

**MISSION
AUSTRALIA**

Concepts of community: Young people's concerns, views and experiences

Findings from the Youth Survey 2016



ISBN 978-0-6481835-1-8

@Mission Australia 2017

This report may be cited as: Mission Australia (2017) Concepts of community: Young people's concerns, views and experiences. Findings from the Youth Survey 2016.

Executive Summary

The transition from childhood to adolescence is a challenging period for most young people. Depending on where they live, a young person's sense of place and attachment to their local community can help them to foster resilience, personal identity and social connections which can be accessed in times of crisis. For young people living in disadvantaged or low socio-economic communities affected by complex and long-term social problems, getting access to the same community-based resources as their more advantaged peers is far from guaranteed.

In every state and territory of Australia, the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage can be seen repeating itself in the lives of many young people from low socio-economic communities. Through no fault of their own, some young people from disadvantaged areas are left behind from their earliest years of life as a result of having fewer opportunities and resources, leading to poorer outcomes across a range of life domains such as education, employment, housing and health.

In order to better understand the issues and challenges that are facing young people from different socio-economic backgrounds, this report presents the findings from Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2016* with respondents grouped according to whether they lived in low, moderate or high socio-economic status (SES) areas across Australia. These groupings were determined using a well-established social measure of advantage and disadvantage known as the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), which was developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

This report makes comparisons between the responses of young people from different socio-economic areas across a range of issues and questions, with a specific focus on the issues identified as the most important by respondents. The main purpose of this report is to compare the results in terms of young people's concerns about alcohol and other drug use in their communities; their feelings of trust and safety within their local community; their experiences as a target or witness of discrimination; their participation in community life and social activities; and their most common sources of social support in a crisis.

The report then offers a range of policy recommendations, as well as advocating for a more consultative, place-based and multi-faceted approach of delivering services for disadvantaged young people. Consistent with the report's main themes, these recommendations are predominately focused on how governments, community organisations and society can work together more effectively to ensure that all young people: are healthy; feel safe and included in the places that are integral to their development; participate in the community in ways that are meaningful to them; and receive the best possible care from informal and professional sources in times of crisis.

Main findings

- The top three most important issues in Australia in 2016 across all SES groups were *alcohol and drugs* (24.5%), *equity and discrimination* (23.2%) and *mental health* (17.6%).
- When asked about their personal concerns, young people from low SES areas were more likely than their peers from moderate or high SES areas to identify *personal safety, bullying/emotional abuse, suicide* and *family conflict* as issues of personal concern.
- Nearly all young people surveyed (99.3%) were seriously concerned about the use of at least one type of drug in their community. On average, young people living in low SES areas were seriously concerned about a larger number of drugs (4.5) than their peers in moderate (3.8) and high SES areas (3.3).
- When considering the concerns about *methamphetamines, amphetamines, heroin, cocaine* and *marijuana* those from the low SES group were considerably more concerned about the use of these drugs in their community when compared to both other SES groups, but particularly when compared to those from the high SES cohort.
- Young people living in low SES areas reported higher levels of concern about community safety and exhibited lower levels of trust compared to other young people living in moderate or high SES areas.
- Lack of community trust is particularly stark in low SES areas, where only one quarter (26.0%) of young people *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they can trust most people in their community compared to half of young people in high SES areas (50.6%).
- Of particular note, young people in low SES areas were less likely than those in moderate or high SES areas to feel safe when using public spaces in their community or when walking alone in their local area after dark.
- Over a 12-month period, young people from low SES areas were the least likely to have participated in a range of activities, including *sport (as a participant), sport (as a spectator)* *volunteering* and *arts/culture/musical activities*.
- *Friend/s, parent/s and relative/family friends* were the top sources of support for all SES cohorts.
- One in four young people from all SES areas had experienced discrimination or unfair treatment over the last 12 months, whilst half of all young people had witnessed discrimination or unfair treatment. The SES group of respondents did not affect their likelihood of having experienced or witnessed discrimination.
- Young people from low SES areas were slightly more likely than their peers to experience discrimination or unfair treatment on the basis of *mental health* or *physical health issues*.

Recommendations

Mission Australia believes that the outcomes and lifetime trajectories for all young people, particularly those living in disadvantaged or low SES areas, can be improved if there is a sustained investment and effort from governments, the business sector, schools and community organisations to support young people to reach their full potential.

Place-based approaches can provide a framework for doing business differently and sharing resources at a local level to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people. These approaches need to be long-term, consultative and tailored in response to the strengths, needs and aspirations of young people and their communities. Place-based approaches should focus on delivering evidence-based prevention and early intervention services for young people, which includes addressing specific service gaps in relation to supporting young people during their transition to independence and adulthood.

Policy needs to drive change and focus on empowering young people to be involved in the identification of their needs, as well as the co-design and delivery of services and how these interventions should be improved and evaluated. Specific attention is also required to ensure that policies and services are culturally appropriate and tailored to meet the needs of young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and young people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.

Strengthening communities

- Commitment from all levels of government is required to address entrenched and locational disadvantage at the community level, over the long term.
- Solutions need to be based on strong local participation, flexible in adapting to changes and lessons learned, whilst being community owned and driven. They should be based on an understanding of the multiple and complex needs within these communities and provide an integrated service response through community partnerships.

Alcohol and other drug use

- Whole-of-community prevention and early intervention responses should be funded to minimise the harmful impacts of alcohol and other drug use on young people.
- When required, young people must be provided with timely and appropriate access to youth-focused detox, rehabilitation and aftercare services.

Trust and safety in the community

- Place-based approaches should be adopted to improve community safety in low SES communities. Governments can fund and facilitate co-design of youth-friendly spaces and design elements which enhance the safety and wellbeing of young people and encourage them to establish connections with their local community.

Community participation and inclusion

- Young people's participation in a broad range of social, cultural, volunteering and mentoring activities at school or within their local communities should be supported to enhance their social networks and trust with other members of their community.
- Policies and programs must be put in place to overcome barriers to participation for young people from low SES communities, including financial barriers.

Help-seeking behaviours

- Support and training should be offered to informal sources of help, such as family and friends, to provide them with the knowledge and skills that they need to support young people in times of crisis and facilitate their connections to appropriate face-to-face or online professional support.

Discrimination

- Educational institutions from early childhood to university should be funded and supported to deliver comprehensive and age-appropriate education programs focusing on equality and diversity to combat discrimination.
- Further investment is required in community, organisational and media interventions to influence broader society and the behaviour of adults as role models in overcoming discrimination.
- Governments and community organisations should continue to support campaigns to promote gender equality and reduce the incidence of violence against young women and children at a community level.
- Reconciliation programs that foster a higher level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and communities in organisations, schools and early learning environments should continue to be supported.

Co-design with young people and their families

- Young people and their families should be involved in the co-design and evaluation of youth programs at the community level to ensure that they are youth friendly and responsive to local needs as well as informed by the latest evidence.

"We need to foster a safer and more welcoming environment within our schools and communities and provide more services and community events for teenagers and young adults especially. It's quite hard as a teenager to find support and friends and it can be quite isolating."

Female 16, NSW

Background

Young people's life opportunities are heavily influenced by the relationships they develop with their family, neighbours and community, as well as the places they can access such as public spaces and services. Their personal identity, aspirations and sense of belonging are shaped by their experiences of the social and economic environment that they have inherited from their families and the local community.

People living in some of Australia's most disadvantaged communities have been shown to have poorer outcomes across almost every social and economic indicator. Children living in low socio-economic communities are more likely to be developmentally vulnerable than their advantaged peers when starting school, experience a range of social, emotional and behavioural problems, and be exposed to child maltreatment and abuse.^{1 2} By the time they reach adolescence, young people from low socio-economic areas have lower rates of educational attainment and school completion, lower rates of participation in tertiary education, and are more likely to be unemployed as adults.^{3 4} Disadvantaged communities are often also characterised by housing stress, poorer levels of physical and mental health, community safety issues, and a higher rate of criminal convictions amongst the local population.^{5 6} Importantly, research has shown that communities with low levels of social cohesion, trust, reciprocity or resources are more likely to struggle to overcome the individual and family level risk factors that entrench poverty and long-term social disadvantage.⁷

Although Australia is often described as the 'lucky' country, poverty is an everyday reality for a significant proportion of the community. Poverty is considered to exist when a household's income is so manifestly inadequate as to prevent its occupants from attaining a basic and 'community accepted' standard of living. In 2014, it was estimated that 2.99 million people in Australia (13.3% of the population) were living below the poverty line, which was defined as 50% of median income after housing costs were taken into consideration. Of particular concern, 17.4% of all children were living in poverty, including 40.6% of those living in lone parent families.⁸

While income poverty has been frequently used by policymakers to define the extent of community disadvantage, it has been criticised by academics for undermining the complexity and scope of social

¹ Edwards, B., & Baxter, J. (2013) The tyrannies of distance and disadvantage: Factors related to children's development in regional and disadvantaged areas of Australia, Research Report No.25, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

² Australian Early Development Census (2017) Findings from the Australian Early Development Census, AEDC, Canberra. Available at: <https://www.aedc.gov.au/early-childhood/findings-from-the-aedc>. Accessed on 13 October 2017.

³ Leventhal, T., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2000) The neighborhoods they live in: The effects of neighborhood residence upon child and adolescent outcomes. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126, pp. 309–337.

⁴ Héault, N., & Kalb, G. (2008) Intergenerational correlation of labour market outcomes, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, Melbourne.

⁵ Griggs, J., Whitworth, A., Walker, R., McLennan, D. & Noble, M. (2008) Person or place-based policies to tackle disadvantage? Joseph Rowntree Foundation, London.

⁶ Pinoncelly, V. (2016) Poverty, place and inequality: Why place-based approaches are key to tackling poverty and inequality, Royal Town Planning Institute, London.

⁷ Vinson, T., Rawsthorne, M., Beavis, A., & Ericson, M. (2015) Dropping off the edge 2015: persistent disadvantage in Australia, Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services, Melbourne and Canberra.

⁸ Australian Council of Social Service (2016) Poverty in Australia 2016, ACOSS, Sydney.

disadvantage.⁹ ¹⁰ Critics have argued that income poverty approaches have tended to excessively focus on economic or income redistribution policy solutions, whilst failing to distinguish between communities that are genuinely struggling on low incomes, and those that are faring well despite the presence of economic disadvantage in their lives. In contrast, the concept of social exclusion has recognised that individuals and communities can experience multiple forms of social disadvantage and are at greater risk of being ‘left out’ of mainstream society as a result of having fewer opportunities at a family and community level.¹¹ Alternatively, the concept of social capital has highlighted the value of strong local relationships, community activities and shared resources as protective factors for children and young people growing up in disadvantaged communities.¹²

More recently, social disadvantage has been increasingly understood and linked with specific geographic places or areas. A study undertaken by the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling showed that children and young people living in households located in the most disadvantaged Local Government Areas were notably more likely to be living in jobless families with lower levels of educational attainment, overcrowded dwellings, and without access to resources such as a motor vehicle or the internet.

Further to these findings, the most compelling evidence on social disadvantage and its relationship with place in Australia was outlined in the 2007 ‘Dropping off the Edge’ study, which analysed social disadvantage at a postcode level across Australia. The study found that a relatively small number of postcodes in outer metropolitan, regional and rural areas were linked to a large proportion of multiple forms of disadvantage in each state, such as unemployment and low educational attainment.¹³ When the study was undertaken again in 2015, it was clear that complex and entrenched disadvantage had persisted in most of the same locations with many of the locations that were identified as having high levels of social disadvantage in 2007 having the same degree of disadvantage when re-examined in 2014.¹⁴ These findings demonstrate that a new community-driven approach to social disadvantage is needed to make a difference in the lives of children and young people.

