 4.2% of females).

Figure 7.1: Plans after leaving school

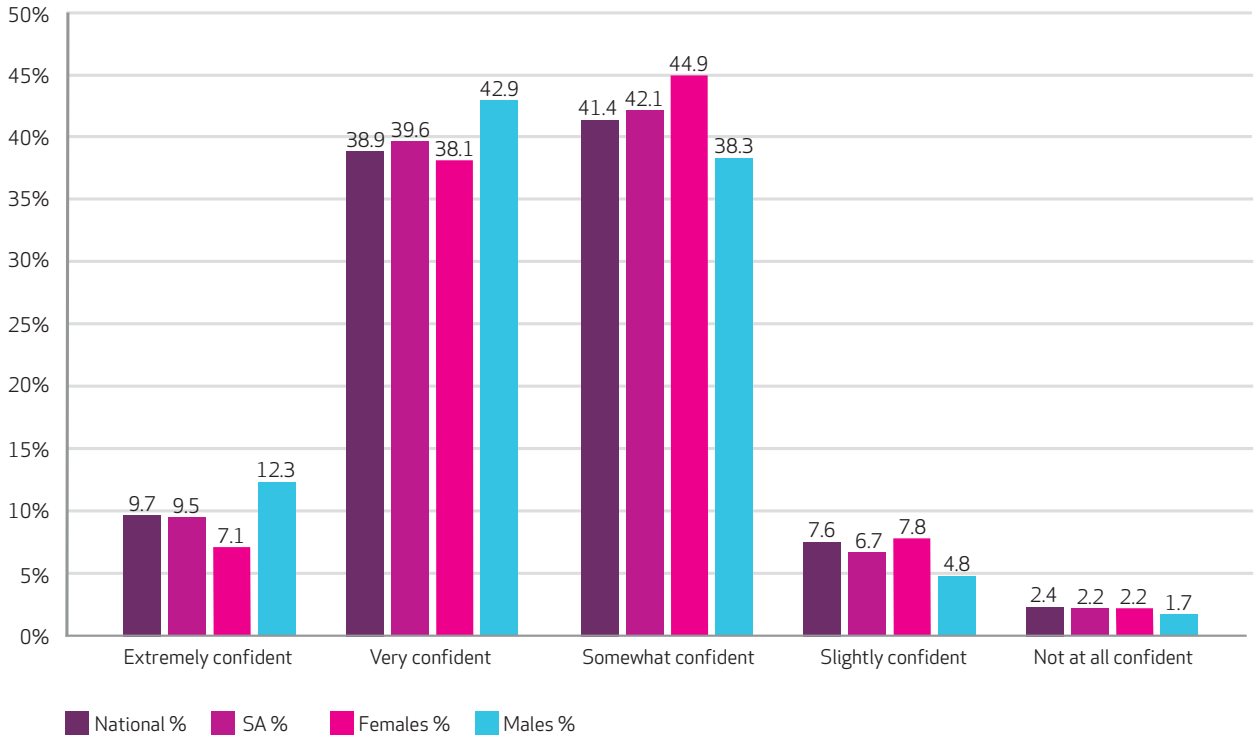



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of SA frequency.

## How confident are young people in achieving their study/work goals?

Respondents from SA were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after finishing school. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. As shown in Figure 7.2, nearly half (49.1%) of SA respondents indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study/work goals: 9.5% reported they were *extremely confident* and 39.6% stated they were *very confident*. However, less than one in 10 (8.9%) young people from SA were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals: 6.7% of young people indicated they were *slightly confident*, while 2.2% were *not at all confident*. A notably higher proportion of male respondents reported they were *extremely* or *very confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school (55.2% compared with 45.2% of females).

Figure 7.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals




## Employment

Respondents from SA were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average how many hours they worked per week. Table 7.3 shows participation in paid employment among respondents from SA. A very small proportion of young people from SA who reported paid employment were employed full-time (0.3%). This is unsurprising given the high proportion of respondents to the *Youth Survey* who were still at school. Nearly four in 10 (37.6%) respondents from SA reported they were employed part-time. Over six in 10 (62.1%) respondents indicated they were not in paid employment: 38.0% stated they were looking for work, while 24.1% were neither working nor looking for work. The proportion of respondents from SA in part-time employment in 2020 is similar to 2019 (37.6% and 37.7% respectively).

### Gender differences

Similar proportions of SA male and female respondents reported full-time employment (0.4% and 0.1% respectively). A notably higher proportion of female respondents were employed part-time (43.4% compared with 30.8% of males). Whereas, a greater proportion of male respondents were looking for work (41.9% compared with 35.0% of females).

Table 7.3: Participation in paid employment

| | National % | SA % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employed full-time | 0.6 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.4 |
| Employed part-time | 40.5 | 37.6 | 43.4 | 30.8 |
| Not in paid employment, looking for work | 34.7 | 38.0 | 35.0 | 41.9 |
| Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work | 24.2 | 24.1 | 21.4 | 26.9 |

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

## What would help young people secure a job?

Respondents from SA who were looking for work were asked to indicate from a number of factors, what might help them secure a job, as shown in Figure 7.3.

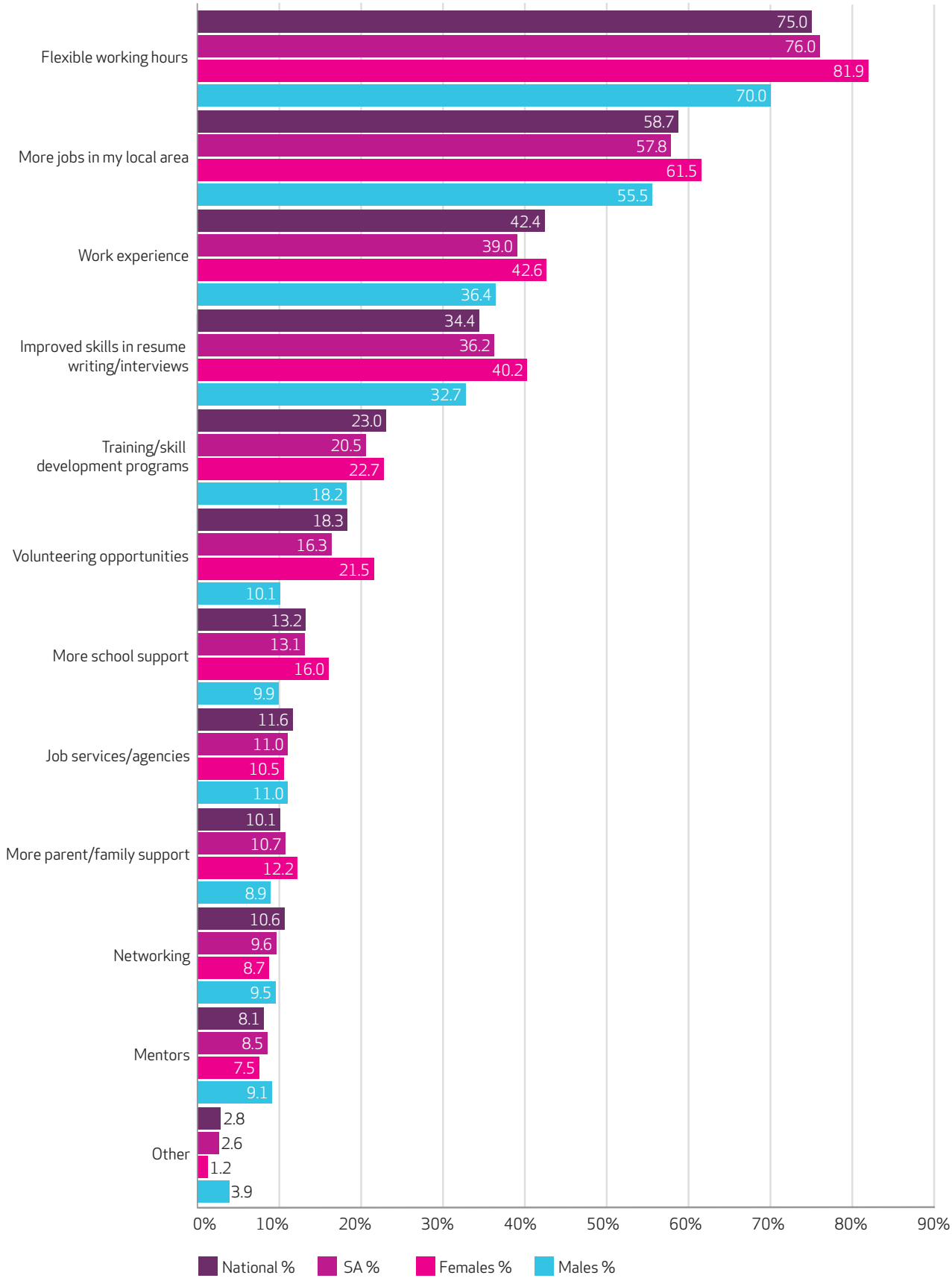
- *Flexible working hours* (76.0%), *more jobs in my local area* (57.8%) and *work experience* (39.0%) were the top factors in helping young people from SA secure a job.
- Over one third (36.2%) of respondents from SA saw *improved skills in resume writing/interviews* as an important factor in helping them secure a job.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 7.3, the top three factors to securing work for both females and males from SA were *flexible working hours*, *more jobs in my local area* and *work experience*.

- A notably higher proportion of female respondents from SA reported *flexible working hours* (81.9% compared with 70.0% of males) as a factor to securing a job.
- Double the proportion of female respondents from SA saw *volunteering opportunities* as a factor to securing a job (21.5% compared with 10.1% of males).

Figure 7.3: Factors to securing a job




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

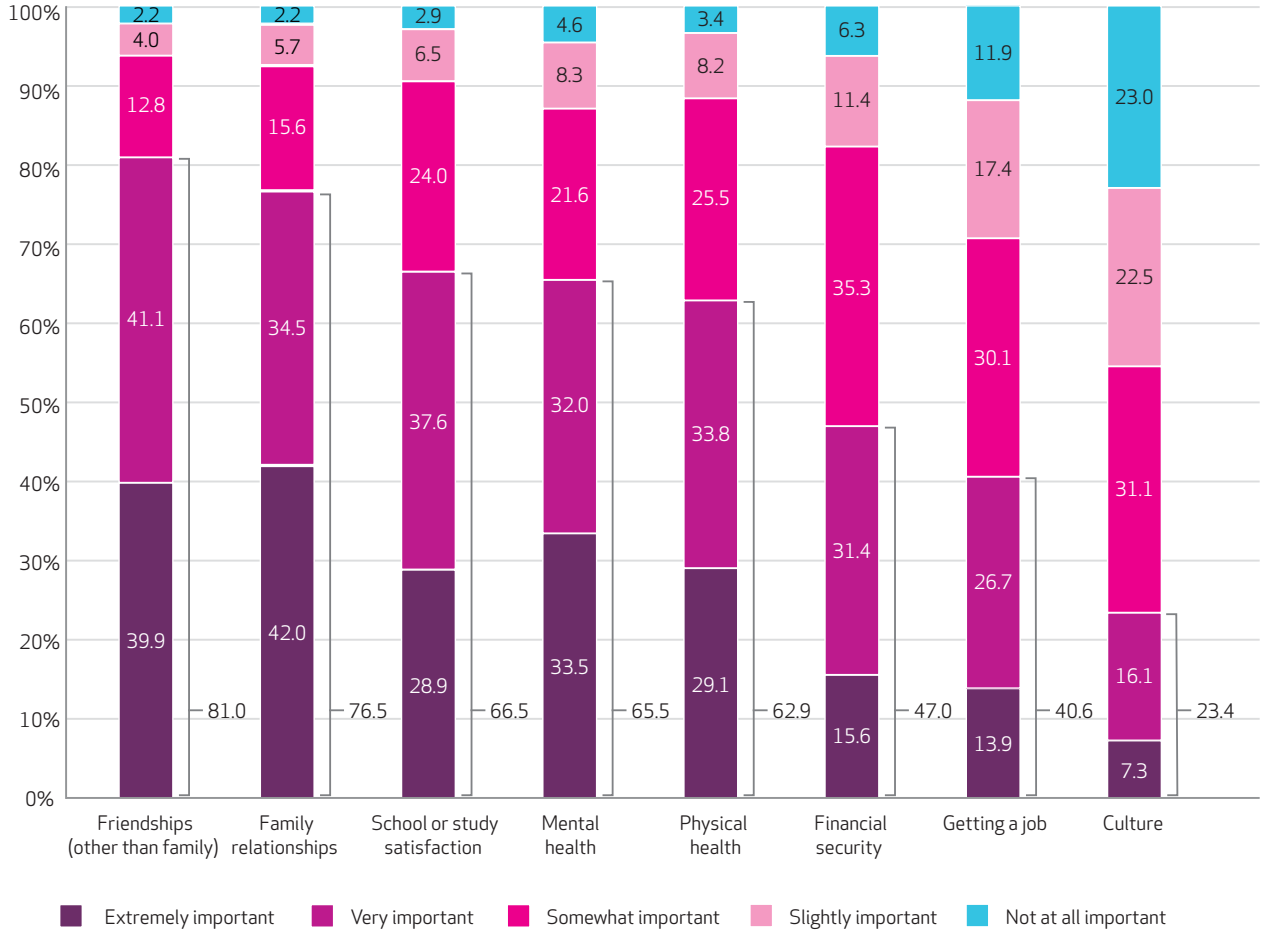
## What do young people value?

Young people from SA were asked how important a number of items had been in their lives over the past year. Responses for these items were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely important* to *not at all important*.

As shown in Figure 7.4, the three most highly valued items for respondents from SA were *friendships (other than family)*, *family relationships* and *school or study satisfaction*. The next most highly valued items were *mental health* and *physical health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were considered *extremely* or *very important* by 81.0% of respondents from SA (*extremely important*: 39.9%; *very important*: 41.1%).
- Almost eight in 10 (76.5%) respondents from SA highly valued *family relationships* (*extremely important*: 42.0%; *very important*: 34.5%).
- Around two thirds of respondents from SA placed a high value upon *school or study satisfaction* (66.5%), *mental health* (65.5%) and *physical health* (62.9%).

Figure 7.4: What young people value




Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

### Gender differences

*Friendships (other than family)* and *family relationships* were rated as the two most important items by both SA females and males, as shown in Table 7.4. The third top item for females was *school or study satisfaction*, while for males the third most highly valued item was *physical health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were rated *extremely* or *very important* by around eight in 10 females (82.2%) and males (80.5%) from SA.
- Notably higher proportions of SA females than males placed a high value upon *school and study satisfaction* (75.0% compared with 58.7%) and *mental health* (70.5% compared with 60.4%).

Table 7.4: What young people value by gender

| Females | Extremely important % | Very important % | Somewhat important % | Slightly important % | Not at all important % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **42.4** | **39.8** | 11.3 | 4.5 | 2.0 |
| **Family relationships** | **46.2** | **32.4** | 14.2 | 5.6 | 1.6 |
| **School or study satisfaction** | **36.0** | **39.0** | 18.2 | 5.0 | 1.9 |
| Mental health | 39.2 | 31.3 | 18.1 | 8.0 | 3.5 |
| Physical health | 27.7 | 34.1 | 26.1 | 8.8 | 3.2 |
| Financial security | 16.4 | 31.3 | 33.9 | 12.1 | 6.3 |
| Getting a job | 14.0 | 30.1 | 28.9 | 16.1 | 10.9 |
| Culture | 7.2 | 16.1 | 30.0 | 22.4 | 24.3 |
| **Males** | **Extremely important %** | **Very important %** | **Somewhat important %** | **Slightly important %** | **Not at all important %** |
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **36.5** | **44.0** | 13.8 | 3.6 | 2.2 |
| **Family relationships** | **37.3** | **38.2** | 16.7 | 5.2 | 2.6 |
| School or study satisfaction | 20.9 | 37.8 | 30.3 | 7.5 | 3.5 |
| Mental health | 26.7 | 33.7 | 26.0 | 8.4 | 5.2 |
| **Physical health** | **31.0** | **34.6** | 24.5 | 7.1 | 2.8 |
| Financial security | 13.6 | 31.7 | 37.7 | 11.1 | 5.9 |
| Getting a job | 13.7 | 23.7 | 30.3 | 19.5 | 12.8 |
| Culture | 6.9 | 15.5 | 32.0 | 24.0 | 21.6 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of SA frequency.

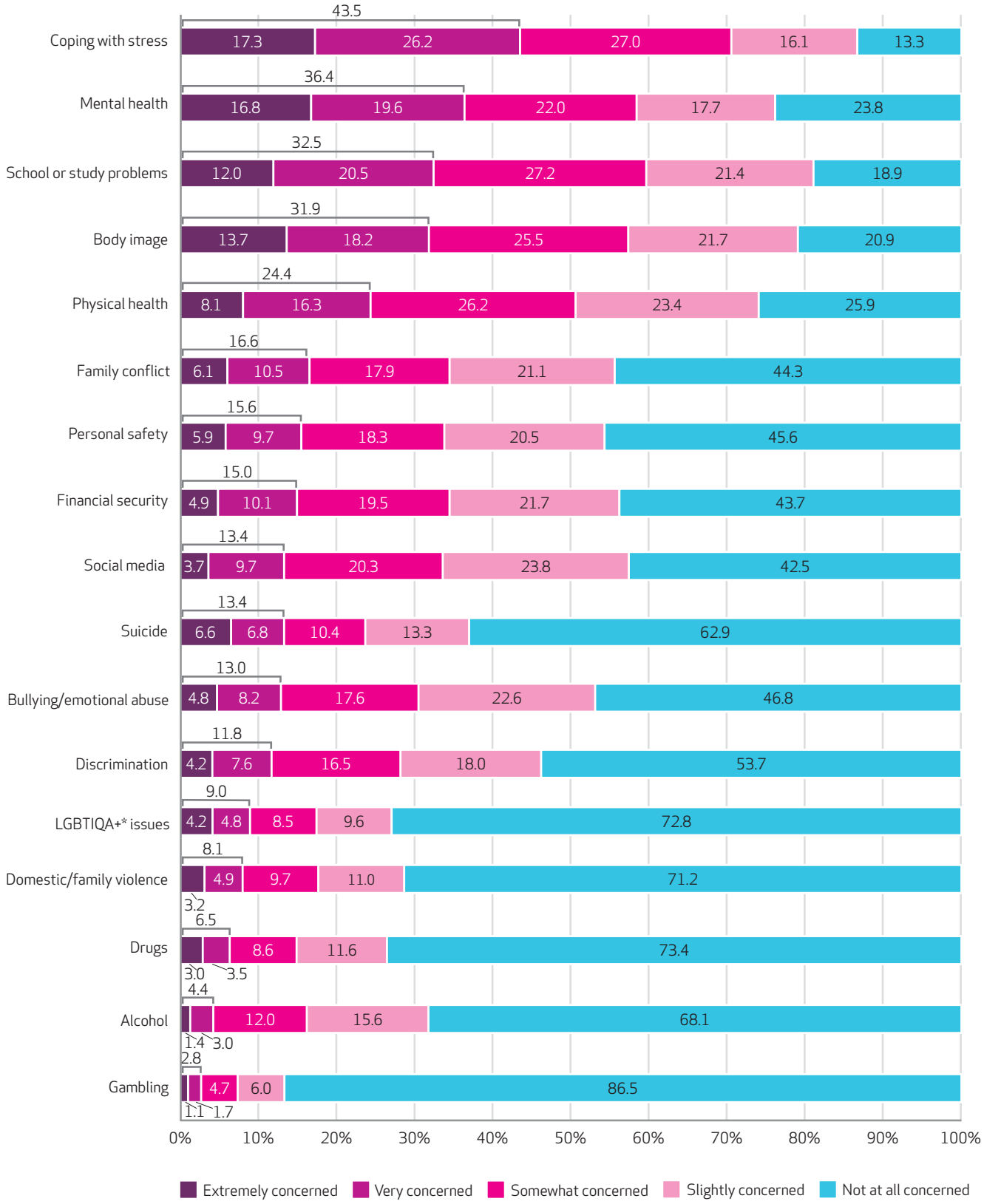
## What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Young people were asked to indicate how concerned they were about a number of issues over the past year, as shown in Figure 7.5. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*.

The top three issues of personal concern for young people from SA were *coping with stress*, *mental health* and *school or study problems*. The next most concerning issues were *body image* and *physical health*.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with more than four in 10 (43.5%) respondents from SA indicating they were *extremely* or *very concerned* about this issue.
- Around one third of respondents from SA were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *mental health* (36.4%), *school or study problems* (32.5%) and *body image* (31.9%).
- Close to one quarter (24.4%) of SA respondents were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *physical health*.

Figure 7.5: Issues of personal concern to young people




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

## Gender differences

*Coping with stress* was the top issue of personal concern for both females and males from SA, as shown in Table 7.5. For females from SA, the second and third most concerning personal issues were *mental health* and *body image*. For SA males the second and third most concerning personal issues were *school or study problems* and *mental health*. The proportion of female respondents from SA who were concerned about these issues (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- More than double the proportion of females from SA reported *coping with stress* was a major issue of concern (59.5% compared with 24.5% of males).
- Notably higher proportions of females than males were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *body image* (45.7% compared with 14.5%), *mental health* (48.2% compared with 21.5%) and *school or study problems* (41.2% compared with 22.0%).

Table 7.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

| Females | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **25.2** | **34.3** | 25.1 | 10.7 | 4.6 |
| **Mental health** | **22.0** | **26.2** | 22.4 | 16.0 | 13.3 |
| School or study problems | 15.4 | 25.8 | 27.8 | 19.4 | 11.5 |
| **Body image** | **19.8** | **25.9** | 27.9 | 17.9 | 8.4 |
| Physical health | 9.0 | 18.8 | 29.7 | 24.2 | 18.3 |
| Family conflict | 7.7 | 13.4 | 20.5 | 23.5 | 34.9 |
| Personal safety | 7.0 | 11.0 | 19.8 | 21.8 | 40.5 |
| Financial security | 6.3 | 11.8 | 20.4 | 21.9 | 39.5 |
| Social media | 4.4 | 12.9 | 25.1 | 25.1 | 32.5 |
| Suicide | 7.0 | 8.2 | 12.2 | 14.9 | 57.7 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 4.9 | 10.9 | 20.6 | 24.1 | 39.5 |
| Discrimination | 4.0 | 10.0 | 18.7 | 20.4 | 46.9 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 3.8 | 6.6 | 9.5 | 11.3 | 68.8 |
| Domestic/family violence | 3.7 | 5.8 | 10.4 | 10.6 | 69.6 |
| Drugs | 2.1 | 3.0 | 8.9 | 13.1 | 72.9 |
| Alcohol | 1.0 | 2.7 | 13.7 | 15.9 | 66.6 |
| Gambling | 0.2 | 1.5 | 3.1 | 5.7 | 89.5 |

Table 7.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

| Males | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **7.7** | **16.8** | 29.3 | 24.0 | 22.1 |
| **Mental health** | **9.5** | **12.0** | 21.4 | 21.6 | 35.6 |
| **School or study problems** | **7.4** | **14.6** | 26.2 | 24.3 | 27.5 |
| Body image | 5.5 | 9.0 | 21.7 | 27.7 | 36.1 |
| Physical health | 6.4 | 13.9 | 21.6 | 23.1 | 35.0 |
| Family conflict | 3.4 | 7.1 | 14.4 | 19.6 | 55.6 |
| Personal safety | 3.9 | 7.9 | 15.6 | 19.7 | 52.8 |
| Financial security | 3.0 | 7.0 | 17.7 | 22.3 | 50.0 |
| Social media | 2.1 | 5.7 | 15.0 | 23.0 | 54.1 |
| Suicide | 4.7 | 4.7 | 8.0 | 11.7 | 70.9 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 3.5 | 4.9 | 13.2 | 22.0 | 56.4 |
| Discrimination | 2.9 | 4.8 | 12.7 | 16.7 | 62.8 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 2.9 | 2.1 | 6.2 | 8.0 | 80.9 |
| Domestic/family violence | 1.7 | 3.5 | 8.4 | 11.9 | 74.5 |
| Drugs | 2.8 | 3.4 | 7.5 | 10.6 | 75.6 |
| Alcohol | 1.1 | 3.3 | 9.2 | 15.2 | 71.2 |
| Gambling | 1.4 | 1.7 | 6.0 | 6.3 | 84.6 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of SA frequency.
*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

## Have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people were asked whether they had been treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Over one quarter (26.5%) of young people from SA reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A higher proportion of SA females than males reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (31.9% compared with 18.9%).

## Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify reasons for being treated unfairly from a list of suggested items. Table 7.6 shows that, of the 26.5% of SA respondents who had been treated unfairly in the past year, four in 10 (41.0%) reported the unfair treatment was due to their *gender*. Three in 10 (29.2%) indicated they were treated unfairly due to their *mental health*, while 24.6% stated they were treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background*.

