

THE HOPES AND DREAMS OF YOUNG AUSTRALIANS



# HOPES & DREAMS



**“I TRULY BELIEVE THAT EVERY PERSON, ESPECIALLY YOUNG PEOPLE, HAVE UNLIMITED POTENTIAL AND THAT WE ALL HAVE A ‘VOICE’ WHICH WANTS TO BE HEARD. DEEP DOWN, BEHIND ALL THE BULLSHIT WE JUST WANT TO BE OURSELVES, AND WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE ARE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THEIR REAL SELVES THEY CAN ACHIEVE WHATEVER THEY WANT AND THEY CAN HAVE ALL THE LOVE, HAPPINESS AND SUCCESS THEY REQUIRE. VERY OFTEN THIS PROCESS STARTS SIMPLY BY SOMEONE BELIEVING IN THEM”**

**Jim Stynes, Co-Founder, The Reach Foundation**

# THE REACH FOUNDATION

## THE HOPES AND DREAMS OF YOUNG AUSTRALIANS

Flighty, self-absorbed, materialistic, media-dependent ... we've been saying this kind of thing about teenagers for a very long time. *Me! Me! Me!* (How easily we forget that it was the Baby Boomers, born in the 15 years after World War II, for whom the label 'Me Generation' was invented.) Trenchant criticism of the young is nothing new. The feeling that teenagers inhabit a different planet from their parents is nothing new. The reluctance of older people to listen to younger people - to take them seriously - is nothing new.

A large part of the problem has always been that, in the adult world, teenagers don't really have a voice. Occasionally, young stars will rise - in sport, in the arts, in education, in a 'cause' - but mostly, adults seem content to ignore, and therefore to misunderstand and often to undervalue the emerging views and aspirations of young people.

At the same time, paradoxically, we know that our young people are the signpost to the future. They are bursting with the energy that will reshape our society and drive us forward - socially, culturally, intellectually, economically. They will very soon become our next generation of leaders, teachers, managers, doctors, engineers, scientists, inventors, entrepreneurs, innovators, writers, poets, painters and film-makers.

So if we want to hear some messages from our future, we'd better start listening!

And here, in the nick of time, is an extraordinary document to help us do just that - *listen!*

Thanks to the Reach Foundation, we now have direct access to the minds of over 600 young Australians. It's not a scientific sample; it's not representative of the whole spectrum. But it's a huge insight into the thinking of this generation.



Flighty, self-absorbed, materialistic, media-dependent? Yes, you might pick up some hints of some of those things. But here's what else you'll discover: a switched-on, engaged, concerned and responsible voice that will surprise you - perhaps even shock you - by its intensity and maturity.

In the pages of this report, you'll hear young people coming to the conclusion that a major factor in personal happiness is 'giving to others'. You'll hear an optimistic spirit prevailing, even in the face of quite a cool and calm assessment of the challenges they - and the world - are likely to face. You'll hear a real passion for social justice, for a non-judgemental tolerance of diversity, and for the breaking down of prejudices and stereotypes.

Above all, you'll hear a voice that is enthusiastic about life in Australia, yet doesn't take our privileges for granted.

But don't take my word for it. Read what the young Australians themselves have said. In particular, immerse yourself in the verbatim quotations: that's where the real gold lies.

And when you've listened to those voices, ask yourself this: how hopeful do you feel about the capacity of the rising generation of young Australians to tackle the future?

**Hugh Mackay, AO // Social Researcher**



# THANK YOU

The Reach Foundation would like to thank all the amazing young people who participated in this report by sharing their stories: thank you for speaking up, for your generosity and for telling us your hopes and dreams. We hope we can amplify your voices: they are powerful, inspiring and need to be heard.

Thank you to our partner schools and students for participating in and supporting this research.

And a mega thank you to our research partner – Moira Callard and her company Reality Check Research, a specialist qualitative research agency. Without the remarkable expertise, hard work, passion and generous partnership, this research and Report would not exist. So to Moira and the team from Reality Check Research, thank you for everything!

## **10 INTRODUCTION**

About the Reach Foundation: the inspiration behind this important youth study, from the Reach Crew

The goal behind this study, and multi-layered research methodology

About the (youth) authors of this report

## **14 FUTURE // 1**

What we believe now, will shape our future

## **18 FREEDOM // 2**

We believe freedom of expression is also critical to our futures, and others

## **26 SOCIAL JUSTICE // 3**

Why we believe embracing social justice will underpin our future happiness

## **32 APPRECIATION // 4**

We appreciate the privileges of being young in Australia, and want to share the benefits

## **38 CHALLENGES // 5**

Our attitude toward the challenges

## **42 ENVIRONMENT // 6**

Our feelings on the environment

## **46 FAMILY // 7**

We believe family and friends will remain a central part of our future

## **50 EXPLORATION // 8**

A central part of our Australian youth dream is to have the freedom to travel and explore

## **54 EMPOWERMENT // 9**

Our thoughts on hope and empowerment

## **60 APPENDIX 1 //**

## **61 APPENDIX 2 //**

## **64 APPENDIX 3 //**

## **65 LITERATURE REVIEW 2014 //**

# CONTENTS



“ Having a dream  
regardless of what it  
may be is fundamental for  
a life lived with purpose”

## **ROZI KOMLOS // 21**

### **YOUTH WORKER & PROFESSIONAL MUAY THAI FIGHTER, REACH CREW MEMBER – FACILITATOR**

This Reach Report into the Hopes & Dreams of young Australians is crucial in inspiring young people to dream and to dream big! The report presents the dreams of young people from all walks of life. This gives permission for all young people to dream, regardless of circumstance. It provides inspiration for the discovery and investment in a dream. Living with a dream means living with a purpose and each young person has a purpose.

I am introducing this Report to you with three other Reach Crew Members, to share with you our hopes and dreams.

My dreams over the last few years have really evolved with me as I've become more clear and connected with who I am and what kind of life I want to live.

When I was younger I remember my dreams were heavily influenced by my feelings of worthiness, making my parents happy and society. Now having experienced more of life and through personal development my dreams are fuelled by things that are going to make me happy and healthy.

My ultimate dream is to become a Muay Thai champion; I've been training and competing in Muay Thai since I was 16 years old. This is a dream I've been working extremely hard for over the last few years, frequently travelling to Thailand to experience the tradition and develop my skills.

This dream has led me down a path of dedication, respect, health and strength.

It makes me feel alive and worthy. Each little achievement that takes me closer to my dream.

Having a dream regardless of what it may be is fundamental for a life lived with purpose. The “dream” is always alive within, it's the fire in the belly that allows you to be open, willing to learn and work hard.

Being able to talk about the dream is what makes it real, it's important because once you put it out there, in the universe or to other people you not only begin the creation of it but you also attract people and opportunities that will help strengthen the dream.



## JAKE MCMILLAN // 20

### MUSICIAN, UNI STUDENT (DEFERRED), REACH CREW MEMBER – FACILITATOR IN TRAINING

Ever since I was a little kid and my big brother brought home some old metal bands album, something like Pantera or Slipknot, I decided that I was going to play music for the rest of my life. My mum got me my first electric guitar when I was 11. Nine years later I still spend as much time as possible with my guitar in my hands.

When I got into high school I met a couple of like minded people and started some crappy band. In hindsight we absolutely sucked. We spent most of our time covering half learned Blink-182 songs and thinking we were the best thing since sliced bread.

Years later, after numerous name changes and a few new members (myself moving from guitar to vocals) we now have a band (The City at Night) with whom I play gigs all over Melbourne and on the odd occasion interstate. When I'm on stage and I look out into a crowd of people, even if just one person in a crowd of however many is wearing my band's T-shirt, I feel so overwhelmed by how incredible it feels.

To be playing music and doing what I love, what I dreamt of since I was an 8 year old metal head feels so incredible. My music is my own personal expression, my lyrics are something so personal to me yet people out there however many or few have managed to find some common ground with my experiences and my expression. After a gig a few months ago I even found a fan has a line from a song I wrote tattooed on her ribs.

The music always kept me moving toward something: without dreams, hopes and aspirations I feel that personally I become stagnant. This is my dream.

**“ The music always kept me moving toward something: without dreams, hopes and aspirations I feel that personally I become stagnant. This is my dream”**

## ALEX BLACKBURN // 19

### STUDYING EXERCISE SCIENCE AT UNIVERSITY, REACH CREW MEMBER

Having a dream that gives people the opportunity to explore themselves and their surroundings and allows them to reach their unthinkable potential is one of the most important aspects in life.

My dreams are simply to be able to inspire people to take the reins of their own lives and take all opportunities that come their way. I would love to make a difference in the world of sport and fitness and join women that have had the opportunity to change the mindset of many and to encourage more to think of exercising as an opportunity to better their health rather than a chore.

I would also love to travel and listen to the youth from a range of different and diverse cultures and hear their previously untold stories. This will develop a greater understanding and appreciation for the multicultural society we live in today.

In regards to my dreams about education, empowerment and encouraging participation in sport and physical activity, I feel so passionate about breaking down stereotypes that are attached to sports and ensuring everyone is granted an opportunity for participation and are encouraged to take steps to improving their lifestyle and their overall level of health.

To be able to talk about dreams for me increases the fire that lives within and leads me to believe that dreams aren't just thoughts and hopes and that they can be a reality, given the right mindset and encouragement from those around them. In our society today we have such a diverse range of people who all have the possibility to bring new ideas to the table. This can only lead to infinite possibilities in the future that we need to support and encourage, especially those of the youth generation.

“ To able to talk about dreams for me increases the fire that lives within and leads me to believe that dreams aren't just thoughts and hopes and that they can be a reality”



## HARRY MORTON // 18

### STUDYING JOURNALISM AT UNIVERSITY, REACH CREW MEMBER – FACILITATOR IN TRAINING

What's the difference between a 'hope' and a 'dream' for me?

My dreams have always been something real, usually associated with long-term fantasies about the direction my life might take, the people I might meet and the things I'll achieve.

My hopes, however, I would describe as the level of desire I hold for those particular dreams to actually become reality. One of my greatest desires is to find love. Yet I find it difficult to get a grasp of what love really means to me, and whether or not that vague dream may have already been met but not recognised.

At the age of five I dreamed of being a turkey farmer and hoped for a Nutella sandwich at lunch.

As a kid, I believe you tend to dream more and hope less because you simply assume that those dreams will come true. Yet something seems to change as we grow into a teenager that causes us to hope more and dream less, maybe because our expectations of those dreams coming true begin to diminish and although we may want more for ourselves out of life, we can't actually put our finger on what "more" really is.

At the age of eighteen I dream of a day when I'll look back on my time and be satisfied and I hope that I can discover what exactly will one day make me feel satisfied.

So why do I tell myself that it's important to keep hoping and dreaming in life? I do this because then I can keep faith that no part of my life will ever feel dull, but also recognise a point where I'm completely at ease with the hand I've been dealt. Only when I have dreams for all aspects of my life, both great and small, will my dream of living with the intention of striving for something more, be achieved.

“ My dreams have always been something real, fantasies about the direction my life might take, the people I might meet and the things I'll achieve”



# INTRODUCTION

## HOPES & DREAMS REPORT // OUR PURPOSE

Reach supports young people to get the most out of life. We aim to improve the wellbeing of young people so they can be healthy and resilient to meet life's challenges, fulfil their potential and thrive. Reach's mission is to encourage young people, no matter what their circumstances or experience, to believe they can achieve.

Reach organises and facilitates workshops across Australia to connect with young people and normalise the anxiety of growing up. We've found that teenagers need a place where they can go to talk honestly about what's going on – about their fears and their dreams – without being judged and with people who understand. Along the way we hope to inspire young people not to be spooked by the emotion of it all, but to dream and to hope for one's own destiny.

We're proud of our record supporting and engaging with young people and in Reach's 21st anniversary year, we are reaching out to young people to open a conversation with them and understand (at a national level) their hopes and dreams for the future. It is important for young people to dream big, to aspire, to envisage the kind of future they want and genuinely to feel able to chase that dream.

This is a critically important discussion. We hope this conversation will inspire and inform by sharing the hopes and dreams of young people within their own communities and in the broader national conversation; and want the Report to provide a channel for young people to express their hopes and dreams, and feel a sense of ownership over a piece of this important national conversation.



## THE GOAL BEHIND THIS STUDY, AND MULTI-LAYERED RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In support of our mission, and in keeping with our youth-lead approach, The Reach Foundation (Reach) has opened a conversation with young people in Australia, about their hopes and dreams for the future. We took a multi-step process to engage with young people in Australia:

- a) Conducted a literature review to identify the current state of the conversation of, and about, young people in Australia, and how Reach can provide a new, youth-led perspective. In doing so we have used the strong work previously reported by many youth organisations in Australia to guide our focus, and identify some of the hopes and dreams of young people.
- b) Conducted 4 dedicated focus groups (Sample: 40 school students) with Reality Check Research and Reach crew amongst young people, to listen to their thoughts, hopes, dreams and concerns. We used the open environment of the focus group to create a space for young people to lead the conversation and shape our thinking.
- c) Conducted 8 group discussions with young people reflecting on their school years, as part of Reality Check's weekly groups discussion programme in Melbourne and Sydney (Sample: 48 young people, 16-18 year olds).
- d) We then used an online forum to expand on some aspects (Sample: 24 young people, under 18).
- e) We then used the outputs of the focus groups to create a survey guided by Lewers Research to test the focus group discussions and engage young people around the country. This youth-led approach to survey design hopes to focus the discussion on issues of most importance to young people, and give them a clear level of ownership over the final report and Quantitative Study.
- f) The survey was conducted amongst a sample of 560 young Australians aged 13-18, mainly through secondary schools that had participated in the past in Reach programs.<sup>1</sup>



- g) Following this approach, we hope to make a meaningful contribution to the current conversation of youth issues in Australia, providing a viewpoint that fits into the current landscape and reflects the hopes and dreams of young people in Australia.
- h) Total Youth Sample across qualitative and quantitative streams: 632 young Australians.

<sup>1</sup> When referencing statistics throughout this report from the Reach Quantitative Study ' % agrees with a statement' refer to sub-totals of scores 8 to 10. Source: On a scale of 0-10, where 0='I do not agree at all' and 10='I agree strongly', please indicate how much you agree with each statement?

## ABOUT THE (YOUTH) AUTHORS OF THIS REPORT



**Spence Goucher** was 22 years of age when she participated in conduct of this youth research study, and co-wrote the findings with Dylan. She was born in Melbourne, Australia. Spence attended Wesley College through years 5-12.

She studied at Victoria University and completed her Degree of Bachelor of Communications specialising in Professional Writing. She travelled throughout South East Asia, New Zealand and Europe during her studies before landing a full time gig at Reality Check Research shortly after finishing her degree.

For leisure she enjoys the outdoors, hitting the coast for a surf in the summer and strumming her guitar in the winter. Spence enjoys the Aussie life here, but is keen to continue her exploration of other worldly cultures.



**Dylan Callard** was 21 years of age when he participated in conduct of this youth research study, and co-wrote the findings with Spence. He was born in Melbourne, Australia of Scottish/ New Zealand migrants.

Dylan attended Williamstown High School through Years 7-10, before gaining a general excellence scholarship to Wesley College for Years 11-12. He is currently studying Journalism at RMIT University, with an ambition to become a Sports Journalist. He travelled extensively across Asia and Europe in a gap year before his study, and

supports his tertiary study with part-time work with Reality Check Research and an events production company through the summer months.

For leisure, he plays football for Spotswood in the WRFL, keeping fit off-season with gym work and occasional golf. Dylan is passionate about his life in Australia, with extended family overseas contributing to his understanding of the cultural advantages of living here.

**AS YOUNG AUSTRALIANS  
WE WANT, AND NEED TRUE  
EQUALITY. THIS DEMAND  
FOR EQUALITY STRETCHES  
ACROSS GENDER,  
SEXUALITY, NATIONALITY,  
RELIGION AND ALL OTHER  
WALKS OF LIFE.**





# FUTURE

## **WHAT WE BELIEVE NOW, WILL SHAPE OUR FUTURE**

As young Australians of today, we are filled with excitement and positivity about what the future holds, and (mostly) enthusiastic about the challenges that the future will present, as this report outlines.

We feel that our future here in Australia still offers 'a land of opportunity', but many of us are keen to take care to translate some of the happiness and values in our young lives now, into the future.

We believe that embracing social justice will help. We share a sense of responsibility to help create change, and support those more disadvantaged than us.

We do appreciate the benefits of living here. We still believe money and financial security will play a key role and that money will be a driving force for most of our futures; but, far from being greedy about it, our main desire is to be successful enough in our future endeavours just to earn enough money to live comfortably, and support our families.<sup>2</sup>

As supported by the Reach Quantitative Youth Survey results, whilst the desire to pursue our own dreams is strong, more young females would like to inspire others by doing so and giving back and helping out those who have been less privileged than us.

- ▶ For example, **63%** of females agree that they feel aware of the problems of others in the world and want to play a part in fixing them
- ▶ In comparison to only **47%** of males

Some young males place greater emphasis on monetary value in the workplace, feeling that it will elicit a greater sense of freedom.

- ▶ **75%** of females agree that money is important but it's more important to me that I love my job
- ▶ As opposed to **59%** of males agreeing

Importantly, our feelings about future employment opportunities, work and career are central to many themes in this report.

Key in that, we want to earn money doing something that we love and enjoy. The thought of being stuck in a job where we don't pursue our passion is met with great disdain.

Also, as young Australians, we are aiming to be pretty selfless individuals, and hopefully, less materialistic, certainly, more so than our parent's generation.

There is of course, a want to be successful and look after our own needs to a degree, but the realisation of how privileged we are to live in this country means that we challenge ourselves and our peers to give back to the communities that we have grown up as a part of.<sup>3</sup>

Most of us see the future as a time for adventure and exploration, filled with excitement, freedom, and most importantly, inspiration for ourselves, and others.

Above all else, we just want to be happy, and stay that way. Whilst recognising other factors that help shape our futures, such as freedom of expression, friends and family, our environment, hopes and empowerment.

