

MISSION
AUSTRALIA

youth survey report 2015



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ISBN 978-0-9874487-7-4
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This report may be cited as: Cave, L., Fildes, J., Lockett, G. and Wearing, A. 2015, Mission Australia's 2015 Youth Survey Report, Mission Australia.

CEO's message

Young people are the future of Australia. As a society and as individuals, we must do everything we can to nurture their ambitions and support them to achieve their potential.

Now in its 14th year, Mission Australia's *Youth Survey* provides a unique window into the lives of young Australians. The biggest survey of its type in Australia, it's a well-respected report that gives parents, policy makers, teachers and advocates a greater understanding of our young people.

The *Youth Survey 2015* provides a special focus on the barriers young people believe prevent them from reaching their work and study goals. It explores young people's concerns around their ability to achieve their goals and aspirations in the context of high youth unemployment and a rapidly changing job market.

Pleasingly, over half of respondents had a high level of confidence in their ability to achieve goals in study and work after school. But not all were so sure - one in ten young people reported that they were only slightly or not at all confident in their ability to achieve their goals.

Barriers to success

Half of all respondents reported perceived barriers to achieving their goals. The top three barriers were academic ability, financial difficulty and a lack of jobs.

I was disappointed to note that females were far more likely (21.7% compared with 13.8%) than male respondents to identify academic ability as a barrier. While we shouldn't oversimplify such responses, it does concern me that young women - who academically achieve on par if not better than males - appear to be lacking confidence in their abilities. Despite some progress, women are still woefully underrepresented in many aspects of employment, management and leadership roles across all sectors. We need strong female role models and mentors to give young women the confidence and practical assistance to attain their goals.

The prominence of financial difficulty as a barrier is also concerning. We know young people adjust their aspirations in response to financial constraints early in their school life and aiming too low can limit the fulfilment of their potential. In 21st Century Australia, we have to ensure the policies and supports are in place so young people do not self-limit their aspirations because of financial concerns.

The after effects of the Global Financial Crisis have been felt most keenly by young people. Youth unemployment is more than double the general unemployment rate - higher in some areas. Many of our survey respondents highlighted a lack of jobs as a barrier to further education and employment.

Transition to work programs are very effective in bridging this gap and they should be available to more of the young people who need them. These must include training opportunities so young people can gain the skills that match emerging skills needs. More nuanced place-based approaches should also be utilised to link young people to local job opportunities.

Personal concerns

As in previous years, the key issues young people are concerned about are: coping with stress; school and study problems; and body image issues. While we know there are good initiatives out there to help young people with stress, our findings show more needs to be done to raise awareness.

It's clear that young people are mindful of the world they live in. When asked about the key issues facing Australia today, for the first time in recent years the number one response was alcohol and drugs.

Alongside general concerns surrounding alcohol and drug use in their peers, this concern may reflect the pervasiveness of the drug issue through many communities in Australia, as well as its prevalence in media and political discussions.

I would like to thank those young people who took the time to complete the Youth Survey. It's now essential that we listen to their voices and act on what they have told us.

Too often their voices go unheeded - young people remain some of the most marginalised and unrepresented in our society.

Young people are often represented negatively, as irresponsible or unreliable, lazy or uncaring. But this survey demonstrates that most are engaged citizens who aspire to achieve and work hard to overcome the barriers they face. Instead of denigrating our young people, it is time to support them to reach their goals.

Young Australians have big dreams, and so they should. We must help them to break down the barriers that unfairly impede their efforts to achieve their full potential.

Catherine Yeomans

Mission Australia CEO



Introduction

Demographic profile of respondents

A total of 18,994 young people aged 15-19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2015*. The largest number of responses came from New South Wales (24.9%), Victoria (24.5%) and Queensland (21.6%). Over half of the respondents (55.3%) were female and 6.2% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The percentage of young people who spoke a language other than English at home was 21.9%, similar to results in 2014 (19.7%).

The level of reported disability remained fairly constant again between 2015 (6.0%) and 2014 (4.4%). The vast majority of respondents were studying full-time (94.0%), consistent with the 93.8% in 2014. Around four in ten (38.8%) respondents were working part-time and 35.9% were looking for work, again consistent with previous years

Young people and plans for study and training

Young people were asked about their future plans for education and training following school. Of those who were still at school, 96.6% stated that they intended to complete Year 12. Almost three times the proportion of males indicated that they did not intend to complete Year 12 (5.3% compared with 1.8% of females). When asked what they were planning to do after school, going to university was the most frequently chosen option among both males and females (65.3%), although a greater proportion of females than males stated that they planned to do so (71.2% compared with 58.0%).

Many planned to get a job (34.5%) or to travel or go on a gap year (29.6%) after school, while 13.0% planned to attend TAFE or college and 9.7% planned to undertake an apprenticeship.

Barriers to further education and employment

The *Youth Survey 2015* asked young people how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. Just over half of respondents indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve study/work goals, with 10.3% indicating that they were *extremely confident* and 40.3% indicating that they were *very confident*. However, around one in ten young people were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals, with 8.1% being *slightly confident* and 2.3% *not at all confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school.

Overall, a greater proportion of male respondents than female respondents reported high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study/work goals.

When asked what they were planning to do after school, going to university was the most frequently chosen option among both males and females.

While many respondents reported high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their post-school study/work goals, when asked whether they felt there were any barriers which may impact on the achievement of these goals, more than half (52.0%) of young people across Australia felt that barriers were present. Respondents who indicated the presence of barriers were asked to indicate from a number of items which barriers they saw as preventing them from achieving their goals after school. Nationally, the top three barriers that young people felt would impact on their study/work goals were *academic ability* (18.2%), *financial difficulty* (16.9%) and *lack of jobs* (12.2%). Just over one in ten respondents indicated that they saw *family responsibilities* (12.0%) and *physical or mental health* (10.3%) as barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals after school. A greater proportion of female than male respondents indicated that they saw each of these items as a barrier to their post-school goals.

What young people value

In 2015 young people were again asked how much they valued *family relationships*, *financial security*, *friendships*, *getting a job*, *physical and mental health* and *school or study satisfaction*. The responses were consistent with previous years, with *friendships* and *family relationships* ranked as the two most highly valued items. Also consistent with past years was the high value placed on *school or study satisfaction* and *physical and mental health*. Around four in ten respondents placed a high value on *financial security* and *getting a job*.

Issues of personal concern

Young people were asked to rank how concerned they had been about a number of issues in the past year. Nationally, the top three issues of concern were *coping with stress*, *school or study problems* and *body image*, with around four in ten respondents indicating that they were either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* about *coping with stress*, one third indicating they were either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* about *school or study problems* and around one quarter highly concerned about *body image*. Around one in five respondents were either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* about *depression* and *family conflict*. The proportion of females concerned about each of these issues was much higher than the proportion of males.

Where young people go for help with important issues

Young people were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. The top three sources of help for young people were *friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends* (86.7%, 76.4% and 66.4% respectively). Over half (55.3%) of respondents indicated that they would go to the *internet* for help with important issues and around one third indicated that they would go to their *teacher* or *school counsellor* (37.9% and 33.0% respectively).

How well do young people's families get along?

Young people were asked how well they thought their family got along. The majority of respondents were positive, with 27.4% rating their family's ability to get along as *excellent*, and 31.3% as *very good*. However, one in five did not have such a positive experience of family relationships, rating their family's ability to get along as either *fair* (12.5%) or *poor* (7.0%).

Most important issues in Australia today

Young people were asked to write down the three issues that they considered were the most important in Australia today. The top three issues identified in 2015 were *alcohol and drugs* (27.0%), *equity and discrimination* (25.0%) and *the economy and financial matters* (18.9%).

These compare to the top three issues in 2014 of *the economy and financial matters* (25.1%), *politics* (23.5%) and *alcohol and drugs* (22.1%). Since 2013, *international relations* has been increasingly identified as a key issue facing the nation. Conversely, mentions of *population issues* have declined over this period.

There were notable differences in the issues identified as the most important in Australia today by male and female respondents. While *alcohol and drugs* and *equity and discrimination* featured in the top three most important issues for both males and females, the other issue that made up their top three differed.

For females, the top issue facing the nation this year was *equity and discrimination* followed by *alcohol and drugs* and *mental health*. For males, the top issue was *alcohol and drugs*, followed by *equity and discrimination* and *the economy and financial matters*.

Activities that young people are involved in

As in previous years, the top three activities for young people were *sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *volunteer work*. Males were more likely to report participation in *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)* than females, while females were more likely to have participated in *arts/cultural/music activities*, *volunteer work* and *student leadership activities* in the past year.

The future

Young people were asked to rate how positive they felt about the future. Compared to 2014 and 2013 there has been a slight decrease in those feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future and a slight increase in those feeling *neither positive nor negative* about the future. Despite this, around six in ten respondents reported feeling either *very positive* or *positive* about the future and one in ten young people felt either *very negative* or *negative* about the future.

Policy Implications

Mission Australia believes that all young Australians need appropriate support in their transition to adulthood.

For some young people, the transition to adulthood can be especially challenging and can limit their opportunities later in life. Our findings show that young people often first seek support within their immediate social environment, usually from family and friends. Support from the broader community, such as schools, specialist services and through government programs, is also important for young people facing challenges.

In some cases a smooth transition also requires access to effective youth focussed services. Where young people face particular difficulties and barriers, these services must address their underlying needs; whether this is through place-based initiatives or individual wrap-around supports.

Young people are generally positive about their future, but they are also cognisant of the world they live in and the obstacles they have to overcome.

Policy settings can be a barrier or a facilitator in overcoming these obstacles. We know that investing early has long lasting benefits, which extend not just to young Australians themselves but to our broader society and economy as well.

Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2015* included specific questions on young people's barriers to further education and employment. We found that many young people were aware of these barriers and felt that they would impact on the achievement of their goals in education, training and employment after school.

We also found that young people are concerned about a range of issues facing Australia more broadly, including: alcohol and drug problems; issues relating to equity and discrimination; and the economy and financial issues.

Commonwealth, state and local governments have important roles to play in addressing these societal issues and providing a more hopeful future for all.

Results from the *Youth Survey 2015* reveal that we must continue to work with all young people in ensuring that:

1. Young people are connected with the necessary information, guidance and additional support services to facilitate their transition from school to further education and employment.
2. Young people are informed about issues related to alcohol and drugs and are able to access appropriate support services if personal substance use issues arise.
3. Young people are exposed to both national and local campaigns and programs which promote equality and empower them to prevent and respond effectively to discriminatory acts when they occur.
4. Young people feel safe in their communities and are able to participate in available opportunities.
5. The mental health and wellbeing of young people is addressed as a priority including through school-based programs and access to appropriate services.

Transitions into education and employment: we need to ensure that young people are supported and connected

Policy settings should enable all young people to be confident that, with enough effort, their education and employment goals are within reach.

This includes providing young people with information, services and structures which can help build confidence in their future and connect them to education and employment opportunities.

While over half of respondents had a high level of confidence in their ability to achieve their goals in study and work after school, not all were so confident. Around one in ten young people reported being only slightly confident or not at all confident in their ability to achieve these goals.

From the list of barriers presented to young people, the top three that were perceived as preventing them from reaching their work and study goals were:

- academic ability (18.2%);
- financial difficulty (16.9%) and;
- lack of jobs (12.2%).

Policy makers should take into account the variety of circumstances and barriers that young people may face in their transition to post-school education and work.

We need young people to see their goals as achievable regardless of their financial circumstances or family background. If we ask them to strive for success, the pathways to success need to be accessible.

Demand-side initiatives paired with targeted programs designed to develop the relevant skills in each young job-seeker are required; a one size fits all approach will not suffice.

School Pressures and Supports

As the majority of 15 to 19 year olds are still in full-time education, it is unsurprising that academic ability features so highly among the barriers believed to impact on future study and work goals. The impact of high school results in determining the future can often seem overwhelming in the minds of young people, particularly in the final stage of secondary education, and students need to be made aware of the multiple pathways to success.

The identification of academic ability as a barrier to the achievement of post-school goals may be tied to concerns about school or study problems and coping with stress, which also feature among the key findings from the *Youth Survey 2015*. Expanding the post-school options for young people may also act to reduce pressures experienced during school as students gain a broader understanding of the pathways available to them.

Young people need appropriate career guidance and mentoring which emphasises the variety of post-school education and training opportunities available. A one size fits all approach will not cater for the diverse needs and aspirations of young people.

Policy makers should take into account the variety of circumstances and barriers that young people may face in their transition to post-school education and work.

For some young people, mainstream school settings may not be the best fit. Alternative education options should be supported for young people who disengage with or are at risk of disengaging with school, as we know that early school leavers have increased difficulty accessing the job market later in life.¹

University access and aspirations

Young people who identified financial difficulty as a barrier to work and study goals may have done so in response to the rising cost of further study and the difficulties faced by young people in supporting themselves through this period.

The prominence of financial difficulty as a barrier is also concerning as we know young people adjust their aspirations in response to financial constraints early in their school life, which may limit their options for the future.

The majority of respondents to the *Youth Survey 2015* continue to highlight university study among their post-school plans, particularly females, while far fewer young people indicate plans to undertake vocational education and training or apprenticeships.

For those who aspire towards tertiary education, university needs to be accessible in terms of both location and cost. We know that regional and remote students complete university at lower rates than metropolitan students.² The costs of moving to attend university add to the cost of course fees and may provide a deterrent as this is not accounted for in the setting of youth allowance payments. The combination of high costs for tertiary education and the difficulty of surviving on youth allowance is likely to deter the most disadvantaged young people from pathways of further study that may better equip them for the labour market.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were considerably less likely to indicate an intention to go to university. In attempting to close the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people we need to ensure that their aspirations are nurtured, including aspirations to attend university. Aspiration building can occur through programs such as the Indigenous Youth Careers Pathways (IYCP) program.

The promotion of a positive sense of cultural identity has also been shown to promote greater participation in education and training for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.³

¹ Crawford, C., Duckworth, K., Vignoles, A. & Wyness, G. (2010) Young people's education and labour market choices aged 16/17 to 18/19: Research Report DFE-RR182, UK Department for Education and Centre for Analysis of Youth Transitions.

² Edwards, D. & McMillan, J. (2015) Completing university in a growing sector: Is equity an issue, Australian Council for Educational Research.

³ Helme, S. & Lamb, S. (2011) Closing the school completion gap for Indigenous students, Produced for the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare & Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Vocational Education

Young people need to be equipped with the skills that are in demand to be able to compete in today's constantly changing workplace. Expanded apprenticeship and traineeship programs should reflect growth industries like aged care and childcare, not just traditional trades, as the job market restructures to a more service-orientated rather than trade-based economy.

The *Youth Survey 2015* found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were more likely to plan to get an apprenticeship or to attend TAFE or college than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

Further, research has shown that schools which offer apprenticeships or traineeships for young people from year 10 onwards improve rates of retention.⁴ School-based programs offering similar links to VET should be offered more broadly.

Work Experience and Mentoring

Young people are seeking to gain work experience but often have difficulty finding the part-time work that suits their needs. While 94% of respondents to the *Youth Survey 2015* were studying full-time, 35.9% were looking for work. Access to part-time work while studying appeared to be a particular issue for males with a lower proportion of males working part-time and a higher proportion looking for work.

Work experience while still at school is an important pathway to future employment and should be prioritised. Work experience or volunteer work can be an effective means for young people to improve their employment prospects and is highly valued by employers.⁵

Mission Australia supports the subsidies offered under the National Work Experience Program and the support offered through the proposed Transition to Work service, which have the prospect of providing young people with meaningful work experience opportunities and improved entry points to the workforce after they finish school.

Pre and post-employment mentoring is also useful for transitioning into work and work retention, and families can be supported with the knowledge and skills to help young people navigate education and employment pathways.

School and community-based mentoring programs provided by organisations like Raise can support young people to engage in further education and employment while also working with them to build positive relationships and increase self-confidence and general wellbeing.

⁴ Polidano, C., Hanel, B. & Buddelmeyer, H. (2012) Explaining the SES School Completion Gap, Melbourne Institute Working Paper Series: Working Paper. No. 16/12. Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, The University of Melbourne.

⁵ Department of Employment, Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences – combined data for all regions surveyed in the 2013-2014 financial year.

Youth specific employment programs

A lack of jobs was highlighted as a barrier to further education and employment by many young people. The Department of Employment reports that there is an average of 18 applicants per low skilled vacancy advertised on the internet and/or in newspapers.⁶

Transition to work programs are essential to assist young people to gain access to entry level jobs, to provide avenues to higher skilled jobs and to address complex needs for more disadvantaged young people.

Young people who experience greater difficulty finding work both during and after secondary school often face specific barriers, including low literacy and/or numeracy skills and problems with housing or childcare. Evidence has shown us that we need to work with the specific barriers faced by some young people alongside their employment needs.⁷

The Australian Government's new Transition to Work service is a step in the right direction with youth specific supports proposed for early school leavers aged 15 to 21 including localised service delivery and flexible individual case management.

However, for young people with complex needs, greater investment and more tailored supports are needed. There is a danger that the most at-risk young people will not be picked up by the proposed Transitions to Work service. There is a need for complementary programs to support these vulnerable young people in order to avoid the scarring effects of long-term unemployment which may occur without additional supports. A program that targets the most disadvantaged young job seekers would be a welcome addition to the policy framework.

Place-based approaches to work

Youth unemployment is more than double the general unemployment rate at around 14 per cent⁸ and is much more pronounced in some areas than others.⁹

Training opportunities need to allow young people to gain the skills that match the needs of the local job market, as these are more likely to help young people access employment in the long-term.¹⁰

⁶ Department of Employment, Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences – combined data for all regions surveyed in the 2013-2014 financial year.

⁷ Oxenbridge, S. & Evesson, J. (2012) Young people entering work: A review of the research, Ref: 18/12, Employment Research Australia.

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Labour Force, Australia (Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics) <<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/ABS@NSF/mediareleasesbyCatalogue/46DFE12FCDB783D9CA256B740082AA6C?OpenDocument>>.

⁹ ABS, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery (Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015) <<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@nsf/PrimaryMainFeatures/6291.0.55.001?OpenDocument>>.

¹⁰ Polvere, R-A. & Lim, P. (2015) Career Development supporting young Australians: a literature review, Adelaide: National Centre for Vocational Education Research & Melbourne: Brotherhood of St Laurence.

More nuanced place-based approaches should be utilised to link young people to local industries and to provide a more coordinated approach that is responsive to local needs.

Initiatives such as the Real Futures Generation program, run through the Beacon Foundation, has the potential to address this need by supporting young people to build work readiness skills and matching them with potential employers through a tailored workplace training program.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People: home, family and work

Encouragingly, young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents to the *Youth Survey 2015* indicated a similar level of confidence in achieving their goals compared to non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

However, a greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people than non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young people felt that family responsibilities and where you live would impact the achievement of study and work goals after school.

We know that family responsibilities are culturally important in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including extended family networks.¹¹ Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders also may face additional pressure from caring responsibilities.

In the last Census, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders aged 15-34 years were twice as likely to be carers as non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders of the same age and three times more likely to need assistance with core activities themselves.¹²

The impact of caring responsibilities requires both recognition of cultural norms and concerted efforts to improve health outcomes.

We also know that unemployment can be particularly high in remote and disadvantaged areas¹³ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are at heightened risk of entrenched employment exclusion.¹⁴

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in regional and remote areas as well as in urban areas need to have the opportunity to pursue their aspirations, however remote and very remote communities require tailored service provision models.

¹¹ Zubrick, S.R., Shepherd, C.C.J., Dudgeon, P., Gee, G., Paradies, Y., Scine, C. & Walker, R. (2014) Social Determinants of Social and Emotional Wellbeing in Dudgeon, P., Milroy, H. & Walker, R. [eds.] Working Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice, 2nd Edition, Telethon Institute for Child Health Research/Kulunga Research Network & the University of Western Australia.

¹² ABS (2008) Summary of findings: 2006 ABS Census of Population and Housing, the Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, Canberra.

¹³ ABS, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery (Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015) <<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@nsf/PrimaryMainFeatures/6291.0.55.001?OpenDocument>>.

¹⁴ Campbell, P., Kelly, P. & Harrison, L. (2012) No. 31: The problem of Aboriginal Marginalisation: Education, Labour Markets and Social and Emotional Well-being. Working papers: Series two, Geelong: Alfred Deakin Research Institute.

Place-based approaches are needed to ensure that where you live does not determine the achievability of your goals.

Place-based approaches work best in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where these approaches are developed in partnership with local leaders and in consultation with local schools and employers.¹⁵ Engagement with communities must also be long-term, allowing service providers to develop strong and meaningful relationships with local stakeholders.

Alcohol and drugs, an issue of increasing concern: we need to guarantee that young people are informed and can access appropriate supports

Alcohol and drugs was the top issue of national concern for the first time in recent years with over one quarter of young people identifying it as an important issue in Australia today. Young people expressed concern about issues ranging from underage drinking and alcohol-fuelled violence to smoking and increasing methamphetamine use among peers.

While we know that the rate of young people aged 14 to 17 years abstaining from drinking has increased over the past ten years,¹⁶ abuse of alcohol and drugs by young people remains a serious issue.

It appears that the important messages around problem drinking and attendant issues are impacting on young people's perceptions and behaviour. Continued support should be provided for effective school and community campaigns. However, for the minority of young people for whom substance abuse is a problem, effective youth-focussed detox, rehabilitation and after care services are required.

Programs such as Triple Care Farm (TCF) offer an excellent model for such care. TCF is a residential alcohol and other drugs rehabilitation and treatment program for young people aged between 16 and 24 years which specialises in treating young people with co-morbid mental illness and drug and alcohol problems. The program also includes the provision of vocational and educational training so young people can re-engage with education and find pathways to employment. A recent Social Return on Investment analysis demonstrated that \$3 of value was created for every \$1 invested in TCF.¹⁷

Young people may also be exposed to the harmful drinking and drug-taking behaviours of others. This includes alcohol and drug related violence at home or in public places, parental and peer drinking, substance use and the risk-taking behaviours of others such as driving under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Broader measures are required to reduce alcohol-related harm at all ages across Australia.

¹⁵ Hunt, J. (2013). Engaging with Indigenous Australia—exploring the conditions for effective relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Issues paper no. 5. Produced for the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse.

¹⁶ Livingston, M. (2014) Trends in non-drinking among Australian adolescents, *Addiction*, 109 (6) pp. 922-929.

¹⁷ Social Ventures Australia Consulting (2015) Triple Care Farm: Baseline Social Return on Investment. Available at: https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/annual-reports/doc_download/382-triple-care-farm-baseline-social-return-on-investment-analysis.

Growing concerns about equity and discrimination: we need to further promote equality through positive community campaigns

The proportion of young people concerned about equity and discrimination increased in 2015 from around one in five to one quarter of all respondents, making it the second top issue nationally. Comments expressed by young people focussed largely on racism, sexism, gender inequality and discrimination more generally.

In addition to equity and discrimination, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) issues, predominantly including references to same-sex marriage, featured as a national issue of concern for just over one in ten (13.2%) respondents nationally.

To address these concerns, policies are required which promote gender equality and which make discrimination unacceptable in all aspects of society. Governments can take a leadership role in eradicating discrimination and promoting equity and all sectors of society can also play a part.

Workplace equity policies and community awareness campaigns can make a difference. The Male Champions of Change initiative initiated by the outgoing Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick is one example of positive inroads being made through business leadership. Sporting clubs have also shown some leadership in signing up to campaigns against racism and sex discrimination, such as the 'Play by the Rules' and 'Racism. It stops with me' initiatives.

Persistent issues of personal concern: we need to support a continued focus on the mental health and wellbeing of young people'

In recent years, coping with stress, school or study problems and body image have remained among the top three issues of personal concern for young people. Depression and family conflict were also highlighted as issues of personal concern for around one in five respondents. Mental health was among the top three issues of national concern for females, with one in five young females highlighting this as an issue (19.3%).

Additionally, just over one in ten respondents indicated that family responsibilities and physical or mental health were among the barriers impacting on the achievement of their study or work goals after school.

As adolescence can be a difficult time, it is important that we do all we can to support the mental health of young people as they grow into contributing young adults. Models of holistic and broad-based mental health care are required and Mission Australia has worked with Black Dog Institute to analyse changes in young people's mental health across the years and made specific recommendations for policy reform.¹⁸

Recommendations include providing young people with the skills to cope with stress when it arises and providing universal programs through schools to improve mental health and mental health awareness.

Recommendations include providing young people with the skills to cope with stress when it arises and providing universal programs through schools to improve mental health and mental health awareness. These programs can work towards reducing stigma and encourage help-seeking in young people. It is important to provide evidence-based online supports to young people alongside face-to-face services where needed.

Through equipping friends, family and other important people in young people's lives to find effective support avenues and engaging young people and their families in the design and development of services and programs that are youth-friendly and appealing we will see greater uptake of support when and where it is needed.

¹⁸ Mission Australia & Black Dog Institute (2015) Young people's mental health over the years: 2012-2014. Available at: https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/research/young-people/doc_download/399-youth-survey-mental-health-report-2015.

About the survey

Survey background

In 2015, Mission Australia conducted its 14th annual survey of young people. As in previous years, the survey aimed to identify both the values and issues of concern to young people. A small number of amendments were made to the survey this year. Most notably, new questions were added to explore young people's perceptions surrounding their confidence in achieving post-school study/work goals, as well as exploring the type of barriers young people saw as impacting the achievement of these goals.

Participation

In 2015, 18,994 young Australians aged 15-19 years participated in the survey. Of these, 17,323 (91.2%) respondents completed the survey online, with the remainder completing a hard copy.

Areas of focus

As well as collecting valuable socio-demographic data, the *Youth Survey 2015* sought to capture the views and perspectives of young people on a broad range of issues. Topics covered by the survey this year included education and employment, barriers to future study/work goals, participation in community activities, general wellbeing, values and concerns, preferred sources of support, as well as feelings about the future.

Methodology

Following approval from State and Territory Education Departments, as well as Catholic Education Offices, to approach secondary school principals across Australia, information about Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2015* and an electronic link to the online version of the survey were distributed. Information was also distributed to Mission Australia services, networks of other service providers, Commonwealth, State/Territory and local government departments, youth organisations and peak bodies.

Changes in 2015

As previously mentioned, some changes were made to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey* this year, including the removal of a number of questions asked in 2014 and the addition of some new questions. Minor amendments were also made to a small number of questions. Details for these changes to the survey have been outlined below.

- As in previous years, respondents were asked to indicate in an open text response which issues they felt were most important in Australia today. Responses to this question are categorised according to a pre-determined set of subcategories and main categories. In the 2015 survey a small number of revisions were made to these categorisations, the most notable being the division of the main category *politics and societal values* into two separate categories, *politics* and *societal values*, to more accurately reflect the content of young people's responses.

- The analytical method used to count responses was also changed in the question asking young people to list the issues they felt were most important in Australia today. The current methodology counts the number of young people who gave one or more responses categorised into each main category. For instance, if a young person responded "alcohol" and "drugs" as their first and second issues, this was counted as one young person who felt *alcohol and drugs* was an issue of national importance.
- For the first time in 2015, young people were asked about how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school, ranking responses on a five point scale from *not at all confident* to *extremely confident*. Respondents were then asked whether they felt there were any barriers which may impact on the achievement of these goals. If young people responded 'yes' to this question, they were prompted to indicate from a list of items which they saw as a barrier to the achievement of their study/work goals. The items included *family responsibilities, financial difficulty, lack of information, lack of jobs, academic ability, physical or mental health, lack of family support, where you live, lack of school support* and other.

Please note that not all questions asked in the survey are presented in the current report. These questions will inform other research publications to be released throughout 2016.

This report

This report contains an executive summary, a national summary and a summary for each State or Territory. As in 2014, the results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are again included in a chapter within this report. In this chapter, the responses of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents are compared to those of non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents.

Each of the chapters contains a breakdown of key data by gender and, where applicable, comparisons with previous years' data. The one exception is to the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) chapter where, due to a modest number of responses, data is presented at only a Territory-wide level, with no gender breakdown.

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

National summary



Profile of respondents

State and territory distribution

A total of 18,994 young people aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2015*. Respondents came from across Australia and Figure 1.1 indicates the number and percentages from each state/territory. There were 11 respondents who did not indicate which state/territory they lived in.

Gender breakdown

Over half (55.3%) of respondents were female and 44.7% were male.

Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 1,147 (6.2%) respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 929 (5.0%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 126 (0.7%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.5% identified as both). A higher proportion of male than female respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (7.1% compared with 5.4%).

Language background other than English

A total of 3,028 (16.2%) respondents stated that they were born overseas and 4,081 (21.9%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 70 languages spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency); Chinese, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin and Italian.

Disability

A total of 1,125 (6.0%) respondents indicated that they had a disability, with a greater proportion of males (7.6%) than females (4.7%) reporting a disability. The most frequently cited disabilities overall were (in order of frequency); learning disability, autism, physical disability, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and deafness or hearing impairment.

Detailed national results

Education

As indicated in Table 1.1, 94.0% of respondents were studying full-time, similar to the 93.8% of respondents aged 15 to 19 in 2014. A slightly greater proportion of female than male respondents reported that they were studying full-time (95.1% compared with 92.6% respectively), while a slightly greater proportion of males (4.3%) than females (2.7%) reported not studying at all.

Respondents who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in previous years, the majority of respondents reported that they were either *very satisfied* (16.0%) or *satisfied* (56.7%) with their studies. Less than one in ten were *very dissatisfied* or *dissatisfied* (1.3% and 4.4% respectively). As shown in Table 1.2, a slightly higher proportion of females than males reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their studies (16.1% and 58.0% of females compared with 15.9% and 55.2% of males respectively).

Figure 1.1: Percentage of respondents by state/territory

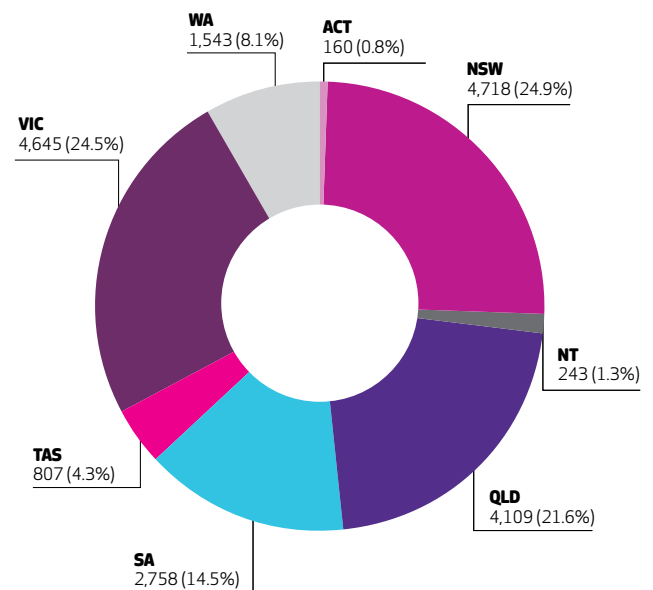


Table 1.1: Participation in education

	National %	Female %	Male %
Studying full-time	94.0	95.1	92.6
Studying part-time	2.6	2.2	3.0
Not studying	3.5	2.7	4.3

Table 1.2: Satisfaction with studies

	National 2015 %	Female %	Male %	National 2014 %	National 2013 %
Very satisfied	16.0	16.1	15.9	15.3	17.0
Satisfied	56.7	58.0	55.2	55.9	55.7
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	21.5	20.7	22.5	22.3	21.2
Dissatisfied	4.4	4.1	4.7	5.0	4.4
Very dissatisfied	1.3	1.0	1.7	1.5	1.6

In 2015, respondents who reported they were studying full-time or part-time were asked whether or not they were still at school. The majority of respondents (97.6%) stated they were still at school. A slightly higher proportion of males than females indicated that they were still at school (98.1% compared with 97.3% respectively). Of those who were still at school, 96.6% stated that they intended to complete Year 12. Almost three times the proportion of males than females indicated that they did not intend to complete Year 12 (5.3% compared with 1.8% respectively).

Respondents who were still at school were also asked what they were planning to do after leaving school. Figure 1.2 shows that nearly two thirds of respondents planned to go to university after school (65.3%). Many respondents also indicated plans to get a job (34.5%) and to travel or go on a gap year (29.6%) after school. Overall, 13.0% planned to attend TAFE or college and 9.7% reported plans to undertake an apprenticeship. A small minority of respondents (0.6%) indicated that they felt no choices were available to them after they left school.

While going to university was the most frequently chosen option among both male and female respondents, a higher proportion of females than males stated that they planned to do so (71.2% compared with 58.0% respectively). A greater proportion of female respondents also reported plans to travel or go on a gap year after school (34.6% compared with 23.4% of males). A larger proportion of males indicated that they were planning to undertake an apprenticeship (16.6% compared with 4.1% of females).

Figure 1.2: Plans after leaving school



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Employment

Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who answered that they had paid employment were asked to specify how many hours they worked per week, on average. Table 1.3 shows respondents' participation in paid employment. Only 0.5% of respondents who reported paid employment were employed full-time. However, given the percentage of respondents who were still at school this is not surprising. Almost four in ten (38.8%) respondents, the majority of whom were still at school, reported part-time employment. Around six in ten respondents reported that they were not in paid employment, with 35.9% looking for work and 24.8% not looking for work.

Similar proportions of male and female respondents reported full-time employment (0.6% compared with 0.5%), while a slightly higher proportion of female respondents were employed part-time (42.3% compared with 34.4%). Conversely, a greater proportion of male than female respondents were looking for work (38.6% compared with 33.7%).

Table 1.3: Participation in paid employment

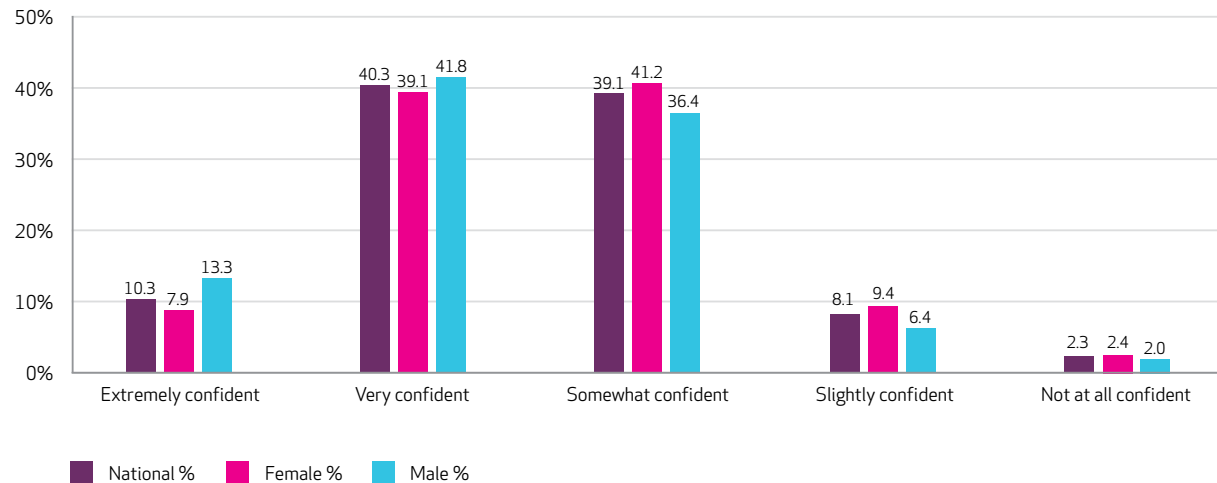
	National %	Female %	Male %
Employed full-time	0.5	0.5	0.6
Employed part-time	38.8	42.3	34.4
Not in paid employment, looking for work	35.9	33.7	38.6
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	24.8	23.5	26.3

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

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

In 2015, respondents were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. Responses for this question were rated on a five point scale from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. Just over half of respondents indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve study/work goals, with 10.3% indicating that they were *extremely confident* and 40.3% indicating that they were *very confident*. However, around one in ten young people were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals, with 8.1% being *slightly confident* and 2.3% *not at all confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. A slightly higher proportion of male than female respondents reported feeling *extremely confident* or *very confident* (13.3% and 41.8% of males compared with 7.9% and 39.1% of females respectively).

Figure 1.3: Confidence in achieving study/work goals



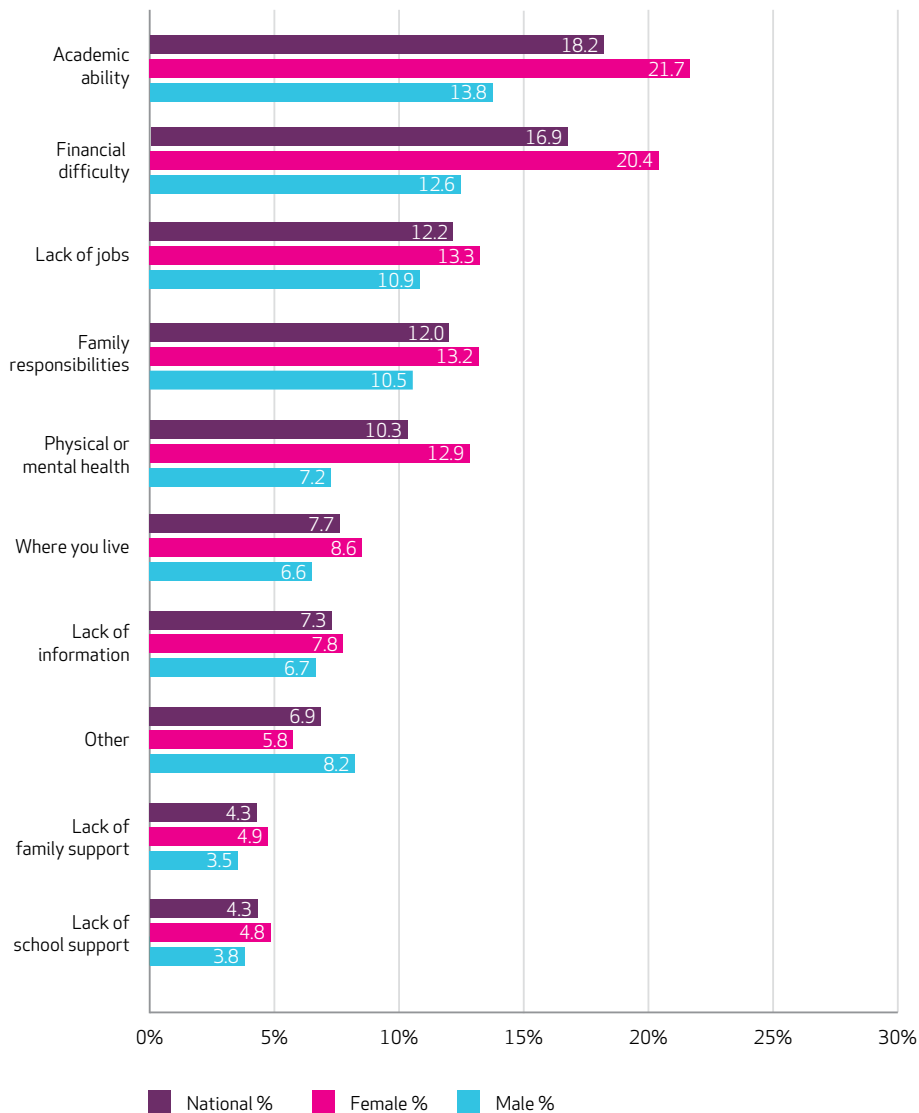
Barriers to the achievement of young people's study/work goals after school

Young people in 2015 were asked whether they felt there were any barriers which may impact on the achievement of their study/work goals after school. Just over half (52.0%) of respondents indicated that they felt there would be barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals, with a slightly greater proportion of females (55.5%) than males (47.5%) reporting the presence of these barriers.

