

**MISSION  
AUSTRALIA**



**YOUTH  
SURVEY  
2023  
VICTORIA**



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# About this report

This is the **Victoria (VIC)** sub-report of the Mission Australia *Youth Survey Report 2023*.

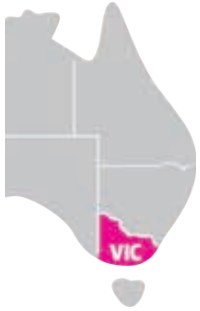
The Mission Australia *Youth Survey Report 2023* presents key findings based on national level data and can be found [here](#). It contains the methodology, national executive summary, national key findings, and findings for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The report also includes commentary on the national findings that may assist in the interpretation of the data found within this sub-report.

This **VIC** sub-report is a state-based overview of the key findings from the *Youth Survey 2023*. The report includes detailed data tables comparing state-level findings against the national data. Care needs to be taken when interpreting and generalising some results due to variations in sample sizes for different survey items. When sample sizes are under 100 and need to be read with caution, notes are included under the data tables. Care also needs to be taken when interpreting and generalising state-based gender breakdowns due to small sample sizes. **VIC** gender breakdowns are included where sample size allows. Results have been excluded where sample sizes are under 30 respondents.

## Acknowledgment

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

This report may be cited as: McHale, R., Brennan, N., Freeburn, T., Rossetto, A., Richardson, E., Boon, B., & Christie, R. (2023). *Youth Survey Report 2023: Victoria sub-report*. Sydney, NSW: Mission Australia



**VIC**

 **6,175** **VIC** RESPONSES

## MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA TODAY FOR VIC RESPONDENTS

**1** 

### The environment

**51%** identified it as one of the most important issues in Australia compared with 54% in 2022 and 43% in 2021.

23% of young people were personally extremely or very concerned about climate change.

**2** 

### Equity and discrimination

**33%** identified it as one of the most important issues in Australia compared with 36% in 2022 and 37% in 2021.

25% of young people were treated unfairly or discriminated against in the last year, most commonly due to:  
Race/cultural background, Physical appearance, Gender.

**3** 

### The economy and financial matters

**31%** identified it as one of the most important issues in Australia compared with 22% in 2022 and 10% in 2021.

14% of young people were personally extremely or very concerned about financial security.

Remaining positive. Whether it be about climate change, schoolwork, or just the future generally, it can be hard to remain optimistic sometimes.

**Male, 16, VIC**



## CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

In young peoples' own words

Young people told us in their own words and unprompted, what their **biggest personal challenge** has been in the past year, what they found helpful in dealing with that challenge and what more could be done to help them address their challenge. The key themes of young people's responses are shown below.

**Close to 1 in 3** young people said nothing more could help, or they were unsure what could help with their challenges, indicating there is an opportunity to improve awareness of supports available to them.

### THE BIGGEST PERSONAL CHALLENGES

### WHAT MORE WOULD HELP?

Solutions suggested by young people



#### 47% SCHOOL CHALLENGES

Academic pressure, high workload, challenges with teachers, learning difficulties, general school challenges

65%

of students were satisfied or very satisfied with their studies

34%

of students said there are barriers to achieving study or work goals

#### TOP 3 BARRIERS:

- 1 Mental health
- 2 Academic ability
- 3 Financial difficulty

- Study harder and more effectively
- Greater understanding from teachers and parents about stress levels
- Being comfortable asking for support or advice



#### 24% MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Low mental health, stress, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or self-harm

24%

had high psychological distress

19%

felt lonely all or most of the time

39%

were extremely or very concerned about coping with stress

- Asking healthcare professionals for help
- Greater understanding from teachers and parents about stress levels
- Being comfortable asking for support or advice
- Better access to and availability of mental healthcare services



#### 20% RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES

Death, abuse, challenging relationships with family, friends or significant others

22%

said their family's ability to get along was fair to poor

#### TOP SOURCE OF SUPPORT:

76% friends

- Being comfortable asking for support or advice
- Asking healthcare professionals for help
- Asking those closest to me for advice and understanding