<sup>2</sup> Reach Literature Review 2014: 'Youths also base their expectations on the belief that high incomes achieved through education and work would allow for their aspirations of leisure time, travel and childrearing to be achieved' (McDonald, Pini, Bailey, & Price, 2011)

<sup>3</sup> Reach Literature Review 'Young people also want to offer more than just dialogue on social justice issues with 67% involved in grassroots volunteering and 53% of young workers wanting to give back and make a difference through their professional pursuits' (Optus, 2014)





## THE 'PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS' IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO US, BOTH NOW, AND WHEN WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Putting aside the challenges, the environmental worries and the inevitable everyday stresses of life, at the end of the day we don't mind what we're doing or where we are, as long as we are feeling happy with life, overall.

And we know that there are many factors impacting our happiness.

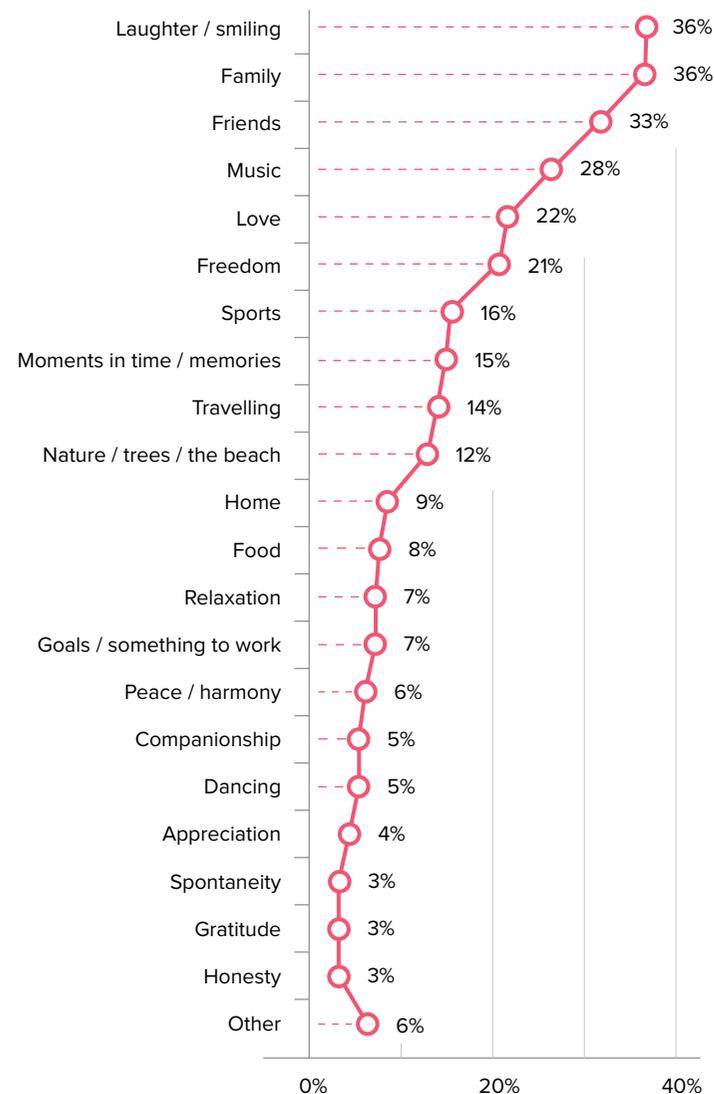
Whilst these factors of course vary from one young person to another, overall, we believe happiness is generally driven by the people that we surround ourselves with, and how we interact and connect with others.

It is not the materialistic things that make us happy but the small things.

As evidence of this, as indicated in the chart to follow, we feel the three factors that we use to describe happiness are all about **personal connectivity**:

- ▶ **36%** of us feel our happiness is driven by family
- ▶ **36%** by laughing and smiling
- ▶ **33%** feel our happiness is driven by our friends
- ▶ Music is also seen as a device that describes happiness, with 28% of young Australians surveyed also feeling that music is one of their key factors of happiness, no doubt as it so often reflects our moods

The chart below shows these and other elements that we defined as the key factors that we use to describe our happiness.



Survey Question 8: The following are words other young people living in Australia have used to describe what happiness means to them. Please choose three (3) words from the list below that best describes what happiness means to you. Base: n=560. Data has been weighted based on ABS's 2011 Census figures for the proportions of males and females in the 13-18 age group





# FREEDOM

## **WE BELIEVE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IS ALSO CRITICAL TO OUR FUTURES, AND OTHERS**

As young people, we believe that we should be able to express ourselves freely without fear of discrimination or judgement. It is extremely important in order to be able to grow and fully express ourselves.

However a number of young Australians harbour some concerns that there may be restrictions on freedom of expression in the future, and young Australian people in particular won't be able to speak out and have their voices heard.

## WE ALL BELIEVE FREE SELF-EXPRESSION IS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT

We fundamentally believe it is important for anyone to be able to express themselves however they like, without any fear of what others might think, say or do.

“ My concerns are that in the future we may not have the freedom to express ourselves as much as today. E.g. protesting for what we believe is right”  
**(Female, 17)**

“ I don't have any concerns for the future because I can express myself fine”  
**(Female, 13)**

Notably some of us particularly stress the need to be able to express ourselves without fear of persecution or judgement, because we feel it is the fundamental right of any person.

And we fear that without being able to speak our minds freely, we may not be able to grow into the adults we should become.

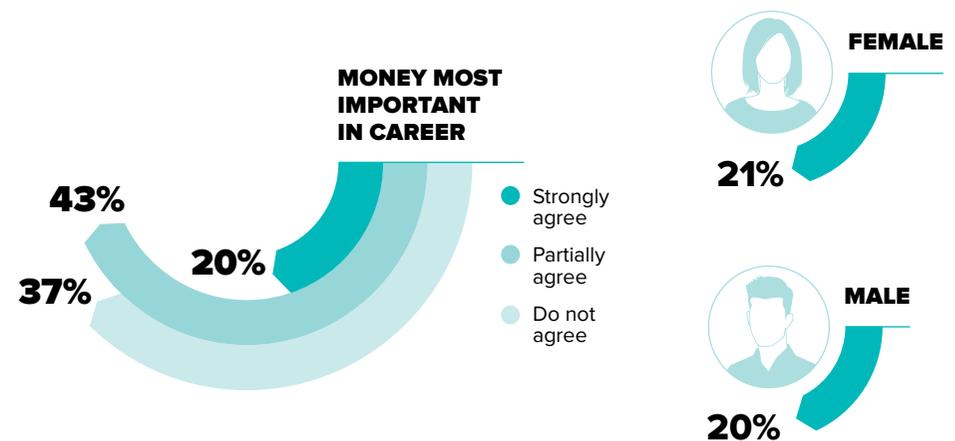
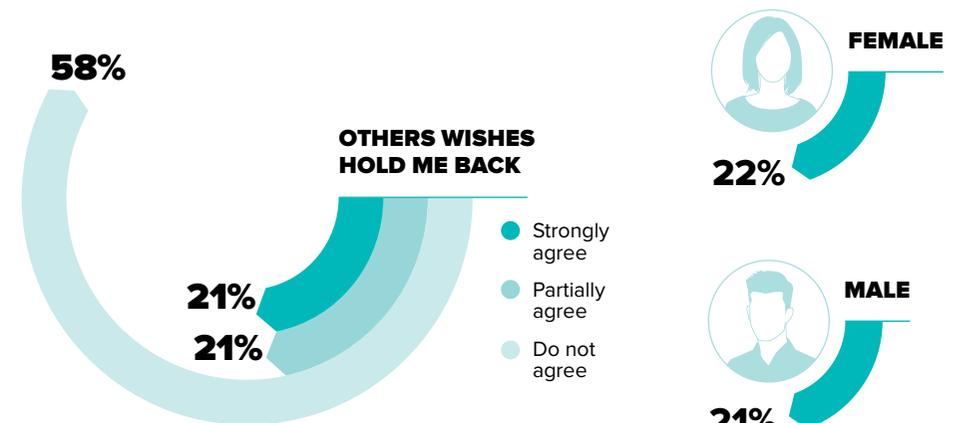
“ My social freedom to be and express is paramount. I should have the right to say what I feel I need to say, without fear of persecution, as long as it's not defamatory, slanderous, deemed to incite violence, racism etc.” **(Male, 17)**

“ If people aren't able to be themselves from a young age it means that we will change what they will become. We would lose so much potential from people who are really passionate about things but are too afraid to show it for fear of being judged” **(Male, 15)**

“ My concerns are that people will judge me and other people for expressing themselves, or that things come to a point where people are too afraid to express themselves and everyone strives to be the same”

**Female // 16**

## FREEDOM



Base: n=560 (female n=416; male n=144).

Data has been weighted based on ABS's 2011 Census figures for the proportions of males and females in the 13-18 age group.

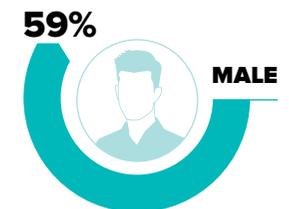
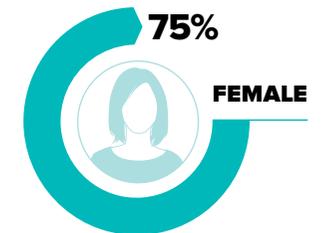
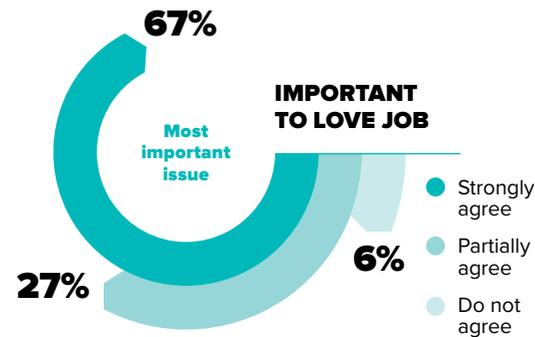
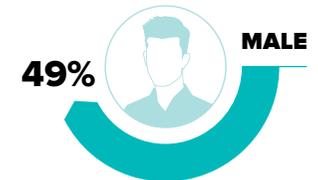
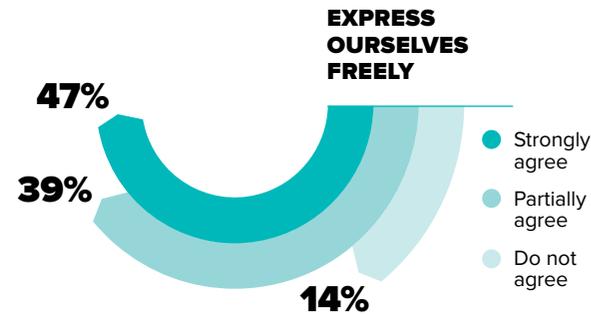
Source: Q10. The following are statements made by some young people living in Australia. On a scale of 0-10, where 0='I do not agree at all' and 10='I agree strongly', please indicate how much you agree with each statement.



“ I hope that in the future the freedom of speech act will still be in place and will allow people to speak up without any fear or threat”

Male // 18

## FREEDOM



Base: n=560 (female n=416; male n=144).

Data has been weighted based on ABS's 2011 Census figures for the proportions of males and females in the 13-18 age group

Source: Q10. The following are statements made by some young people living in Australia. On a scale of 0-10,

where 0='I do not agree at all' and 10='I agree strongly', please indicate how much you agree with each statement.

## SUPPRESSION OF YOUNGER VOICES REMAINS A CONCERN

Interestingly,

- ▶ **47%** of young people agree that we have the freedom to express ourselves how we choose
- ▶ **14%** disagree that we are able to express ourselves freely nowadays

There are some underlying feelings that our opinions are not valid or taken seriously due to our youth, age and lack of life experience.<sup>4</sup>

That subset of us feel that our opinions don't matter, and are not heard, as we feel those older than us and those in leadership or authoritative positions aren't hearing our voice simply due to our age and lack of life experiences and perceived lack of knowledge.

Many of us fear that this will not change and this attitude will move into the future and more young people will be afraid to voice our opinions and express our beliefs freely.

“ I don't think young people are listened seriously to by the Government, authorities or our older generation, like my parents. They think we are young and not as experienced as them, so they don't take us seriously” **(Female, 16)**

There is an apprehension when it comes to our freedom of expression as some feel that when we have previously done so, we have not been heard.

So, we feel that our efforts are wasted and that maybe in the future the voice of young Australians will become completely drowned out.

“ I used to like expressing myself regarding school policies, government's regulations and other social issues but now I feel young peoples' opinions are not treated seriously. So I now don't bother paying attention to these, as my opinions and suggestions are not really listened to, though we are encouraged to make a contribution” **(Male, 14)**

There is an element of concern expressed surrounding the suppression of our voices, whether relating to religious beliefs, political beliefs, or any number of other issues.

Some of us feel it is our right to speak freely, but express some concern as to whether maintaining free speech is an achievable goal into the future.

“ Freedom of expression is important to me as I feel it is one of the most basic human rights, any infringement to that whatsoever is draconian as the power is with the people in a democracy and without expression the government can do as they please so be less judgemental and instead be more accepting” **(Male, 18)**

“ I'm concerned that young people won't be able to freely express themselves in the future” **(Male, 16)**

## MORE YOUNG AUSTRALIANS ARE NEEDED AS LEADERS NOW, TO HELP SHAPE FUTURE AUSTRALIAN LEADERS

We believe it is important that we can express ourselves freely and be taken more seriously, as, at the end of the day we are the future of this country.

We should therefore be encouraged to speak our minds, express our opinions, share our beliefs and conduct ourselves in a manner that expresses who we are as a person.

“ This is important, to help the issue, people would need to be more accepting to make an honest environment for people to express their emotions and then we can learn from others” **(Female, 14)**

We also recognise it's important to listen and learn from others around us, as we can learn so much from each other and our differences in opinions and values. We are keen to be leaders, and to have more young leaders take the plunge, and step forward.

“ We need capable young leaders to speak and unite every young Australian by guiding us to be more expressive” **(Male, 14)**

## WE HAVE HIGH HOPES FOR CHANGE, AND YOUTH VOICES IN AUSTRALIA BEING HEARD MORE

We have much hope that this will change and that young people's opinions, emotions and beliefs will be heard and taken seriously.

We have hope that we will find our voice and speak out, and in turn, we can express ourselves freely always.

“ I hope I can be heard. So when I say something people think highly of it” **(Female, 13)**

We are happy to take on the role of change, and this is especially strong among females.

<sup>4</sup> Reach Literature Review 2014: "...often young people can feel as though they are perceived as a homogenous group, rather than unique individuals with valuable skills, experience and opinions that can lend value or insights to national debate" (National Youth Affairs Research Scheme, 2010)



**I WOULD HUGELY BENEFIT  
FROM A NEW CURRICULUM  
CHANGE WHERE THE  
EDUCATION SYSTEM FOCUSES  
ON OUR STRENGTHS RATHER  
THAN OUR ABILITY TO  
REMEMBER FORMULAS FROM  
TEXTBOOKS.**



### **SOCIAL MEDIA ASSISTING IN SOCIAL CHANGE**

The prevalence of social media in our lives means it has almost become an innate factor in the development of today's youth.

“ Social media is a driving factor in our life, without it some youths would feel lost or out of touch” **(Male, 16)**

Social media plays a significant role in the majority of young Australians lives and its usage has become a part of young Australian culture. The nature of social media allows for 24/7 social contact and allows for a greater exposure to a boundless range of social factors.

“ It's massive, it's huge, it's life now, our lives revolve around it, I feel like you can fall behind so easily and everyone is trying to keep up” **(Male, 17)**

“ Every conversation involves ‘have you seen that video or that picture’” **(Female, 17)**

There is some concern that elements of social media are taking over our lives and repressing our ability to truly express ourselves. Judgement and negativity from behind computer screens or mobile phones is also an element that concerns us, especially young females.

“ **My hopes for the future are that people will find their voice and speak out for what they believe in. Their voice has the power to change the world”**

**Female // 14**

“ I am concerned that in the future the only way for people to express how they feel would be to use social media to talk to people. I don't like using social media because I feel insecure on Facebook and feel vulnerable to people being negative towards others without any consequences for their actions” **(Male, 18)**

However, we are happy to take on the role of change here too. Social media is a driving factor in young Australians lives, not just as an effective tool for communication and interaction, but also as a promoter of change, or as a platform to have your voice or opinion heard. It's a support network of young people right at your fingertips.

“ What could I do? I could help spread the ‘word’. I would speak up, join an action group, I could be active in social media about these issues” **(Male, 17)**

We are open to actively taking small steps to ensure that young people now and in the future can express themselves freely and without fear of judgement.

“ I will try not to judge people that are proud and confident expressing themselves in different ways and will try and encourage everyone around me to be free to do as they like” **(Female, 16)**

### **WE BELIEVE BREAKING STEREOTYPES OF CLASSIC GENDER ROLES WILL BE PART OF THE FUTURE SOLUTION**

Amongst some of us, young males especially, there is still a feeling that stereotyped gender roles are playing a part in today's society, with hopes expressed that these 'stereotypes' will be broken in the future, and that all people are allowed to be whoever they please without fear of ridicule.

“ My concerns for the future regarding the freedom of expression are whether or not we will be able to have such freedom. My hopes and dreams are that we break free of these stereotypes and that both men and women have the right to be whatever they want. As an issue I find this very important because I remember growing up and doing things that weren't considered things that a boy would usually do. (i.e. wear dresses etc.)” **(Male, 16)**

## **MANY OF US ARE EXPRESSING CONCERNS REGARDING OUR CURRENT EDUCATION SYSTEM**

We feel we are being pushed to conform, and there is a sense that the current Australian education system suppresses freedom of speech, and freedom to be who we really are.

This largely stems from concerns that the routine of school becomes robotic, where each individual is being steered to the same outcome, rather than blossom as the unique individual that they are.

“ I feel like we're all the same thing, doing the same thing and sometimes it's hard to be me. Don't do that, do this, you can't do that, and maybe try this. Maybe I want to try it my own way and learn from the mistake” **(Female, 15)**

Some of us feel that the current system naturally discourages freedom of expression, because it feels like it decides who you are and what you do by your ability to memorise and recite textbooks, rather than being able to express your true self or focus on the things you are truly talented at.

“ My only concern for the future is the way students are being tested on their academic ability. Students don't have much freedom in proving their intelligence as everything is being assessed through the use of tests and exams. Why are creative subjects being scaled down? That is, to me, limiting the freedom of students and their ability to express their intelligence/academic ability” **(Male, 15)**

“ I would hugely benefit from a new curriculum change where the education system focuses on our strengths rather than our ability to remember formulas from textbooks” **(Male, 15)**

We believe the future education system needs to be far more tolerant both of diversity of interests and talents, and allow more young individuals to develop in more diverse, imaginative and different directions.