Respondents who indicated the presence of barriers were asked to indicate from a number of items which barriers they saw as preventing them from achieving their goals after school. Figure 1.4 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated each item as a barrier. Nationally, the top three barriers young people saw impacting the achievement of their study/work goals after school were *academic ability*, *financial difficulty* and *lack of jobs*.

- *Academic ability*, *financial difficulty* and *lack of jobs* were the three most commonly cited barriers to the achievement of young people's study/work goals after school (18.2%, 16.9% and 12.2% respectively).
- Just over one in ten respondents indicated that they saw *family responsibilities* and *physical or mental health* as barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals after school.

Figure 1.4: Barriers to the achievement of study/work goals after school



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

Gender differences

As shown in Figure 1.4, the top three barriers identified by both genders to the achievement of their study/work goals after school were consistent with national results. The proportion of females that indicated they saw these, along with most of the other items, as barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals was generally greater than the proportion of males.

- One in five (21.7%) female respondents and 13.8% of male respondents indicated that *academic ability* was a barrier.
- A higher proportion of female than male respondents indicated that *financial difficulties* and a *lack of jobs* were barriers to the achievement of future study/work goals (20.4% and 13.3% of females compared with 12.6% and 10.9% of males respectively).

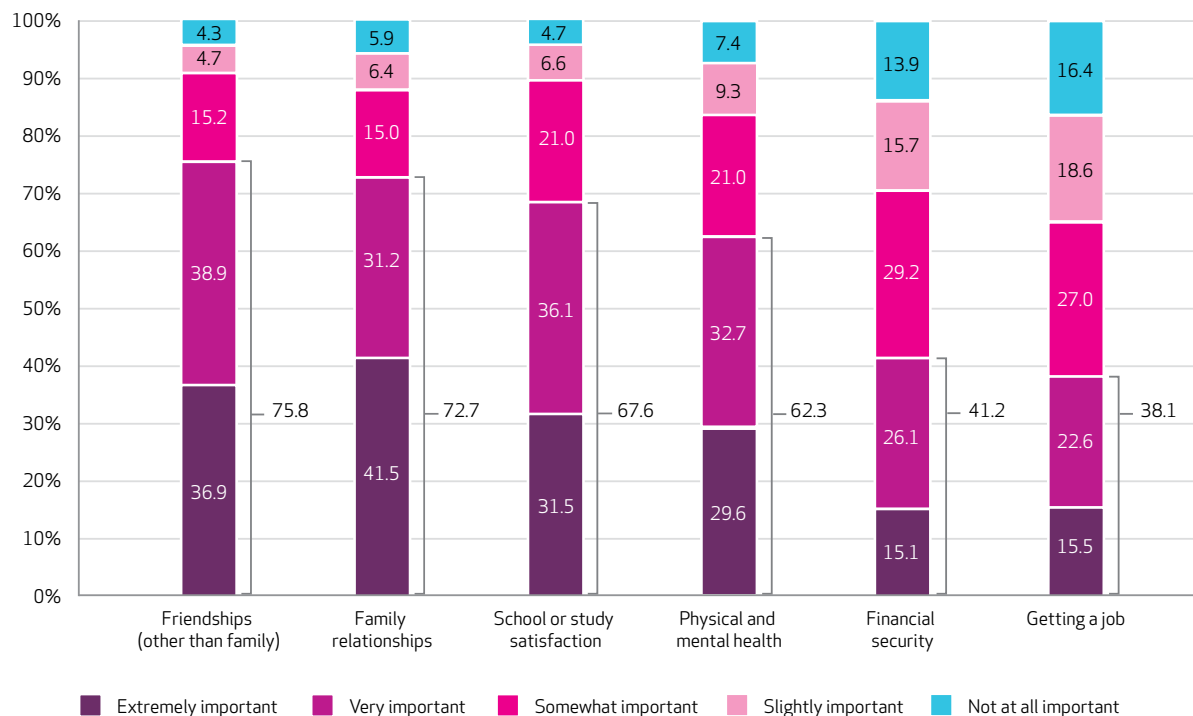
What do young people value?

In 2015 young people were again asked how much they valued *family relationships*, *financial security*, *friendships*, *getting a job*, *physical and mental health* and *school or study satisfaction*. Responses for these items were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely important* to *not at all important*. In Figure 1.5 the items were ranked in order of importance by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely important* or *very important* for each item. In 2015 responses were consistent with previous years, with *friendships* and *family relationships* ranked as the two most highly valued items. Also consistent with past years is the high value placed on *school or study satisfaction* and *physical and mental health*.

- *Friendships* were highly valued by 75.8% of respondents (*extremely important*: 36.9%; *very important*: 38.9%). *Family relationships* were also valued very highly by 72.7% of respondents (*extremely important*: 41.5%; *very important*: 31.2%).

- Just over two thirds of respondents highly valued *school or study satisfaction* (*extremely important*: 31.5%; *very important*: 36.1%) and around six in ten highly valued *physical and mental health* (*extremely important*: 29.6%; *very important*: 32.7%).
- Around four in ten respondents placed a high value on *financial security* (*extremely important*: 15.1%; *very important*: 26.1%) and *getting a job* (*extremely important*: 15.5%; *very important*: 22.6%).

Figure 1.5: What young people value



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

Gender differences

Consistent with last year's findings, *friendships*, *family relationships* and *school or study satisfaction* were again ranked as the three most highly valued items by both males and females, as shown in Table 1.4. The proportion of female respondents who highly valued these and all of the other items was higher than the proportion of males.

- *Friendships* were highly valued by 79.4% of females (*extremely important*: 40.3%; *very important*: 39.1%) compared with 71.3% of males (*extremely important*: 32.7%; *very important*: 38.6%).
- *Family relationships* were highly valued by 77.3% of females (*extremely important*: 46.6%; *very important*: 30.7%) compared with 67.2% of males (*extremely important*: 35.2%; *very important*: 32.0%).
- 74.6% of females highly valued *school or study satisfaction* (*extremely important*: 37.2%; *very important*: 37.4%) compared with 59.0% of males (*extremely important*: 24.4%; *very important*: 34.6%).
- *Physical and mental health* was highly valued by around two thirds of all females (*extremely important*: 32.0%; *very important*: 34.2%) and by almost six in ten of all males (*extremely important*: 26.7%; *very important*: 31.0%).

Table 1.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	40.3	39.1	13.6	4.1	2.9
Family relationships	46.6	30.7	13.3	5.9	3.6
School or study satisfaction	37.2	37.4	17.9	4.8	2.7
Physical and mental health	32.0	34.2	20.1	8.7	5.0
Financial security	15.7	28.1	30.1	15.2	10.8
Getting a job	14.9	23.4	28.6	18.0	15.1
Males	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	32.7	38.6	17.2	5.5	6.0
Family relationships	35.2	32.0	17.1	6.9	8.8
School or study satisfaction	24.4	34.6	25.0	8.8	7.1
Physical and mental health	26.7	31.0	22.0	10.1	10.3
Financial security	14.3	23.6	28.0	16.2	17.8
Getting a job	16.2	21.6	25.0	19.3	18.0

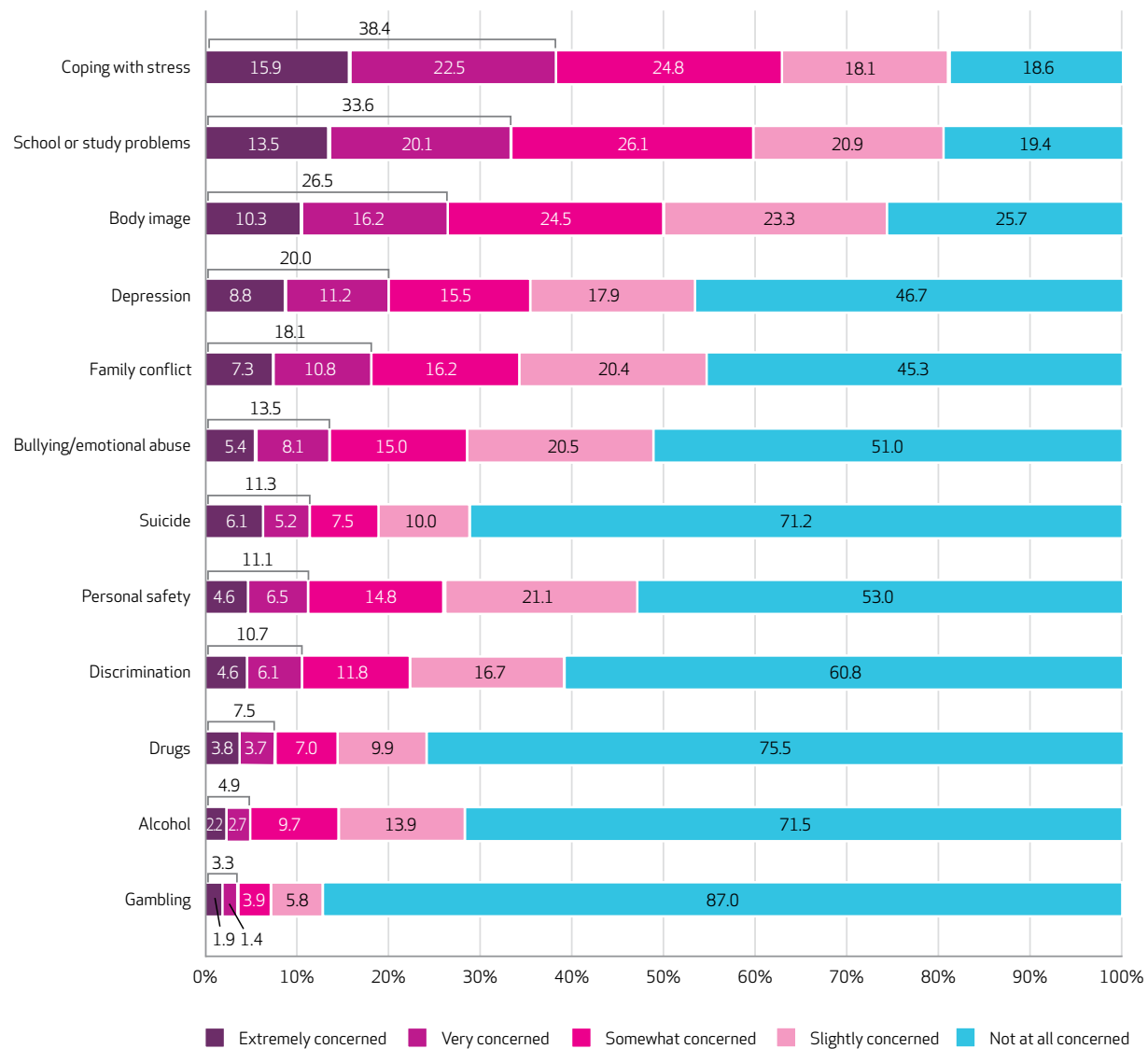
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Respondents were asked to rate how concerned they were about a number of issues, shown in Figure 1.6. Responses were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*. The items were ranked in order of concern by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* for each item. The top three issues of concern for young people were *coping with stress*, *school or study problems* and *body image*. Compared to the results from previous years, the top three issues of concern remain unchanged.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with 38.4% of respondents indicating that they were either *extremely concerned* (15.9%) or *very concerned* (22.5%) about this issue.
- *School or study problems* was a major concern for 33.6% (*extremely concerned*: 13.5%; *very concerned*: 20.1%) of young people.
- *Body image* was also an important issue of concern for 26.5% of respondents (*extremely concerned*: 10.3%; *very concerned*: 16.2%).
- Around one in five respondents were either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* about *depression* and *family conflict*.

Figure 1.6: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item.

Gender differences

Coping with stress and *school or study problems* were the top two issues of concern for both males and females as highlighted in Table 1.5. The order of the top two issues of concern differed, however, with males indicating that *school or study problems* was their number one concern, while for females the top issue of concern was *coping with stress*. The third highest issue of concern for females was *body image*, while for males the number three issue was *depression*. The proportion of females concerned about all of these (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- For around half of all females *coping with stress* was a major concern (*extremely concerned*: 22.6%; *very concerned*: 28.9%), compared with around one fifth of all males (*extremely concerned*: 7.6%; *very concerned*: 14.6%)
- Females were also more concerned about *school and study problems* with 42.2% (*extremely concerned*: 17.6%; *very concerned*: 24.6%) indicating that this was a major concern, compared with 23.0% of males (*extremely concerned*: 8.4%; *very concerned*: 14.6%).
- Concerns about *body image* were considerably higher among females, with 37.4% (*extremely concerned*: 14.8%; *very concerned*: 22.6%) indicating that *body image* was a major concern, compared with 13.1% (*extremely concerned*: 4.7%; *very concerned*: 8.4%) of males.
- For 25.3% of females (*extremely concerned*: 11.2%; *very concerned*: 14.1%) and 13.2% of males (*extremely concerned*: 5.8%; *very concerned*: 7.4%), *depression* was a major concern.

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

Females	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	22.6	28.9	25.2	14.5	8.7
School or study problems	17.6	24.6	26.4	19.3	12.1
Body image	14.8	22.6	27.4	21.3	14.0
Depression	11.2	14.1	17.5	18.9	38.3
Family conflict	9.2	13.7	18.8	21.5	36.8
Bullying/emotional abuse	6.3	9.9	17.2	22.6	43.9
Suicide	7.0	6.6	8.9	12.1	65.5
Personal safety	4.8	7.8	17.1	23.0	47.3
Discrimination	5.0	7.4	13.4	18.1	56.1
Drugs	3.4	3.9	7.4	10.9	74.3
Alcohol	1.7	3.0	10.6	15.0	69.6
Gambling	1.3	1.2	3.3	5.5	88.7
Males	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	7.6	14.6	24.3	22.5	31.0
School or study problems	8.4	14.6	25.8	23.0	28.3
Body image	4.7	8.4	21.0	25.8	40.2
Depression	5.8	7.4	12.9	16.7	57.1
Family conflict	4.9	7.3	13.0	19.0	55.9
Bullying/emotional abuse	4.2	5.8	12.2	17.9	59.9
Suicide	4.9	3.4	5.9	7.4	78.4
Personal safety	4.4	4.8	11.8	18.7	60.3
Discrimination	4.1	4.4	9.8	15.1	66.6
Drugs	4.3	3.4	6.6	8.7	77.0
Alcohol	2.8	2.3	8.6	12.4	73.9
Gambling	2.6	1.7	4.6	6.3	84.9

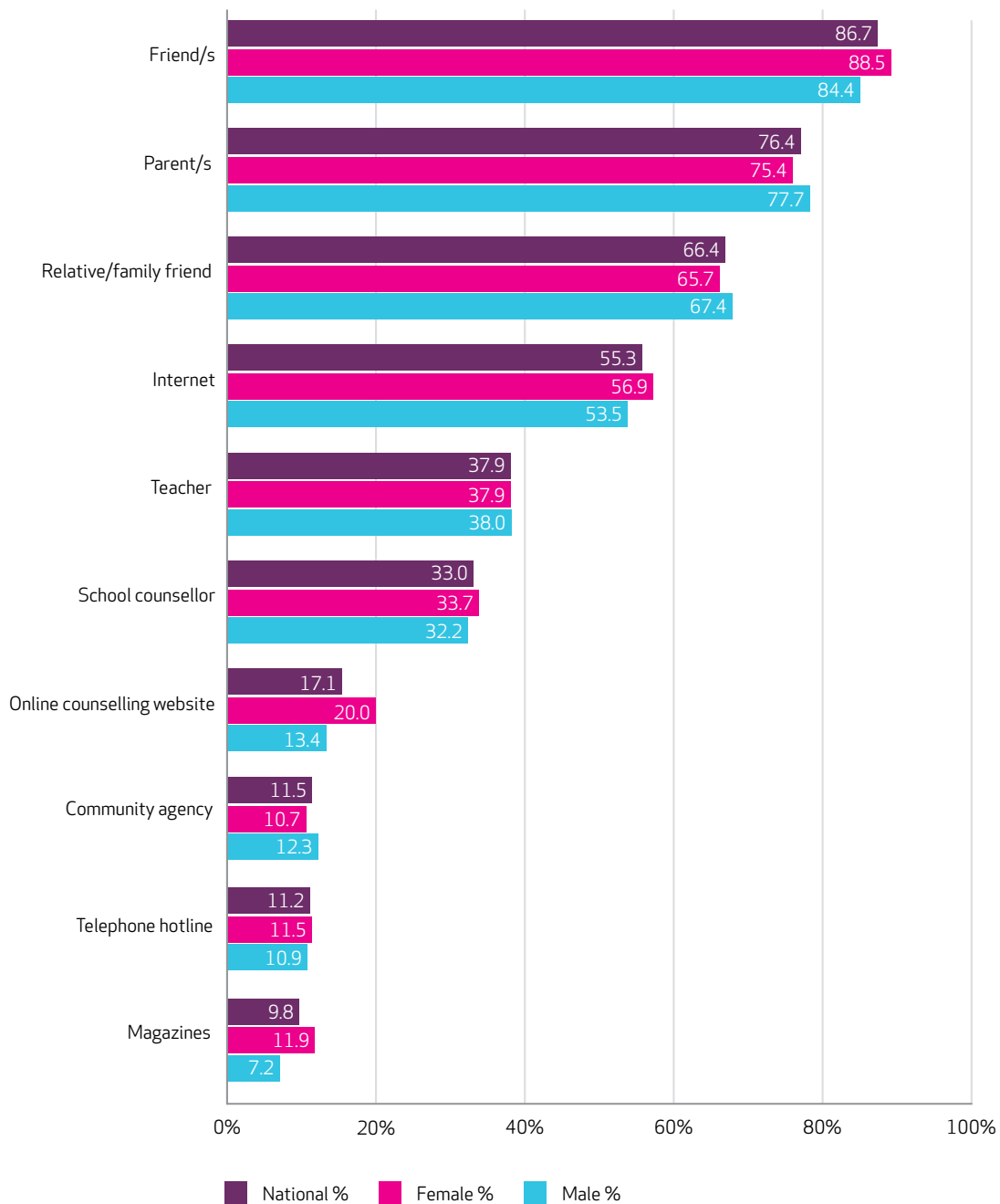
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

Young people were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 1.7 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that they would go to each source. The top three sources of help for young people were *friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends*.

- *Friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends* were the three most commonly cited sources of help for young people.
- Over half of respondents indicated that they would go to the *internet* for help with important issues in their lives.
- Around one third of respondents indicated that they would go to their *teacher* or *school counsellor* for help with important issues.

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



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Gender differences

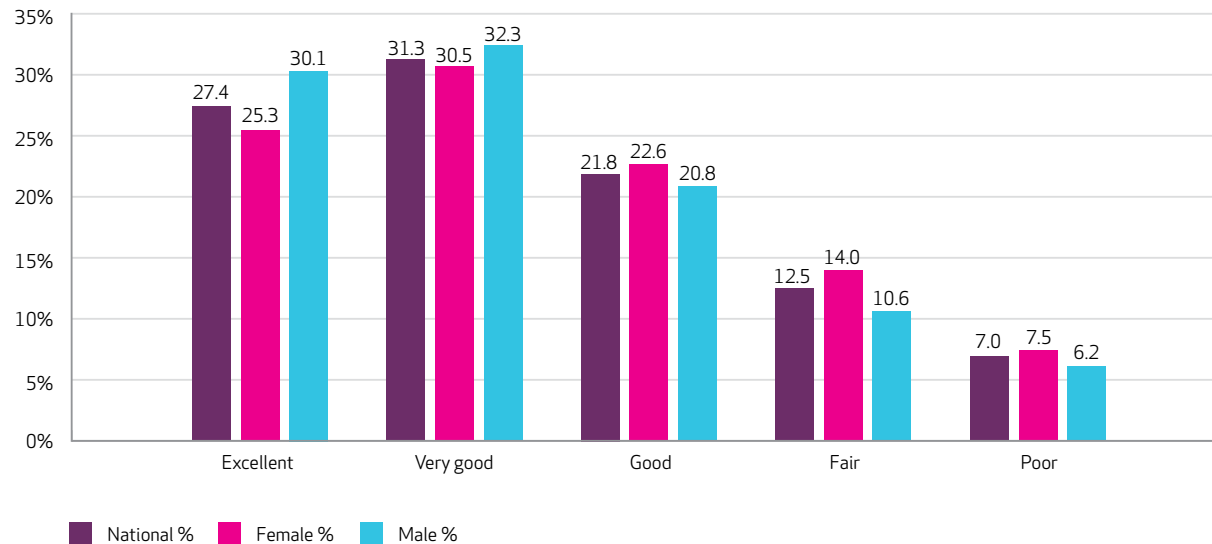
As shown in Figure 1.7 the top three sources of help for both genders were consistent with national results, although a greater proportion of female respondents than male respondents indicated that they would go to *friend/s* for help with important issues, while greater proportions of males would go to *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends*.

- Almost nine in ten (88.5%) of female respondents and 84.4% of male respondents indicated that they would go to *friend/s* for help with important issues.
- A higher proportion of male than female respondents indicated they would go to *parent/s* (77.7% compared with 75.4%) and *relatives/family friends* (67.4% compared with 65.7%) for help.
- A greater proportion of females than males would go to the *internet* (56.9% compared with 53.5%), *online counselling websites* (20.0% compared with 13.4%) and *magazines* (11.9% compared with 7.2%) for help with important issues in their lives.

How well do young people feel their families get along?

Respondents were asked about how well they thought their family got along. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *excellent* to *poor*. Overall, the majority of respondents rated their family's ability to get along very positively, with 27.4% indicating that their family's ability to get along was *excellent* and 31.3% that it was *very good*. However, around one in five young people did not report such a positive experience of family relationships, rating their family's ability to get along as either *fair* (12.5%) or *poor* (7.0%). Male and female respondents gave similar ratings of their family's ability to get along.

Figure 1.8: Family's ability to get along



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

Young people were asked to write down the three issues they considered were most important in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 1.6. In 2015 the top three issues identified by young people were *alcohol and drugs*, *equity and discrimination* and *the economy and financial matters*.

- Around one quarter of young people identified *alcohol and drugs* (27.0%) and *equity and discrimination* (25.0%) as important issues in Australia today.
- Compared to the past two years, *alcohol and drugs* has risen as an issue of national concern among respondents.
- Close to one in five respondents identified *the economy and financial matters* (18.9%) and *politics* (16.1%) as major issues.
- Since 2013, *international relations* has been increasingly identified as a key issue facing the nation. Conversely, mentions of *population issues* have declined over this period.

Gender differences

There were some similarities and differences in the issues identified as the most important in Australia today by male and female respondents. Consistent with the national results, *alcohol and drugs* and *equity and discrimination* were among the top three issues of importance for both male and female respondents. For female respondents the top issue facing the nation this year was *equity and discrimination*, followed by *alcohol and drugs* and *mental health*. For males, the top issue was *alcohol and drugs*, with *equity and discrimination* as their number two issue and *the economy and financial matters* third.

- Around one quarter of female and male respondents (27.1% and 22.3% respectively) identified *equity and discrimination* as a major issue facing Australia today.
- A greater proportion of males than females identified *alcohol and drugs* (31.0% compared with 23.7%) and *the economy and financial matters* (20.7% compared with 17.6%) as important national issues.
- Conversely, a greater proportion of females than males identified *mental health* (19.3% compared with 9.4%) as an important issue.

Table 1.6: Most important issues in Australia today

	National 2015 %	Female %	Male %	National 2014 %	National 2013 %
Alcohol and drugs	27.0	23.7	31.0	22.1	18.7
Equity and discrimination	25.0	27.1	22.3	19.1	21.7
The economy and financial matters	18.9	17.6	20.7	25.1	24.5
Politics	16.1	13.2	19.8	23.5	22.2
Population issues	15.3	15.0	15.6	16.1	21.2
Mental health	14.9	19.3	9.4	16.3	13.2
International relations	13.4	11.0	16.4	3.3	2.7
LGBT issues	13.2	17.2	8.1	6.1	6.6
The environment	12.8	13.3	12.2	11.6	13.6
Employment	12.7	11.4	14.4	11.1	13.7
Education	12.2	13.3	10.8	15.0	14.3
Crime, safety and violence	10.1	10.1	10.0	10.1	10.6
Health	9.5	10.0	8.9	13.4	11.1
Bullying	9.3	10.9	7.2	14.3	10.7
Homelessness/housing	7.8	9.7	5.5	7.4	7.7

Note: Items are listed in order of national frequency.

What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities that they have been involved in over the past year from the list shown in Table 1.7. As in previous years, the top three activities for young people aged 15 to 19 years were *sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *volunteer work*. However, significant proportions of young people reported involvement in almost all activities over the past year.

- *Sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *volunteer work* were the three most popular activities for young people in 2015.
- Around half of respondents indicated that they had participated in *arts/cultural/music activities* (50.7%).
- Four in ten young people reported participation in *student leadership activities* (40.0%), one third had participated in *youth groups and clubs* (33.1%), three in ten had participated in *religious groups or activities* (30.8%) and around one in five had participated in *environmental groups or activities* (22.0%) over the past year.

Gender differences

As shown in Table 1.7 the top two activities for both genders were consistent with national results, although a greater proportion of male respondents than female respondents were involved in both *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)*. The third top activity for males was *volunteer work*, while for females it was *arts/cultural/music activities*.

- 77.6% of male respondents and 71.6% of female respondents were involved in *sports (as a participant)* over the past year.
- A larger proportion of male than female respondents were involved in *sports (as a spectator)* (72.8% compared with 63.1%).
- Despite *volunteer work* ranking higher up the list for male respondents, overall a greater proportion of female than male respondents were involved in *volunteer work*, *arts/cultural/music activities* and *student leadership activities* (56.2%, 59.0% and 45.0% compared with 45.2%, 40.2% and 34.0% respectively).

Table 1.7: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	National 2015 %	Female %	Male %	National 2014 %	National 2013 %
Sports (as a participant)	74.3	71.6	77.6	74.1	73.9
Sports (as a spectator)	67.4	63.1	72.8	67.6	68.9
Volunteer work	51.3	56.2	45.2	53.4	55.6
Arts/cultural/music activities	50.7	59.0	40.2	53.0	53.8
Student leadership activities	40.0	45.0	34.0	41.9	43.0
Youth groups and clubs	33.1	34.2	31.7	32.4	33.9
Religious groups or activities	30.8	33.4	27.6	29.3	32.6
Environmental groups or activities	22.0	22.9	21.0	23.7	24.7
Political groups or organisations	7.7	7.4	8.1	8.5	7.8

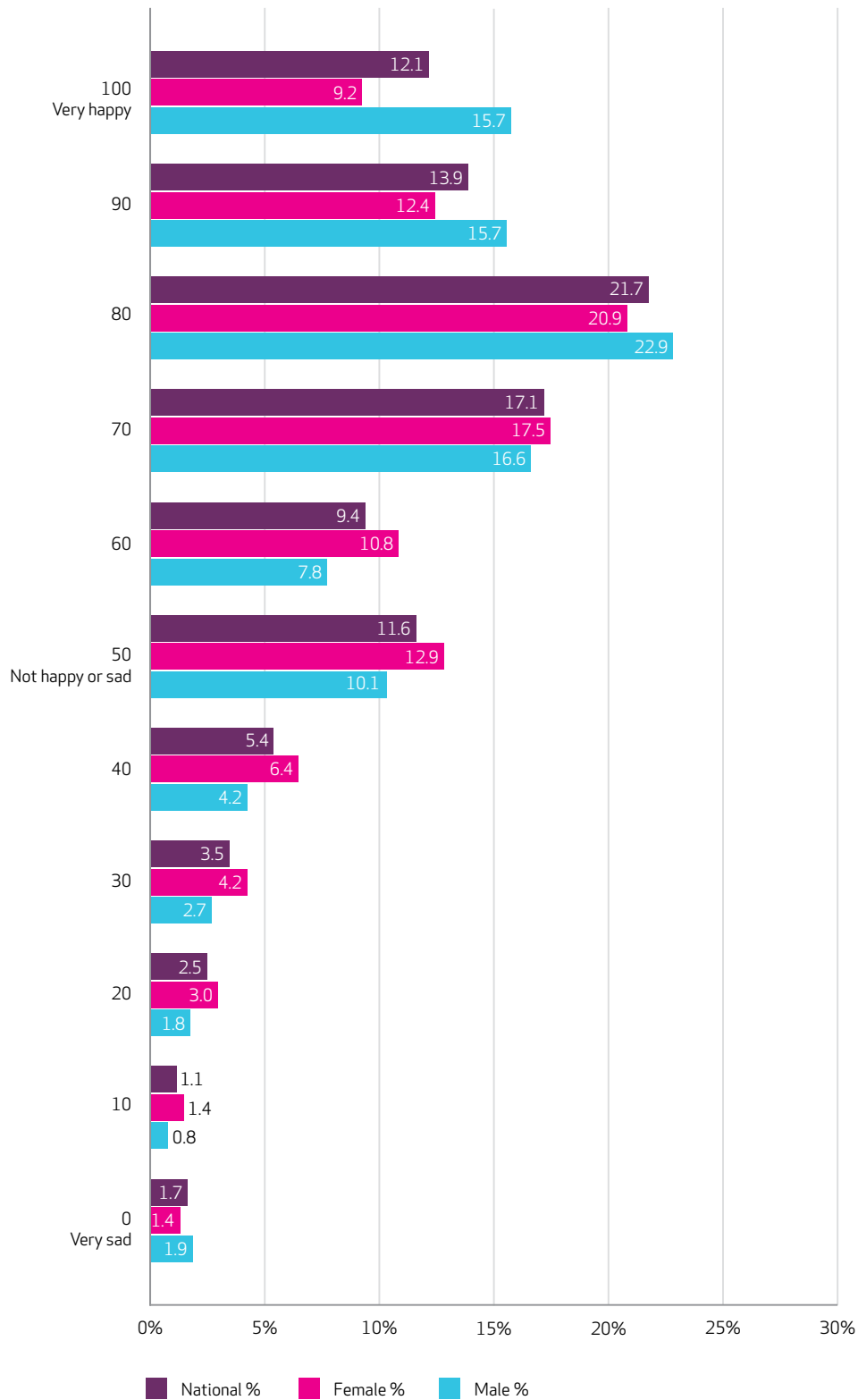
Note: Items are listed in order of national frequency.

How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being *very sad*, 5 *not happy or sad* and 10 *very happy*. In line with recommendations from the authors of this question¹, responses were standardised on a scale of 0 – 100, with 100 being the happiest. As Figure 1.9 shows, the majority of young people (64.8%) responded in the range 70 to 100, indicating that they felt positive overall about their lives. This is consistent with the 2014 and 2013 results. Responses were similar for both males and females, although a higher proportion of male than female respondents indicated they felt *very happy* with their lives as a whole (15.7% compared with 9.2%).

¹ Cummins, R.A., & Lau, A.L.D., 2005, *Personal Wellbeing Index – School Children (PWI-SC) (English)*, Manual, 3rd Edition.

Figure 1.9: How happy young people are



How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked how positive they felt about the future, with responses rated on a 5 point scale from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 1.8 shows that compared to 2014 and 2013 there has been a slight decrease in those feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future and a slight increase in those feeling *neither positive nor negative* about the future. Overall, one in ten young people felt *very negative* or *negative* about the future.

- Just over six in ten respondents felt either *positive* (46.8%) or *very positive* (15.0%) about the future.
- Almost three in ten respondents (28.2%) felt *neither positive nor negative* about the future.
- 7.5% of respondents felt *negative* about the future, and 2.5% felt *very negative*.
- Males and females were very similar in terms of their feelings about the future. Males were more likely, however, to indicate feeling *very positive* (17.7% compared with 12.9%).

Table 1.8: Feelings about the future

	National 2015 %	Female %	Male %	National 2014 %	National 2013 %
Very positive	15.0	12.9	17.7	15.8	18.7
Positive	46.8	46.4	47.3	48.0	48.8
Neither positive nor negative	28.2	30.8	24.9	26.8	24.4
Negative	7.5	7.9	6.9	6.9	5.6
Very negative	2.5	2.0	3.1	2.5	2.5

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander summary



Profile of respondents

In total, 1,147 (6.2%) respondents to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2015* identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 929 (5.0%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 126 (0.7%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.5% identified as both). A higher proportion of male than female respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (7.1% compared with 5.4%).

Gender breakdown

Around half (51.2%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were male and 48.8% were female.

Language background other than English

40 respondents (3.5%) reported speaking an Indigenous language at home.

Disability

A total of 199 (17.6%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that they had a disability.

Detailed results

Education

As indicated in Table 2.1, 84.2% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were studying full-time (compared to 94.8% of non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents). A slightly greater proportion of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males than females reported that they were not studying at all (11.3% compared with 8.1% respectively).

Respondents who reported that they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. Almost two thirds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported that they were either *very satisfied* (16.2%) or *satisfied* (48.2%) with their studies and less than one in ten were *very dissatisfied* or *dissatisfied* (3.7% and 5.6% respectively). Compared to 2014 and 2013 results, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated a greater level of satisfaction with their studies overall this year. As shown in Table 2.2, a slightly higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported feeling either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their studies (16.9% and 50.6% of females compared with 15.4% and 46.2% of males respectively).

Table 2.1: Participation in education

	Non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
Studying full-time	94.8	84.2	84.7	83.8
Studying part-time	2.3	6.0	7.2	4.8
Not studying	2.9	9.8	8.1	11.3

Table 2.2: Satisfaction with studies

	Non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2015 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2014 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2013 %
Very satisfied	15.9	16.2	16.9	15.4	15.3	11.7
Satisfied	57.3	48.2	50.6	46.2	46.9	44.5
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	21.2	26.2	24.1	28.3	28.1	30.1
Dissatisfied	4.3	5.6	5.8	5.5	3.9	6.7
Very dissatisfied	1.2	3.7	2.6	4.7	5.8	7.1

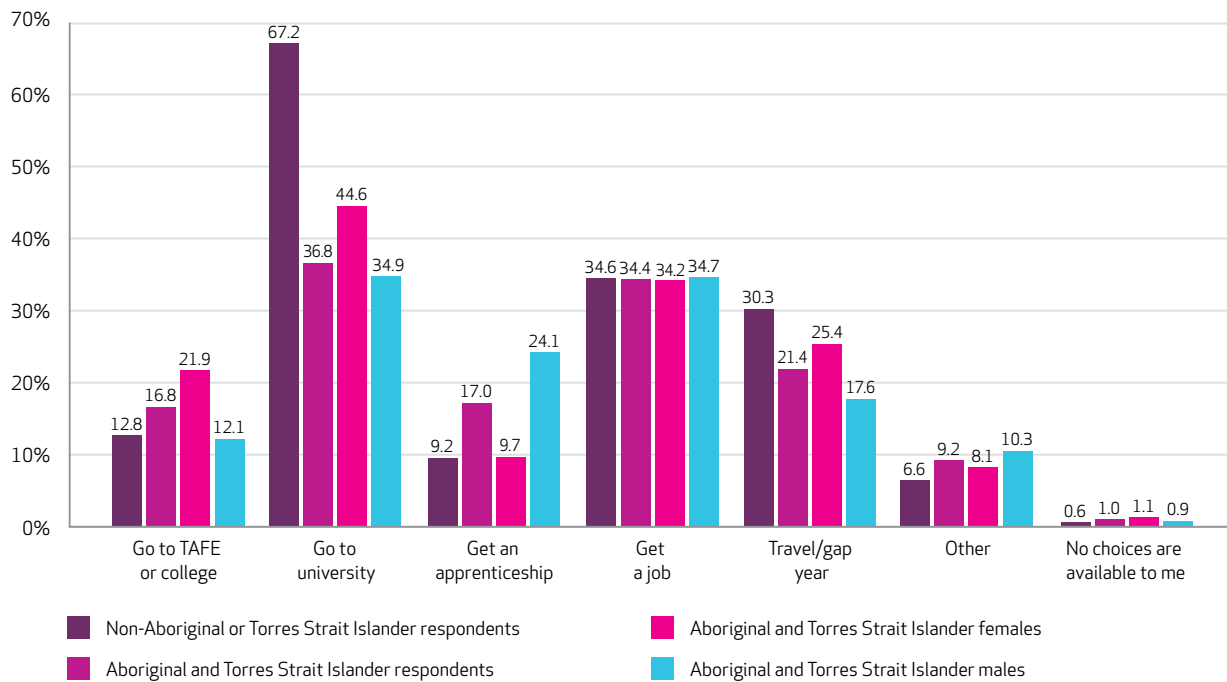
In 2015, respondents who reported they were studying full-time or part-time were asked whether or not they were still at school. The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (95.3%) stated they were still at school. A slightly higher proportion of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males than females indicated that they were still at school (97.1% compared with 93.5% respectively). Of those who were still at school, 92.0% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents stated that they intended to complete Year 12 (compared to 97.0% of non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents). The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males who indicated that they did not intend to complete Year 12 was more than twice that of female respondents (11.6% compared with 4.1% respectively).