### Gender differences

There were some notable differences in female and male responses to the question regarding the reasons for unfair treatment, as shown in Table 7.6. Of the 26.5% of young people from SA who had been treated unfairly in the past year:

- More than double the proportion of females from SA had been treated unfairly due to their *gender* (48.7% compared with 22.0% of males).
- A notably higher proportion of SA females than males reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *age* (23.1% compared with 14.7%) and their *mental health* (30.8% compared with 22.9%).
- Conversely, more than double the proportion of males from SA reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *disability* (11.9% compared with 4.0% of females).

Table 7.6: Reasons for being treated unfairly

| | National % | SA % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | **41.0** | **41.0** | **48.7** | **22.0** |
| **Mental health** | **26.0** | **29.2** | **30.8** | **22.9** |
| **Race/cultural background** | **30.4** | **24.6** | **23.8** | **26.1** |
| Age | 21.0 | 20.3 | 23.1 | 14.7 |
| Sexuality | 19.4 | 18.7 | 16.7 | 14.7 |
| Other | 14.4 | 15.6 | 12.1 | 21.6 |
| Religion | 13.8 | 12.0 | 11.5 | 11.9 |
| Financial background | 9.0 | 11.6 | 9.9 | 16.1 |
| Disability | 7.5 | 7.0 | 4.0 | 11.9 |

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

## Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Young people were asked whether they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Over half (53.9%) of young people from SA reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year. A much higher proportion of SA females than males reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (62.5% compared with 43.8%).

## What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

Young people who reported they had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year were asked to identify from a list of reasons why the person was being treated unfairly. Table 7.7 shows that, of the 53.9% of respondents from SA who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 59.2% reported they witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *race/cultural background*. Almost half (48.5%) of respondents from SA indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality*. Four in 10 (39.7%) respondents from SA who had witnessed unfair treatment reported it was due to a person's *gender*.

### Gender differences

As shown in Table 7.7, the three most frequently witnessed reasons for unfair treatment for SA females and males were consistent with SA results.

- Six in 10 (61.7%) SA female respondents had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *race/cultural background* (compared with 55.6% of males).
- A higher proportion of SA females than males reported they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality* (50.8% compared with 43.4%) and due to a person's *gender* (40.9% compared with 34.7%).

Table 7.7: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

| | National % | SA % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race/cultural background** | **62.0** | **59.2** | **61.7** | **55.6** |
| **Sexuality** | **49.4** | **48.5** | **50.8** | **43.4** |
| **Gender** | **40.5** | **39.7** | **40.9** | **34.7** |
| Disability | 32.2 | 36.4 | 37.6 | 33.5 |
| Mental health | 28.9 | 30.0 | 31.3 | 26.5 |
| Religion | 28.8 | 27.5 | 28.4 | 25.9 |
| Financial background | 18.7 | 17.9 | 18.5 | 15.8 |
| Age | 17.5 | 17.7 | 18.0 | 16.4 |
| Other | 5.3 | 7.3 | 4.7 | 9.9 |

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

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

Respondents were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 7.6 shows the percentage of respondents from SA who indicated they would go to the particular source for support.

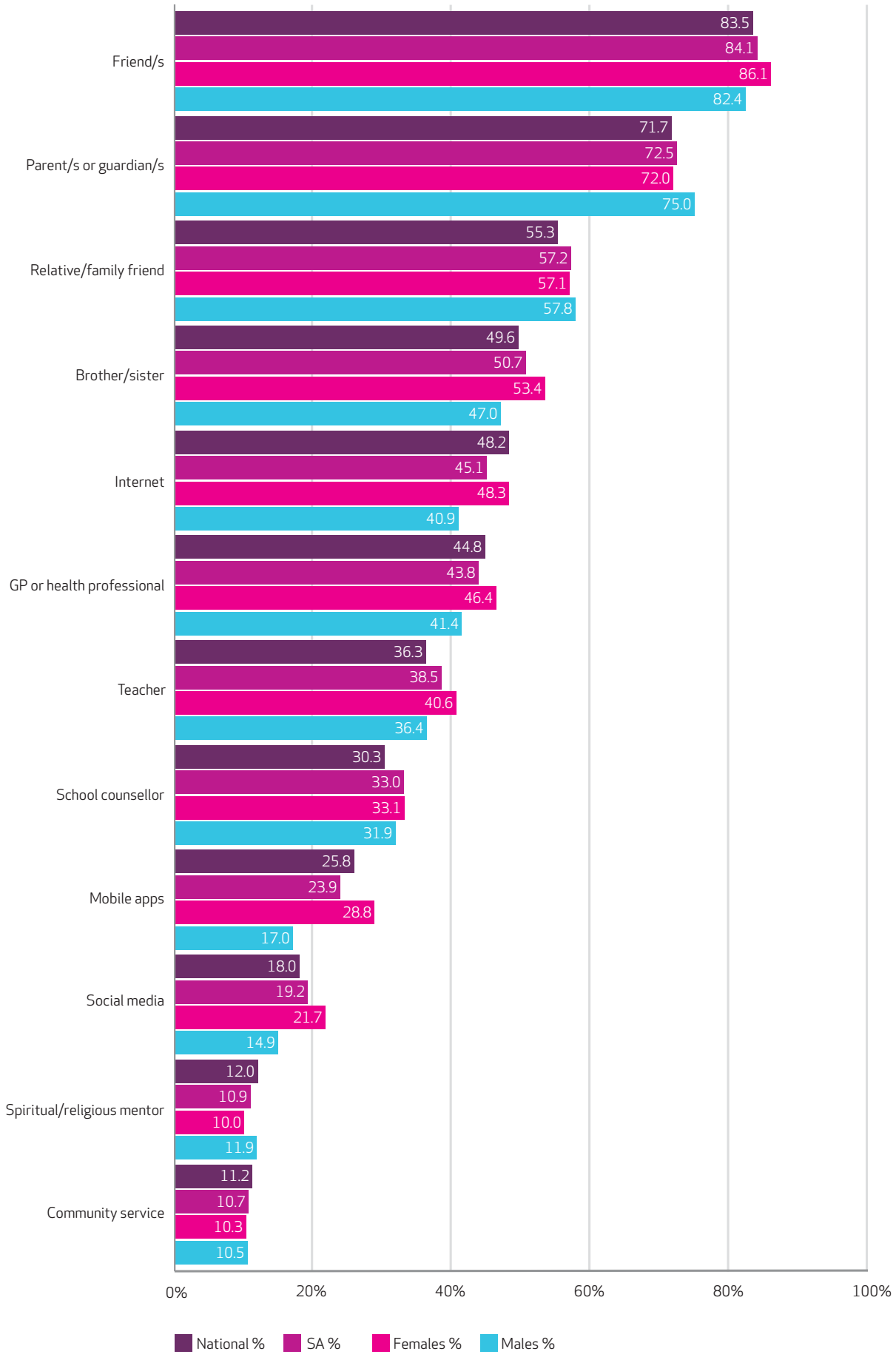
- *Friend/s* (84.1%), *parent/s or guardian/s* (72.5%) and *relative/family friend* (57.2%) were the three most frequently cited sources of help for young people from SA.
- Around half (50.7%) of young people from SA indicated they would go to their *brother/sister*, while 45.1% would go to the *internet* for support with important issues in their lives.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 7.6, the top three sources of help for both genders were consistent with the SA results.

- A higher proportion of SA females than males indicated they would turn to their *friend/s* for help with important issues (86.1% compared with 82.4%), whereas a slightly higher proportion of SA males than females stated they would go to their *parent/s or guardian/s* (75.0% compared with 72.0%).
- A higher proportion of females than males from SA would turn to *mobile apps* (28.8% compared with 17.0%), the *internet* (48.3% compared with 40.9%) or *social media* (21.7% compared with 14.9%) for support with important issues in their lives.

Figure 7.6: Where young people go for help with important issues




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

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

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 7.8. In 2020, the top three issues identified by young people from SA were *COVID-19*, *equity and discrimination* and *the environment*.

- Around four in 10 young people from SA indicated that *COVID-19* (42.2%) and *equity and discrimination* (37.6%) were important issues in Australia today.
- Almost three in 10 (28.2%) respondents from SA reported that *the environment* was an important national issues.
- Since 2019, the proportion of those from SA reporting *equity and discrimination* as a key national issue has increased from 28.1% to 37.6%. Conversely, concerns about *alcohol and drugs* and *mental health* have decreased since 2019.

### Gender differences

The most important issues for females from SA were *equity and discrimination, COVID-19* and *the environment*. For males, the top three most important issues were *COVID-19, equity and discrimination* and *the environment*.

- Notably higher proportions of SA females than males identified *equity and discrimination* (44.2% compared with 30.3%), *the environment* (32.4% compared with 23.5%) and *mental health* (30.3% compared with 22.3%) as important issues facing Australia today.
- Conversely, higher proportions of SA males than females regarded *COVID-19* (45.6% compared with 39.8%) and *the economy and financial matters* (18.6% compared with 14.0%) as key issues in Australia.

Table 7.8: Most important issues in Australia today

| | National 2020 % | SA 2020 % | Females % | Males % | SA 2019 % | SA 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **COVID-19** | **38.8** | **42.2** | **39.8** | **45.6** | - | - |
| **Equity and discrimination** | **40.2** | **37.6** | **44.2** | **30.3** | **28.1** | **24.8** |
| **The environment** | 29.8 | **28.2** | **32.4** | **23.5** | **30.0** | 7.4 |
| Mental health | **30.6** | 26.7 | 30.3 | 22.3 | **34.7** | **40.1** |
| The economy and financial matters | 15.3 | 15.3 | 14.0 | 18.6 | 15.6 | 11.6 |
| Alcohol and drugs | 10.5 | 10.6 | 9.0 | 11.6 | 21.0 | **27.9** |
| Homelessness/Housing | 8.3 | 10.5 | 11.5 | 9.6 | 8.6 | 7.7 |
| Employment | 7.5 | 9.2 | 8.3 | 10.7 | 10.5 | 11.4 |
| Crime, safety and violence | 9.3 | 8.6 | 9.8 | 7.2 | 11.4 | 12.0 |
| Bullying | 6.4 | 7.1 | 8.0 | 5.5 | 12.4 | 20.0 |

Note: Items are listed in order of SA frequency.

## What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities they had been involved in over the past year from the list of options shown in Table 7.9.

- The top three activities for young people from SA were *sports (as a participant)* (65.9%), *sports (as a spectator)* (61.0%) and *volunteer work* (38.1%).
- Close to four in 10 (37.5%) respondents from SA reported they had participated in *arts/cultural/music activities* in the past year.
- One quarter (24.7%) of young people from SA indicated they had taken part in *student leadership activities*.

### Gender differences

In line with SA results, *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)* were the top two activities for both SA females and males. While *arts/cultural/music activities* was the third most reported activity for females from SA, *volunteer work* was the third highest for males.

- Higher proportions of SA males than females reported taking part in *sports (as a spectator)* (67.3% compared with 56.8%) and *sports (as a participant)* (69.6% compared with 63.8%).
- Conversely, higher proportions of females than males from SA participated in *arts/cultural/music activities* (45.0% compared with 28.8%) and *volunteer work* (41.5% compared with 33.5%) in the past year.

Table 7.9: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

| | National % | SA % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sports (as a participant)** | **70.7** | **65.9** | **63.8** | **69.6** |
| **Sports (as a spectator)** | **62.1** | **61.0** | **56.8** | **67.3** |
| **Volunteer work** | 43.3 | **38.1** | 41.5 | **33.5** |
| Arts/cultural/music activities | **43.9** | 37.5 | **45.0** | 28.8 |
| Student leadership activities | 34.0 | 24.7 | 27.2 | 21.3 |
| Youth groups/activities | 25.6 | 20.4 | 21.8 | 17.2 |
| Religious groups/activities | 23.6 | 19.7 | 21.1 | 18.2 |
| Environmental groups | 14.8 | 12.7 | 15.2 | 8.4 |
| Political groups/organisations | 8.8 | 7.8 | 8.4 | 6.2 |

Note: Items are listed in order of SA frequency.

## How stressed are young people?

For the first time in 2020, young people were asked to report on how much of the time they felt stressed in the past four weeks. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *all of the time* to *none of the time*. Table 7.10 shows that close to half (46.6%) of young people from SA felt stressed either *all of the time* or *most of the time*.

- More than double the proportion of female respondents from SA felt stressed *all of the time* or *most of the time* (61.0% compared with 29.3% of males).
- Conversely, more than three times the proportion of males from SA felt stressed *a little of the time* or *none of the time* (36.0% compared with 10.5% of females).

Table 7.10: How stressed are young people?

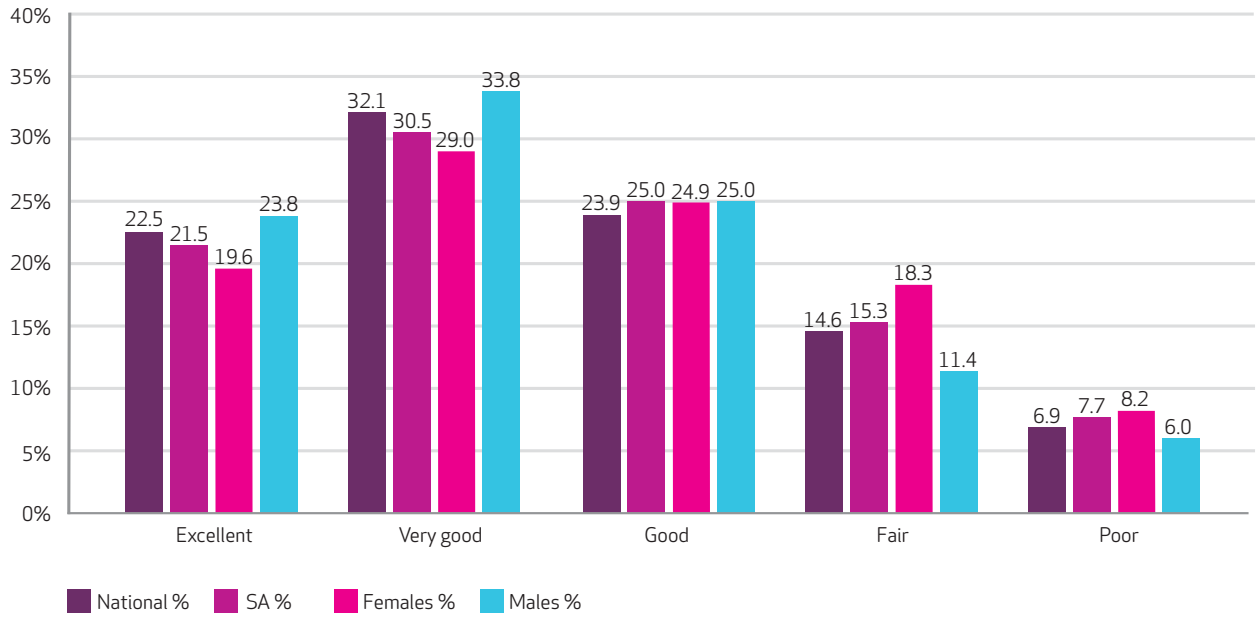
| | National % | SA % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| All of the time | 11.6 | 13.9 | 19.0 | 7.2 |
| Most of the time | 31.0 | 32.7 | 42.0 | 22.1 |
| Some of the time | 32.4 | 31.3 | 28.5 | 34.7 |
| A little of the time | 19.7 | 17.6 | 9.2 | 28.1 |
| None of the time | 5.3 | 4.5 | 1.3 | 7.9 |

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

Respondents were asked to rate their family's ability to get along with one another. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 7.7 shows that the majority of respondents from SA rated their family's ability to get along very positively: 21.5% rated it as *excellent* and 30.5% rated it as *very good*. However, almost one quarter (23.0%) of young people from SA indicated their family's ability to get along was either *fair* (15.3%) or *poor* (7.7%).

A higher proportion of male respondents rated their family's ability to get along as *excellent* or *very good* (57.6% compared with 48.6% of females), while a higher proportion of females rated their family's ability to get along as *fair* or *poor* (26.5% compared with 17.4% of males).

Figure 7.7: Family's ability to get along with one another




## How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 indicates that they felt *very sad* and 10 indicates that they felt *very happy*. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100, in which 100 is the happiest. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes *happy/very happy*; 40-60 signifies *not happy or sad*; and 0-30 indicates *very sad/sad*. As Table 7.11 shows, the majority (56.7%) of young people from SA responded in the 70-100 range, which indicates most young people felt happy overall with their lives.

A notably higher proportion of males from SA reported feeling *happy/very happy* with their lives as a whole (65.2% compared with 50.3% of females), whereas a greater proportion of females indicated they felt *very sad/sad* (13.4% compared with 8.4% of males).

Table 7.11: How happy are young people?

| | National % | SA % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Happy/very happy (70-100) | 58.6 | 56.7 | 50.3 | 65.2 |
| Not happy or sad (40-60) | 30.7 | 31.7 | 36.4 | 26.4 |
| Very sad/sad (0-30) | 10.7 | 11.6 | 13.4 | 8.4 |

## How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked to describe their feelings when they thought about the future. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 7.12 shows that the majority of young people from SA felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future.

- More than half (54.3%) felt either *very positive* (12.3%) or *positive* (42.0%) about the future.
- One in eight (12.9%) young people from SA indicated they felt *negative* (9.7%) or *very negative* (3.2%) about the future.
- A higher proportion of males from SA reported feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future (59.9% compared with 50.4% of females).

Table 7.12: Feelings about the future

| | National 2020 % | SA 2020 % | Females % | Males % | SA 2019 % | SA 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very positive | 12.3 | 12.3 | 10.4 | 14.6 | 14.2 | 15.6 |
| Positive | 43.2 | 42.0 | 40.0 | 45.3 | 46.2 | 46.2 |
| Neither positive nor negative | 30.5 | 32.8 | 35.5 | 29.5 | 29.2 | 28.4 |
| Negative | 10.5 | 9.7 | 10.9 | 8.3 | 7.8 | 6.8 |
| Very negative | 3.4 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 2.4 | 2.6 | 3.0 |

# Tasmania



## Profile of respondents

A total of 739 young people from Tasmania (TAS) aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2020*.

### Gender breakdown

Half (50.7%) of respondents from TAS were female, 46.7% were male, 1.7% gender diverse and 0.9% preferred not to say.

### Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 38 (5.2%) respondents from TAS identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Similar proportions of male and female respondents from TAS identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (4.6% and 4.2% respectively).

### Cultural background

A total of 96 (13.0%) respondents from TAS stated they were born overseas and 89 (12.1%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 30 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Cantonese, Chinese, German, Arabic, French and Mandarin.

Close to three in 10 (28.1%) respondents from TAS stated that one or both of their parents were born overseas.

### Disability

A total of 37 (5.1%) respondents from TAS identified as living with disability. A greater proportion of males than females reported living with disability (5.3% compared with 4.3%). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): autism, physical disabilities, learning disabilities and anxiety disorder.

## Education

As indicated in Table 8.1, 90.7% of respondents from TAS were studying full-time, which is lower than the 95.2% of respondents studying full-time in 2019. A higher proportion of females from TAS reported studying full-time (93.2% compared with 89.0% of males). Conversely, a higher proportion of males than females from TAS reported they were studying part-time (4.0% compared with 3.1%) or not studying (7.0% compared with 3.7%).

Table 8.1: Participation in education

| | National % | TAS % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Studying full-time | 86.6 | 90.7 | 93.2 | 89.0 |
| Studying part-time | 6.5 | 3.8 | 3.1 | 4.0 |
| Not studying | 6.8 | 5.4 | 3.7 | 7.0 |

Respondents from TAS who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in previous years, the majority of respondents from TAS reported they were either *very satisfied* (11.9%) or *satisfied* (60.1%) with their studies. Less than one in 10 indicated they were *dissatisfied* (4.8%) or *very dissatisfied* (1.2%). As shown in Table 8.2, a higher proportion of females than males from TAS reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* (77.0% compared with 67.8%), while a slightly higher proportion of males than females indicated they felt *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* (6.7% compared with 5.0%).

Table 8.2: Satisfaction with studies

| | National % | TAS % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 10.4 | 11.9 | 13.2 | 10.3 |
| Satisfied | 56.7 | 60.1 | 63.8 | 57.5 |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 25.6 | 22.1 | 17.9 | 25.6 |
| Dissatisfied | 5.7 | 4.8 | 5.0 | 4.7 |
| Very dissatisfied | 1.5 | 1.2 | 0.0 | 2.0 |

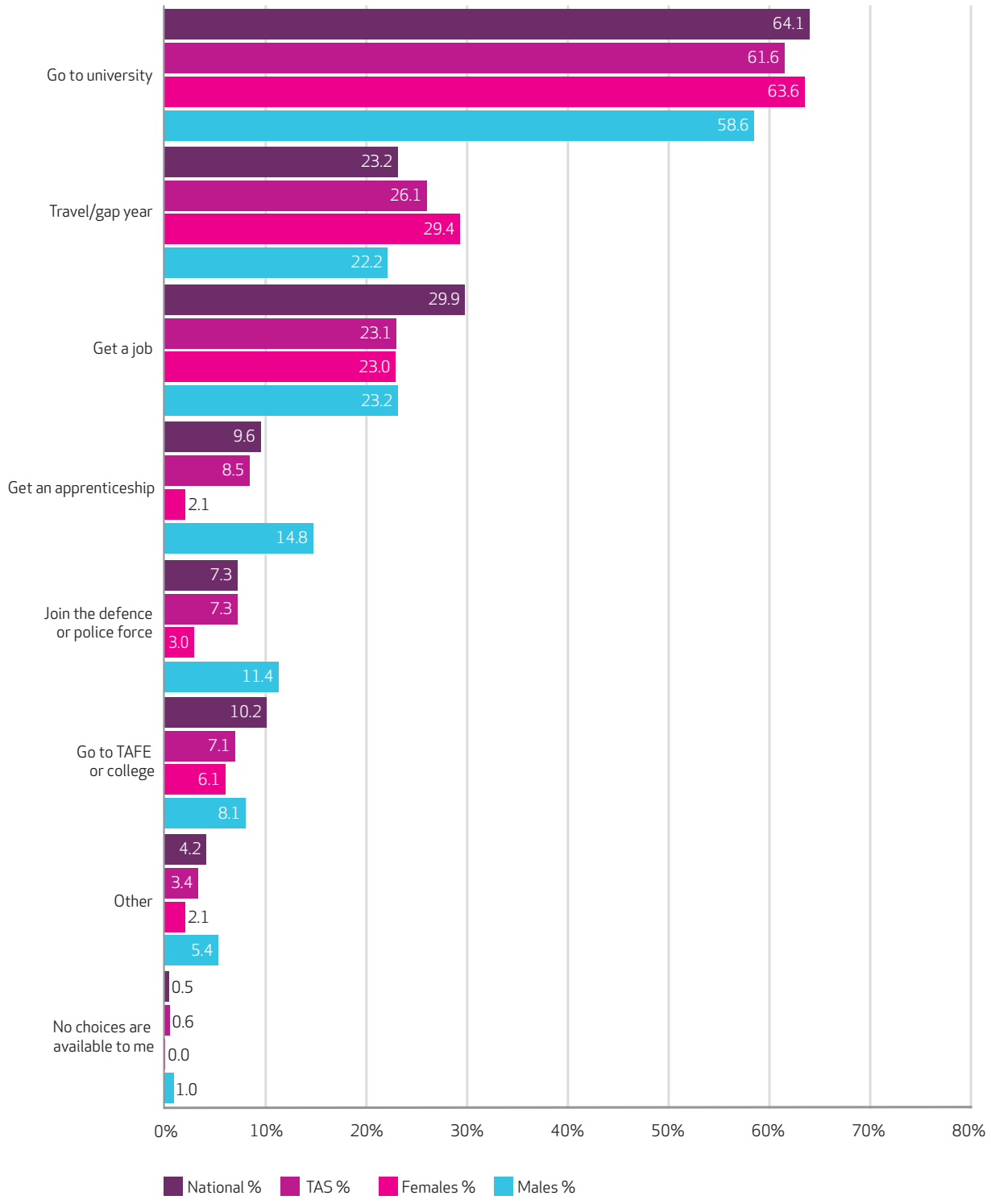
Of those still at school, the majority (97.3%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. A higher proportion of males indicated they did not plan to complete Year 12 (3.3% compared with 1.1% of females).