# Examples of personal challenges and solutions

Young person's profile	What was the biggest personal challenge you experienced in 2022-2023?	How did you handle the challenge?	What more could be done to help in the future?
<b>School Challenges</b>			
Male, 18	"Recently this year it's been school, I think it's the point of the year where everyone has kind of given up on school, everyone's feeling it. Teachers as well but yeah burnout from school is an issue."	"Just knowing it ends, getting to the end of each day knowing I made it. Watching a feel-good movie or TV show helps me."	"I feel like a lot of parents don't understand that the teenagers of today are different to the teenagers of yesterday. They've grown up in a world where people were less open about their personality but today people want to express themselves differently. I feel like we are kind of at a point where it's teenagers vs adults and there's a lack of communication. I think finding a way to explain to parent's how teenagers of today want a new future to what was envisioned in their generation. I think strategies or resources or ways to allow people to communicate with parents would help."
Male, 16	"The biggest personal challenge I faced this year was managing stress. I have multiple co-curricular commitments which take up a majority of my week. I also have copious amounts of schoolwork for all of my subjects, so I really struggled to maintain proper mental health for most of the past year."	"Getting as much work done as possible, then taking one or two days to sleep and relax. I also relished being sick as it gave me time when I didn't have to focus on school (although it was hard to catch up if I was sick for a while)."	"Give more student free days, remove holiday homework, remove the heavy expectation put on the shoulders of most students."



Young person's profile	What was the biggest personal challenge you experienced in 2022-2023?	How did you handle the challenge?	What more could be done to help in the future?
<b>Mental Health Challenges</b>			
Female, 17	"Struggling with my own mental health problems (such as depression and recovering from an eating disorder), while also still recovering from traumatic experiences of the past. This alongside the pressures of completing year 12 and doing well has been exceptionally difficult. On top of this, my parents have made the recent decision to separate and so I will be burdened by moving houses while sitting my year 12 exams."	"I am yet to really find anything that has helped me other than unhealthy avenues and bottling up."	"Having efficient help being more accessible; seeking mental health support in Australia is appalling - after waiting more than six months to see a psychologist (who you'll be paying thousands to see for a half hour session), they'll just tell you to try and be happy! Or eat healthy and exercise, never providing any genuine support. The government supplied mental health services are unprofessional and ineffective, but going private is impossible. People like myself are left alone with no one to help us."
Gender diverse, 16	"I think the biggest personal challenge was probably coming to terms with burnout and how I need to manage it myself and trying to grow as a person to accommodate for that. I don't recover from burnout or exhaustion the way school tells us to and I'm more susceptible to it than a lot of people it seems, so I had to learn how to take care of myself and be okay with it."	"I think finding communities online which shared similar experiences and having friends who supported me no matter what choice I picked."	"I think more mental health awareness in schools for people who don't function like how we're 'taught' to, and also getting rid of the stigma surrounding neurodivergence. I haven't been diagnosed but being able to feel like I can relate to the community without an official diagnosis helped so much."

Young person's profile	What was the biggest personal challenge you experienced in 2022-2023?	How did you handle the challenge?	What more could be done to help in the future?
Relationship Challenges			
Female, 19	"I am preparing to lose my mother. I am her carer, and she is terminally ill. She has end-stage renal failure and has decided to use Voluntary Assisted Dying to end her suffering. I fully support this decision; I don't think I am ready to lose my mum before I turn 20."	"My psychologist, close friends and immediate family have been my primary support. Scouting has also been an excellent support for me, and my Rover family has helped keep me in check."	"I wish more support had been offered whilst I was in school to help address the stresses and hardship that my caring role gave me. I also wish there was more outward support for young carers and patients who choose to go down the path of assisted dying, as it would allow for more open conversations and public support."
Gender diverse, 18	"Trying to stay mentally well and complete school in a domestically abusive environment. I do not experience violent or physical abuse but more verbally and manipulation from a narcissistic parent. It is extremely hard to stay consistent in my work and motivation when I do not feel valued or safe at home. There is no way my school can support me because my abuse experience is not affected by school, and I enjoy going to school. And because of the housing crisis there is no way I can live independently and affordably. Because of my ADHD I physically cannot juggle having a well-paying part time job and school. There was no escape from my abusive household although it is not consistent everyday experiences of abuse, so I could function somewhat at home."	"Although psychological therapy is spendy it is a great support for me and gives me good strategies to regulate my emotions and process trauma. It also has helped me lower my experiences of symptoms from post-traumatic events. Another support was going on medication for my ADHD which has helped me become a better functioning person and be productive at school, which makes me feel happy."	"If the government could provide housing for students experiencing domestic abuse at home and that do not have time for a job. This housing could be for 16-18 year olds that have permission from parents to live independently. even just a single room apartment with a working bathroom and a small office would help most children in desperate need of an escape from abuse and the government could provide social workers and security to make sure children are safe. The government does not do enough for children experiencing abuse but do not want to be a foster kid or separated from their family, and for children experiencing non-violent abuse lack of care for them makes them feel like they are not important enough to deserve mental health care or to be able to reach out for help."