Respondents who were still at school were also asked what they were planning to do after leaving school. Figure 2.1 shows notable differences in the reported plans of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents compared to non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents. While the most common plan among both groups of respondents was to go to university, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicating plans to do so was much lower than that of non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents (39.6% compared with 67.2% respectively). The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents planning to travel or go on a gap year after school was also lower than that of non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders (21.4% compared with 30.3%).

Similar proportions of both non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated plans to get a job (34.6% compared with 34.4%). Greater proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander than non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated plans to get an apprenticeship (17.0% compared with 9.2%) or to attend TAFE or college (16.8% compared with 12.8%). A small proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (1.0%) indicated that they felt no choices were available to them after they left school.

Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported plans to go to university after school in greater proportions than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males (44.6% compared with 34.9% respectively). A greater proportion of female than male respondents also reported plans to travel or go on a gap year (25.4% compared with 17.6%) or to go to TAFE or college (21.9% compared with 12.1%). Conversely, however, a much greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males than females reported plans to undertake an apprenticeship (24.1% compared with 9.7%). Similar proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females indicated plans to get a job (34.7% compared with 34.2%) after leaving school.

Figure 2.1: Plans after leaving school



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Employment

Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who answered that they had paid employment were asked to specify how many hours they worked per week, on average. Table 2.3 shows participation in paid employment amongst both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents. Only a small proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (1.6%) and non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents (0.5%) were employed full-time. However, given the percentage of respondents who were still at school this is not surprising. Around three in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported part-time employment (31.5% compared to 39.3% of non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents). A greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that they were currently looking for work compared to non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents (47.3% compared with 35.1%). Around one in five (19.5%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were not employed and not looking for work.

A greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females than males reported full-time employment (2.1% compared with 1.3% respectively). A greater proportion of female respondents than male respondents were also employed part-time (35.5% compared with 27.8%). Greater proportions of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males than females reported that they were looking for work (48.6% compared with 46.0%).

Table 2.3: Participation in paid employment

	Non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
Employed full-time	0.5	1.6	2.1	1.3
Employed part-time	39.3	31.5	35.5	27.8
Not in paid employment, looking for work	35.1	47.3	46.0	48.6
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	25.2	19.5	16.4	22.2

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

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

In 2015, respondents were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. Responses for this question were rated on a five point scale from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. Similar proportions of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve study/work goals, with around half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (*extremely confident*: 12.3%; *very confident*: 36.8%) and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (*extremely confident*: 10.1%; *very confident*: 40.6%) indicating this response. However, just over one in ten young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals, with 7.4% being *slightly confident* and 3.8% *not at all confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. A slightly higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male than female respondents reported feeling *extremely confident* or *very confident* (14.9% and 38.0% of males compared with 9.6% and 35.5% of females respectively).

Figure 2.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals



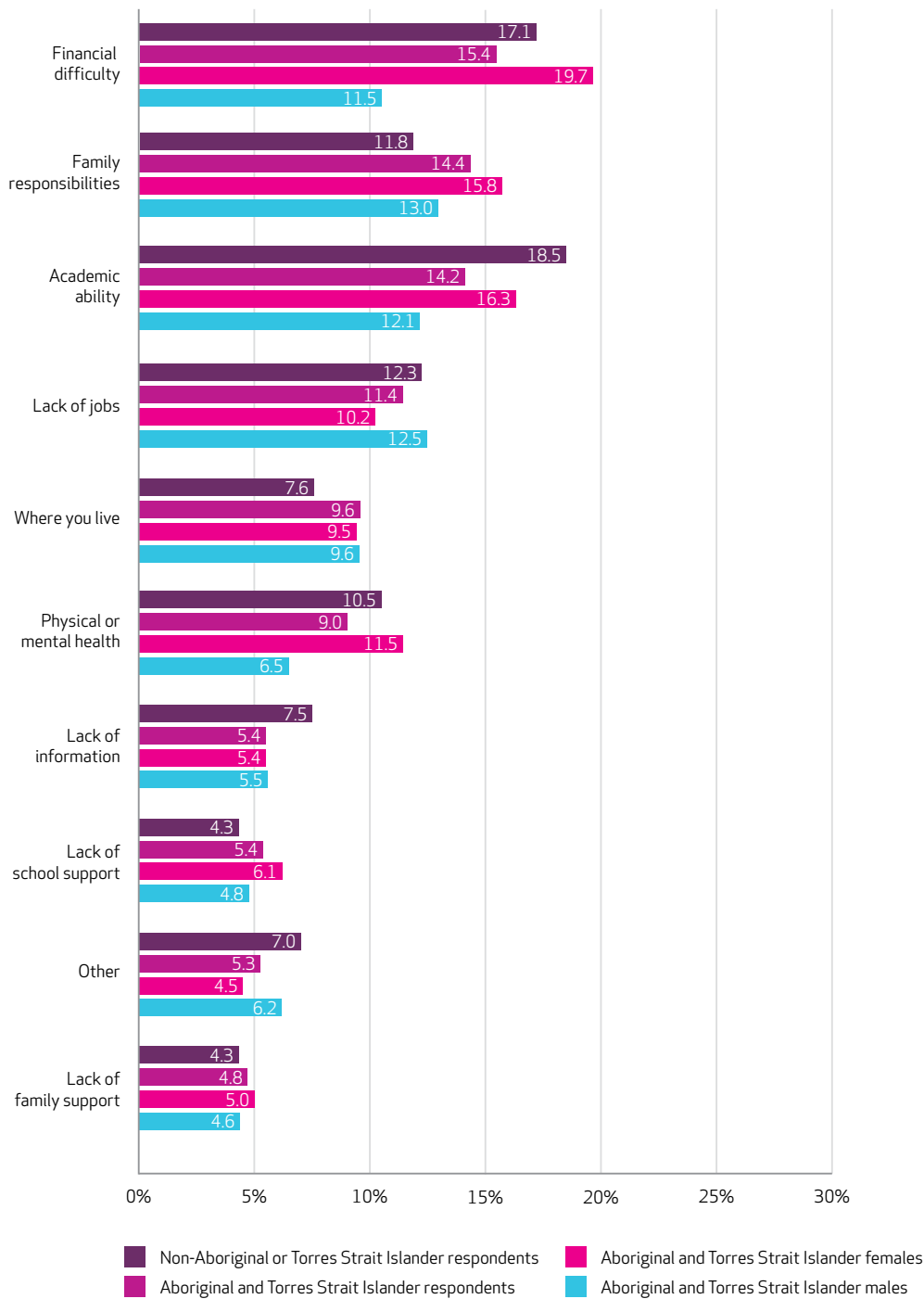
Barriers to the achievement of young people's study/work goals after school

Young people in 2015 were asked whether they felt there were any barriers which may impact on the achievement of their study/work goals after school. Just over half (53.0%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that they felt there would be barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals, with a greater proportion of females (56.6%) than males (49.5%) reporting the presence of these barriers.

Respondents who indicated the presence of barriers were asked to indicate from a number of items which barriers they saw as preventing them from achieving their goals after school. Figure 2.3 shows the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents who indicated each item as a barrier. The top three barriers young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders saw impacting the achievement of their study/work goals after school were *financial difficulty*, *family responsibilities* and *academic ability*. For non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents, the top barrier they saw impacting their study/work goals was *academic ability*, followed by *financial difficulty* and then a *lack of jobs*.

- A greater proportion of non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that they saw *academic ability* and *financial difficulty* as barriers to their study/work goals (18.5% and 17.1% compared with 14.2% and 15.4% respectively).
- Conversely, a greater proportion of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander than non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that *family responsibilities* and *where you live* would impact on the achievement of study/work goals after school (14.4% and 9.6% compared with 11.8% and 7.6% respectively).
- Just over one in ten non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents saw a *lack of jobs* as a barrier (12.3% compared with 11.4%).

Figure 2.3: Barriers to the achievement of study/work goals after school



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

Gender differences

There were some differences in the barriers identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females. While *family responsibilities* and *academic ability* were identified amongst the top three barriers by both males and females, the other issues making up their top three differed. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females *financial difficulty* was the number one barrier, followed by *academic ability* and then *family responsibilities*. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males the top barrier was *family responsibilities*, followed by *lack of jobs* and then *academic ability*.

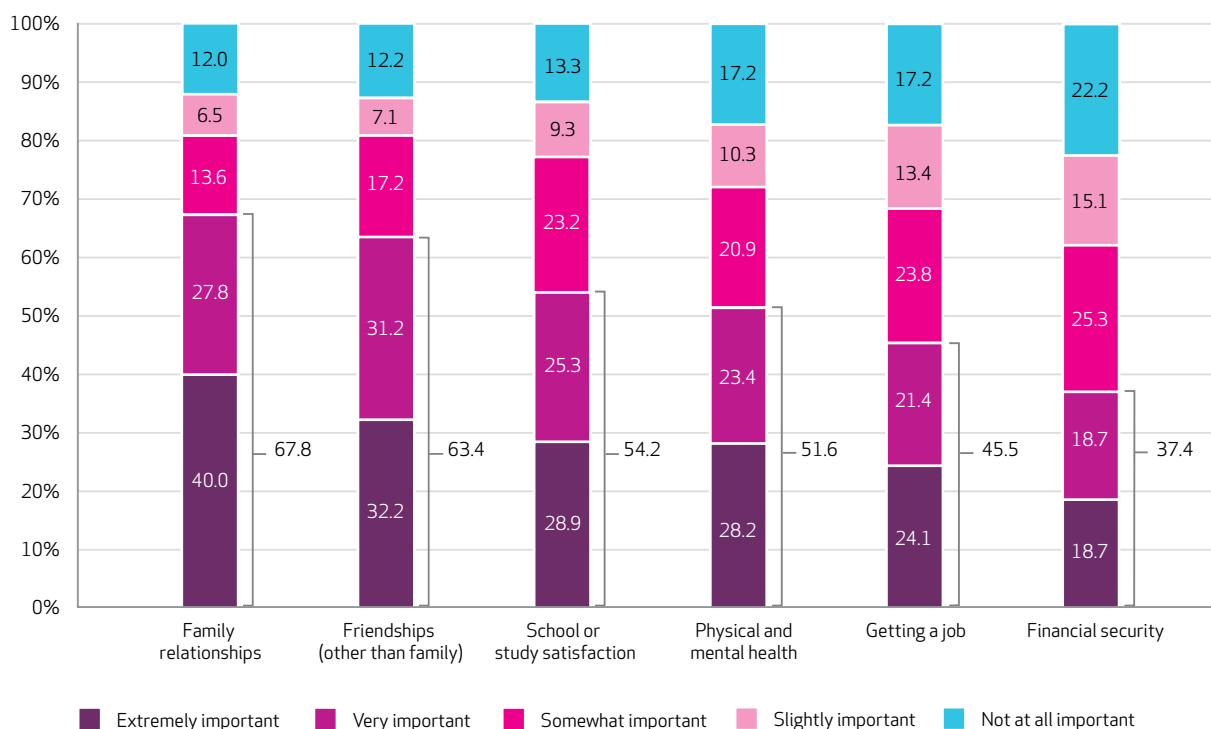
- One in five (19.7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and 11.5% of male respondents indicated that *financial difficulty* was a barrier.
- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female than male respondents indicated that *academic ability* was a barrier to the achievement of future study/work goals (16.3% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females compared with 12.1% of males respectively).
- While *family responsibilities* ranked higher up the list of barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males, a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females indicated that *family responsibilities* was a barrier to study/work goals (15.8% compared with 13.0% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males).
- A slightly higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males than females indicated that they saw a *lack of jobs* as a barrier (12.5% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males compared with 10.2% of females).

What do young people value?

In 2015 young people were again asked how much they valued *family relationships*, *financial security*, *friendships*, *getting a job*, *physical and mental health* and *school or study satisfaction*. Responses for these items were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely important* to *not at all important*. In Figure 2.4 the items were ranked in order of importance by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely important* or *very important* for each item. The two most highly valued items for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents this year were *family relationships* and *friendships*. These were the same top two items as in 2014. The next most valued item among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents was *school or study satisfaction*, followed by *physical and mental health*.

- *Family relationships* were highly valued by 67.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (*extremely important*: 40.0%; *very important*: 27.8%). *Friendships* were also valued highly by 63.4% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (*extremely important*: 32.2%; *very important*: 31.2%).
- Over half of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents highly valued both *school or study satisfaction* (*extremely important*: 28.9%; *very important*: 25.3%) and *physical and mental health* (*extremely important*: 28.2%; *very important*: 23.4%).
- Around four in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents placed a high value on *getting a job* (*extremely important*: 24.1%; *very important*: 21.4%) and *financial security* (*extremely important*: 18.7%; *very important*: 18.7%).

Figure 2.4: What young people value



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

Gender differences

Family relationships and friendships were ranked as the two most highly valued items by both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females, as shown in Table 2.4. The third most valued item among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females this year was school or study satisfaction, whereas among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males it was physical and mental health.

- Family relationships were highly valued by 71.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females (*extremely important*: 44.2%; *very important*: 27.5%) compared with 64.3% of males (*extremely important*: 36.0%; *very important*: 28.3%).
- Friendships were highly valued by 65.7% of females (*extremely important*: 30.7%; *very important*: 35.0%) compared with 61.4% of males (*extremely important*: 33.8%; *very important*: 27.6%).
- 62.2% of females highly valued school or study satisfaction (*extremely important*: 34.8%; *very important*: 27.4%) compared with 46.6% of males (*extremely important*: 23.3%; *very important*: 23.3%).
- Physical and mental health was highly valued by around half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females (*extremely important*: 30.1%; *very important*: 26.3%) and males (*extremely important*: 26.5%; *very important*: 20.7%).

Table 2.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
Family relationships	44.2	27.5	12.6	6.5	9.1
Friendships (other than family)	30.7	35.0	16.1	8.1	10.0
School or study satisfaction	34.8	27.4	20.5	8.0	9.3
Physical and mental health	30.1	26.3	18.1	10.8	14.7
Getting a job	24.4	22.9	25.2	12.9	14.6
Financial security	17.9	21.9	26.1	15.5	18.5
Males	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
Family relationships	36.0	28.3	14.7	6.5	14.5
Friendships (other than family)	33.8	27.6	18.4	6.1	14.1
School or study satisfaction	23.3	23.3	26.0	10.4	16.9
Physical and mental health	26.5	20.7	23.6	9.9	19.3
Getting a job	23.7	20.1	22.7	13.8	19.6
Financial security	19.3	15.9	24.7	14.8	25.4

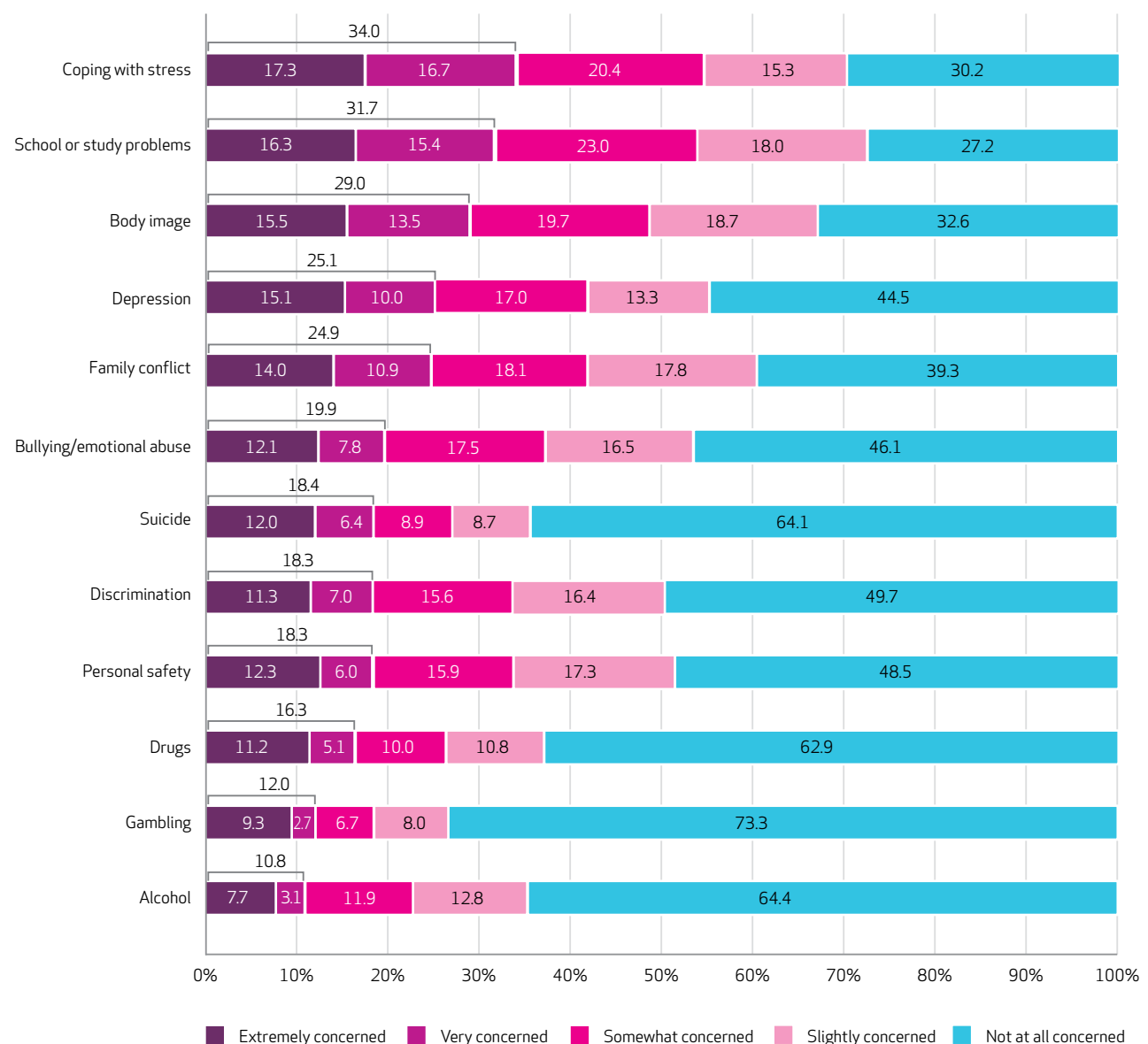
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of frequency amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Respondents were asked to rate how concerned they were about a number of issues, shown in Figure 2.5. Responses were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*. The items were ranked in order of concern by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* for each item. The top three issues of concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were *coping with stress*, *school or study problems* and *body image*. These were the same top three issues identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents in 2014, although the order of the top two issues was reversed.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents, with 34.0% indicating that they were either *extremely concerned* (17.3%) or *very concerned* (16.7%) about this issue.
- *School or study problems* was a major concern for 31.7% (*extremely concerned*: 16.3%; *very concerned*: 15.4%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.
- *Body image* was also an important issue of concern for 29.0% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (*extremely concerned*: 15.5%; *very concerned*: 13.5%).
- Around one quarter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* about *depression* and *family conflict*.

Figure 2.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item.

Gender differences

Coping with stress, school or study problems and *body image* were the top three issues of concern for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females, as highlighted in Table 2.5. The order of the top two issues of concern differed, however, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males indicating that *school or study problems* was their number one issue of concern, while for females the top issue of concern was *coping with stress*. The proportion of females concerned about all of these (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- For just under half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females *coping with stress* was a major concern (*extremely concerned*: 20.9%; *very concerned*: 23.7%), compared with around one quarter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males (*extremely concerned*: 13.7%; *very concerned*: 10.1%).
- Females were also more concerned about *school or study problems*, with 38.3% (*extremely concerned*: 17.4%; *very concerned*: 20.9%) indicating that this was a major concern, compared with 25.4% of males (*extremely concerned*: 15.1%; *very concerned*: 10.3%).
- Concerns about *body image* were considerably higher among females, with 37.4% (*extremely concerned*: 18.8%; *very concerned*: 18.6%) indicating that *body image* was a major concern, compared with 20.9% (*extremely concerned*: 12.3%; *very concerned*: 8.6%) of males.
- For 31.0% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females (*extremely concerned*: 17.0%; *very concerned*: 14.0%) and 19.3% of males (*extremely concerned*: 13.1%; *very concerned*: 6.2%) *depression* was a major concern.

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

Females	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	20.9	23.7	22.2	15.1	17.9
School or study problems	17.4	20.9	23.7	18.5	19.6
Body image	18.8	18.6	23.0	18.0	21.6
Depression	17.0	14.0	18.5	13.1	37.5
Family conflict	15.6	14.1	21.8	19.7	28.9
Bullying/emotional abuse	11.2	11.2	19.1	19.1	39.4
Suicide	11.4	9.0	10.3	8.6	60.6
Discrimination	9.6	8.3	18.2	19.5	44.4
Personal safety	10.4	7.8	18.0	20.3	43.5
Drugs	8.8	5.1	9.0	12.2	64.8
Gambling	6.8	2.1	5.1	6.9	79.2
Alcohol	6.0	3.4	11.9	13.4	65.3

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

Males	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	13.7	10.1	18.8	15.5	41.9
School or study problems	15.1	10.3	22.5	17.6	34.6
Body image	12.3	8.6	16.6	19.4	43.0
Depression	13.1	6.2	15.8	13.6	51.3
Family conflict	12.0	8.0	14.7	16.1	49.2
Bullying/emotional abuse	12.8	4.6	16.0	14.0	52.7
Suicide	12.2	3.9	7.6	8.7	67.6
Discrimination	12.6	5.7	13.3	13.5	55.0
Personal safety	13.6	4.3	14.1	14.6	53.4
Drugs	13.1	5.1	10.8	9.6	61.4
Gambling	11.4	3.4	8.3	8.9	68.0
Alcohol	9.2	2.8	12.0	12.2	63.8

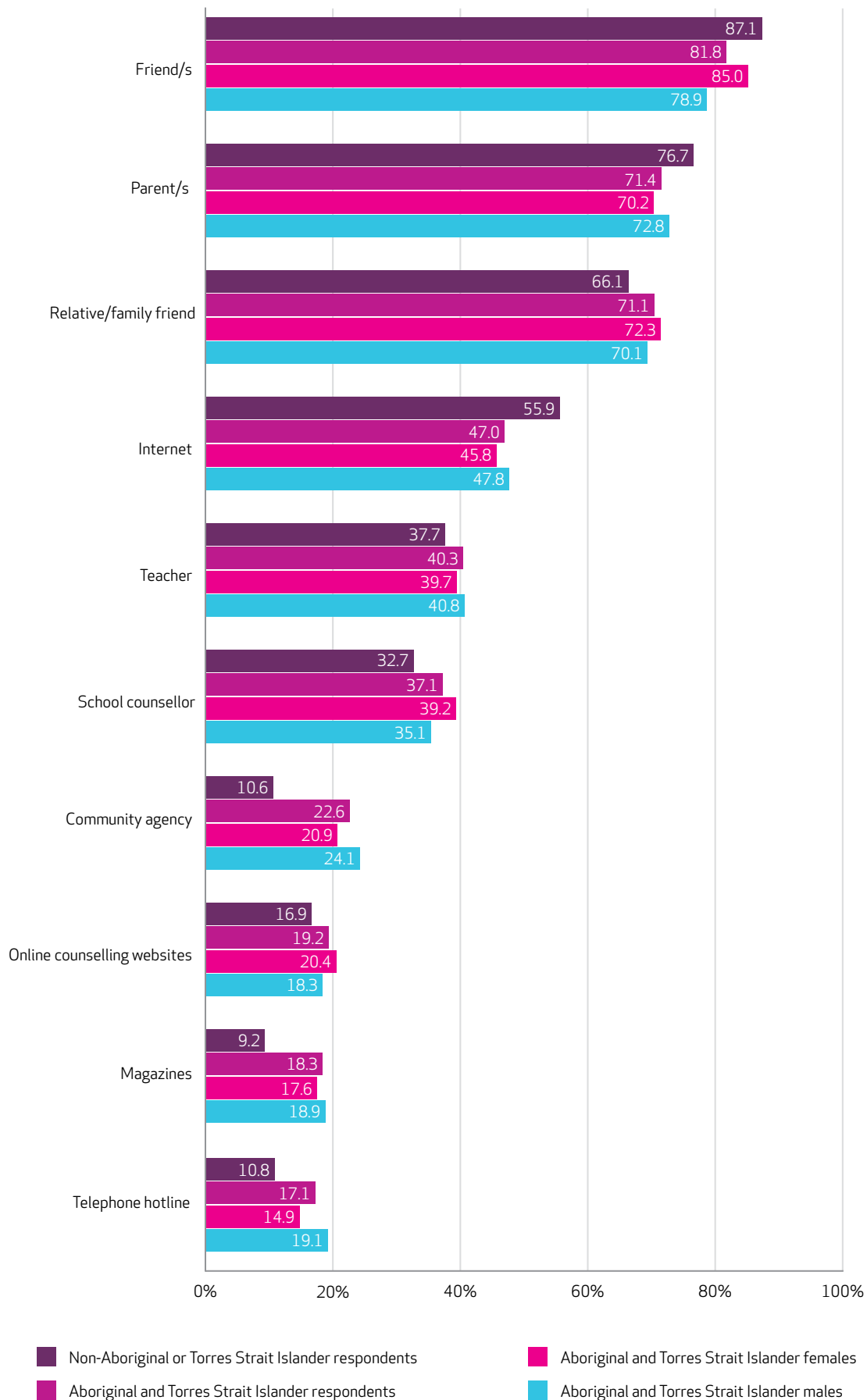
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of frequency amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

Young people were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 2.6 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that they would go to each source. The top three sources of help for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young people were *friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends*. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that they would go to *relatives/family friends* for help in greater proportions than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents, while a greater proportion of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that they would go to *parent/s*.

- The top source of help reported by both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young people was *friend/s* (81.8% compared with 87.1%), followed by *parents* (71.4% compared with 76.7%) and then *relatives/family friends* (71.1% compared with 66.1%).
- Just under half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that they would go to the *internet* for help with important issues in their lives (47.0% compared with 55.9% of non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents).
- Around four in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that they would go to their *teacher* or *school counsellor* for help with important issues.

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



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

Gender differences

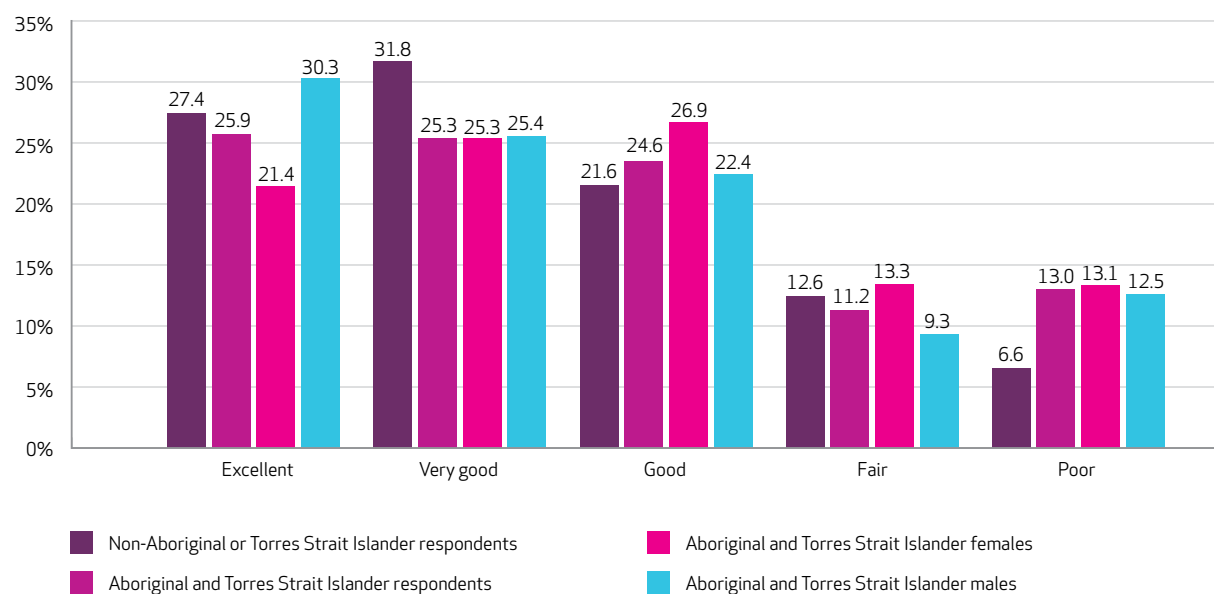
As shown in Figure 2.6, the top three sources of help for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females were *friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends*. Similar proportions of female and male respondents indicated that they would go to each of the sources listed for help.

- Greater proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females than males indicated that they would go to *friend/s* (85.0% compared with 78.9%) and *relatives/family friends* (72.3% compared to 70.1%) for help with important issues.
- 72.8% of male respondents and 70.2% of female respondents indicated that they would go to *parents* for help with important issues.
- Greater proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males than females indicated that they would go to the *internet* (47.8% compared with 45.8%) and *community agencies* (24.1% compared with 20.9%) for help with important issues in their lives.
- Conversely, greater proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females than males indicated that they would go to their *school counsellor* (39.2% compared with 35.1%) or an *online counselling website* (20.4% compared with 18.3%) for help.

How well do young people feel their families get along?

Respondents were asked how well they thought their family got along. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 2.7 shows that the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents rated their family's ability to get along positively, with 25.9% indicating that their family's ability to get along was *excellent*, 25.3% that it was *very good* and 24.6% that it was *good*. However, around one quarter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people did not report such a positive experience of family relationships, rating their family's ability to get along as either *fair* (11.2%) or *poor* (13.0%). Compared with non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents, almost twice the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents rated their family's ability to get along as *poor* (13.0% compared with 6.6%). A greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males than females rated their families ability to get along as *excellent* (30.3% compared with 21.4%).

Figure 2.7: Family's ability to get along



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

Young people were asked to write down the three issues they considered were most important in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 2.6. In 2015 the top three issues identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were *alcohol and drugs*, *equity and discrimination* and *politics*. *Alcohol and drugs* and *equity and discrimination* were also the top two issues identified this year by non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents, with *the economy and financial matters* as their third top issue.

- Around one third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people identified *alcohol and drugs* as an important issue in Australia today (32.3% compared with 26.6% of non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents).
- Just under one quarter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people identified *equity and discrimination* (24.6%) and 16.5% identified *politics* as important issues.

- Compared to the past two years, identification of *alcohol and drugs* as an important issue has increased among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.
- Since 2013, *international relations* and *homelessness/housing* have been increasingly identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people as key issues facing the nation. Conversely, mentions of *crime, safety and violence* and *population issues* have declined over this period.

Gender differences

There were some notable differences in the issues identified as the most important in Australia today by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male and female respondents. While *alcohol and drugs* and *equity and discrimination* were identified among the top three issues by both males and females, the other issues making up their top three differed. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males identified *alcohol and drugs* (35.2%) as the top issue facing the nation, followed by *politics* (19.8%) and then *equity and discrimination* (18.3%). Comparatively, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females identified *equity and discrimination* (30.8%) as the top issue, followed by *alcohol and drugs* (29.3%) and then *the economy and financial matters* (15.1%).

- Around one third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and just under three in ten female respondents (35.2% and 29.3% respectively) identified *alcohol and drugs* as a major issue facing Australia today.
- Three in ten female respondents and around one in five male respondents (30.8% and 18.3% respectively) identified *equity and discrimination* as an important issue.
- A greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males than females identified *politics* (19.8% compared with 12.9%) and *employment* (16.2% compared with 13.7%) as important national issues.
- Despite *the economy and financial matters* ranking higher up the list for female respondents, overall a greater proportion of males than females identified *the economy and financial matters* as an important issue (16.2% compared with 15.1%).
- Conversely, a greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females than males identified *mental health* (14.9% compared with 6.6%) as an important national issue.

Table 2.6: Most important issues in Australia today

	Non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2015 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2014 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2013 %
Alcohol and drugs	26.6	32.3	29.3	35.2	30.8	20.9
Equity and discrimination	25.1	24.6	30.8	18.3	14.6	18.2
Politics	16.2	16.5	12.9	19.8	21.6	18.5
The economy and financial matters	19.2	15.6	15.1	16.2	20.1	21.4
Employment	12.5	14.9	13.7	16.2	16.9	15.2
International relations	13.4	11.4	7.8	14.7	2.6	2.5
Crime, safety and violence	10.0	11.1	12.2	10.2	12.3	12.5
Education	12.3	11.0	11.8	10.2	12.8	9.2
Mental health	15.2	10.6	14.9	6.6	11.2	9.0
Homelessness/housing	7.7	10.5	13.3	7.9	9.4	8.5
Bullying	9.2	10.3	13.5	7.2	13.3	7.7
Population issues	15.6	9.3	7.3	11.1	9.6	21.2
LGBT issues	13.5	7.5	9.3	5.8	2.9	4.7
The environment	13.1	7.0	8.2	5.8	6.0	12.0
Health	9.6	6.8	7.5	6.2	10.2	8.7
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues	4.2	6.5	6.0	7.0	3.4	4.2

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

What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities that they have been involved in over the past year from the list shown in Table 2.7. The top three activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were *sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *arts/cultural/music activities*. These were also the top three activities identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in 2014. Comparatively, the top three activities identified by non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents this year were *sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *volunteer work*. Significant proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported involvement in each of the activities listed over the past year.

- *Sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *arts/cultural/music activities* were the three most popular activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in 2015.
- Just under half of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait respondents indicated that they had participated in *volunteer work* (45.2%).
- Around four in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported participation in *student leadership activities* (38.9%) and *youth groups and clubs* (36.5%) and close to three in ten had participated in *religious groups or activities* (29.3%) or *environmental groups or activities* (28.5%).
- Nearly twice as many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that they had participated in *political groups or organisations* over the past year compared with non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents (13.1% compared with 7.4%).

Gender differences

As shown in Table 2.7 the top three activities for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females were the same, although a greater proportion of male respondents than female respondents were involved in *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)*. Conversely, a greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females than males reported participation in *arts/cultural/music activities*.

- 79.0% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and 69.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were involved in *sports (as a participant)* over the past year.
- A greater proportion of male respondents than female respondents were involved in *sports (as a spectator)* (71.6% compared with 61.6%).
- Conversely, a greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females than males were involved with *arts/cultural/music activities* (61.8% compared with 46.0%) and *volunteer work* (49.1% compared with 41.4%).

Table 2.7: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	Non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2015 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2014 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2013 %
Sports (as a participant)	74.3	74.4	69.9	79.0	72.6	68.7
Sports (as a spectator)	67.6	66.6	61.6	71.6	66.0	66.8
Arts/cultural/music activities	50.6	53.7	61.8	46.0	51.6	47.8
Volunteer work	51.7	45.2	49.1	41.4	46.1	49.4
Student leadership activities	40.1	38.9	40.0	37.9	37.5	42.5
Youth groups and clubs	32.9	36.5	36.2	36.6	39.8	39.6
Religious groups or activities	30.9	29.3	28.7	30.1	27.3	30.6
Environmental groups or activities	21.6	28.5	30.7	26.4	29.1	31.2
Political groups or organisations	7.4	13.1	10.5	15.4	16.2	15.8

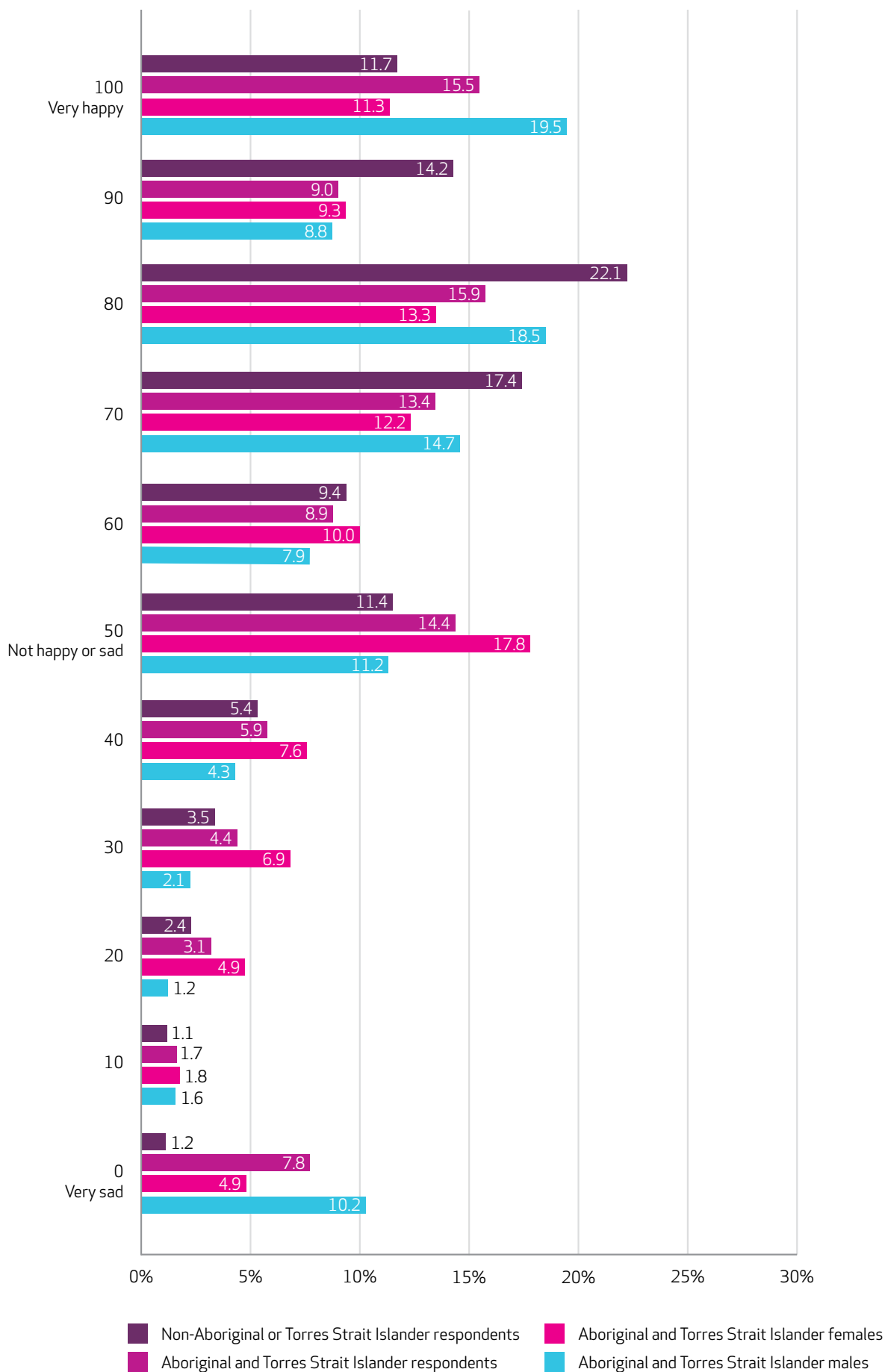
Note: Items are listed in order of frequency amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being *very sad*, 5 *not happy or sad* and 10 *very happy*. In line with recommendations from the authors of this question¹, responses were standardised on a scale of 0 – 100, with 100 being the happiest. As Figure 2.8 shows, just over half of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (53.8%) responded in the range 70 to 100, indicating that they felt positive overall about their lives (compared to almost two thirds of non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents). Responses were similar for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females, although a slightly greater proportion of male respondents than female respondents indicated that they felt *very happy* with their lives as a whole (19.5% compared with 11.3%).