“ We feel the current education system does not always support freedom of speech, so there is room for improvement”



# SOCIAL JUSTICE

## **WHY WE BELIEVE EMBRACING SOCIAL JUSTICE WILL UNDERPIN OUR FUTURE HAPPINESS**

As young Australians we want, and need, true equality. This demand for equality stretches across gender, sexuality, nationality, religion and all other walks of life. It also stems from awareness of the current discrimination around us.

We understand that in today's society there is a wide range of discrimination, and we want to see change. Ideally, we would like to see everyone treated fairly and equally, starting right now.

“My hopes and dreams for the future would be to all be as one, and to be treated fairly no matter what we look like or where we are from. That no one is made to feel uncomfortable, and can feel happy with who they are, with what they believe in, and be proud of where they are from. My hopes for the future also involve having everyone in this country and world being treated and cared for correctly, without people starving and homeless or mistreated” (Female, 16)

### WE WANT MORE TOLERANCE OF DIVERSITY

Many of us, particularly a majority of young females, 74% agree that it is important to make a difference and 40% believe that everyone should build on or adopt tolerance and acceptance of diversity in order to resist and cease discrimination in the future. And, ideally, be better supported by good government example.

“I hope that in the future Australians will become more tolerant to all nationalities that call Australia home, I would like to see the poor, elderly and underprivileged looked after by the government and respected by more people” (Male, 15)

### MANY OF US DO ALREADY SEE POSITIVE CHANGES FOR THE FUTURE

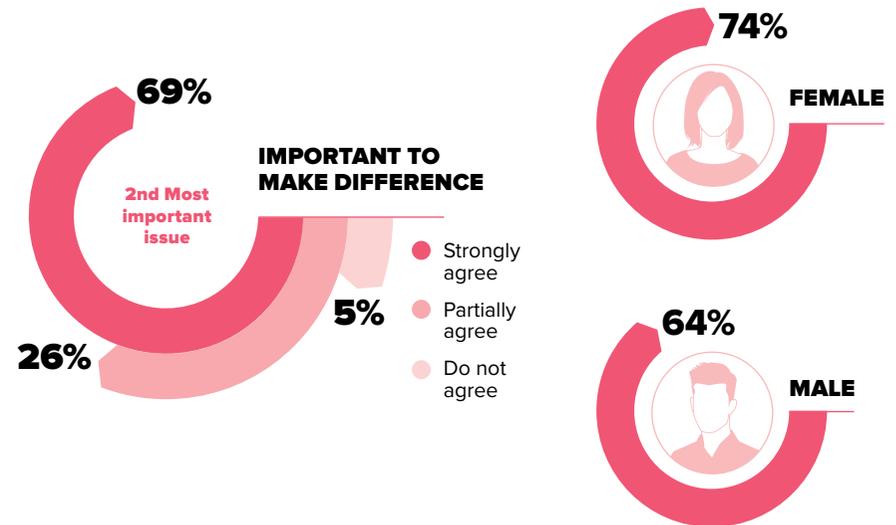
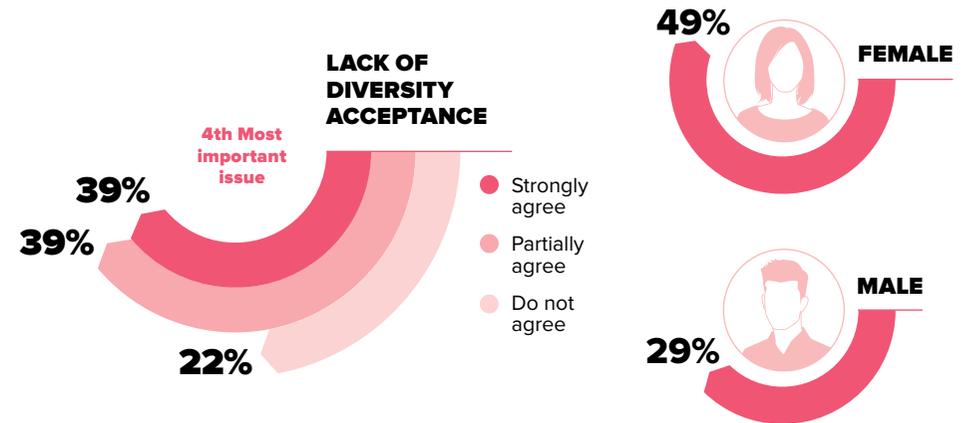
Many of us are optimistic about a more positive future regarding discrimination, and we believe there is hope for quite radical changes in the coming years. We believe that as younger people, we already have a wider acceptance and comfort when tackling racial discrimination in comparison to past generations, which encourages further improvements.

We can already see a change from previous generations to today's generation.

More and more young people are felt to be becoming more accepting and tolerant of people's differences, particularly in comparison to older generations such as our grandparents.

Most of us also readily want to take on a responsibility to continue that change, by continuing to be even more positive and accepting towards those of other cultures and nationalities.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE



Base: n=560 (female n=416; male n=144).

Data has been weighted based on ABS's 2011 Census figures for the proportions of males and females in the 13-18 age group.

Source: Q10. The following are statements made by some young people living in Australia. On a scale of 0-10, where 0='I do not agree at all' and 10='I agree strongly', please indicate how much you agree with each statement.



**“ I hope Australians will respect all people whether they are gay, straight, wherever they come from and whatever colour their skin is, but I think discrimination will always be present as it is our human nature to do so”**

**Male // 18**

**“** I feel comfortable with discrimination, though there are some bad stories reported by the media. I think younger generations are handling these issues with excellence because we have grown up from a young age surrounded with people from different cultures while old Australians are still sentimental with their ‘white people world’. I believe the issues regarding discrimination against different races or cultures will be better and better. There is still a long way to go though” **(Female, 15)**

### **YET, A FEW OF US STILL BELIEVE THAT DISCRIMINATION MAY CONTINUE TO WORSEN IN FUTURE YEARS AND FEAR HOW WE AND OTHERS WILL BE TREATED**

**“** I am concerned about society becoming harder to live in and harder for future generations to live in without discrimination” **(Female, 14)**

**“** My concerns for the future are that the future generations will grow up to treat others horribly” **(Female, 15)**

Consequently there still remains some concern that discrimination is unfortunately so ingrained within aspects of some people’s lives that discrimination will always remain to some extent, unless the majority with good intent can gain a stronger voice.

### **GENDER EQUALITY IS NOW STRONGLY ON OUR RADAR**

Although this ‘new more tolerant culture’ is trending amongst many of us, and we’re holding high hopes for the future regarding racial discrimination, some of us are also slightly fearful that gender inequalities will remain prevalent in our societies.

We still hope to grow into a future where we are able to choose a career path and follow that, regardless of our gender.

However, a select few of us females fear that due to our gender we will face struggles in the future when trying to enter our chosen career.

**“** The sex discrimination. I’m concerned that when I start to look for a job in the future, I will get fewer opportunities just because I’m a girl” **(Female, 14)**

Even with these lingering concerns about gender discrimination, most still believe that all deserve the opportunity to be in leadership positions, and, be treated equally.

**“** A truly equal world would be one where women ran half our countries and companies and men ran half our homes. I believe that this would be a better world” **(Female, 14)**

“ I think there is still room for improvement but I believe that if I wanted to be a woman in a powerful leadership position, I can be. I don't want to do that, but I'm glad that it's there for other girls if they choose to take that opportunity” **(Female 15)**

But not only do we want to choose a career path and succeed, but also to enjoy what we do. Monetary success isn't always our first thought, or, how we will assess our successes.

Enjoyment and happiness with what we do is of as much, if not more importance to us, as being able to achieve these goals in our chosen career. Success we feel will generally follow on from our desire to be happy in our jobs.

“ I hope that I can support myself and have a successful career that I love and enjoy” **(Female, 13)**

## **WE FEEL IT'S OUR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO GET INVOLVED IN THE SOLUTIONS**

We feel a strong sense of responsibility to try to minimise levels of hate and discrimination.

We hope that with greater emphasis on education, experience and empathy for those who are different, less fortunate, less privileged or ultimately living different lifestyles, changes can be made and we can live in a more socially just and accepting society.

“ I want Australia to be accepting of immigrants and asylum seekers, and for Australia to show itself as being a modern, tolerant society. I want politicians to listen to their voters, be socially responsible, responsive and proactive on issues of importance, not just serving their own self-interests” **(Male, 17)**

“ This issue is something that should be dealt with in the earlier stages of life, like visiting Indigenous communities or those less fortunate and see how they live. A lot of racism comes from the fear of the unknown, the more people are exposed to different cultures, the more we can understand that we are all equals” **(Female, 17)**

Some of us do have concerns about the voice of the 'little guy'; that opportunities for everyone may not be equal in a world that we feel is driven by materialistic values rather than allowing equal opportunity.

“ I feel that young people are being limited in their opportunities and being marginalised – the rich seem to have all the power and voice in society today” **(Male, 15)**



## **THE WAY FORWARD...**

### **WE BELIEVE A NEW MORE NON-JUDGEMENTAL YOUTH SOCIAL CULTURE IS STARTING, THAT BUILDS HOPE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

We are adopting a culture of our own in which we're making an effort to not pass judgement on others who may be different from us.

By doing so, we're building a strong hope for the future, although this attitude is still seen as a little optimistic and hopeful by some.

With recognition of the generational change in young Australians' attitudes to tolerance of diversity, there is still hope to carry this through to future generations and we are more than happy to be a part of the change, and hopefully be the ones who help implement it.

“ To me personally it's not a dramatic issue but an issue that I believe should be placed on my whole generation to change. I believe that more and more people that are being discriminated against should speak up so we have more of an understanding of ways to help them” **(Male, 14)**

“ I think that discrimination against things like race and sexuality may take some time to get rid of completely, but I feel that this is an achievable goal” **(Male, 16)**

## **WE THINK ACCEPTANCE OF SEXUALITY AND DIFFERENT PREFERENCES HAS TO BE AT THE CORE OF TRUE 'EQUALITY', IF IT IS TO BE ACHIEVED**

We do feel that in recent times, society has begun to be more accepting of sexuality.

We also feel we are at the beginning of a social change, because we are far more comfortable with our own sexuality and that of those around us than our parents or previous generations.

We believe that each person has a right to feel comfortable in their own skin without fear of discrimination or judgement.

Most of us have an open mind about sexuality, and we don't discriminate against those who may have a different preference to us. We believe that if people didn't judge those who are different to the socially accepted norm, then the world would be an easier place to live in.

“ My hopes and dreams for the future would be that we can live in peace with each other and not judge, although I think it will take a while to do so” **(Female, 13)**

Acceptance of sexuality is of the utmost importance to us, but especially so to females, because we believe so strongly everyone should be treated fairly. We believe that by doing so we are creating a stable social environment for ourselves, and future generations to come.

By changing our attitudes toward discrimination we believe we are making a change and that others will follow this change and behaviour. This behaviour change will create a much more humble environment, where we can live more harmoniously.

“ I will try to fix it by having an open mind when meeting people for the first time and not see them physically but get to know them as an individual”

**Female // 13**

## **MORE EDUCATION TOOLS ARE STILL FELT NEEDED, TO FURTHER REDUCE DISCRIMINATION**

To continue our efforts thus far, we believe that education should be used more, for current and future generations as a key tool to raise awareness and decrease discrimination and unfairness.

If there is more understanding, there will be less discrimination.

“ I think it is important to me, as unfairness and discrimination will not provide us a stable social environment. I think people need to be educated for those issues from a very young age. For me, for instance, I have a few gay friends though I am straight. I treat them the same as other friends and make sure they understand that gay is not a sin as it comes from the gene. Gays don't have to be guilty and they have their rights” **(Female, 15)**

Education and understanding is, we believe, the key to decreasing, or possibly even eliminating discrimination.

Whether it is racial, religion, gender or sexuality specific, if there is better understanding there will be a decrease in discrimination and increase in perceived equality. We believe we can learn from one another, and learn from mistakes made in the past to create a better future.

“ My hopes for the future are that people will learn from their own or other people's mistakes and they will be more mindful of their actions” **(Female, 15)**

“ I hope people are more respectful and understanding of each other regardless of their differences” **(Female, 16)**

We understand that this is a work in progress and it will take time, but we young people of Australia are happy to take on that challenge and extend our understanding to help others.

“ We can all work toward a better understanding together and work with one another to make sure all people are treated the same” **(Male, 15)**

Overall we are aware of our surroundings and we hope that the future will be an inclusive one that protects the freedom and rights of everyone in our communities to ensure that we're all treated equally.



# APPRECIATION

## **WE APPRECIATE THE PRIVILEGES OF BEING YOUNG IN AUSTRALIA, AND WANT TO SHARE THE BENEFITS**

We are privileged, but we do appreciate that privilege. We definitely don't take it for granted (despite some in older generation's beliefs).

Most of us want to use that privilege to give back to others, help make their lives better.

We want to inspire and support them through both our careers, and the general way in which we carry ourselves in our lives.

“ I would like to change or help at least one person’s life. Maybe I could teach them something or bring joy to their heart. I currently play drums and I really enjoy it which made me think it would be cool to join a band. This way I could probably inspire more than just one individual. I would also like to travel the world and explore the many fascinating things it has to offer. When I am older I would like to continue with what I love” **(Female, 16)**

### WE STRONGLY APPRECIATE LIVING IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT WITHIN AUSTRALIA

We have an appreciation for what we have, and a strong will to share that with others. This appreciation stems from realising that the quality of life here in Australia is higher than that of a lot of other countries.

► **77%** of young people agree that we have a good quality of life in Australia

“ I feel safe, we clearly live in a country that provides us with advantages over other countries” **(Female, 17)**

Many of us look comparatively at living in Australia, as opposed to other countries that suffer from unrest. Especially when watching the news every day, and witnessing the unrest so prevalent in other countries. Through that, we recognise that our living situations are typically much better than others and we feel lucky to be living here, so, Australia is ‘The Lucky Country’ still, even if maybe for different reasons now than before.

“ I hope I can continue living in a secured and safe country, where I can walk on the streets or travel on the train in the dark without fear” **(Female, 15)**

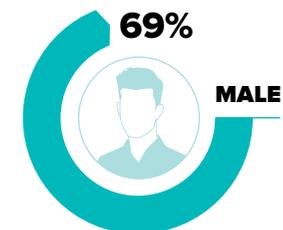
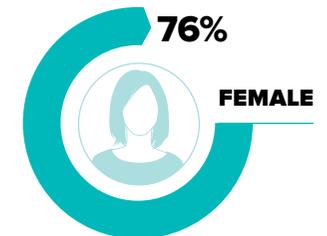
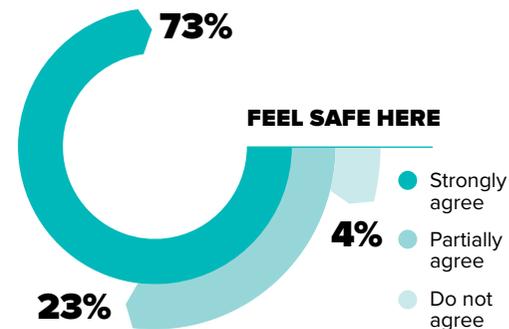
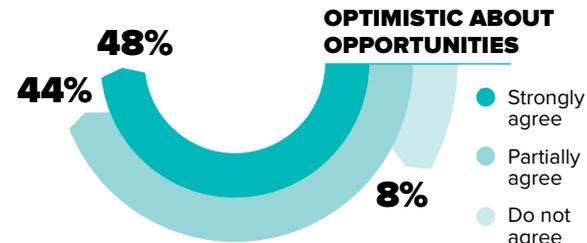
There is a strong sense of freedom and confidence that this sense of safety provides.

“ I hope the freedom that we enjoy here continues to be and that we will take a stand to protect it” **(Female, 17)**

For some, who have moved to Australia at a young age, the feeling of privilege is especially recognised, especially in comparison to previous living situations.

► **65%** of young people agree that we feel fortunate to be living in Australia

### APPRECIATION



Base: n=560 (female n=416; male n=144).

Data has been weighted based on ABS's 2011 Census figures for the proportions of males and females in the 13-18 age group.

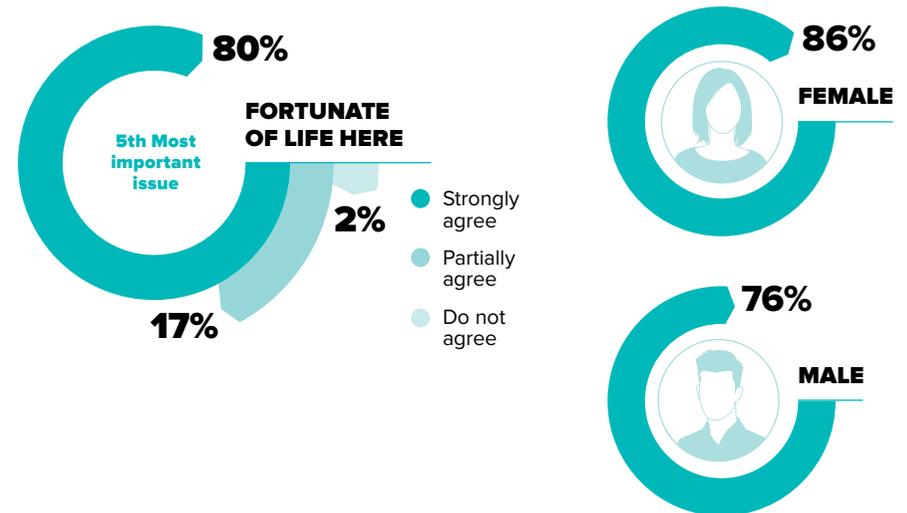
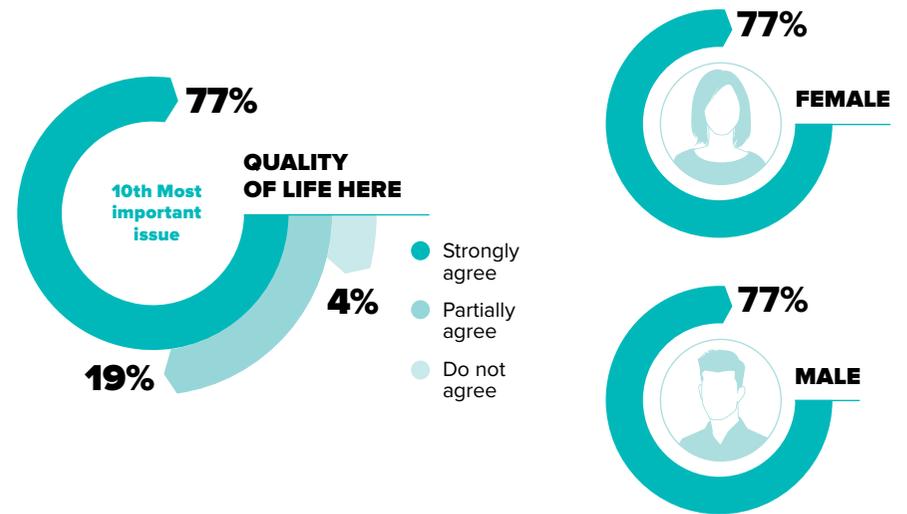
Source: Q10. The following are statements made by some young people living in Australia. On a scale of 0-10, where 0='I do not agree at all' and 10='I agree strongly', please indicate how much you agree with each statement.