# VIC Data Tables

## PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

**Table 1: Gender**

	VIC n	VIC %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5913</b>	<b>5913</b>	<b>18790</b>
Female	3277	55.4	54.9
Male	2307	39.0	40.2
Gender diverse <sup>^</sup>	240	4.1	3.7
Prefer not to say	89	1.5	1.3

<sup>^</sup>A-gender/non-gendered, non-binary gender, transgender and not listed are combined under the gender diverse reporting category.

**Table 2: Locality**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5973</b>	<b>3181</b>	<b>2244</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>18857</b>
Major city	68.5	67.9	69.6	65.5	62.7
Regional area	21.1	20.8	20.7	27.8	24.7
Major city/regional area <sup>^</sup>	10.5	11.3	9.7	6.7	12.7

<sup>^</sup>Postcodes classified as both a major city and regional area in the *Australian Statistical Geography Standard* (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

**Table 3: Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5941</b>	<b>3175</b>	<b>2198</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>18824</b>
Non-Indigenous	97.9	98.9	97.4	89.9	95.6
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	2.1	1.1	2.7	10.1	4.4
Aboriginal	1.4	0.9	1.8	4.4	3.5
Torres Strait Islander	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.9	0.4
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	0.4	0.0	0.4	4.8	0.5

**Table 4: Identify with a cultural or ethnic identity**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5900</b>	<b>3162</b>	<b>2178</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>18750</b>
Yes	20.3	21.2	19.1	24.0	21.6
No	79.7	78.8	80.9	76.0	78.4

**Table 5: Spoke a language other than English**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5884</b>	<b>3158</b>	<b>2168</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>18698</b>
Yes	23.8	26.0	20.4	24.7	22.1
No, English only	76.2	74.0	79.6	75.3	77.9

**Table 6: Identify as a person with disability**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5826</b>	<b>3133</b>	<b>2138</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>18545</b>
Yes, I have disability	6.4	4.6	6.3	32.1	7.3
No	89.5	92.5	90.2	50.4	88.6
Prefer not to say	4.1	2.9	3.6	17.4	4.1

**Table 7: Identify as a person with a mental health condition**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5825</b>	<b>3129</b>	<b>2136</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>18533</b>
Yes, I have a mental health condition	17.5	20.9	8.8	50.2	17.4
No	71.4	66.4	84.4	31.3	70.8
Prefer not to say	11.1	12.8	6.8	18.5	11.7

## PERSONAL CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

**Table 8: Biggest personal challenge experienced by young people**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5120</b>	<b>2698</b>	<b>1932</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>16447</b>
School challenges	47.0	49.2	46.1	32.1	49.0
Mental health challenges	23.6	30.0	12.3	39.6	24.2
Interpersonal relationship challenges	20.2	24.3	14.4	25.5	21.3
Financial and Housing challenges	3.5	3.6	3.1	6.6	4.2
Other challenges	18.1	18.5	17.1	27.4	17.1
Not sure/no challenge identified	6.0	4.1	8.5	5.7	5.9

Note: Items ranked high to low according to the VIC responses with only the top-level themes being reported due to sample size. Examples in *Other challenges* included top-level themes like motivation, general health, moving to a new environment, etc. that stood out on their own. Items based on content analysis of 84% of responses to this question. The percentage figure for the top-level themes represents its proportion amongst the total responses for this question.