Although there is an inherent risk that particular places or locations can entrench disadvantage, some low SES communities have demonstrated their capacity to improve childhood outcomes through effective place-based approaches, service coordination and ongoing community involvement. The ‘Thriving in Adversity’ study identified four low SES communities in South Australia whose children were consistently exceeding expectations by achieving positive outcomes in the Australian Early Development Census and Year 3 NAPLAN results. As a comparison, the study examined four low SES communities that were facing adversity and where children were performing ‘as expected’ in consideration of the community’s SES profile. The study showed that the ‘thriving’

⁹ Saunders, P. (2005) *The poverty wars: Reconnecting research with reality*, UNSW Press, Sydney.

¹⁰ Wolff, J., & De-Shalit, A. (2007) *Disadvantage*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

¹¹ Hayes, A., Gray, M., & Edwards, B. (2008) Social inclusion: Origins, concepts and key themes, Social Inclusion Unit, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra.

¹² Putnam, R. D. (1995) *Bowling alone: America’s declining social capital*. *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1), pp. 65–78.

¹³ Phillips, B., Miranti, R., Vidyattama, Y. & Cassells, R. (2013) *Poverty, Social Exclusion and Disadvantage in Australia*, Report prepared for UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families, National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling, University of Canberra, Canberra.

¹⁴ Vinson, T., Rawsthorne, M., & Cooper, B. (2007) *Dropping off the edge 2007: the distribution of disadvantage in Australia*, Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services, Melbourne and Canberra.

communities had a lower proportion of children who spoke a language other than English at home, and that children were generally transitioning more effectively from pre-school into primary school.¹⁵ The study found that the ‘thriving’ communities provided early literacy programs for infants through their local libraries; more playgroups were available per 100 children in the community; and that a much higher proportion of children were attending a playgroup.¹⁶ Of particular interest, the study also showed that ‘thriving’ communities demonstrated a higher level of collaboration between services and agencies, as evidenced through the co-location of services and a strong culture of community involvement. The findings from this study demonstrate that it is possible to strengthen the characteristics of low SES communities and improve child outcomes through the delivery of well-targeted services and local collaborative efforts.

Over the last few decades, place-based approaches have emerged in Australia and internationally as a response to the concentrations of social disadvantage and complex issues that have persisted in many low socio-economic communities, often across multiple generations. Place-based approaches can be defined as collaboration between individuals, community organisations and governments which are designed to address agreed social issues within a specified geographic location. Although there are many different types of place-based approaches, they are predominately focused on achieving better life outcomes for specific target groups or whole communities; improving local services and stakeholder collaboration; and enhancing local community capacity, participation or leadership.¹⁷ Perhaps most significantly, place-based approaches have interrupted the ‘traditional’ models of service delivery where government departments and funding streams operate in silos, which have often occurred at the expense of innovative local solutions, joint planning and multi-agency collaboration. Place-based approaches can help government departments to recognise that there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to addressing social disadvantage in low socio-economic communities, and that policies and programs which are not intrinsically responsive to local needs and conditions in every community are less likely to achieve lasting social change.

Recent reviews have identified several common features which were considered integral to the successful design, delivery and evaluation of place-based approaches in Australia and internationally.^{18 19 20} Having a flexible approach to service delivery and the expenditure of funding was regarded as essential in responding effectively to local conditions. To inform these approaches, local community members and organisations needed to be actively involved in genuine consultation processes and decision-making at all stages of the policy or program’s life. Coordinated or integrated partnerships between government departments and local community organisations were also seen as vital in resolving shared problems and delivering community-focused outcomes. In terms of

¹⁵ Gregory, T., Keech, B., Sincovich, A., & Brinkman, S. (2015) Thriving in Adversity: Identification of off-diagonal South Australian communities using AEDC and NAPLAN data. Government Report. Department for Education and Child Development. Adelaide.

¹⁶ Gregory, Thriving in Adversity.

¹⁷ Moore, T.G., McHugh-Dillon, H., Bull, K., Fry, R., Laidlaw, B., & West, S. (2014) The evidence: what we know about place-based approaches to support children’s wellbeing, Murdoch Children’s Research Institute and The Royal Children’s Hospital Centre for Community Child Health, Melbourne.

¹⁸ Moore, What we know about place-based approaches.

¹⁹ Wilks, S., Lahausse, J., & Edwards, B. (2015) Commonwealth Place-Based Service Delivery Initiatives: Key Learnings project. Research Report No. 32, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

²⁰ Brotherhood of St Laurence (2015) What next for place-based initiatives to tackle disadvantage? A practical look at recent lessons for Australian public policy, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne.

implementation, place-based approaches required appropriate and realistic timeframes in order to establish programs, build community relationships and multi-agency partnerships, and prepare for evaluation. Capacity building activities, training and mentoring were also identified as a critical component for ensuring that service delivery methods or interventions were aligned with the local community's needs and aspirations. Most importantly, place-based approaches needed to be implemented with a long-term policy focus and sustained investment from government to achieve the desired results.

Young people from low SES communities are often excluded from having a say in the issues that affect them. Place-based approaches can provide young people with a valuable opportunity to share their views about the policies and services that are most relevant to them, engage in community life, build social and professional networks and develop the skills they need to transition into adulthood. Young people should be actively involved in all stages of the co-design process of youth-friendly services and programs to ensure their applicability and increase their likelihood of making a difference in their lives. Every effort should be made by government departments and community organisations to consult widely with young people who are considered 'hard to reach' or those who are not usually involved in community engagement processes.

Where possible, young people should be invited to participate in local governance bodies that provide them with meaningful opportunities to contribute to decision-making and advocate on behalf of other young people in their communities. To enable young people to engage effectively in these processes, government departments and community organisations need to provide them with strengths-based leadership training and ongoing mentoring support, with the objective of enhancing their future participation in tertiary education, community engagement and employment.

Method

For the last 16 years, Mission Australia has conducted an annual survey of young people aged 15 to 19 years across Australia. The survey collects socio-demographic information and asks young people about their current circumstances, values, concerns and aspirations.

In 2016, a total of 21,846 young people responded to the survey. This report compares the responses of young people in terms of their socio-economic status (SES), which was measured by their usual place of residence at the time of completing the survey. Each respondent was then grouped into low, moderate or high SES areas as determined by a measure of SES, which was developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Young people who could not be matched to the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) are excluded from this report.

This report's methodology is based on the approach previously developed by Mission Australia for the report *Location, Vocation, Aspiration: Findings from Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2014*. The methodology is outlined below.

All survey responses were mapped using the postcode provided by respondents against one of the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) to determine the relative SES of their local area. The SEIFA indexes are based on information collected from the 2011 Census, all of which were designed to measure one of four aspects of socio-economic advantage and disadvantage at a state and territory level. According to the ABS, socio-economic advantage and disadvantage is broadly defined in the SEIFA indexes in terms of ‘people’s access to material social resources, and their ability to participate in society.’²¹

The IRSAD was selected to inform this report as it is comprised of the most complete list of Census data variables, including residents’ income, educational qualifications, unemployment, housing costs and dwelling characteristics. Within this context, the IRSAD has been updated over time to reflect contemporary debates on poverty, social exclusion, human capital and social capital, which is consistent with the concepts and perspectives outlined in this report. Furthermore, the IRSAD was considered by Mission Australia to be the most appropriate index on the grounds that the *Youth Survey* is conducted with a sample of 15-19 year olds from the general population and does not specifically target young people from low SES areas.

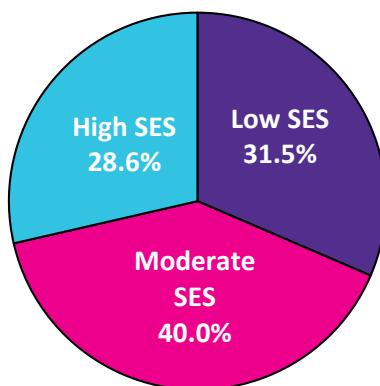
Consistent with Mission Australia’s approach in the 2014 report, the same SEIFA percentiles were retained and grouped into three categories as outlined below. These rankings were developed in accordance with the ABS’ recommendations, with the objective of highlighting differences between the SES groups and reflect both advantage and disadvantage among the sample (see Figure 1 and 2).

1. Low SES areas = living in a postcode in the bottom 40% for IRSAD
2. Moderate SES areas = living in a postcode in the next 40% (41st-80th percentiles) for IRSAD
3. High SES areas = living in a postcode in the top 20% for IRSAD

Profile of survey respondents

As shown in Figure 1, a total of 21,049 young people (96.4% of respondents) provided postcode information which was successfully matched to the IRSAD.

Figure 1: Distribution of Youth Survey 2016 respondents, by SES of area



²¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Technical Paper, Cat No. 2033.0.55.001, 2011, ABS, Canberra.

Table 1 outlines the demographic characteristics for young people living in low, moderate and high SES areas. The mean age of young people in all three SES groups was 16 years.

Table 1: Youth Survey sample characteristics 2016, by SES of area

	Low SES %	Moderate SES %	High SES %
Total respondents	31.5	40.0	28.6
Gender			
Male	44.2	44.4	46.0
Female	55.8	55.6	54.0
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	9.5	5.5	2.5
Born overseas	10.2	14.3	17.4
Speaks language other than English at home	17.8	18.2	18.3
State			
New South Wales	39.5	27.0	33.2
Victoria	12.3	20.0	26.1
Queensland	15.6	29.2	12.1
South Australia	15.5	10.0	6.1
Western Australia	1.8	5.0	9.5
Tasmania	14.6	7.3	5.1
Northern Territory	0.4	1.3	1.0
Australian Capital Territory	0.2	0.2	6.9
Remoteness			
Major cities	38.9	52.7	88.1
Inner regional	31.5	31.3	9.8
Outer regional	27.2	8.8	1.4
Remote and very remote	2.4	7.2	0.7

Discussion of key findings

This report compares the responses of young people from low, moderate and high socio-economic backgrounds who participated in the survey and highlights areas of similarity and difference.

Young people were asked to identify the three issues that they considered were the most important in Australia today. The top three issues identified in 2016 across all SES groups were *alcohol and drugs* (24.5%), *equity and discrimination* (23.2%) and *mental health* (17.6%). As shown in Table 2, there were some similarities and some differences in the issues identified as the most important in Australia today by young people from each SES area.

- Young people from low SES areas were more likely to identify *alcohol and drugs* as one of their top issues of importance (26.0%), compared to 24.9% of young people from moderate SES areas and 22.4% of young people from high SES areas.

- In contrast, young people from high SES areas were more likely to identify *equity and discrimination* as one of their top issues of importance (25.6%), compared to 23.8% of young people from moderate SES areas and 20.3% of young people from low SES areas.
- Young people from high SES areas were more likely than their peers from moderate or low SES areas to identify *international relations* and *population issues* as one of their top issues of importance.

Table 2 Most important issues in Australia today: Top 10 issues of importance, by SES of area

	Low SES %	Moderate SES %	High SES %	All young people %
Alcohol and drugs	26.0	24.9	22.4	24.5
Equity and discrimination	20.3	23.8	25.6	23.2
Mental health	17.7	17.5	17.8	17.6
International relations	12.7	13.9	15.2	13.9
Population issues	10.9	14.1	16.5	13.8
The economy and financial matters	12.3	12.5	12.7	12.5
Politics	10.5	11.0	11.6	11.0
Crime, safety and violence	11.0	11.0	10.9	11.0
Education	10.0	9.8	10.2	10.0
The environment	8.1	9.8	11.6	9.8

Note: Items were ranked according to responses from all young people.

Young people were asked about their personal concerns as shown in Table 3. Responses were rated on a 5 point scale ranging from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*. Table 3 shows those who responded either *extremely* or *very concerned* across the three SES areas.