Respondents from TAS who were studying at school were asked what they planned to do after leaving school. Figure 8.1 shows that over six in 10 (61.6%) respondents from TAS planned to *go to university* after school. Around one quarter of respondents from TAS reported *travel/gap year* plans (26.1%) and plans to *get a job* (23.1%) after school. Overall, 8.5% of young people planned to *get an apprenticeship,* 7.3% indicated plans to *join the defence or police force* and 7.1% reported plans to *go to TAFE or college*. A small minority (0.6%) of respondents indicated that *no choices are available to me* after finishing school.

## Gender differences

While the most frequently reported plan among both female and male respondents from TAS was to *go to university* after finishing school, a higher proportion of females indicated they planned to do so (63.6% compared with 58.6% of males). A greater proportion of females from TAS also reported *travel/gap year* plans after leaving school (29.4% compared with 22.2% of males). Conversely, seven times the proportion of males from TAS indicated they were planning to *get an apprenticeship* after school (14.8% compared with 2.1% of females).

Figure 8.1: Plans after leaving school

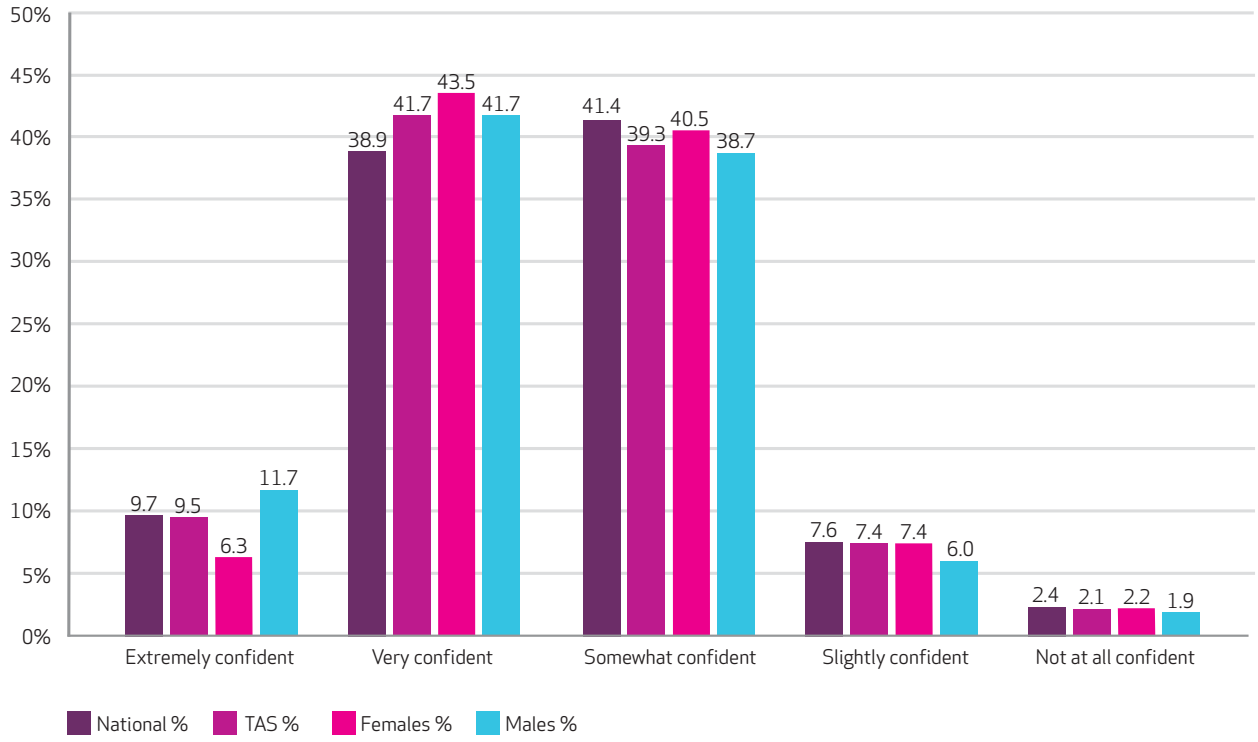



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of TAS frequency.

## How confident are young people in achieving their study/work goals?

Respondents from TAS were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after finishing school. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. As shown in Figure 8.2, over half (51.2%) of TAS respondents indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study/work goals: 9.5% reported they were *extremely confident* and 41.7% stated they were *very confident*. However, close to one in 10 (9.5%) young people from TAS were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals: 7.4% of young people indicated they were *slightly confident*, while 2.1% were *not at all confident*. A higher proportion of male respondents reported they were *extremely* or *very confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school (53.4% compared with 49.8% of females).

Figure 8.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals




## Employment

Respondents from TAS were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average how many hours they worked per week. Table 8.3 shows participation in paid employment among respondents from TAS. A very small proportion of young people from TAS who reported paid employment were employed full-time (0.7%). This is unsurprising given the high proportion of respondents to the *Youth Survey* who were still at school. Close to four in 10 (38.7%) respondents from TAS reported they were employed part-time. Six in 10 (60.6%) respondents indicated they were not in paid employment: 34.4% stated they were looking for work, while 26.2% were neither working nor looking for work. The proportion of respondents from TAS in part-time employment in 2020 is slightly higher than in 2019 (38.7% compared with 37.6%).

### Gender differences

A slightly higher proportion of male respondents from TAS reported full-time employment (0.9% compared with 0.3% of females). Whereas, a higher proportion of female respondents were employed part-time (42.7% compared with 35.5% of males). Similar proportions of male and female respondents were looking for work (34.0% and 33.6% respectively).

Table 8.3: Participation in paid employment

| | National % | TAS % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employed full-time | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.3 | 0.9 |
| Employed part-time | 40.5 | 38.7 | 42.7 | 35.5 |
| Not in paid employment, looking for work | 34.7 | 34.4 | 33.6 | 34.0 |
| Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work | 24.2 | 26.2 | 23.4 | 29.6 |

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

## What would help young people secure a job?

Respondents from TAS who were looking for work were asked to indicate from a number of factors, what might help them secure a job, as shown in Figure 8.3.

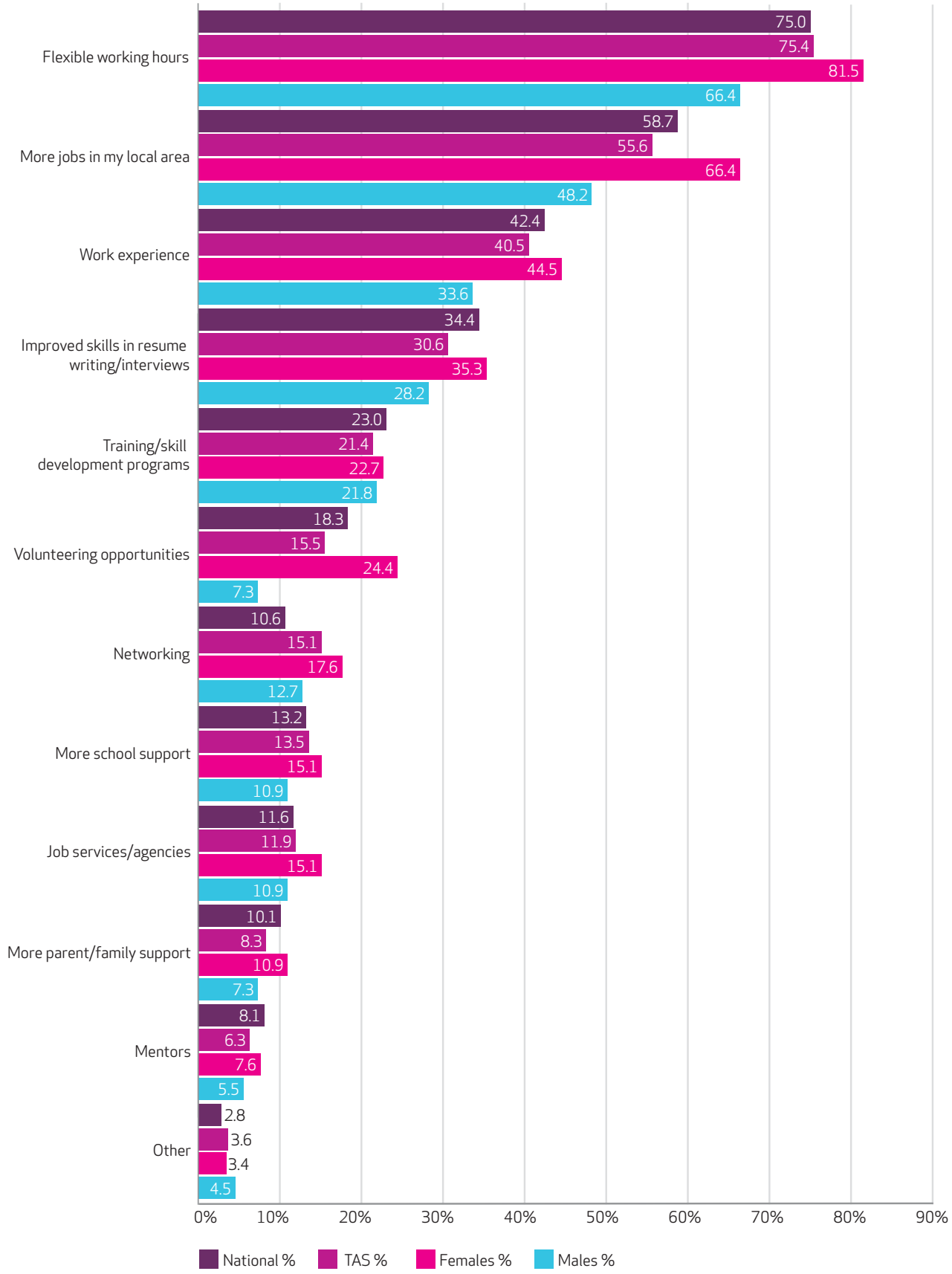
- *Flexible working hours* (75.4%), *more jobs in my local area* (55.6%) and *work experience* (40.5%) were the top factors in helping young people from TAS secure a job.
- Three in 10 (30.6%) respondents from TAS saw *improved skills in resume writing/interviews* as an important factor in helping them secure a job.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 8.3, the top three factors to securing work for both females and males from TAS were *flexible working hours*, *more jobs in my local area* and *work experience*.

- More than three times the proportion of female respondents from TAS saw *volunteering opportunities* as a factor to securing a job (24.4% compared with 7.3% of males).
- Notably higher proportions of TAS females than males reported *more jobs in my local area* (66.4% compared with 48.2%), *flexible working hours* (81.5% compared with 66.4%) and *work experience* (44.5% compared with 33.6%) were factors to securing a job.

Figure 8.3: Factors to securing a job




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

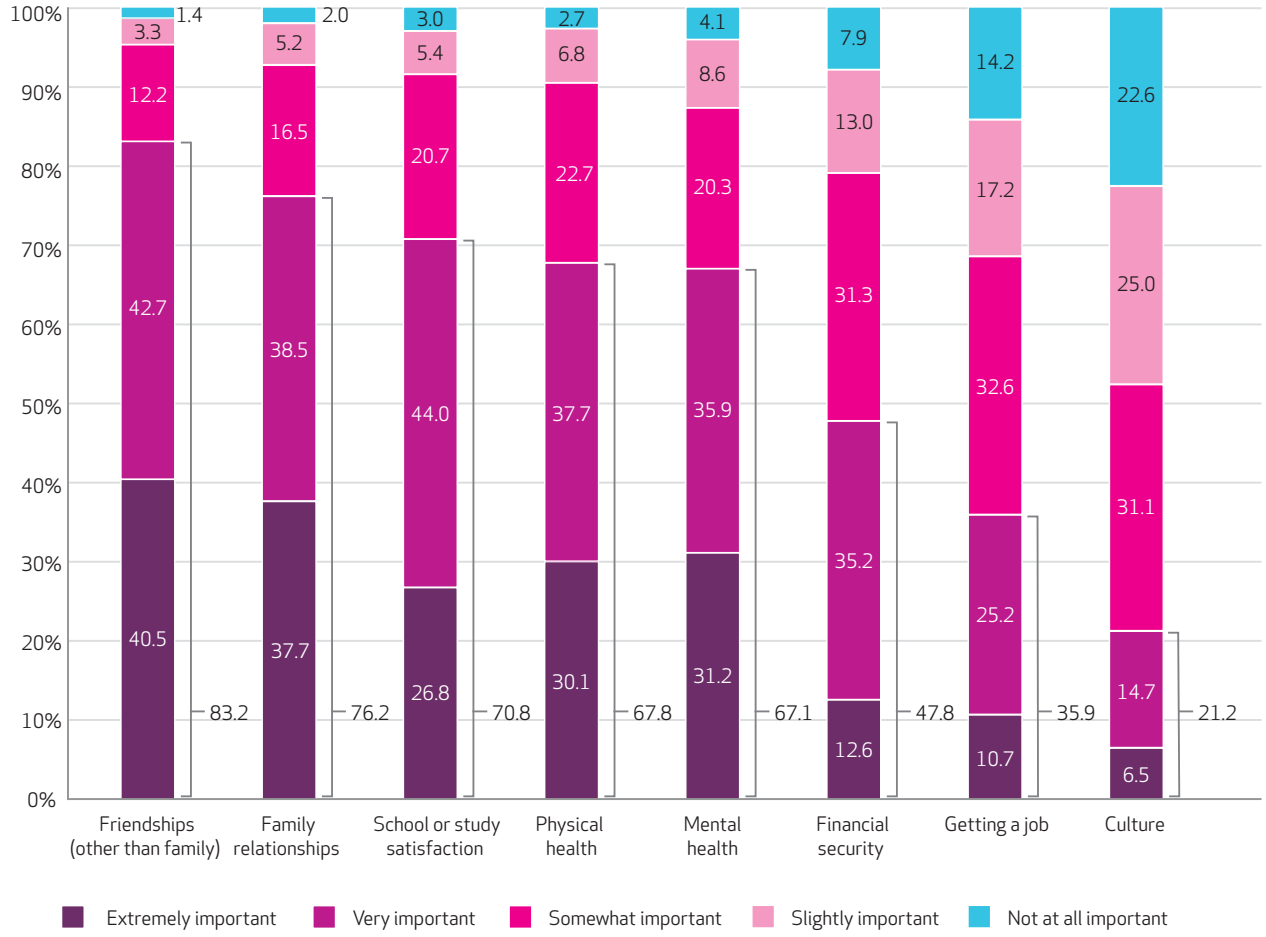
## What do young people value?

Young people from TAS were asked how important a number of items had been in their lives over the past year. Responses for these items were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely important* to *not at all important*.

As shown in Figure 8.4, the three most highly valued items for respondents from TAS were *friendships (other than family)*, *family relationships* and *school or study satisfaction*. The next most highly valued items were *physical health* and *mental health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were considered *extremely* or *very important* by 83.2% of respondents from TAS (*extremely important*: 40.5%; *very important*: 42.7%).
- Close to eight in 10 (76.2%) respondents from TAS highly valued *family relationships* (*extremely important*: 37.7%; *very important*: 38.5%).
- Seven in 10 (70.8%) respondents from TAS highly valued *school or study satisfaction*.
- More than two thirds of respondents from TAS placed a high value upon *physical health* (67.8%) and *mental health* (67.1%).

Figure 8.4: What young people value




Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

### Gender differences

*Friendships (other than family)* and *family relationships* were rated as the two most important items by both TAS females and males, as shown in Table 8.4. The third top item for females was *school or study satisfaction*, while for males the third most highly valued item was *physical health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were rated *extremely* or *very important* by more than eight in 10 females (83.6%) and males (83.0%) from TAS.
- Notably higher proportions of TAS females than males placed a high value upon *school and study satisfaction* (80.0% compared with 62.4%), *mental health* (72.3% compared with 60.3%) and *family relationships* (81.9% compared with 70.9%).

Table 8.4: What young people value by gender

| Females | Extremely important % | Very important % | Somewhat important % | Slightly important % | Not at all important % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **42.5** | **41.1** | 11.6 | 3.7 | 1.1 |
| **Family relationships** | **41.8** | **40.1** | 11.9 | 4.2 | 2.0 |
| **School or study satisfaction** | **33.0** | **47.0** | 14.6 | 3.4 | 2.0 |
| Physical health | 29.6 | 37.5 | 24.8 | 5.9 | 2.3 |
| Mental health | 34.6 | 37.7 | 18.0 | 8.2 | 1.4 |
| Financial security | 13.0 | 38.4 | 29.1 | 14.1 | 5.4 |
| Getting a job | 12.4 | 26.7 | 31.7 | 16.3 | 12.9 |
| Culture | 5.4 | 16.2 | 33.8 | 24.4 | 20.2 |
| **Males** | **Extremely important %** | **Very important %** | **Somewhat important %** | **Slightly important %** | **Not at all important %** |
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **37.8** | **45.2** | 13.8 | 2.5 | 0.6 |
| **Family relationships** | **32.8** | **38.1** | 22.0 | 5.9 | 1.2 |
| School or study satisfaction | 20.4 | 42.0 | 28.1 | 6.8 | 2.8 |
| **Physical health** | **29.7** | **39.6** | 20.7 | 8.0 | 1.9 |
| Mental health | 27.1 | 33.2 | 24.0 | 9.8 | 5.8 |
| Financial security | 11.1 | 32.2 | 34.4 | 12.7 | 9.6 |
| Getting a job | 8.6 | 24.5 | 33.9 | 18.3 | 14.7 |
| Culture | 7.1 | 13.8 | 29.8 | 25.8 | 23.6 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of TAS frequency.

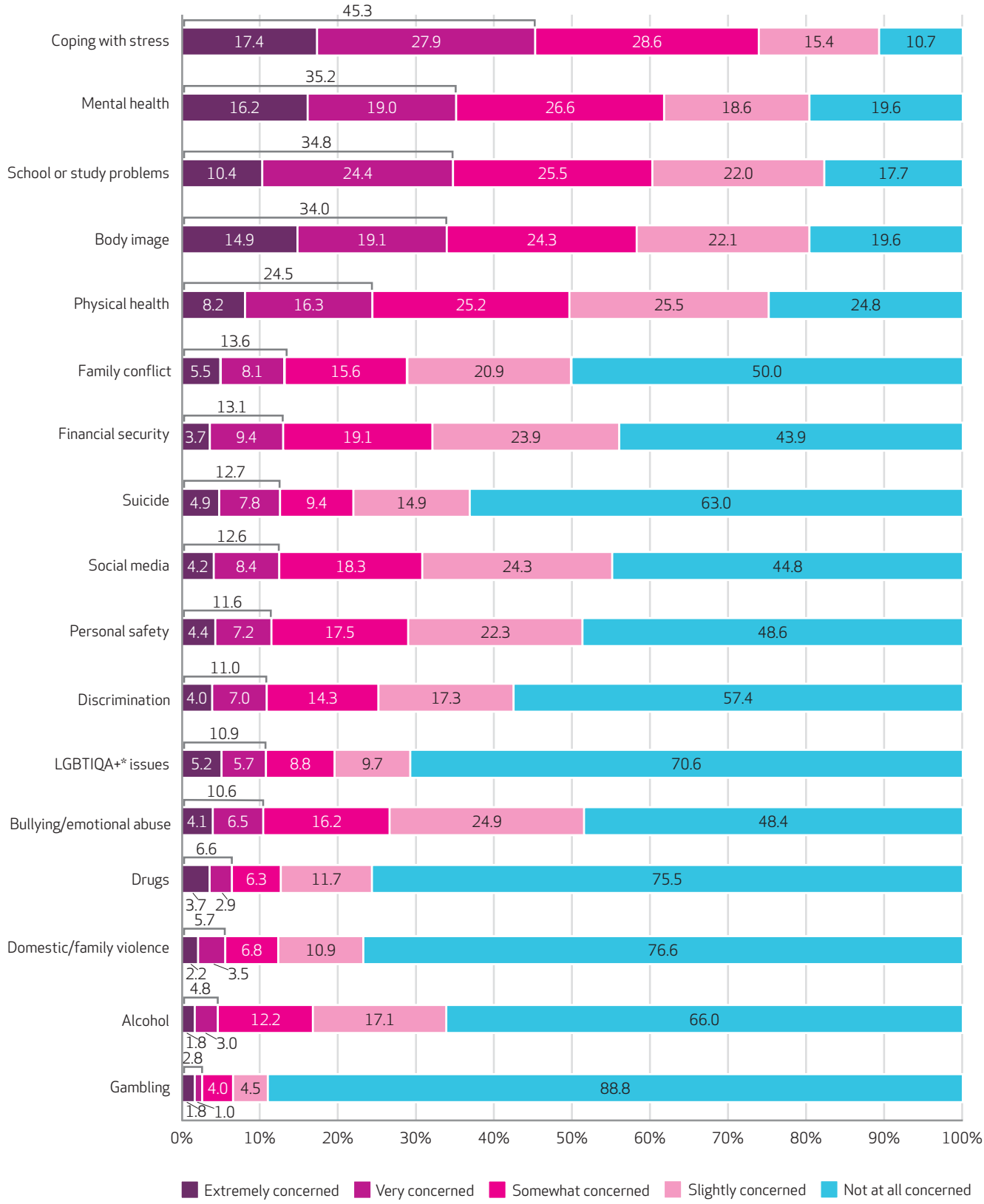
## What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Young people were asked to indicate how concerned they were about a number of issues over the past year, as shown in Figure 8.5. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*.

The top three issues of personal concern for young people from TAS were *coping with stress*, *mental health* and *school or study problems*. The next most concerning issues were *body image* and *physical health*.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with close to half (45.3%) of respondents from TAS indicating they were *extremely* or *very concerned* about this issue.
- Over one third of respondents from TAS were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *mental health* (35.2%), *school or study problems* (34.8%) and *body image* (34.0%).
- Close to one quarter (24.5%) of respondents from TAS were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *physical health*.

Figure 8.5: Issues of personal concern to young people




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

## Gender differences

*Coping with stress* was the top issue of personal concern for both females and males from TAS, as shown in Table 8.5. For females from TAS, the second and third most concerning personal issues were *body image* and *mental health*. For TAS males, *school or study problems* and *mental health* were the next most concerning personal issues. The proportion of female respondents from TAS who were concerned about these issues (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- More than double the proportion of females from TAS reported *coping with stress* was a major issue of concern (62.7% compared with 27.6% of males).
- Notably higher proportions of females than males were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *body image* (52.5% compared with 14.1%), *mental health* (49.3% compared with 20.0%) and *school or study problems* (44.9% compared with 24.4%).

Table 8.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

| Females | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **24.6** | **38.1** | 26.8 | 7.9 | 2.5 |
| **Mental health** | **23.4** | **25.9** | 25.1 | 15.8 | 9.9 |
| School or study problems | 14.4 | 30.5 | 25.7 | 20.3 | 9.0 |
| **Body image** | **25.8** | **26.7** | 22.8 | 16.0 | 8.7 |
| Physical health | 9.7 | 21.4 | 27.9 | 24.2 | 16.8 |
| Family conflict | 8.2 | 11.6 | 18.8 | 24.1 | 37.2 |
| Financial security | 5.9 | 10.8 | 22.7 | 25.8 | 34.8 |
| Suicide | 5.7 | 10.2 | 12.2 | 15.0 | 56.9 |
| Social media | 5.9 | 12.7 | 23.4 | 25.1 | 33.0 |
| Personal safety | 5.1 | 8.8 | 21.5 | 24.9 | 39.7 |
| Discrimination | 4.2 | 9.1 | 15.3 | 20.4 | 51.0 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 5.9 | 8.2 | 8.8 | 13.3 | 63.7 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 5.3 | 10.1 | 18.5 | 28.9 | 37.1 |
| Drugs | 3.1 | 2.8 | 7.1 | 13.3 | 73.7 |
| Domestic/family violence | 2.8 | 3.9 | 7.3 | 13.8 | 72.1 |
| Alcohol | 1.1 | 2.8 | 17.1 | 21.1 | 57.9 |
| Gambling | 1.1 | 1.4 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 90.1 |

Table 8.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

| Males | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **9.8** | **17.8** | 31.0 | 22.4 | 19.0 |
| **Mental health** | **8.0** | **12.0** | 28.7 | 21.6 | 29.6 |
| **School or study problems** | **6.2** | **18.2** | 25.5 | 23.1 | 27.1 |
| Body image | 3.4 | 10.7 | 25.7 | 28.7 | 31.5 |
| Physical health | 6.5 | 11.4 | 23.5 | 26.5 | 32.1 |
| Family conflict | 2.8 | 4.0 | 12.6 | 18.2 | 62.5 |
| Financial security | 1.2 | 7.1 | 16.6 | 23.3 | 51.8 |
| Suicide | 3.4 | 5.2 | 6.8 | 13.2 | 71.4 |
| Social media | 1.8 | 4.0 | 14.2 | 22.5 | 57.5 |
| Personal safety | 4.0 | 5.6 | 13.3 | 19.8 | 57.4 |
| Discrimination | 2.8 | 5.2 | 12.9 | 13.8 | 65.3 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 2.4 | 2.1 | 8.9 | 7.0 | 79.5 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 2.5 | 3.1 | 13.5 | 20.3 | 60.6 |
| Drugs | 4.3 | 3.1 | 5.5 | 9.2 | 77.9 |
| Domestic/family violence | 1.5 | 2.1 | 5.8 | 8.6 | 81.9 |
| Alcohol | 2.4 | 3.0 | 7.3 | 13.7 | 73.5 |
| Gambling | 2.2 | 0.3 | 4.6 | 5.2 | 87.7 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of TAS frequency.
*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

## Have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people were asked whether they had been treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Over one quarter (25.3%) of young people from TAS reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A higher proportion of TAS females than males reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (30.3% compared with 18.7%).

## Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify reasons for being treated unfairly from a list of suggested items. Table 8.6 shows that, of the 25.3% of TAS respondents who had been treated unfairly in the past year, close to half (47.3%) reported the unfair treatment was due to their *gender*. Around one quarter indicated they were treated unfairly due to their *mental health* (26.3%) and *race/cultural background* (23.7%).

### Gender differences

As shown in Table 8.6, of the 25.3% of young people from TAS who had been treated unfairly in the past year:

- More than three times the proportion of females from TAS had been treated unfairly due to their *gender* (61.1% compared with 18.0% of males).
- A notably higher proportion of TAS females reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *mental health* (29.6% compared with 19.7% of males).
- Conversely, close to double the proportion of males from TAS reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background* (34.4% compared with 18.5% of females).

Table 8.6: Reasons for being treated unfairly

| | National % | TAS % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | **41.0** | **47.3** | **61.1** | 18.0 |
| **Mental health** | **26.0** | **26.3** | **29.6** | **19.7** |
| **Race/cultural background** | **30.4** | **23.7** | **18.5** | **34.4** |
| Sexuality | 19.4 | 20.4 | 14.8 | **19.7** |
| Age | 21.0 | 18.3 | 17.6 | 18.0 |
| Other | 14.4 | 14.5 | 13.0 | 18.0 |
| Religion | 13.8 | 10.8 | 7.4 | 16.4 |
| Financial background | 9.0 | 8.6 | 8.3 | 8.2 |
| Disability | 7.5 | 5.9 | 3.7 | 6.6 |

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

## Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Young people were asked whether they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Nearly six in 10 (57.6%) young people from TAS reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year. A much higher proportion of TAS females than males reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (62.0% compared with 50.9%).

## What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

Young people who reported they had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year were asked to identify from a list of reasons why the person was being treated unfairly. Table 8.7 shows that, of the 57.6% of respondents from TAS who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 60.7% reported they witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *race/cultural background*. Almost half of respondents from TAS indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality* (49.5%) and due to a person's *gender* (46.7%).

### Gender differences

As shown in Table 8.7, the three most frequently witnessed reasons for unfair treatment for TAS females and males were consistent with TAS results.

- Much higher proportions of TAS females than males reported they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality* (55.9% compared with 40.0%), *mental health* (35.9% compared with 24.2%) and due to a person's *gender* (50.9% compared with 40.0%).

Table 8.7: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

| | National % | TAS % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race/cultural background** | **62.0** | **60.7** | **62.7** | **58.8** |
| **Sexuality** | **49.4** | **49.5** | **55.9** | **40.0** |
| **Gender** | **40.5** | **46.7** | **50.9** | **40.0** |
| Disability | 32.2 | 32.7 | 34.5 | 27.9 |
| Mental health | 28.9 | 31.3 | 35.9 | 24.2 |
| Religion | 28.8 | 27.5 | 28.6 | 25.5 |
| Financial background | 18.7 | 21.6 | 22.3 | 18.8 |
| Age | 17.5 | 14.9 | 12.7 | 15.2 |
| Other | 5.3 | 3.6 | 2.7 | 3.6 |

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

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

Respondents were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 8.6 shows the percentage of respondents from TAS who indicated they would go to the particular source for support.

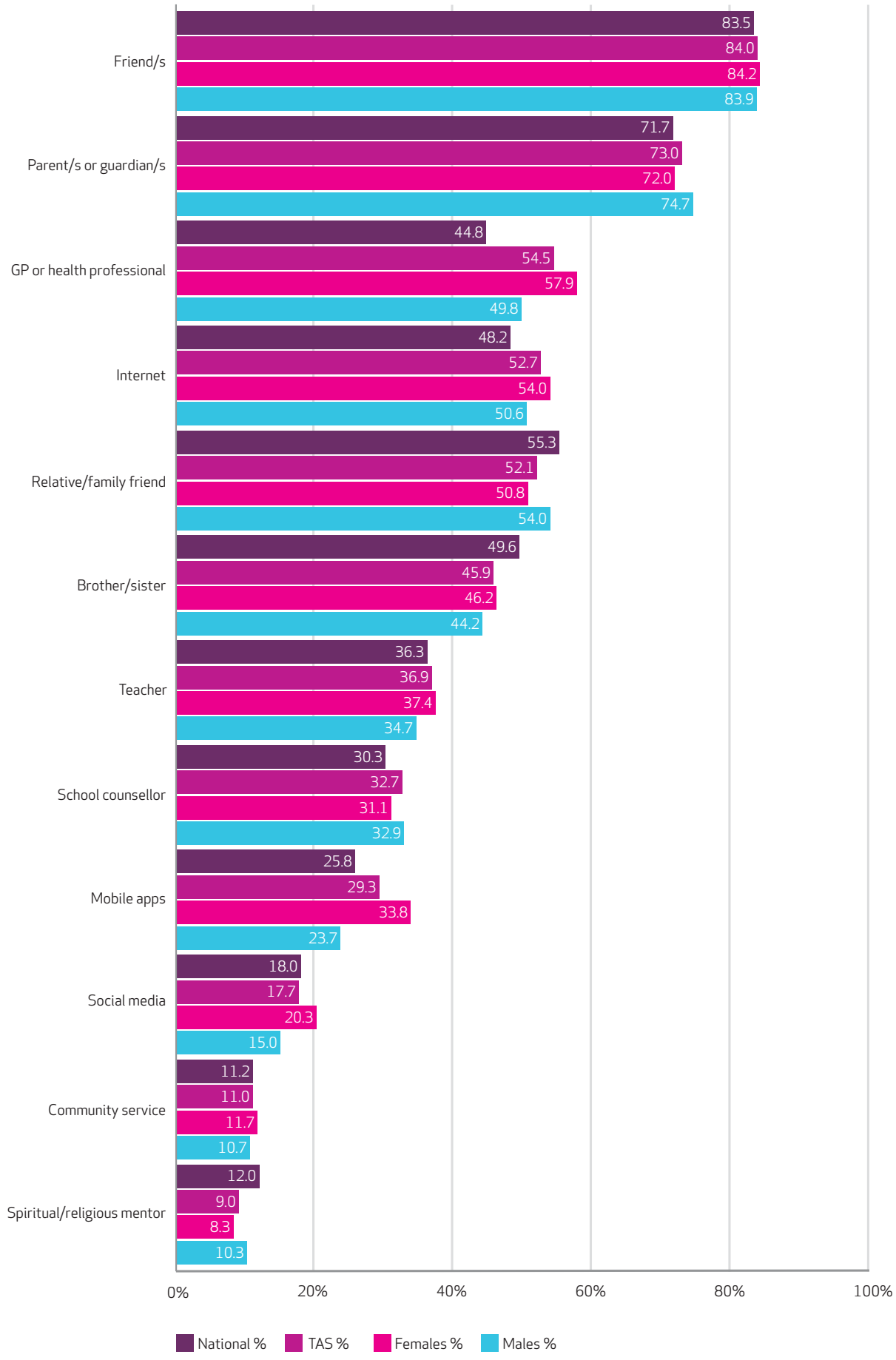
- *Friend/s* (84.0%), *parent/s or guardian/s* (73.0%) and *GP or health professional* (54.5%) were the three most frequently cited sources of help for young people from TAS.
- Around half of young people from TAS indicated they would go to the *internet* (52.7%), to a *relative/family friend* (52.1%) or to their *brother/sister* (45.9%) for support with important issues in their lives.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 8.6, the top two sources of help for both genders were consistent with the TAS results. Followed by a *GP or health professional* for females and a *relative/family friend* for males.

- Higher proportions of TAS females than males indicated they would turn to *mobile apps* (33.8% compared with 23.7%) or a *GP or health professional* (57.9% compared with 49.8%) for help with important issues.
- Slightly higher proportions of TAS males than females stated they would go to a *relative/family friend* (54.0% compared with 50.8%) or their *parent/s or guardian/s* (74.7% compared with 72.0%).

Figure 8.6: Where young people go for help with important issues




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

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

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 8.8. In 2020, the top three issues identified by young people from TAS were *the environment*, *equity and discrimination* and *mental health*.

- More than four in 10 (44.1%) young people from TAS indicated that *the environment* is an important issue in Australia today.
- Over one third of respondents from TAS reported that *equity and discrimination* (36.9%) and *mental health* (34.2%) are important national issues.
- Close to three in 10 (27.5%) young people from TAS indicated *COVID-19* is an important issue in Australia today.
- Since 2019, the proportion of those from TAS reporting *equity and discrimination* as a key national issue has increased from 23.3% to 36.9%. Conversely, concerns about *alcohol and drugs* have decreased since 2019.

### Gender differences

The most important issues for females from TAS were *the environment*, *mental health* and *equity and discrimination*. For males, the three most important issues were *the environment*, *equity and discrimination* and *COVID-19*.

- Notably higher proportions of TAS females than males identified *mental health* (43.7% compared with 24.4%), *the environment* (47.7% compared with 38.5%) and *equity and discrimination* (40.2% compared with 33.3%) as important issues facing Australia today.
- Conversely, higher proportions of TAS males than females regarded *COVID-19* (31.5% compared with 23.8%) and *politics* (13.3% compared with 6.8%) as key issues in Australia.

Table 8.8: Most important issues in Australia today

| | National 2020 % | TAS 2020 % | Females % | Males % | TAS 2019 % | TAS 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The environment** | 29.8 | **44.1** | **47.7** | **38.5** | **40.4** | 15.3 |
| **Equity and discrimination** | **40.2** | **36.9** | **40.2** | **33.3** | **23.3** | **26.4** |
| **Mental health** | **30.6** | **34.2** | **43.7** | 24.4 | **33.9** | **40.6** |
| COVID-19 | **38.8** | 27.5 | 23.8 | **31.5** | - | - |
| The economy and financial matters | 15.3 | 17.4 | 16.4 | 18.9 | 15.1 | 11.9 |
| Health | 6.5 | 11.3 | 10.8 | 11.9 | 11.8 | 14.5 |
| Politics | 7.5 | 9.7 | 6.8 | 13.3 | 10.9 | 6.1 |
| Employment | 7.5 | 8.9 | 9.6 | 8.9 | 11.7 | 9.7 |
| Alcohol and drugs | 10.5 | 8.3 | 8.0 | 8.9 | 16.7 | **21.4** |
| Homelessness/housing | 8.3 | 8.2 | 6.5 | 8.9 | 11.7 | 14.1 |

Note: Items are listed in order of TAS frequency.

## What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities they had been involved in over the past year from the list of options shown in Table 8.9.

- The top three activities for young people from TAS were *sports (as a participant)* (76.3%), *sports (as a spectator)* (65.7%) and *volunteer work* (54.3%).
- Close to half (47.8%) of respondents from TAS reported they had participated in *arts/cultural/music activities* in the past year.
- More than one third (36.3%) of young people from TAS indicated they had taken part in *student leadership activities*.

### Gender differences

The top three activities for females from TAS were *sports (as a participant)*, *volunteer work* and *sports (as a spectator)*. For males, the top activities were *sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *volunteer work*.

- Higher proportions of male respondents from TAS reported taking part in *sports (as a spectator)* (71.0% compared with 61.8% of females).
- Conversely, higher proportions of females than males from TAS participated in *volunteer* work (64.4% compared with 44.1%), *arts/cultural/music activities* (55.6% compared with 41.0%) and *student leadership activities* (40.3% compared with 31.2%) in the past year.

Table 8.9: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

| | National % | TAS % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sports (as a participant)** | **70.7** | **76.3** | **77.7** | **76.3** |
| **Sports (as a spectator)** | **62.1** | **65.7** | **61.8** | **71.0** |
| **Volunteer work** | 43.3 | **54.3** | **64.4** | **44.1** |
| Arts/cultural/music activities | **43.9** | 47.8 | 55.6 | 41.0 |
| Student leadership activities | 34.0 | 36.3 | 40.3 | 31.2 |
| Youth groups/activities | 25.6 | 26.9 | 27.4 | 27.3 |
| Environmental groups | 14.8 | 24.8 | 31.1 | 17.4 |
| Religious groups/activities | 23.6 | 16.5 | 19.3 | 15.3 |
| Political groups/organisations | 8.8 | 13.5 | 13.4 | 12.7 |

Note: Items are listed in order of TAS frequency.

## How stressed are young people?

For the first time in 2020, young people were asked to report on how much of the time they felt stressed in the past four weeks. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *all of the time* to *none of the time*. Table 8.10 shows that close to half (47.0%) of young people from TAS felt stressed either *all of the time* or *most of the time*.

- More than double the proportion of female respondents from TAS felt stressed *all of the time* or *most of the time* (62.7% compared with 28.6% of males).
- Conversely, more than three times the proportion of males from TAS felt stressed *a little of the time* or *none of the time* (35.1% compared with 10.5% of females).

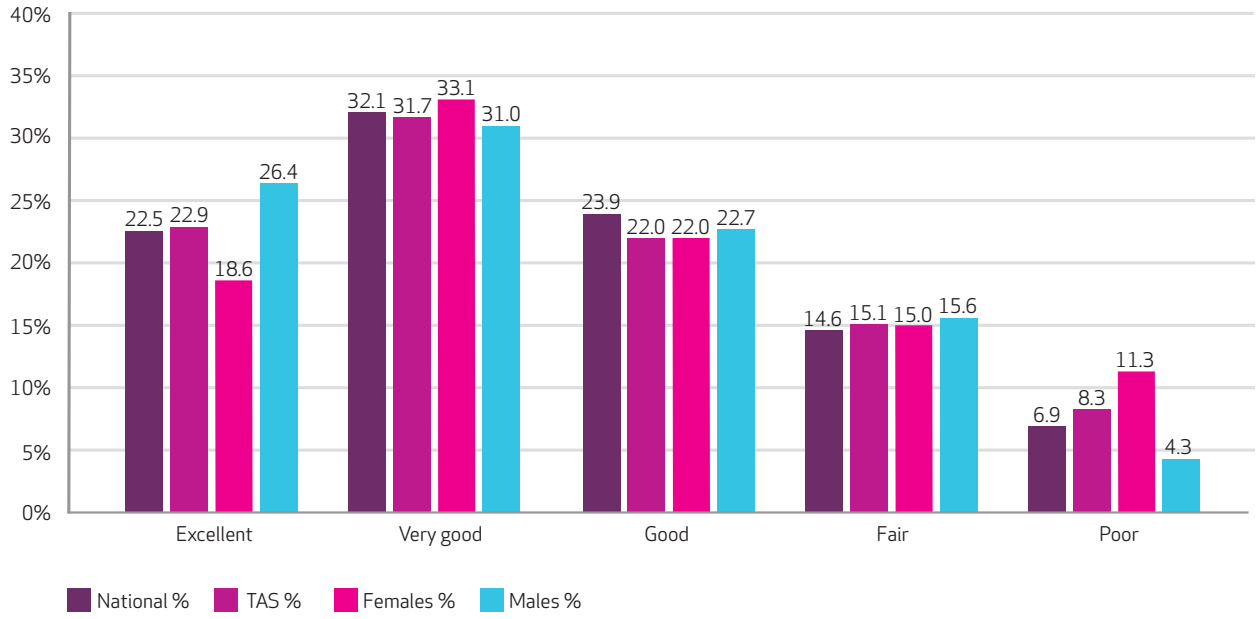
Table 8.10: How stressed are young people?

| | National % | TAS % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| All of the time | 11.6 | 11.7 | 17.2 | 5.2 |
| Most of the time | 31.0 | 35.3 | 45.5 | 23.4 |
| Some of the time | 32.4 | 31.1 | 26.8 | 36.3 |
| A little of the time | 19.7 | 18.3 | 9.9 | 28.3 |
| None of the time | 5.3 | 3.7 | 0.6 | 6.8 |

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

Respondents were asked to rate their family's ability to get along with one another. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 8.7 shows that the majority of respondents from TAS rated their family's ability to get along very positively: 22.9% rated it as *excellent* and 31.7% rated it as *very good*. However, almost one quarter (23.4%) of young people from TAS indicated their family's ability to get along was either *fair* (15.1%) or *poor* (8.3%). A higher proportion of male respondents rated their family's ability to get along as *excellent* or *very good* (57.4% compared with 51.7% of females), while a higher proportion of females rated their family's ability to get along as *fair* or *poor* (26.3% compared with 19.9% of males).

Figure 8.7: Family's ability to get along with one another




## How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 indicates that they felt *very sad* and 10 indicates that they felt *very happy*. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100, in which 100 is the happiest. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes *happy/very happy*; 40-60 signifies *not happy or sad*; and 0-30 indicates *very sad/sad*. As Table 8.11 shows, the majority (57.5%) of young people from TAS responded in the 70-100 range, which indicates most young people felt happy overall with their lives. A notably higher proportion of males from TAS reported feeling *happy/very happy* with their lives as a whole (66.1% compared with 50.6% of females), whereas a greater proportion of females indicated they felt *very sad/sad* (15.8% compared with 7.3% of males).

Table 8.11: How happy are young people?

| | National % | TAS % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Happy/very happy (70-100) | 58.6 | 57.5 | 50.6 | 66.1 |
| Not happy or sad (40-60) | 30.7 | 30.4 | 33.6 | 26.6 |
| Very sad/sad (0-30) | 10.7 | 12.1 | 15.8 | 7.3 |

## How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked to describe their feelings when they thought about the future. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 8.12 shows that the majority of young people from TAS felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future.

- More than half (53.3%) felt either *very positive* (9.5%) or *positive* (43.8%) about the future.
- Over one in seven (15.4%) young people from TAS indicated they felt *negative* (12.0%) or *very negative* (3.4%) about the future.
- A higher proportion of males from TAS reported feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future (57.3% compared with 50.0% of females).

Table 8.12: Feelings about the future

| | National 2020 % | TAS 2020 % | Females % | Males % | TAS 2019 % | TAS 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very positive | 12.3 | 9.5 | 7.9 | 10.7 | 12.6 | 13.8 |
| Positive | 43.2 | 43.8 | 42.1 | 46.6 | 42.8 | 47.1 |
| Neither positive nor negative | 30.5 | 31.3 | 32.8 | 31.0 | 30.9 | 28.2 |
| Negative | 10.5 | 12.0 | 13.6 | 9.5 | 8.8 | 7.9 |
| Very negative | 3.4 | 3.4 | 3.7 | 2.1 | 4.8 | 2.9 |

# Victoria



## Profile of respondents

A total of 5,826 young people from Victoria (VIC) aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2020*.

### Gender breakdown

Nearly two thirds (63.4%) of respondents from VIC were female, 34.6% were male, 1.2% gender diverse and 0.8% preferred not to say.

### Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 83 (1.4%) respondents from VIC identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 71 (1.2%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 7 (0.1%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.1% identified as both). Similar proportions of female and male respondents from VIC identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (1.4% and 1.3% respectively).

### Cultural background

A total of 800 (13.9%) respondents from VIC stated they were born overseas and 1,336 (23.2%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 80 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Vietnamese, Greek, Chinese, Italian and Arabic.

Four in 10 (40.5%) respondents from VIC stated that one or both of their parents were born overseas.

### Disability

A total of 292 (5.1%) respondents from VIC identified as living with disability. A greater proportion of males than females reported living with disability (5.3% compared with 4.4%). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): autism, physical disabilities, learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and anxiety disorder.

## Education

As indicated in Table 9.1, 88.8% of respondents from VIC were studying full-time, which is lower than the 95.2% of respondents studying full-time in 2019. A higher proportion of females from VIC reported studying full-time (91.2% compared with 85.4% of males). Conversely, a higher proportion of males than females from VIC reported they were studying part-time (8.2% compared with 4.7%) or not studying (6.4% compared with 4.1%).

Table 9.1: Participation in education

| | National % | VIC % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Studying full-time | 86.6 | 88.8 | 91.2 | 85.4 |
| Studying part-time | 6.5 | 6.1 | 4.7 | 8.2 |
| Not studying | 6.8 | 5.1 | 4.1 | 6.4 |

Respondents from VIC who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in previous years, the majority of respondents from VIC reported they were either *very satisfied* (10.6%) or *satisfied* (58.8%) with their studies. Less than one in 10 indicated they were *dissatisfied* (5.2%) or *very dissatisfied* (1.0%). As shown in Table 9.2, a higher proportion of females than males from VIC reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* (72.7% compared with 64.6%), while a slightly higher proportion of males than females indicated they felt *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* (7.2% compared with 5.4%).

Table 9.2: Satisfaction with studies

| | National % | VIC % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 10.4 | 10.6 | 10.9 | 10.5 |
| Satisfied | 56.7 | 58.8 | 61.8 | 54.1 |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 25.6 | 24.4 | 22.0 | 28.2 |
| Dissatisfied | 5.7 | 5.2 | 4.7 | 5.7 |
| Very dissatisfied | 1.5 | 1.0 | 0.7 | 1.5 |

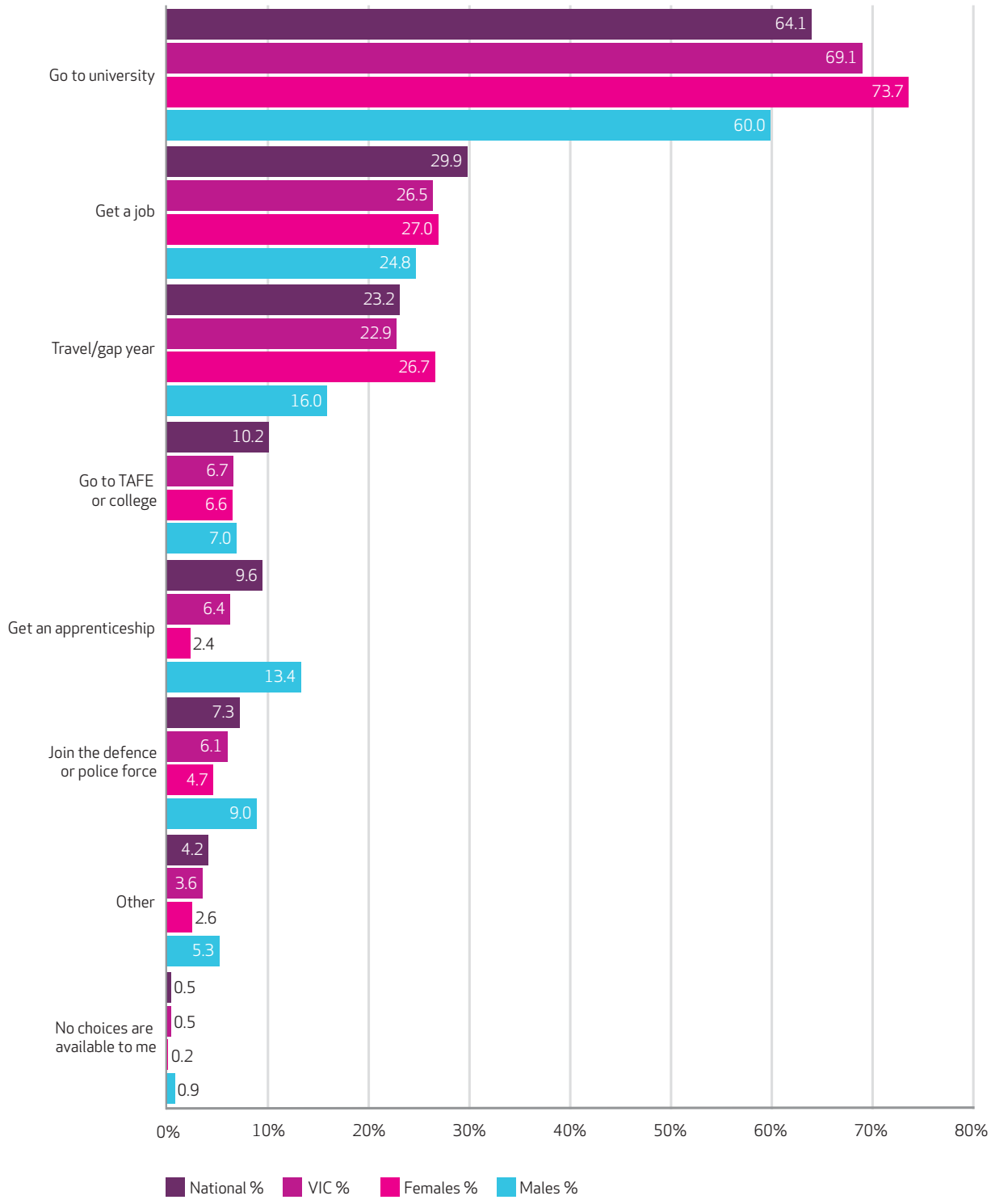
Of those still at school, the majority (97.3%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. More than double the proportion of males indicated they did not plan to complete Year 12 (4.1% compared with 1.8% of females).