**Table 9: Issues of personal concern to young people (extremely or very concerned)**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
Coping with stress	38.8	50.2	20.7	58.3	38.4
School or study problems	36.8	45.8	22.5	50.6	37.1
Mental health	32.5	40.7	17.3	63.4	31.9
Body image	29.0	39.1	13.1	45.3	29.0
Climate change	23.4	27.4	15.7	42.8	20.8
Physical health	19.1	21.6	14.8	26.5	19.1
Financial security	14.3	16.1	10.4	29.2	14.7
Suicide	14.0	16.0	8.1	41.6	14.0
Family conflict	13.9	17.9	6.4	32.1	15.6
LGBTIQA+^ issues	12.0	11.2	6.6	61.4	11.8
Discrimination	11.5	13.1	6.7	35.7	11.6
Social media	11.2	13.6	7.0	18.3	11.2
Bullying/emotional abuse	10.4	12.7	5.3	26.4	11.1
Personal safety	10.2	11.9	6.5	25.5	10.6
Alcohol and other drugs	7.2	8.2	5.0	14.1	7.1
Domestic/family violence	6.8	7.9	4.1	18.8	7.1
COVID-19	5.4	6.1	3.8	10.2	5.0

^Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues. Bases vary across each aspect.

Note: Items ranked high to low according to VIC responses.

## NATIONAL CONCERNS

**Table 10: Most important issues in Australia today**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>4927</b>	<b>2621</b>	<b>1848</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>15556</b>
The environment	50.6	57.0	42.2	43.7	44.0
Equity and discrimination	32.5	37.2	25.7	36.7	31.4
The economy and financial matters	31.3	29.5	34.3	32.2	31.2
Mental health	29.7	36.5	21.4	25.1	30.3
Homelessness/housing	16.8	17.4	16.1	17.6	18.5
Crime, safety and violence	15.6	16.0	14.9	14.1	17.7
Alcohol & drugs	10.8	10.3	11.7	9.5	12.1
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues	8.6	9.7	7.5	7.5	7.3
Politics	7.6	5.0	10.5	12.6	7.2
Education	7.2	7.9	6.4	5.5	7.4

Note: Items are listed in order of VIC frequency.

## EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

**Table 11: Participation in education**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>6143</b>	<b>3267</b>	<b>2294</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>19414</b>
Studying full-time	88.3	91.3	84.9	85.7	86.2
Studying part-time	6.5	4.4	9.2	8.0	7.4
Not studying	5.1	4.2	5.9	6.3	6.4

**Table 12: Satisfaction with studies**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5778</b>	<b>3104</b>	<b>2141</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>17766</b>
Very satisfied or satisfied	64.6	67.0	63.1	55.9	62.9
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	26.5	24.8	28.4	24.3	28.1
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	8.9	8.2	8.5	19.8	9.0

Base: Respondents currently studying.

**Table 13: Where they are currently studying**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5797</b>	<b>3115</b>	<b>2147</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>17864</b>
School or equivalent	97.8	98.6	97.1	95.5	97.9
University	1.1	0.7	1.4	2.3	0.9
TAFE or equivalent	1.0	0.7	1.5	2.3	1.2

Base: Respondents currently studying. Items are listed in order of VIC frequency.

**Table 14: Plan to complete Year 12**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5627</b>	<b>3041</b>	<b>2073</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>17343</b>
Yes	98.0	98.6	97.4	97.1	97.2
No	2.0	1.4	2.6	2.9	2.8

Base: Respondents who reported they were studying at a school or equivalent.



**Table 15: Currently doing a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5661</b>	<b>3066</b>	<b>2081</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>17440</b>
Yes	4.3	3.5	5.3	6.7	5.5
No	95.7	96.5	94.7	93.3	94.5

Base: Respondents who reported they were studying at a school or equivalent.