- Coping with stress, *school or study satisfaction* and *body image* were the top three concerns across all SES groups.
- Young people from high SES areas were more likely to identify *coping with stress* as a personal concern than young people from moderate and low SES areas.
- A similar proportion of young people from all SES areas identified *school or study satisfaction* and *body image* as issues of personal concern.

- Young people from low SES areas were more likely than their peers from moderate or high SES areas to identify personal safety, bullying/emotional abuse, suicide and family conflict as issues of personal concern.

Table 3: Issues of personal concern to young people (extremely or very concerned), by SES of area

	Low SES %	Moderate SES %	High SES %	All young people %
Coping with stress	57.7	58.3	62.6	59.3
School or study satisfaction	51.7	51.6	52.6	51.9
Body image	41.8	42.2	43.1	42.3
Depression	31.3	27.2	27.3	28.5
Family conflict	31.0	26.9	25.3	27.7
Personal safety	26.9	21.7	19.2	22.6
Bullying/emotional abuse	24.0	19.0	17.5	20.1
Discrimination	18.5	16.3	14.9	16.5
Suicide	17.7	13.5	11.9	14.3
Drugs	11.6	8.5	7.4	9.2
Alcohol	8.7	7.5	7.1	7.8
Gambling	5.5	4.5	3.7	4.6

Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for extremely concerned and very concerned for each item. Items are listed according to responses from all young people.

Alcohol and other drug concerns

As shown in Table 4, nearly all young people were seriously concerned about the use of at least one type of drug in their community, regardless of where they lived. However, there were some differences observed across SES areas with regard to the number of drugs that young people considered to be of serious concern in their community. On average, young people living in low SES areas were seriously concerned about a larger number of drugs (4.5) compared to their peers in moderate (3.8) and high SES areas (3.3).

Young people from all SES areas were most likely to be seriously concerned about the use of *tobacco* (53.4%), *marijuana* (49.3%) and *alcohol* (47.5%) in their local communities (Table 5). Of particular note, young people in low SES areas were more likely to be seriously concerned about the use of all drugs that they were asked about. When considering the concerns about *methamphetamines*,

amphetamines, heroin, cocaine and marijuana those from the low SES group were considerably more concerned about the use of these drugs in their community when compared to both other SES groups, but particularly when compared to those from the high SES cohort. There were consistently lower proportions of young people from moderate and high SES areas expressing serious concern about community-level use of all drug types.

Table 4: Young people's concerns about drug use in their communities, by SES of area

	Low SES	Moderate SES	High SES
Concerned about the use of one or more drugs in their community (%)	99.3	99.5	99.0
Number of drugs concerned about			
Mean	4.5	3.8	3.3
Median	4	3	2

Table 5 Young people's concerns about use of specific drugs in their communities, by SES of area

	Low SES (%)	Moderate SES (%)	High SES (%)	All young people (%)
Tobacco smoking	58.0	52.4	49.7	53.4
Marijuana	55.3	48.1	44.6	49.3
Alcohol	50.9	47.0	44.4	47.5
Methamphetamine (ice)	49.7	39.4	28.9	39.6
Ecstasy/MDMA	35.8	30.6	27.6	31.4
Cocaine	34.9	28.6	24.0	29.3
Amphetamines (speed)	33.0	25.4	19.5	26.1
Heroin	31.0	24.5	19.7	25.2
Non-medical use of prescription drugs	28.1	22.4	19.7	23.4
Hallucinogens (LSD)	25.5	21.2	18.7	21.9
Steroids (non-medical)	23.9	20.0	16.0	20.1
Inhalants	20.9	17.3	13.7	17.4

Note: Items were ranked according to responses from all young people.

Alcohol and other drugs play a complex role in the lives of young people as they transition towards adulthood. For many young people, their initial exposure to alcohol and other drugs may be predominately influenced by environmental and social factors, such as parental use, peer group influences and personal experimentation.²² Research has identified a range of individual, family and community level factors that can increase the vulnerability of young people to problematic substance use, including early-school leaving; poor family and community connections; the emergence of mental health disorders; involvement with the child protection system; and homelessness.^{23 24} If these factors are not properly addressed during adolescence, young people may experience significant disruption to their education, employment and relationships in later life.²⁵ Harmful drug use can also be linked with a range of mental health disorders occurring in adolescence, including depression, anxiety and personality disorders.²⁶

Recent data has indicated that alcohol consumption amongst young people has decreased and that the use of illicit drugs has either remained steady or decreased over the last decade.²⁷ However, the 2016 National Drug Household Survey showed that people living in the lowest SES areas of Australia were more likely to smoke than those living in the highest SES areas. In contrast, people living in the highest SES areas were more likely to engage in risky drinking and to report that they had used cocaine and ecstasy in the last 12 months than those living in the lowest SES areas.²⁸

While the research on the relationship of place-based characteristics and substance use issues is mixed, some studies have shown that young people who regarded their local community as cohesive and safe, in addition to feeling supported by adults in their community, tended to have lower risks of drug use.²⁹ Research has also found that low SES communities affected by low social cohesion, anti-social behaviour and more substance-using role models amongst the adult population were positively associated with alcohol and other drug use amongst young people. Of particular note, one of these studies showed that the influence of place was stronger than individual or family characteristics.^{30 31}

²² Lancaster, K., Ritter, A., & Matthews-Simmons, F. (2013) Young people's opinions on alcohol and other drugs issues, National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, Sydney.

²³ Spooner, C., & Hetherington, K. (2005) Social determinants of drug use. Technical report 228, National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, UNSW, Sydney.

²⁴ Daley, K., & Chamberlain, C. (2009) Moving On: Young People and Substance Use, Youth Studies Australia, 28 (4), pp. 35-43.

²⁵ Spooner, C., & Hall, W. (2002) Preventing drug misuse by young people: we need to do more than 'just say no', Addiction, (97), 2002, pp. 478-481.

²⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008) National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of Results, Cat No. 4326.0, 2007, ABS, Canberra.

²⁷ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2017) National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2016: detailed findings. Drug Statistics series no. 31. Cat. no. PHE 214, AIHW, Canberra.

²⁸ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2017) National Drug Strategy Household Survey.

²⁹ Mayberry, M., Espelage, D. & B. Koenig (2009) Multilevel modelling of direct effects and interaction of peers, parents, school and community influences on adolescent substance use, Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 38 (8), pp 1038-1049.

³⁰ Jones-Webb, R., & Karriker-Jaffe, J. (2013). Neighborhood disadvantage, high alcohol content beverage consumption, drinking norms, and drinking consequences: A mediation analysis. Journal of Urban Health, 90(4), pp. 667–684.

³¹ Winstanley, L., Steinwachs, M., Ensminger, E., Latkin, A., Stitzer, L., & Olsen, Y. (2008) The association of self-reported neighborhood disorganization and social capital with adolescent alcohol and drug use, dependence, and access to treatment, Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 92(1), pp. 173–182.

It is clear from the *Youth Survey* findings that those living in areas of low socio-economic advantage have many more concerns about drug use in their communities, especially relating to illicit drug use. Policy and practice responses should utilise place-based approaches to minimise the harmful impact of environmental factors in local communities which can increase the vulnerability of young people to alcohol and other drug use issues. Community-wide programs incorporating multiple and holistic interventions, such as parenting and family support programs, school-based programs and life skills training, media campaigns and environmental measures focused on behavioural change have been found to have significant positive effects on reducing alcohol and other drug use amongst young people.³²

Junaa Buwa! outreach program

The Junaa Buwa! outreach program targets 13 to 18 year olds and is delivered in eight local high schools across the North Coast in New South Wales. It is a research and evidence-based stepped care, health promotions, treatment and support service which is delivered through group and community education, as well as individual casework. The program works with young people, their families and community to educate and highlight the dangers of alcohol and other drug use as well as offering localised and individualised support and advice.

When alcohol and drug use issues are identified as a problem for young people, there is a need to provide appropriate and timely access to youth-focused detox, rehabilitation and aftercare services, including those which are culturally appropriate for young people from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. Services need to be flexibly designed and staffed to respond more effectively to young people with comorbid disorders and complex needs.³³ Young people and their families should also be involved in the co-design and evaluation of prevention and early intervention programs to ensure that they are both youth friendly and informed by the latest evidence.

Young people may also be aware of and concerned about alcohol and other drug use issues experienced by other members of their community. Alcohol and other drug use within the community can have broader impacts such as alcohol-related violence and crimes and dangerous driving under the influence of alcohol. Alcohol use has also been shown to be a major contributor to injury through interpersonal violence particularly assaults, domestic violence and child abuse. Substance use issues can also have major impacts on families including inability to care adequately for children and expenditure on alcohol placing additional financial pressures on low-income families, potentially leading to conflict.³⁴

³² Lancaster, K., Ritter, A., & Matthews-Simmons, F. (2013) Young people's opinions on alcohol and other drugs issues, National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, Sydney.

³³ headspace (2014) Service Innovation Project Component1: best practice framework.

³⁴ Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy (2001) *Alcohol in Australia: Issues and Strategies*, Commonwealth of Australia. Available at: http://www.health.gov.au/internet/drugstrategy/publishing.nsf/Content/alc-strategy/%24FILE/alcohol_strategy_back.pdf

Smoking rates among people from low SES groups, those who are unemployed, homeless or imprisoned, and those with a mental illness or other drug or alcohol dependency are much higher than for the general population. People living in low socio-economic areas are 2.7 times more likely to smoke than people from high socio-economic areas, with the majority of smokers starting smoking as teenagers. Smoking prevalence among teenagers has fallen dramatically in recent years. However, smoking rates are still too high, with 15.1% of Australians aged 14 years or over smoking daily and about three million smoking at least daily or weekly.³⁵

The National Drug Strategy 2017-2026 recognises the health, social and economic harms of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs and focuses on demand reduction, supply reduction and harm reduction to provide a comprehensive response. Priority drugs include methamphetamine, alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, pharmaceuticals, opioids and psychoactive substances. It also recognises that alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems are associated with social and health determinants, such as discrimination, unemployment, homelessness, poverty and family breakdown.³⁶

To address alcohol and drug misuse in the community a raft of interventions is required including: providing information and education to young people, strengthening mass media campaigns, improving legislation and regulation, limiting marketing and advertising and changes to pricing and taxation, addressing driving under the influence, and increasing the availability of treatment and responses from health professionals.^{37 38}

Policy Recommendations

- Whole-of-community prevention and early intervention responses which incorporate multiple interventions should be funded to minimise the harmful impacts of alcohol and other drug use on young people.
- Young people and their families should be involved in the co-design and evaluation of prevention and early intervention programs to ensure that they are both youth friendly and informed by the latest evidence.
- When required, young people must be provided with timely and appropriate access to youth-focused detoxification (withdrawal and respite), rehabilitation and aftercare services.

³⁵ Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs (2012) National Tobacco Strategy 2012-2018, Commonwealth of Australia. Available at: [http://www.nationaldrugstrategy.gov.au/internet/drugstrategy/publishing.nsf/Content/D4E3727950BDBAE4CA257AE70003730C/\\$File/National%20Tobacco%20Strategy%202012-2018.pdf](http://www.nationaldrugstrategy.gov.au/internet/drugstrategy/publishing.nsf/Content/D4E3727950BDBAE4CA257AE70003730C/$File/National%20Tobacco%20Strategy%202012-2018.pdf)

³⁶ Department of Health (2017) National Drug Strategy 2017-2026, Commonwealth of Australia. Available at: <https://www.hcasa.asn.au/documents/555-national-drug-strategy-2017-2026/file>

³⁷ Department of Health (2017) National Drug Strategy.