“ I feel privileged to have moved to Australia and been granted a greater opportunity at life”

Male // 15

## APPRECIATION



Base: n=560 (female n=416; male n=144).

Data has been weighted based on ABS's 2011 Census figures for the proportions of males and females in the 13-18 age group.

Source: Q10. The following are statements made by some young people living in Australia. On a scale of 0-10, where 0='I do not agree at all' and 10='I agree strongly', please indicate how much you agree with each statement.

## YET SOME OF US FEEL THREATENED BY THE UNREST GLOBALLY THREATENING OUR FUTURE

Inevitably, some of our safety fears contribute to our anxieties, and figures below show that we don't know how we feel about safety in 10 years. Our sense of safety locally is challenged by our viewing of a turbulent world around us.

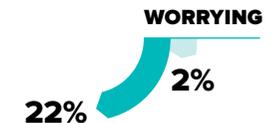
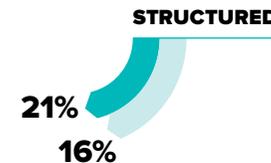
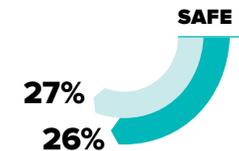
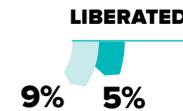
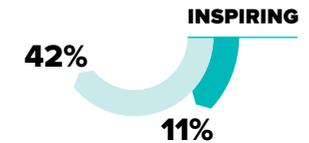
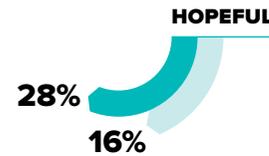
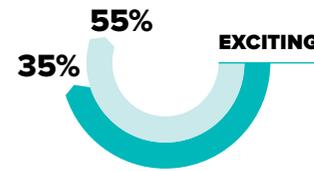
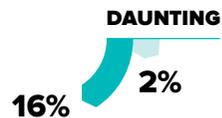
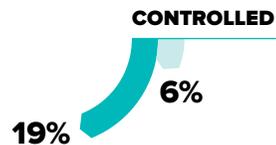
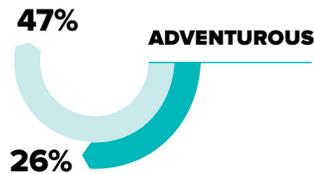
As reflected in the following chart, the proportion of young people who consider safety as one of the three key factors regarding how they would like to feel in 10 years is similar to the proportion of young people who currently feel safe. (Remembering the Quantitative Survey coincided with the troubling outbreak of Terrorism and ISIS barbarism, heavily covered in local media.)

This also explains how we are feeling now and how we would like to feel in the future.

The word we feel most describes our current lives is 'challenge', but this is not how we want to describe our lives in 10 years from now.

Alternately, around a quarter of us describe our life as 'exciting', compared with many more wanting to feel excited in the future.

We want to see our future also filled with freedom, adventure and inspiration.



- Q 6 // Select the words that best describe your life today
- Q 7 // Thinking about your life ten years from now, select the words that best describe how you would like to feel.

Question: 6. From the list below select the three (3) words that best describe your life today.  
 Question: 7. Thinking about your life ten years from now, select the three (3) words that best describe how you would like to feel.  
 Base: n=560 Data has been weighted based on ABS's 2011 Census figures for the proportions of males and females in the 13-18 age group.

## **WE ARE HOWEVER STILL CONFIDENT ABOUT, AND APPRECIATE, THE VAST EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES THAT WE BELIEVE AUSTRALIA WILL OFFER IN THE FUTURE**

Overall, we recognise that in Australia we still have many opportunities. We are grateful for the education that is available and feel that this will lead to a successful career. We feel that there are future employment opportunities in Australia that perhaps aren't offered elsewhere.

“ Living in Australia I feel I can get the job that I want when I grow up and not have to worry about that. I think this country gives us a lot of opportunities” **(Female, 17)**

For those of us who have had the opportunity to travel with family overseas, we have seen this first hand. As some of us enter the final years of high school, we are thinking towards future employment and are confident that most of us can find employment within Australia.

“ When I was overseas with my family, a young Greek lady was working as a waitress because she couldn't get a job in her field of nursing. It was sad. I don't think I would have to go through that here in Australia, I think there are lots of opportunities when looking for a job” **(Female, 16)**

The opportunities that living in a privileged country provides, means that we're full of ambition and hope for the future. We also hope and believe we'll all be given a fair chance and a fair go when seeking employment.

“ I feel very privileged to live in Australia, as most of the time everyone is given a fair go and everyone is given a chance. I appreciate everything everyone has ever done for me, whether it be small or large, it still counts and I am very happy for them to have been a part of my life. I am hopeful this will continue in the future. I don't have many concerns for the future, as Australia is quite a good place to grow up, especially compared to a lot of other countries” **(Female, 13)**

However not all of us are as optimistic about the future as others. There is a degree of pessimism surrounding the state of the world and its conflicts, based on the understanding that there will still be forms of discrimination in the future.

“ Most people don't have the same opportunities as we do in Australia, so you always think about those people who don't have what we have and I want to help them and give them just a little bit of what I have here” **(Female, 17)**

“ I'm concerned about people not being included and being viewed as equals, and not getting a job/position because of their beliefs, colour/race, gender, identity, etc. and my thoughts go to fights/wars because things like that happen all over the world very regularly and even though Australia usually doesn't have many conflicts, I am still concerned that it will happen, and I'm worried about future generations/ children that will have to grow up with it happening around them” **(Female, 13)**

## **CONSEQUENTLY, WE HAVE A DESIRE TO GIVE BACK TO OTHERS, TO HELP MAKE THEIR LIVES BETTER, AND SHARE THE BENEFITS**

When thinking about Australia in the future, we young people don't only think about ourselves and our personal hopes and dreams, but we think about how we can help others and improve the quality of their lives also.<sup>5</sup>

When asked to project our imaginations to the future, we not only see our personal hopes and dreams, but we look at the bigger picture to include others and those around us.

As young Australians, particularly females, we want to impact other people's lives in a positive and inspiring way. There is a broad aspiration to assist others beyond our own means.

Some of us are still stuck on the 'how' we're going to help and inspire others, whilst some of us are starting with the small things.

“ I want to help people in some way. I'm not really sure how but I want to make people happy and give people the best life possible” **(Female, 13)**

We want to help and assist others in any way that we can even if it's simply putting a smile on someone's face or perhaps through our professional pursuits. We think a lot about the positive impacts that we can have on others to benefit those who are less fortunate.

“ My hopes and dreams for the future are to help other people and know that me helping someone else feel just that tiny bit better or put a smile on their face for a few seconds could be the reason they decide to live and I want to do that for the rest of my life” **(Female, 14)**

These altruistic desires, whilst perhaps less common, are still prevalent for young males, who are astutely aware of the privileged environment we have been raised in.

<sup>5</sup> Reach Literature Review 2014: 'Young people are also focussed strongly on the wellbeing of disenfranchised members of their community, demonstrating a strong sense of empathy and social justice' (Eastern Region Alliance – Youth, 2013)



We appreciate and acknowledge that there are many people in disadvantaged countries that are not as lucky, and we are also keen to give back where we can.

“My hopes and dreams for the quality and opportunities of life in Australia is that each individual uses the resources this country has given them but also be sure to give some back. Nothing annoys me more when people just sit around and put their hands out for the government to pay them while they sit around and do nothing” **(Male, 16)**

“I can donate to homeless charities or donate to the homeless themselves” **(Male, 16)**

### **THIS SENSE OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IS BECOMING THE BASIS FOR MANY OF OUR LIFE CHOICES, AND EXPECTATIONS**

As young Australians we are very keen to take on more social responsibility.

This extends into goals to do volunteer work, with some more broadly thinking about adoption or even taking on the role of a foster parent in the future.

“I would like to consider adoption when I have a family of my own, because there are a lot of children out there without a family” **(Female, 15)**

We want to share what we have and let others experience that too.

We want to actively do something to help others that don't have the same opportunities that Australian's do.<sup>6</sup>

“Before I settle down I want to travel and even do some volunteer work to help those less fortunate than I” **(Female, 17)**

When we look to our hopes and dreams for the future, many of us aren't quite sure what we want to do as a career choice, but that aside, we know we want it to affect others in a positive way.

Jobs that allow us to use our skill set in a professional manner to help others are appealing to us.

“My hopes for the future would be to be able to help people in some way, maybe as a counsellor or psychologist. I want to be able to let people know that they are not alone and be someone they can tell their worries to” **(Female, 16)**

### **WE WANT TO USE OUR SKILLS TO INSPIRE AND HELP OTHERS**

Inspire is a word that we use when talking about helping people. If there's a way to use our strengths to inspire those around us, we want to be able to do that.

Whether it is through writing a book, joining a band, our chosen career path, or following any dream that we may have, we still want others to feel inspired to chase their own dreams too.

When we think about our own dreams

- ▶ **54%** of females describe their future life as inspiring
- ▶ In comparison, **31%** of males describe their future life as inspiring

“My personal dream for my future in Australia is to become a writer, so I can inspire people into believing in themselves and never giving up the right. Just as past and present writers have taught me, you know just a song, a sentence or maybe even just a word could change someone's world and make them strong, that would be enough” **(Female, 13)**

We feel an obligation, and are driven to help create better lives for people through the way in which we live our own. Through the way we use our skills and privileges to help and support others.

Through using the things that have been given to us, to help others achieve their goals.

<sup>6</sup> Reach Literature review 2014: 'Additionally, many have the expectation that they will be able to help make a difference in other people's lives through volunteering, philanthropy or other social impact related endeavours' (Optus 2014).



# CHALLENGES

## OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CHALLENGES

Most of us are not afraid of facing the challenges we defined as most influencing our lives.

And, out of the challenges we are experiencing right now, we recognise there are opportunities to help us achieve our hopes and dreams.

## WE RECOGNISE WE WILL BE PRESENTED WITH A NUMBER OF CHALLENGES IN THE FUTURE

Not least, we are perilously aware of the already high and continually rising cost of living in Australia.

“There isn’t much I can do to increase employment as well as decreasing cost of living, but there are ways to help myself get around these dilemmas” (Male, 16)

Coupled with that, there are concerns that the rising population will leave job shortages or difficulty getting into our preferred line of work.

“As for opportunities, there are less and less jobs available as I feel unemployment might go up as the population rises. The cost of living might also continue to rise” (Male, 17)

The rising cost of living is felt to put all other concerns into some perspective for us.

► 63% of youths agree with the following statement, ‘Everything is expensive, if I want a comfortable lifestyle I’ll have to work hard’

“I’m worried about high cost of living in the future, lack of employment opportunities, and a dwindling employment base. Will I even be able to afford a home” (Male, 15)

## DUE TO ALL OF OUR GOALS WE REALISE THAT WE WILL HAVE DELAYED LIFE TRANSITIONS IN COMPARISON TO OUR PARENTS BEFORE US

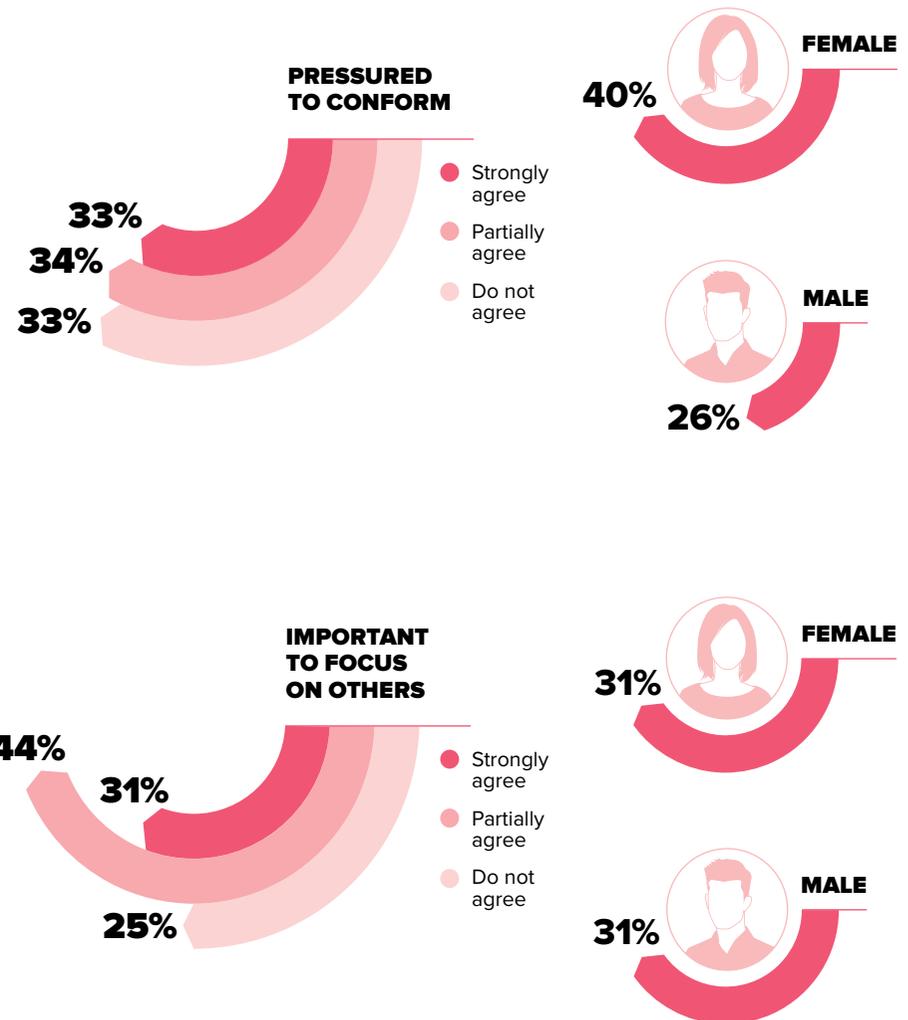
We realise that things that were once easy to achieve in the past have now been made harder. We will experience and achieve things that our parents did, much later in life, such as moving out of home and owning our own home. This is due to the increased transition from school, to full time study.

However, these experiences are also often delayed due to the exploration and travel dreams that we have and want to experience once we leave the education system, so we recognise it is our choice.

Most of us are choosing to settle down later in life after we have experienced travel of some sort.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Reach Literature review 2014: ‘However, delays in starting a family are common as a result of the delay of many life transitions among today’s young people, including moving from study to full time work, moving away from home, selecting a partner and getting married’ (Qu & Soriano, 2004)

## CHALLENGES

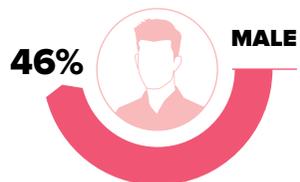
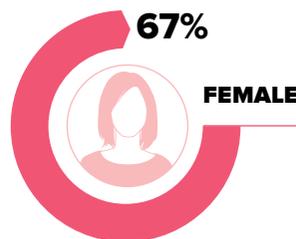
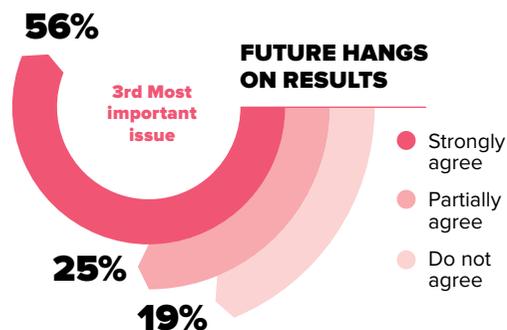
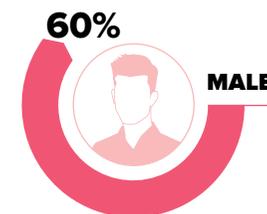
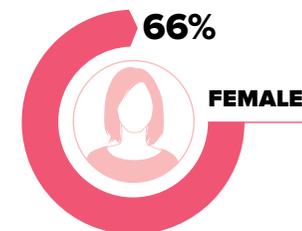
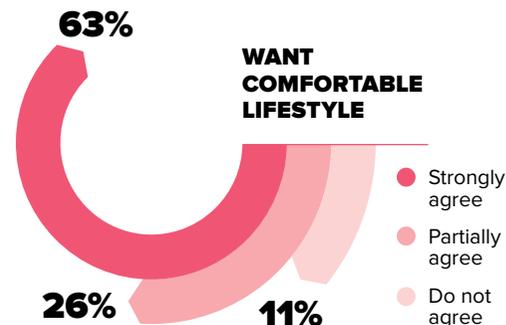
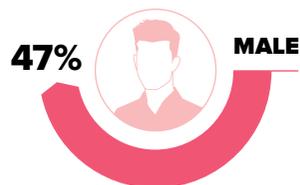
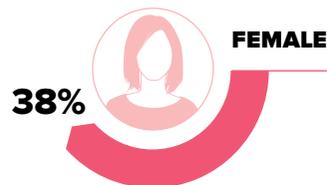
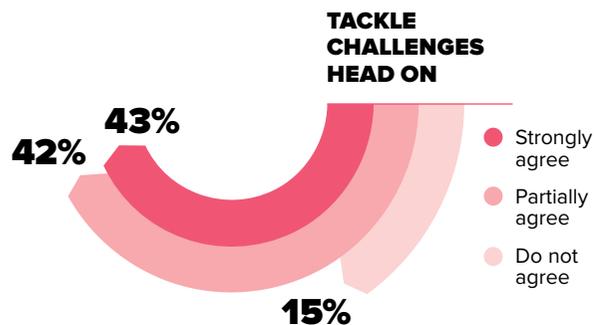


Base: n=560 (female n=416; male n=144).