**Table 16: Plans after leaving school**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5672</b>	<b>3071</b>	<b>2084</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>17492</b>
Go to university	74.6	81.0	66.7	67.3	70.0
Get a job	46.2	48.4	42.3	50.7	46.2
Travel/gap year	35.4	38.9	30.3	39.8	32.5
Start a business	11.6	7.5	17.9	9.5	11.3
Become a professional athlete	7.7	5.3	11.6	6.2	7.6
Go to TAFE or college	7.3	7.0	7.0	18.0	10.2
Join the defence force or emergency services	6.3	4.6	8.9	8.5	7.1
Get an apprenticeship	6.0	3.1	10.2	6.2	8.7
Other	1.7	1.1	2.6	3.3	2.0
Not sure	6.9	5.6	8.2	7.6	7.0
No choices are available to me	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.1

Base: Respondents who reported they were studying at a school or equivalent.

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

**Table 17: Confidence in achieving study or work goals**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5523</b>	<b>3011</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>17052</b>
Extremely or very confident	47.3	44.1	53.6	35.6	47.4
Somewhat or slightly confident	50.4	53.2	45.1	57.4	50.0
Not at all confident	2.4	2.7	1.3	6.9	2.6

Base: Respondents who reported having a plan or were *not sure* of their plan after leaving school.

**Table 18: Are there any barriers to young people achieving their study/work goals**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5275</b>	<b>2899</b>	<b>1909</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>16215</b>
Yes	33.6	36.0	26.3	63.5	37.0
No	66.4	64.0	73.7	36.5	63.0

Base: Respondents who reported having a plan or were *not sure* of their plan after leaving school.

**Table 19: Barriers to people achieving study/work goals**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>1772</b>	<b>1045</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>5994</b>
Mental health	42.4	45.4	30.3	65.8	42.4
Academic ability	34.8	37.4	30.7	29.2	36.5
Financial difficulty	27.4	28.5	23.3	31.7	28.9
Admission/job requirements	15.0	15.8	12.2	19.2	16.9
Where you live	14.4	14.0	15.5	14.2	16.2
Lack of information	13.4	12.9	12.4	15.8	15.6
Transport	12.4	11.5	13.1	15.8	11.5
Family responsibilities	12.3	12.6	12.2	10.0	13.0
Lack of jobs	12.0	12.1	10.6	15.8	12.6
Physical health	9.7	8.4	10.0	15.0	9.5
Lack of family support	9.3	9.3	8.0	15.8	9.1
Lack of school support	9.0	9.4	8.4	10.0	9.8
Discrimination	7.3	6.0	5.8	24.2	7.0
Caring responsibilities	4.5	4.5	5.0	2.5	5.1
COVID-19	3.7	3.3	5.0	4.2	3.2
Cultural responsibilities	2.9	2.5	3.4	4.2	2.6
Other	7.6	5.6	10.8	11.7	7.7

Base: Respondents who reported there were barriers to achieving their study/work goals.

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

**Table 20: Participation in paid employment**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>6134</b>	<b>3263</b>	<b>2290</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>19390</b>
Permanent employee	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.0	4.6
Casual employee	50.7	52.4	49.5	42.7	48.2
Not in paid employment, looking for work	24.5	23.4	25.6	31.8	26.6
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	19.7	19.1	19.8	20.5	20.6

**Table 21: Employment type**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>3397</b>	<b>1865</b>	<b>1238</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>10031</b>
Working full-time	0.9	0.5	0.6	8.8	1.4
Working part-time	99.1	99.5	99.4	91.2	98.6

Base: Respondents who reported they are in paid employment.

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

**Table 22: Satisfaction with job**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>3397</b>	<b>1865</b>	<b>1240</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>10024</b>
Very satisfied or satisfied	66.1	67.9	64.8	55.4	66.7
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	22.8	22.9	22.4	24.1	22.1
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	11.1	9.2	12.7	20.5	11.1

Base: Respondents who reported they are in paid employment.