³⁸ Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs (2012) *National Tobacco Strategy 2012-2018*, Commonwealth of Australia. Available at: [http://www.nationaldrugstrategy.gov.au/internet/drugstrategy/publishing.nsf/Content/D4E3727950BDBAE4CA257AE70003730C/\\$File/National%20Tobacco%20Strategy%202012-2018.pdf](http://www.nationaldrugstrategy.gov.au/internet/drugstrategy/publishing.nsf/Content/D4E3727950BDBAE4CA257AE70003730C/$File/National%20Tobacco%20Strategy%202012-2018.pdf)

Triple Care Farm

Triple Care Farm is an alcohol and other drugs program based in the Southern Highlands for young people with co-morbid substance dependence and mental illness. Specialising in treating clients with co-morbid substance dependence and mental illness, the 18 bed program works with young people aged between 16 and 24 years. This program includes a 12-week residential rehabilitation program and a six-month aftercare program to ensure participants have a smooth transition back into the community. The new detox facility, **David Martin Place** which opened in mid-2017 at Triple Care Farm offers a 28-day substance withdrawal and detox program for 10 young people aged 16 to 24 at a time.

Trust and safety in the community

As shown in Figure 6, there were some notable differences expressed by young people from each SES group regarding their levels of trust expressed towards people in the local area.

- Lack of community trust is particularly stark in low SES areas, where only one quarter (26.0%) of young people *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they can trust most people in their community compared to half of young people in high SES areas (50.6%).
- Conversely, those in low SES areas were twice more likely to *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that they can trust most people in their community than those in high SES areas (12.4% compared to 27.6%).

The *Youth Survey* also asked young people about their feelings of safety by asking them how comfortable they were using public spaces in their local area (Figure 7) and how safe they felt walking alone after dark in their local area (Figure 8).

- The majority of young people tended to feel more *comfortable* or *very comfortable* with using public spaces, however young people from high SES areas were more likely to report feeling comfortable or very comfortable than those from low SES areas (74.8% compared with 57.6%).
- Young people from low SES areas were twice as likely to feel *uncomfortable* or *very uncomfortable* using public spaces than those from high SES areas (15.1% compared with 7.5%).
- Young people from low SES areas were less likely to report feeling safe to walk alone after dark in their community than those from high SES areas (28.4% compared with 43.0%) and they were more likely to report feeling unsafe compared to young people high SES areas (41.5% compared to 27.7%) (Figure 8).
- Young people from low SES areas were more likely to report personal safety as a personal concern than those in moderate or high SES areas (26.9%, 21.7% and 19.2% respectively) (Table 3).

Figure 6 Proportion of young people who feel that they can trust most people in their community, by SES of area

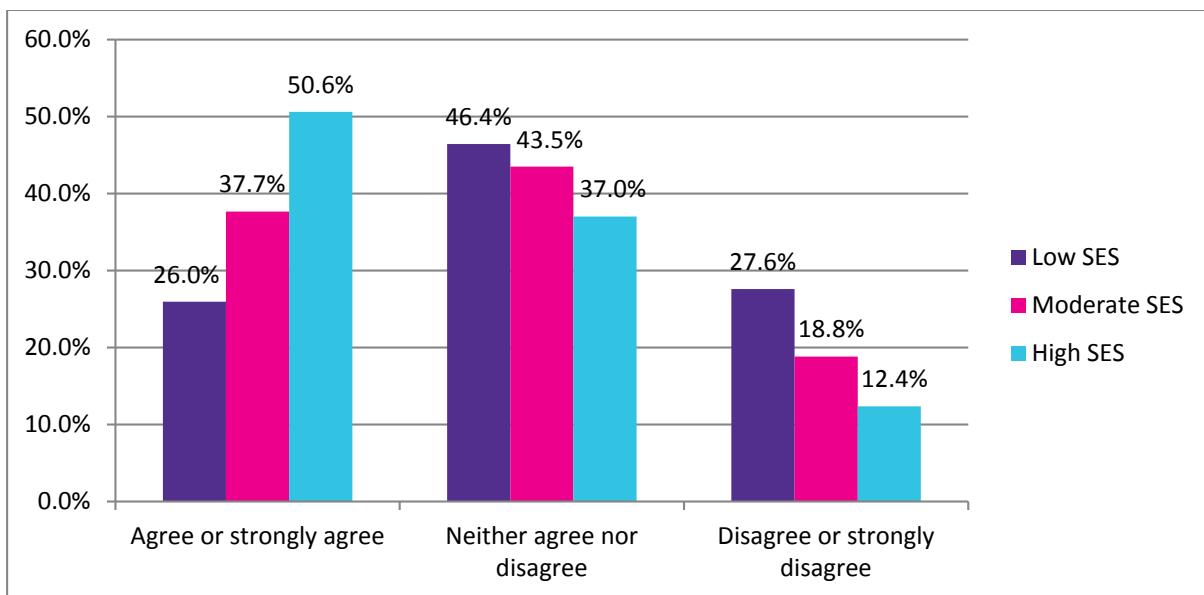


Figure 7 Proportion of young people who feel comfortable using public spaces in their community, by SES of area

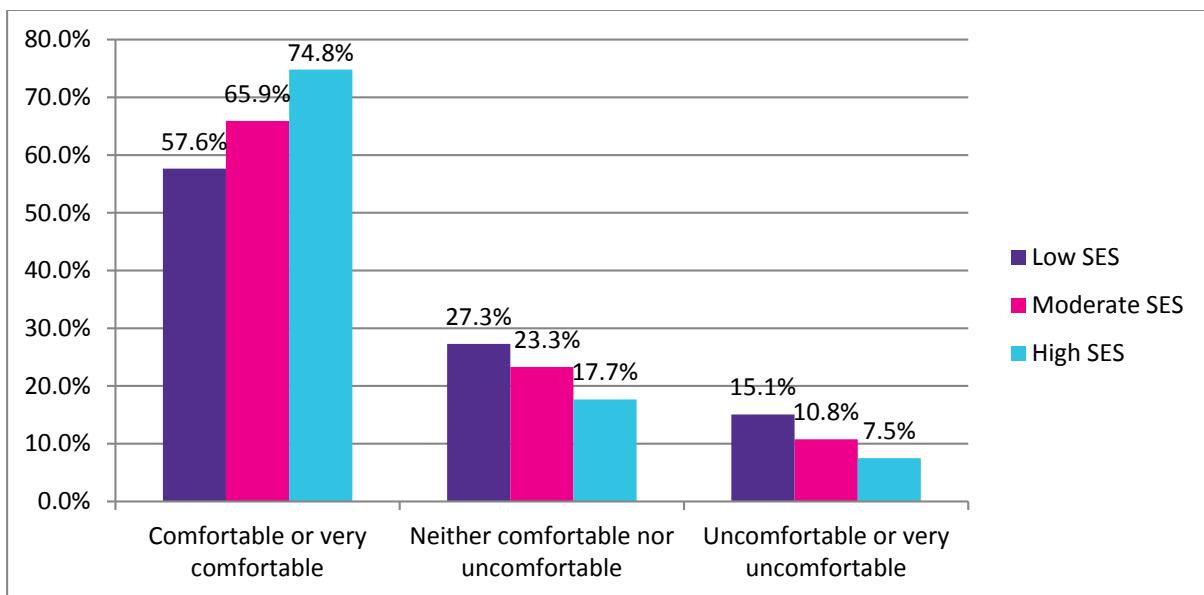
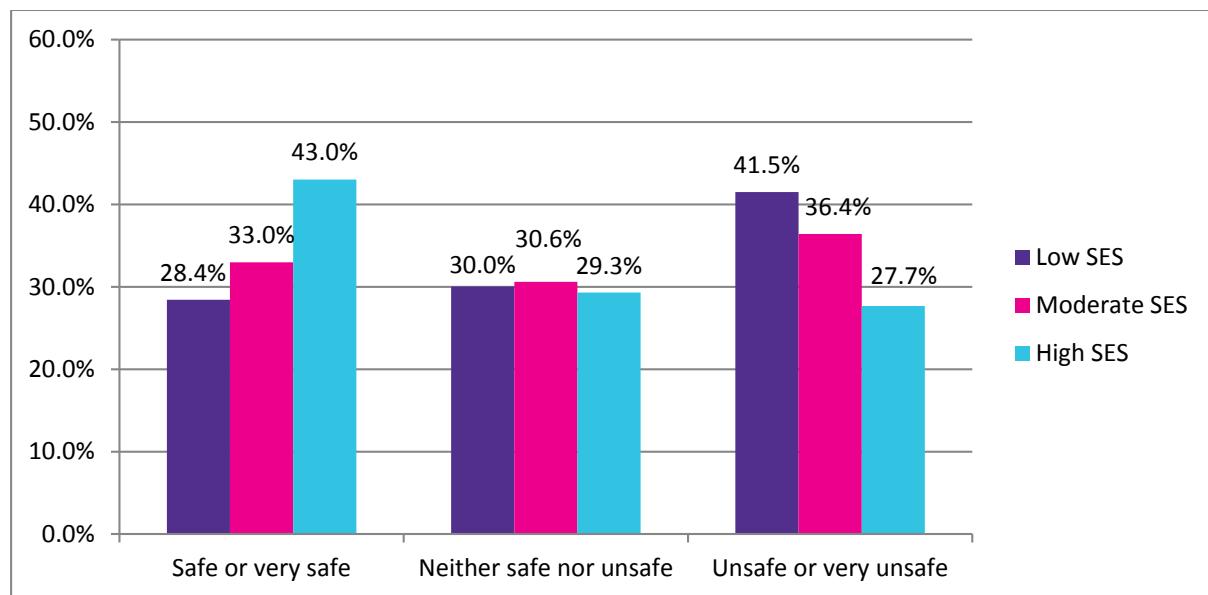


Figure 8 Proportion of young people who feel safe walking alone after dark in their community, by SES of area



For all people networks, trust and reciprocity are an important part of their everyday lives which allow people to give and receive support when needed and allow for networks to develop which are mutually beneficial. These develop either through formal networks in the community, such as activity based networks, or through informal social networks between neighbours and friends.

“There needs to be an added sense of empathy in the community ... listening to other people’s problems if they have listened to yours, companionship and teamwork building exercises should be put in place.”

Male 16, VIC

An integral component of trust is that young people feel safe, both in their personal relationships and in their communities. Children and young people’s safety and trust can be defined in various ways, including: their connection to trusted adults who can be relied upon for assistance in unsafe situations; their individual capacity to manage or negotiate unsafe circumstances and events; and having confidence in their personal strategies to minimise risk.³⁹ Children and young people’s feelings of public safety can be compromised by being alone, witnessing or hearing about violence, being around people who are perceived to be threatening, being in unfamiliar places or around unfamiliar people, and bullying.

³⁹ Collins, K. (2001) Children's perceptions of safety and exposure to violence, International Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 10(1-2), pp 31-49.

There are several important factors that contribute to young peoples' views of a safe community, including the physical environment, neighbourhood design and the availability of social and emotional supports. Research has shown that young people with a strong sense of place-based attachment were more likely to have positive perceptions about safety in their local area, increased feelings of positive wellbeing, greater levels of personal resilience, and stronger social connections to local community members and organisations.⁴⁰ Further to these findings, another study found that young people living in low SES communities who expressed fewer fears about safety were more inclined to participate in social activities in their local area. Conversely, young people who were disengaged from their local communities were more likely to perceive a lack of social support and belonging at a community level, as well as being more fearful about their personal safety.⁴¹

The ABS' 2014 General Social Survey provides community-level insights on a range of topics, including the extent to which most people can be trusted, and personal feelings of safety experienced by respondents when walking alone in their local area after dark. According to the survey, more than half (57.6%) of respondents aged 15-17 years and close to half (49.6%) of respondents aged 18-24 years strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement that most people can be trusted.⁴² The survey also found that when young people were asked about their feelings of safety in the local area after dark, 42.5% of young people aged 15-17 years and 53.3% of young people aged 18-24 years felt very safe or safe when walking alone in their local area after dark.⁴³ Of particular concern, when the ABS results are compared to the *Youth Survey*, only young people from high SES areas expressed a similar level of trust in other people and feelings of safety when walking alone in their local area after dark.