Data has been weighted based on ABS’s 2011 Census figures for the proportions of males and females in the 13-18 age group.

Source: Q10. The following are statements made by some young people living in Australia. On a scale of 0-10, where 0='I do not agree at all' and 10='I agree strongly', please indicate how much you agree with each statement.

## CHALLENGES



## CONFORMITY, AND THE TRANSITION TO ADULthood MAKE US QUESTION OUR ABILITY TO ACHIEVE A BALANCED LIFE

There is apprehension among most of us as we go through the education system, we feel weighed down by controlled factors and feel we're being pushed to conform.

We feel pressures from external sources such as parents and teachers to perform well.

We also pressure ourselves to perform well.

Often, we have the mentality that we only have one chance and we need to make it worthwhile in order to end up in a career that we want to be in and to have the success that we dream of. We will not settle for anything less.

When approaching the age of 16 and 17 years old and moving into the final years of schooling, naturally many of us are more anxious than at other ages.

“ I just feel pressure, I don't even know where it comes from half the time, I probably put it on myself” **(Female, 17)**

There are more worries and higher stress levels due to the preparation for the end of high school and leaving the education system more than we have been familiar with for most of our lives.

Base: n=560 (female n=416; male n=144).  
 Data has been weighted based on ABS's 2011 Census figures for the proportions of males and females in the 13-18 age group.  
 Source: Q10. The following are statements made by some young people living in Australia. On a scale of 0-10, where 0='I do not agree at all' and 10='I agree strongly', please indicate how much you agree with each statement.

“ We have so many pressures from family, school, and wider communities. We are young and inexperienced. We have strong wills but are not sure what the right path is for us to be happy”

Female // 16

“ It's scary when I think about leaving school and I would hope I have the right marks to get into the right course at university” (Female, 17)

We are filled with apprehension as we deal with the pressures of performance.

- ▶ Females are more likely to describe their life as worrying (29%) or daunting (22%)
- ▶ In comparison to the more relaxed approach of males with only 16% describing their life as worrying

“ I know I will be able to do what I want to do, it will all work itself out” (Male, 17)

Not only do we feel pressure to perform but we feel pressure to conform. We feel the need to fit in with the social norm.

As detailed before in the chapter regarding our view to Education, in today's education system we feel that we are being sculpted a particular way which doesn't factor in our personal skills.

Many of us feel this is pushing us away from creativity and it doesn't help us build a tolerance of any diversity among one another.

It is a challenge to achieve the right balance between wanting to live the life we dream of, yet maintaining some of the more old fashioned traditional values passed on to us. We dream of wanting to travel and explore, but also dream of starting a family of our own and settling down, it's a challenge to find the right balance between the two.

“ My dream is that people will push and challenge themselves to see who they are as an adult” (Female, 13)



“ Support, achievement and balance. My hopes and dreams are to be able to do what I have wanted and to be able to see clearly where I want to go in life and to have enough hope in my path so that I am confident enough to start achieving my goals”

Female // 18



# ENVIRONMENT

## OUR FEELINGS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

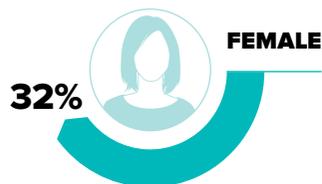
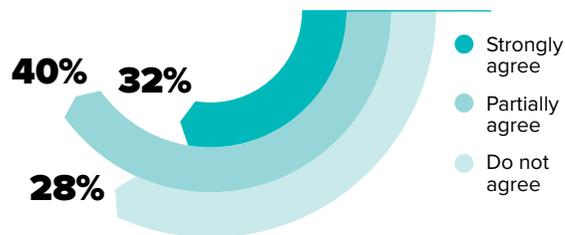
The environment and maintaining a sustainable future is very important to us as young people. We are very aware of the impact that human activity is having on the earth and fear that we may grow to live in a concrete jungle.

We have ongoing concerns regarding global warming, climate change and sustainability. There are fears that our current lifestyle is simply no longer sustainable.

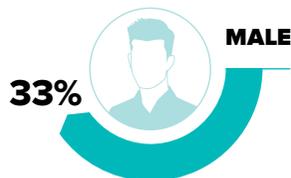
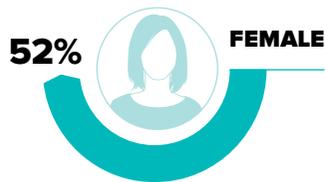
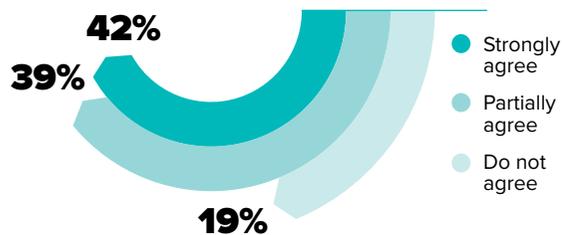


## ENVIRONMENT

### NOTHING BEING DONE ABOUT ENVIRONMENT



### WE ARE THREATENING ENVIRONMENT



Base: n=560 (female n=416; male n=144).

Data has been weighted based on ABS's 2011 Census figures for the proportions of males and females in the 13-18 age group.

Source: Q10. The following are statements made by some young people living in Australia. On a scale of 0-10, where 0='I do not agree at all' and 10='I agree strongly', please indicate how much you agree with each statement.



## CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY CONCERNS ARE FRONT OF MIND

We feel generally aware about the dangers of climate change and the effects that our industrial lifestyle is having on the earth, and the fact that the way we live currently isn't sustainable.<sup>9</sup>

Some of us are also aware of the effects that we personally are having on the environment and strongly realise that changes need to be made in order to have any positive effect in the future.

“ One day we might run out of oil and coal, and pollution might mean we run out of clean water, which will affect us all seriously” **(Male, 15)**

However there are concerns that too many of us are still ignorant to the effects of climate change.

“ Society is still ignorant of the impact that they are causing on global warming and the effects it will have on future generations” **(Male, 16)**

Beyond our own responsibilities, there is a heightened sense of political awareness, and concerns surrounding the current government's perceived lack of action on the matter.

“ I hope governments all over the world start to act strongly on climate change and the reality that is global warming. I hope as a nation we stop relying on coal and oil and start to use more sustainable energy sources” **(Female, 17)**

<sup>9</sup> Reach Literature review 2014: 'The issue of global warming in particular is seen as a major threat to Australia's future, with a study in Queensland finding 61% of young people are concerned about the impact of global warming' (Tranter & Skrbis, 2011)

“ My hopes and dreams for the future of the environment are just that we allow the world to regenerate so that there is nothing to worry about like global warming. Let’s not end up like the Lorax”

Male // 16

## WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT OUR ENVIRONMENTAL FUTURE

Environmental factors are high on the agenda of importance and anxieties for most of us.

Some of us are so concerned about our own futures and that of future generations and the state of the environment, that we are feeling empowered to do our bit, whether it be big or small, in order to try and make a difference.

“ This is very important to me. I think the only way to fix it is to keep telling our governments that we want change. I think that if everyone does their bit at home and lives more sustainably, it would make a difference” (Female, 17)

Some of us are even thinking about our associated interests and how we could turn that into a career that is going to positively impact our environment. We’re already thinking of new ways to increase sustainability.

“ My family recycles as much as possible; we should encourage people to plant trees and plants. I will do my best to try to help and protect the environment” (Female, 14)

We don’t want to live in a future that is fully industrialised; or a world where all natural wildlife and resources have been exhausted.

We would like to be able to enjoy the future, and the beauty that the earth beholds.

“ I am very concerned about rising pollution levels, global warming, feeding a growing world and preserving our native habitats and species. I fear that biodiversity will decrease due to a large number of factors, and that extreme weather events will become more common and more deadly” (Male, 17)

“ I want to live in a world with gardens and trees, not just concrete” (Male, 15)



“ As I do have an interest in Science, I would hope to perhaps investigate possible ways in which we can create more efficient and reliable sources of energy”

Female // 18



# FAMILY

## **WE BELIEVE FAMILY AND FRIENDS WILL REMAIN A CENTRAL PART OF OUR FUTURE**

Family and friends are of course playing a very large role in our lives. Most of us are relying on our family and friends for support, but some of us are struggling to balance future desires.

Freedom, success and security and played against the desire for more traditional, old fashioned family values. We're finding it difficult to find a happy medium between the two and pair that with our ever-increasing exploration and travel dreams.

## OUR FUTURE FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIP EXPECTATIONS VARY

Starting our own family is a strong desire for the future in young females especially.

When we project our lives to the future most of us see family playing an important role in developing and being of our future selves.

Most of us also mention in particular finding a life partner, settling down in a home, having children and growing as a family unit.

“ I have a picture of a family because I want to be a mum and a wife. I want to stay close to my family. I want to help people in the world so that Earth can be a better place” **(Female, 15)**

Young males on the other hand don't always put family first when thinking to the future. We often think of our successes and our environmental surroundings before we think of family. Family is not always prevalent at first thought, but of course when mentioned; we want to enjoy the joys that a life partner and children bring, and to be able to share our success with the people we love.

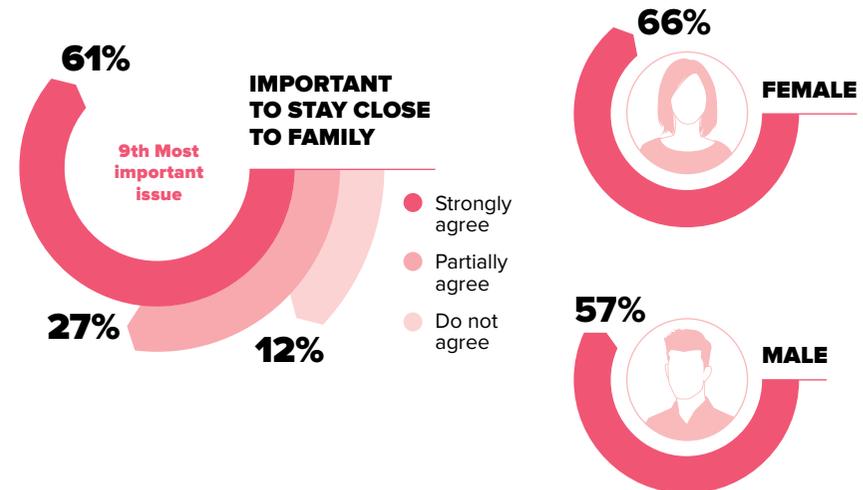
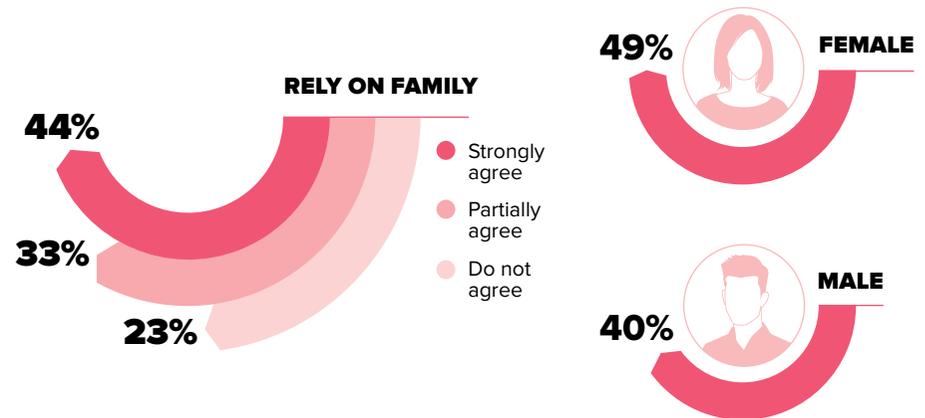
“ To have a loving partner and children. To have (all four of my) parents actively involved in my children's lives. That we are all healthy and happy as an expanded family” **(Male, 16)**

“ I'm concerned that I may lose contact with most of my friends when we graduate from high school, there is also the chance that I lose contact with my family as well when I move out of the house. I think the best way around this would be to spend as much time as I can with my friends. However, the impact of travel overseas and exposure to different cultures is also important for our personal growth and development” **(Male, 16)**

“ To find a course I enjoy, do well and be able to get a decent paying job and afford a home, and also a car and have a family”

**Male // 14**

## FAMILY



Base: n=560 (female n=416; male n=144).

Data has been weighted based on ABS's 2011 Census figures for the proportions of males and females in the 13-18 age group.

Source: Q10. The following are statements made by some young people living in Australia. On a scale of 0-10, where 0='I do not agree at all' and 10='I agree strongly', please indicate how much you agree with each statement.



**“ It’s important to surround yourself with friends who want to achieve the same goals as you, but we all get there in different ways”**

**Female // 15**

## **FAMILY CONNECTIONS ARE REALLY IMPORTANT**

When thinking to the future, we expect to keep a strong family connection with our parents, siblings and extended family.

Family for young Australians extends well beyond just the closest members of their family. It even extends beyond relatives. To many of us, family mean our friends, the people we spend every day with, the people we laugh, love and share memorable moments with.

**“** I want my life to be shared with people I care about, and I hope that when I do get older and start going through bigger challenges in my life, that I will always have true friends and family to help support me and get me through it” **(Female, 16)**

## **KEEPING A SENSE OF HOME AND COMMUNITY**

There is a strong sense of ‘home’ and community values among young males. Whilst travel and exploration is high on the agenda, the sense of community and the strength that it brings us means we see our future in the neighbourhoods we grew up in, where we know and love the people in our areas, and family values run true.

**“** Family and community are very important to me. I come from a small town and there is a very strong sense of community here. I think that more and more people these days want to create a broader sense of family and community. It is almost trendy” **(Male, 15)**

Whereas young females tend to stretch the mind and think more about exploration and travel rather than settling in the neighbourhood that they were raised. We take a more activist role to create change, focussing on living in and experiencing other cultures.

Young Australians are fairly emphatic in the sense that they want to remain close and in touch with their families, friends and the people they have grown up with. But there is also a strong relationship between exploration, and meeting new people, making new friends and enjoying the pleasures that doing so entails.

**“** I hope that my family and friendship group will get closer and grow together. I hope my friends will treasure each other and I will get to make many new friends” **(Male, 15)**

**“** I hope to always have friends, to make many new friends and to stay in contact with my current friends” **(Male, 15)**

“ I hope that the importance of family and community continues to be a big part of Australian life, but I want a change of scenery and explore other environments”

Female // 17

## OUR SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Family is seen as a support system. Our family is there to guide and support us through our journey. As we grow older, our support system changes, it is not only limited to our parents, but inevitably extends into our friends, peers and our teachers.

Most of us find comfort in those who are not only going through the same notions but in those who have experienced the things we strive to achieve. We trust that they have our best interests at heart.

“ My mates are considered family too, they’re the ones who I spend most of my time with anyway” **(Male, 16)**

Our inner circle of friends and family are the keys to our hopes and dreams as they’re the ones that support us and help us achieve them. They keep us inspired and motivated in setting goals that are achievable.

Our teachers don’t so much inspire us, yet they certainly support and guide us. They assist and encourage us to reach our potential and give us a sense of safety with in the education system.

“ I get support from not only my family, but my friends and my teachers” **(Female, 14)**

We are heavily influenced by our parents and their expectations for us. Also we are influenced by our peers and their attitudes towards education and future plans. It is important to us to have a comfortable relationship with our teachers as they play an important role in our success.

“ I don’t feel pressure from my parents, but I know that they have some expectations” **(Male, 17)**

## INSPIRATION IS FOUND THROUGH MANY SOURCES

Our sources of inspiration come from the same groups of people. It’s not only driven by family and friends, but it also comes from four groups of people: musicians, sporting professionals, business people and humanitarians are the types of people we look up to and draw inspiration from regularly. These types of people leave us with the strong desire to succeed in any profession we dream of.

“ The things that make me happy and inspire me are being with my friends, feeling loved and accepted. Music is a great source of inspiration for me. I always feel happy at holiday times and at parties. I am keen on keeping fit and healthy and I have noticed that I feel good after exercise. My pets also make me feel happy and last but not least the love of my family” **(Male, 14)**

## SOCIAL CONCERNS WEIGH HEAVILY ON SOME ESPECIALLY FRACTURED FAMILIES

The main concerns surrounding family and its involvement in the Australian dream are losing touch with family and friends over the journey, or having a fractured or broken household, usually as a result of divorce.

Some of us touch on our own experiences with divorce, and how it has affected our lives and why we hope that isn’t something we ever have to deal with, or put our children through, as most found growing up in a separated family can adversely affect family bonds and values.

“ Growing apart and disregarding family members is hopefully something I never have to go through. Fighting with family and friends is inevitable, but ensuring there are ways to stop these or solve these issues is beneficial to my hopes and dreams. Family and friends are of high priority to me” **(Male, 15)**

“ It’s not something I want to put my kids through, I’ve been the mediator for my parents and I’m too young for that” **(Female, 16)**

“ I am concerned with the fact that more and more people are getting divorced, and that this tends to be quite normal in today’s society. Speaking from personal experience, I know how this can affect children, it’s is not a nice feeling” **(Male, 18)**



# EXPLORATION

## **A CENTRAL PART OF OUR AUSTRALIAN YOUTH DREAM IS TO HAVE THE FREEDOM TO TRAVEL AND EXPLORE**

Exploration is how young people are often connecting to themselves, society, community and the world as a whole. We would all like to travel at some stage in our lives and experience different parts of this world.

There is an urge to immerse ourselves in as many different and unique cultures as possible. Many of us would like to live or work overseas at some stage of our professional careers.



“ My dream is that lots of people get the opportunity to discover the wonders the Earth has to offer” **(Female, 17)**

“ I want to travel the world, and experience and see as many different places and cultures as possible” **(Male, 15)**

### TRAVEL PROVIDES DISCOVERY OF SELF THROUGH SOAKING UP AND EXPERIENCING OTHER CULTURES

Travelling is seen as something that will lead to a discovery of self, and promote self-expression through the experience of different cultures.<sup>11</sup>

We don't only want to travel to a holiday destination, but we want to soak up and experience as much of the many different cultures the world has to offer as we possibly can and learn all about different people in different societies and how they live in other parts of the world.