¹ Cummins, R.A., & Lau, A.L.D., 2005, *Personal Wellbeing Index – School Children (PWI-SC) (English)*, Manual, 3rd Edition.

Figure 2.8: How happy young people are



How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked how positive they felt about the future, with responses rated on a 5 point scale from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 2.8 shows that results are similar to those in 2014 and 2013 with almost six in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents feeling either *very positive* or *positive* about the future. A minority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (13.2%) felt *very negative* or *negative* about the future.

- Almost six in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents felt either *positive* (40.7%) or *very positive* (18.4%) about the future.
- Around three in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (27.8%) felt *neither positive nor negative* about the future.
- 7.2% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents felt *negative* about the future and 6.0% felt *very negative*.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females were similar in terms of their feelings about the future. However, a greater proportion of males than females indicated feeling *very positive* (21.3% compared with 15.4%).

Table 2.8: Feelings about the future

	Non- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2015 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2014 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2013 %
Very positive	14.8	18.4	15.4	21.3	18.1	20.2
Positive	47.2	40.7	41.5	40.0	35.2	38.6
Neither positive nor negative	28.3	27.8	31.4	24.4	31.0	26.3
Negative	7.5	7.2	8.1	6.5	6.8	4.7
Very negative	2.2	6.0	3.5	7.9	8.9	10.2

Australian Capital Territory



Profile of respondents

In total, 160 young people from the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2015*. Comparisons with ACT data from previous years has been limited to 2014 as results from the ACT in 2013 were combined with NSW due to the smaller number of responses. Additionally, due to the small number of ACT respondents in 2015, Mission Australia is unable to provide breakdowns of the data by gender, as in other chapters. Instead, data is presented only at a Territory-wide level.

Gender breakdown

Over half (51.3%) of respondents from the ACT were male and 48.8% were female.

Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 20 (12.6%) respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total 11 (6.9%) identified as Aboriginal, while 2 (1.3%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 4.4% identified as both).

Language background other than English

A total of 31 (19.9%) respondents from the ACT stated that they were born overseas and 36 (22.6%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home.

Disability

A total of 15 (9.5%) respondents from the ACT indicated that they had a disability.

Detailed results

Education

As indicated in Table 3.1, 91.9% of respondents from the ACT were studying full-time.

Respondents who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in the 2014 results, the majority of respondents from the ACT reported that they were either *very satisfied* (14.7%) or *satisfied* (58.0%) with their studies. Less than one in ten were *very dissatisfied* or *dissatisfied* (3.3% and 3.3% respectively).

Table 3.1: Participation in education

	National %	ACT %
Studying full-time	94.0	91.9
Studying part-time	2.6	1.9
Not studying	3.5	6.3

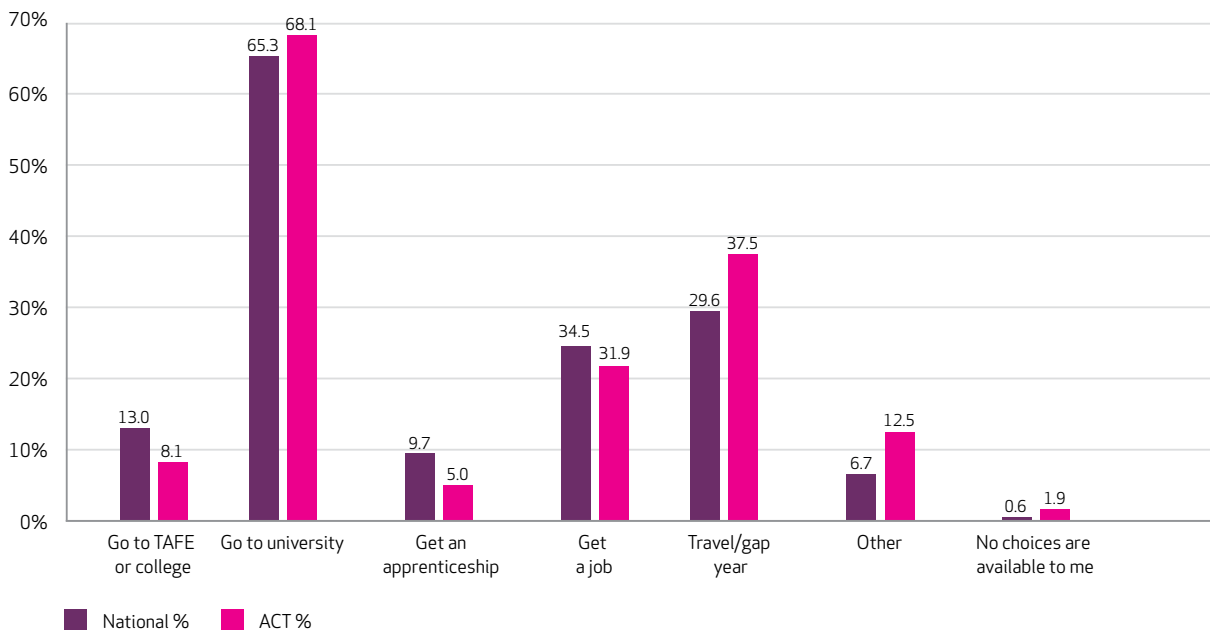
Table 3.2: Satisfaction with studies

	National %	ACT 2015 %	ACT 2014 %
Very satisfied	16.0	14.7	25.0
Satisfied	56.7	58.0	45.7
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	21.5	20.7	21.3
Dissatisfied	4.4	3.3	6.1
Very dissatisfied	1.3	3.3	1.8

In 2015, respondents who reported they were studying full-time or part-time were asked whether or not they were still at school. The majority of respondents (98.0%) from the ACT stated they were still at school. Of those who were still at school in the ACT, 97.9% stated that they intended to complete Year 12.

Respondents who were still at school were also asked what they were planning to do after leaving school. Figure 3.1 shows that just over two thirds of respondents from the ACT planned to go to university after school (68.1%). Around one third of respondents indicated plans to travel or go on a gap year (37.5%) or to get a job (31.9%) after school. Overall, 8.1% of young people from the ACT planned to attend TAFE or college and 5.0% reported plans to undertake an apprenticeship. A small proportion of respondents (1.9%) indicated that they felt no choices were available to them after they left school.

Figure 3.1: Plans after leaving school



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Employment

Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who answered that they had paid employment were asked to specify how many hours they worked per week, on average. Table 3.3 shows participation in paid employment amongst respondents from the ACT. In line with the national data, only a small proportion (1.9%) of respondents reported that they were employed full-time. However, given the percentage of respondents who were still at school this is not surprising. Almost half (46.5%) of respondents from the ACT reported part-time employment. Just over half of respondents from the ACT were not in paid employment, with 27.1% looking for work and 24.5% not looking for work.

Table 3.3: Participation in paid employment

	National %	ACT %
Employed full-time	0.5	1.9
Employed part-time	38.8	46.5
Not in paid employment, looking for work	35.9	27.1
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	24.8	24.5

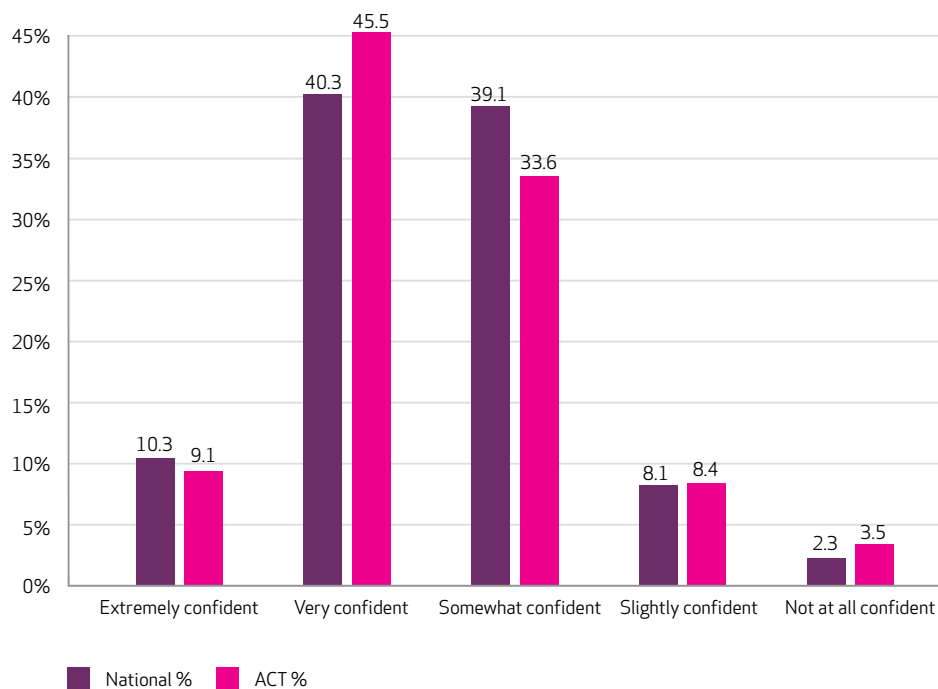
Note: Part-time is considered to be less than 35 hours per week and full-time is 35 hours or more.

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

In 2015, respondents were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. Responses for this question were rated on a five point scale from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*.

Around half of respondents from the ACT indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve study/work goals, with 9.1% indicating that they were *extremely confident* and 45.5% indicating that they were *very confident*. However, just over one in ten young people from the ACT were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals, with 8.4% being *slightly confident* and 3.5% *not at all confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school.

Figure 3.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals



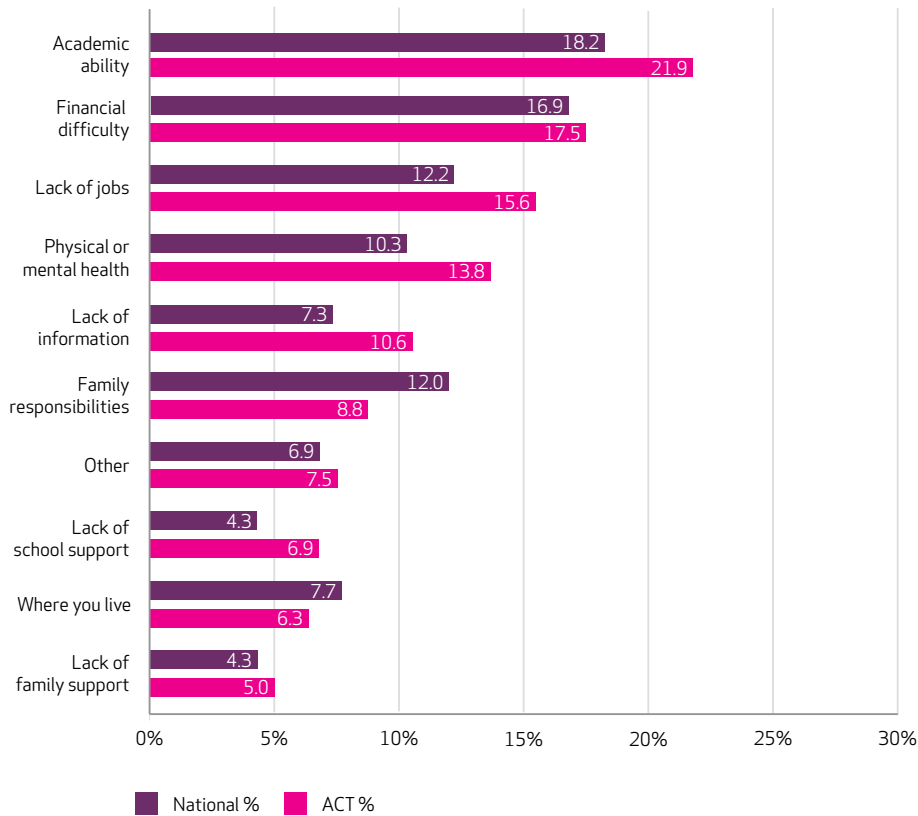
Barriers to the achievement of young people’s study/work goals after school

Young people in 2015 were asked whether they felt there were any barriers which may impact on the achievement of their study/work goals after school. Just over half (52.8%) of respondents from the ACT indicated that they felt there would be barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals.

Respondents who indicated the presence of barriers were asked to indicate from a number of items which barriers they saw as preventing them from achieving their goals after school. Figure 3.3 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated each item as a barrier. In the ACT, the top three barriers young people saw impacting the achievement of their study/work goals after school were *academic ability*, *financial difficulty* and *lack of jobs*.

- *Academic ability*, *financial difficulty* and *lack of jobs* were the three most commonly cited barriers to the achievement of young people’s study/work goals after school (21.9%, 17.5% and 15.6% respectively).
- Just over one in ten respondents from the ACT indicated that they saw *physical or mental health* and *lack of information* as barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals after school.

Figure 3.3: Barriers to the achievement of study/work goals after school



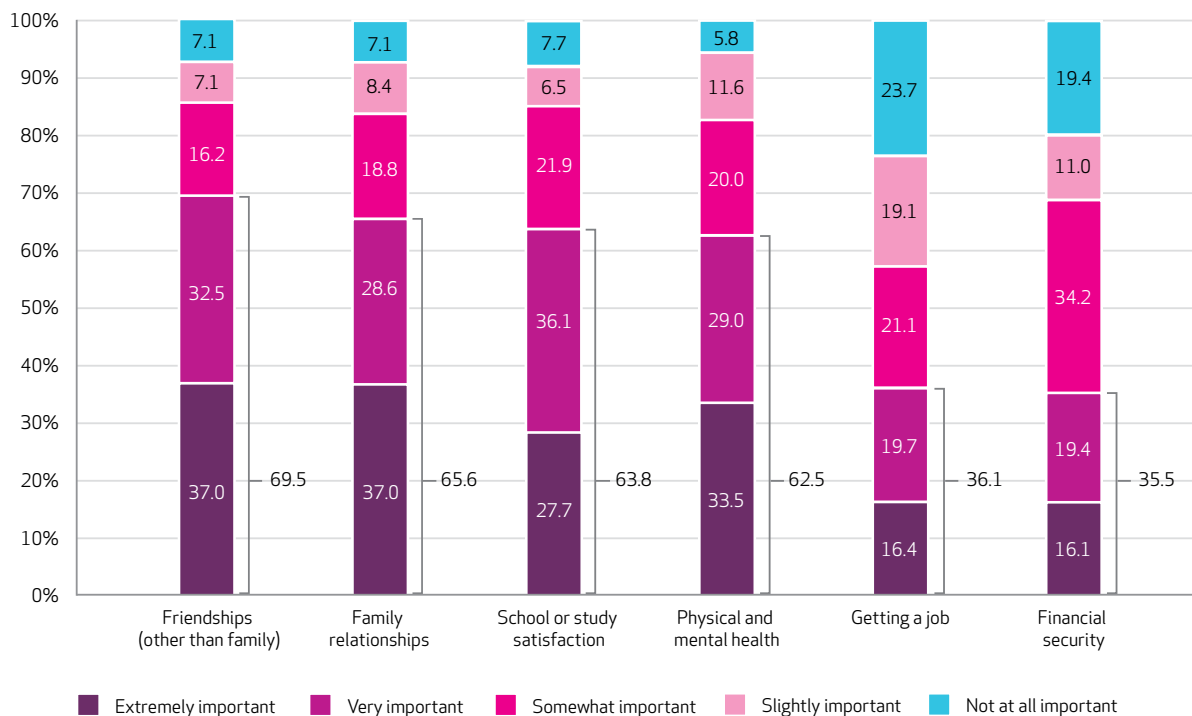
Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

What do young people value?

In 2015 young people were again asked how much they valued *family relationships*, *financial security*, *friendships*, *getting a job*, *physical and mental health* and *school or study satisfaction*. Responses for these items were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely important* to *not at all important*. In Figure 3.4 the items were ranked in order of importance by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely important* or *very important* for each item. In line with the national data, the two most highly valued items for respondents from the ACT this year were *friendships* and *family relationships*. The next most valued item for the ACT respondents was *school or study satisfaction*, followed by *physical and mental health* (again consistent with the national results).

- *Friendships* were highly valued by 69.5% of respondents from the ACT (*extremely important*: 37.0%; *very important*: 32.5%). *Family relationships* were also valued highly by 65.6% of respondents (*extremely important*: 37.0%; *very important*: 28.6%).
- Around two thirds of respondents highly valued *school or study satisfaction* (*extremely important*: 27.7%; *very important*: 36.1%) and *physical and mental health* (*extremely important*: 33.5%; *very important*: 29.0%).
- Just over one third of ACT respondents placed a high value on *getting a job* (*extremely important*: 16.4%; *very important*: 19.7%) and *financial security* (*extremely important*: 16.1%; *very important*: 19.4%).

Figure 3.4: What young people value



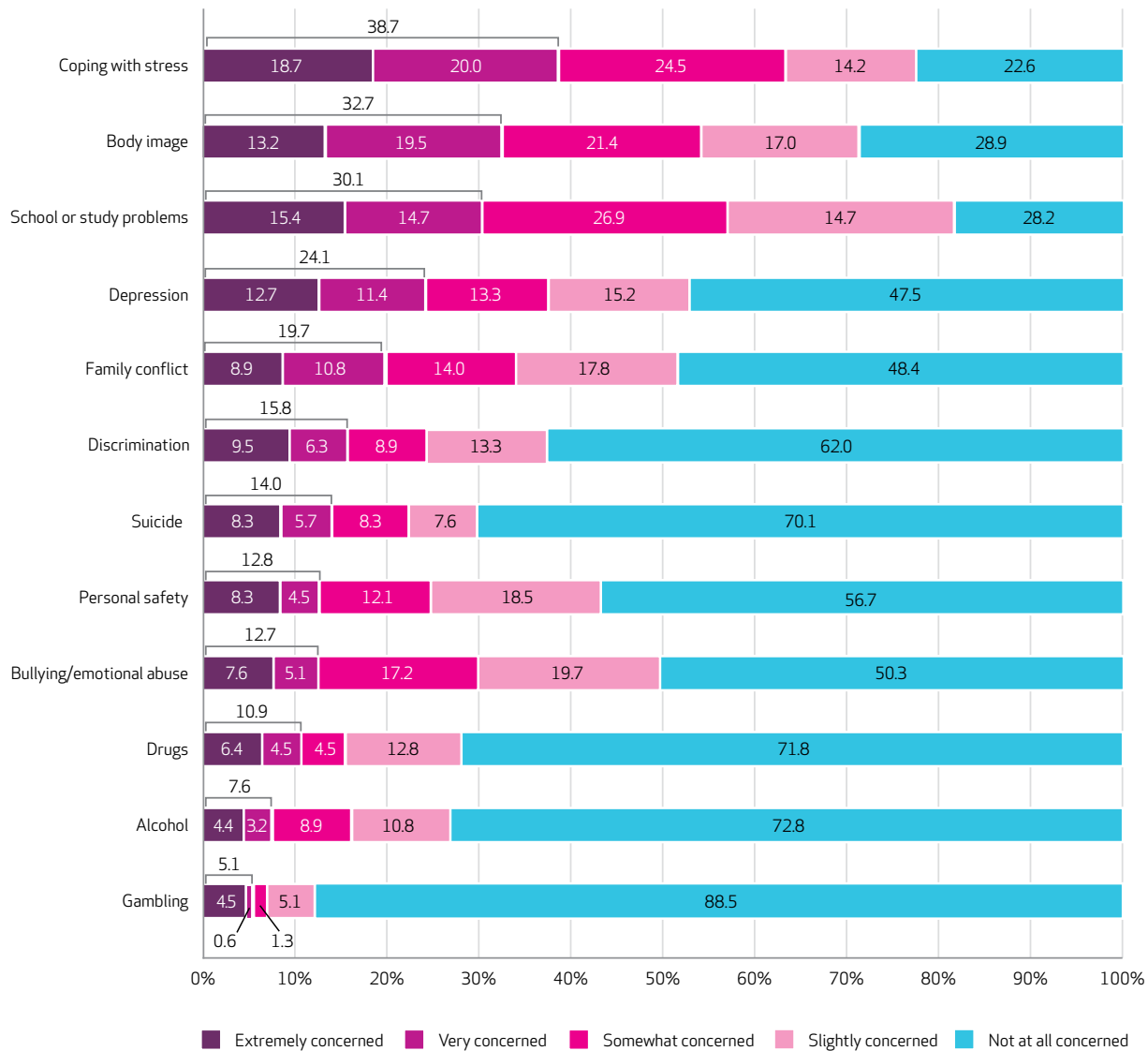
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Respondents were asked to rate how concerned they were about a number of issues, shown in Figure 3.5. Responses were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*. The items were ranked in order of concern by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* for each item. The top three issues of concern for young people from the ACT were *coping with stress*, *body image* and *school or study problems*. These were the same top three issues identified at the national level although the order of the second and third top issues of concern was reversed.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with 38.7% of respondents from the ACT indicating that they were either *extremely concerned* (18.7%) or *very concerned* (20.0%) about this issue.
- *Body image* was a major concern for 32.7% (*extremely concerned*: 13.2%; *very concerned*: 19.5%) of young people.
- *School or study problems* was also an important issue of concern for 30.1% of respondents (*extremely concerned*: 15.4%; *very concerned*: 14.7%).
- Around one quarter of respondents were either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* about *depression* and one in five respondents were either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* about *family conflict*.

Figure 3.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



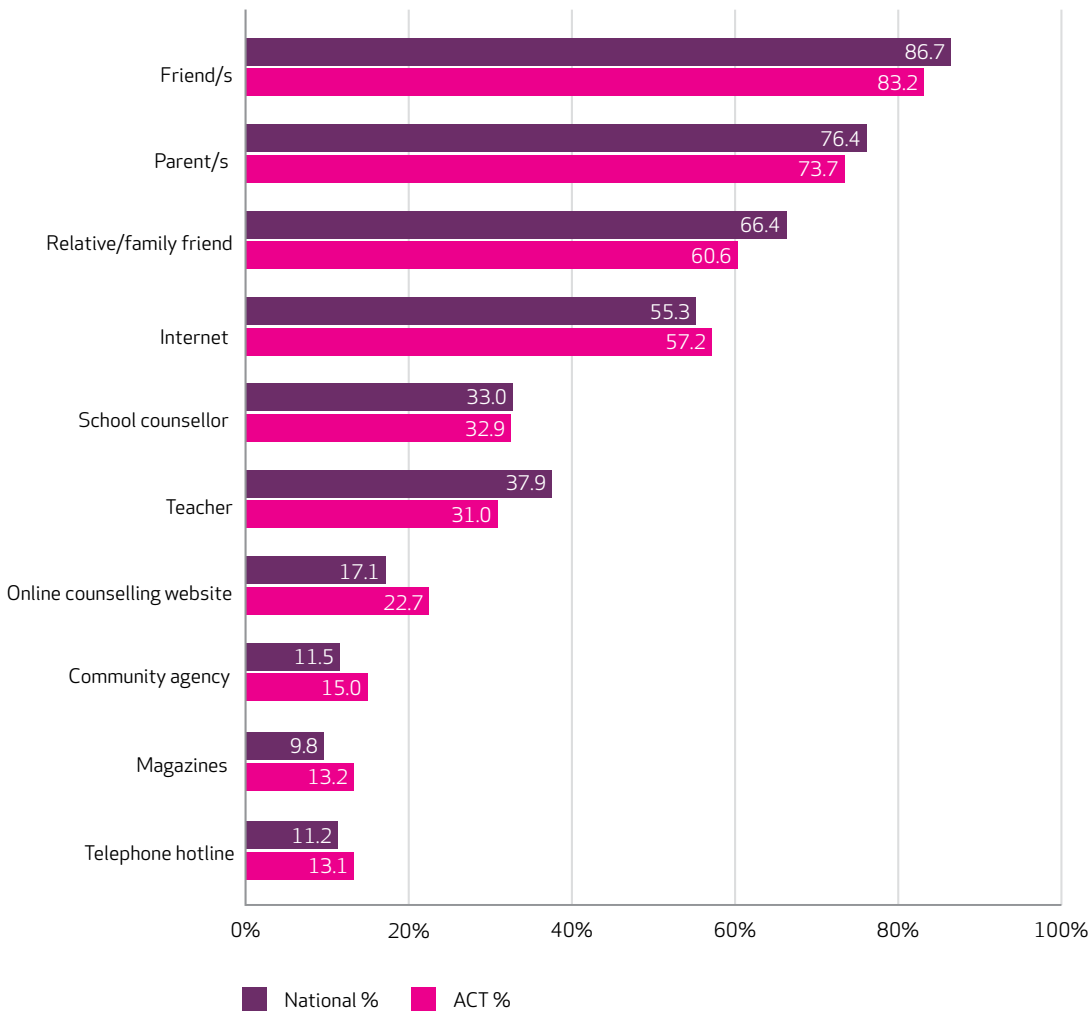
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item.

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

Young people were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 3.6 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that they would go to each source. The top three sources of help for young people in the ACT were *friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends*.

- *Friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends* were the three most commonly cited sources of help for young people (83.2%, 73.7% and 60.6% respectively).
- Almost six in ten respondents from the ACT indicated that they would go to the *internet* for help with important issues in their lives.
- Just over three in ten respondents indicated that they would go to their *school counsellor* or *teacher* for help with important issues.

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

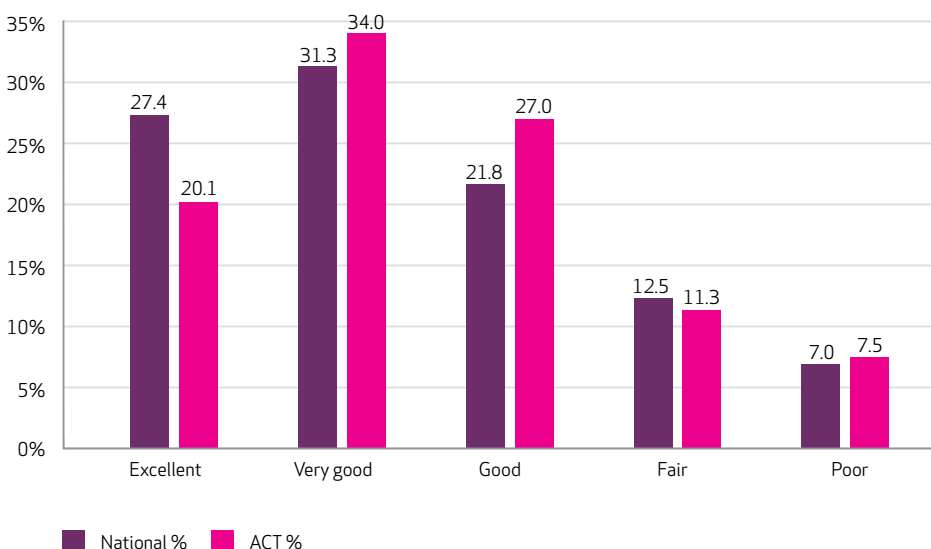


Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of State frequency.

How well do young people feel their families get along?

Respondents were asked how well they thought their family got along. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 3.7 shows that, in line with the national data, the majority of respondents from the ACT rated their family's ability to get along very positively, with 20.1% indicating that their family's ability to get along was *excellent* and 34.0% that it was *very good*. However, almost one in five young people did not report such a positive experience of family relationships, rating their family's ability to get along as either *fair* (11.3%) or *poor* (7.5%).

Figure 3.7: Family's ability to get along



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

Young people were asked to write down the three issues they considered were most important in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 3.4. In 2015 the top three issues identified by young people from the ACT were *alcohol and drugs*, *equity and discrimination*, and *population issues*.

- Three in ten young people from the ACT identified *alcohol and drugs* (29.9%) and almost one quarter identified *equity and discrimination* (23.9%) and *population issues* (22.4%) as important issues in Australia today.
- Around one in five respondents identified *the environment* (20.9%) and *LGBT issues* (17.9%) as major issues.

Table 3.4: Most important issues in Australia today

	National %	ACT 2015 %	ACT 2014 %
Alcohol and drugs	27.0	29.9	14.3
Equity and discrimination	25.0	23.9	23.6
Population issues	15.3	22.4	26.4
The environment	12.8	20.9	16.4
LGBT issues	13.2	17.9	8.6
Homelessness/housing	7.8	11.9	7.1
Politics	16.1	11.9	22.9
The economy and financial matters	18.9	11.9	27.9
International relations	13.4	11.2	4.3
Mental health	14.9	10.4	15.7
Crime, safety and violence	10.1	7.5	6.4
Education	12.2	7.5	17.1
Employment	12.7	6.7	11.4

Note: Items are listed in order of State frequency.

What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities that they have been involved in over the past year from the list shown in Table 3.5. The top two activities for young people from the ACT, as they were nationally, were *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)*. The third most popular activity for ACT respondents this year was *arts/cultural/music activities*. Significant proportions of young people reported involvement in each of the activities listed over the past year.

- *Sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *arts/cultural/music activities* were the three most popular activities for young people from the ACT in 2015.
- Around four in ten young people reported participation in *student leadership activities* (42.4%) and *volunteer work* (37.0%) and almost three in ten had participated in *youth groups and clubs* (29.8%).
- Around one quarter of young people from the ACT had participated in *environmental groups or activities* (26.9%) and *religious groups or activities* (26.5%).

Table 3.5: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

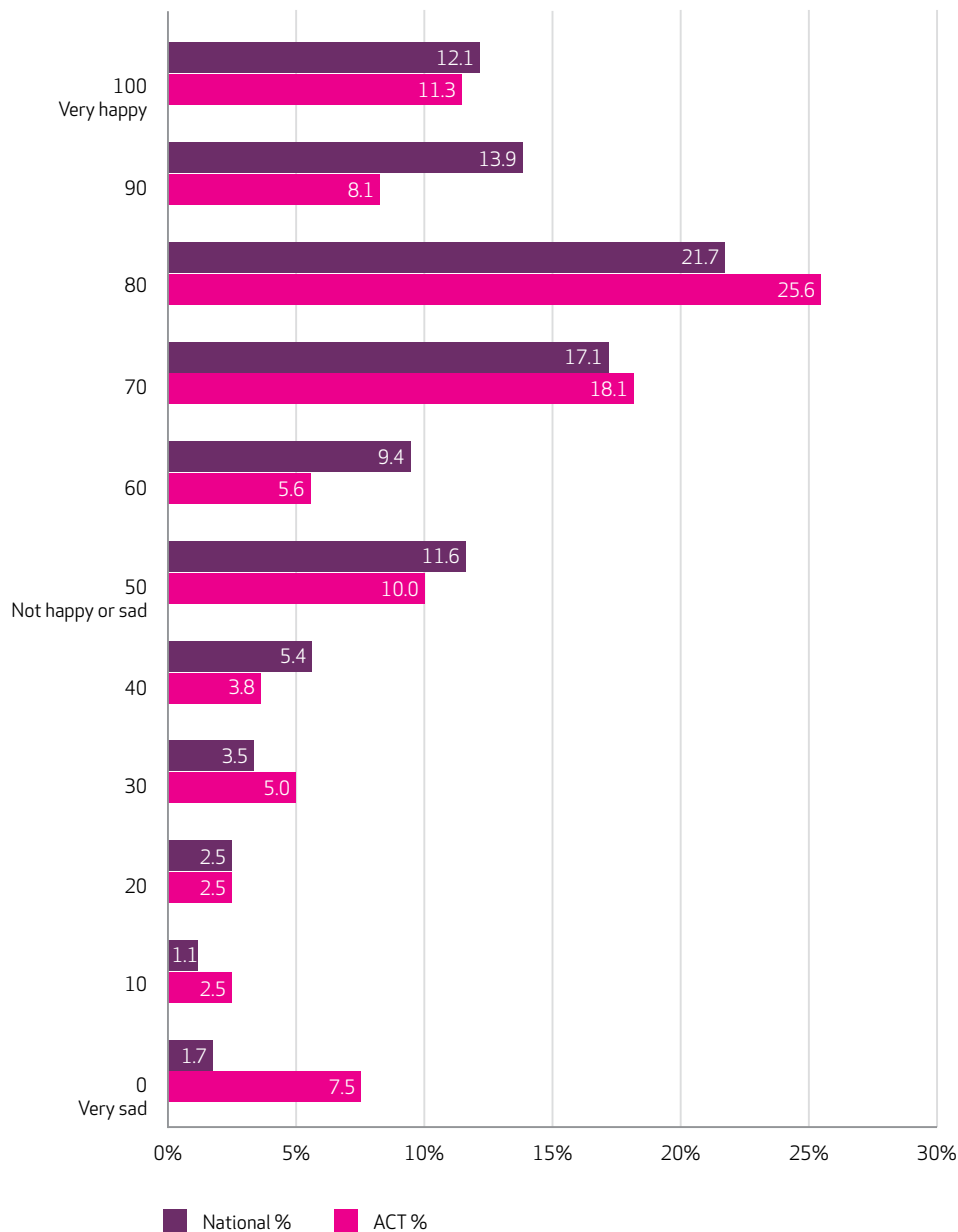
	National %	ACT 2015 %
Sports (as a participant)	74.3	72.0
Sports (as a spectator)	67.4	70.0
Arts/cultural/music activities	50.7	46.8
Student leadership activities	40.0	42.4
Volunteer work	51.3	37.0
Youth groups and clubs	33.1	29.8
Environmental groups or activities	22.0	26.9
Religious groups or activities	30.8	26.5
Political groups or organisations	7.7	11.8

Note: Items are listed in order of State frequency.

How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being *very sad*, 5 *not happy or sad* and 10 *very happy*. In line with recommendations from the authors of this question¹, responses were standardised on a scale of 0 – 100, with 100 being the happiest. As Figure 3.8 shows, the majority of young people from the ACT (63.1%) responded in the range 70 to 100, indicating that they felt positive overall about their lives. This is consistent with the national results.

Figure 3.8: How happy young people are



¹ Cummins, R.A., & Lau, A.L.D., 2005, *Personal Wellbeing Index – School Children (PWI-SC) (English)*, Manual, 3rd Edition.

How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked how positive they felt about the future, with responses rated on a 5 point scale from *very positive* to *very negative*.

- Almost six in ten young people from the ACT felt either *positive* (38.7%) or *very positive* (20.0%) about the future.
- Three in ten respondents (29.0%) felt *neither positive nor negative* about the future.
- However, around one in ten young people from the ACT felt *very negative* or *negative* about the future.

Table 3.6: Feelings about the future

	National %	ACT 2015 %	ACT 2014 %
Very positive	15.0	20.0	13.9
Positive	46.8	38.7	49.4
Neither positive nor negative	28.2	29.0	22.3
Negative	7.5	7.7	7.8
Very negative	2.5	4.5	6.6

New South Wales



Profile of respondents

In total, 4,718 young people from New South Wales (NSW) aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2015*. Comparisons with NSW data in 2013 reflect combined results from both NSW and the ACT. Due to the small number of responses received from the ACT in that year, NSW and the ACT were combined in the 2013 report.

Gender breakdown

Over half (58.4%) of respondents from NSW were female and 41.6% were male.

Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 376 (8.1%) respondents from NSW identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 335 (7.2%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 28 (0.6%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.3% identified as both). A higher proportion of male than female respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (9.3% compared with 7.2%).

Language background other than English

A total of 526 (11.4%) respondents from NSW stated that they were born overseas and 1,118 (24.2%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 60 languages spoken at home in NSW, the most common were (in order of frequency): Cantonese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Mandarin and Greek.

Disability

A total of 278 (6.0%) respondents from NSW indicated that they had a disability, with a greater proportion of males (6.7%) than females (5.5%) reporting a disability. The most frequently cited disabilities in NSW were (in order of frequency): learning disability, physical disability and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD).

Detailed results

Education

As indicated in Table 4.1, 93.7% of respondents from NSW were studying full-time. A slightly greater proportion of female than male respondents reported that they were studying full-time (95.0% compared with 91.8% respectively), while a slightly greater proportion of males (4.7%) than females (3.1%) reported not studying at all.

Respondents who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in the 2014 NSW results and 2013 combined NSW/ACT results, the majority of respondents from NSW reported that they were either *very satisfied* (14.4%) or *satisfied* (54.9%) with their studies. Less than one in ten were *very dissatisfied* or *dissatisfied* (1.6% and 5.2% respectively). As shown in Table 4.2, a slightly higher proportion of females than males from NSW reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their studies (14.6% and 55.8% of females compared with 14.0% and 53.6% of males respectively).