Respondents from VIC who were studying at school were asked what they planned to do after leaving school. Figure 9.1 shows that close to seven in 10 (69.1%) respondents from VIC planned to *go to university* after school. Around one quarter of respondents from VIC reported plans to *get a job* (26.5%) or *travel/gap year* plans (22.9%). Similar proportions planned to *go to TAFE or college* (6.7%), *get an apprenticeship* (6.4%) or *join the defence or police force* (6.1%). A small minority (0.5%) of respondents indicated that *no choices are available to me* after finishing school.

## Gender differences

While the most frequently reported plan among both female and male respondents from VIC was to *go to university* after finishing school, a much higher proportion of females indicated they planned to do so (73.7% compared with 60.0% of males). A greater proportion of females from VIC also reported *travel/gap year* plans after leaving school (26.7% compared with 16.0% of males). Conversely, close to six times the proportion of males from VIC indicated they were planning to *get an apprenticeship* after school (13.4% compared with 2.4% of females).

Figure 9.1: Plans after leaving school

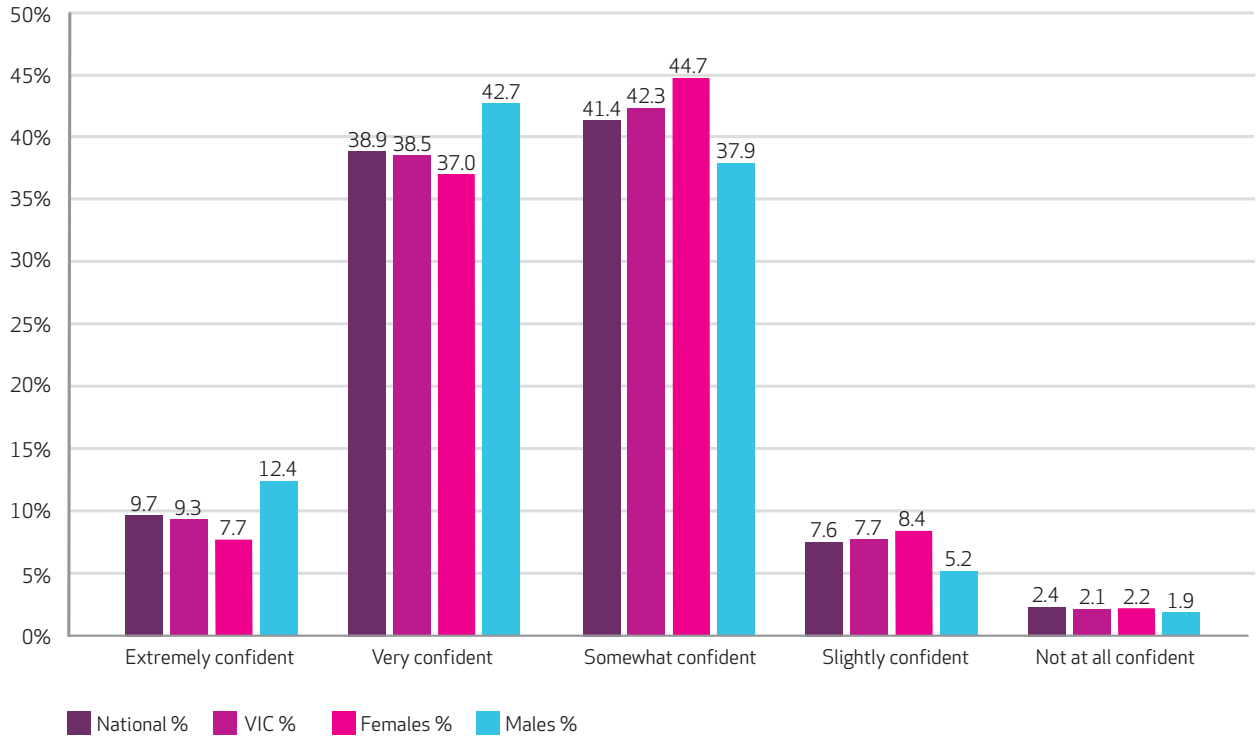



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of VIC frequency.

## How confident are young people in achieving their study/work goals?

Respondents from VIC were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after finishing school. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. As shown in Figure 9.2, nearly half (47.8%) of VIC respondents indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study/work goals: 9.3% reported they were *extremely confident* and 38.5% stated they were *very confident*. However, close to one in 10 (9.8%) young people from VIC were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals: 7.7% of young people indicated they were *slightly confident*, while 2.1% were *not at all confident*. A notably higher proportion of male respondents reported they were *extremely* or *very confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school (55.1% compared with 44.7% of females).

Figure 9.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals




## Employment

Respondents from VIC were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average how many hours they worked per week. Table 9.3 shows participation in paid employment among respondents from VIC. A very small proportion of young people from VIC who reported paid employment were employed full-time (0.2%). This is unsurprising given the high proportion of respondents to the *Youth Survey* who were still at school. Four in 10 (42.9%) respondents from VIC reported they were employed part-time. Over half (56.9%) of respondents indicated they were not in paid employment: 34.6% stated they were looking for work, while 22.3% were neither working nor looking for work. The proportion of respondents from VIC in part-time employment in 2020 is lower than in 2019 (42.9% compared with 49.5%).

### Gender differences

Similar proportions of female and male respondents from VIC reported full-time employment (0.1% and 0.5% respectively) and part-time employment (43.4% and 42.0% respectively). A greater proportion of male respondents were looking for work (36.9% compared with 33.2% of females).

Table 9.3: Participation in paid employment

| | National % | VIC % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employed full-time | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.5 |
| Employed part-time | 40.5 | 42.9 | 43.4 | 42.0 |
| Not in paid employment, looking for work | 34.7 | 34.6 | 33.2 | 36.9 |
| Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work | 24.2 | 22.3 | 23.3 | 20.6 |

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

## What would help young people secure a job?

Respondents from VIC who were looking for work were asked to indicate from a number of factors, what might help them secure a job, as shown in Figure 9.3.

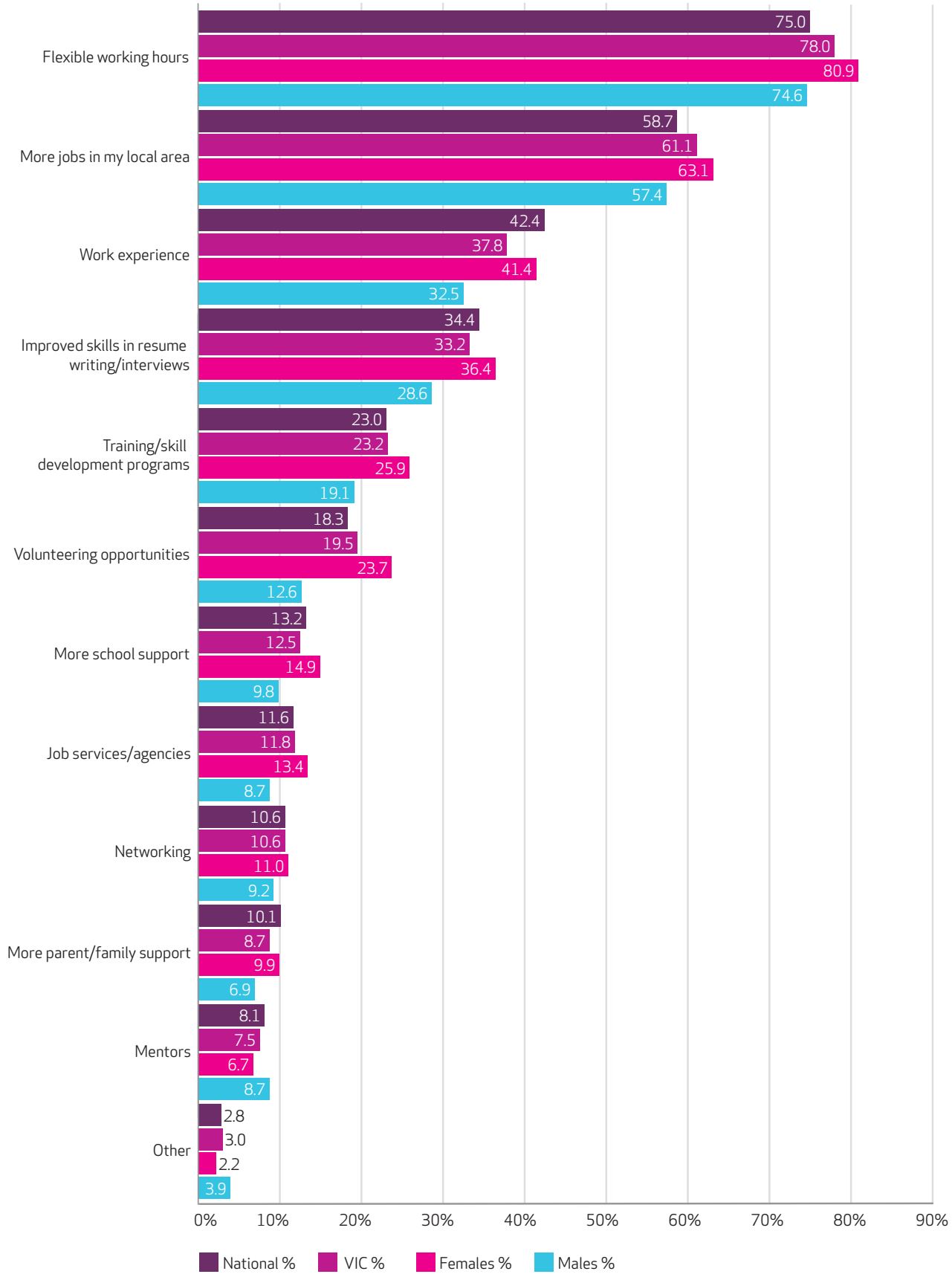
- *Flexible working hours* (78.0%), *more jobs in my local area* (61.1%) and *work experience* (37.8%) were the top factors in helping young people from VIC secure a job.
- One third (33.2%) of respondents from VIC saw *improved skills in resume writing/interviews* as an important factor in helping them secure a job.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 9.3, the top three factors to securing work for both females and males from VIC were *flexible working hours*, *more jobs in my local area* and *work experience*.

- Close to double the proportion of female respondents from VIC saw *volunteering opportunities* as a factor to securing a job (23.7% compared with 12.6% of males).
- Higher proportions of VIC females than males reported *work experience* (41.4% compared with 32.5%) and *improved skills in resume writing/interviews* (36.4% compared with 28.6%) were factors to securing a job.

Figure 9.3: Factors to securing a job




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

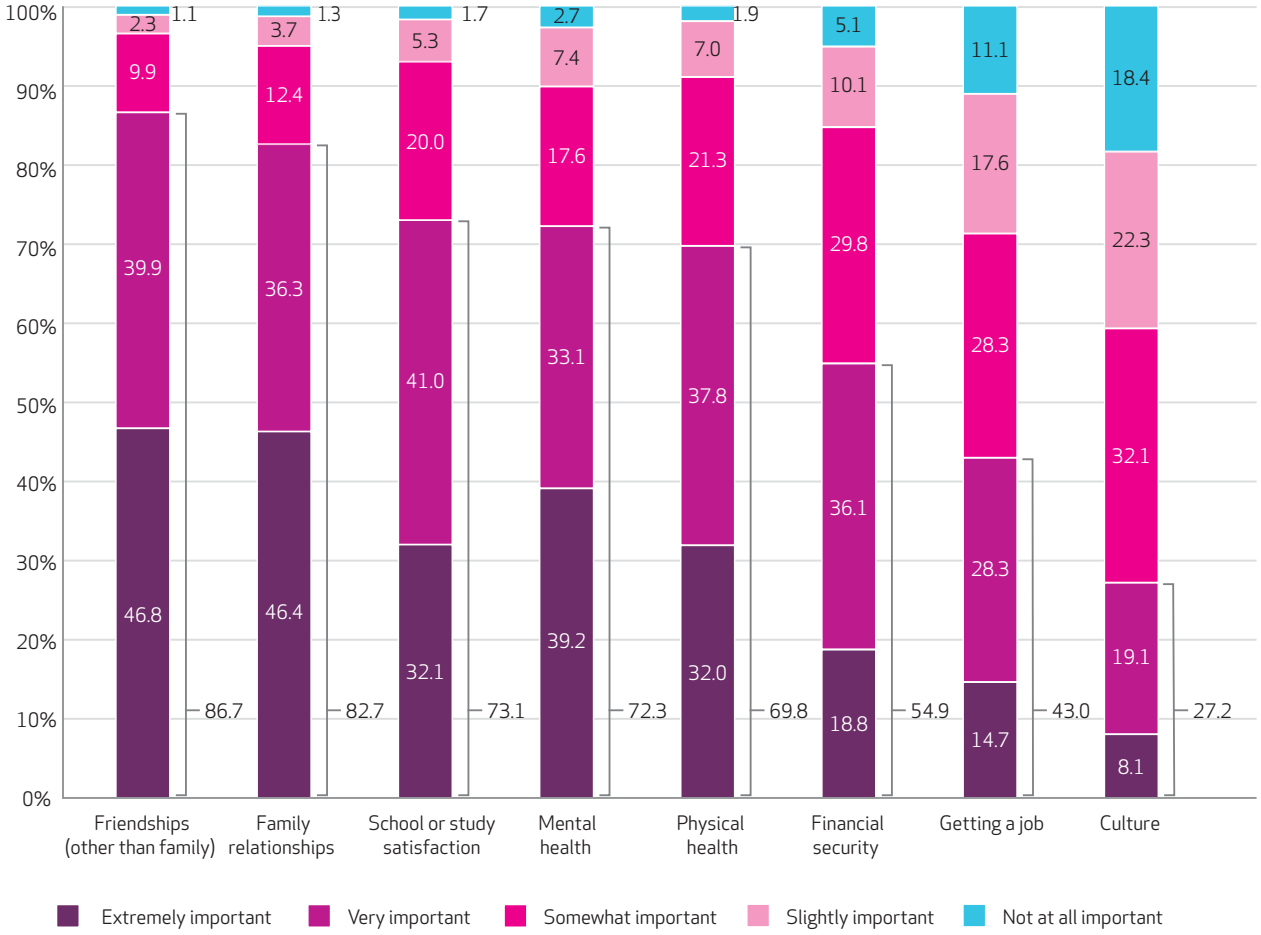
## What do young people value?

Young people from VIC were asked how important a number of items had been in their lives over the past year. Responses for these items were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely important* to *not at all important*.

As shown in Figure 9.4, the three most highly valued items for respondents from VIC were *friendships (other than family)*, *family relationships* and *school or study satisfaction*. The next most highly valued items were *mental health* and *physical health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were considered *extremely* or *very important* by 86.7% of respondents from VIC (*extremely important*: 46.8%; *very important*: 39.9%).
- Over eight in 10 (82.7%) respondents from VIC highly valued *family relationships* (*extremely important*: 46.4%; *very important*: 36.3%).
- Around seven in 10 respondents from VIC placed a high value upon *school or study satisfaction* (73.1%), *mental health* (72.3%) and *physical health* (69.8%).

Figure 9.4: What young people value




Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

### Gender differences

*Friendships (other than family)* and *family relationships* were rated as the two most important items by both VIC females and males, as shown in Table 9.4. The third top item for females was *school or study satisfaction*, while for males the third most highly valued item was *physical health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were rated *extremely* or *very important* by more than eight in 10 females (88.0%) and males (84.5%) from VIC.
- Notably higher proportions of VIC females than males placed a high value upon *school and study satisfaction* (77.7% compared with 65.2%) and *mental health* (75.9% compared with 65.9%).

Table 9.4: What young people value by gender

| Females | Extremely important % | Very important % | Somewhat important % | Slightly important % | Not at all important % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **49.8** | **38.2** | 9.0 | 2.3 | 0.8 |
| **Family relationships** | **50.6** | **34.5** | 10.9 | 3.1 | 0.9 |
| **School or study satisfaction** | **36.7** | **41.0** | 17.1 | 4.0 | 1.2 |
| Mental health | 41.8 | 34.1 | 16.3 | 6.2 | 1.6 |
| Physical health | 31.8 | 37.2 | 21.8 | 7.6 | 1.7 |
| Financial security | 18.7 | 37.3 | 29.9 | 9.8 | 4.4 |
| Getting a job | 13.7 | 28.8 | 28.4 | 18.5 | 10.6 |
| Culture | 8.0 | 20.3 | 31.3 | 21.7 | 18.7 |
| **Males** | **Extremely important %** | **Very important %** | **Somewhat important %** | **Slightly important %** | **Not at all important %** |
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **41.8** | **42.7** | 12.0 | 2.2 | 1.2 |
| **Family relationships** | **40.2** | **39.3** | 15.1 | 3.9 | 1.5 |
| School or study satisfaction | 24.4 | 40.8 | 25.2 | 7.6 | 2.1 |
| Mental health | 34.0 | 31.9 | 20.4 | 9.5 | 4.2 |
| **Physical health** | **32.4** | **39.4** | 20.3 | 5.8 | 2.1 |
| Financial security | 18.9 | 34.3 | 30.2 | 10.8 | 5.9 |
| Getting a job | 15.8 | 27.5 | 27.9 | 17.1 | 11.7 |
| Culture | 8.0 | 17.2 | 34.5 | 23.2 | 17.1 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of VIC frequency.

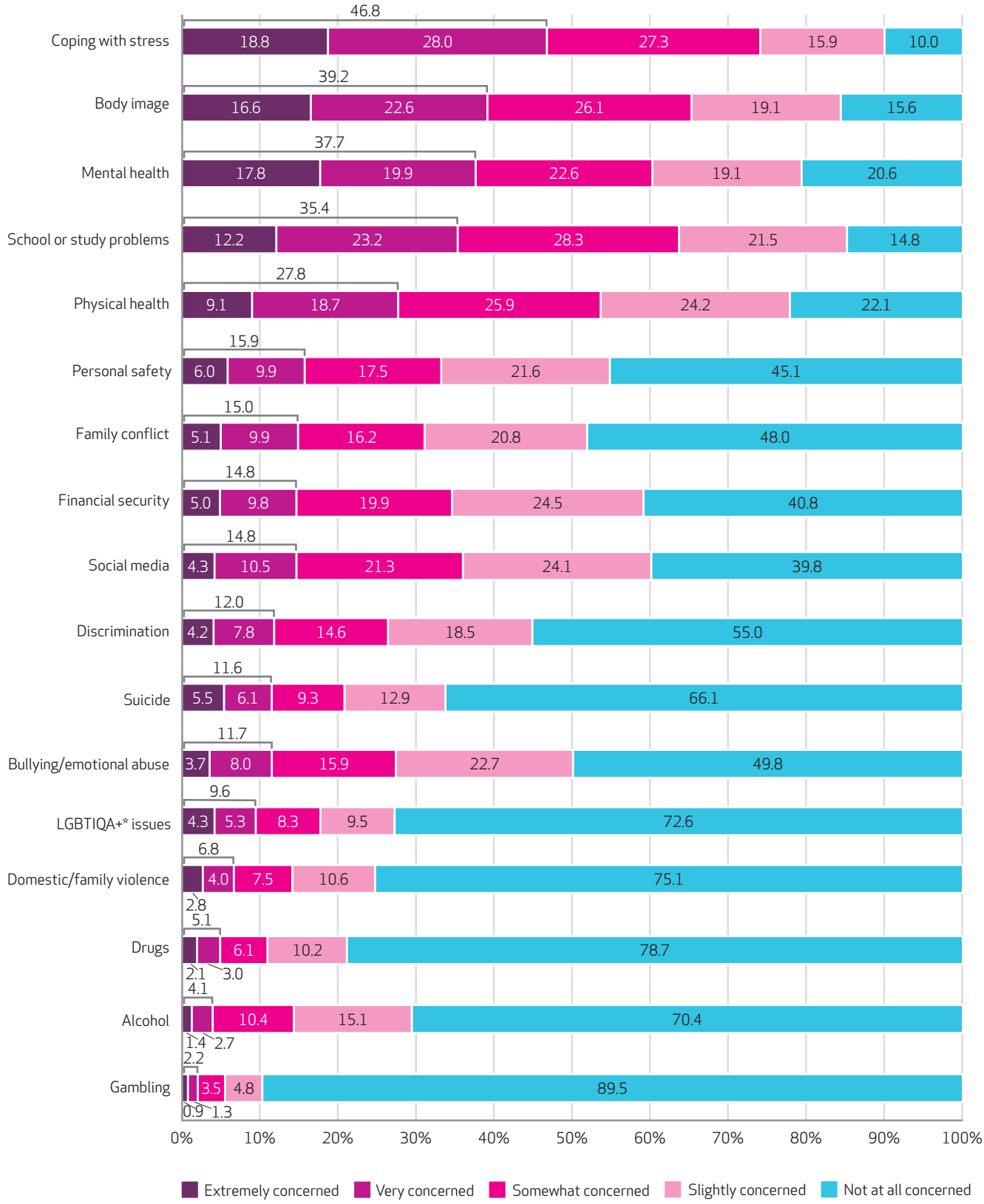
## What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Young people were asked to indicate how concerned they were about a number of issues over the past year, as shown in Figure 9.5. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*.

The top three issues of personal concern for young people from VIC were *coping with stress*, *body image* and *mental health*. The next most concerning issues were *school or study problems* and *physical health*.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with almost half (46.8%) of respondents from VIC indicating they were *extremely* or *very concerned* about this issue.
- Close to four in 10 respondents from VIC were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *body image* (39.2%) and *mental health* (37.7%).
- More than one third (35.4%) of VIC respondents were *extremely* or *very concerned* about school or *study problems*.

Figure 9.5: Issues of personal concern to young people




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

## Gender differences

*Coping with stress* was the top issue of personal concern for both females and males from VIC, as shown in Table 9.5. For females from VIC, the second and third most concerning personal issues were *body image* and *mental health*. For VIC males the second most concerning personal issue was *mental health,* followed by *physical health* and *school or study problems* (equal third). The proportion of female respondents from VIC who were concerned about these issues (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- Double the proportion of females from VIC reported *coping with stress* was a major issue of concern (56.9% compared with 28.0% of males).
- Notably higher proportions of females than males were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *body image* (49.5% compared with 20.7%), *mental health* (44.6% compared with 24.3%) and *school or study problems* (42.4% compared with 22.8%).

Table 9.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

| Females | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **23.0** | **33.9** | 26.7 | 12.1 | 4.3 |
| **Body image** | **22.1** | **27.4** | 27.0 | 15.9 | 7.6 |
| **Mental health** | **21.2** | **23.4** | 23.5 | 17.4 | 14.4 |
| School or study problems | 14.6 | 27.8 | 29.2 | 18.5 | 9.9 |
| Physical health | 9.9 | 20.3 | 27.9 | 24.0 | 17.7 |
| Personal safety | 6.8 | 10.9 | 18.5 | 21.7 | 42.0 |
| Family conflict | 5.8 | 12.2 | 18.4 | 22.6 | 41.1 |
| Financial security | 5.1 | 10.6 | 21.7 | 26.0 | 36.6 |
| Social media | 5.0 | 13.3 | 23.7 | 25.5 | 32.5 |
| Discrimination | 4.0 | 9.2 | 15.1 | 20.1 | 51.6 |
| Suicide | 6.1 | 7.3 | 9.8 | 14.0 | 62.8 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 3.8 | 9.5 | 17.0 | 24.3 | 45.4 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 4.4 | 6.0 | 9.7 | 11.0 | 68.9 |
| Domestic/family violence | 2.8 | 4.5 | 8.0 | 11.1 | 73.6 |
| Drugs | 1.7 | 3.2 | 5.9 | 10.4 | 78.9 |
| Alcohol | 1.2 | 3.0 | 10.6 | 15.5 | 69.7 |
| Gambling | 0.7 | 0.8 | 3.1 | 4.5 | 90.9 |

Table 9.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

| Males | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **10.7** | **17.3** | 28.6 | 23.0 | 20.3 |
| Body image | 6.6 | 14.1 | 24.6 | 25.4 | 29.3 |
| **Mental health** | **10.6** | **13.7** | 21.2 | 22.0 | 32.5 |
| **School or study problems** | **7.7** | **15.1** | 27.0 | 27.2 | 22.9 |
| **Physical health** | **7.1** | **15.7** | 22.8 | 24.6 | 29.8 |
| Personal safety | 4.4 | 7.7 | 15.2 | 21.7 | 51.0 |
| Family conflict | 3.5 | 5.9 | 12.3 | 17.8 | 60.6 |
| Financial security | 4.4 | 8.6 | 16.9 | 22.1 | 47.9 |
| Social media | 2.6 | 6.0 | 17.6 | 21.6 | 52.3 |
| Discrimination | 3.9 | 5.2 | 12.4 | 16.0 | 62.4 |
| Suicide | 4.4 | 3.9 | 7.9 | 10.4 | 73.4 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 3.3 | 4.8 | 13.5 | 20.3 | 58.1 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 3.0 | 3.0 | 6.0 | 6.6 | 81.4 |
| Domestic/family violence | 2.7 | 3.3 | 6.3 | 9.3 | 78.4 |
| Drugs | 2.4 | 2.6 | 6.0 | 10.2 | 78.9 |
| Alcohol | 1.5 | 2.3 | 9.5 | 14.0 | 72.7 |
| Gambling | 1.0 | 1.9 | 4.1 | 5.2 | 87.7 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of VIC frequency.
*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

## Have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people were asked whether they had been treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. One quarter (25.5%) of young people from VIC reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A higher proportion of VIC females than males reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (28.7% compared with 18.3%).

## Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify reasons for being treated unfairly from a list of suggested items. Table 9.6 shows that, of the 25.5% of VIC respondents who had been treated unfairly in the past year, over four in 10 (41.5%) reported the unfair treatment was due to their *gender*. Three in 10 (30.9%) indicated they were treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background*, while close to one quarter (23.1%) stated they were treated unfairly due to their *mental health*.

### Gender differences

There were some notable differences in female and male responses to the question regarding the reasons for unfair treatment, as shown in Table 9.6. Of the 25.5% of young people from VIC who had been treated unfairly in the past year:

- More than double the proportion of females from VIC had been treated unfairly due to their *gender* (47.7% compared with 21.2% of males).
- A notably higher proportion of VIC females than males reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *age* (22.8% compared with 12.5%) and their *mental health* (23.8% compared with 18.3%).
- Conversely, a notably higher proportion of males from VIC reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background* (41.2% compared with 28.5% of females).

Table 9.6: Reasons for being treated unfairly

| | National % | VIC % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | **41.0** | **41.5** | **47.7** | **21.2** |
| **Race/cultural background** | **30.4** | **30.9** | **28.5** | **41.2** |
| **Mental health** | **26.0** | **23.1** | **23.8** | 18.3 |
| Age | 21.0 | 19.9 | 22.8 | 12.5 |
| Sexuality | 19.4 | 18.5 | 16.5 | 15.9 |
| Other | 14.4 | 14.7 | 12.9 | **19.1** |
| Religion | 13.8 | 11.7 | 10.3 | 16.2 |
| Financial background | 9.0 | 7.0 | 6.8 | 6.7 |
| Disability | 7.5 | 6.4 | 4.6 | 7.8 |

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

## Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Young people were asked whether they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. More than half (53.2%) of young people from VIC reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year. A much higher proportion of VIC females than males reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (56.8% compared with 46.0%).

## What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

Young people who reported they had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year were asked to identify from a list of reasons why the person was being treated unfairly. Table 9.7 shows that, of the 53.2% of respondents from VIC who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, six in 10 (60.4%) reported they witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *race/cultural background*. Almost half (48.5%) of respondents from VIC indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality*. Four in 10 (40.0%) respondents from VIC who had witnessed unfair treatment reported it was due to a person's *gender*.

### Gender differences

The three most frequently witnessed reasons for unfair treatment for VIC females and males were consistent with VIC results, as shown in Table 9.7.

- Six in 10 VIC female and male respondents had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *race/cultural background* (60.6% and 60.3% respectively).
- Notably higher proportions of VIC females than males reported they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality* (53.7% compared with 36.0%) and due to a person's *gender* (43.1% compared with 33.3%).

Table 9.7: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

| | National % | VIC % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race/cultural background** | **62.0** | **60.4** | **60.6** | **60.3** |
| **Sexuality** | **49.4** | **48.5** | **53.7** | **36.0** |
| **Gender** | **40.5** | **40.0** | **43.1** | **33.3** |
| Disability | 32.2 | 29.5 | 30.9 | 25.7 |
| Religion | 28.8 | 27.0 | 27.8 | 25.7 |
| Mental health | 28.9 | 26.5 | 27.0 | 23.1 |
| Financial background | 18.7 | 16.5 | 16.4 | 15.9 |
| Age | 17.5 | 16.2 | 17.2 | 14.1 |
| Other | 5.3 | 5.2 | 4.8 | 6.3 |

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

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

Respondents were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 9.6 shows the percentage of respondents from VIC who indicated they would go to the particular source for support.

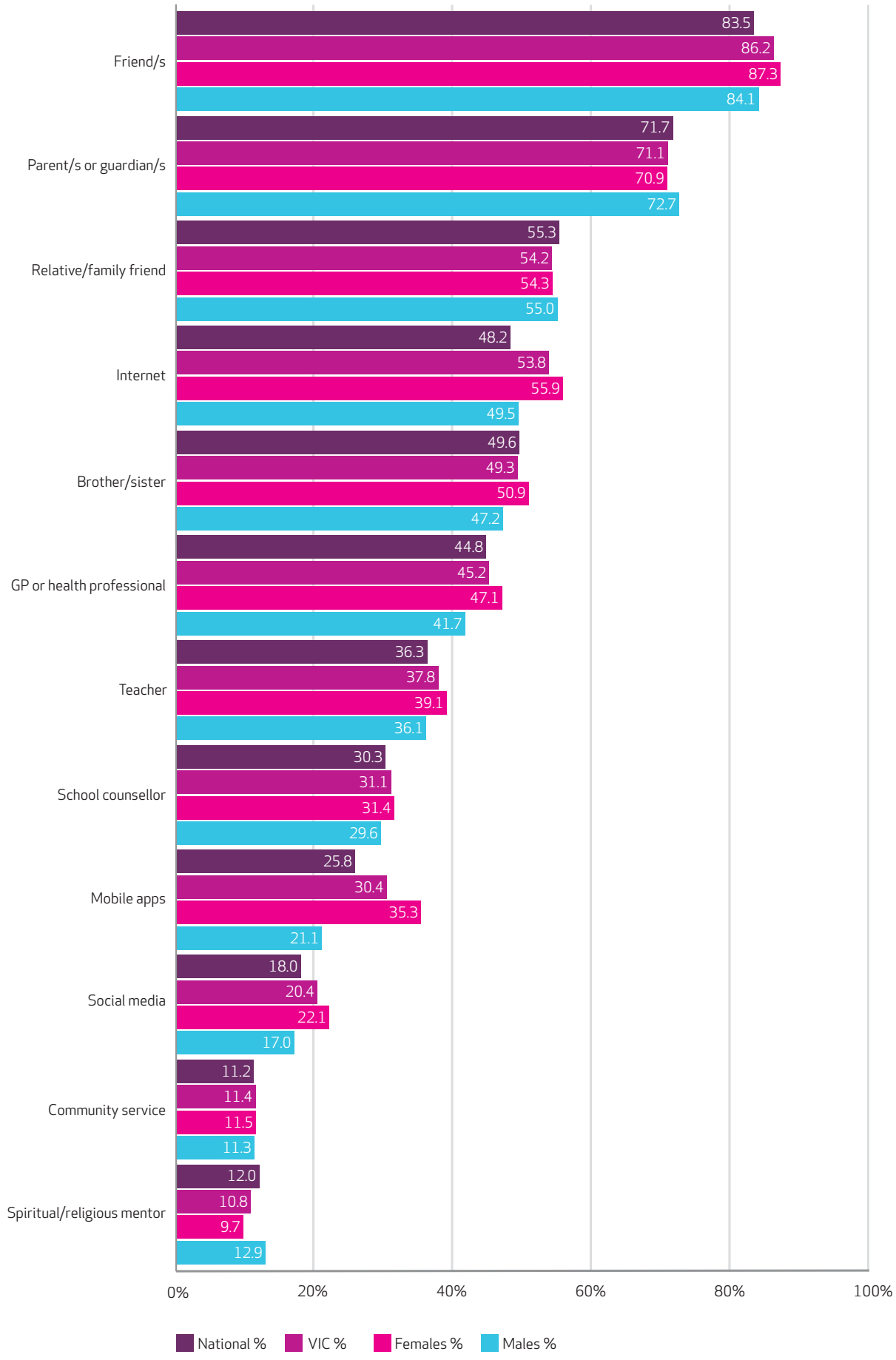
- *Friend/s* (86.2%), *parent/s or guardian/s* (71.1%) and *relative/family friend* (54.2%) were the three most frequently cited sources of help for young people from VIC.
- Around half of young people from VIC indicated they would go to the *internet* (53.8%) or their *brother/sister* (49.3%) for support with important issues in their lives.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 9.6, the top two sources of help for both genders were consistent with the VIC results. Followed by the *internet* for females from VIC and a *relative/family friend* for males.

- A higher proportion of females from VIC indicated they would turn to their *friend/s* for help with important issues (87.3% compared with 84.1% of males).
- A higher proportion of females than males from VIC would also turn to *mobile apps* (35.3% compared with 21.1%) or the *internet* (55.9% compared with 49.5%) for support with important issues in their lives.

Figure 9.6: Where young people go for help with important issues




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

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

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 9.8. In 2020, the top three issues identified by young people from VIC were *COVID-19*, *equity and discrimination* and *mental health*.

- Around four in 10 young people from VIC reported that *COVID-19* (41.9%) and *equity and discrimination* (39.7%) were important issues in Australia today.
- One third (33.6%) of respondents from VIC reported that *mental health* was an important national issue.
- Since 2019, the proportion of those from VIC reporting *equity and discrimination* as a key national issue has increased from 25.4% to 39.7%. Conversely, concerns about *alcohol and drugs* and *the environment* have decreased since 2019.

### Gender differences

The most important issues for females in VIC were *equity and discrimination, COVID-19* and *mental health*. For VIC male respondents the top three issues were *COVID-19, equity and discrimination* and *mental health*.

- Notably higher proportions of VIC females than males identified *equity and discrimination* (43.4% compared with 34.0%), *mental health* (36.3% compared with 28.3%) and *the environment* (32.6% compared with 26.2%) as important issues facing Australia today.
- Conversely, higher proportions of VIC males than females regarded *COVID-19* (47.6% compared with 39.1%) and *the economy and financial matters* (19.3% compared with 12.1%) as key issues in Australia.

Table 9.8: Most important issues in Australia today

| | National 2020 % | VIC 2020 % | Females % | Males % | VIC 2019 % | VIC 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **COVID-19** | **38.8** | **41.9** | **39.1** | **47.6** | - | - |
| **Equity and discrimination** | **40.2** | **39.7** | **43.4** | **34.0** | **25.4** | **27.1** |
| **Mental health** | **30.6** | **33.6** | **36.3** | **28.3** | **37.6** | **43.1** |
| The environment | 29.8 | 30.4 | 32.6 | 26.2 | **37.3** | 9.1 |
| The economy and financial matters | 15.3 | 14.6 | 12.1 | 19.3 | 12.2 | 10.6 |
| Homelessness/housing | 8.3 | 10.3 | 11.1 | 8.7 | 10.8 | 12.3 |
| Alcohol and drugs | 10.5 | 9.1 | 9.3 | 8.7 | 21.0 | **30.5** |
| Crime, safety and violence | 9.3 | 9.0 | 9.3 | 8.7 | 14.9 | 15.3 |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues | 6.2 | 7.3 | 9.1 | 3.4 | 1.4 | 3.3 |
| Health | 6.5 | 7.1 | 7.2 | 7.4 | 8.6 | 12.2 |

Note: Items are listed in order of VIC frequency.

## What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities they had been involved in over the past year from the list of options shown in Table 9.9.

- The top three activities for young people from VIC were *sports (as a participant)* (71.4%), *sports (as a spectator)* (63.2%) and *arts/cultural/music activities* (42.6%).
- More than four in 10 (42.0%) respondents from VIC reported they had participated in *volunteer work* in the past year.
- Over one third (36.4%) of young people from VIC indicated they had taken part in *student leadership activities*.

## Gender differences

In line with VIC results, *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)* were the top two activities for both VIC females and males. While *arts/cultural/music activities* was the third most reported activity for females from VIC, *volunteer work* was the third highest for males.

- Higher proportions of male than female respondents from VIC reported taking part in *sports (as a spectator)* (74.8% compared with 57.5%) and *sports (as a participant)* (77.4% compared with 68.9%).
- Conversely, higher proportions of females than males from VIC participated in *arts/cultural/music activities* (47.2% compared with 33.9%) and *student leadership activities* (40.3% compared with 30.0%) in the past year.

Table 9.9: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

| | National % | VIC % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sports (as a participant)** | **70.7** | **71.4** | **68.9** | **77.4** |
| **Sports (as a spectator)** | **62.1** | **63.2** | **57.5** | **74.8** |
| **Arts/cultural/music activities** | **43.9** | **42.6** | **47.2** | 33.9 |
| Volunteer work | 43.3 | 42.0 | 44.3 | **38.6** |
| Student leadership activities | 34.0 | 36.4 | 40.3 | 30.0 |
| Youth groups/activities | 25.6 | 24.4 | 24.4 | 24.0 |
| Religious groups/activities | 23.6 | 22.6 | 22.9 | 22.3 |
| Environmental groups | 14.8 | 16.1 | 17.9 | 12.9 |
| Political groups/organisations | 8.8 | 8.4 | 8.3 | 7.4 |

Note: Items are listed in order of VIC frequency.

## How stressed are young people?

For the first time in 2020, young people were asked to report on how much of the time they felt stressed in the past four weeks. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *all of the time* to *none of the time*. Table 9.10 shows that more than four in 10 (43.2%) young people from VIC felt stressed either *all of the time* or *most of the time*.

- Almost double the proportion of female respondents from VIC felt stressed *all of the time* or *most of the time* (51.0% compared with 28.3% of males).
- Conversely, more than double the proportion of males from VIC felt stressed *a little of the time* or *none of the time* (37.8% compared with 16.1% of females).

Table 9.10: How stressed are young people?

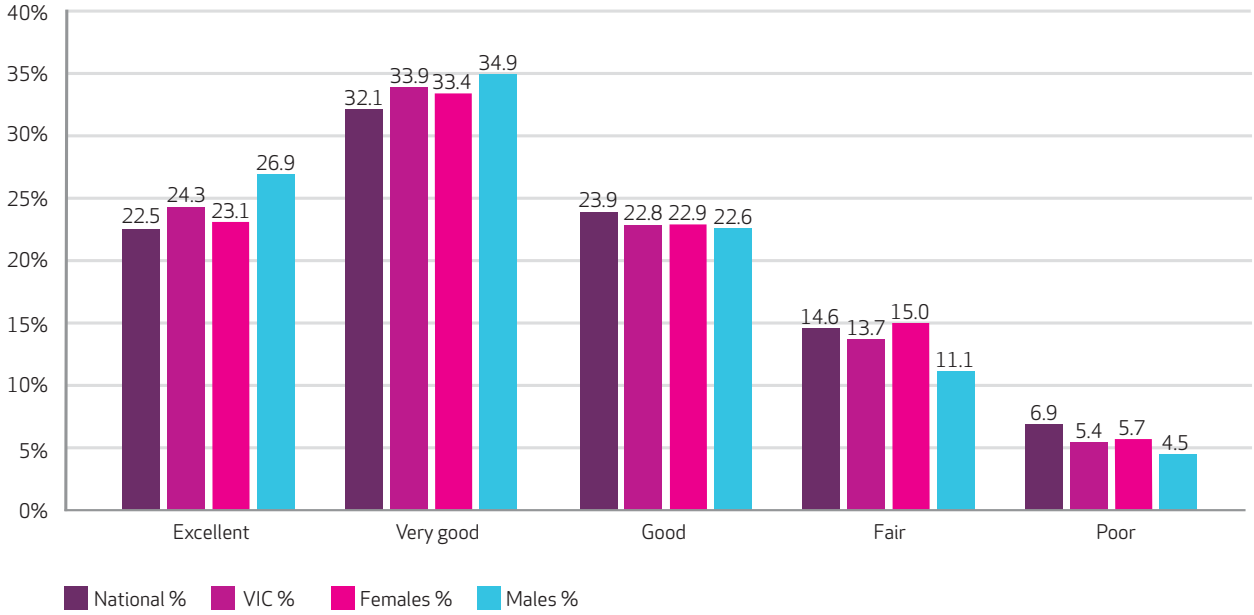
| | National % | VIC % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| All of the time | 11.6 | 10.2 | 13.0 | 4.9 |
| Most of the time | 31.0 | 33.0 | 38.0 | 23.4 |
| Some of the time | 32.4 | 33.2 | 32.9 | 33.9 |
| A little of the time | 19.7 | 19.5 | 14.4 | 29.4 |
| None of the time | 5.3 | 4.1 | 1.7 | 8.4 |

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

Respondents were asked to rate their family's ability to get along with one another. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 9.7 shows that the majority of respondents from VIC rated their family's ability to get along very positively: 24.3% rated it as *excellent* and 33.9% rated it as *very good*. However, almost one in five (19.1%) young people from VIC indicated their family's ability to get along was either *fair* (13.7%) or *poor* (5.4%).

A higher proportion of male respondents rated their family's ability to get along as *excellent* or *very good* (61.8% compared with 56.5% of females), while a higher proportion of females rated their family's ability to get along as *fair* or *poor* (20.7% compared with 15.6% of males).

Figure 9.7: Family's ability to get along with one another




## How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 indicates that they felt *very sad* and 10 indicates that they felt *very happy*. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100, in which 100 is the happiest. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes *happy/very happy*; 40-60 signifies *not happy or sad*; and 0-30 indicates *very sad/sad*. As Table 9.11 shows, the majority (61.4%) of young people from VIC responded in the 70-100 range, which indicates most young people felt happy overall with their lives.

A notably higher proportion of males from VIC reported feeling *happy/very happy* with their lives as a whole (67.5% compared with 58.8% of females), whereas a slightly greater proportion of females indicated they felt *very sad/sad* (10.1% compared with 7.1% of males).

Table 9.11: How happy are young people?

| | National % | VIC % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Happy/very happy (70-100) | 58.6 | 61.4 | 58.8 | 67.5 |
| Not happy or sad (40-60) | 30.7 | 29.3 | 31.1 | 25.4 |
| Very sad/sad (0-30) | 10.7 | 9.3 | 10.1 | 7.1 |

## How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked to describe their feelings when they thought about the future. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 9.12 shows that the majority of young people from VIC felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future.

- Close to six in 10 (57.6%) felt either *very positive* (11.9%) or *positive* (45.7%) about the future.
- Close to one in seven (13.4%) young people from VIC indicated they felt *negative* (10.4%) or *very negative* (3.0%) about the future.
- Higher proportions of males from VIC reported feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future (62.8% compared with 55.4% of females).

Table 9.12: Feelings about the future

| | National 2020 % | VIC 2020 % | Females % | Males % | VIC 2019 % | VIC 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very positive | 12.3 | 11.9 | 10.5 | 14.5 | 13.2 | 16.1 |
| Positive | 43.2 | 45.7 | 44.9 | 48.3 | 46.0 | 48.4 |
| Neither positive nor negative | 30.5 | 29.1 | 30.6 | 26.2 | 28.2 | 26.5 |
| Negative | 10.5 | 10.4 | 11.0 | 8.6 | 9.2 | 6.3 |
| Very negative | 3.4 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 2.4 | 3.5 | 2.7 |

# Western Australia



## Profile of respondents

A total of 3,098 young people from Western Australia (WA) aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2020*.

### Gender breakdown

Over half (53.8%) of respondents from WA were male, 43.3% were female, 2.0% gender diverse and 1.0% preferred not to say.

### Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 131 (4.3%) respondents from WA identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 102 (3.3%) identified as Aboriginal, while 18 (0.6%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.4% identified as both). A higher proportion of males identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (4.6% compared with 3.0% of females).

### Cultural background

A total of 805 (26.3%) respondents from WA stated they were born overseas and 684 (22.4%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 70 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Filipino/Tagalog, Afrikaans, Arabic, Indonesian and Spanish.

Over half (52.9%) of respondents from WA stated that one or both of their parents were born overseas.

### Disability

A total of 262 (8.7%) respondents from WA identified as living with disability. A greater proportion of males than females reported living with disability (9.5% compared with 7.0%). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning disabilities, autism, physical disabilities and anxiety disorder.

## Education

As indicated in Table 10.1, 84.4% of respondents from WA were studying full-time, which is lower than the 92.2% of respondents studying full-time in 2019. A higher proportion of females from WA reported studying full-time (88.2% compared with 82.4% of males). Conversely, a higher proportion of males than females from WA reported they were studying part-time (8.9% compared with 5.5%) or not studying (8.6% compared with 6.3%).

Table 10.1: Participation in education

| | National % | WA % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Studying full-time | 86.6 | 84.4 | 88.2 | 82.4 |
| Studying part-time | 6.5 | 7.7 | 5.5 | 8.9 |
| Not studying | 6.8 | 7.9 | 6.3 | 8.6 |

Respondents from WA who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in previous years, the majority of respondents from WA reported they were either *very satisfied* (10.2%) or *satisfied* (54.0%) with their studies. Less than one in 10 indicated they were *dissatisfied* (7.1%) or *very dissatisfied* (1.8%). As shown in Table 10.2, a higher proportion of males than females from WA reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* (67.1% compared with 62.3%), whereas a slightly higher proportion of females than males indicated they felt *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* (9.9% compared with 7.6%).

Table 10.2: Satisfaction with studies

| | National % | WA % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 10.4 | 10.2 | 7.1 | 12.4 |
| Satisfied | 56.7 | 54.0 | 55.2 | 54.7 |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 25.6 | 26.9 | 27.8 | 25.4 |
| Dissatisfied | 5.7 | 7.1 | 8.4 | 5.9 |
| Very dissatisfied | 1.5 | 1.8 | 1.5 | 1.7 |

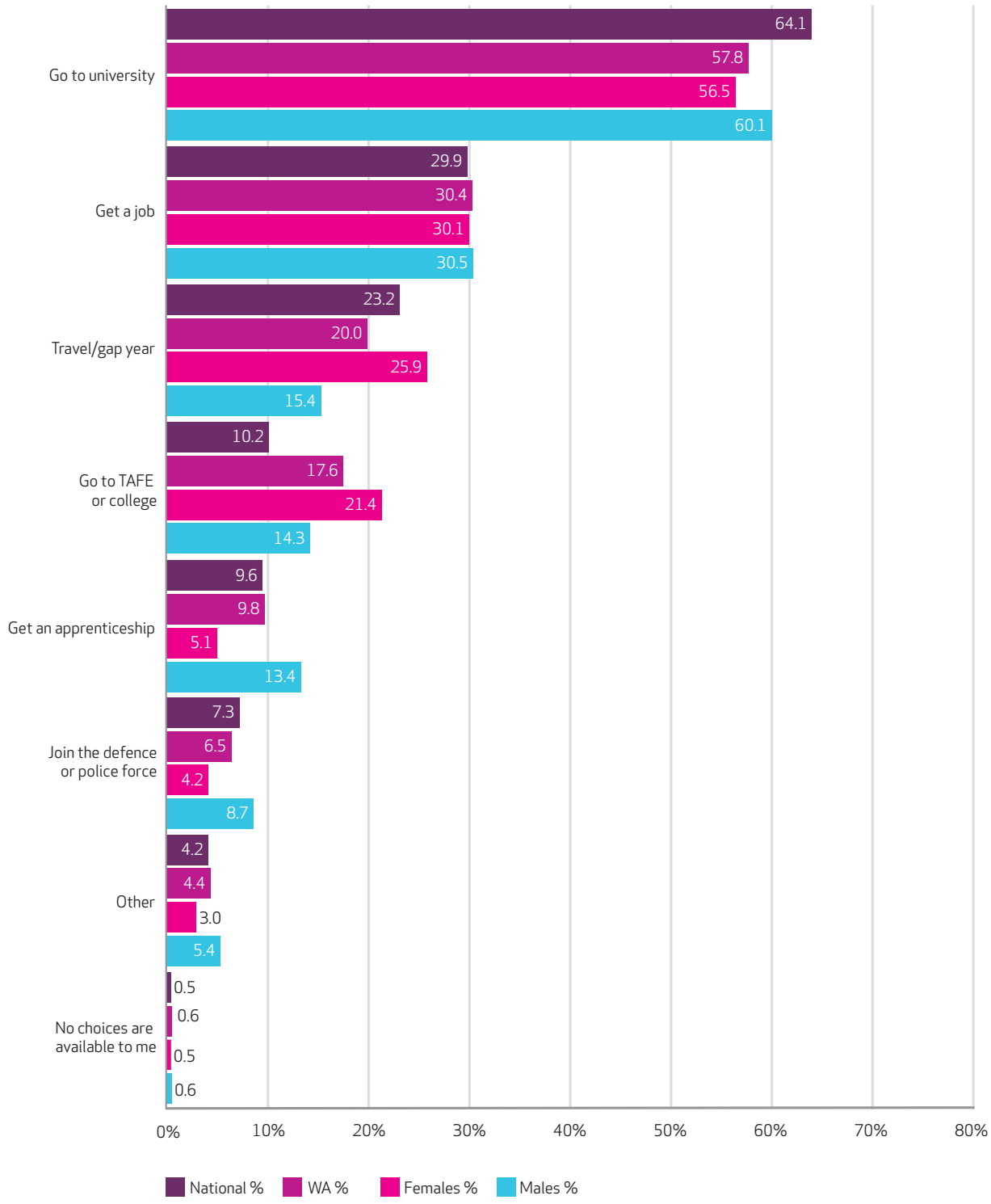
Of those still at school, the majority (97.9%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. A slightly higher proportion of males indicated they did not plan to complete Year 12 (2.1% compared with 1.6% of females).