Clarendon Vale and Rokeby – Community Safety

In March 2013, Mission Australia Housing took over the management of approximately 500 social homes in Clarendon Vale and Rokeby in Hobart, Tasmania under an agreement with the Tasmania Department of Health and Human Services. Since then we have been listening to the community and helping to facilitate their vision for the future. This collaborative effort, guided by the overarching 10 year community Master Plan, has seen a number of community initiatives come to life. As the Community Housing Provider in the area, Mission Australia Housing is facilitating the development of the Master Plan, however, it is the input and ownership of the opportunities and responses adopted by all stakeholders that has been critical to its success.

Safety concerns both within and outside of the home were raised by the community. It was acknowledged that improving community safety is a long-term process that requires strong leadership, effective collaboration and support from community, government and business sectors. In June 2014, a number of local community partners agreed to work under a *collective impact*

⁴⁰ VicHealth (2015) Current theories relating to resilience and young people: a literature review, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne.

⁴¹ Stafford, M., De Silva, M., Stansfeld, S., & Marmot, M. (2008) Neighbourhood social capital and common mental disorder: Testing the link in a general population sample, *Health & Place*, 14, pp. 394–405.

⁴² Australian Bureau of Statistics (2015) General Social Survey 2014, Summary Results, Australia, 2014. Table 5.3 All persons, Selected Personal Characteristics – By age groups 15-17 years, 18-24 years, 25 years and over, Cat No. 41590DO005_2014, ABS, Canberra.

⁴³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2015) General Social Survey 2014.

framework and *One Community Together* was created. One Community Together works within a four pillar agenda:

- Community life – creating a welcoming community that encourages positive community contribution and healthy relationships.
- Community spaces – ensuring the physical environment supports safety and the perception of safety in the community, and enhances community pride.
- Community activities and support – developing activities that create positive social and community environments, and ensuring adequate support is available to those community members and families that require it.
- Community education and employment – delivering workshops and training that meet the needs and interests of community members, and connecting community members to employment opportunities both in and out of the community.

More recently, there has been evidence to suggest that gender can also affect young people's perceptions of safety and how they interact and behave on a daily basis within their local community. A 2016 survey of 600 Australian women aged 15-19 years found that 42% of young women did not always feel safe on the way to school; that nearly one third of respondents agreed that young women should not be outside in public after dark; and that more than one in five respondents considered that young women should not travel alone on public transport.⁴⁴ These findings are complemented by an earlier study which found that girls were less likely than boys to develop a strong sense of place-based attachment and establish connections with their neighbours as a result of feeling less safe in their communities.⁴⁵

Taking these findings into consideration, it is recommended that place-based approaches are considered by policymakers and urban planners as a means of revitalising neighbourhoods and improving safety in low SES communities. Place-based approaches should be underpinned by the best available evidence from government administrative data collections, local program evaluations and mixed-methods research studies. Targeted and ongoing consultation involving local government agencies, community organisations, schools and individuals is also required to identify community priorities, co-design and implement programs, and establish monitoring data collections and evaluation. Young people should be involved in the co-design of place-based approaches to ensure that these initiatives are youth-friendly and consider the different safety needs of young women. Such approaches could focus on introducing youth-friendly spaces and design elements which enhance the safety and wellbeing of young people and encourage them to establish connections with their local community.

⁴⁴ Plan International Australia and Our Watch (2016) Everyday sexism: Girls' and young women's views on gender inequality in Australia. Available at: https://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/1ee3e574-ce66-4acb-b8ef-186640c9d018/Everyday-Sexism_version_03.pdf.aspx.

⁴⁵ Dallago, L., Perkins, D., Santinelle, M., Boyce, W., Molcho, M., & Morgan, A. (2009) Adolescent Place Attachment, Social Capital, and Perceived Safety: A Comparison of 13 Countries, American Journal of Community Psychology, vol. 44, nos. 1-2.

YouthBeat – Western Australia

The Mission Australia YouthBeat program is a youth homelessness service that offers safety and early intervention programs, supporting young people experiencing homelessness or facing challenges on the streets of the Perth CBD. This comprehensive program provides mobile outreach to young people in the Northbridge and inner city areas, as well as case management, including informal counselling and goal setting.

A key feature of the YouthBeat model is the follow-up support offered to young people and their families. YouthBeat assists young people to identify and achieve outcomes based on challenges including homelessness, financial issues, mental health, AOD use, harm minimisation and social connectedness.

The Department for Child Protection and Family Support (DCPFS) Crisis Care Unit (CCU), WA Police, Nyoongar Outreach Services and YouthBeat collaboratively work together in the Youth at Risk Strategy (YARS). YARS is operational each Friday and Saturday night from 9.00pm through 5.00am where WA Police identify young people at risk and bring them through the YouthBeat facility, where the agencies work together to provide service support and secure safe accommodation. YouthBeat is funded by the Department of Health and Ageing and the DCPFS.

Policy Recommendations

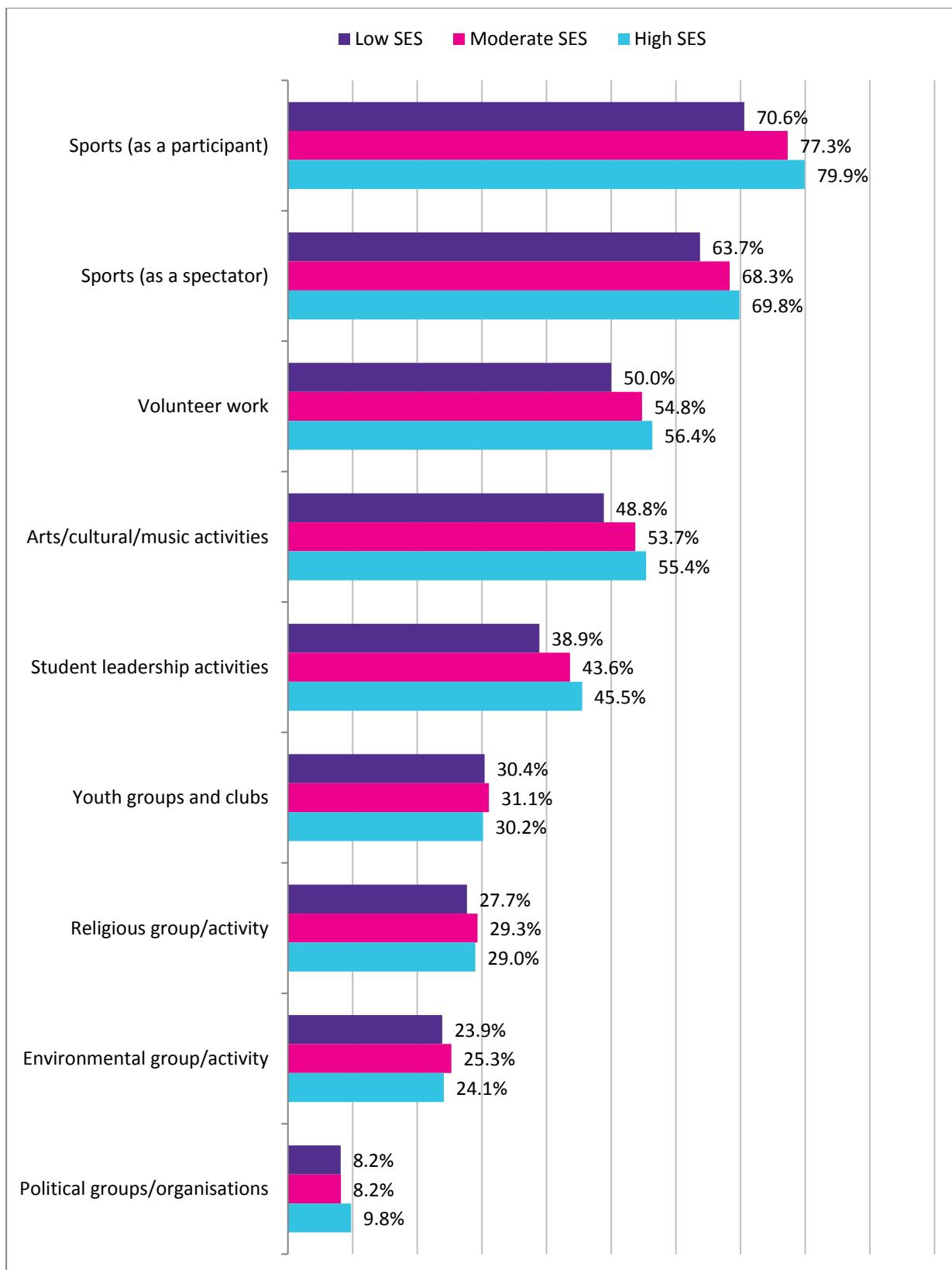
- Place-based approaches should be adopted to improve community safety in low SES communities. Governments can fund and facilitate co-design of youth-friendly spaces and design elements which enhance the safety and wellbeing of young people and encourage them to establish connections with their local community.

Community participation and inclusion

As shown in Figure 9, most young people, regardless of their SES area, participated in a range of activities, such as sport, volunteering and arts/culture/musical activities. However, there were some differences in the types of activities that young people were involved in.

- The five most common activities that young people from all SES groups were involved in were: *sports (as a participant), sport (as a spectator), volunteer work, arts/culture/music activities and student leadership activities*.
- Young people from low SES areas were less likely to be involved in each of the most common activities (and all other activities) than young people from moderate and high SES areas.

Figure 9 Young people's involvement in activities and groups in the past year, by SES of area



Note: Items are listed according to responses from all young people.

It is important that young people from all socio-economic backgrounds are provided with the opportunity to participate in regular activities that are aligned with their interests, skills and preferred ways of engaging with their local community. For all young people, participating in sports and cultural activities has been associated with a range of interpersonal and developmental benefits, such as improving communication and social skills, building resilience and coping mechanisms, gaining early leadership experiences, and establishing new social networks.⁴⁶ Research has shown that young people who attended schools in low socio-economic areas and participated in extra-curricular activities were more likely to experience positive feelings of self-worth, academic self-concept and social-concept than their peers from similar schools who were not involved in any social activities.⁴⁷ Other studies have highlighted the positive links between extra-curricular activities and improved educational outcomes; enhanced mental health and wellbeing; and reduced anti-social behaviour.⁴⁸

Creative Youth Initiative (CYI)

Creative Youth Initiative (CYI), is a unique service that provides free TAFE accredited creative programs for young people aged 16-25 who are facing many and varied challenges in their lives, such as homelessness, mental health concerns, substance abuse, family breakdown, unemployment or poor educational experiences. Based in Surry Hills at the Mission Australia Centre (MAC), CYI helps young people develop their creativity through the visual arts program, *Artworks!* and the music program, *Sounds of the Street*. This in turn builds self-esteem, encourages self-expression and provides positive learning experiences in a safe and supportive environment. In addition, it provides young people with the opportunity to access free training programs run in partnership with TAFE as well as personalised individual support.

The vast majority of the Australian public consider social activities as an essential part of childhood and adolescence. In a 2009 study of community attitudes to deprivation in Australia, the majority of respondents (94.8%) from the general community agreed that all children and young people should be able to participate in school activities and outings. In contrast, less than half (49.4%) of disadvantaged families from the study indicated that they were able to provide these opportunities.⁴⁹ These findings are further supported by an analysis of ABS data focusing on the participation of children and young people from different socio-economic backgrounds in after-school sporting and cultural activities. Of particular concern, nearly half (49.6%) of children and young people from the most disadvantaged areas were not involved in any activities, compared to 13.3% of those from the most advantaged areas.⁵⁰ Further to this, children and young people from

⁴⁶ Bailey, R. (2005) Evaluating the relationship between physical education, sport and social inclusion. *Educational Review*, 57(1), pp.71-90.