## WELLBEING

**Table 23: Young people's overall mental health and wellbeing**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>6035</b>	<b>3215</b>	<b>2242</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>19110</b>
Excellent	10.5	5.3	18.0	9.0	10.4
Very good	22.9	19.7	29.9	7.3	22.0
Good	30.0	31.3	29.8	17.6	29.9
Fair	25.0	31.2	15.7	25.3	25.4
Poor	11.5	12.5	6.6	40.8	12.3

**Table 24: Mean Personal Wellbeing Index scores of respondents compared with Australian adults**

	VIC Mean	Female Mean	Male Mean	Gender diverse Mean	National Mean	Adult National normative range <sup>^</sup>	Adult National Mean <sup>^</sup>
With their life as a whole	66.6	64.7	71.1	50.6	65.7	75.5 – 79.3	77.4
<b>Personal Wellbeing Index</b>	<b>69.0</b>	<b>67.9</b>	<b>72.3</b>	<b>55.5</b>	<b>68.2</b>	<b>74.2 – 76.8</b>	<b>75.5</b>
About the things they have e.g., money	74.3	73.8	76.1	64.2	73.1	75.8 – 80.6	78.2
With their health	66.7	64.4	71.7	53.3	65.9	72.5 – 76.0	74.2
With things they want to be good at	63.2	60.8	67.8	54.3	62.4	69.9 – 74.5	72.1
With getting on with the people they know	71.0	70.4	73.4	58.2	70.4	75.7 – 80.9	78.2
About how safe they feel	78.1	77.4	81.5	58.6	77.4	75.4 – 83.1	79.2
Doing things away from home	73.9	72.6	76.8	64.5	73.0	68.2 – 72.1	70.1
About what may happen to them later in their life	60.4	57.9	66.0	44.2	59.7	65.5 – 72.0	68.7
With their connection to culture <sup>**</sup>	68.0	69.0	67.2	60.7 <sup>***</sup>	68.1	n/a	n/a

<sup>^</sup>National average index is based on aggregated survey mean scores from 2002 to 2021 of adults 18 years and over where mean age = 50.55 and SD= 17.47 (Khor, S., Capic, T., Cummins, R.A., Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, M., Olsson, C.A., Hutchinson, D., Lycett, K. (2021). *Australian Unity Wellbeing Index - Report 38*. Subjective wellbeing in Australia during the second year of the pandemic. Geelong, Victoria: Australian Centre on Quality of Life, School of Psychology, Deakin University).

<sup>\*\*</sup>This question is not officially part of the PWI but a supplementary question to *spiritual and/or cultural beliefs*. Respondents who answered *yes* to having *spiritual and/or cultural beliefs* were only able to respond to this question.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>Sample is less than 100, please use caution when interpreting results.

**Table 25: Young people's level of control over their life**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5988</b>	<b>3200</b>	<b>2218</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>18982</b>
Complete control	10.0	5.7	16.0	10.8	9.6
Mostly in control	47.0	46.1	51.8	23.8	46.3
Some control	34.0	39.0	25.9	38.5	34.1
Almost no control	7.2	7.6	4.7	19.0	7.7
No control	1.9	1.6	1.6	7.8	2.3

**Table 26: Level of psychological distress in young people (experienced in the past four weeks)**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5848</b>	<b>3131</b>	<b>2162</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>18554</b>
Low psychological distress	47.1	37.0	64.9	24.2	46.0
Moderate psychological distress	29.1	33.8	22.6	21.5	29.1
High psychological distress	23.8	29.2	12.5	54.3	24.9

Note: Cut-off scores for categories of psychological distress are as follows: low = 0 to 7, moderate = 8 to 12 and high = 13 to 24 (Hilton, M. F., Whiteford, H. A., Sheridan, J. S., Cleary, C. M., Chant, D. C., Wang, P. S., & Kessler, R. C. (2008). The prevalence of psychological distress in employees and associated occupational risk factors. *Journal of occupational and environmental medicine*, 50(7), 746-757). These cut-off scores are used by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (Riosco, P., Warren, D., & Daraganova, G. (2020). *Children's social-emotional wellbeing: The role of parenting, parents' mental health and health behaviours*. Southbank, Victoria: Australian Institute of Family Studies).