Table 4.1: Participation in education

	National %	NSW %	Female %	Male %
Studying full-time	94.0	93.7	95.0	91.8
Studying part-time	2.6	2.6	1.9	3.5
Not studying	3.5	3.8	3.1	4.7

Table 4.2: Satisfaction with studies

	National %	NSW 2015 %	Female %	Male %	NSW 2014 %	NSW/ACT 2013 %
Very satisfied	16.0	14.4	14.6	14.0	14.3	15.6
Satisfied	56.7	54.9	55.8	53.6	54.0	56.1
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	21.5	23.9	23.5	24.6	24.0	21.9
Dissatisfied	4.4	5.2	4.8	5.8	5.9	4.7
Very dissatisfied	1.3	1.6	1.3	2.0	1.7	1.6

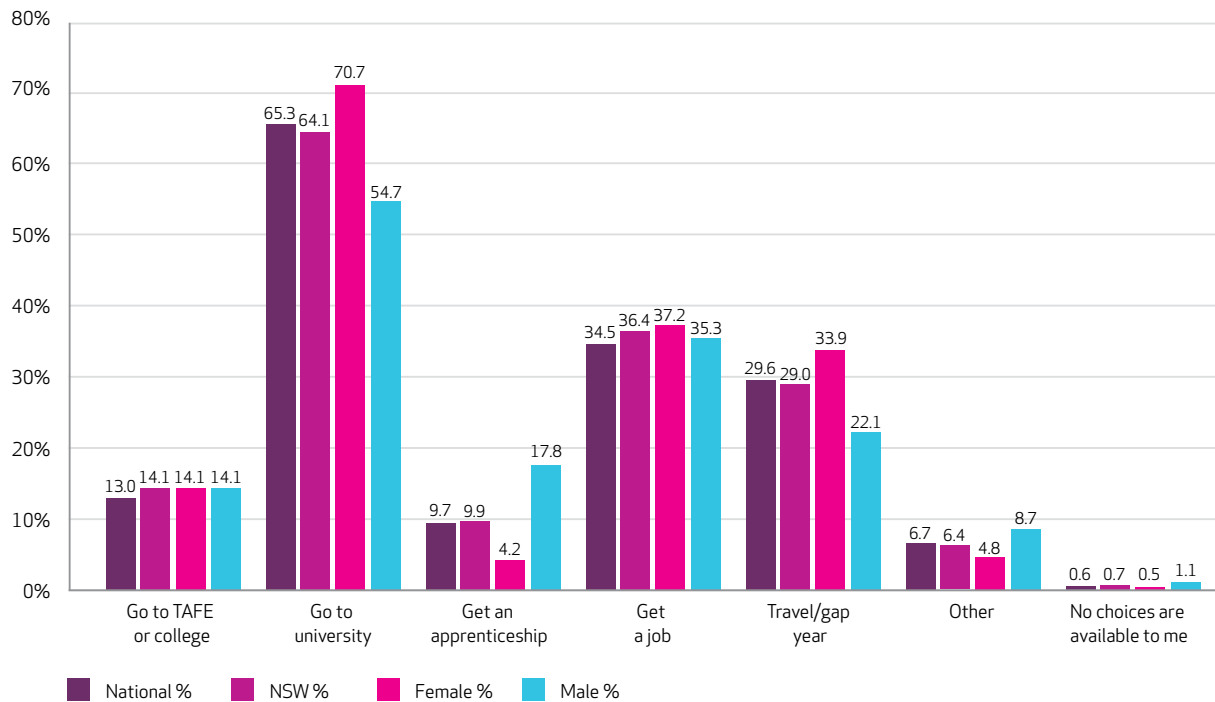
Note: Data for 2013 was based on combined NSW and ACT results from that year.

In 2015, respondents who reported they were studying full-time or part-time were asked whether or not they were still at school. The majority (97.6%) of respondents from NSW stated they were still at school. Male and female respondents indicated that they were still at school in similar proportions (97.8% compared with 97.6% respectively). Of those who were still at school in NSW, 95.2% stated that they intended to complete Year 12. Around four times the proportion of males than females indicated that they did not intend to complete Year 12 (8.2% compared with 2.5% respectively).

Respondents who were still at school were also asked what they were planning to do after leaving school. Figure 4.1 shows that almost two thirds of respondents from NSW planned to go to university after school (64.1%). Many respondents also indicated plans to get a job (36.4%) and to travel or go on a gap year (29.0%) after school. Overall, 14.1% of young people from NSW planned to attend TAFE or college and 9.9% reported plans to undertake an apprenticeship. A small proportion of respondents (0.7%) indicated that they felt no choices were available to them after they left school.

While going to university was the most frequently chosen option among both male and female respondents from NSW, a higher proportion of females than males stated that they planned to do so (70.7% compared with 54.7% respectively). A greater proportion of female respondents also reported plans to travel or go on a gap year after school (33.9% compared with 22.1%). A much greater proportion of males indicated that they were planning to undertake an apprenticeship (17.8% compared with 4.2% of females).

Figure 4.1: Plans after leaving school



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Employment

Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who answered that they had paid employment were asked to specify how many hours they worked per week, on average. Table 4.3 shows participation in paid employment amongst respondents from NSW. In line with the national data, only a small proportion (0.6%) of respondents who reported paid employment were employed full-time. However, given the percentage of respondents who were still at school this is not surprising. Over one third (36.4%) of respondents from NSW reported part-time employment. Just over one in six NSW respondents reported that they were not in paid employment, with 34.2% looking for work and 28.8% not looking for work.

Similar proportions of male and female respondents from NSW reported full-time employment (0.8% compared with 0.4% respectively), while a slightly higher proportion of female respondents were employed part-time (38.7% compared with 33.1%). Conversely, a greater proportion of male than female respondents were looking for work (36.6% compared with 32.5%).

Table 4.3: Participation in paid employment

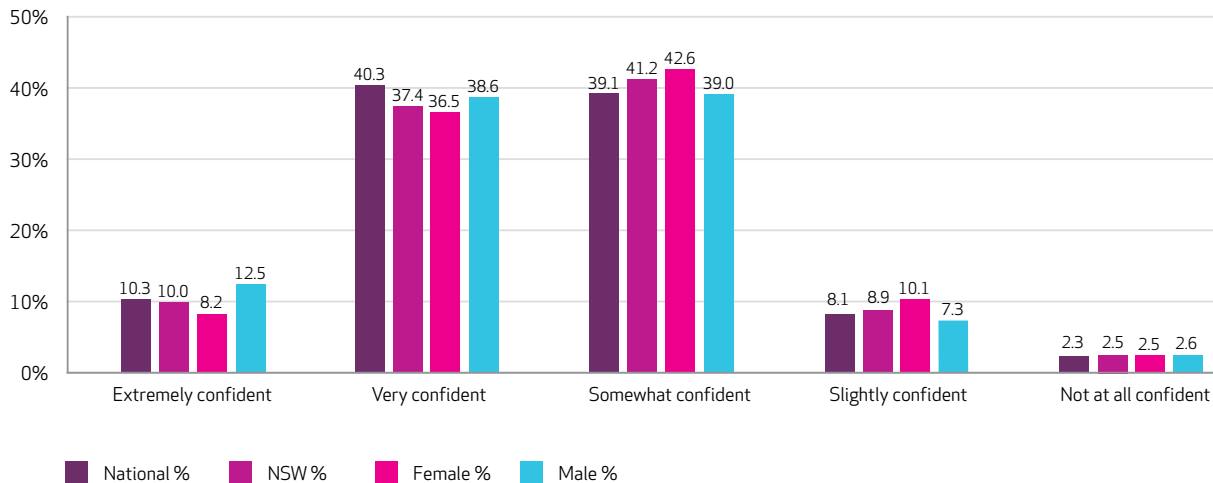
	National %	NSW %	Female %	Male %
Employed full-time	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.8
Employed part-time	38.8	36.4	38.7	33.1
Not in paid employment, looking for work	35.9	34.2	32.5	36.6
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	24.8	28.8	28.4	29.4

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

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

In 2015, respondents were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. Responses for this question were rated on a five point scale from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. Around half of respondents from NSW indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve study/work goals, with 10.0% indicating that they were *extremely confident* and 37.4% indicating that they were *very confident*. However, around one in ten young people from NSW were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals, with 8.9% being *slightly confident* and 2.5% *not at all confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. A slightly higher proportion of male than female respondents reported feeling *extremely confident* or *very confident* (12.5% and 38.6% of males compared with 8.2% and 36.5% of females respectively).

Figure 4.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals



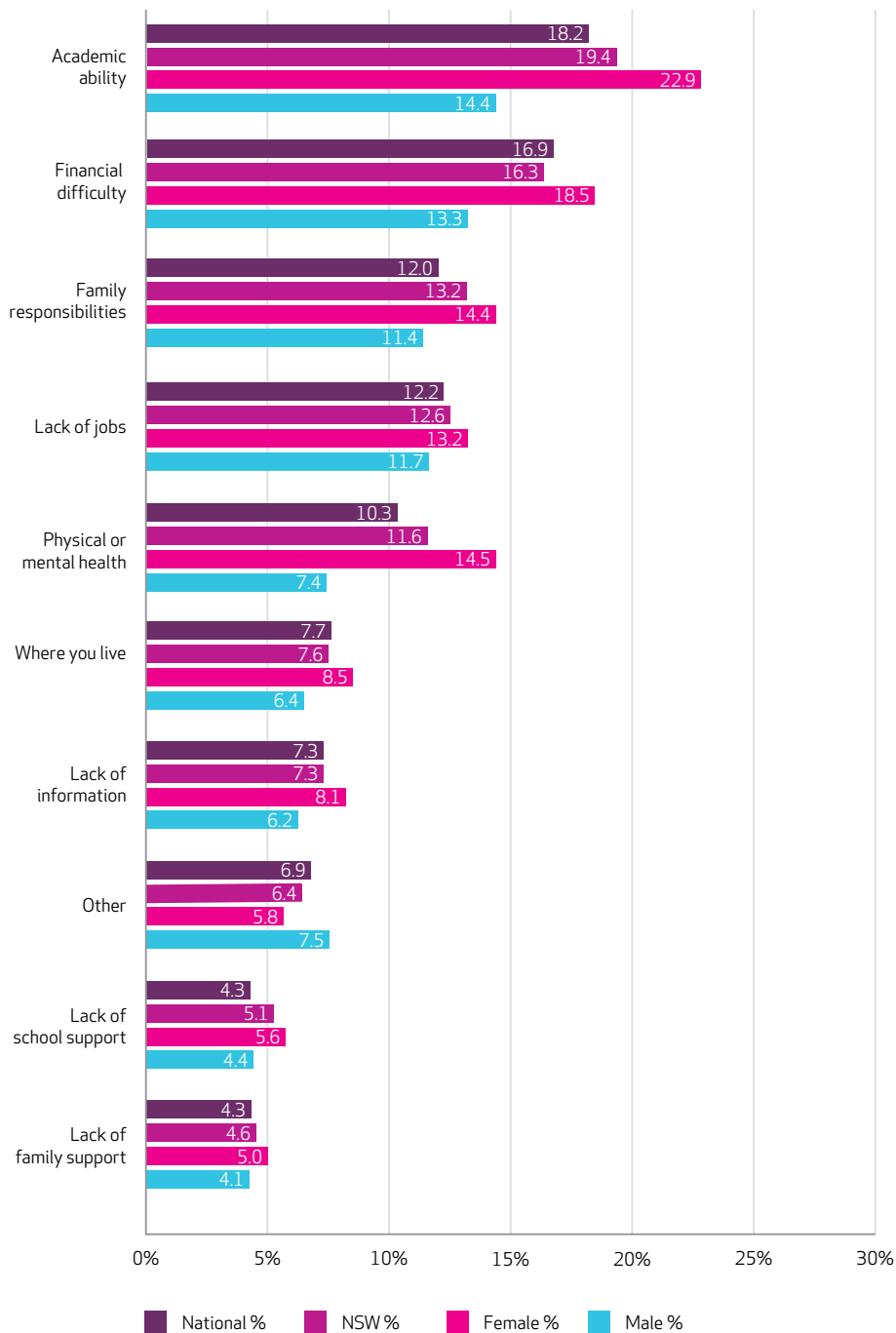
Barriers to the achievement of young people's study/work goals after school

Young people in 2015 were asked whether they felt there were any barriers which may impact on the achievement of their study/work goals after school. Just over half (53.8%) of respondents from NSW indicated that they felt there would be barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals, with a greater proportion of females (57.3%) than males (48.7%) reporting the presence of these barriers.

Respondents who indicated the presence of barriers were asked to indicate from a number of items which barriers they saw as preventing them from achieving their goals after school. Figure 4.3 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated each item as a barrier. In NSW, the top three barriers young people saw impacting the achievement of their study/work goals after school were *academic ability*, *financial difficulty* and *family responsibilities*.

- *Academic ability*, *financial difficulty* and *family responsibilities* were the three most commonly cited barriers to the achievement of young people's study/work goals after school (19.4%, 16.3% and 13.2% respectively).
- Over one in ten respondents from NSW indicated that they saw a *lack of jobs* and *physical or mental health* as barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals after school.

Figure 4.3: Barriers to the achievement of study/work goals after school



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

Gender differences

As shown in Figure 4.3, the top two barriers identified by both genders to the achievement of their study/work goals after school were consistent with NSW and national results. The third top barrier for females in NSW was *physical or mental health*, while for males the third top barrier was a *lack of jobs*. A greater proportion of females than males from NSW indicated that they saw these, along with many of the other items, as barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals.

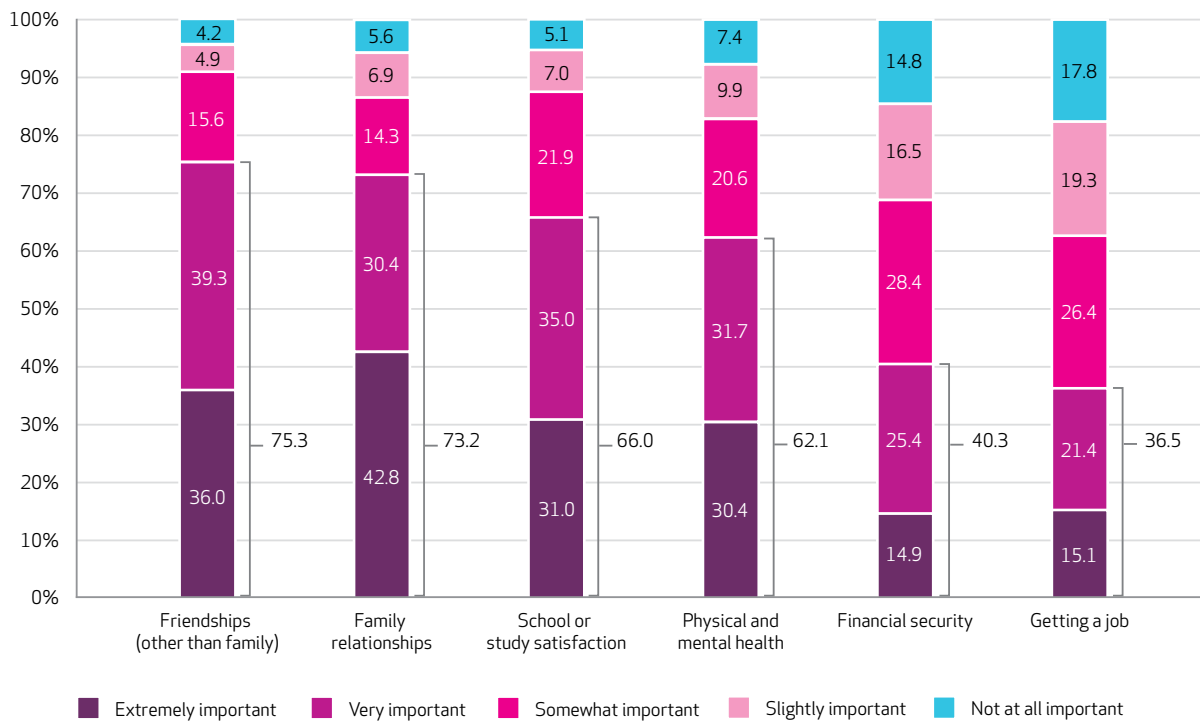
- One in five (22.9%) female respondents and 14.4% of male respondents indicated that *academic ability* was a barrier.
- A higher proportion of female than male respondents indicated that *financial difficulty* and *physical and mental health* were barriers to the achievement of future study/work goals (18.5% and 14.5% of females compared with 13.3% and 7.4% of males respectively).
- Despite a *lack of jobs* ranking higher up the list for male respondents, overall a greater proportion of female than male respondents from NSW indicated that they saw a *lack of jobs* as a barrier (13.2% compared with 11.7% respectively).

What do young people value?

In 2015 young people were again asked how much they valued *family relationships*, *financial security*, *friendships*, *getting a job*, *physical and mental health* and *school or study satisfaction*. Responses for these items were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely important* to *not at all important*. In Figure 4.4 the items were ranked in order of importance by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely important* or *very important* for each item. In line with both the national data and 2014 NSW findings, the two most highly valued items for respondents from NSW this year were *friendships* and *family relationships*. The next most valued item for NSW respondents was *school or study satisfaction*, followed by *physical and mental health* (again consistent with the national results).

- *Friendships* were highly valued by 75.3% of respondents from NSW (*extremely important*: 36.0%; *very important*: 39.3%). *Family relationships* were also valued highly by 73.2% of respondents (*extremely important*: 42.8%; *very important*: 30.4%).
- Two thirds of respondents highly valued *school or study satisfaction* (*extremely important*: 31.0%; *very important*: 35.0%) and around six in ten highly valued *physical and mental health* (*extremely important*: 30.4%; *very important*: 31.7%).
- Around four in ten NSW respondents placed a high value on *financial security* (*extremely important*: 14.9%; *very important*: 25.4%) and *getting a job* (*extremely important*: 15.1%; *very important*: 21.4%).

Figure 4.4: What young people value



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

Gender differences

Friendships, family relationships and school or study satisfaction were ranked as the three most highly valued items by both males and females in NSW, as shown in Table 4.4. The proportion of female respondents who highly valued these, and many of the other items, was higher than the proportion of males.

- Friendships were highly valued by 79.0% of females (*extremely important*: 38.7%; *very important*: 40.3%) compared with 70.2% of males (*extremely important*: 32.3%; *very important*: 37.9%).
- Family relationships were highly valued by 77.9% of females (*extremely important*: 47.8%; *very important*: 30.1%) compared with 66.6% of males (*extremely important*: 35.7%; *very important*: 30.9%).
- 72.9% of females highly valued school or study satisfaction (*extremely important*: 37.0%; *very important*: 35.9%) compared with 56.4% of males (*extremely important*: 22.6%; *very important*: 33.8%).
- Physical and mental health was highly valued by 66.3% of females (*extremely important*: 33.3%; *very important*: 33.0%) and 56.0% of males (*extremely important*: 26.2%; *very important*: 29.8%) in NSW.

Table 4.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	38.7	40.3	13.9	4.2	2.9
Family relationships	47.8	30.1	12.4	6.3	3.4
School or study satisfaction	37.0	35.9	19.1	4.9	3.0
Physical and mental health	33.3	33.0	19.5	9.1	5.0
Financial security	15.1	26.9	29.8	16.0	12.2
Getting a job	14.5	21.7	28.0	18.5	17.3
Males	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	32.3	37.9	18.0	5.8	5.9
Family relationships	35.7	30.9	17.0	7.7	8.7
School or study satisfaction	22.6	33.8	26.0	9.7	7.9
Physical and mental health	26.2	29.8	22.2	11.1	10.7
Financial security	14.8	23.1	26.5	17.3	18.4
Getting a job	15.9	20.9	24.2	20.4	18.6

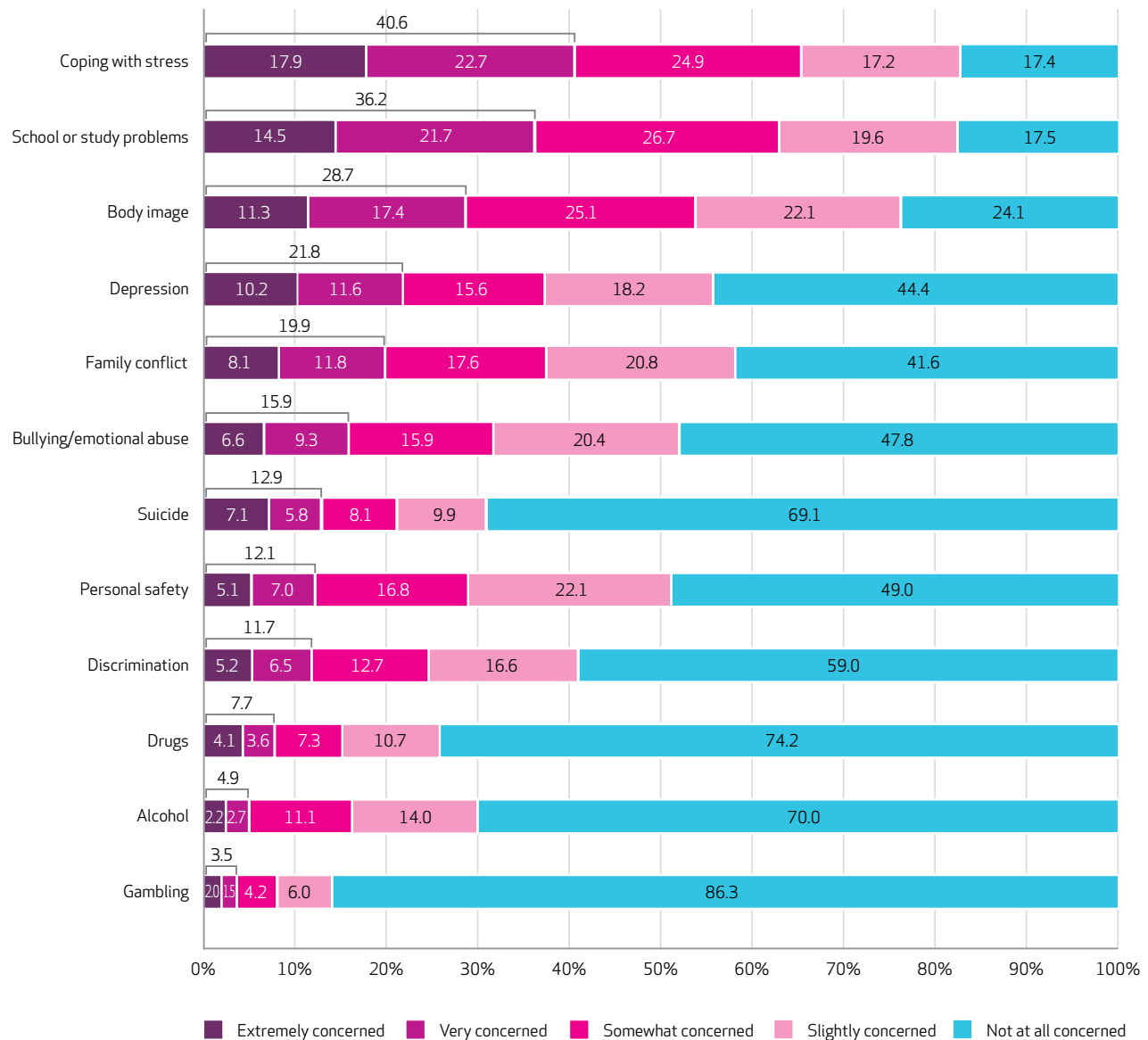
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of State frequency.

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Respondents were asked to rate how concerned they were about a number of issues, shown in Figure 4.5. Responses were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*. The items were ranked in order of concern by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* for each item. The top three issues of concern for young people from NSW were *coping with stress*, *school or study problems* and *body image*. These were the same top three issues identified at the national level.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with 40.6% of respondents from NSW indicating that they were either *extremely concerned* (17.9%) or *very concerned* (22.7%) about this issue.
- *School or study problems* was a major concern for 36.2% (*extremely concerned*: 14.5%; *very concerned*: 21.7%) of young people.
- *Body image* was also an important issue of concern for 28.7% of respondents (*extremely concerned*: 11.3%; *very concerned*: 17.4%).
- Around one in five respondents were either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* about *depression* and *family conflict*.

Figure 4.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item.

Gender differences

Coping with stress, *school or study problems* and *body image* were the top three issues of concern for both males and females in NSW, as highlighted in Table 4.5. The proportion of females concerned about these three (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- For over half of all females *coping with stress* was a major concern (*extremely concerned*: 24.5%; *very concerned*: 28.7%), compared with around one in five of all males (*extremely concerned*: 8.5%; *very concerned*: 14.3%).
- Females were also more concerned about *school or study problems* with 46.0% (*extremely concerned*: 19.1%; *very concerned*: 26.9%) indicating that this was a major concern, compared with 22.5% of males (*extremely concerned*: 8.0%; *very concerned*: 14.5%).
- Concerns about *body image* were considerably higher among females, with 39.2% (*extremely concerned*: 15.6%; *very concerned*: 23.6%) indicating that *body image* was a major concern, compared with 14.0% (*extremely concerned*: 5.3%; *very concerned*: 8.7%) of males.
- For 27.7% of females (*extremely concerned*: 12.9%; *very concerned*: 14.8%) and 13.3% of males (*extremely concerned*: 6.4%; *very concerned*: 6.9%) *depression* was a major concern.

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

Females	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	24.5	28.7	24.9	13.7	8.2
School or study problems	19.1	26.9	26.2	17.4	10.5
Body image	15.6	23.6	28.0	19.2	13.7
Depression	12.9	14.8	17.2	19.4	35.6
Family conflict	10.2	14.6	19.8	21.9	33.5
Bullying/emotional abuse	7.7	11.3	18.4	22.0	40.6
Suicide	8.2	7.5	9.5	11.5	63.4
Personal safety	5.5	8.3	19.0	23.4	43.7
Discrimination	5.6	7.6	13.9	18.0	54.8
Drugs	3.8	3.8	7.8	11.8	72.9
Alcohol	1.7	3.0	12.1	14.7	68.6
Gambling	1.4	1.4	3.6	5.1	88.6
Males	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	8.5	14.3	24.8	22.0	30.3
School or study problems	8.0	14.5	27.5	22.8	27.2
Body image	5.3	8.7	21.0	26.3	38.7
Depression	6.4	6.9	13.4	16.6	56.8
Family conflict	5.1	7.9	14.6	19.2	53.2
Bullying/emotional abuse	5.0	6.6	12.3	18.2	58.0
Suicide	5.5	3.6	6.3	7.4	77.2
Personal safety	4.5	5.2	13.5	20.4	56.4
Discrimination	4.6	5.0	10.9	14.6	64.9
Drugs	4.6	3.4	6.5	9.3	76.2
Alcohol	2.8	2.2	9.7	12.9	72.4
Gambling	2.8	1.7	5.2	7.2	83.1

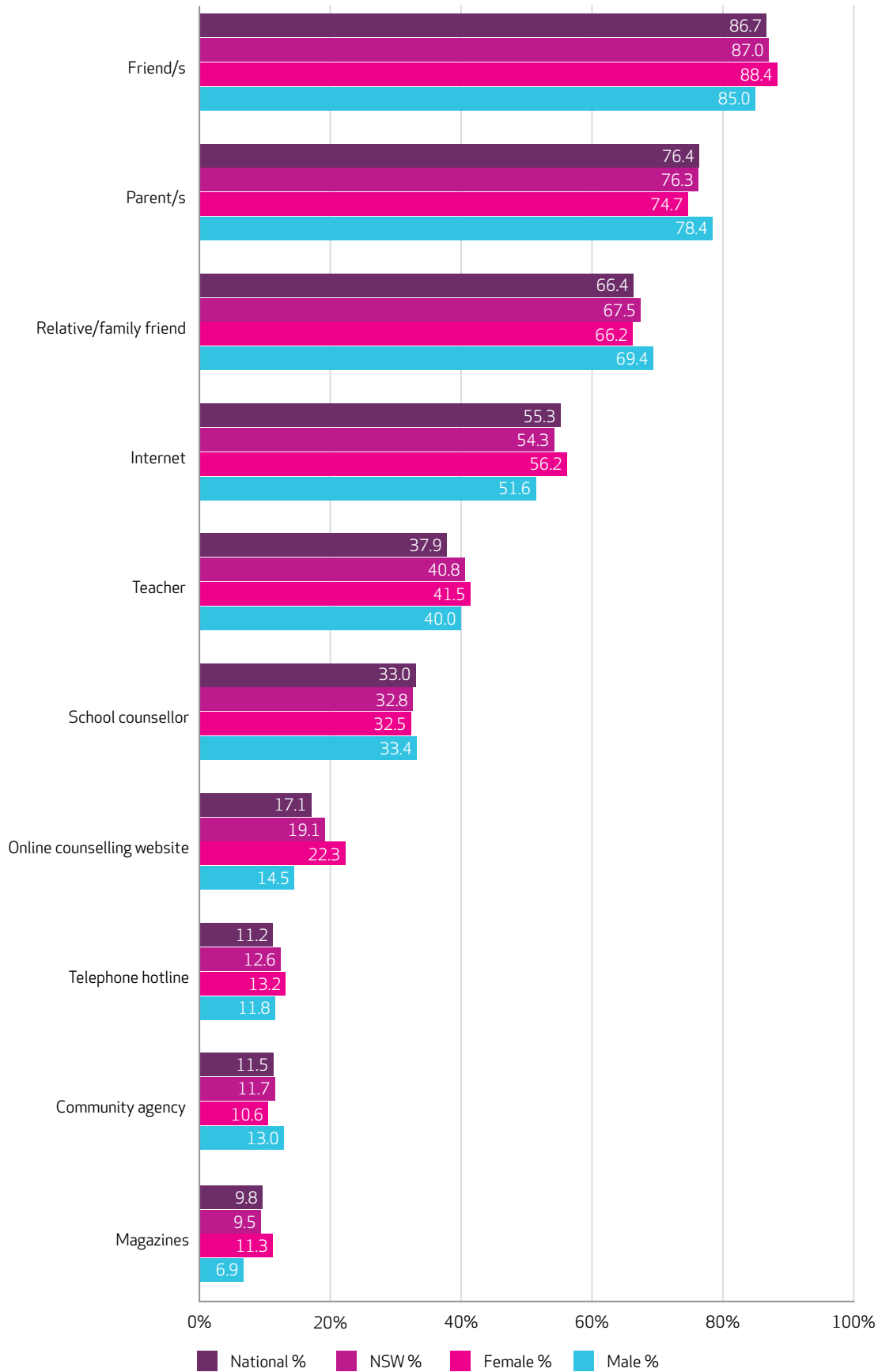
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of State frequency.

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

Young people were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 4.6 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that they would go to each source. The top three sources of help for young people in NSW were *friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends*.

- *Friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends* were the three most commonly cited sources of help for young people (87.0%, 76.3% and 67.5% respectively).
- Over half of respondents from NSW indicated that they would go to the *internet* for help with important issues in their lives.
- One in four respondents indicated that they would go to their *teacher* for help and just under one third indicated that they would go to their *school counsellor* for help with important issues.

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



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

Gender differences

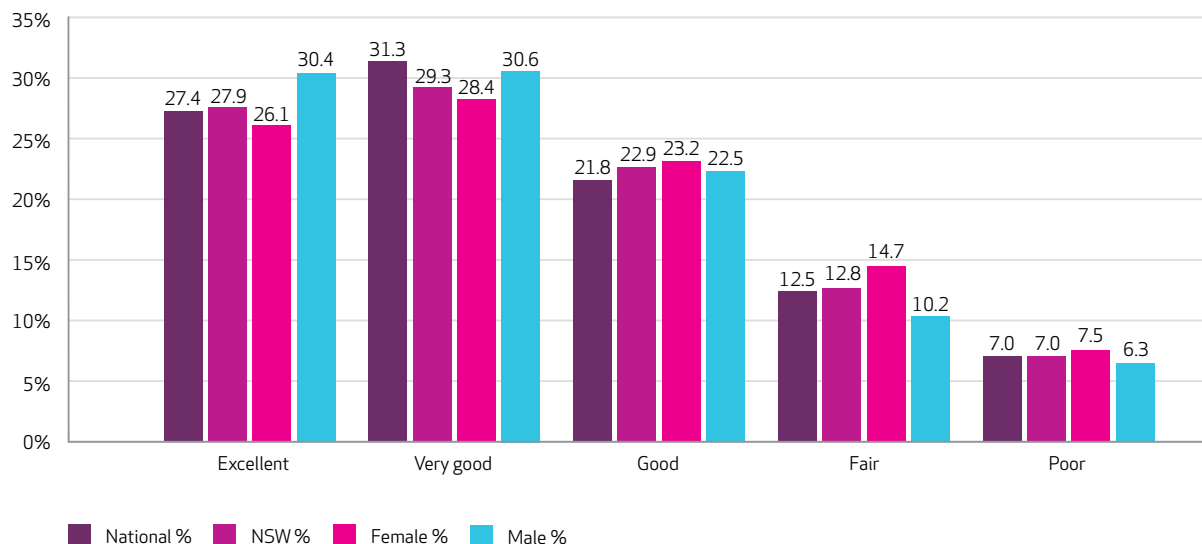
As shown in Figure 4.6, the top three sources of help for both genders were consistent with NSW and national results. However, a greater proportion of female respondents than male respondents indicated that they would go to *friend/s* for help with important issues, while greater proportions of males would go to *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends*.

- Around nine in ten (88.4%) female respondents and 85.0% of male respondents in NSW indicated that they would go to *friend/s* for help with important issues.
- A higher proportion of male than female respondents indicated they would go to *parent/s* (78.4% compared with 74.7%) and *relatives/family friends* (69.4% compared with 66.2%) for help.
- A greater proportion of females than males from NSW would go to the *internet* (56.2% compared with 51.6%), *online counselling websites* (22.3% compared with 14.5%) and *magazines* (11.3% compared with 6.9%) for help with important issues in their lives.

How well do young people feel their families get along?

Respondents were asked how well they thought their family got along. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 4.7 shows that, in line with the national data, the majority of respondents from NSW rated their family's ability to get along very positively, with 27.9% indicating that their family's ability to get along was *excellent* and 29.3% that it was *very good*. However, almost one in five young people did not report such a positive experience of family relationships, rating their family's ability to get along as either *fair* (12.8%) or *poor* (7.0%). Male and female respondents gave similar ratings of their family's ability to get along.

Figure 4.7: Family's ability to get along



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

Young people were asked to write down the three issues they considered were most important in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 4.6. In 2015 the top three issues identified by young people from NSW were *alcohol and drugs*, *equity and discrimination*, and *the economy and financial matters*. These were also the top three issues identified nationally.

- Around one quarter of young people from NSW identified *alcohol and drugs* (25.8%) and *equity and discrimination* (24.1%) as important issues in Australia today.
- Compared to the past two years, identification of *alcohol and drugs* as an important issue has increased among respondents.
- Almost one in five respondents identified *the economy and financial matters* (19.9%) and *mental health* (17.2%) as major issues.
- Since 2013, *mental health* and *international relations* have been increasingly identified by young people as key issues facing the nation. Conversely, mentions of *politics* and *education* have declined over this period.

Gender differences

There were some notable differences in the issues identified as the most important in Australia today by male and female respondents from NSW. While *alcohol and drugs* and *equity and discrimination* were identified among the top three issues by both males and females, the other issues making up their top three differed. For females, *equity and discrimination* was the number one issue, followed by *alcohol and drugs* and then *mental health*. For males the top issue this year was *alcohol and drugs*, followed by *the economy and financial matters* and then *equity and discrimination*.

- Three in ten male respondents and almost one quarter of female respondents from NSW (30.0% and 23.0% respectively) identified *alcohol and drugs* as a major issue facing Australia today.
- A greater proportion of females than males identified *equity and discrimination* (26.8% compared with 20.2%) and *mental health* (21.2% compared with 11.5%) as important national issues.
- Conversely, a greater proportion of males than females identified *the economy and financial matters* (22.2% compared with 18.4%) and *international relations* (18.5% compared with 13.3%) as important issues.

Table 4.6: Most important issues in Australia today

	National %	NSW 2015 %	Female %	Male %	NSW 2014 %	NSW/ACT 2013 %
Alcohol and drugs	27.0	25.8	23.0	30.0	21.3	16.3
Equity and discrimination	25.0	24.1	26.8	20.2	19.4	20.3
The economy and financial matters	18.9	19.9	18.4	22.2	26.4	25.4
Mental health	14.9	17.2	21.2	11.5	16.8	13.6
Population issues	15.3	15.6	15.1	16.4	15.2	21.0
Politics	16.1	15.5	13.5	18.3	21.8	22.9
International relations	13.4	15.4	13.3	18.5	3.4	2.5
Education	12.2	13.3	14.5	11.4	15.5	16.3
The environment	12.8	12.5	12.5	12.7	11.5	14.3
LGBT issues	13.2	12.1	15.7	7.0	4.5	5.0
Employment	12.7	11.0	9.5	13.2	10.4	13.4
Health	9.5	9.9	10.4	9.1	11.7	11.5
Bullying	9.3	9.4	10.8	7.5	15.0	10.8
Crime, safety and violence	10.1	9.3	9.0	9.4	10.0	8.9
Homelessness/housing	7.8	7.9	8.9	6.3	8.4	7.7

Note: Items are listed in order of State frequency. Data for 2013 was based on combined NSW and ACT results from that year.

What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities that they have been involved in over the past year from the list shown in Table 4.7. The top three activities for young people from NSW, as they were nationally, were *sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *volunteer work*. These were also the top three activities for young people from NSW in 2014 and NSW/ACT in 2013. Significant proportions of young people reported involvement in each of the activities listed over the past year.