⁴⁷ Blomfield C. and Barber B. (2011) Developmental experiences during extracurricular activities and Australian adolescents' self-concept: Particularly important for youth from disadvantaged schools. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 40(5) pp. 582-594.

⁴⁸ Bungay H., & Vella-Burrows, T. (2013) The effects of participating in creative activities on the health and wellbeing of children and young people: A rapid review of the literature. *Perspectives in Public Health*, 33(1), pp. 44-52.

⁴⁹ Saunders P. and Wong M. (2009) Still doing it tough: an update on deprivation and social exclusion among welfare service clients, Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW, Sydney.

⁵⁰ The Smith Family (2013) Sport, culture and the internet: Are Australian children participating? Research Report June 2013, The Smith Family, Sydney.

the most disadvantaged areas were nearly three times less likely than their most advantaged peers to be involved in both cultural activities and sport (12.5% compared with 36.6%).

The cost of some sporting and recreational activities has often been identified as a significant participation barrier for low-income households, as these activities require families to commit to ongoing expenses such as registration fees, uniforms, equipment and transport. Such activities may inadvertently contribute to increased social exclusion for young people from low-income households, as their families are less likely to have the discretionary income required to support their participation. There is also evidence to suggest that some children and young people may actively seek to protect their parents from financial hardship by not mentioning activities that cost money, or by making an independent decision to participate in the least expensive activities.⁵¹ Aside from cost, other factors which have been shown to adversely affect the participation of young people from low SES communities in social activities include: inadequate sporting and recreational facilities, geographic distance, poor public transport and a lack of volunteers to support the delivery of social activities.^{52 53}

Spin 180 Youth Sailing Program

Spin 180 is an 8 week program delivered in partnership with the Darwin Sailing Club for young people aged 12-21 years who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, disengaged from education and/or engaged in antisocial behaviour. The program provides young people with the opportunity to participate in nationally accredited beginners 1 and 2 sailing course.

The program equips young people in the areas of critical thinking, problem solving and conflict resolution; builds resilience and self-esteem; builds and strengthens leadership skills, communication skills and teamwork capabilities; and engages young people in a positive and practical environment to learn new life skills to use in furthering their education or employment.

Volunteering activities provide young people with the opportunity to contribute to the social, economic and cultural life of their communities by enabling them to establish connections to people with a diverse range of perspectives and life experiences. There is a range of evidence to suggest that young people are frequently driven to volunteer as a way of fulfilling their altruistic responsibilities as a 'good citizen' or as a means of 'giving back' to their community.⁵⁴ However, young people are often also motivated to volunteer as a way of developing and using skills that may help them to access or obtain work or employment opportunities.⁵⁵ Of particular note, volunteering

⁵¹ Skattebol, J., Saunders, P., Redmond, G., Bedford, M., & Cass, B. (2012) Making a Difference: Building on Young People's Experiences of Economic Adversity, Final Report, Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW, Sydney.

⁵² Skattebol. Making a Difference.

⁵³ Ware, V., & Meredith, V. (2013) Supporting healthy communities through sporting and recreation programs, Resource Sheet No.26, Closing the Gap Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra.

⁵⁴ Flanagan, C. A., Bowes, J. M., Jonsson, B., Csapo, B., & Sheblanova, E. (1998). Ties that Bind: Correlates of Adolescents' Civic Commitments in Seven Countries. Journal of Social Issues, 54(3), 457-475.

⁵⁵ Haski-Leventhal, D. (2009) Addressing social disadvantage through volunteering, The Centre for Social Impact, Canberra.

has been found to be particularly beneficial for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, as these activities have the potential to increase their level of political awareness and level of self-belief about their ability to succeed in their studies and make a difference.⁵⁶ Other benefits that young people may experience as a result of volunteering include: improved physical and psychological wellbeing, reduced social isolation and increased social networks.

According to the 2016 *Youth Survey*, young people from low SES areas were also less likely than their more advantaged peers to be involved in volunteering activities. These findings are supported by several Australian and international studies which have shown that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds may be deterred from volunteering as a consequence of various attitudinal and structural barriers. Studies have suggested that young people from low SES backgrounds are less confident about participating in the community and find it more difficult to access the educational and social opportunities that promote volunteering.⁵⁷ With regard to structural barriers, young people from low SES backgrounds can also find it difficult to cover the financial and travel costs associated with volunteering, particularly if these commitments affect their capacity to engage in employment or education.⁵⁸ Finally, young people have also expressed concerns about volunteering as a result of discrimination based on their age or socio-economic background.^{59 60}

Young people should be encouraged to participate in a broad range of social, cultural, volunteering and mentoring activities at school or within their local communities to enhance their social networks and trust with other members of their community. Place-based approaches should be utilised by community organisations, schools, businesses and local government agencies to increase the participation rates of young people from low SES communities by developing practical solutions in response to the most commonly identified participation barriers, such as cost and transport. Young people should be consulted on the design, implementation and evaluation of these activities to ensure that they are aligned with their needs and aspirations and to maximise the likelihood of success.

Where possible, priority should be given to social, cultural, volunteering and mentoring activities with a capacity building component that provide young people with longer-term opportunities to develop leadership and teamwork skills by working in partnership with the local community. Providing these opportunities can potentially enhance the learning experiences of young people and equip them with the skills to participate more fully in the social, cultural and economic life of their communities. Consideration should also be given to the strengths of the local community when designing these place-based approaches and ensuring that these are culturally appropriate for young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and CALD communities.

⁵⁵ Spring, K., Dietz, N., & Grimm, R. (2007) Leveling the path to participation: Volunteering and civic engagement among youth from disadvantaged circumstances, Youth Helping America Series, Corporation for National and Community Service, Washington.

⁵⁶ Spring. Leveling the path to participation.

⁵⁷ Flanagan, C. A. & Levine, P. (2010) Civic Engagement and the Transition to Adulthood. *The Future of Children*, 20(1), pp. 159 -179.

⁵⁸ Auld, C. (2004). Behavioural characteristics of student volunteers. *Australian Journal of Volunteering*, 9(2), pp. 8-18.

⁵⁹ Geale, J., Creyton, M., Tindoy, M., & Radovic, A. (2010) Youth leading Youth: a look at organisations led by young people, Volunteering Queensland, Brisbane.

⁶⁰ Hill, M., Russell, J., & Brewis, G. (2009) Young people, volunteering and youth projects: A rapid review of recent evidence, Institute of Volunteering Research, London.

Policy Recommendations

- Young people's participation in a broad range of social, cultural, volunteering and mentoring activities at school or within their local communities should be supported to enhance their social networks and trust with other members of their community.
- Policies and programs must be put in place to overcome barriers to participation for young people from low SES communities, including financial barriers.

Traditional Camps - Queensland

Mission Australia, in collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (ATSILS), provides Indigenous camps on local, traditional country to support local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who are involved in the criminal justice system and are at high risk of reoffending. Up to 10 camping trips per year are planned to a local national park to do culturally appropriate activities to strengthen young people's connection to culture and country.

The camp aims to provide young people with opportunities to experience traditional and cultural activities, identify healthy, traditional and sustainable food, and understand how the environment reflects traditional cultural knowledge and uses of environmental resources.

The camps are based on the premise that connection to mob and to country is an essential part of health as a first nation person. The cultural camps aim to enhance the self-esteem and cultural pride of Indigenous young people, particularly those who may feel disconnected from their cultural identity.

On the camp, young people may participate in the following activities:

- Aboriginal mentoring with an elder;
- visiting cultural and environmental sites;
- observing turtle tagging;
- observing traditional spear making for fishing;
- learning to identify traditional bush tucker;
- participating in cultural cooking lessons;
- fishing;
- swimming; and
- cultural yarning with a senior elder.

After the camp, the elders maintain regular contact with the participants. This is both formal and informal contact. The purpose of this contact may be for general support, or it may be more specific. For example, the young person and the elder may revisit the individual goals they set together on the camp. The young person can then attend further camps to explore these goals, acquire more skills and discover a further connection to the land.

Help-seeking behaviours

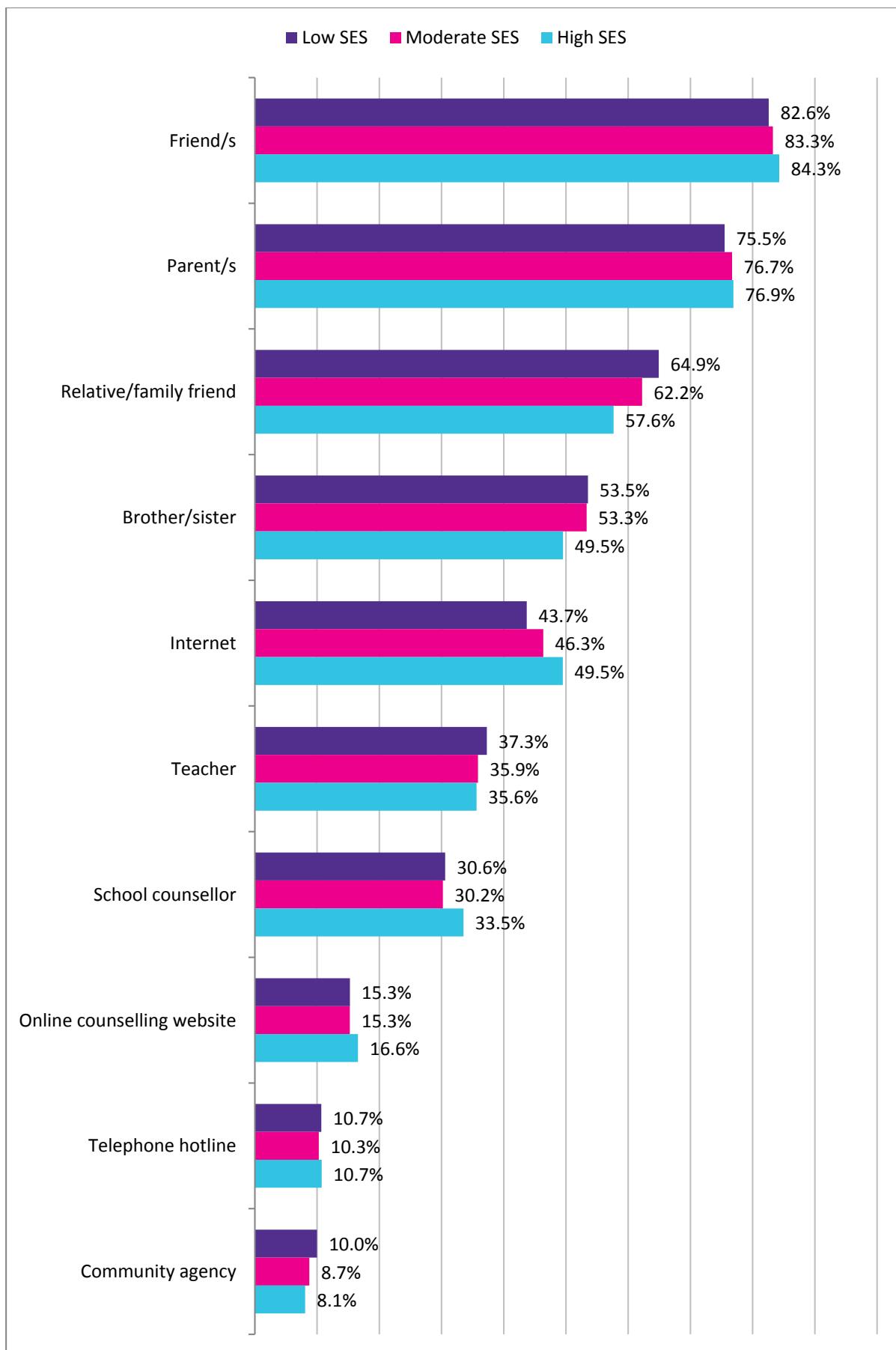
Young people were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go to seek help with important issues in their lives.