**Table 27: Young people's level of loneliness (experienced in the past four weeks)**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>6000</b>	<b>3208</b>	<b>2220</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>18991</b>
None of the time	17.5	12.8	24.8	13.9	17.2
A little of the time	32.7	33.3	34.2	16.9	31.1
Some of the time	30.5	32.7	27.3	28.1	30.8
Most of the time	15.6	17.7	10.6	29.0	16.6
All of the time	3.8	3.4	3.1	12.1	4.2

Table 28: Family's ability to get along with one another

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5981</b>	<b>3201</b>	<b>2208</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>18926</b>
Excellent	22.2	19.7	26.8	14.6	20.7
Very good	30.5	30.1	33.2	16.7	29.4
Good	25.1	25.7	24.4	23.2	25.3
Fair	14.9	16.7	10.6	24.0	16.2
Poor	7.2	7.7	5.1	21.5	8.4

Table 29: Feelings about the future

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5988</b>	<b>2215</b>	<b>3201</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>18953</b>
Very positive or positive	50.6	57.6	47.8	33.5	50.0
Neither positive nor negative	33.7	29.8	36.6	29.6	33.5
Negative or very negative	15.7	12.6	15.7	36.9	16.5



## SUPPORT AND CONNECTEDNESS

**Table 30: Where young people go for help with important issues**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>6061</b>	<b>3236</b>	<b>2248</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>19162</b>
Friend(s)	75.6	81.2	68.0	76.8	72.8
Parent(s) or guardian(s)	67.6	70.8	67.2	42.5	66.3
Relative/family friend	41.5	44.9	39.2	27.0	41.9
Brother/sister	39.9	42.6	38.2	27.9	39.4
Internet	26.1	26.0	24.9	37.3	24.6
GP or health professional	24.1	27.6	18.9	33.9	23.0
Partner or significant other	23.9	22.9	24.6	31.8	23.5
Teacher	21.7	23.3	20.2	18.9	22.7
School counsellor	14.9	16.7	12.2	18.9	16.1
Social media	14.3	15.6	11.3	23.6	13.6
Mobile apps	9.7	10.6	7.9	14.6	9.6
Spiritual/religious mentor	4.4	3.2	5.6	6.4	5.8
Community service	2.5	2.0	2.7	8.2	2.8
Other	3.1	1.5	4.5	9.4	3.3
None of the above	5.4	3.2	8.0	5.6	6.4

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

**Table 31: Activities young people were involved in during the past year**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>6025</b>	<b>3214</b>	<b>2241</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>19065</b>
Sports (as a participant)	67.8	64.7	75.6	42.9	67.0
Sports (as a spectator)	52.6	47.1	63.6	33.9	49.7
Volunteer work (e.g., through a sports club, charity, religious organisation, school)	35.8	39.4	31.3	34.3	40.7
Student leadership groups/activities	28.2	32.9	22.0	28.8	28.6
Arts/cultural/music groups/activities	27.6	32.3	18.5	46.4	29.4
Youth groups/activities	15.8	15.1	15.6	29.2	18.2
Religious groups/activities	12.2	12.2	12.0	13.3	15.4
Environmental groups/activities	7.5	7.9	6.3	13.7	7.5
Political groups/activities	3.5	2.8	3.7	10.7	3.4
None of the above	11.8	12.4	9.8	16.3	12.4

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of VIC frequency. In 2023 this was asked as a multiple response question for the first time. In prior years it was asked as yes/no response per item which may impact historical comparisons.

**Table 32: Whether young people have cultural and/or spiritual beliefs**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5961</b>	<b>3196</b>	<b>2198</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>18762</b>
Yes – both spiritual and cultural beliefs	16.9	18.6	14.9	13.8	18.5
Yes – spiritual beliefs	17.8	17.7	17.8	19.0	20.0
Yes – cultural beliefs	11.4	11.5	11.0	10.3	11.2
No beliefs	53.9	52.2	56.3	56.9	50.2