We see this as a great learning tool where we can feed and open our young minds to new experiences, rather than just a having a relaxing holiday.

“ My hopes and dreams would be to be able to travel around the world and see life in another country. To be able to make new relationships with people overseas and gain a new outlook in life from travelling experiences. I hope that I would be able to become a better and more responsible person from exploration experiences” **(Female, 16)**

It is beyond just travel and seeing parts of the world, there is a level of diversity and appreciation that we are seeking. We understand that the world is vast and full of different people, beliefs and cultures.

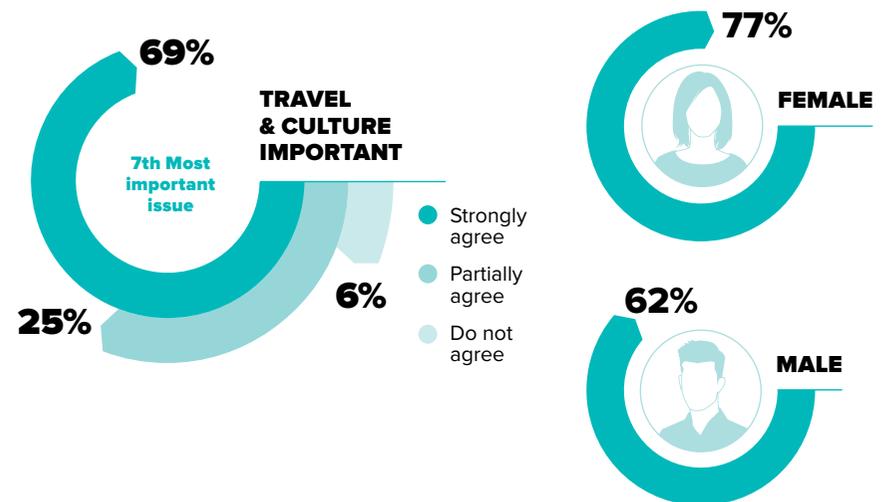
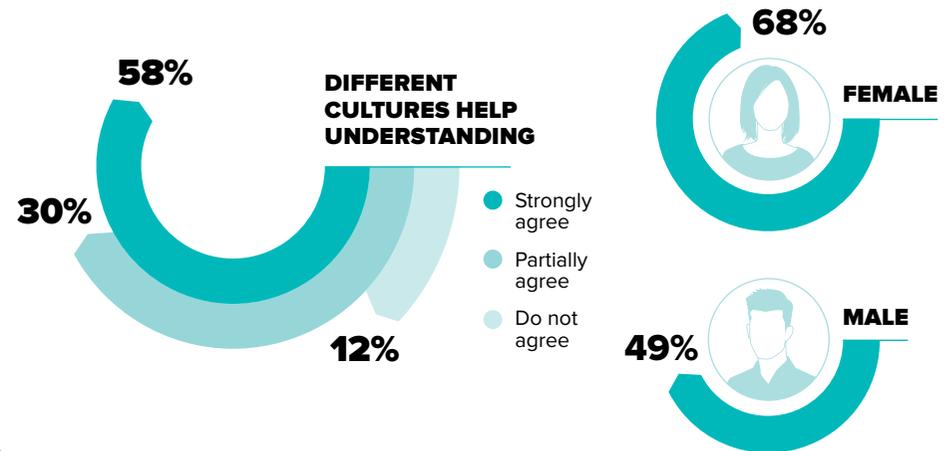
There is an urge to get out there and immerse ourselves in these cultures, to help out through volunteering and experience everything travelling has to offer, ultimately for the betterment of ourselves.<sup>12</sup>

“ It is important to explore and travel the globe to experience not just new cultures but everything else that travel allows” **(Male, 16)**

“ I think travel is great and exposes people to other ways of life and has almost no negatives” **(Male, 16)**

<sup>11</sup> Reach Literature review 2014; 'The future leisure activities of young people is often reflected as a desire for travel, with a growing expectation from young people that they will go through periods of travel before settling down into real life and marriage' (McDonald, Pini, Baily & Price, 2011)

## EXPLORATION



Base: n=560 (female n=416; male n=144).

Data has been weighted based on ABS's 2011 Census figures for the proportions of males and females in the 13-18 age group.

Source: Q10. The following are statements made by some young people living in Australia. On a scale of 0-10, where 0='I do not agree at all' and 10='I agree strongly', please indicate how much you agree with each statement.

## **IT'S MORE THAN TRAVEL, FOR SOME IT'S LIVING ABROAD TO FULLY EXPERIENCE A DIFFERENT WAY OF LIVING BEFORE WE SETTLE DOWN**

Travel and exploration of the world is considered a form of personal growth and a means of gaining perspective and appreciation of what we have back home. Most of us would like to experience living in another country before we settle down and think about a family of our own.

We feel that this will assist with our personal growth and is an experience that we should have before we also pursue our chosen professional career.

“ I think young people should open their eyes by experiencing different cultures to understand the world around them. It is very good for personal growth”  
**(Female, 15)**

“If I'm going to travel or live overseas, I think I will do it while I'm still young before I start a family” **(Female, 17)**

Some of us would also want to go that one step further. We dream of a life where we are able live, work or study overseas for an indefinite period of time. Hence, we are fully immersing ourselves and truly experiencing the life of other cultures, various environments and different systems.

“ I hope that one day I am able to study or find a job overseas”  
**(Male, 16)**

But dreams of travel aren't only limited to this world alone. Those who dare to dream big feel that even something such as space travel is not off-limits in the eyes and minds of a select few.

“ I have always dreamed of being able to go to space someday – that has always been a childhood dream of mine”

**Male // 15**

<sup>12</sup> Reach Literature review 2014: 'More Australian young people are seeking volunteering opportunities overseas, which bridge their needs for travel with opportunities to grow their independence and confidence and to have a positive impact on the world' (Latitude Global Volunteering, 2014)



## **TRAVEL IS ALSO ABOUT CONNECTING WITH OUR WIDER GLOBAL FAMILY AND HISTORY. A FAMILY AND HISTORY THAT IS A RESULT OF AUSTRALIA'S CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

Australia is a multicultural and diverse nation and so many of us have family from all corners of the world. It's a dream of ours to connect with and visit family from overseas, where we discover cultural history.

We're extremely keen to explore our roots and get to better know the cultures and beliefs that our grandparents have passed down to us.

“ I would like to see where my family comes from and discover my family's history and culture because that in turn is where I have come from” **(Female, 15)**

“ I like many others would absolutely love to travel the world and experience different cultures. I come from an Asian background and I'm fascinated by the way they live and the different culture they have to here, so I would like to see and learn more about where I come from” **(Male, 15)**

The ability and want to travel the globe is perhaps more accessible than 20 or 30 years ago. But our thirst for adventure is surely something that harbours a better future for the young Australians of today, creating more experienced, cultured and educated young minds.

We feel there is only so much we can learn in a school or workplace. Experiencing everything that is out there is part of the adventure of life.



# EMPOWERMENT

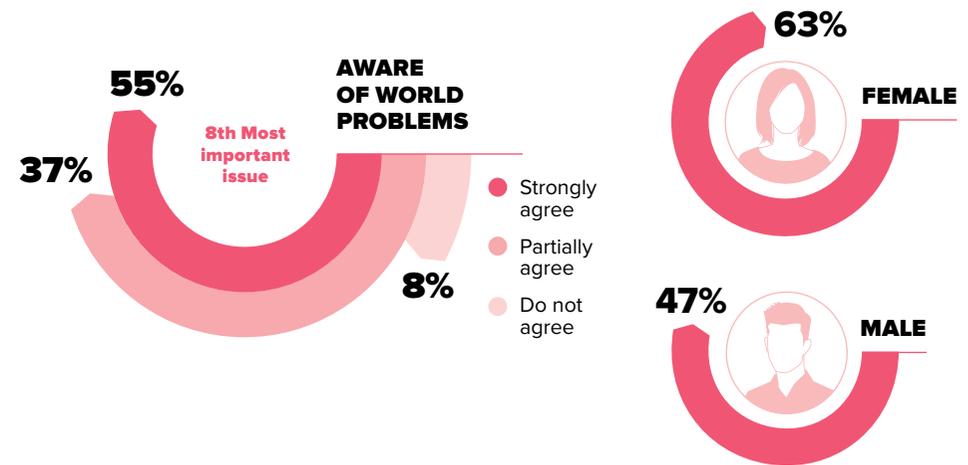
## OUR THOUGHTS ON HOPE AND EMPOWERMENT

Although we are faced with everyday challenges, we are still very ambitious and hopeful for our future. We recognise that there are problems in the world but we realise that we are the future and we have to tackle these things head on in order to make a change.

We are determined to realise our dreams and we feel empowered to realise these dreams as we set ourselves goals that aren't too farfetched and can be easily achieved by putting in the hard yards. We are aware that our dreams won't just happen for us; we are willing to work hard toward our goals to be anything we want to be, do anything we want to do.



## EMPOWERMENT



## AMBITIONS AND HOPES TO SUCCEED ARE HIGH ON OUR AGENDA TOO

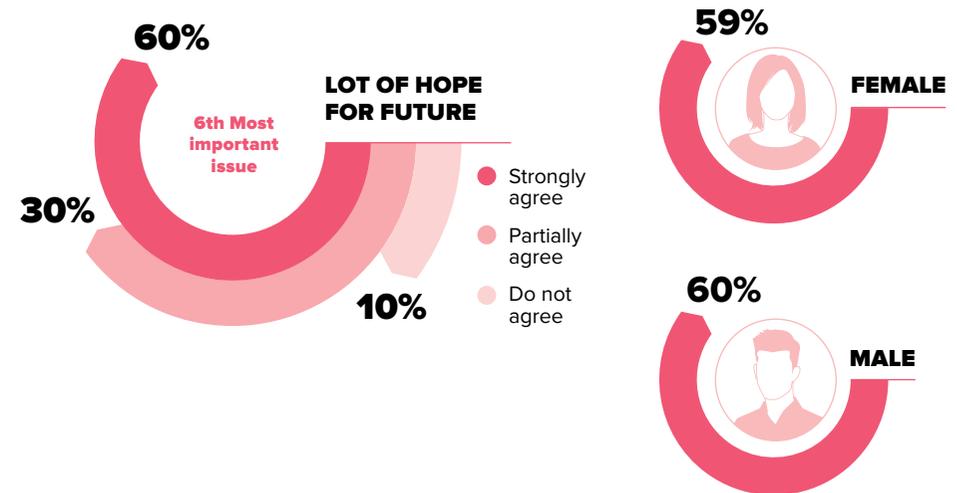
Whilst young males tend to place greater focus on thriving in the business/work industry first, family still plays a part in shaping the future of today's youth, but is a secondary thought for most behind workplace success.

Dream jobs and aspirations vary, but a majority of us want a successful well paid job that allows us to enjoy and live comfortably. Many of us even dream of owning our own business in the future.<sup>13</sup>

“ I want to be the head of my business, the one that calls the shots, making good money” (Male, 16)

Yet many of us are also keen to follow our dream or passion and not be confined to a workplace that we aren't passionate about.

“ My hopes and dreams for the future involve me not just making money but enjoying myself and making a living doing the things I like with the people I like and enjoy being around” (Male, 18)



<sup>13</sup> Reach Literature Review: 'Young people are ambitious in their expectations for their own career with up to 70% of young people already having or seeing themselves have their own business at some point in their career' (Hays, Australia, 2013)

Base: n=560 (female n=416; male n=144).

Data has been weighted based on ABS's 2011 Census figures for the proportions of males and females in the 13-18 age group.

Source: Q10. The following are statements made by some young people living in Australia. On a scale of 0-10, where 0='I do not agree at all' and 10='I agree strongly', please indicate how much you agree with each statement.



“ It’s important to me to do what I love, I don’t want to sit behind a desk plugging away. No matter what you need to love what you do and do what you love”

Female // 15

Notably, more young females take a more balanced view on career and success in comparison to males who have an expectation of achieving their goals even if they seem unattainable.

Doing what we love is paramount; success in a monetary value comes second to the passion that we want to hold for our jobs.

We are very focussed on finding the things that we love and turning them into a career. It is very important to us that we love what we do and enjoy it, rather than just plodding along day in day out. Passion is strongly factored in when choosing a career path.

Although many of us still strive to be successful and to live comfortably within our means, we need to love what we do.

“ I hope that I can be successful and happy in the future and make enough money to live on” (Female, 13)

### **FOR SOME OF US EVERYDAY STRESSES ARE DIFFICULT TO IGNORE BUT WE FEEL WE CAN OVERCOME THEM**

Whilst many acknowledge the stresses of everyday life, in an ideal world living without burden or stress, and financial security is a key to a happy, healthy life.

“ I want to live a stress free life. I want to live comfortably, have financial security and no struggles” (Female, 15)

It seems young people genuinely want to help others be happy and help and give back to the community.

“ I hope that I can be successful and happy in the future and I hope that I can help someone else do this as well” (Male, 15)

### **WE STRIVE FOR FURTHER EDUCATION AND WANT TO COMPLETE UNIVERSITY DEGREES**

For those of us who are pursuing a university degree or tertiary level course, there is strong emphasis and focus on working towards that goal.

But we also feel the pressure of expectation, and finding a career path that we are both interested in and want to do.

“ My realistic hopes are to finish high school with a high enough score to study the course I want” (Male, 17)



**MY DREAM IS TO TRAVEL  
AROUND THE WORLD  
AND SEE LIFE IN ANOTHER  
COUNTRY. TO BE ABLE TO  
MAKE NEW RELATIONSHIPS  
WITH PEOPLE OVERSEAS  
AND GAIN A NEW OUTLOOK  
ON LIFE FROM TRAVELLING  
EXPERIENCES.**



# APPENDIX 1

## PROFESSIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Contributors to the conduct of this study, gratefully acknowledged by Reach, are:

**Lewers Research** is an Australian owned, full service market research agency established in 2004 by Lisa Lewers (B.Bus, M.Bus, MMSRS). Lewers provides strategic input based on rigorous research to some of Australia's leading marketers. Particular areas of expertise include Brand and Advertising, Segmentation, Value Proposition Development, Customer Acquisition and Attrition. Lewers is delighted to support Reach in its' ongoing conversation with Australian youth, aiding with quantitative analysis of their Youth Survey (Example charts included later in this appendix).

**Reality Check Research** is an Australian owned, specialist qualitative research agency established in 2001 by Moira Callard (MA Hons, Dip Ad, MMSRS) that operates Australia's longest running program of weekly group discussions, running continuously, for over 14 years. Reality Check is co-located with Lewers Research, and is also delighted to support Reach in engaging Australian Youth in discussions for this important, ongoing study.

Reach gratefully acknowledges the generous support of Print Media Group and Blick Creative.

**PRINT MEDIA  
GROUP**

OUR STRENGTHS - YOUR ADVANTAGE

**blick**  
creative

## ABOUT THE REACH FOUNDATION

At Reach, we have a purpose to support the needs of young people to be healthy and resilient to meet life's challenges. We've found that teenagers need a place where they can go to talk honestly about what's going on – about their fears and their dreams – without being judged and with people who understand.

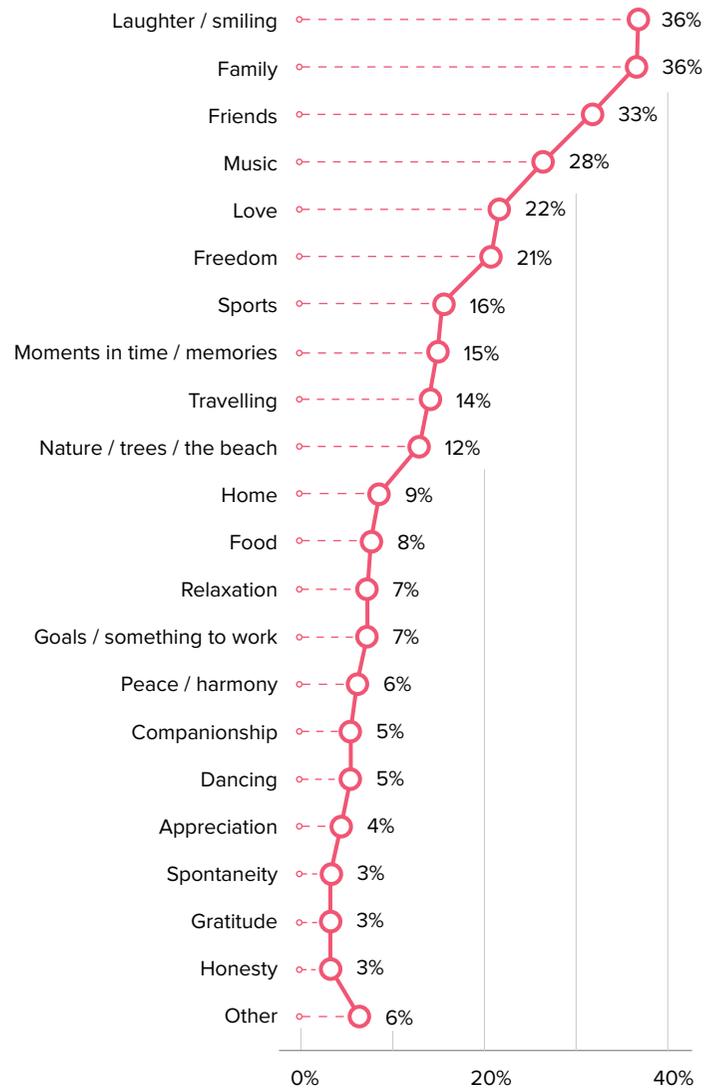
As part of realising our vision, Reach organises and facilitates workshops across Australia to connect with young people and normalise some of the anxiety of growing up. Along the way we hope to inspire young people not to be spooked by the emotion of it all, but to dream and to hope for one's own destiny.

We're proud of our record supporting and engaging with the young people in Australia, and as an extension to this we are reaching out to young people, to open a conversation with them, and understand (at a national level) their hopes and dreams for the future.