- Overall, most young people (89.5%) had a person or source that they could consult in a crisis, regardless of where they lived.
- Young people from high SES areas were the most likely to indicate that they had a person or source that they could consult in a crisis (90.6%), compared to 89.6% of young people from moderate SES areas and 88.4% of young people from low SES areas.

As shown in Figure 10, the five most common sources of help for young people from all SES areas were *friend/s*, *parent/s*, *relative/family friends*, *brother/sister* and *the internet*. There were some differences in the percentage of young people from each SES area who used these sources.

- Young people from high SES areas were more likely to go to their *friend/s* and *parent/s* for support than those from moderate or low SES areas.
- In contrast, young people from low SES areas were more likely to go to a *relative/family friend* and their *brother/sister* than those from moderate and high SES areas.
- Perhaps reflecting their increased access to online support, young people from high SES areas were more likely to use the *internet* and *online counselling* websites than young people from low or moderate SES areas.
- Young people from low SES areas were more likely than those from other SES areas to seek support from a *teacher*, whilst young people from high SES areas were more likely to visit a *school counsellor*.

Figure 10 Sources of help young people would go to, by SES of area



There are many reasons why young people may need to seek help during their adolescence and many issues can be resolved or helped through their social networks and adopt a range of help-seeking behaviours and coping strategies when dealing with adverse. Research has found that young people have an initial preference for self-reliance rather than seeking external or professional help to resolve their issues.⁶¹ Consistent with the *Youth Survey*'s findings, the evidence has constantly shown that young people are far more likely to seek help from their informal sources of support, such as friends and family.⁶²

However, some young people may require help which cannot be gained through these networks (i.e. friends, family and family friends) and require support from more formal sources of help; such as social workers, school counsellors or other health care professionals. A number of factors influence their help-seeking behaviours, particularly their willingness to seek professional support and the resources available.

However, young people often lack the emotional competence to identify that they are experiencing problems and/or to recognise that they need to seek external support. Further to this, young people may develop negative attitudes about services as a result of past negative experiences, particularly when they felt that they were not helped and/or their problems were not taken seriously by a professional, which can increase their reluctance to seek professional support. Additionally, young people may hold concerns about the stigma associated with seeking help, which is then coupled with fears of judgement from their peers or professionals. Within this context, some young people may be worried about the trustworthiness of adults and the confidentiality of professional support services, particularly those which are located on school premises.⁶³

Policy and practice responses should facilitate appropriate and timely access to evidence-based and youth-friendly services and interventions across the continuum of need, ranging from prevention activities through to early intervention and primary care services. From a prevention and early intervention perspective, given that *Youth Survey* respondents were most likely to go to friends, family and relatives/family friends for help with important issues in their lives, these individuals need to be equipped to provide appropriate information, support, and if required, referrals to professional support. Evidence-based programs such as Mental Health First Aid and Sources of Strength can potentially provide individuals with the knowledge and skills that they need to support young people in times of crisis and facilitate their connections to appropriate face-to-face or online professional support.

⁶¹ Gulliver, A., Griffiths, K. and Christensen, H. (2010) Perceived barriers and facilitators to mental health help-seeking in young people: a systematic review *BCM Psychiatry* 10:113.

⁶² Robinson, E., Rodgers, B. and Butterworth, P (2008) Family relationships and mental illness Impacts and service responses Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse.

⁶³ Robinson. Family relationships and mental illness.

Youth Accommodation Support Service (YASS)

Justine,* an 18 year old female, accessed the Youth Accommodation Support Service (YASS) in Western Australia for over 4 months. With an unconfirmed diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Justine was particularly anxious about using public transport and engaging with other people in social situations. Justine also experienced occasional episodes of suicidal ideation whilst at YASS.

YASS referred her to *headspace* where she received support with her mental health and drug use. To overcome her anxieties around public transport, staff initially caught the bus with Justine to her *headspace* appointments to get her used to the route and then empowered her to go alone. With support from YASS and *headspace*, Justine demonstrated an ability to better manage her mental health.

Justine participated in all of the recreational activities provided by YASS including picnics, bush walks, bike rides, cinema, youth events, swimming, trampolines, strawberry picking, laser tag and ice skating which supported her mental health, community participation and overall wellbeing.

YASS staff supported Justine to enrol in a Certificate in General Education at Leederville TAFE. Staff again helped her with public transport until she felt comfortable going on her own. Staff also assisted Justine in setting up a payment plan for her TAFE fees, writing a resume and to find employment.

Importantly, Justine's alcohol and other drugs misuse decreased significantly while at YASS.

*Name changed for client confidentiality

Policy Recommendations

- Support and training should be offered to informal sources of help, such as family and friends, to provide them with the knowledge and skills that they need to support young people in times of crisis and facilitate their connections to appropriate face-to-face or online professional support.

"I personally believe that mental illness has a lot of stigma around it, that shouldn't be there. I think that we need to talk about it more openly as a community and shouldn't just have it as a closed subject like it still is today. Yes some of the stigma around mental illness has disappeared but there is still a long way to go before it no longer has stigma attached to it."

Female 15, NSW

Experiencing and witnessing discrimination

For the first time in 2016, the *Youth Survey* young people were asked whether they had experienced any unfair treatment or discrimination and/or if they had witnessed any unfair treatment or discrimination in the last twelve months. Young people were also asked to identify whether any incidents they had experienced or witnessed were on the basis of their own or someone else's *gender, race or cultural background, age, mental health, physical health, religion or sexuality*.

- The likelihood of having experienced or witnessed discrimination over the last twelve months was unaffected by SES areas of the respondents.
- Across each of the SES groups, one in four young people reported that they had experienced at least one type of discrimination or unfair treatment over the last 12 months.
- Further to this, half of young people in each of the SES groups indicated that they had witnessed at least one incident of discrimination or unfair treatment during this period.
- Young people from low SES areas were more likely to report discrimination as a personal concern than those from moderate or high SES areas (18.5%, 16.3% and 14.9% respectively).

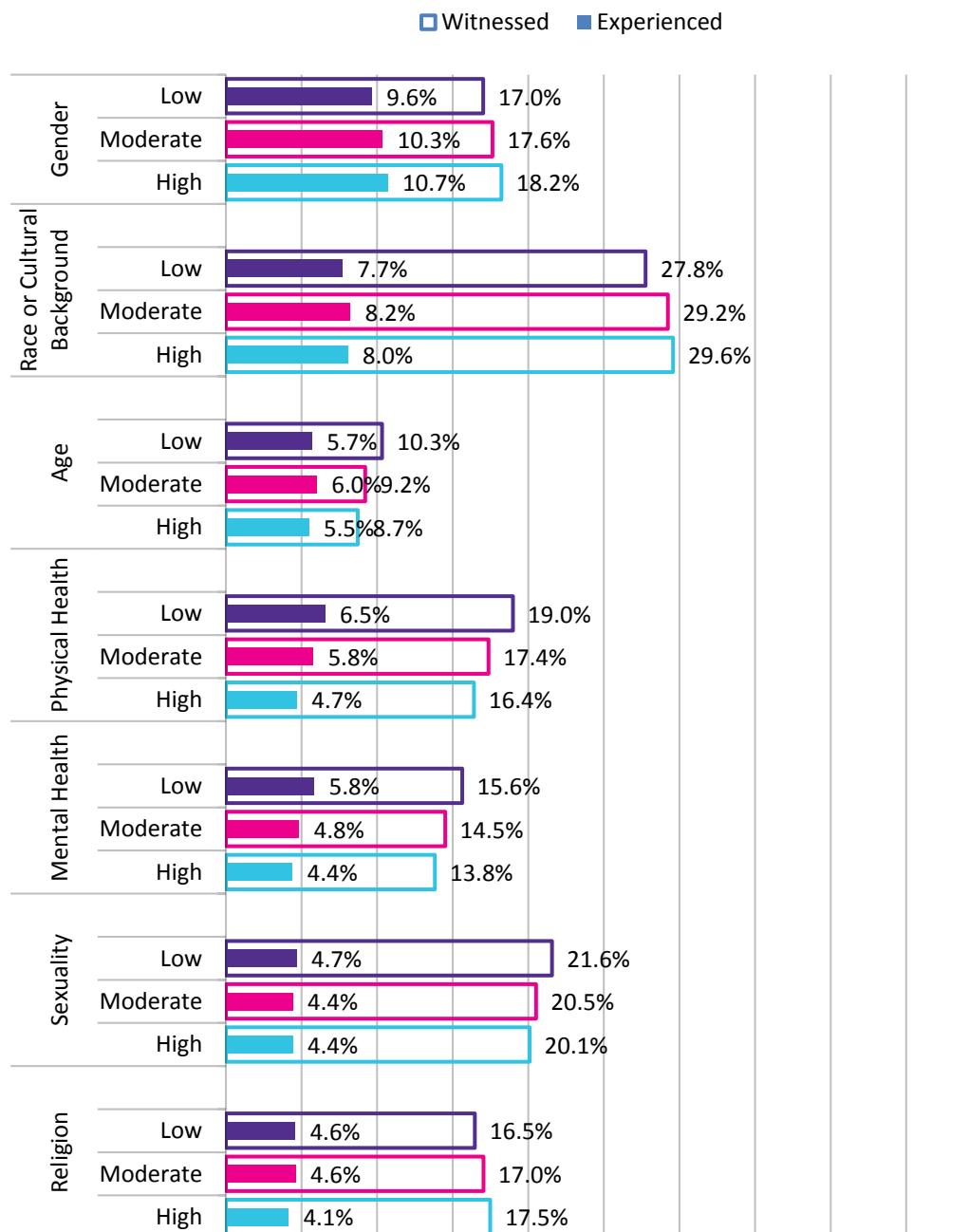
As shown in Figure 11 below, there was only limited variation in the types of discrimination or unfair treatment experienced by young people from each SES area.

- The most common type of discrimination or unfair treatment experienced by young people was related to their gender. Approximately one in ten young people from each of the SES areas reported an experience of *gender-based discrimination* or unfair treatment within the last 12 months.
- *Race or cultural background* was identified as the second most common source of discrimination or unfair treatment experienced by young people.
- Young people from low SES areas were more likely than their peers to experience discrimination or unfair treatment on the basis of *mental health* or *physical health* issues.

There were also some differences with regard to the types of discrimination or unfair treatment that young people had witnessed in the community during the reporting period.

- Nearly three in ten young people from all SES areas identified *race or cultural background* as the most common type of discrimination or unfair treatment that they had witnessed in the community.
- Young people from low SES areas were slightly more likely than young people from moderate or high SES areas to have witnessed discrimination or unfair treatment on the basis of age, physical health, mental health and/or sexuality.

Figure 11 Proportion of young people who experienced or witnessed discrimination, by SES of area



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed according to experienced discrimination reported by all young people.

Experiencing and witnessing discrimination

Discrimination of any type can have a profound impact on children and young people's feelings of belonging, personal safety and willingness to participate in the social, cultural and economic life of their local communities. As previously noted, the most common forms of discrimination experienced by young people who responded to the 2016 *Youth Survey* were gender discrimination and race-based discrimination.