- *Sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *volunteer work* were the three most popular activities for young people from NSW in 2015.
- Just over half of respondents indicated that they had participated in *arts/cultural/music activities* (52.1%).
- Over four in ten young people reported participation in *student leadership activities* (44.4%) and over one third had participated in *youth groups and clubs* (36.1%) and *religious groups or activities* (34.8%).
- Around one in five young people from NSW (21.1%) had participated in *environmental groups or activities* over the past year.

Gender differences

As shown in Table 4.7 the top two activities for both genders were consistent with NSW and national results, although a greater proportion of male respondents than female respondents were involved in *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)*. The third top activity for females in NSW was *arts/cultural/music activities*, while the third top activity for males from NSW was *volunteer work*.

- 76.2% of male respondents and 73.4% of female respondents were involved in *sports (as a participant)* over the past year.
- A larger proportion of male than female respondents were involved in *sports (as a spectator)* (72.2% compared with 62.9%).
- A much higher proportion of female than male respondents were involved with *arts/cultural/music activities* (60.2% compared with 40.4%).
- Despite *volunteer work* ranking higher up the list for male respondents, overall a greater proportion of female than male respondents from NSW were involved in *volunteer work* and *student leadership activities* (58.7% and 49.9% compared with 45.1% and 36.7% respectively).

Table 4.7: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	National %	NSW 2015 %	Female %	Male %	NSW 2014 %	NSW/ACT 2013 %
Sports (as a participant)	74.3	74.6	73.4	76.2	73.5	73.4
Sports (as a spectator)	67.4	66.8	62.9	72.2	65.9	68.4
Volunteer work	51.3	53.2	58.7	45.1	56.8	57.5
Arts/cultural/music activities	50.7	52.1	60.2	40.4	53.0	53.7
Student leadership activities	40.0	44.4	49.9	36.7	45.0	44.8
Youth groups and clubs	33.1	36.1	37.3	34.2	36.0	34.7
Religious groups or activities	30.8	34.8	37.9	30.4	37.8	35.9
Environmental groups or activities	22.0	21.1	22.3	19.3	23.6	23.9
Political groups or organisations	7.7	8.3	7.6	9.1	8.4	7.3

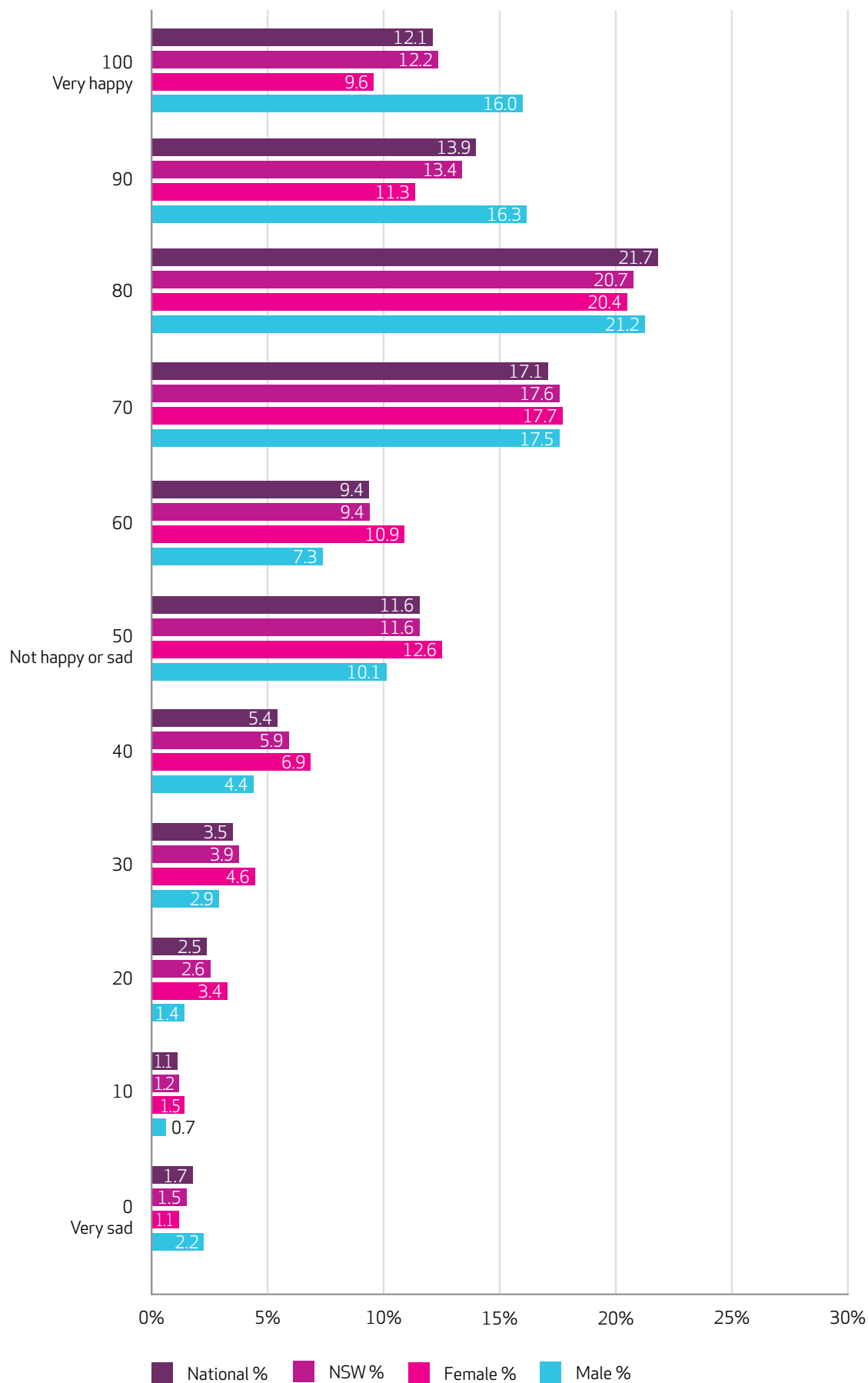
Note: Data for 2013 was based on combined NSW and ACT results from that year. Items are listed in order of State frequency.

How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being *very sad*, 5 *not happy or sad* and 10 *very happy*. In line with recommendations from the authors of this question¹, responses were standardised on a scale of 0 – 100, with 100 being the happiest. As Figure 4.8 shows, the majority of young people from NSW (63.9%) responded in the range 70 to 100, indicating that they felt positive overall about their lives. This is consistent with the national results. Responses were similar for both males and females, although a greater proportion of male than female respondents indicated that they felt *very happy* with their lives as a whole (16.0% compared with 9.6%).

¹ Cummins, R.A., & Lau, A.L.D., 2005, *Personal Wellbeing Index – School Children (PWI-SC) (English)*, Manual, 3rd Edition.

Figure 4.8: How happy young people are



How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked how positive they felt about the future, with responses rated on a 5 point scale from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 4.8 shows that compared to 2014 NSW results and 2013 NSW/ACT results there has been a slight decrease in the proportion of NSW respondents feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future and a slight increase in those feeling *neither positive nor negative* about the future. Overall, less than one in ten young people from NSW felt *very negative* or *negative* about the future.

- Around six in ten respondents from NSW felt either *positive* (46.8%) or *very positive* (15.2%) about the future.
- Almost three in ten respondents (28.5%) felt *neither positive nor negative* about the future.
- 7.5% of respondents felt *negative* about the future and 1.9% felt *very negative*.
- Males and females from NSW were similar in terms of their feelings about the future. A larger proportion of male than female respondents, however, indicated feeling *very positive* (17.8% compared with 13.4% for females).

Table 4.8: Feelings about the future

	National %	NSW 2014 %	Female %	Male %	NSW 2014 %	NSW/ACT 2013 %
Very positive	15.0	15.2	13.4	17.8	15.6	19.3
Positive	46.8	46.8	46.5	47.3	47.3	49.3
Neither positive nor negative	28.2	28.5	30.4	25.9	28.0	23.8
Negative	7.5	7.5	8.1	6.7	6.7	5.4
Very negative	2.5	1.9	1.6	2.4	2.4	2.3

Note: Data for 2013 was based on combined NSW and ACT results from that year..

Northern Territory



Profile of respondents

In total, 243 young people from Northern Territory (NT) aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2015*.

Gender breakdown

Around two thirds (65.0%) of respondents from the NT were female and 35.0% were male.

Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 61 (25.6%) respondents from the NT identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 49 (20.5%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 3 (1.3%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 3.8% identified as both). A higher proportion of male than female respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (39.7% compared with 17.9%).

Language background other than English

A total of 52 (22.0%) respondents from the NT stated that they were born overseas and 63 (26.7%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Among NT respondents who spoke a language other than English at home, 21.2% spoke Indigenous languages.

Disability

A total of 24 (10.1%) respondents from the NT indicated that they had a disability, with a greater proportion of males (20.7%) than females (4.5%) reporting a disability.

Detailed results

Education

As indicated in Table 5.1, 80.2% of respondents from the NT were studying full-time. A greater proportion of female than male respondents reported that they were studying full-time (82.9% compared with 75.0% respectively), while a greater proportion of males (19.0%) than females (12.0%) reported not studying at all.

Respondents who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in previous years, the majority of respondents from the NT reported that they were either *very satisfied* (17.7%) or *satisfied* (58.1%) with their studies. Less than one in ten were *very dissatisfied* or *dissatisfied* (2.5% and 6.6% respectively). As shown in Table 5.2, a slightly higher proportion of females than males from the NT reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their studies (19.7% and 59.1% of females compared with 13.6% and 56.1% of males respectively).

Table 5.1: Participation in education

	National %	NT %	Female %	Male %
Studying full-time	94.0	80.2	82.9	75.0
Studying part-time	2.6	5.4	5.1	6.0
Not studying	3.5	14.5	12.0	19.0

Table 5.2: Satisfaction with studies

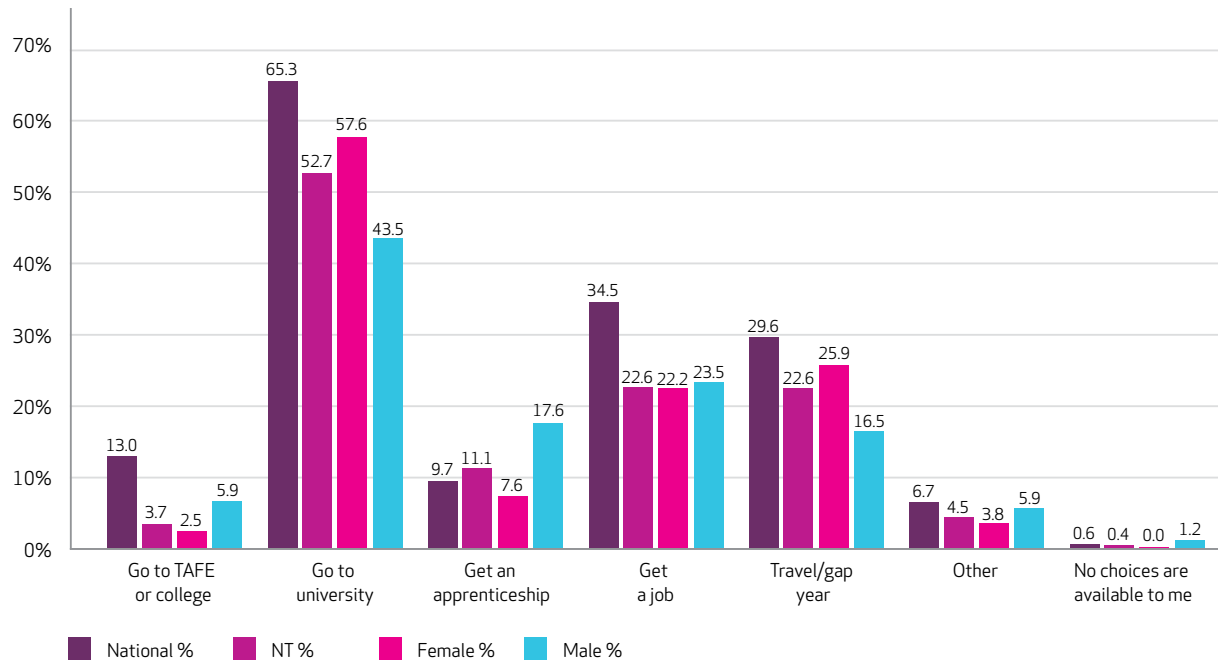
	National %	NT 2015 %	Female %	Male %	NT 2014 %	NT 2013 %
Very satisfied	16.0	17.7	19.7	13.6	18.8	13.6
Satisfied	56.7	58.1	59.1	56.1	45.3	42.0
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	21.5	15.2	13.6	18.2	25.8	27.3
Dissatisfied	4.4	6.6	6.8	6.1	7.8	9.1
Very dissatisfied	1.3	2.5	0.8	6.1	2.3	8.0

In 2015, respondents who reported they were studying full-time or part-time were asked whether or not they were still at school. The majority of respondents (97.0%) from the NT stated they were still at school. A slightly greater proportion of male than female respondents indicated that they were still at school (98.5% compared with 96.3% respectively). Of those who were still at school in the NT, 98.4% stated that they intended to complete Year 12. Around three times the proportion of males than females indicated that they did not intend to complete Year 12 (3.1% compared with 0.8% respectively).

Respondents who were still at school were also asked what they were planning to do after leaving school. Figure 5.1 shows that just over half of respondents from the NT planned to go to university after school (52.7%). Many respondents also indicated plans to get a job (22.6%) and to travel or go on a gap year (22.6%) after school. Just over one in ten (11.1%) young people from the NT planned to undertake an apprenticeship and 3.7% reported plans to attend TAFE or college. A small proportion of respondents (0.4%) indicated that they felt no choices were available to them after they left school.

While going to university was the most frequently chosen option among both male and female respondents from the NT, a higher proportion of females than males stated that they planned to do so (57.6% compared with 43.5% respectively). A greater proportion of female respondents also reported plans to travel or go on a gap year after school (25.9% compared with 16.5%). A larger proportion of males indicated that they were planning to undertake an apprenticeship (17.6% compared with 7.6% of females).

Figure 5.1: Plans after leaving school



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Employment

Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who answered that they had paid employment were asked to specify how many hours they worked per week, on average. Table 5.3 shows participation in paid employment amongst respondents from the NT. In line with the national data, only a small proportion (4.4%) of respondents who reported paid employment were employed full-time. However, given the percentage of respondents who were still at school this is not surprising. Around four in ten (42.5%) respondents from the NT reported part-time employment. Just over one half of NT respondents reported that they were not in paid employment, with 36.3% looking for work and 16.8% not looking for work.

While 6.8% of females reported full-time employment, there were no males from the NT who reported full-time employment. A much higher proportion of female respondents were also employed part-time compared to males (55.4% compared with 17.9%). Conversely, a much greater proportion of male than female respondents were looking for work (53.8% compared with 27.0%).

Table 5.3: Participation in paid employment

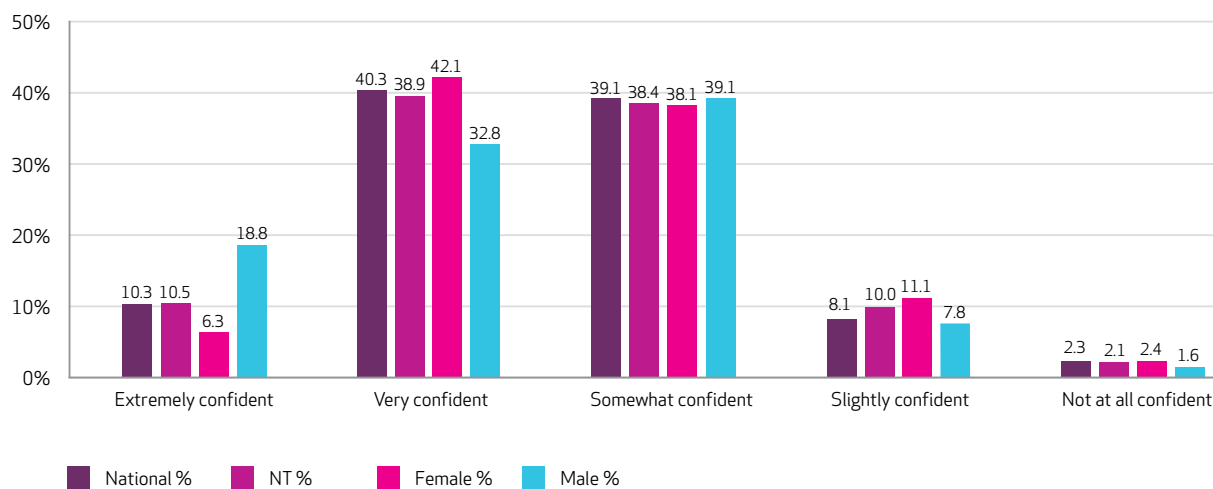
	National %	NT %	Female %	Male %
Employed full-time	0.5	4.4	6.8	0.0
Employed part-time	38.8	42.5	55.4	17.9
Not in paid employment, looking for work	35.9	36.3	27.0	53.8
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	24.8	16.8	10.8	28.2

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

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

In 2015, respondents were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. Responses for this question were rated on a five point scale from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. Around half of respondents from the NT indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve study/work goals, with 10.5% indicating that they were *extremely confident* and 38.9% indicating that they were *very confident*. However, just over one in ten young people from the NT were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals, with 10.0% being *slightly confident* and 2.1% *not at all confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. A slightly higher proportion of male than female respondents reported feeling *extremely confident* or *very confident* (18.8% and 32.8% of males compared with 6.3% and 42.1% of females respectively).

Figure 5.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals



Barriers to the achievement of young people's study/work goals after school

Young people in 2015 were asked whether they felt there were any barriers which may impact on the achievement of their study/work goals after school. Two thirds (66.8%) of respondents from the NT indicated that they felt there would be barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals, with a slightly greater proportion of females (68.3%) than males (64.1%) reporting the presence of these barriers.

Respondents who indicated the presence of barriers were asked to indicate from a number of items which barriers they saw as preventing them from achieving their goals after school. Figure 5.3 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated each item as a barrier. In the NT, the top barriers young people saw impacting the achievement of their study/work goals after school were *financial difficulty*, followed by *academic ability* and then *family responsibilities* and *where you live* (in equal third position).

- *Financial difficulty* and *academic ability* were the two most commonly cited barriers to the achievement of young people's study/work goals after school (19.8% and 14.8% respectively).
- Equal proportions of young people from the NT indicated that they saw *family responsibilities* and *where you live* as barriers to their study/work goals (both at 14.4%).
- Around one in ten respondents from the NT indicated that they saw *physical or mental health* and a *lack of jobs* as barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals after school.

Figure 5.3: Barriers to the achievement of study/work goals after school



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

Gender differences

As shown in Figure 5.3, the top barriers identified by both genders to the achievement of their study/work goals after school were among the top three for the NT overall. The number one barrier highlighted by females in the NT was *financial difficulty*, followed by *academic ability* and *where you live* (in equal second position). For males the top barrier was *family responsibilities*, followed by *financial difficulty*. A greater proportion of females than males from the NT indicated that they saw these, along with many of the other items, as barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals.

- Around one quarter (24.1%) of female respondents and 11.8% of male respondents indicated that *financial difficulty* was a barrier.
- Almost one in five (17.6%) male respondents and 12.7% of female respondents indicated that they saw *family responsibilities* as a barrier to their study/work goals.
- A higher proportion of female than male respondents indicated that *academic ability* and *where you live* were barriers to the achievement of future study/work goals (17.1% and 17.1% of females compared with 10.6% and 9.4% of males respectively).

What do young people value?

In 2015 young people were again asked how much they valued *family relationships*, *financial security*, *friendships*, *getting a job*, *physical and mental health* and *school or study satisfaction*. Responses for these items were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely important* to *not at all important*. In Figure 5.4 the items were ranked in order of importance by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely important* or *very important* for each item. The two most highly valued items for respondents from the NT this year were *school or study satisfaction* and *friendships*. The next most valued item for NT respondents was *family relationships*, followed by *physical and mental health*.

- *School or study satisfaction* was highly valued by 67.7% of respondents from the NT (*extremely important*: 31.5%; *very important*: 36.2%). *Friendships* were also valued highly by 67.0% of respondents (*extremely important*: 31.8%; *very important*: 35.2%).
- Two thirds of respondents highly valued *family relationships* (*extremely important*: 32.1%; *very important*: 34.2%) and around six in ten highly valued *physical and mental health* (*extremely important*: 24.3%; *very important*: 34.9%).
- Around four in ten NT respondents placed a high value on *getting a job* (*extremely important*: 20.0%; *very important*: 24.3%) and *financial security* (*extremely important*: 16.9%; *very important*: 26.6%).

Figure 5.4: What young people value



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

Gender differences

School or study satisfaction, *friendships* and *family relationships* were among the three most highly valued items by both males and females in the NT, as shown in Table 5.4. However, the order of these items differed between genders. The most highly valued item for males from the NT this year was *friendships*, followed by *family relationships* and then *school or study satisfaction*. Comparatively, the most highly valued item for females was *school or study satisfaction*, followed by *family relationships* and then *friendships*. The proportion of female respondents who highly valued these, and many of the other items, was higher than the proportion of males.

- *School or study satisfaction* was highly valued by 79.9% of females (*extremely important*: 39.0%; *very important*: 40.9%) compared with 44.5% of males (*extremely important*: 17.3%; *very important*: 27.2%).
- *Family relationships* were highly valued by 71.8% of females (*extremely important*: 35.3%; *very important*: 36.5%) compared with 55.5% of males (*extremely important*: 25.9%; *very important*: 29.6%).
- Almost seven in ten of females highly valued *friendships* (*extremely important*: 28.4%; *very important*: 40.6%) compared with 63.0% of males (*extremely important*: 38.3%; *very important*: 24.7%).
- *Physical and mental health* was highly valued by 67.8% of females (*extremely important*: 26.5%; *very important*: 41.3%) and 42.5% of males (*extremely important*: 20.0%; *very important*: 22.5%) in the NT.

Table 5.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
School or study satisfaction	39.0	40.9	11.7	3.9	4.5
Friendships (other than family)	28.4	40.6	16.8	7.7	6.5
Family relationships	35.3	36.5	16.0	7.7	4.5
Physical and mental health	26.5	41.3	15.5	8.4	8.4
Getting a job	18.4	26.3	29.6	11.2	14.5
Financial security	18.1	30.3	27.7	11.6	12.3
Males	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
School or study satisfaction	17.3	27.2	30.9	4.9	19.8
Friendships (other than family)	38.3	24.7	16.0	6.2	14.8
Family relationships	25.9	29.6	23.5	6.2	14.8
Physical and mental health	20.0	22.5	30.0	8.8	18.8
Getting a job	22.9	20.5	14.5	20.5	21.7
Financial security	14.6	19.5	22.0	17.1	26.8

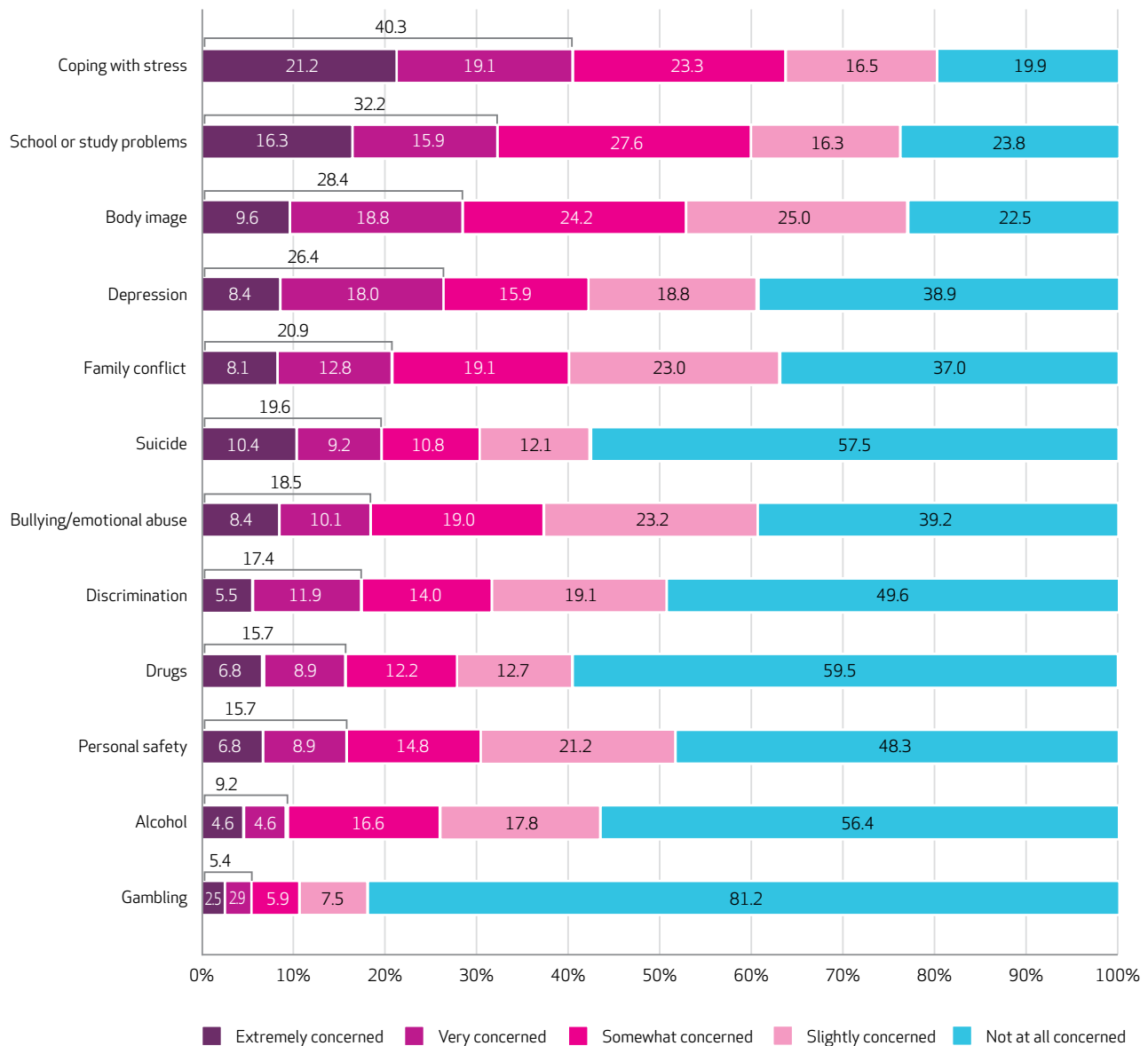
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of State frequency.

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Respondents were asked to rate how concerned they were about a number of issues, shown in Figure 5.5. Responses were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*. The items were ranked in order of concern by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* for each item. The top three issues of concern for young people from the NT were *coping with stress*, *school or study problems* and *body image*. These were the same top three issues identified at the national level.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with 40.3% of respondents from the NT indicating that they were either *extremely concerned* (21.2%) or *very concerned* (19.1%) about this issue.
- *School or study problems* was a major concern for 32.2% (*extremely concerned*: 16.3%; *very concerned*: 15.9%) of young people.
- *Body image* was also an important issue of concern for 28.4% of respondents (*extremely concerned*: 9.6%; *very concerned*: 18.8%).
- Over one quarter of respondents were either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* about *depression*, while *family conflict* was a major concern for around one in five respondents from the NT.

Figure 5.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item.

Gender differences

Coping with stress and *school or study problems* were the top two issues of concern for both males and females in the NT, as highlighted in Table 5.5. The order of the top two issues of concern differed, however, with males indicating that *school or study problems* was their number one concern, while for females the top issue of concern was *coping with stress*. For females, the third top issue of concern was *body image*, while for males the third top issue of concern was *drugs*. The proportion of females concerned about these (and many of the other issues) was generally higher than the proportion of males.

- For around half of females from the NT *coping with stress* was a major concern (*extremely concerned*: 24.5%; *very concerned*: 25.2%), compared with around one in five of all males (*extremely concerned*: 14.8%; *very concerned*: 7.4%).
- Females were also more concerned about *school or study problems* with 36.8% (*extremely concerned*: 19.4%; *very concerned*: 17.4%) indicating that this was a major concern, compared with 23.8% of males (*extremely concerned*: 10.7%; *very concerned*: 13.1%).
- Conversely, a slightly higher proportion of males were concerned about *drugs* with 21.6% (*extremely concerned*: 12.0%; *very concerned*: 9.6%) indicating that this was a major concern, compared with 12.3% of females (*extremely concerned*: 3.9%; *very concerned*: 8.4%).
- Concerns about *body image* were considerably higher among females, with 35.2% (*extremely concerned*: 11.5%; *very concerned*: 23.7%) indicating that *body image* was a major concern, compared with 15.5% (*extremely concerned*: 6.0%; *very concerned*: 9.5%) of males.

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

Females	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	24.5	25.2	23.9	15.5	11.0
School or study problems	19.4	17.4	28.4	16.8	18.1
Body image	11.5	23.7	26.9	25.6	12.2
Depression	7.7	22.4	17.9	19.2	32.7
Family conflict	7.2	15.1	21.1	27.6	28.9
Suicide	8.3	10.3	13.5	14.7	53.2
Bullying/emotional abuse	7.7	12.3	21.3	24.5	34.2
Discrimination	4.5	13.6	14.3	22.1	45.5
Drugs	3.9	8.4	12.3	15.6	59.7
Personal safety	3.9	12.5	17.1	20.4	46.1
Alcohol	3.2	4.5	19.1	17.8	55.4
Gambling	0.6	3.2	6.5	7.1	82.6
Males	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	14.8	7.4	22.2	18.5	37.0
School or study problems	10.7	13.1	26.2	15.5	34.5
Body image	6.0	9.5	19.0	23.8	41.7
Depression	9.6	9.6	12.0	18.1	50.6
Family conflict	9.6	8.4	15.7	14.5	51.8
Suicide	14.3	7.1	6.0	7.1	65.5
Bullying/emotional abuse	9.8	6.1	14.6	20.7	48.8
Discrimination	7.3	8.5	13.4	13.4	57.3
Drugs	12.0	9.6	12.0	7.2	59.0
Personal safety	11.9	2.4	10.7	22.6	52.4
Alcohol	7.1	4.8	11.9	17.9	58.3
Gambling	6.0	2.4	4.8	8.3	78.6

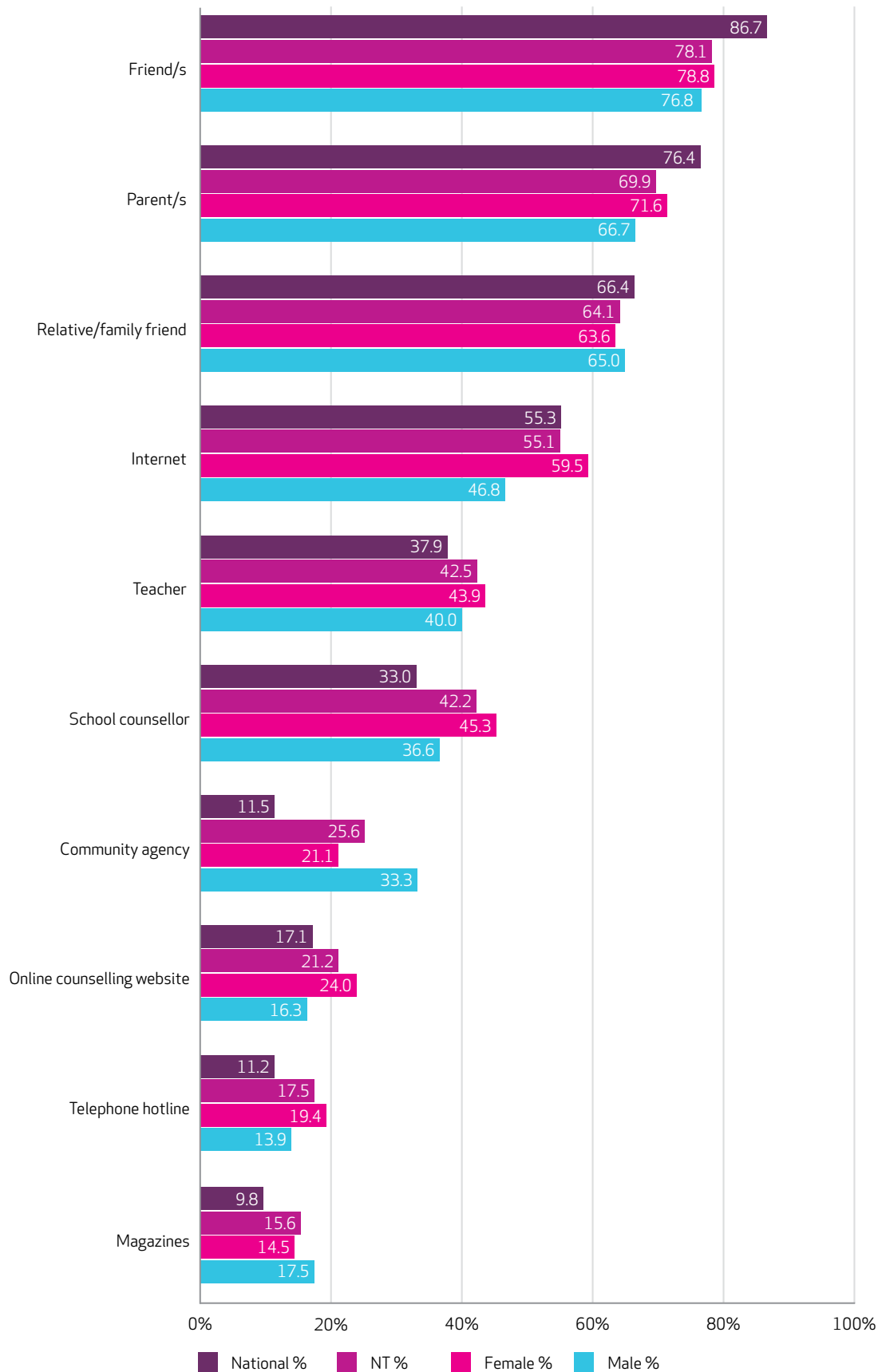
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of State frequency.

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

Young people were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 5.6 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that they would go to each source. The top three sources of help for young people in the NT were *friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends*.

- *Friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends* were the three most commonly cited sources of help for young people (78.1%, 69.9% and 64.1% respectively).
- Over half of respondents from the NT indicated that they would go to the *internet* for help with important issues in their lives.
- Just over one in four respondents indicated that they would go to their *teacher* or *school counsellor* for help with important issues.

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



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

Gender differences

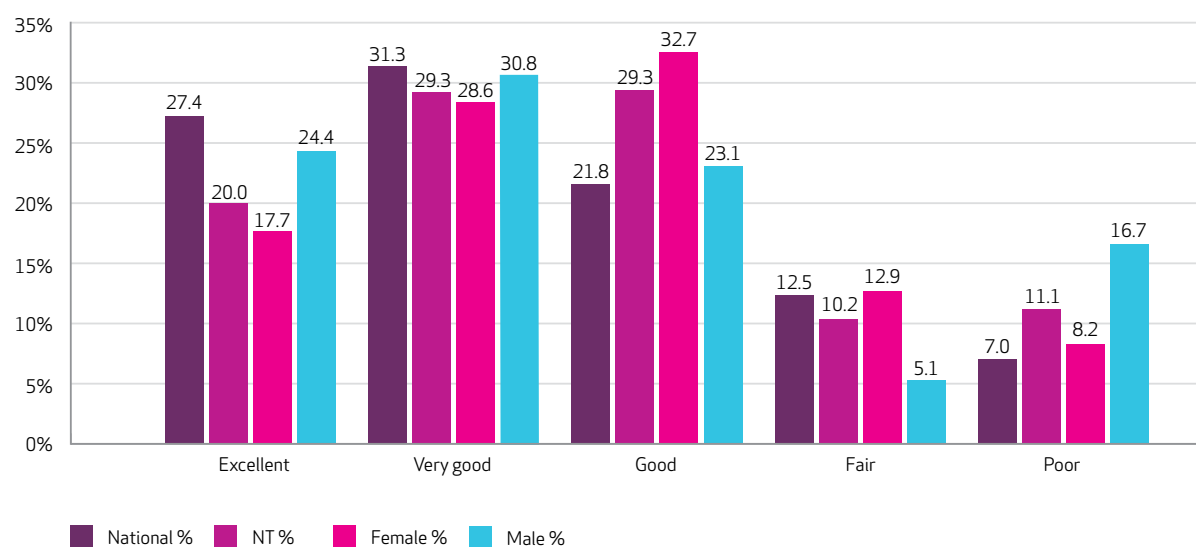
As shown in Figure 5.6, the top three sources of help for both genders were consistent with NT and national results. However, a greater proportion of female respondents than male respondents indicated that they would go to *friend/s* and *parent/s* for help with important issues, while greater proportions of males would go to *relatives/family friends*.

- Around eight in ten (78.8%) female respondents and 76.8% of male respondents in the NT indicated that they would go to *friend/s* for help with important issues.
- A higher proportion of female than male respondents also indicated they would go to *parent/s* (71.6% compared with 66.7%) for help.
- Conversely, a higher proportion of males than females indicated they would go to *relatives/family friends* for help with important issues (65.0% compared with 63.6% respectively).
- A greater proportion of females than males from the NT would go to the *internet* (59.5% compared with 46.8%), *school counsellor* (45.3% compared with 36.6%) and *online counselling website* (24.0% compared with 16.3%) for help with important issues in their lives.

How well do young people feel their families get along?

Respondents were asked how well they thought their family got along. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 5.7 shows that, in line with the national data, the majority of respondents from the NT rated their family's ability to get along very positively, with 20.0% indicating that their family's ability to get along was *excellent* and 29.3% that it was *very good*. However, around one in five young people did not report such a positive experience of family relationships, rating their family's ability to get along as either *fair* (10.2%) or *poor* (11.1%). Male and female respondents gave similar ratings of their family's ability to get along, although a greater proportion of females than males indicated that it was *excellent*.

Figure 5.7: Family's ability to get along



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

Young people were asked to write down the three issues they considered were most important in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 5.6. In 2015 the top three issues identified by young people from the NT were *alcohol and drugs*, *equity and discrimination* and *mental health*.