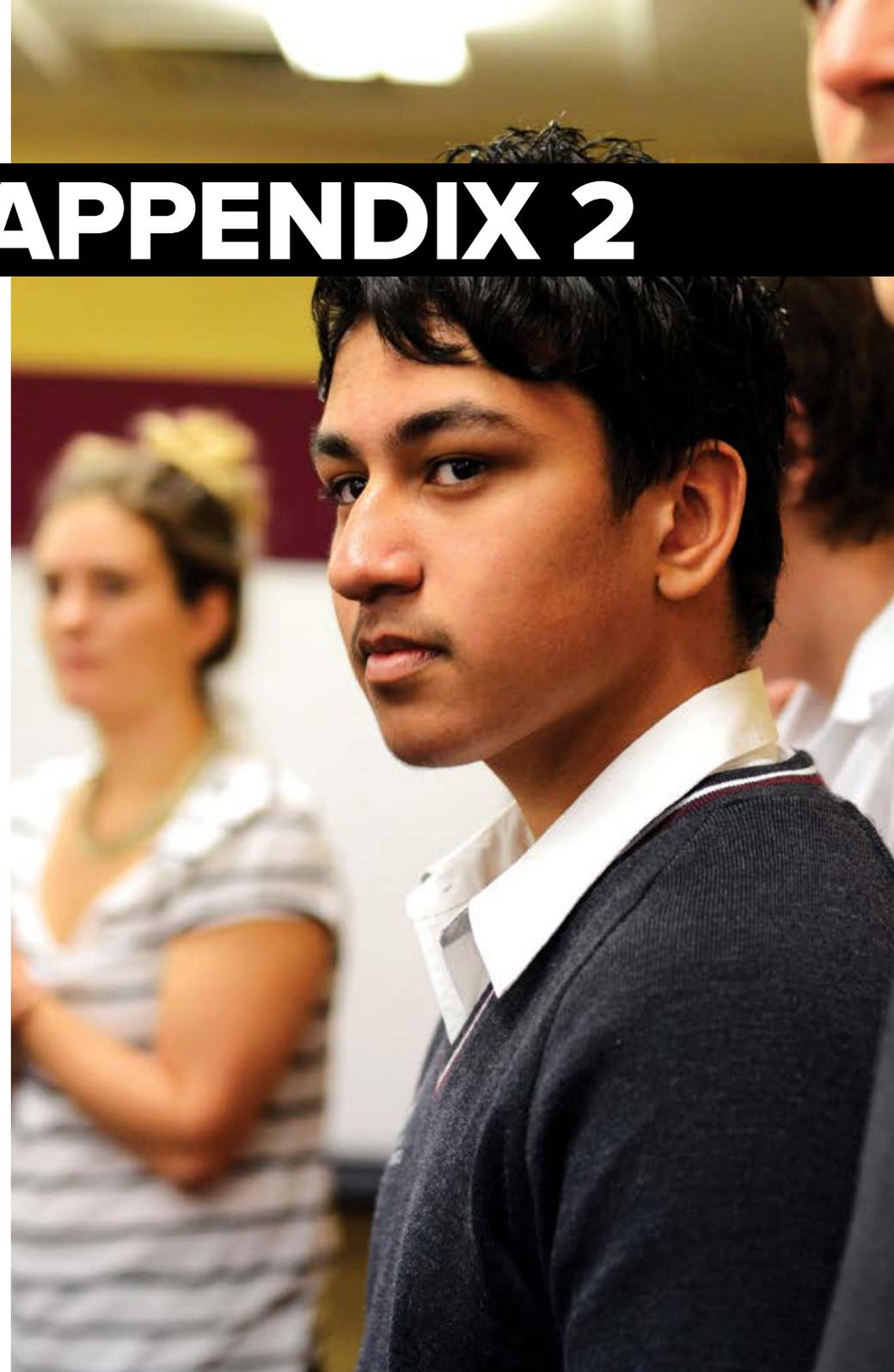
We believe that this is a critically important discussion, supporting our mission to encourage young people, no matter what their circumstances or experience, to believe they can achieve.

We hope this conversation will inspire and inform by sharing the hopes and dreams of young people within their own communities and in the broader national conversation.

**SAMPLE CHARTS AND RESULTS  
FROM REACH YOUTH SURVEY**



# APPENDIX 2



Question: 8. The following are words other young people living in Australia have used to describe what happiness means to them. Please choose three (3) words from the list below that best describes what happiness means to you.

Base: n=560 Weighting: ABS's 2011 Census figures for the proportions of males and females in the 13-18 age group.

## SAMPLE CHARTS AND RESULTS FROM REACH YOUTH SURVEY



Question: 10. The following are statements made by some young people living in Australia. On a scale of 0-10, where 0='I do not agree at all' and 10='I agree strongly', please indicate how much you agree with each statement. Average scores shown. Base: n=560 Weighting: ABS's 2011 Census figures for the proportions of males and females in the 13-18 age group.



## SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES // LIFE TODAY

	TOTAL	AGE			GENDER	
		13-15	16-17	18	Female	Male
<b>Adventurous</b>	26%	24%	32%	20%	18%	<b>34%</b>
<b>Safe</b>	26%	<b>34%</b>	16%	22%	27%	25%
<b>Free</b>	24%	22%	18%	39%	13%	<b>34%</b>
<b>Worrying</b>	22%	23%	20%	23%	<b>29%</b>	16%
<b>Daunting</b>	16%	10%	<b>23%</b>	17%	22%	10%

## SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES // 10 YEARS FROM NOW

	TOTAL	AGE			GENDER	
		13-15	16-17	18	Female	Male
<b>Inspiring</b>	42%	36%	50%	43%	<b>54%</b>	31%

Question 6: From the list of words below select the three (3) words that best describe your life today? Question 7: Thinking about your life ten years from now, select the three (3) words that best describe how you would like to feel.

Base n = 560 (13-15 years n = 353; 16-17 years n = 169; 18 n = 38; female n = 416; male n = 144)

Data has been weighted based on ABS's 2011 Census figures for the proportions of males and females in the 13-18 age group.

# APPENDIX 3

## INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Before testing the research proposition and starting the research process, an extensive Literature Review was undertaken to explore what was already in the public domain about the hopes and dreams of current young Australians and identify the current state of the conversation of and about young people in Australia.

There was no desire to replicate or repeat what was already happening. However, the literature review did demonstrate that we need a new element to the conversation – a youth-lead, perspective based around hopes and dreams.

This review was undertaken by three generous volunteers. Victoria, Nick and Amelia are employees at one of the largest professional services firms in Australia. They have completed this work in their spare time. Information presented was sourced from publicly available literature and does not represent the views of their employer.

## AMELIA HANSLOW

With a background in BA Communications (Journalism and International Politics), and experience in online, print content internationally, I started at a large professional services company after working with social media agency TWO Social. I work within both marketing and human capital teams across a range of the social media channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube).

This project appeals to me as finding out what youth think, rather than assuming that generations and ages think the same way, is a fascinating premise. The social media space in particular can provide a window into the generations that grow up with it.

I hope to see this country develop within extremely quickly shifting paradigms, in positive ways, ways that seek to lift up rather than push down, to renew the country's resources and not to deplete them. I want to live in a world that allows for diversity - but doesn't find diversity confronting. And I'd like to live to old age, with happy friends and family around me.

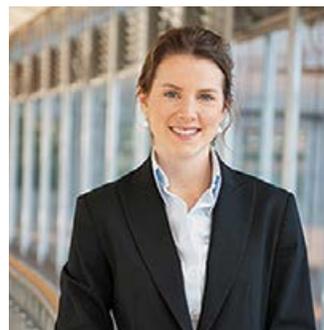


## NICK SUNDERLAND

After finishing a Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Arts at Sydney University, I joined a large professional services firm as a graduate in 2013. I have spent time across a few teams in the firm, and currently work in the customer team, supporting organisations undergoing transformations with customer centric operating models and strategic advice and direction.

I enjoyed contributing to this report, and was intrigued by the research and analysis that exists around the hopes and dreams of youth. It is fascinating to me to see how these have shifted over time, what has stayed the same and what has changed. I'm curious to see what changes are to come as this generation grows up and shapes the experiences of the next.

For my part, my hopes and dreams for the future are to see the outcomes available to all improve and increase as developments in technology democratise the economy, attack resource scarcity, and continue to breakdown the geographic, social and technological barriers that exist between people today.



## VICTORIA YATES

I started at a large professional services firm three years ago as a graduate after completing my degree in Economics at the University of Sydney. At work, I support clients to design programs of work to improve their customer experience and deliver improved commercial outcomes.

I am very grateful to be able to contribute to this report. For me, what is most interesting is how the hopes and dreams of youth today may change our society in terms of employment, education, and service delivery given their different needs as citizens and consumers.

In the future, I hope to continue to contribute meaningfully to our society by supporting organisations to deliver on their goals, whilst providing a platform for youth to achieve their dreams.

# LITERATURE REVIEW 2014



## YOUTH // STATE OF THE CONVERSATION

Talking with, and about young people in Australia is not a new endeavour. Policy makers, social/youth workers, religious organisations and researchers have long been engaging with young people. Conscious of this, we wanted to shape our report by examining the ‘conversations’ that are and have been happening with young people in Australia.

These ‘conversations’ are ongoing discussions in the community, in research and amongst social commentators, targeting youth-focussed sectors of government, business and media. These are generally about the state of young people living in Australia today and include key issues such as their health and wellbeing, the issues and challenges they face, their role in our community, their relationship with others, and their future prospects (economic, social and individual). Many of these discussions use the standard markers to make an assessment, such as demographics, social phenomenon, health and wellbeing statistics, education, specific issues, and challenges faced by young people.

We believe taking into account the hopes and dreams of young people, as told by young people, adds an important dimension to this ‘conversation’.

## CURRENT ‘CONVERSATIONS’

When it comes to engaging young people in national conversations, or understanding their major concerns and issues, we’ve identified five major approaches which are common practice today. Each differs in its style, purpose and level of engagement.

“ We believe taking into account the hopes and dreams of young people, as told by young people, adds an important dimension to this ‘conversation’ ”

There has been much work (such as the AYAC ‘Australia’s Youth Matters’ and Mission Australia’s ‘Youth Survey’) focussed on understanding the needs of youth in Australia for the purposes of advocating on their behalf for relevant policy changes. This part of the conversation has been an important enabler of youth voice, providing practical recommendations to improve the situation of young people in Australia, based on an understanding developed via direct engagement with young people.

There are also many reports (such as The Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) ‘Unlimited Potential’ and ‘How Young People are Faring’ reports and the ‘Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth’) that do not aim to represent the voice of the youth, but follow research methodologies (often quantitative) to come to a position on youth issues. These often inform economic appraisals or demographic research and present recommendations for policy makers.

In addition to the approaches above, which generally rely on surveys and other large quantitative studies, there are also a number of workshops (such as the Eastern region Alliance – Youth ‘Speaking of which...’ workshop) that aim to engage with targeted groups of young people. These workshops will draw out a range of issues, concerns, hopes and values from participating youth.

There are other approaches that seek to capture the voice of the youth to help train youth workers or provide guidance to anyone working with young people. This will often result in reports (such as the ‘National Youth Advisory Council Summit Report’) that aim to build the available knowledge on youth issues.

The final approach to engaging with young people that we have come across is from organisations that seek to connect youth groups to broader organisations and movements. These generally operate as the youth arm of a major organisation (such as the UN Youth Australia organisation) and focus on engaging the youth with current areas of debate.

## LITERATURE REVIEW – KEY THEMES

A review of the literature has been completed which predominantly relates to expectations and issues facing young people in Australia today. The literature has been analysed with the purpose of identifying underlying hopes and dreams. These can be seen to emerge across a range of research methods and across a diverse range of regional/community groups. The core themes that have been identified focus mainly on family, community, education, transition to adulthood, and quality of life. Each of these themes is summarised below.

### FAMILY

A review of literature relating to young people's expectations of family and relationships reveals a level of gratitude for family and friends, who not only provide support and advice but also help shape expectations. These relationships with family and friends encourage young people to be in a long term relationships and have children. There are also expectations for young people to fulfil traditional male/female family roles, with men expecting to be primarily focussed on work while women believe they will have a future combining primary care giving and workforce participation.

The Mission Australia Youth Report 2014 listed relationships with family and friends as the two most highly valued aspects for young people. Family and friends play an important role in their everyday life as advisers and as a place they go for support, particularly during times of stress (Eastern Region Alliance - Youth, 2013). Young people today are more connected to, and influenced by, their peers than any other generation. Whilst all generations have tended to have the same number of close friends (an average of 13), young people have almost twice as many Facebook friends as older generations (Mcrindle Research, 2012). The 24/7 nature of social networking and larger sphere of influence from networked groups of peers exposes young people to greater diversity in factors shaping their expectations. Cyber bullying, affecting up to a third of students, may have a negative impact on young people's expectations of themselves and others (Mcrindle Research, 2012). Maintaining strong relationships and connections with family and friends and feeling accepted appears to be an important expectation for many young people.

There is also a high level of importance placed on getting married, however for a large proportion of young people this is not realised in early adulthood. While young people, particularly women, typically hope to experience a long term relationship and get married in the future (before the age of 30), data from the 2001 Census suggests that these aspirations are not being realised, with only 41% of men and 53% of women



married or cohabiting (living with a partner without being married) in their late twenties. Increasing numbers of men and women are living without a partner and cohabitation has gained social acceptance and is now widely seen as a logical step before marriage or an alternative to marriage altogether (Qu & Soriano, 2004). Trend analysis also suggests that as women move into their late twenties, their aspirations move away from marriage and towards other forms of stable relationships (Lee & Johnstone, 2009).

The majority of young people aspire to having children however compared to historical family norms, they do not expect to start a family until they achieve financial security and find a suitable partner. In 2009, Lee and Johnstone assessed that 92% of Australian women aged 18-23 aspired to having at least once child before they were 35, with the majority aspiring to have 2 or 3. However, delays in starting a family are common as a result of the delay of many life transitions among today's young people, including moving from study to full time work, moving away from home, selecting a partner and getting married (Qu & Soriano, 2004).

**“ The 24/7 nature of social networking and larger sphere of influence from networked groups of peers exposes young people to greater diversity in factors shaping their expectations”**

Reasons for delays in forming relationships have been explored by Yas (1998) and Qu and Serano (2004) who identify a mix of both internal and external constraints. Young people report a number of internal constraints, such as being selective on compatibility and being too cautious due to fears of being hurt, which delay their commitment to forming a relationship. External constraints include having a lack of time due to work commitments, few opportunities or venues to meet people and friends who are less interested in settling down. While forming a long-term-relationship is increasingly identified as difficult and hard to achieve, youths nonetheless are hopeful to be in a longer term relationship in the future.

Further analysis of the delay in forming relationships suggests there is a socio-economic divide that distinguishes women living more “traditional” lifestyles and starting families early in life, from urban women living more “modern” lifestyles; choosing to pursue work and educational attainment and delay starting a family (Lee & Johnstone, 2009). The evidence suggests this divide is shaped by the context and circumstances in which women grew up, with more “traditional” lifestyles typically chosen by women from rural areas/lower socio-economic backgrounds. Women choosing “traditional” lifestyles and having children early typically experience socio-economic disadvantage and feel stigmatised and judged based on their mothering abilities (Lee & Johnstone, 2009). Younger mothers aspire to create safe and secure futures for their children and find a steady job however they have little understanding of how they can overcome barriers and drive a pathway to achieve their goals. “Modern” lifestyles are more typical of women living in urban areas. “Modern” women also face challenges associated with delaying having children, often resulting in them being unable to have children at all (Institute of Child Protection Studies, Australian Catholic University, 2010).

Traditional expectations of family roles for men and women within the youth segment have not significantly changed. Young men generally hold an expectation to have an involvement in family life secondary to participation in paid work. More women expect to simultaneously have a future involving primary care giving and an autonomous, independent career, however if a choice had to be made, family would come first. (McDonald, Pini, Bailey, & Price, 2011)

The conversation around young people’s future aspirations for relationships and family primarily focuses on expectations and an assessment against actualities in population statistics. The hopes and dreams of youth in relation to family and relationships beyond marriage, children and roles are explored in little detail. Information on expectations can be extrapolated to assume that the hopes and dreams of the youth are to have a supportive network of family and friends, to be involved in a loving, long term relationship with a partner and to someday start a family.





## COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

One of the key themes that has emerged from a review of the literature is the importance of communities (both virtual and physical) and strong sense of social justice that exists among young people in Australia. Young people in Australia have clear and thoughtful perspectives on current social and community issues, and are also committed to both developing, and learning from the communities they are exposed to.

A consistent element in conversations with young people in Australia has been a strong sense of empathy and social justice, reflected in a desire for close knit communities that promote fair outcomes for all. Specifically, reports on youth concerns and hopes have revealed the importance of political/economic communities, online communities, care for the community and environment, and concern over some key social issues impacting on people's lives (such as binge drinking and violence).

Young people are interested in important national debates on a range of political and economic issues, particularly around issues involving unjust or unfair circumstances. However often young people can feel as though they are perceived as a homogenous group, rather than unique individuals with valuable skills, experience and opinions that can lend value or insights to national debates (National Youth Affairs Research Scheme, 2010). Of the general concerns represented in various sources, there is a key focus on government spending and the importance of intergenerational equality. There is some concern from young people that short-sighted overspending could have a major impact on their ability to achieve their goals in the future, and create ongoing economic instability (Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, 2013). Similar to this is a focus on the importance of maintaining domestic competitiveness in the face of increasing competition from Asian economies (Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, 2013). This focus on economic and political issues was also identified by the 2014 Mission Australia Youth Australia survey, in which 27.1% of respondents identified the economy and financial matters as an important issue in Australia today (Mission Australia, 2014). The importance of this issue for young people suggests that many hopes and dreams are built on expectations of a successful national economy, even before young people enter the workforce.

In addition to this focus on economic security, young people also focussed strongly on the well-being of disenfranchised members of their community, demonstrating a strong sense of empathy and social justice. This was reflected in Mission Australia's national youth survey, with politics and societal values as the most important issue for 28% of young people surveyed. These issues have received focus elsewhere, with a strong sense of empathy and care, social justice, and a strong desire to see equality amongst Australians figuring as key hopes for young people (Eastern Region Alliance - Youth, 2013). Young people also want to offer more than just dialogue on social justice issues with 67% involved in grassroots volunteering and 53% of young workers wanting to

**“ Young people also want to offer more than just dialogue on social justice issues with 67% involved in grassroots volunteering and 53% of young workers wanting to give back and make a difference through their professional pursuits”**



give back and make a difference through their professional pursuits (Optus, 2014). For young people in Australia, many of their hopes and dreams involved living in a community that was inclusive, safe and fair to all. Additionally, many have the expectation that they will be able to help make a difference in other people's lives through volunteering, philanthropy or other social impact related endeavours.