Respondents from WA who were studying at school were asked what they planned to do after leaving school. Figure 10.1 shows that close to six in 10 (57.8%) respondents from WA planned to *go to university* after school. Three in 10 (30.4%) respondents from WA reported plans to *get a job* and two in 10 (20.0%) had *travel/gap year* plans. Over one in six (17.6%) planned to *go to TAFE or college*, whereas one in 10 (9.8%) planned to *get an apprenticeship* and 6.5% reported plans to *join the defence or police force*. A small minority (0.6%) of respondents indicated that *no choices are available to me* after finishing school.

## Gender differences

While the most frequently reported plan among both female and male respondents from WA was to *go to university* after finishing school, a higher proportion of males indicated they planned to do so (60.1% compared with 56.5% of females). A greater proportion of females from WA reported *travel/gap year* plans after leaving school (25.9% compared with 15.4% of males). Conversely, over double the proportion of males from WA indicated they were planning to *get an apprenticeship* after school (13.4% compared with 5.1% of females).

Figure 10.1: Plans after leaving school

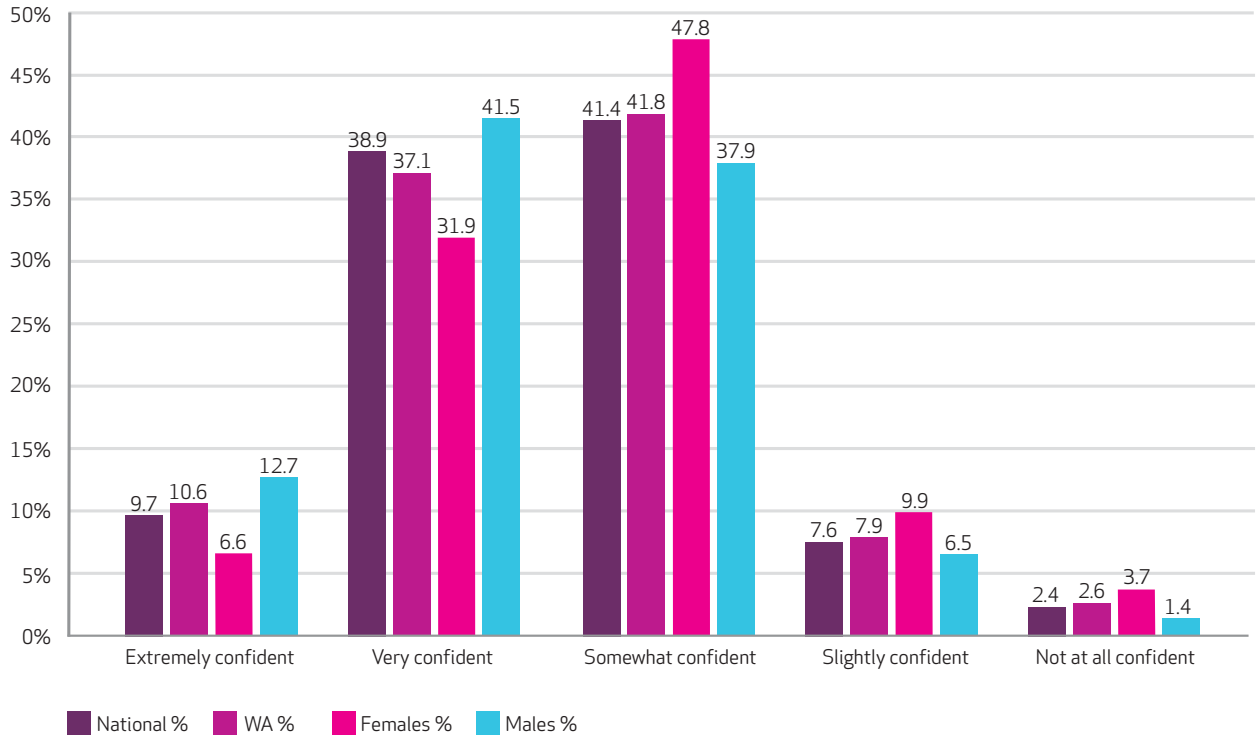



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of WA frequency.

## How confident are young people in achieving their study/work goals?

Respondents from WA were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after finishing school. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. As shown in Figure 10.2, nearly half (47.7%) of WA respondents indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study/work goals: 10.6% reported they were *extremely confident* and 37.1% stated they were *very confident*. However, one in 10 (10.5%) young people from WA were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals: 7.9% of young people indicated they were *slightly confident*, while 2.6% were *not at all confident*. A higher proportion of male respondents reported they were *extremely* or *very confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school (54.2% compared with 38.5% of females).

Figure 10.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals




## Employment

Respondents from WA were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average how many hours they worked per week. Table 10.3 shows participation in paid employment among respondents from WA. A very small proportion of young people from WA who reported paid employment were employed full-time (0.6%). This is unsurprising given the high proportion of respondents to the *Youth Survey* who were still at school. One third (33.2%) of respondents from WA reported they were employed part-time. Two thirds (66.2%) of respondents indicated they were not in paid employment: 38.8% stated they were looking for work, while 27.4% were neither working nor looking for work. The proportion of respondents from WA in part-time employment in 2020 is slightly lower than in 2019 (33.2% compared with 35.2%).

### Gender differences

Similar proportions of male and female respondents from WA reported full-time employment (0.8% and 0.2% respectively). Considerably more females than males were in part-time employment (40.0% compared with 27.5%).

Table 10.3: Participation in paid employment

| | National % | WA % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employed full-time | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.8 |
| Employed part-time | 40.5 | 33.2 | 40.0 | 27.5 |
| Not in paid employment, looking for work | 34.7 | 38.8 | 40.8 | 37.0 |
| Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work | 24.2 | 27.4 | 19.1 | 34.8 |

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

## What would help young people secure a job?

Respondents from WA who were looking for work were asked to indicate from a number of factors, what might help them secure a job, as shown in Figure 10.3.

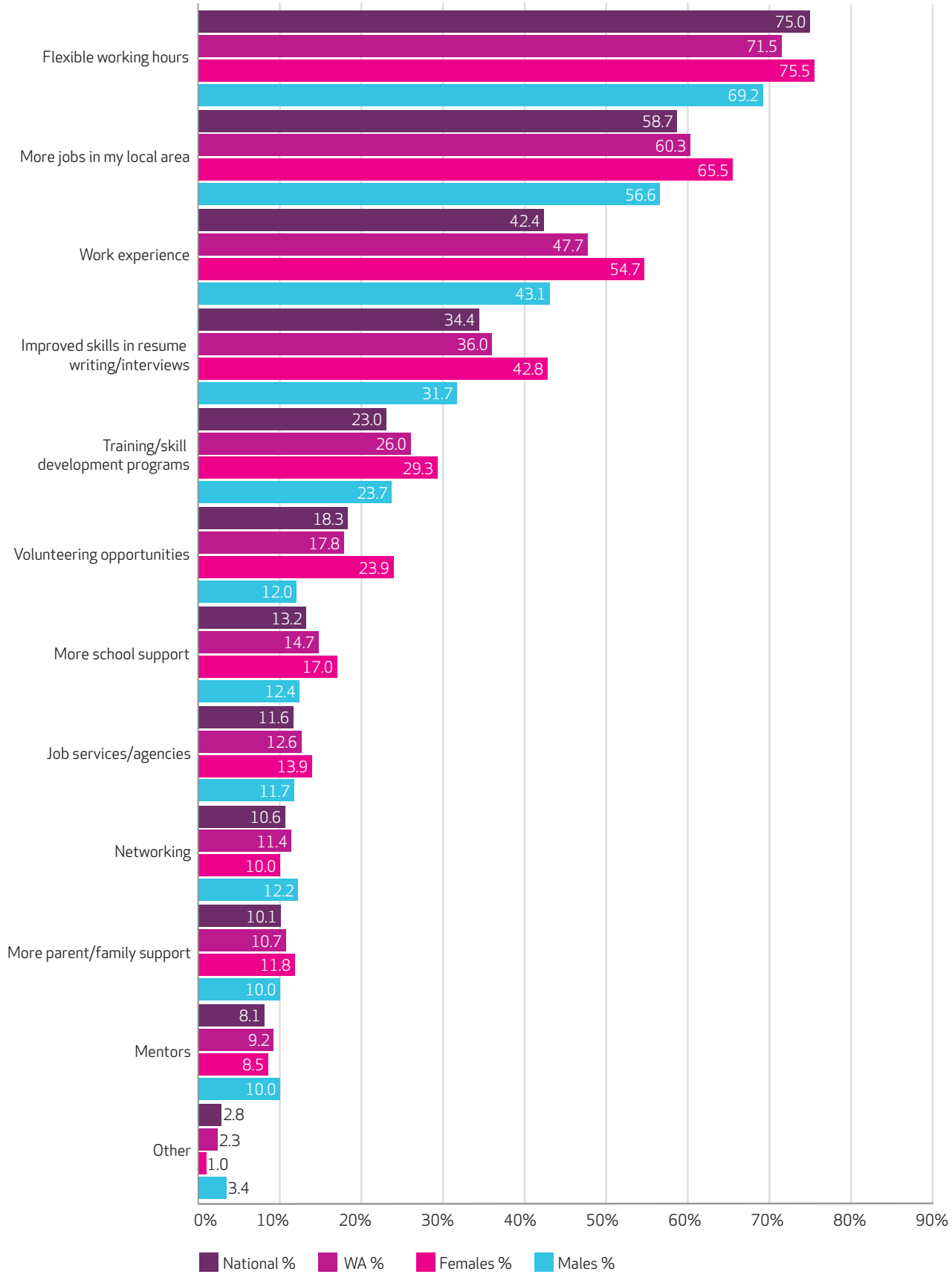
- *Flexible working hours* (71.5%), *more jobs in my local area* (60.3%) and *work experience* (47.7%) were the top factors in helping young people from WA secure a job.
- Over one third (36.0%) of respondents from WA saw *improved skills in resume writing/interviews* as an important factor in helping them secure a job.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 10.3, the top three factors to securing work for both females and males from WA were *flexible working hours, more jobs in my local area* and *work experience*.

- Double the proportion of female respondents from WA saw *volunteering opportunities* as a factor to securing a job (23.9% compared with 12.0% of males).
- Higher proportions of WA females than males reported *work experience* (54.7% compared with 43.1%) and *improved skills in resume writing/interviews* (42.8% compared with 31.7%) were factors to securing a job.

Figure 10.3: Factors to securing a job




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

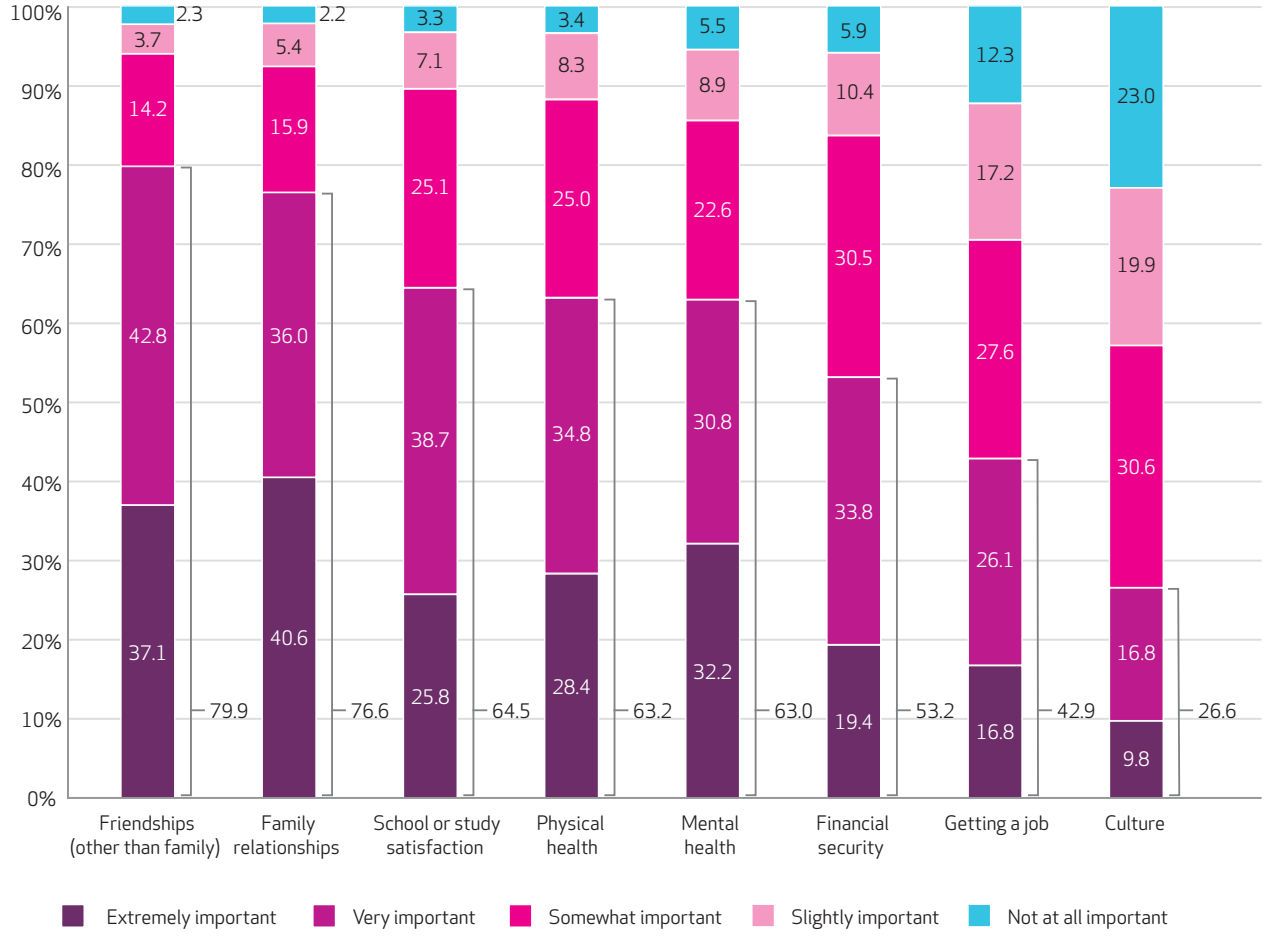
## What do young people value?

Young people from WA were asked how important a number of items had been in their lives over the past year. Responses for these items were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely important* to *not at all important*.

As shown in Figure 10.4, the three most highly valued items for respondents from WA were *friendships (other than family)*, *family relationships* and *school or study satisfaction*. The next most highly valued items were *physical health* and *mental health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were considered *extremely* or *very important* by 79.9% of respondents from WA (*extremely important*: 37.1%; *very important*: 42.8%).
- Close to eight in 10 (76.6%) respondents from WA highly valued *family relationships* (*extremely important*: 40.6%; *very important*: 36.0%).
- Over six in 10 respondents from WA placed a high value upon *school or study satisfaction* (64.5%), *physical health* (63.2%) and *mental health* (63.0%).

Figure 10.4: What young people value




Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

### Gender differences

*Friendships (other than family)* and *family relationships* were rated as the two most important items by both WA females and males, as shown in Table 10.4. The third top item for females was *school or study satisfaction*, while for males the third most highly valued item was *physical health*.

- *Friendships (other than family)* were rated *extremely* or *very important* by eight in 10 females (80.5%) and males (80.2%) from WA.
- Higher proportions of WA females than males placed a high value upon *getting a job* (47.2% compared with 38.9%), *mental health* (66.7% compared with 61.0%) and *financial security* (56.0% compared with 50.5%).
- A higher proportion of males from WA valued *physical health* (66.6% compared with 59.6% of females).

Table 10.4: What young people value by gender

| Females | Extremely important % | Very important % | Somewhat important % | Slightly important % | Not at all important % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **39.2** | **41.3** | 14.6 | 3.1 | 1.7 |
| **Family relationships** | **43.9** | **34.3** | 15.1 | 5.2 | 1.5 |
| **School or study satisfaction** | **29.8** | **38.3** | 22.5 | 7.3 | 2.2 |
| Physical health | 26.3 | 33.3 | 27.7 | 9.4 | 3.3 |
| Mental health | 36.1 | 30.6 | 21.9 | 8.3 | 3.1 |
| Financial security | 19.8 | 36.2 | 31.1 | 8.7 | 4.2 |
| Getting a job | 17.9 | 29.3 | 28.5 | 15.4 | 8.7 |
| Culture | 9.5 | 17.3 | 30.8 | 20.2 | 22.3 |
| **Males** | **Extremely important %** | **Very important %** | **Somewhat important %** | **Slightly important %** | **Not at all important %** |
| **Friendships (other than family)** | **35.1** | **45.1** | 13.8 | 3.9 | 2.1 |
| **Family relationships** | **38.5** | **38.2** | 16.0 | 5.3 | 2.0 |
| School or study satisfaction | 23.1 | 39.7 | 27.1 | 6.5 | 3.5 |
| **Physical health** | **30.0** | **36.6** | 23.0 | 7.4 | 3.0 |
| Mental health | 29.0 | 32.0 | 23.2 | 9.5 | 6.2 |
| Financial security | 17.9 | 32.6 | 30.4 | 12.0 | 7.1 |
| Getting a job | 15.1 | 23.8 | 27.8 | 18.7 | 14.6 |
| Culture | 9.2 | 17.0 | 31.0 | 20.1 | 22.8 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of WA frequency.

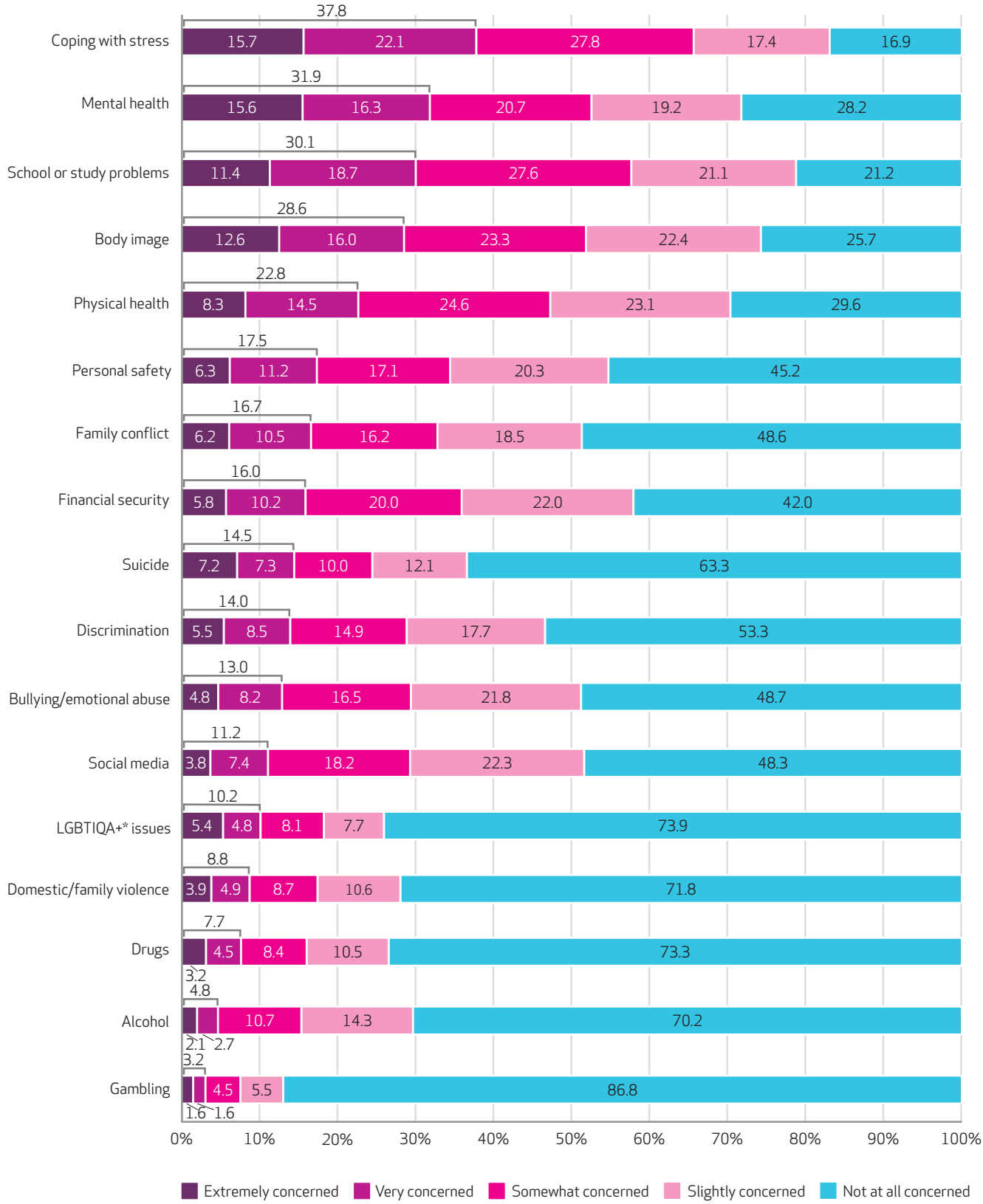
## What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Young people were asked to indicate how concerned they were about a number of issues over the past year, as shown in Figure 10.5. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*.

The top three issues of personal concern for young people from WA were *coping with stress*, *mental health* and *school or study problems*. The next most concerning issues were *body image* and *physical health*.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with nearly four in 10 (37.8%) respondents from WA indicating they were *extremely* or *very concerned* about this issue.
- Around three in 10 respondents from WA were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *mental health* (31.9%), *school or study problems* (30.1%) and *body image* (28.6%).
- Close to one quarter (22.8%) of WA respondents were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *physical health*.

Figure 10.5: Issues of personal concern to young people




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

## Gender differences

*Coping with stress* was the top issue of personal concern for both females and males from WA, as shown in Table 10.5. For females from WA, the second and third most concerning personal issues were *body image* and *mental health*. For WA males the second most concerning personal issue was *school or study problems* followed by *mental health*. The proportion of female respondents from WA who were concerned about these issues (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- Three times the proportion of females from WA reported *body image* was a major issue of personal concern (46.7% compared with 14.5% of males).
- Notably higher proportions of females than males were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *coping with stress* (54.5% compared with 24.6%) and *mental health* (45.3% compared with 20.5%).