- Four in ten young people from the NT identified *alcohol and drugs* (40.8%) as an important issue in Australia today.
- Compared to the past two years, identification of *alcohol and drugs* and *equity and discrimination* as important issues has increased among respondents from the NT.
- Around one in five respondents identified *equity and discrimination* (20.6%) and *mental health* (19.7%) as major issues.
- Since 2013, *LGBT issues* has been increasingly identified by young people as a key issue facing the nation. Conversely, mentions of *the environment* have declined over this period.

Gender differences

There were some notable differences in the issues identified as the most important in Australia today by male and female respondents from the NT. While *alcohol and drugs* and *equity and discrimination* were identified among the top three issues by both males and females, the other issues making up their top three differed. For females, *alcohol and drugs* was the number one issue, followed by *mental health* and then *equity and discrimination*. For males the top issue this year was *alcohol and drugs*, followed by *homelessness/housing* and then *equity and discrimination* and *employment* (in equal third position).

- Around four in ten female and male respondents from the NT (41.9% and 38.6% respectively) identified *alcohol and drugs* as a major issue facing Australia today.
- A greater proportion of females than males identified *mental health* (23.6% compared with 11.4%) and similar proportions of both females and males identified *equity and discrimination* (20.9% compared with 20.0%) as important national issues.
- Conversely, a greater proportion of males than females identified *homelessness/housing* (22.9% compared with 10.8%) and *employment* (20.0% compared with 7.4%) as important issues.

Table 5.6: Most important issues in Australia today

	National %	NT 2015 %	Female %	Male %	NT 2014 %	NT 2013 %
Alcohol and drugs	27.0	40.8	41.9	38.6	36.2	22.9
Equity and discrimination	25.0	20.6	20.9	20.0	12.1	10.4
Mental health	14.9	19.7	23.6	11.4	23.5	16.7
Homelessness/housing	7.8	14.7	10.8	22.9	15.4	5.2
Crime, safety and violence	10.1	14.2	16.2	10.0	7.4	9.4
Education	12.2	13.8	15.5	10.0	19.5	16.7
Politics	16.1	12.8	10.1	18.6	12.8	20.8
Population issues	15.3	12.4	13.5	10.0	12.1	21.9
Employment	12.7	11.5	7.4	20.0	15.4	12.5
The economy and financial matters	18.9	11.5	9.5	15.7	11.4	19.8
Bullying	9.3	10.6	10.1	11.4	10.7	9.4
International relations	13.4	8.7	10.1	5.7	0.7	2.1
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues	4.3	7.8	8.1	7.1	6.0	12.5
Health	9.5	7.3	8.1	5.7	5.4	10.4
Relationships	2.6	6.9	6.1	8.6	10.7	2.1
The environment	12.8	6.9	7.4	5.7	8.7	11.5
LGBT issues	13.2	6.4	6.1	7.1	4.7	2.1

Note: Items are listed in order of State frequency.

What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities that they have been involved in over the past year from the list shown in Table 5.7. The top activity for young people from the NT, as it was nationally, was *sports (as a participant)*. This was also the top activity for young people from the NT in 2014 and 2013. The second top activity for NT respondents was *arts/cultural/music activities* followed by *sports (as a spectator)*. Significant proportions of young people reported involvement in each of the activities listed over the past year.

- *Sports (as a participant)*, *arts/cultural/music activities* and *sports (as a spectator)* were the three most popular activities for young people from the NT in 2015.
- Six in ten respondents indicated that they had participated in *volunteer work* (60.2%).
- Around half of young people reported participation in *student leadership activities* (48.1%) and *youth groups and clubs* (45.3%).
- Around one third of young people from the NT had participated in *religious groups or activities* (34.3%) and *environmental groups or activities* (33.0%) over the past year.

Gender differences

As shown in Table 5.7 the top activity for both genders was consistent with NT results, although a greater proportion of male respondents than female respondents were involved in *sports (as a participant)*. The second top activity for females in the NT was *volunteer work* followed by *arts/cultural/music activities*, while the second top activity for males from the NT was *sports (as a spectator)* followed by *arts/cultural/music activities*.

- 79.3% of male respondents and 64.3% of female respondents were involved in *sports (as a participant)* over the past year.
- A larger proportion of male than female respondents were involved in *sports (as a spectator)* (67.1% compared with 56.8%).
- A higher proportion of female than male respondents were involved with *volunteer work* (63.9% compared with 53.2%) and *arts/cultural/music activities* (62.3% compared with 60.3%).

Table 5.7: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	National %	NT 2015 %	Female %	Male %	NT 2014 %	NT 2013 %
Sports (as a participant)	74.3	69.8	64.3	79.3	66.2	63.4
Arts/cultural/music activities	50.7	61.6	62.3	60.3	51.0	59.0
Sports (as a spectator)	67.4	60.6	56.8	67.1	62.8	60.4
Volunteer work	51.3	60.2	63.9	53.2	52.3	54.9
Student leadership activities	40.0	48.1	45.5	52.6	45.2	52.4
Youth groups and clubs	33.1	45.3	41.5	51.9	53.1	42.2
Religious groups or activities	30.8	34.3	29.1	43.4	24.1	31.3
Environmental groups or activities	22.0	33.0	32.6	33.8	34.5	32.7
Political groups or organisations	7.7	17.1	14.3	21.9	23.7	16.8

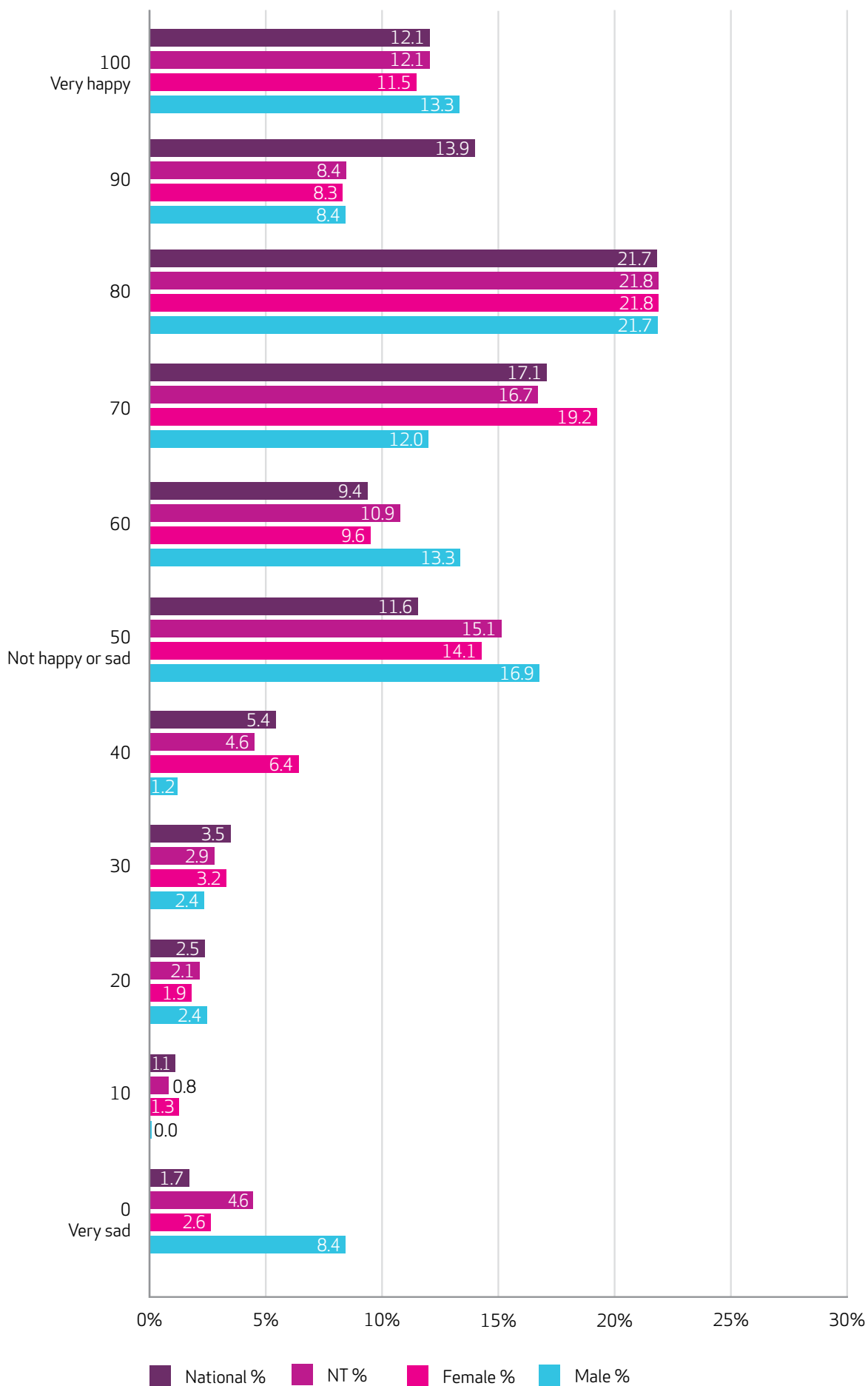
Note: Items are listed in order of State frequency.

How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being *very sad*, 5 *not happy or sad* and 10 *very happy*. In line with recommendations from the authors of this question¹, responses were standardised on a scale of 0 – 100, with 100 being the happiest. As Figure 5.8 shows, the majority of young people from the NT (59.0%) responded in the range 70 to 100, indicating that they felt positive overall about their lives. This is consistent with the national results. Responses were similar for both males and females, although a greater proportion of male than female respondents indicated that they felt *very happy* with their lives as a whole (13.3% compared with 11.5%).

¹ Cummins, R.A., & Lau, A.L.D., 2005, *Personal Wellbeing Index – School Children (PWI-SC) (English)*, Manual, 3rd Edition.

Figure 5.8: How happy young people are



How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked how positive they felt about the future, with responses rated on a 5 point scale from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 5.8 shows that compared to 2014 and 2013 NT results there has been a slight increase in those feeling *neither positive nor negative* about the future. Overall, around one in ten young people from the NT felt *very negative* or *negative* about the future.

- Around six in ten respondents from the NT felt either *positive* (47.6%) or *very positive* (13.1%) about the future.
- Almost three in ten respondents (28.8%) felt *neither positive nor negative* about the future.
- 6.1% of respondents felt *negative* about the future and 4.4% felt *very negative*.
- Males and females from the NT were similar in terms of their feelings about the future. A larger proportion of male than female respondents, however, indicated feeling *very positive* (19.5% compared with 9.9% for females).

Table 5.8: Feelings about the future

	National %	NT 2015 %	Female %	Male %	NT 2014 %	NT 2013 %
Very positive	15.0	13.1	9.9	19.5	15.8	22.4
Positive	46.8	47.6	52.0	39.0	43.0	40.2
Neither positive nor negative	28.2	28.8	29.6	27.3	24.2	18.7
Negative	7.5	6.1	6.6	5.2	9.7	2.8
Very negative	2.5	4.4	2.0	9.1	7.3	15.9

Queensland



Profile of respondents

In total, 4,109 young people from Queensland (QLD) aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2015*.

Gender breakdown

Six in ten (59.3%) respondents from Queensland were female and 40.7% were male.

Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 227 (5.6%) respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 169 (4.2%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 32 (0.8%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.6% identified as both). A higher proportion of male than female respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (6.2% compared with 5.2%).

Language background other than English

A total of 703 (17.4%) respondents from Queensland stated that they were born overseas and 726 (17.9%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 50 languages spoken at home in Queensland, the most common were (in order of frequency): Chinese, Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese and Cantonese.

Disability

A total of 237 (5.8%) respondents from Queensland indicated that they had a disability, with a greater proportion of males (7.6%) than females (4.6%) reporting a disability. The most frequently cited disabilities in Queensland were (in order of frequency): autism, learning disability, physical disability and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD).

Detailed results

Education

As indicated in Table 6.1, 94.5% of respondents from Queensland were studying full-time. A slightly greater proportion of female than male respondents reported that they were studying full-time (96.0% compared with 92.3% respectively), while a slightly greater proportion of males (4.9%) than females (2.5%) reported not studying at all.

Respondents who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in previous years, the majority of respondents from Queensland reported that they were either *very satisfied* (17.9%) or *satisfied* (57.6%) with their studies. Less than one in twenty were *very dissatisfied* or *dissatisfied* (1.0% and 3.9% respectively). As shown in Table 6.2, similar proportions of females and males from Queensland reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their studies (17.6% and 59.1% of females and 18.4% and 55.5% of males respectively).

Table 6.1: Participation in education

	National %	QLD %	Female %	Male %
Studying full-time	94.0	94.5	96.0	92.3
Studying part-time	2.6	2.0	1.5	2.8
Not studying	3.5	3.5	2.5	4.9

Table 6.2: Satisfaction with studies

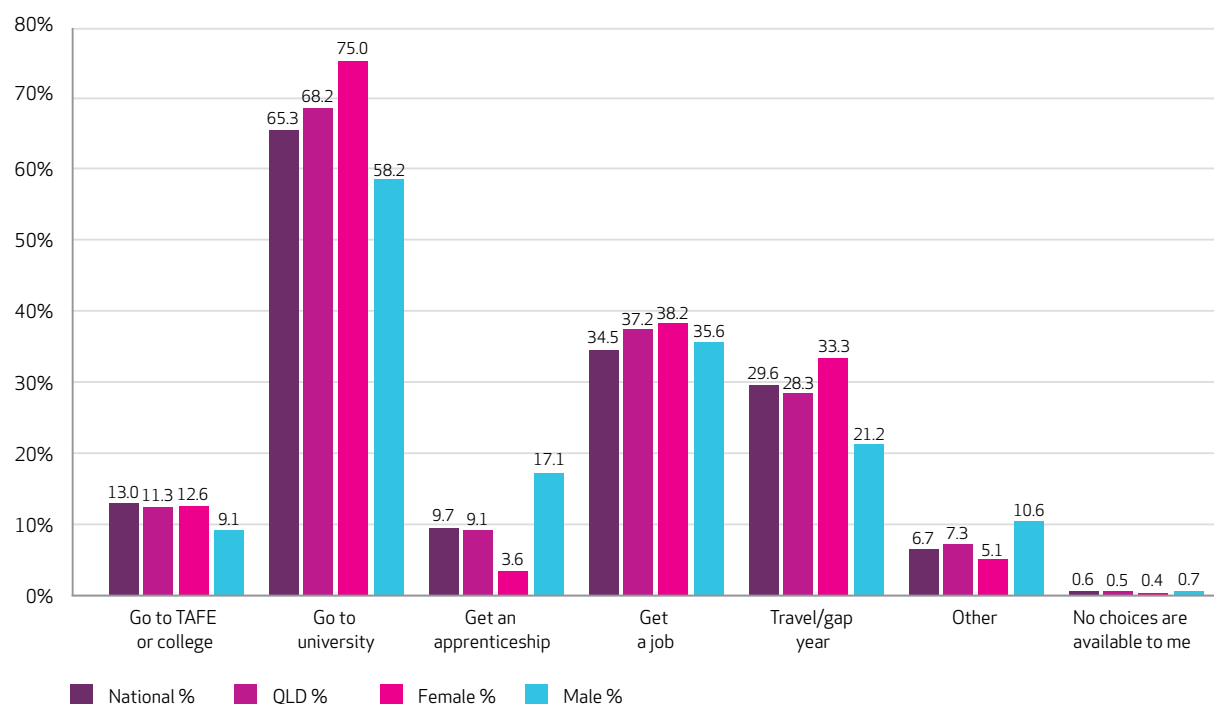
	National %	QLD 2015 %	Female %	Male %	QLD 2014 %	QLD 2013 %
Very satisfied	16.0	17.9	17.6	18.4	16.9	22.6
Satisfied	56.7	57.6	59.1	55.5	59.7	55.5
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	21.5	19.6	19.1	20.3	19.1	18.6
Dissatisfied	4.4	3.9	3.4	4.5	3.4	2.8
Very dissatisfied	1.3	1.0	0.8	1.3	0.8	0.6

In 2015, respondents who reported they were studying full-time or part-time were asked whether or not they were still at school. The majority of respondents (98.4%) from Queensland stated they were still at school. Male and female respondents indicated that they were still at school in similar proportions (98.8% compared with 98.1% respectively). Of those who were still at school in Queensland, 98.6% stated that they intended to complete Year 12. Twice the proportion of males than females indicated that they did not intend to complete Year 12 (2.1% compared with 0.8% respectively).

Respondents who were still at school were also asked what they were planning to do after leaving school. Figure 6.1 shows that just over two thirds of respondents from Queensland planned to go to university after school (68.2%). Many respondents also indicated plans to get a job (37.2%) and to travel or go on a gap year (28.3%) after school. Overall, 11.3% of young people from Queensland planned to attend TAFE or college and 9.1% reported plans to undertake an apprenticeship. A small proportion of respondents (0.5%) indicated that they felt no choices were available to them after they left school.

While going to university was the most frequently chosen option among both male and female respondents from Queensland, a much greater proportion of females than males stated that they planned to do so (75.0% compared with 58.2% respectively). A greater proportion of female respondents also reported plans to travel or go on a gap year after school (33.3% compared with 21.2%). A greater proportion of males indicated that they were planning to undertake an apprenticeship (17.1% compared with 3.6% of females).

Figure 6.1: Plans after leaving school



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Employment

Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who answered that they had paid employment were asked to specify how many hours they worked per week, on average. Table 6.3 shows participation in paid employment amongst respondents from Queensland. In line with the national data, only a small proportion (0.4%) of respondents who reported paid employment were employed full-time. However, given the percentage of respondents who were still at school this is not surprising. Almost four in ten (39.4%) respondents from Queensland reported part-time employment. Six in ten Queensland respondents reported that they were not in paid employment, with 36.7% looking for work and 23.6% not looking for work.

Similar proportions of male and female respondents from Queensland reported full-time employment (0.6% compared with 0.3% respectively), while a greater proportion of female respondents were employed part-time (44.6% compared with 31.8%). Conversely, a greater proportion of male than female respondents were looking for work (40.3% compared with 34.0%).

Table 6.3: Participation in paid employment

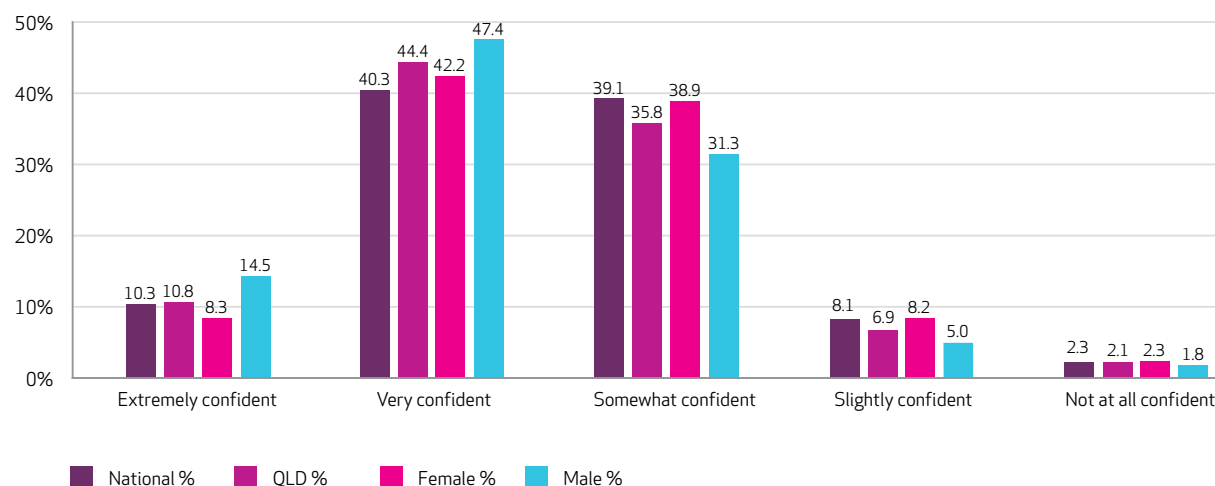
	National %	QLD %	Female %	Male %
Employed full-time	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.6
Employed part-time	38.8	39.4	44.6	31.8
Not in paid employment, looking for work	35.9	36.7	34.0	40.3
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	24.8	23.6	21.2	27.3

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

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

In 2015, respondents were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. Responses for this question were rated on a five point scale from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. Around half of respondents from QLD indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve study/work goals, with 10.8% indicating that they were *extremely confident* and 44.4% indicating that they were *very confident*. However, around one in ten young people from QLD were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals, with 6.9% being *slightly confident* and 2.1% *not at all confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. A higher proportion of male than female respondents reported feeling *extremely confident* or *very confident* (14.5% and 47.4% of males compared with 8.3% and 42.2% of females respectively).

Figure 6.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals



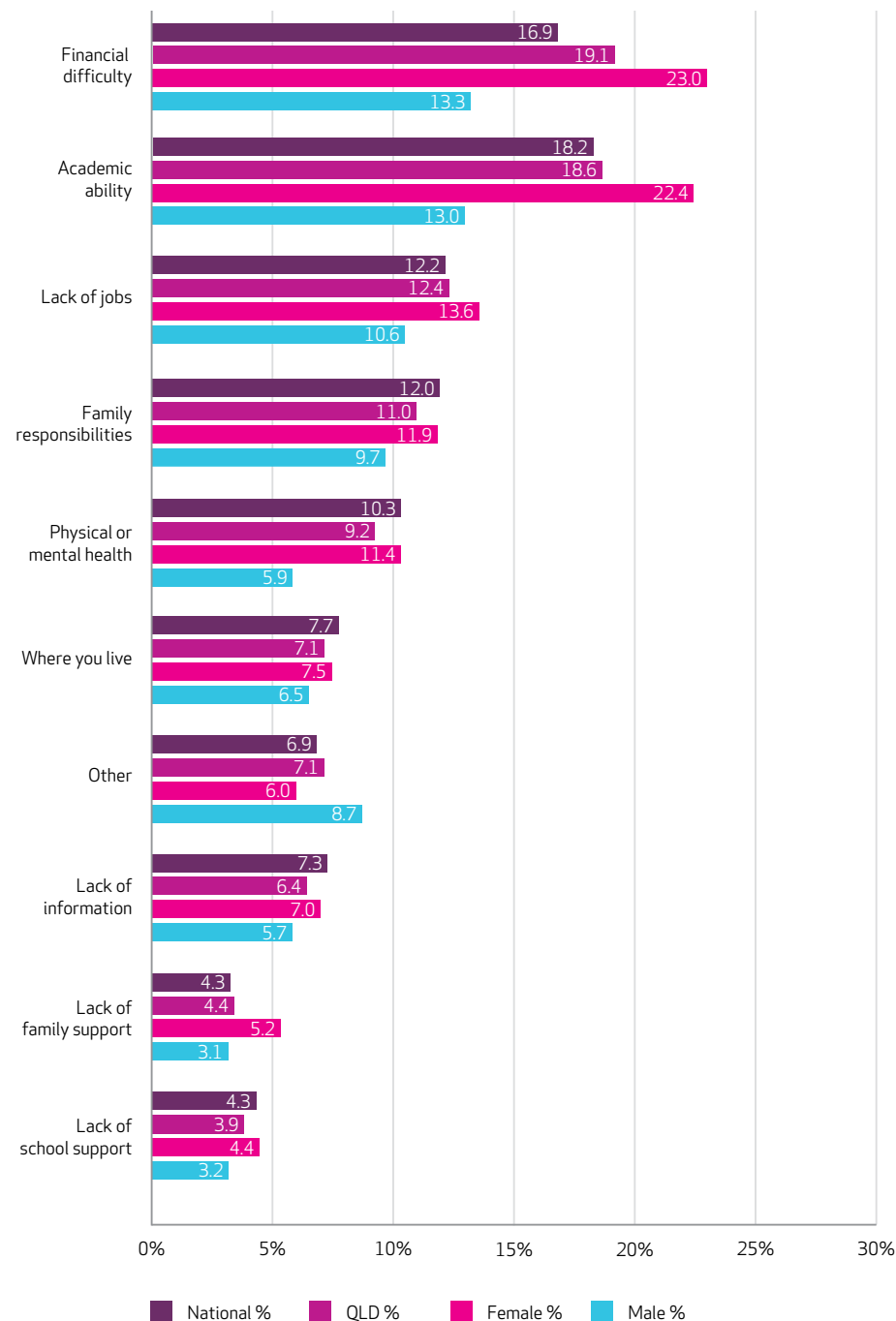
Barriers to the achievement of young people's study/work goals after school

Young people in 2015 were asked whether they felt there were any barriers which may impact on the achievement of their study/work goals after school. Just over half (51.4%) of respondents from Queensland indicated that they felt there would be barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals, with a slightly greater proportion of females (55.0%) than males (46.0%) reporting the presence of these barriers.

Respondents who indicated the presence of barriers were asked to indicate from a number of items which barriers they saw as preventing them from achieving their goals after school. Figure 6.3 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated each item as a barrier. In Queensland, the top three barriers young people saw impacting the achievement of their study/work goals after school were *financial difficulty*, *academic ability* and *lack of jobs*.

- *Financial difficulty*, *academic ability* and a *lack of jobs* were the three most commonly cited barriers to the achievement of young people's study/work goals after school (19.1%, 18.6% and 12.4% respectively).
- Around one in ten respondents from Queensland indicated that they saw *family responsibilities* and *physical or mental health* as barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals after school.

Figure 6.3: Barriers to the achievement of study/work goals after school



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

Gender differences

As shown in Figure 6.3, the top three barriers identified by both genders to the achievement of their study/work goals after school were consistent with Queensland results. A greater proportion of females than males from Queensland indicated that they saw these, along with many of the other items, as barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals.

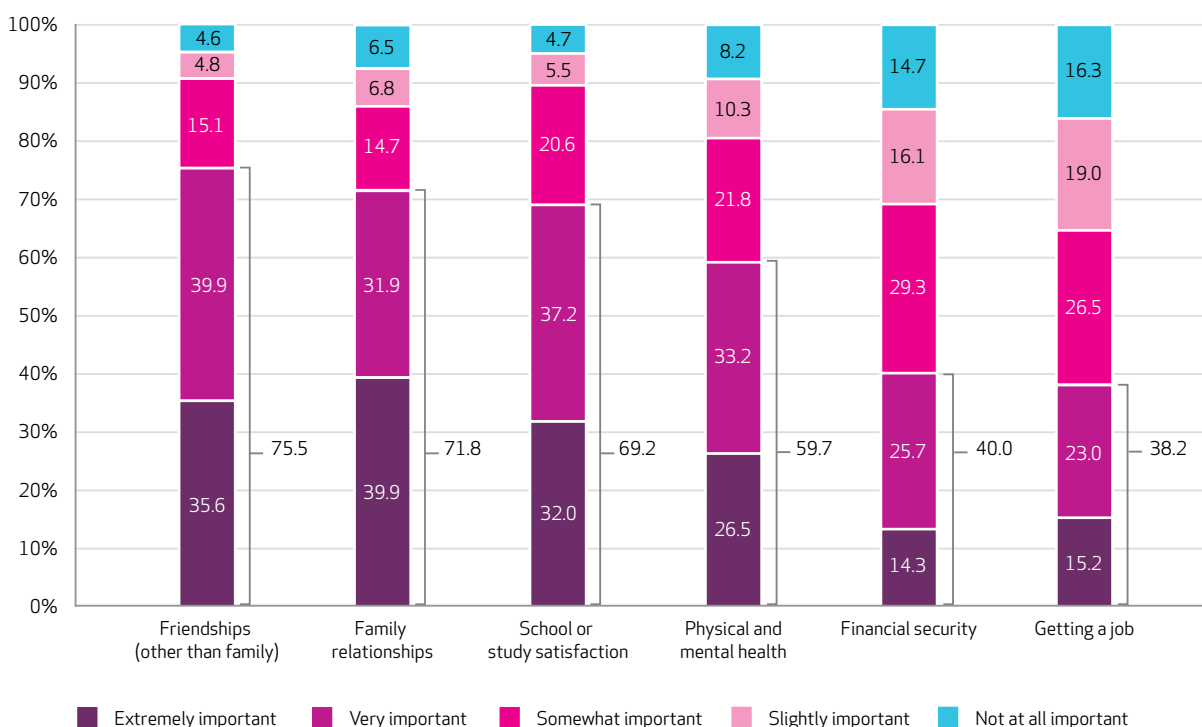
- Almost a quarter (23.0%) of female respondents and 13.3% of male respondents indicated that *financial difficulties* were a barrier.
- A higher proportion of female than male respondents indicated that *academic ability* and a *lack of jobs* were barriers to the achievement of future study/work goals (22.4% and 13.6% of females compared with 13.0% and 10.6% of males respectively).

What do young people value?

In 2015 young people were again asked how much they valued *family relationships*, *financial security*, *friendships*, *getting a job*, *physical and mental health* and *school or study satisfaction*. Responses for these items were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely important* to *not at all important*. In Figure 6.4 the items were ranked in order of importance by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely important* or *very important* for each item. In line with both the national data and 2014 findings, the three most highly valued items for respondents from Queensland this year were *friendships*, *family relationships* and *school or study satisfaction*. The next most valued item for Queensland respondents was *physical and mental health* (again consistent with the national results).

- *Friendships* were highly valued by 75.5% of respondents from Queensland (*extremely important*: 35.6%; *very important*: 39.9%). *Family relationships* were also valued highly by 71.8% of respondents (*extremely important*: 39.9%; *very important*: 31.9%).
- Almost seven out of ten respondents highly valued *school or study satisfaction* (*extremely important*: 32.0%; *very important*: 37.2%) and around six in ten highly valued *physical and mental health* (*extremely important*: 26.5%; *very important*: 33.2%).
- Around four in ten Queensland respondents placed a high value on *financial security* (*extremely important*: 14.3%; *very important*: 25.7%) and *getting a job* (*extremely important*: 15.2%; *very important*: 23.0%).

Figure 6.4: What young people value



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

Gender differences

Friendships was ranked as the most highly valued item by both males and females in Queensland, as shown in Table 6.4. The second most valued item for female respondents was *school or study satisfaction*, followed by *family relationships*. For males, *family relationships* was the second most valued item, followed by *school or study satisfaction*. The proportion of female respondents who highly valued these, and many of the other items, was higher than the proportion of males.

- *Friendships* were highly valued by 79.0% of females (*extremely important*: 39.0%; *very important*: 40.0%) compared with 70.6% of males (*extremely important*: 30.7%; *very important*: 39.9%).

- *School or study satisfaction* was highly valued by 76.2% of females (*extremely important*: 38.0%; *very important*: 38.2%) compared with 59.1% of males (*extremely important*: 23.2%; *very important*: 35.9%).
- 76.1% of females highly valued *family relationships* (*extremely important*: 43.7%; *very important*: 32.4%) compared with 65.8% of males (*extremely important*: 34.4%; *very important*: 31.4%).
- *Physical and mental health* was highly valued by 62.7% of females (*extremely important*: 28.3%; *very important*: 34.4%) and 55.3% of males (*extremely important*: 23.9%; *very important*: 31.4%) in Queensland.

Table 6.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	39.0	40.0	13.8	4.2	3.0
Family relationships	43.7	32.4	13.8	6.3	3.8
School or study satisfaction	38.0	38.2	16.8	4.3	2.7
Physical and mental health	28.3	34.4	21.6	9.4	6.2
Financial security	14.5	28.1	29.9	16.2	11.3
Getting a job	14.6	23.7	28.0	18.8	14.8
Males	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	30.7	39.9	16.9	5.6	6.9
Family relationships	34.4	31.4	16.1	7.6	10.5
School or study satisfaction	23.2	35.9	26.2	7.1	7.6
Physical and mental health	23.9	31.4	22.0	11.5	11.2
Financial security	13.9	22.2	28.6	15.8	19.5
Getting a job	16.0	21.9	24.3	19.2	18.5

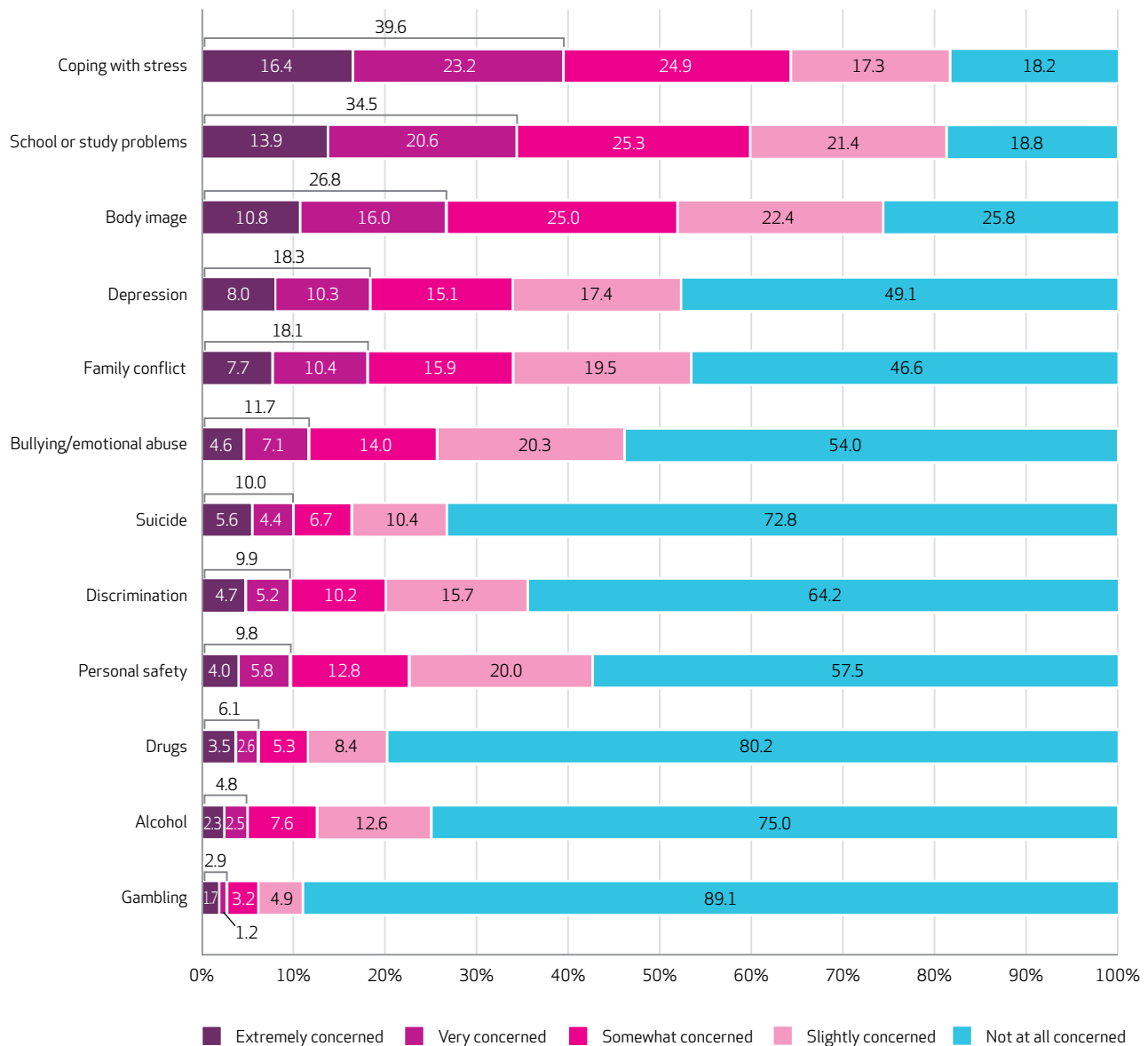
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of State frequency.

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Respondents were asked to rate how concerned they were about a number of issues, shown in Figure 6.5. Responses were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*. The items were ranked in order of concern by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* for each item. The top three issues of concern for young people from Queensland were *coping with stress*, *school or study problems* and *body image*. These were the same top three issues identified at the national level.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with 39.6% of respondents from Queensland indicating that they were either *extremely concerned* (16.4%) or *very concerned* (23.2%) about this issue.
- *School or study problems* was a major concern for 34.5% (*extremely concerned*: 13.9%; *very concerned*: 20.6%) of young people.
- *Body image* was also an important issue of concern for 26.8% of respondents (*extremely concerned*: 10.8%; *very concerned*: 16.0%).
- Around one in five respondents were either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* about *depression* and *family conflict*.

Figure 6.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item.

Gender differences

Coping with stress and *school or study problems* were the top two issues of concern for both males and females as highlighted in Table 6.5. The order of the top two issues of concern differed, however, with males indicating that *school or study problems* was their number one concern, while for females the top issue of concern was *coping with stress*. The third highest issue of concern for females was *body image*, while for males the number three issue was *depression*. The proportion of females concerned about all of these (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males

- For over half of all females *coping with stress* was a major concern (*extremely concerned*: 22.9%; *very concerned*: 28.6%), compared with around one in five of all males (*extremely concerned*: 6.8%; *very concerned*: 15.2%).
- Females were also more concerned about *school or study problems* with 42.8% (*extremely concerned*: 17.6%; *very concerned*: 25.2%) indicating that this was a major concern, compared with 22.4% of males (*extremely concerned*: 8.4%; *very concerned*: 14.0%).
- Concerns about *body image* were considerably higher among females, with 37.2% (*extremely concerned*: 15.3%; *very concerned*: 21.9%) indicating that body image was a major concern, compared with 11.5% (*extremely concerned*: 4.1%; *very concerned*: 7.4%) of males.
- For 22.7% of females (*extremely concerned*: 9.8%; *very concerned*: 12.9%) and 11.9% of males (*extremely concerned*: 5.3%; *very concerned*: 6.6%) *depression* was a major concern.