Some societal issues receive more specific attention from young people, particularly the prevalence of binge drinking and related violence. Many young people accept that alcohol is part of the youth culture, but would like the government to do more to mitigate the negative effects of alcohol and serious binge drinking (Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, 2013). Young people in Australia hope that the problems caused by binge drinking and alcohol can be resolved, and less harm done to the community.

Another issue of particular attention is the importance of the environment. Young people in Australia have been highly focussed on the importance of the environment and the potential impact of human activity. The issue of global warming in particular is seen as a major threat to Australia's future, with a study in Queensland finding 61% of young people are concerned about the impact of global warming (Tranter & Skrbis, 2011). This study further identified endangered species, biodiversity, pollutants and energy usages as issues of concern for young people (Tranter & Skrbis, 2011). However, it is interesting to note that some recent studies have shown the overall importance of the environment to young people has decreased over recent years. The Mission Australia Youth survey has seen the environment drop from 37.4% in 2011 to 12.3% in 2014 in terms of relative importance to young people (Mission Australia, 2011; Mission Australia, 2014).

A final interesting point is the distinction young people make between virtual and physical communities. The boundary between the digital and physical is becoming increasingly difficult to identify, as young people seamlessly draw on a combination of virtual and physical communities in life.

This is strongly reflected in the sources and areas of support that young people trust most. Young people in Australia consistently say that they would go to friends and family most for advice and support (87.7% and 76.2% respectively), but over half (53.7%) indicated that they would go to the internet for help with important issues (Mission Australia, 2014) (Eastern Region Alliance - Youth, 2013). It is also interesting that outside of family and friends, the internet outstripped any other school or formally appointed guidance counsellors or hotlines. This provides an interesting insight into the way young people interact with their communities to find guidance and answer questions.

The internet is increasingly the medium within which young people meet friends and partners. Instagram is a photo-based mobile application that is used predominantly by youth, with recent statistics suggesting that over 90 per cent of Instagram users are under 35-years-old. 37 per cent of all American 18 to 29-year-olds use the application, around 76 per cent of whom use it daily. In Australia there are 2,060,000 users. It is therefore a good social media channel to study and discover what youth are communicating to each other. A recent study of Instagram use in Australia revealed that the terms 'love' and 'Australia' are often associated with the photos ( BuzzNumbers, 2014). Another study showed that the most popular photos that were uploaded onto Instagram differed between Australia's major cities, with portraits (including self-portraits or 'selfies'), most popular in Sydney, followed by artistic shots and then photos of food. In Melbourne photos of food were most popular, followed by artistic shots and then photos of fashion (The Works with University of Technology, 2014).

Overall the conversation on communities and social justice shows that young people are aware of their surroundings and very aspirational in their hopes and dreams for the future. The hopes and dreams of young people for the future of their community include a successful and competitive economy, but also for policies that protect the liberties of everyone in the community and ensure that we are all treated fairly.

**“ For young people in Australia, many of their hopes and dreams involved living in a community that was inclusive, safe and fair to all”**



**SUPPORT, ACHIEVEMENT  
AND BALANCE. MY HOPES  
AND DREAMS ARE TO BE  
ABLE TO SEE CLEARLY WHERE  
I WANT TO GO IN LIFE AND  
TO HAVE ENOUGH HOPE  
IN MY PATH SO THAT I AM  
CONFIDENT ENOUGH TO  
START ACHIEVING MY GOALS.**



## EDUCATION AND TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

A significant conversation has been built in Australian literature focussing on youth's journey through education to adulthood and employment. Primary drivers of aspirations for study and in turn work includes family, friends, community and school with key differences apparent based on wealth and geography. Longitudinal studies and further qualitative and quantitative research explore young people's aspirations, and focus on identifying differences among key demographic groups to support and inform policy decision making and the targeting of resources.

Youth aspirations regarding their education change as they progress through primary and secondary school however they are typically captured by fear of failure and the unknown. Younger people in years 6 and 7 are primarily concerned with their transition to high school, where they show anxiety due to the unknown (Eastern Region Alliance - Youth, 2013). As adolescents move through high school their career path and trajectories change and become more clear (Gemici, Bednarz, Karmel, & Lim, 2014) and school or study problems remain a major concern for young people more generally (Mission Australia, 2014).

There is a growing expectation among youth for higher educational attainment driven by higher expectations for work, wealth and career. The majority of high school students expect to complete high school and then go on to University, attend TAFE and/or undertake an apprenticeship (Mission Australia, 2014). Successfully finishing school is viewed as an important step by youths, which will enable them to achieve their desired direction and career path. Further education is seen to offer the benefits of competitiveness in the job market which is expected to support stable employment and for some, wealth and prosperity in the future (Eastern Region Alliance - Youth, 2013)

(Cuervo, Crofts, & Wyn, 2013) (McDonald, Pini, Bailey, & Price, 2011). Youths also base their expectations on the belief that high incomes achieved through education and work would allow for their aspirations of leisure time, travel and childrearing to be achieved (McDonald, Pini, Bailey, & Price, 2011).

Family, friends, community and school influences are important drivers and determinants of educational and occupational aspirations. Parent's expectations about their child attending University followed by academic performance in high school have been identified as among the strongest drivers of overall occupation outcomes for youths. Friends' plans, attitudes towards school and teacher-student relations are also important drivers (Gemici, Bednarz, Karmel, & Lim, 2014). These drivers have greatest impact on young people's intentions to further their work and careers which in turn drive outcomes (Nguyen & Blomberg, 2014). Having clear occupational plans during school-age years are highly valued by students and can assist young people to achieve positive employment. Goals are also linked with success later in life (even if the goal itself is not achieved), particularly for boys (Nguyen & Blomberg, 2014).

**“ Family, friends, community and school influences are important drivers and determinants of educational and occupational aspirations”**

Geography and wealth are well researched determinants of different outcomes in educational and work attainment for young people. Young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds and rural areas express a desire to “be something” and make something of their lives. However these young people express concern over the high cost of tertiary education, managing associated debt and other obstacles associated with needing to move to a metro area to attend a “good University” (Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, 2013). In particular, the high cost of living, fear of being so far away from family and losing close friendships are top of mind for many rural youth when thinking about moves associated with tertiary education (Regional Policy Advisory Committee, 2013). The result of this is evidenced by young people living in remote or very remote locations and Indigenous young people experiencing far lower year 12 or equivalent completion rates compared to their counterparts (Foundation for Young Australians, 2014). Given the barriers faced by young people in entering further education, there has been an increasing trend to defer further study to achieve independent status for government study support and to earn money to support the cost of pursuing higher education (School of Education and Arts, University of Ballarat, 2012).

As a result of disparity in opportunity based on wealth and geography, there is increasing polarisation in the ways young people make their transition to adulthood, described as the fast and slow lanes. The fast lane is typical of young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds who move to paid work early in life. However opportunities are often fragmented and result in a cycle of training to casual and low-paid work to unemployment. For many young people in the “fast lane”, it is difficult to create aspirations and expectations for the future due to limited mentoring and role models, disadvantage and difficulties maintaining a high quality of education due to high teacher attrition rates (Alloway & Dalley-Trim, 2009). The “slow lane” is more typical of youth from more affluent parents and urban areas who spend several years in education and training to enable them to establish the foundations of their careers (Institute of Child Protection Studies, Australian Catholic University, 2010). As a result, young people from metro areas are more likely to participate in higher education or higher level vocational studies (Regional Policy Advisory Committee, 2013).

While expectations of education and employment in high-status jobs are increasing in high-school aged youth, University and post-university students are experiencing disappointment as their expectations are not being met in the job market. Youth unemployment is a key issue for those aged 17-24. Young people reported a strong desire to work however expressed a sense of frustration at how difficult it is for them to enter the labour market (Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, 2013).



**“ Geography and wealth are well researched determinants of different outcomes in educational and work attainment for young people”**



Competition for good quality jobs has globalised meaning young professionals have to compete with professionals from around the world (Foundation for Young Australians, 2013). Moreover, the demand for quality jobs outweighs availability in the market (Gemici, Bednarz, Karmel, & Lim, 2014). Insufficient opportunities to work in the job or occupation they would “love to have” is a primary concern of youths, leading them to look outside of their chosen field of study and/or expectations to have multiple careers (Cuervo, Crofts, & Wyn, 2013) (McDonald, Pini, Bailey, & Price, 2011). Young people are ambitious in their expectations for their own career with up to 70% of young people already having or seeing themselves have their own business at some point in their career. The growing entrepreneurial sentiment can also be captured in the expectation young people have for flexibility in their career and the power to be their own boss (Hays Australia, 2013).

A key trend stemming from saturation in the youth job market is an increase in casual work leading to youth underemployment. The current landscape of work is increasingly dominated by flexible, casual and insecure patterns of work (Cuervo, Crofts, & Wyn, 2013). Full-time employment is decreasing and casual and part time employment has been increasing over time (Foundation for Young Australians, 2014). Even in this market, youths mention that finding part time employment is difficult and they would welcome support to find a part time job (Eastern Region Alliance - Youth, 2013).

Unemployment and underemployment poses threats of “scarring effects” on youths due to vicious cycles of low skilled jobs with few chances of training, up-skilling and limited possibilities for better employment (Cuervo, Crofts, & Wyn, 2013). Young people look at employment as providing a sense of identity and purpose which can be undermined when youths are not able to achieve gainful employment (Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, 2013).

As a result of longer study and decreased ability to obtain relevant skills during study, life transitions for young people are being delayed. This demonstrates that desired employability skills are becoming increasingly important for young people entering the workforce. However, often the skills young people have do not match the skills they need for their existing jobs or what is required for a new role. Qualification and study does not necessarily result in employment in the intended field of specialisation. Young people require more broad and generalised skill sets such as interpersonal and communication skills, critical reasoning and analytical skills, connection and understanding of Asia, and personal drive and commitment rather than technical skills (Foundation for Young Australians, 2013).

Overall, youths have increasing hopes and dreams to complete further study and achieve a highly paid job however for many this is not realised. The transition to adulthood is fraught with fear and anxiety due to change and disappointing job outcomes which contributes to scarring effects that can reduce the confidence and identity of young people.

## **QUALITY OF LIFE**

A major question of importance to young people in Australia is what kind and quality of life they will experience. Separate to issues of employment and family/ community wellbeing, this often focuses on how they would like to be, i.e. the kind of leisure activities they would like to do, how they would like to manage their health and stress, and the way they deal with challenges in life. These issues tend to be important for young people hoping to live a successful life. Overall young people are most concerned with achieving a positive work/life balance, achieving financial security, maintaining good health (physical and mental) and be able to face down any other challenges that life throws their way.

A big issue for young people is how they get to spend their leisure time, both now and in the future. In the present, young people in Australia mostly spend their active leisure time playing sport (Mission Australia, 2014). The importance of this fixture in the lives of many young people is that the second most common activity they engage in is watching sport (Mission Australia, 2014). As a main focus of youth culture, sport seems to be an important activity for most young people in Australia.



Moreover, students' engagement with school, such as participation in extracurricular activities including sport, is related to positive attitudes towards school and learning, which in turn impact engagement and educational outcomes (Nguyen & Blomberg, 2014). The future leisure activities of young people is often reflected as a desire for travel, with a growing expectation from young people that they will go through periods of travel before 'settling down' into real life and marriage (McDonald, Pini, Bailey, & Price, 2011).

Similar to the hopes and dreams of young people reflected elsewhere in this paper, there is also a focus on wealth and financial security. Young people in Australia have a strong desire to achieve career success, be financially independent and to own their own home (Mission Australia 2014). A high proportion of young people consider housing affordability to be a major issue for young people in Australia (Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, 2013), and their hopes for the future often involve property ownership and large, luxurious homes (McDonald, Pini, Bailey, & Price, 2011).

Young people in Australia identify with the need to be able to manage challenges that they may face in their lives. There is an understanding that challenges are an inevitable part of life, and that it is important to build resilience and methods for dealing with stress. However, coping with stress remains a key concern for young

**“ Young people have hopes and dreams to undertake further study, achieve within their career, get married and start a family”**

people (Mission Australia, 2014). For young people, this involves both identification of immediate activities that can be used to relieve stress, such as listening to music or playing sport (Eastern Region Alliance - Youth, 2013), and also involves building stronger resilience in general through building relationships with strong mentors, learning from them, and leaning on trusted sources of support when confronted with challenges (such as bullying) (Eastern Region Alliance - Youth, 2013).

More Australian young people are seeking volunteering opportunities overseas, which bridge their needs for travel with opportunities to grow their independence and confidence and to have a positive impact on the world. Youths are interested in engaging and immersing with new cultures and are increasingly seeking closer affinity with the Asian region which is thought to help them fully participate in the future economy. Almost half of all Latitude volunteer placements in 2014 are in Asia/Pacific which is a growing trend, with commonly selected reasons for participating including to grow personal adaptability and resilience (Latitude Global Volunteering, 2014).

Key to these issues is that young people in Australia are very much concerned with their quality of life, outside of work and family life. These hopes and dreams specific to personal growth, fulfilment and enjoyment of the individual, and these are seen as important parts of a successful life.

## CONCLUSION

There is a large volume of conversation captured in the literature pertaining to young people's expectations and concerns for the future. The conversation largely revolves of life. The literature varies in its approach and purpose and it is evident that the future of the youth in the context specifically of their "hopes and dreams" has been little explored.

From the state of the conversation, it can be inferred that young people have hopes and dreams to undertake further study, achieve within their career, get married and start a family. Outside work and family, they also express some desire and/or need for personal growth, fulfilment, enjoyment and for the future success and equity of their community. The literature typically pairs each of these themes with disappointing realities, particularly for disadvantaged young people, and focusses on potential policies that could change this in the future.

This document seeks to make a meaningful contribution to the conversation about young people in Australia today. This research will support the current conversation and differentiate from the literature focussed on expectations, concerns and realities by engaging young people in a conversation specific to their hopes and dreams. In doing so, we aim to share ideas that engage, inspire and motivate the youth of today about their future.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

BuzzNumbers. (2014). *Two Social with BuzzNumbers*.

Alloway, N., & Dalley-Trim, L. (2009). 'High and Dry' in Rural Australia: Obstacles to Student Aspirations and Expectations. *19(1)*, 49-59.

Australian Youth Affairs Coalition. (2013). *Australia's Youth Matters: Young People Talk About What's Important to Them*.

Create Foundation. (2009). *Inaugural National Youth Advisory Council Summit Report*.

Cuervo, H., Crofts, J., & Wyn, J. (2013). *Generational Insights into New Labour Market Landscapes for Youth*. Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne, Youth Research Centre.

Eastern Region Alliance - Youth. (2013). *Speaking of Which...*

Foundation for Young Australians. (2013 and 2014). *Unlimited Potential; How Young People are Faring*.

Gemici, S., Bednarz, A., Karmel, T., & Lim, P. (2014). *The Factors Affecting the Educational and Occupational Aspirations of Young Australians*. Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth.

Gemici, S., Bednarz, A., Karmel, T., & Lim, P. (2014). Young People's Aspirations and Their Occupational Outcomes. *The Australian Economic Review*, *47(1)*, pp. 124-36.

Hays Australia. (2013). *Gen Y and the World of Work*.

Institute of Child Protection Studies, Australian Catholic University. (2010). *Experiences and Aspirations of Younger Mothers*. Canberra: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Latitude Global Volunteering. (2014). *Aspirations for 2014: Building Capability of Australian Youth*. Latitude Global Volunteering.

Lee, C., & Johnstone, M. (2009). *Young Australian Women's Aspirations for Work and Family*. Australian Institute of Family Studies.

McDonald, P., Pini, B., Bailey, J., & Price, R. (2011). Young People's Aspirations for Education, Work, Family and Leisure. *Work, Employment & Society* (25), 68-84.

Mcrindle Research. (2012). *Generation Z Defined: Global, Visual, Digital*.

Mission Australia. (2011). *National Survey of Young Australians*.



Mission Australia. (2014). *Youth Survey 2014*.

National Youth Affairs Research Scheme. (2010). *How Young People Participate in Civic Activities using Internet and Mobile Technologies*.

Nguyen, N., & Blomberg, D. (2014). *The Role of Aspirations in the Educational and Occupational Choices of Young People*. Adelaide: National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

Optus. (2014). *Generation We not Me*.

Qu, L., & Soriano, G. (2004). Forming Couple Relationships: Adolescents' aspirations and young adults' actualities. *Family Matters* (68), 43-49.

Regional Policy Advisory Committee. (2013). *Research into Education Aspiration for Regional Victoria*.

School of Education and Arts, University of Ballarat. (2012). *Aspirations and Destinations of Young People*. Ballarat.

The Works with University of Technology, S. (2014). *First Snapshot of Instagram in Australia*. Retrieved from <http://datafication.com.au/instagram/#section-8>

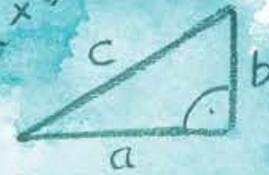
Tranter, B., & Skrbis, Z. (2011). *Attitudes toward global warming, climate change and other environmental issues among young Queenslanders*. Proceedings of 2011 TASA Conference: Local Lives/Global Networks, 28 Nov-1 Dec 2011, Newcastle, Australia EJ ISBN 9780646567792 (2011).



**MOST OF US SEE THE  
FUTURE AS A TIME  
FOR ADVENTURE AND  
EXPLORATION, FILLED WITH  
EXCITEMENT, FREEDOM,  
AND MOST IMPORTANTLY,  
INSPIRATION FOR  
OURSELVES, AND OTHERS.**



$$\pi = 3,14 \dots$$



$$v = \frac{s}{t}$$

$$1 + 1 = 2$$

$$a^2 + 2ab + b^2$$



# SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO GET THE MOST OUT OF LIFE

**REACH.ORG.AU**

**Head office** // 152–156 Wellington St, Collingwood VIC 3066

**NSW office** // Level 1, 251 Riley St, Surry Hills NSW 2010

**T** // 03 9412 0900   **F** // 03 9416 2230   **E** // info@reach.org.au

**ABN** // 87 069 837 627