Table 10.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

| Females | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **23.9** | **30.6** | 26.7 | 12.8 | 6.0 |
| **Mental health** | **23.1** | **22.2** | 22.1 | 17.5 | 15.2 |
| School or study problems | 15.4 | 24.3 | 29.3 | 19.1 | 11.9 |
| **Body image** | **22.3** | **24.4** | 24.7 | 18.4 | 10.2 |
| Physical health | 9.5 | 17.7 | 28.7 | 24.3 | 19.8 |
| Personal safety | 7.7 | 15.4 | 19.3 | 22.1 | 35.6 |
| Family conflict | 8.5 | 14.8 | 19.3 | 20.7 | 36.7 |
| Financial security | 7.6 | 12.3 | 24.3 | 25.3 | 30.5 |
| Suicide | 8.8 | 9.8 | 11.8 | 14.2 | 55.4 |
| Discrimination | 6.8 | 11.4 | 17.6 | 21.4 | 42.8 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 6.5 | 11.5 | 19.6 | 24.3 | 38.0 |
| Social media | 5.2 | 10.8 | 24.3 | 24.0 | 35.8 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 5.8 | 8.2 | 10.7 | 10.2 | 65.0 |
| Domestic/family violence | 4.9 | 6.3 | 9.3 | 12.1 | 67.4 |
| Drugs | 2.8 | 5.0 | 8.9 | 10.9 | 72.3 |
| Alcohol | 1.7 | 3.0 | 11.8 | 15.7 | 67.8 |
| Gambling | 0.6 | 1.2 | 4.1 | 5.0 | 89.1 |

Table 10.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

| Males | Extremely concerned % | Very concerned % | Somewhat concerned % | Slightly concerned % | Not at all concerned % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coping with stress** | **8.7** | **15.9** | 29.5 | 21.4 | 24.4 |
| **Mental health** | **8.9** | **11.6** | 20.6 | 21.5 | 37.4 |
| **School or study problems** | **8.1** | **14.9** | 27.0 | 22.9 | 27.1 |
| Body image | 4.7 | 9.8 | 22.5 | 26.1 | 36.9 |
| Physical health | 6.7 | 12.5 | 21.8 | 22.6 | 36.4 |
| Personal safety | 4.7 | 7.9 | 15.5 | 19.7 | 52.2 |
| Family conflict | 3.6 | 7.0 | 14.0 | 17.2 | 58.2 |
| Financial security | 3.8 | 8.5 | 16.8 | 20.4 | 50.5 |
| Suicide | 4.9 | 5.1 | 8.2 | 11.0 | 70.8 |
| Discrimination | 3.8 | 6.0 | 13.1 | 15.4 | 61.6 |
| Bullying/emotional abuse | 2.7 | 5.3 | 14.2 | 20.7 | 57.1 |
| Social media | 2.2 | 4.7 | 13.8 | 21.7 | 57.5 |
| LGBTIQA+* issues | 3.3 | 2.3 | 5.8 | 6.1 | 82.6 |
| Domestic/family violence | 2.8 | 3.6 | 8.1 | 9.8 | 75.7 |
| Drugs | 2.8 | 4.1 | 8.0 | 10.1 | 75.1 |
| Alcohol | 2.1 | 2.4 | 9.6 | 13.4 | 72.5 |
| Gambling | 1.6 | 1.8 | 4.8 | 6.0 | 85.9 |

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of WA frequency.
*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

## Have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people were asked whether they had been treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Nearly three in 10 (28.2%) young people from WA reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A higher proportion of WA females than males reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (35.7% compared with 20.7%).

## Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify reasons for being treated unfairly from a list of suggested items. Table 10.6 shows that, of the 28.2% of WA respondents who had been treated unfairly in the past year, over one third (36.6%) reported the unfair treatment was due to their *gender*. Over three in 10 (31.2%) indicated they were treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background*, while more than one quarter (26.6%) stated they were treated unfairly due to their *mental health*.

### Gender differences

As shown in Table 10.6, of the 28.2% of young people from WA who had been treated unfairly in the past year:

- Notably higher proportions of females than males from WA had been treated unfairly due to their *gender* (42.7% compared with 24.5%) and their *mental health* (31.8% compared with 17.8%).
- Conversely, a greater proportion of males from WA reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *disability* (12.1% compared with 7.2% of females).

Table 10.6: Reasons for being treated unfairly

| | National % | WA % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | **41.0** | **36.6** | **42.7** | **24.5** |
| **Race/cultural background** | **30.4** | **31.2** | **28.8** | **33.2** |
| **Mental health** | **26.0** | **26.6** | **31.8** | 17.8 |
| Sexuality | 19.4 | 21.2 | 22.0 | 15.1 |
| Age | 21.0 | 21.0 | 22.9 | 16.9 |
| Other | 14.4 | 15.2 | 11.8 | **19.0** |
| Religion | 13.8 | 14.7 | 14.2 | 13.6 |
| Disability | 7.5 | 10.0 | 7.2 | 12.1 |
| Financial background | 9.0 | 9.6 | 8.5 | 9.7 |

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

## Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Young people were asked whether they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly because of their *age*, *disability*, *financial background*, *gender*, *mental health*, *race/cultural background*, *religion*, *sexuality* or any *other* reason in the past year. This could mean any treatment that is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful, including being teased, excluded or humiliated. Nearly six in 10 (56.4%) young people from WA reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year. A much higher proportion of WA females than males reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (68.4% compared with 46.9%).

## What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

Young people who reported they had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year were asked to identify from a list of reasons why the person was being treated unfairly. Table 10.7 shows that, of the 56.4% of respondents from WA who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 62.2% reported they witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *race/cultural background*. Almost half (48.1%) of respondents from WA indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality*. Four in 10 (40.5%) respondents from WA who had witnessed unfair treatment reported it was due to a person's *gender*.

### Gender differences

As shown in Table 10.7, the three most frequently witnessed reasons for unfair treatment for WA females and males were consistent with WA results.

- Notably higher proportions of WA females reported they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *sexuality* (56.7% compared with 37.4% of males).
- A greater proportion of WA female than male respondents had witnessed unfair treatment due to person's *mental health* (31.2% compared with 23.9%), a person's *gender* (45.0% compared with 34.3%) and a person's *race/cultural background* (65.3% compared with 59.2% of males).

Table 10.7: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

| | National % | WA % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race/cultural background** | **62.0** | **62.2** | **65.3** | **59.2** |
| **Sexuality** | **49.4** | **48.1** | **56.7** | **37.4** |
| **Gender** | **40.5** | **40.5** | **45.0** | **34.3** |
| Disability | 32.2 | 33.0 | 34.4 | 30.3 |
| Religion | 28.8 | 30.2 | 32.1 | 27.2 |
| Mental health | 28.9 | 27.8 | 31.2 | 23.9 |
| Age | 17.5 | 19.0 | 20.8 | 16.0 |
| Financial background | 18.7 | 18.6 | 18.8 | 17.4 |
| Other | 5.3 | 5.4 | 2.8 | 7.5 |

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

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

Respondents were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 10.6 shows the percentage of respondents from WA who indicated they would go to the particular source for support.

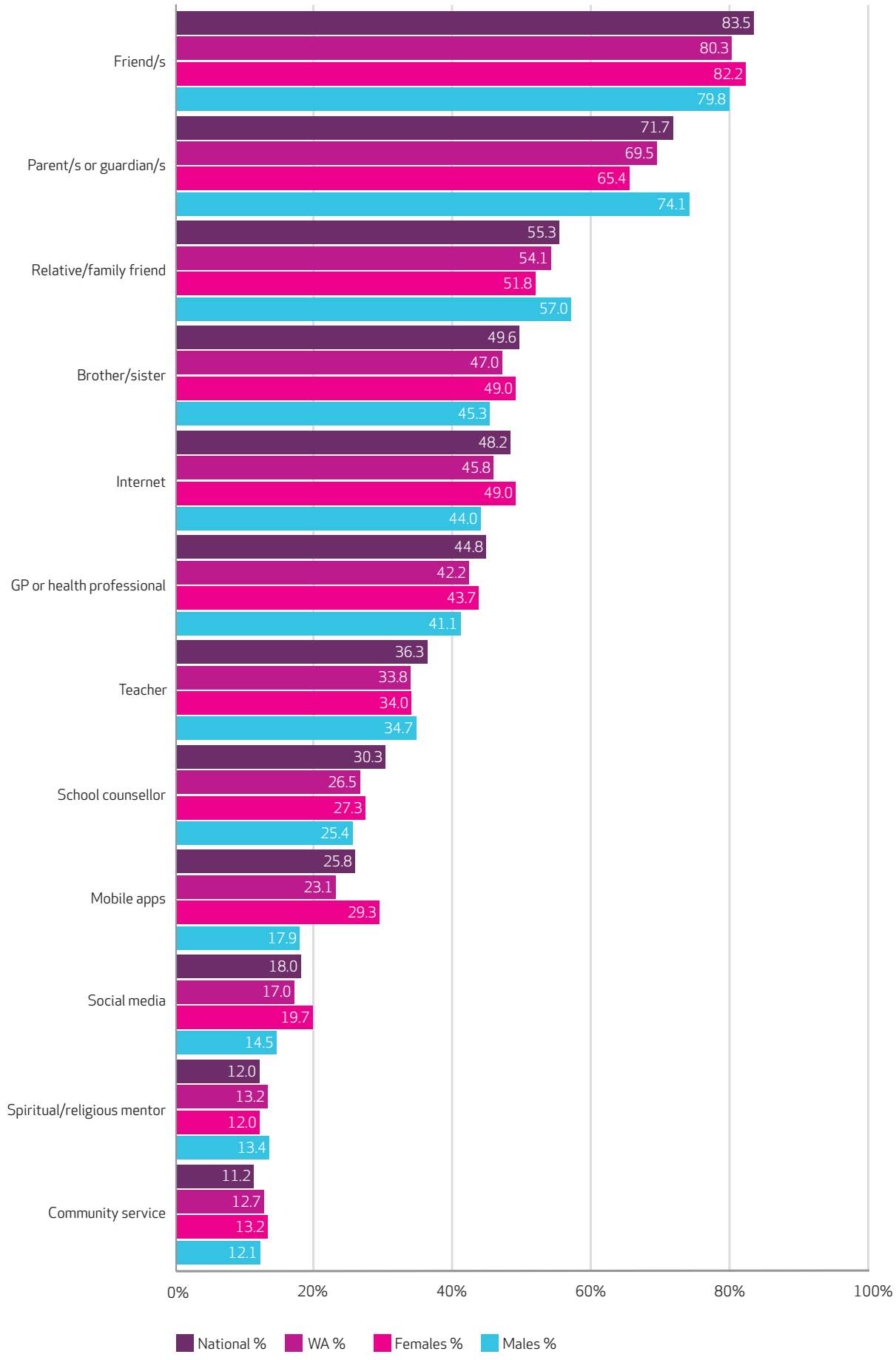
- *Friend/s* (80.3%), *parent/s or guardian/s* (69.5%) and *relative/family friend* (54.1%) were the three most frequently cited sources of help for young people from WA.
- Nearly half of young people from WA indicated they would go to their *brother/sister* (47.0%) or the *internet* (45.8%) for support with important issues in their lives.
- More than four in 10 (42.2%) young people from WA would turn to a *GP or health professional* as a source of help with important issues.

### Gender differences

As shown in Figure 10.6, the top three sources of help for both genders were consistent with the WA results.

- A slightly higher proportion of females from WA indicated they would turn to their *friend/s* for help with important issues (82.2% compared with 79.8% of males), whereas higher proportions of WA males than females stated they would go to their *parent/s or guardian/s* (74.1% compared with 65.4%) or to a *relative/family friend* (57.0% compared with 51.8%).
- Higher proportions of females than males from WA would turn to *mobile apps* (29.3% compared with 17.9%), *social media* (19.7% compared with 14.5%) or the *internet* (49.0% compared with 44.0%) for support with important issues in their lives.

Figure 10.6: Where young people go for help with important issues




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

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

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 10.8. In 2020, the top three issues identified by young people from WA were *equity and discrimination*, *COVID-19* and *mental health*.

- Around four in 10 young people from WA indicated that *equity and discrimination* (44.5%) and *COVID-19* (38.7%) are important issues in Australia today.
- Around one quarter of young people from WA indicated *mental health* (27.3%) and *the environment* (23.4%) as important national issues in Australia today.
- Since 2019, the proportion of those from WA reporting *equity and discrimination* as a key national issue has increased from 27.1% to 44.5%. Conversely, concerns about *alcohol and drugs* and *the environment* have decreased since 2019.

### Gender differences

The most important issues for females and males from WA were *equity and discrimination, COVID-19* and *mental health.*

- Notably higher proportions of WA females than males identified *equity and discrimination* (51.0% compared with 39.9%) and *mental health* (32.9% compared with 23.5%) as important issues facing Australia today.
- Conversely, higher proportions of WA males than females regarded *the economy and financial matters* (16.5% compared with 13.2%) and *employment* (11.2% compared with 7.9%) as key issues in Australia.

Table 10.8: Most important issues in Australia today

| | National 2020 % | WA 2020 % | Females % | Males % | WA 2019 % | WA 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Equity and discrimination** | **40.2** | **44.5** | **51.0** | **39.9** | **27.1** | **22.2** |
| **COVID-19** | **38.8** | **38.7** | **39.6** | **38.7** | - | - |
| **Mental health** | **30.6** | **27.3** | **32.9** | **23.5** | **34.5** | **42.2** |
| The environment | 29.8 | 23.4 | 25.3 | 21.7 | **31.4** | 7.5 |
| The economy and financial matters | 15.3 | 14.8 | 13.2 | 16.5 | 15.4 | 12.0 |
| Alcohol and drugs | 10.5 | 13.4 | 11.8 | 14.5 | 25.2 | **35.9** |
| Employment | 7.6 | 9.6 | 7.9 | 11.2 | 9.8 | 10.3 |
| Politics | 7.5 | 7.8 | 5.9 | 9.0 | 12.5 | 5.0 |
| Education | 7.0 | 7.5 | 6.9 | 8.3 | 10.1 | 9.5 |
| Bullying | 6.4 | 6.9 | 7.2 | 7.0 | 12.1 | 18.2 |
| Crime, safety and violence | 9.3 | 6.9 | 7.6 | 6.4 | 8.4 | 11.9 |

Note: Items are listed in order of WA frequency.

## What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities they had been involved in over the past year from the list of options shown in Table 10.9.

- The top three activities for young people from WA were *sports (as a participant)* (68.6%), *sports (as a spectator)* (62.9%) and *arts/cultural/music activities* (45.0%).
- More than four in 10 (42.8%) respondents from WA reported they had participated in *volunteer work* in the past year.
- Close to one third (32.2%) of young people from WA indicated they had taken part in *student leadership activities*.

### Gender differences

In line with WA results, *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)* were the top two activities for both WA females and males. While *arts/cultural/music activities* was the third most reported activity for females from WA, *volunteer work* was the third highest for males.

- Higher proportions of WA males than females reported taking part in *sports (as a spectator)* (71.4% compared with 53.0%) and *sports (as a participant)* (75.8% compared with 60.2%).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of females from WA participated in *arts/cultural/music activities* (50.9% compared with 39.9% of males).

Table 10.9: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

| | National % | WA % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sports (as a participant)** | **70.7** | **68.6** | **60.2** | **75.8** |
| **Sports (as a spectator)** | **62.1** | **62.9** | **53.0** | **71.4** |
| **Arts/cultural/music activities** | **43.9** | **45.0** | **50.9** | 39.9 |
| Volunteer work | 43.3 | 42.8 | 41.8 | **43.5** |
| Student leadership activities | 34.0 | 32.2 | 30.2 | 33.8 |
| Youth groups/activities | 25.6 | 26.9 | 28.9 | 25.2 |
| Religious groups/activities | 23.6 | 22.2 | 24.9 | 19.5 |
| Environmental groups | 14.8 | 15.4 | 14.2 | 15.8 |
| Political groups/organisations | 8.8 | 9.4 | 9.2 | 8.8 |

Note: Items are listed in order of WA frequency.

## How stressed are young people?

For the first time in 2020, young people were asked to report on how much of the time they felt stressed in the past four weeks. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *all of the time* to *none of the time*. Table 10.10 shows that more than four in 10 (41.4%) young people from WA felt stressed either *all of the time* or *most of the time*.

- Close to double the proportion of female respondents from WA felt stressed *all of the time* or *most of the time* (56.9% compared with 28.6% of males).
- Conversely, more than double the proportion of males from WA felt stressed *a little of the time* or *none of the time* (35.4% compared with 14.8% of females).

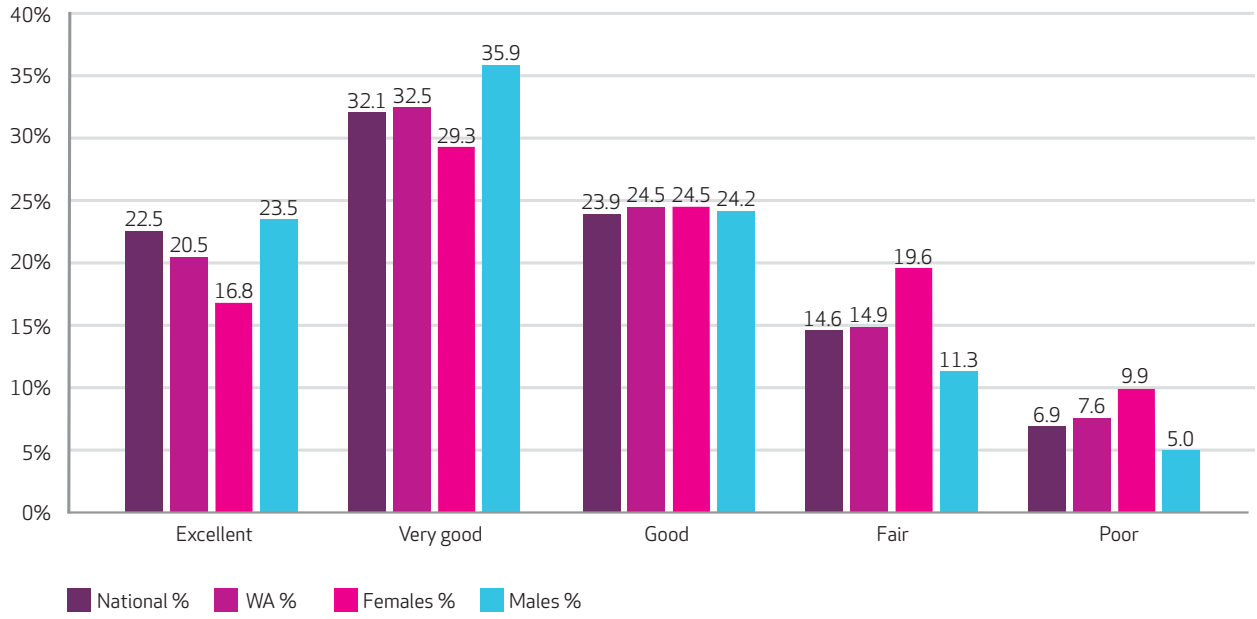
Table 10.10: How stressed are young people?

| | National % | WA % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| All of the time | 11.6 | 11.3 | 16.5 | 6.1 |
| Most of the time | 31.0 | 30.1 | 40.4 | 22.5 |
| Some of the time | 32.4 | 32.5 | 28.3 | 36.0 |
| A little of the time | 19.7 | 20.2 | 12.6 | 26.9 |
| None of the time | 5.3 | 5.9 | 2.2 | 8.5 |

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

Respondents were asked to rate their family's ability to get along with one another. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 10.7 shows that the majority of respondents from WA rated their family's ability to get along very positively: 20.5% rated it as *excellent* and 32.5% rated it as *very good*. However, more than one in five (22.5%) young people from WA indicated their family's ability to get along was either *fair* (14.9%) or *poor* (7.6%). A higher proportion of male respondents rated their family's ability to get along as *excellent* or *very good* (59.4% compared with 46.1% of females), while a much higher proportion of females rated their family's ability to get along as *fair* or *poor* (29.5% compared with 16.3% of males).

Figure 10.7: Family's ability to get along with one another




## How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 indicates that they felt *very sad* and 10 indicates that they felt *very happy*. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100, in which 100 is the happiest. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes *happy/very happy*; 40-60 signifies *not happy or sad*; and 0-30 indicates *very sad/sad*. As Table 10.11 shows, the majority (55.9%) of young people from WA responded in the 70-100 range, which indicates most young people felt happy overall with their lives. A notably higher proportion of males from WA reported feeling *happy/very happy* with their lives as a whole (64.9% compared with 45.4% of females), whereas a greater proportion of females indicated they felt *very sad/sad* (16.3% compared with 7.9% of males).

Table 10.11: How happy are young people?

| | National % | WA % | Females % | Males % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Happy/very happy (70-100) | 58.6 | 55.9 | 45.4 | 64.9 |
| Not happy or sad (40-60) | 30.7 | 32.0 | 38.3 | 27.2 |
| Very sad/sad (0-30) | 10.7 | 12.1 | 16.3 | 7.9 |

## How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked to describe their feelings when they thought about the future. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 10.12 shows that the majority of young people from WA felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future.

- More than half (52.9%) felt either *very positive* (12.3%) or *positive* (40.6%) about the future.
- Over one in seven (15.0%) young people from WA indicated they felt *negative* (11.0%) or *very negative* (4.0%) about the future.
- A higher proportion of males from WA reported feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future (58.8% compared with 46.4% of females).

Table 10.12: Feelings about the future

| | National 2020 % | WA 2020 % | Females % | Males % | WA 2019 % | WA 2018 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very positive | 12.3 | 12.3 | 8.6 | 14.9 | 13.0 | 11.6 |
| Positive | 43.2 | 40.6 | 37.8 | 43.9 | 43.2 | 45.8 |
| Neither positive nor negative | 30.5 | 32.1 | 35.1 | 29.6 | 29.2 | 30.9 |
| Negative | 10.5 | 11.0 | 14.2 | 8.6 | 9.8 | 7.9 |
| Very negative | 3.4 | 4.0 | 4.3 | 3.0 | 4.7 | 3.8 |

## Acknowledgements

Mission Australia would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of the State/Territory Departments of Education and the Catholic Schools Offices from across the country. This valuable research would not be possible without their support. Mission Australia would also like to thank the very many educational institutions, youth and community organisations, government agencies, corporates, philanthropic organisations and others who helped to engage young people in the *Youth Survey 2020* and raise awareness by promoting through their networks and on social media.

These include:

- Alliance of Girls' Schools Australasia
- Alpine Shire Council (VIC)
- Analysis & Policy Observatory
- Anti-Poverty Week
- Australian Council of Social Service
- Australian Indigenous Health*InfoNet*
- Australian Theatre for Young People (NSW)
- Bayside Council (NSW)
- Blackwood Youth Action (WA)
- Brisbane City Council (QLD)
- Camden Council (NSW)
- Catholic Social Services Australia
- Central Highlands Regional Council (QLD)
- Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (VIC)
- Centre for Public Christianity
- Children and Young People with Disability Australia
- Circular Head Council (TAS)
- City of Ballarat (VIC)
- City of Cockburn, Youth Services (WA)
- City of Darwin (NT)
- City of Greater Bendigo (VIC)
- City of Joondalup Youth Services (WA)
- City of Karratha (WA)
- City of Kwinana (WA)
- City of Melton Young Communities (VIC)
- City of Port Adelaide Enfield (SA)
- City of Prospect (SA)
- City of Rockingham (WA)
- City of South Perth (WA)
- City of West Torrens (SA)
- Colac Area Health (VIC)
- Community Council for Australia
- District Council of Streaky Bay (SA)
- Domestic Violence NSW
- Forbes Shire Council (NSW)
- Girl Guides Western Australia
- headspace Bega (NSW)
- headspace Darwin - Anglicare NT
- headspace Goulburn (NSW)
- headspace Joondalup (WA)
- headspace Rockingham (WA)
- Health Consumers NSW
- Hillsong Youth
- Hornsby Shire Council (NSW)
- Kempsey Shire Council (NSW)
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council (QLD)
- Mackay Regional Council (QLD)
- Maribyrnong Council's Youth Services (VIC)
- Monash Youth Services (VIC)
- Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network
- Multicultural Youth Affairs Network (NSW)
- National Mental Health Commission
- Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations
- Office of the Children's Commissioner (NT)
- Orygen
- Physical Disability Australia
- Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network
- Queensland Youth Services
- Reach Foundation
- Save the Children Australia (NSW)
- Shire of Broome (WA)
- Shire of Kojonup (WA)
- Shire of Meekatharra (WA)
- South East Youth Accommodation Service (NSW)
- Surf Coast Shire (VIC)
- Sutherland Shire Council (NSW)
- TasCOSS (TAS)
- The BEN (Business Education Network Inc) (NSW)
- The Burdekin Association (NSW)
- Town of Gawler (SA)
- Valley Youth (VIC)
- Vinnies NSW
- Volunteering Australia
- WANADA (WA)
- Warrumbungle Shire Council (NSW)
- Yarra Ranges Council (VIC)
- Yfoundations (NSW)
- yourtown
- Youth Action NSW
- Youth Affairs Council of South Australia
- Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia
- Youth Affairs Council Victoria
- Youth Disability Advocacy Network (WA)
- Youth Justice NSW
- Youth Solutions (NSW)

## Who is Mission Australia?

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Thank you

This publication would not have been possible without the 25,800 young people who completed Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2020*. We extend special thanks to them, the staff of Mission Australia, and the many schools and organisations who supported their involvement.

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