Gender discrimination

Despite significant improvements in gender equality in Australia over recent decades, research has shown that young women are highly concerned about gender discrimination or inequality in all aspects of their lives. A recent Australian survey of 600 young women aged 15-19 years reported that only one in ten respondents felt they were always treated equally to young men; more than two-thirds (69%) of respondents agreed that gender inequality is still a problem in Australia; and that only 14% of respondents considered they had the same opportunities as young men to 'get ahead' in life.⁶⁴ Furthermore, less than half of respondents agreed that women felt valued and respected in the workplace, and 41% of respondents felt that their decision to start a family would be affected by a lack of supports, such as a lack of affordable childcare or parental leave. Such concerns are reflected in current data on gender inequity in the workplace, including the current 15.3% gender pay gap in the weekly earnings of female and male full-time employees⁶⁵, as well as a 2014 study which reported that nearly half (49%) of all mothers in Australia had experienced discrimination at work during or after their pregnancy.⁶⁶

Policy and program responses in this area should focus on promoting gender equality. Interventions delivered in educational settings are generally regarded as effective, as they are accessible, affordable and can reach a large number of young people from different backgrounds at a critical developmental stage to influence positive behaviours and attitudes.⁶⁷ Community-based prevention and early intervention programs are also needed to reach young people who have disengaged from secondary or tertiary education, particularly those who are entering new relationship phases such as parenthood.

Prevention programs should be complemented by government investment in local community education and action campaigns, which may capitalise on community resources, local issues and knowledge to design and deliver place-based initiatives. As an example, community action campaigns and role modelling led by local sporting clubs have had a positive impact on reducing domestic violence related offending behaviours in their local community.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Plan International Australia and Our Watch (2016) Everyday sexism: Girls' and young women's views on gender inequality in Australia, Plan International Australia and Our Watch, Melbourne.

⁶⁵ <https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/gender-pay-gap-statistics.pdf>

⁶⁶ Australian Human Rights Commission (2014) Headline Prevalence Data: National Review on Discrimination related to pregnancy, parental leave and return to work, 2014, AHRC, Sydney.

⁶⁷ Walden, I., & Wall, L. (2014) Reflecting on primary prevention of violence against women: The public health approach, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse and the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Canberra and Sydney.

⁶⁸ COAG (ND) National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, <https://coagvawsummit.pmc.gov.au>, Accessed 13 October 2017.

Racism

Children and young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities are disproportionately affected by racism compared to other Australians. Recent Australian studies have estimated that between 20% and 85% of children and young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD communities respectively have experienced racism in a range of everyday settings, including education, employment, public transport, sport, housing and when interacting with government agencies.^{69 70 71}

Mission Australia's *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Report* (2015) found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were more likely to report experiencing unfair treatment or discrimination (41.1% compared with 25.6% of non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young people). In addition they were more likely to report that their experiences related to race or cultural background (Table 6) (54.7% compared to 28.3% of non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young people).

Racism has adverse impacts on the housing and health outcomes of children and young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD communities, which can in turn place significant pressure on families and local networks.^{72 73}

Table 6 Perceived reasons for unfair treatment or discrimination: experienced

	Non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %
Race/cultural background	28.3	54.7
Gender	39.5	35.7
Mental health	18.6	28.5
Other	16.3	27.7
Age	21.5	27.5
Physical health or ability	21.5	26.2
Sexuality	16.5	26.0
Religion	16.7	22.8

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

⁶⁹ Zubrick, R., Silburn, R., Lawrence, M., Mitrou, G., Dalby, B., Blair, M., Griffin, J., Milroy, H., De Maio, A., Cox, A. & Li, J. (2005) Western Australian Aboriginal child health survey: the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people, Curtin University of Technology and Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Perth.

⁷⁰ Centre for Multicultural Youth (2014) Everyday Reality: Racism and Young People, CMY, Melbourne.

⁷¹ Mansouri, F., Jenkins, L., Morgan, L., & Taouk, M. (2009) The Impact of Racism upon the Health and Wellbeing of Young Australians, The Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University, Melbourne.

⁷² Priest, N., Paradies, Y., Trenevry, B., Truong, M., Karlsen, S., & Kelly, Y. (2013) A systematic review of studies examining the relationship between reported racism and health and wellbeing for children and young people, Social Science & Medicine, 95, pp. 115-127.

⁷³ Mays, M., Cochran, D., & Barnes, W. (2007) Race, race-based discrimination, and health outcomes among African Americans, Annual Review of Psychology, 58, pp. 201-205.

Further to these findings, young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD communities who have experienced racism may deliberately limit their level of community engagement or withdraw from social activities altogether as a result of feeling unsafe or not trusting other people in the community. For example, a study conducted by the Australian Human Rights Commission with African Australian young people indicated that racism and discrimination could deter young people from participating in sport.⁷⁴ Another study undertaken by VicHealth found that nearly two-thirds (64%) of participants from CALD communities avoided situations where they predicted that racism could potentially take place.⁷⁵

Racism is also a significant issue at school, contributing to poor school attendance and reduced learning capacity amongst children and young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. A recent study highlighted that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who experienced bullying or unfair treatment at school because of their cultural background were more likely to have missed school without permission over a 12 month period than other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who did not experience these issues.⁷⁶

Policy and practice responses should focus on preventing racism from occurring in the first place by developing and fostering safe environments and communities for young people where diversity is championed.⁷⁷ There is evidence to suggest that informal support from family and friends can help young people to build resilience against the harmful effects of racism.⁷⁸ As previously noted, however, young people are often reluctant to take action following their experiences of racism. Providing young people with access to school-based educational and leadership programs may provide them with the skills and confidence to identify and respond to racism. These programs should also include a specific focus on building personal resilience and positive mental health as a response to the health and wellbeing for young people.

Given that schools are one of the main settings where young people experience racism but also seek support from adults, it is recommended that targeted and comprehensive professional development programs are delivered to teaching and non-teaching staff at all levels of school leadership.⁷⁹ Other school initiatives could also focus on building stronger relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and/or CALD community leaders. Young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD communities should be involved in the design and evaluation of school-based programs and responses to racism.

⁷⁴ Australian Human Rights Commission (2010) In our own words - African Australians: A review of human rights and social inclusion.

⁷⁵ VicHealth (ND) Mental health impacts of racial discrimination in Victorian culturally and linguistically diverse communities Experiences of Racism survey: a summary.

⁷⁶ Biddle, N. & Priest, N. (2014) Indigenous students skipping school to avoid bullying and racism, The Conversation, 11 April 2014. Accessed on 13 October 2017.

⁷⁷ Paradies, Y., Chandrakumar, L., Klocker, N., Frere, M., Webster, K., Burrell, M., & McLean, P. (2009) Building on our strengths: a framework to reduce race-based discrimination and support diversity in Victoria, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne.

⁷⁸ Bradshaw, D., Jay, S., McNamara, N., Stevenson, C., & Muldoon, O. (2015) Perceived discrimination amongst young people in socio-economically disadvantaged communities: Parental support and community identity buffer (some) negative impacts of stigma, British Journal of Developmental Psychology, October 2015, pp. 1-16.

⁷⁹ Paradies, Y. (2005) Anti-racism and Indigenous Australians, Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy, 5(1), pp. 1-28.

Policy Recommendations

- Educational institutions from early childhood to university should be funded and supported to deliver comprehensive and age-appropriate education programs focusing on equality and diversity to combat discrimination.
- Further investment is required in community, organisational and media interventions to influence broader society and the behaviour of adults as role models in overcoming discrimination.
- Governments and community organisations should continue to support campaigns to promote gender equality and reduce the incidence of violence against young women and children at a community level.
- Reconciliation programs that foster a higher level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and communities in organisations, schools and early learning environments should continue to be supported.

"There needs to be equal opportunities for all gender and ethnicity groups. What's needed are activities and community workshops to help young people deal with their issues."

Male 17, VIC

Conclusion

This *Concepts of Community* report provides further evidence of the impacts that place has on the lives of young people and the implications for the development of policies, services and programs for young people, particularly for those from low SES areas.

Young people from more socio-economically disadvantaged areas tend to have fewer opportunities and poorer outcomes in terms of education, employment, housing and health. In order to fully support these young people, we need to break the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage in communities of persistent and entrenched disadvantage, to ensure they can achieve their full potential, regardless of where they live.

Place-based approaches that are collaborations between community organisations, governments and community members offer a promising way forward. Place-based approaches allow innovative local solutions to emerge, through joint planning by stakeholders and multi-agency collaboration.

We know from this report that young people living in low SES areas feel less safe in their own suburbs and less trusting of their neighbours. These young people need access to public places where they feel safe to socialise, take part in activities and make connections in their communities. Further, the barriers that prevent young people from low SES areas participating in activities at the same levels as young people from high SES areas, such as the financial costs, need to be addressed.

This report also shows that young people from all backgrounds are seriously concerned about alcohol and drug use in their communities, but those living in low SES areas were concerned about a larger number of drugs than their peers from moderate and high SES areas and were considerably more concerned about the use of all drugs, particularly methamphetamines. We urgently need to address the underlying causes of substance misuse to minimise the negative impacts on young people and provide whole-of-community prevention and early intervention programs where they are most needed.

All young people are most likely to turn to friends and family members when they need help with important issues. Support and training should be offered to these informal networks, so they have the knowledge and skills they need to connect the young person with appropriate face-to-face or online professional support.

Young people and their families also need to be involved in the co-design and evaluation of youth programs at the community level to ensure that they are youth friendly and responsive to local needs.

The similarities and differences between the perceptions of young people living in low, moderate and high SES areas highlighted in the report provide valuable insights into young people's experiences of community and we must take their voices into account as we seek to strengthen communities and improve the lives of young people across Australia.

An approach to strengthening communities that is collaborative, as well as informed by the latest evidence, can add value to the individual services offered and improve the lives of young people living in disadvantaged areas over the long-term.

Appendix: Other results by SES of area

Table A Current study, by SES of area

	Low SES (%)	Moderate SES (%)	High SES (%)	All young people (%)
Current study				
Full-time	92.9	95.0	97.0	94.9
Part-time	3.1	2.1	1.2	2.1
Not studying	4.0	3.0	1.8	3.0
Study satisfaction				
Very satisfied	13.3	16.8	18.0	16.1
Satisfied	54.7	57.2	56.4	56.2
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	25.3	21.0	20.4	22.1
Dissatisfied	4.9	3.7	4.2	4.2
Very dissatisfied	1.9	1.3	1.0	1.4
Where studying				
School	96.5	96.7	97.8	97.0
TAFE or Vocational Education and Training	2.7	2.1	0.9	1.9
University	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.1

Table B School students' future plans, by SES of area

	Low SES (%)	Moderate SES (%)	High SES (%)	All young people (%)
Planning to complete Year 12	95.1	97.5	97.9	96.9
Post school plans				
TAFE or college	15.3	11.6	10.7	12.5
University	59.7	69.6	78.1	69.0
Apprenticeship	11.8	8.9	5.5	8.8
Get a job	35.8	32.5	30.0	32.8
Travel or gap year	27.9	29.3	31.7	29.6
Other	6.2	5.6	4.7	5.6
No choices available	1.1	0.6	0.5	0.7

Table C Influences on students' post-school plans (excluding students who reported having no choices available)

	Low SES (%)	Moderate SES (%)	High SES (%)	All young people (%)
Parents	82.1	83.4	84.3	83.3
Other family members	73.2	72.3	71.0	72.2
Internet	68.0	69.8	70.8	69.5
Friends	65.0	66.1	66.2	65.8
Teacher	52.8	51.7	50.9	51.8
Career advisor	39.3	42.8	46.2	42.8
Career fair or expo	37.3	43.7	46.3	42.6
Work experience/internship	38.9	38.0	35.1	37.4
School staff	31.1	28.3	28.2	29.1
Mentor/coach	26.4	27.8	26.7	27.0
Part-time work	25.9	23.0	20.9	23.3
VET course	17.7	14.0	10.6	14.1
Traineeship	10.2	9.0	6.5	8.7

Table D Employment status, by SES areas

	Low SES (%)	Moderate SES (%)	High SES (%)	All young people (%)
Employed	44.0	40.1	40.4	41.4
Not employed and looking for work	35.5	34.6	31.0	33.9
Not employed and not looking for work	20.6	25.2	28.6	24.7