**Table 33: Activities young people find hard to do**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>5791</b>	<b>3120</b>	<b>2121</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>18452</b>
Turn to friends and family if you need help	27.5	29.8	20.5	54.7	29.3
Fit in and socialise with everyone else ( <i>at school, work or socially</i> )	26.9	29.6	19.6	51.6	28.5
Make choices and feel independent	20.5	24.0	13.4	34.2	21.6
Turn to services / organisations if you need help	20.3	22.5	14.1	46.2	21.1
Do everyday activities as young people your age usually do	17.9	20.0	11.9	41.8	19.2
Do things in public places with friends ( <i>e.g., go to shopping centres</i> )	15.4	14.8	12.9	44.0	16.0
Travel around the community ( <i>e.g., using footpaths</i> )	8.7	9.9	5.5	19.6	9.1
None of the above	47.1	41.6	58.8	19.6	45.5

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

**Table 34: Young people and the feelings they have about their community**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>I am proud to be part of my community (Base)</b>	<b>5780</b>	<b>3104</b>	<b>2134</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>18404</b>
Strongly agree/agree	62.1	62.2	65.7	39.1	60.1
Mixed feelings	30.3	31.9	26.0	34.4	31.8
Disagree/strongly disagree	7.6	5.9	8.3	26.5	8.1
<b>My community has the things that I need to have a positive and thriving future (Base)</b>	<b>5785</b>	<b>3105</b>	<b>2135</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>18408</b>
Strongly agree/agree	65.6	65.5	68.8	43.5	62.5
Mixed feelings	27.6	28.2	24.9	38.4	29.7
Disagree/strongly disagree	6.8	6.3	6.3	18.1	7.8
<b>Young people in my community have a say on issues that matter to them (Base)</b>	<b>5781</b>	<b>3108</b>	<b>2130</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>18390</b>
Strongly agree/agree	46.7	47.3	48.9	29.8	44.4
Mixed feelings	37.8	38.6	35.4	36.7	38.9
Disagree/strongly disagree	15.4	14.1	15.8	33.5	16.7

## UNFAIR TREATMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

**Table 35: Unfair treatment or discrimination in the last year**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>6018</b>	<b>3215</b>	<b>2231</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>19050</b>
Yes	24.6	25.6	19.3	54.7	26.6
No	75.4	74.4	80.7	45.3	73.4

**Table 36: Reason(s) for being treated unfairly in the last year**

	VIC %	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %	National %
<b>Base</b>	<b>1480</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>5060</b>
Race/cultural background	33.2	29.7	43.0	22.0	34.6
Physical appearance	32.8	30.7	34.4	43.3	36.4
Gender	32.2	36.2	10.9	76.4	30.0
Personal views	24.4	22.8	25.6	33.9	26.6
Mental health	22.0	22.6	16.0	37.8	23.6
Sexuality	21.2	18.2	10.7	73.2	20.2
Age	14.9	16.3	11.4	18.9	15.3
Disability	9.0	6.3	7.4	32.3	8.9
Religion	8.4	5.6	12.6	11.0	10.9
Financial background	4.9	3.6	5.1	13.4	6.3
Other	10.8	11.0	11.4	7.9	10.5

Base: Respondents who reported they had been treated unfairly or faced discrimination in the past year.

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of VIC frequency. Examples in *other* included things like personality, family, hobbies, unsure etc.

## Who is Mission Australia?

**Mission Australia is a national Christian charity motivated by a shared vision of an Australia where everyone has a safe home and can thrive.**

Since 1859, we've been standing alongside people and communities in need across Australia, offering real hope that has lasting impact. Backed by our supporters, churches, partners and funders, we work together for the long-term wellbeing of anyone who needs us by collaborating with them to tackle the root causes of their challenges.

Every day we deliver homelessness crisis and prevention services, provide social and affordable housing, assist struggling families and children, address mental health issues, fight substance dependencies, support people with disability and much more.

We measure our impact, collecting evidence of what works to inform our service design and delivery, and to advocate for change.

Mission Australia believes a person's circumstances shouldn't define their future and that given the right support, everyone can reach their full potential.

That's why we stand together with Australians in need, for as long as they need us.

## Thank you

This publication would not have been possible without the 19,501 young people who completed Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2023. We extend special thanks to them, the staff of Mission Australia, and the many schools and organisations who supported their involvement.

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

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