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

Females	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	22.9	28.6	25.6	14.3	8.7
School or study problems	17.6	25.2	25.9	19.0	12.2
Body image	15.3	21.9	27.8	20.4	14.6
Depression	9.8	12.9	17.4	17.9	42.0
Family conflict	9.5	13.1	18.2	20.2	39.0
Bullying/emotional abuse	5.1	8.3	16.1	22.8	47.6
Suicide	6.4	5.5	8.1	12.7	67.3
Discrimination	5.0	6.3	11.3	16.6	60.9
Personal safety	3.7	7.2	14.7	21.8	52.6
Drugs	3.1	2.6	5.3	9.5	79.5
Alcohol	2.0	2.5	8.3	14.0	73.2
Gambling	1.5	0.8	2.8	4.4	90.5
Males	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	6.8	15.2	23.9	21.9	32.2
School or study problems	8.4	14.0	24.2	24.8	28.6
Body image	4.1	7.4	20.9	25.3	42.3
Depression	5.3	6.6	11.8	16.7	59.7
Family conflict	4.9	6.4	12.3	18.4	57.9
Bullying/emotional abuse	3.8	5.5	10.7	16.7	63.4
Suicide	4.5	2.7	4.7	7.1	80.9
Discrimination	4.2	3.6	8.6	14.3	69.2
Personal safety	4.4	3.7	9.9	17.2	64.8
Drugs	4.0	2.7	5.3	6.7	81.3
Alcohol	2.6	2.6	6.6	10.6	77.7
Gambling	2.0	1.7	3.8	5.5	86.9

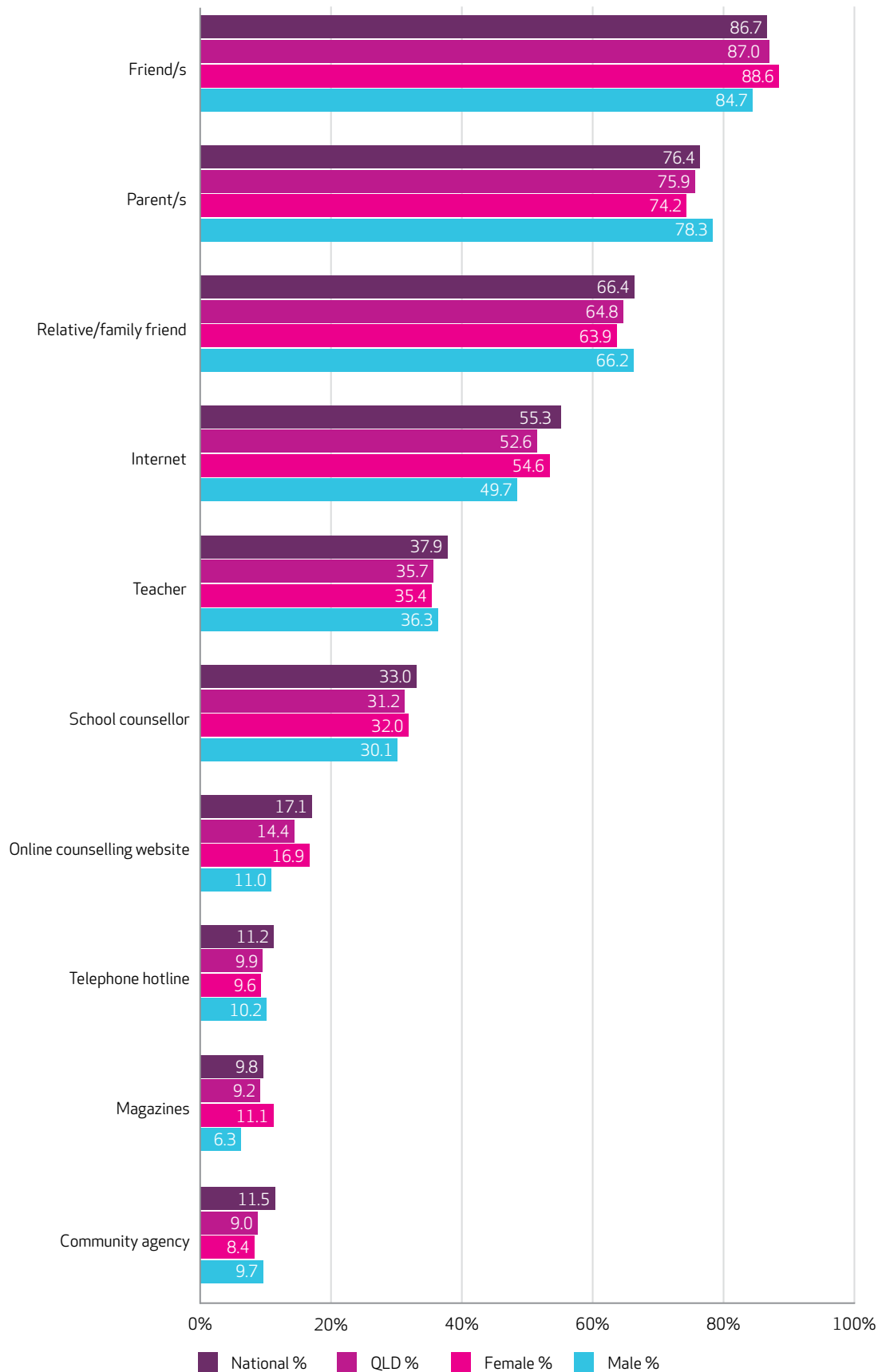
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of State frequency.

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

Young people were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 6.6 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that they would go to each source. The top three sources of help for young people in Queensland were *friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends*.

- *Friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends* were the three most commonly cited sources of help for young people (87.0%, 75.9% and 64.8% respectively).
- Over half of respondents from Queensland indicated that they would go to the *internet* for help with important issues in their lives.
- Around one third of respondents indicated that they would go to their *teacher* or *school counsellor* for help with important issues.

Figure 6.6: Where young people go for help with important issues



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

Gender differences

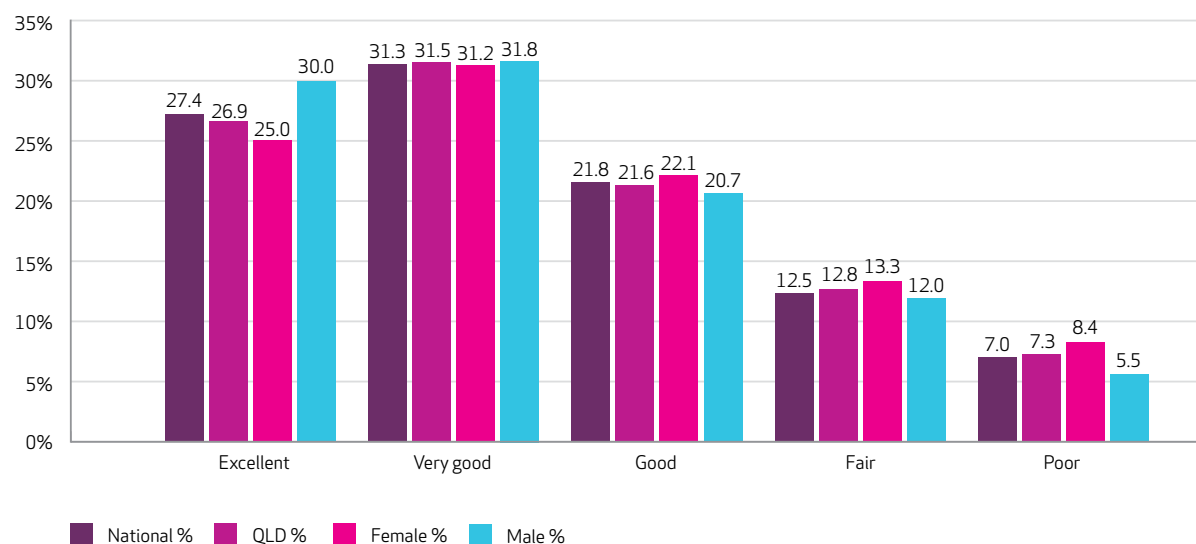
As shown in Figure 6.6, the top three sources of help for both genders were consistent with Queensland and national results. However, a greater proportion of female respondents than male respondents indicated that they would go to *friend/s* for help with important issues, while greater proportions of males would go to *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends*.

- Around nine in ten (88.6%) female respondents and 84.7% of male respondents in Queensland indicated that they would go to *friend/s* for help with important issues.
- A higher proportion of male than female respondents indicated they would go to *parent/s* (78.3% compared with 74.2%) and *relatives/family friends* (66.2% compared with 63.9%) for help.
- A greater proportion of females than males from Queensland would go to the *internet* (54.6% compared with 49.7%), *online counselling websites* (16.9% compared with 11.0%) and *magazines* (11.1% compared with 6.3%) for help with important issues in their lives.

How well do young people feel their families get along?

Respondents were asked how well they thought their family got along. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 6.7 shows that, in line with the national data, the majority of respondents from Queensland rated their family's ability to get along very positively, with 26.9% indicating that their family's ability to get along was *excellent* and 31.5% that it was *very good*. However, one in five young people did not report such a positive experience of family relationships, rating their family's ability to get along as either *fair* (12.8%) or *poor* (7.3%). A higher proportion of male respondents reported that their family's ability to get along was *excellent* (30.0% compared with 25.0% for females).

Figure 6.7: Family's ability to get along



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

Young people were asked to write down the three issues they considered were most important in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 6.6. In 2015 the top three issues identified by young people from Queensland were *alcohol and drugs*, *equity and discrimination*, and the *economy and financial matters*. These were also the top three issues identified nationally.

- Around one quarter of young people from Queensland identified *alcohol and drugs* (25.1%) and *equity and discrimination* (24.9%) as important issues in Australia today.
- Compared to the past two years, identification of *alcohol and drugs* as an important issue has increased among respondents.
- Just under one in five (18.2%) respondents identified *the economy and financial matters* and 15.5% identified *LGBT issues* as major issues.
- Since 2013, *the environment* and *international relations* have been increasingly identified by young people from Queensland as key issues facing the nation. Conversely, mentions of *the economy and financial issues*, *population issues* and *crime, safety and violence* have all declined over this period.

Gender differences

There were some notable differences in the issues identified as the most important in Australia today by male and female respondents from Queensland. While *alcohol and drugs* and *equity and discrimination* were identified among the top three issues by both males and females, the other issues making up their top three differed. For females, *equity and discrimination* was the number one issue, followed by *alcohol and drugs* and then *mental health*. For males the top issue this year was *alcohol and drugs*, followed by *the economy and financial matters* and then *equity and discrimination*.

- Three in ten male respondents and one in five female respondents from Queensland (30.0% and 21.8% respectively) identified *alcohol and drugs* as a major issue facing Australia today.
- A greater proportion of females than males identified *equity and discrimination* (27.7% compared with 20.6%) and *mental health* (19.3% compared with 8.9%) as important national issues.
- Conversely, a greater proportion of males than females identified *the economy and financial matters* (21.5% compared with 16.2%) and *politics* (20.0% compared with 11.5%) as important issues.

Table 6.6: Most important issues in Australia today

	National %	QLD 2015 %	Female %	Male %	QLD 2014 %	QLD 2013 %
Alcohol and drugs	27.0	25.1	21.8	30.0	20.6	20.2
Equity and discrimination	25.0	24.9	27.7	20.6	20.6	22.1
The economy and financial matters	18.9	18.2	16.2	21.5	27.2	27.7
LGBT issues	13.2	15.5	19.0	9.9	5.8	7.8
Mental health	14.9	15.1	19.3	8.9	13.3	14.5
Politics	16.1	14.8	11.5	20.0	22.2	17.8
Population issues	15.3	14.7	14.3	15.1	15.5	16.5
The environment	12.8	14.0	15.5	11.8	12.8	12.3
International relations	13.4	12.7	10.7	15.7	3.7	2.4
Education	12.2	12.2	11.9	12.7	14.5	13.7
Employment	12.7	12.1	10.5	14.5	10.4	16.0
Health	9.5	10.5	9.9	11.4	17.1	12.8
Crime, safety and violence	10.1	9.8	10.9	8.1	11.1	12.1
Bullying	9.3	9.4	10.9	7.0	14.0	12.3
Homelessness/housing	7.8	7.6	10.2	3.7	5.8	8.8

Note: Items are listed in order of State frequency.

What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities that they have been involved in over the past year from the list shown in Table 6.7. The top three activities for young people from Queensland, as they were nationally, were *sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *volunteer work*. These were also the top three activities for young people from Queensland in 2014. Significant proportions of young people reported involvement in each of the activities listed over the past year.

- *Sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *volunteer work* were the three most popular activities for young people from Queensland in 2015.
- Just over half of respondents indicated that they had participated in *arts/cultural/music activities* (53.3%).
- Over four in ten young people reported participation in *student leadership activities* (45.2%) and around three in ten had participated in *youth groups and clubs* (31.4%) and *religious groups or activities* (30.5%).
- Just under one quarter of young people from Queensland (23.1%) had participated in *environmental groups or activities* over the past year.

Gender differences

As shown in Table 6.7 the top two activities for both genders were consistent with Queensland and national results, although a greater proportion of male respondents than female respondents were involved in *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)*. The third top activity for females in Queensland was *arts/cultural/music activities*, while the third top activity for males from Queensland was *volunteer work*.

- 77.0% of male respondents and 72.3% of female respondents were involved in *sports (as a participant)* over the past year.
- A larger proportion of male than female respondents were involved in *sports (as a spectator)* (73.8% compared with 67.4%).
- A much higher proportion of female than male respondents were involved with *arts/cultural/music activities* (61.9% compared with 40.0%).
- Despite *volunteer work* ranking higher up the list for male respondents, overall a greater proportion of female than male respondents from Queensland were involved in *volunteer work* and *student leadership activities* (58.4% and 50.0% compared with 49.8% and 38.4% respectively).

Table 6.7: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	National %	QLD 2015 %	Female %	Male %	QLD 2014 %	QLD 2013 %
Sports (as a participant)	74.3	74.2	72.3	77.0	76.8	79.1
Sports (as a spectator)	67.4	70.0	67.4	73.8	72.0	73.3
Volunteer work	51.3	54.8	58.4	49.8	58.0	63.8
Arts/cultural/music activities	50.7	53.3	61.9	40.0	55.9	63.9
Student leadership activities	40.0	45.2	50.0	38.4	47.5	48.7
Youth groups and clubs	33.1	31.4	32.0	30.4	27.9	34.4
Religious groups or activities	30.8	30.5	33.6	26.1	23.9	35.3
Environmental groups or activities	22.0	23.1	23.8	22.3	24.2	25.1
Political groups or organisations	7.7	7.5	7.4	7.5	7.1	6.6

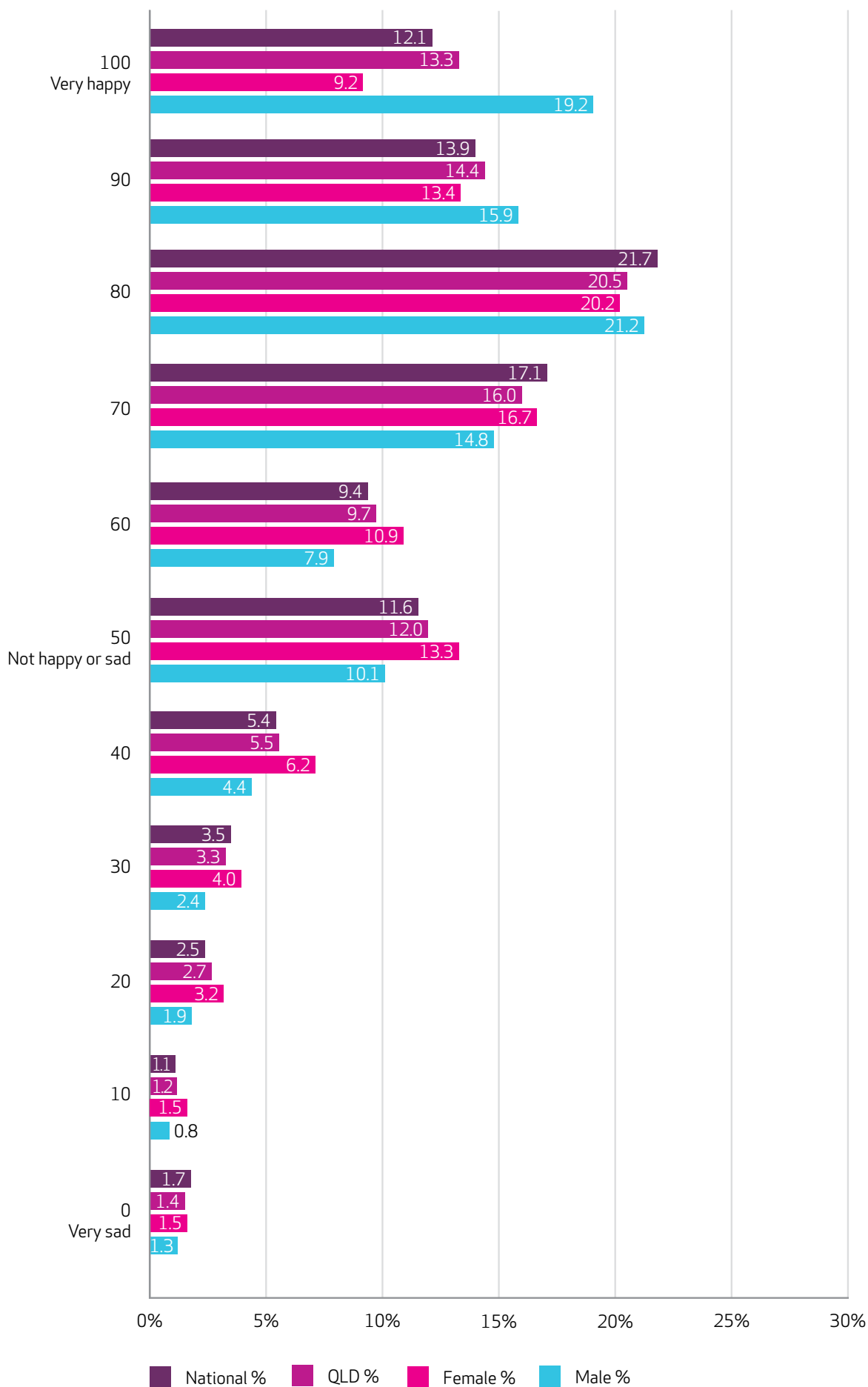
Note: Items are listed in order of State frequency.

How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being *very sad*, 5 *not happy or sad* and 10 *very happy*. In line with recommendations from the authors of this question¹, responses were standardised on a scale of 0 – 100, with 100 being the happiest. As Figure 6.8 shows, the majority of young people from Queensland (64.2%) responded in the range 70 to 100, indicating that they felt positive overall about their lives. This is consistent with the national results. Responses were similar for both males and females, although a greater proportion of male than female respondents indicated that they felt *very happy* with their lives as a whole (19.2% compared with 9.2%).

¹ Cummins, R.A., & Lau, A.L.D., 2005, *Personal Wellbeing Index – School Children (PWI-SC) (English)*, Manual, 3rd Edition.

Figure 6.8: How happy young people are



How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked how positive they felt about the future, with responses rated on a 5 point scale from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 6.8 shows that compared to 2014 and 2013 results there has been a slight decrease in the proportion of Queensland respondents feeling *very positive* about the future. Overall, less than one in ten young people from Queensland felt *very negative* or *negative* about the future.

- Around six in ten respondents from Queensland felt either *positive* (47.1%) or *very positive* (15.6%) about the future.
- Just under three in ten respondents (27.6%) felt *neither positive nor negative* about the future.
- 7.5% of respondents felt *negative* about the future and 2.2% felt *very negative*.
- Males and females from Queensland were similar in terms of their feelings about the future. A larger proportion of male than female respondents, however, indicated feeling *very positive* (19.5% compared with 13.0% for females).

Table 6.8: Feelings about the future

	National %	QLD 2015 %	Female %	Male %	QLD 2014 %	QLD 2013 %
Very positive	15.0	15.6	13.0	19.5	16.4	20.0
Positive	46.8	47.1	47.4	46.6	51.1	48.7
Neither positive nor negative	28.2	27.6	29.7	24.4	24.1	24.5
Negative	7.5	7.5	7.7	7.3	6.4	5.3
Very negative	2.5	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.0	1.5

South Australia



Profile of respondents

In total, 2,758 young people from South Australia (SA) aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2015*.

Gender breakdown

Over half (53.6%) of respondents from SA were female and 46.4% were male.

Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 137 (5.0%) respondents from SA identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 123 (4.5%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 10 (0.4%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.1% identified as both). A slightly higher proportion of male than female respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (5.3% compared with 4.8%).

Language background other than English

A total of 554 (20.4%) respondents from SA stated that they were born overseas and 644 (23.7%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 50 languages spoken at home in SA, the most common were (in order of frequency): Vietnamese, Chinese, Mandarin, Italian and Cantonese.

Disability

A total of 168 (6.2%) respondents from SA indicated that they had a disability, with a greater proportion of males (8.2%) than females (4.4%) reporting a disability. The most frequently cited disabilities in SA were (in order of frequency): learning disability, autism and blindness or vision impairment.

Detailed results

Education

As indicated in Table 7.1, 93.1% of respondents from SA were studying full-time. Equal proportions of both female and male respondents reported studying full time (both at 93.1%), while similar proportions of males and females from SA reported not studying at all (2.9% compared to 2.6% respectively).

Respondents who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in previous years, the majority of respondents from SA reported that they were either *very satisfied* (16.2%) or *satisfied* (56.2%) with their studies. Around one in twenty were *very dissatisfied* or *dissatisfied* (1.3% and 4.2% respectively). As shown in Table 7.2, a slightly greater proportion of females than males reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their studies (15.2% and 58.5% of females compared with 17.4% and 53.6% of males respectively).

Table 7.1: Participation in education

	National %	SA %	Female %	Male %
Studying full-time	94.0	93.1	93.1	93.1
Studying part-time	2.6	4.1	4.3	4.0
Not studying	3.5	2.8	2.6	2.9

Table 7.2: Satisfaction with studies

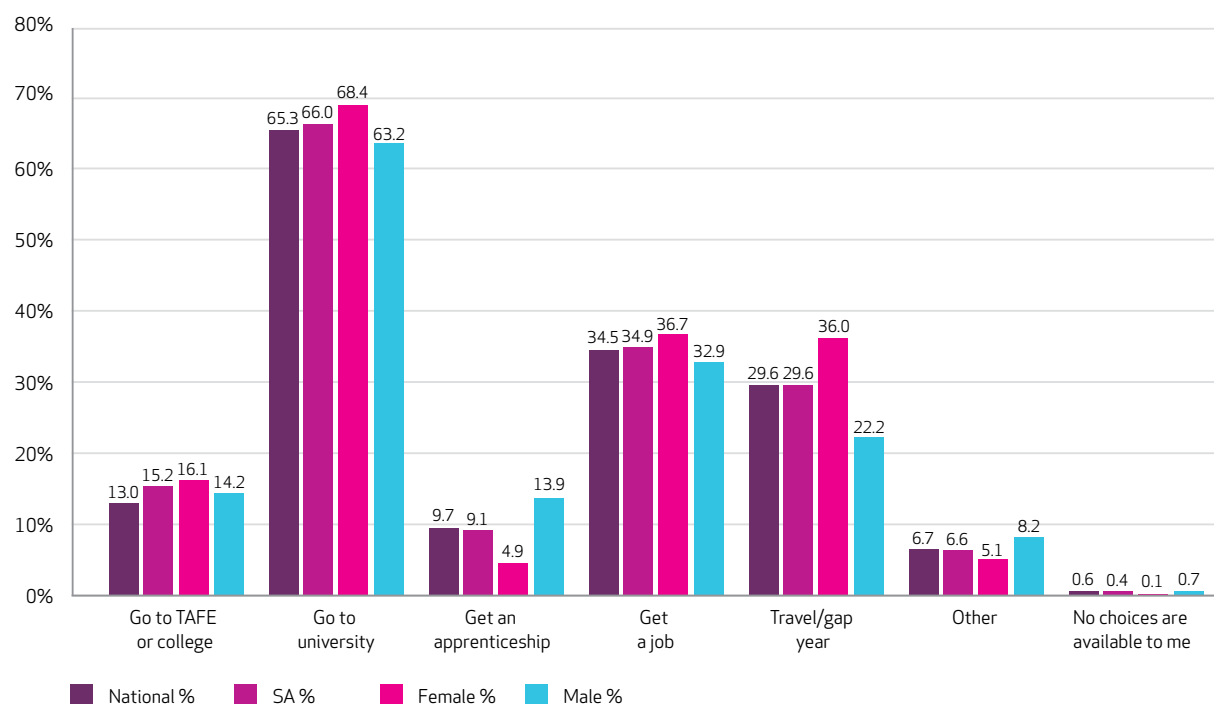
	National %	SA 2015 %	Female %	Male %	SA 2014 %	SA 2013 %
Very satisfied	16.0	16.2	15.2	17.4	14.9	15.3
Satisfied	56.7	56.2	58.5	53.6	54.9	55.1
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	21.5	22.0	21.5	22.4	23.6	23.0
Dissatisfied	4.4	4.2	3.8	4.8	4.9	4.6
Very dissatisfied	1.3	1.3	1.0	1.8	1.7	2.1

In 2015, respondents who reported they were studying full-time or part-time were asked whether or not they were still at school. The majority of respondents from SA (96.7%) stated they were still at school. A slightly greater proportion of males than females indicated that they were still at school (97.9% compared with 95.7% respectively). Of those who were still at school in SA, 96.7% stated that they intended to complete Year 12. Twice the proportion of males than females indicated that they did not intend to complete Year 12 (4.5% compared with 2.2% respectively).

Respondents who were still at school were also asked what they were planning to do after leaving school. Figure 7.1 shows that two thirds of respondents from SA planned to go to university after school (66.0%). Many respondents also indicated plans to get a job (34.9%) and to travel or go on a gap year (29.6%) after school. Overall, 15.2% of young people from SA planned to attend TAFE or college and 9.1% reported plans to undertake an apprenticeship. A small minority of respondents (0.4%) indicated that they felt no choices were available to them after they left school.

While going to university was the most frequently chosen option among both male and female respondents from SA, a higher proportion of females than males stated that they planned to do so (68.4% compared with 63.2% respectively). A greater proportion of female respondents also reported plans to travel or go on a gap year after school (36.0% compared with 22.2%). A larger proportion of males indicated that they were planning to undertake an apprenticeship (13.9% compared with 4.9% of females).

Figure 7.1: Plans after leaving school



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Employment

Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who answered that they had paid employment were asked to specify how many hours they worked per week, on average. Table 7.3 shows participation in paid employment amongst respondents from SA. In line with the national data, only a tiny minority (0.4%) of respondents who reported paid employment were employed

full-time. However, given the percentage of respondents who were still at school this is not surprising. Just over one third (34.9%) of respondents from SA reported part-time employment. Around two thirds of SA respondents reported that they were not in paid employment, with 38.2% looking for work and 26.5% not looking for work.

A slightly greater proportion of females than males from SA reported full-time employment (0.5% compared with 0.2% respectively), a slightly higher proportion of female respondents were also employed part-time (38.3% compared with 30.7%). Conversely, a slightly greater proportion of male than female respondents were looking for work (39.2% compared with 37.4%).

Table 7.3: Participation in paid employment

	National %	SA %	Female %	Male %
Employed full-time	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.2
Employed part-time	38.8	34.9	38.3	30.7
Not in paid employment, looking for work	35.9	38.2	37.4	39.2
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	24.8	26.5	23.7	29.9

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

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

In 2015, respondents were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. Responses for this question were rated on a five point scale from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. Around half of respondents from SA indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve study/work goals, with 9.1% indicating that they were *extremely confident* and 38.4% indicating that they were *very confident*. However, just over one in ten young people from SA were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals, with 9.8% being *slightly confident* and 2.4% *not at all confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. A higher proportion of male than female respondents reported feeling *extremely confident* or *very confident* (12.2% and 39.3% of males compared with 6.4% and 37.5% of females respectively).

Figure 7.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals



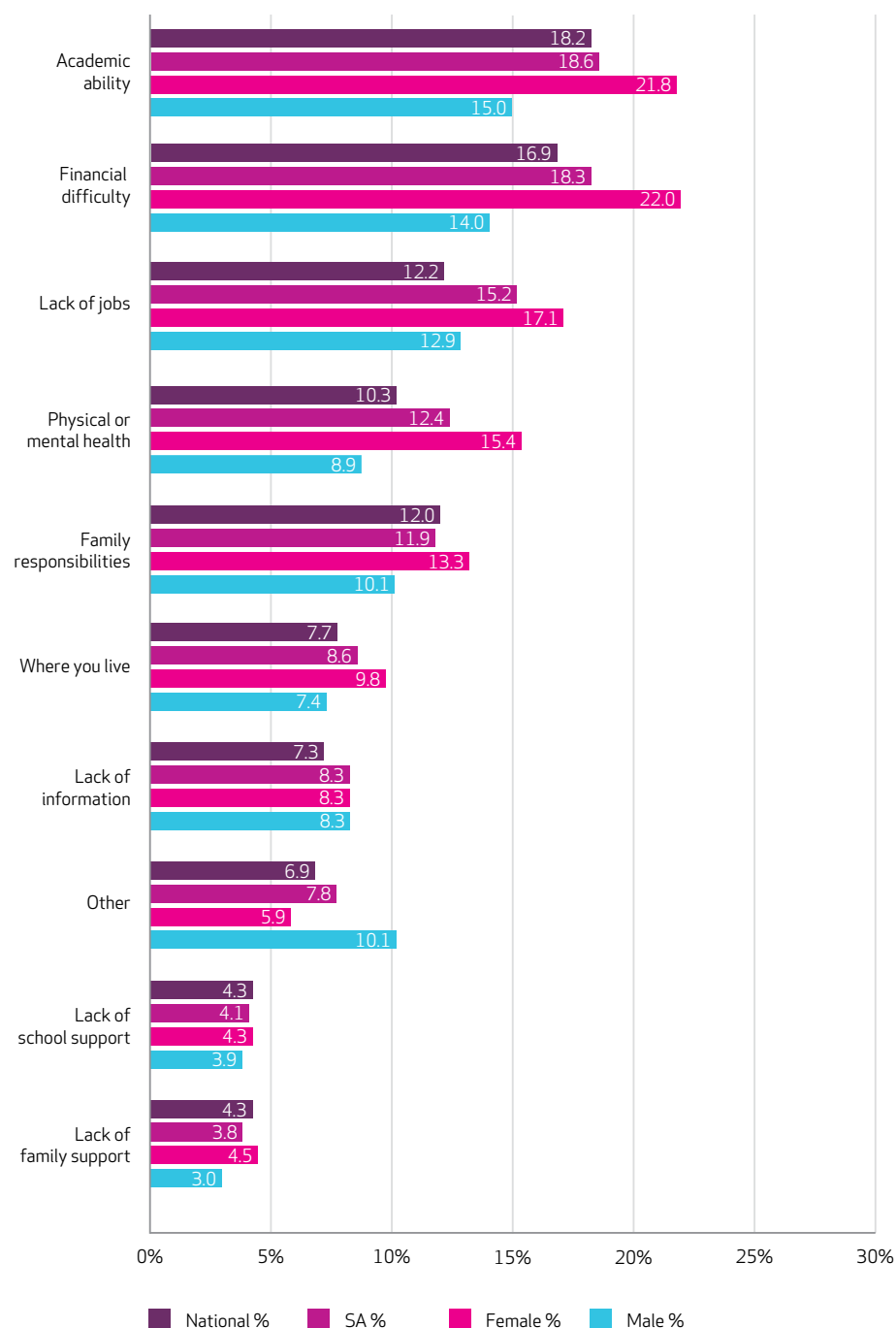
Barriers to the achievement of young people's study/work goals after school

Young people in 2015 were asked whether they felt there were any barriers which may impact on the achievement of their study/work goals after school. Over half (55.9%) of respondents from SA indicated that they felt there would be barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals, with a slightly greater proportion of females (59.6%) than males (51.8%) reporting the presence of these barriers.

Respondents who indicated the presence of barriers were asked to indicate from a number of items which barriers they saw as preventing them from achieving their goals after school. Figure 7.3 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated each item as a barrier. In SA, the top three barriers young people saw impacting the achievement of their study/work goals after school were *academic ability*, *financial difficulty* and *lack of jobs*.

- *Academic ability, financial difficulty and lack of jobs* were the three most commonly cited barriers to the achievement of young people's study/work goals after school (18.6%, 18.3% and 15.2% respectively).
- Over one in ten young people from SA indicated that they saw *physical or mental health* and *family responsibilities* as barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals after school.

Figure 7.3: Barriers to the achievement of study/work goals after school



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

Gender differences

As shown in Figure 7.3, the top three barriers identified by both genders to the achievement of their study/work goals after school were consistent with SA and national results. The order of the top two barriers differed, however, with females indicating that *financial difficulty* was their number one barrier, while for males the top barrier was *academic ability*. A greater proportion of females than males from SA indicated that they saw these, along with many of the other items, as barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals.

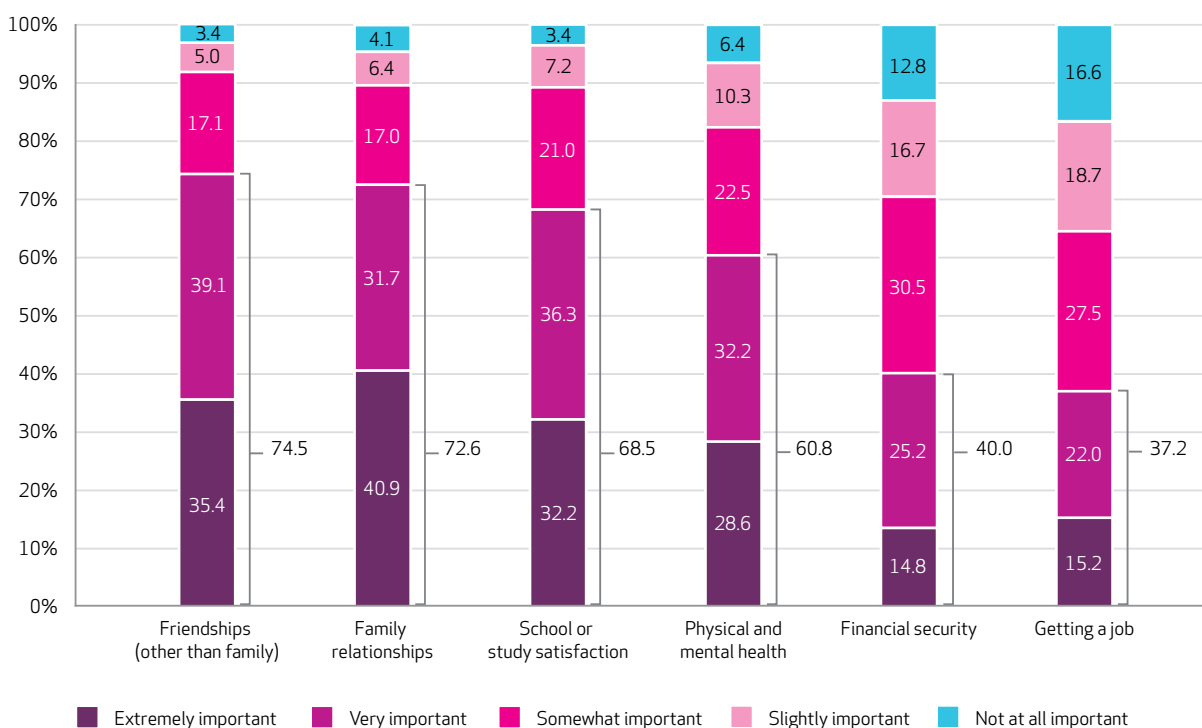
- One in five (22.0%) female respondents and 14.0% of male respondents indicated that *financial difficulty* was a barrier.
- A higher proportion of female than male respondents indicated that *academic ability* and *lack of jobs* were barriers to the achievement of future study/work goals (21.8% and 17.1% of females compared with 15.0% and 12.9% of males respectively).

What do young people value?

In 2015 young people were again asked how much they valued *family relationships*, *financial security*, *friendships*, *getting a job*, *physical and mental health* and *school or study satisfaction*. Responses for these items were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely important* to *not at all important*. In Figure 7.4 the items were ranked in order of importance by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely important* or *very important* for each item. In line with both the national data and 2014 SA findings, the two most highly valued items for respondents from SA this year were *friendships* and *family relationships*. The next most valued item for SA respondents was *school or study satisfaction*, followed by *physical and mental health* (again consistent with the national results).

- *Friendships* were highly valued by 74.5% of respondents from SA (*extremely important*: 35.4%; *very important*: 39.1%). *Family relationships* were also valued highly by 72.6% of respondents (*extremely important*: 40.9%; *very important*: 31.7%).
- Over two thirds of respondents highly valued *school or study satisfaction* (*extremely important*: 32.2%; *very important*: 36.3%) and around six in ten highly valued *physical and mental health* (*extremely important*: 28.6%; *very important*: 32.2%).
- Around four in ten SA respondents placed a high value on *financial security* (*extremely important*: 14.8%; *very important*: 25.2%) and *getting a job* (*extremely important*: 15.2%; *very important*: 22.0%).

Figure 7.4: What young people value



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

Gender differences

Friendships, *family relationships* and *school or study satisfaction* were ranked as the three most highly valued items by both males and females in SA, as shown in Table 7.4. The proportion of female respondents who highly valued these, and many of the other items, was higher than the proportion of males.

- *Friendships* were highly valued by 79.4% of females (*extremely important*: 39.6%; *very important*: 39.8%) compared with 68.8% of males (*extremely important*: 30.4%; *very important*: 38.4%).
- *Family relationships* were highly valued by 77.9% of females (*extremely important*: 46.4%; *very important*: 31.5%) compared with 66.2% of males (*extremely important*: 34.3%; *very important*: 31.9%).
- 74.7% of females highly valued *school or study satisfaction* (*extremely important*: 36.2%; *very important*: 38.5%) compared with 61.3% of males (*extremely important*: 27.5%; *very important*: 33.8%).
- *Physical and mental health* was highly valued by 65.5% of females (*extremely important*: 30.8%; *very important*: 34.7%) and 55.4% of males (*extremely important*: 26.1%; *very important*: 29.3%) in SA.

Table 7.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	39.6	39.8	13.6	4.6	2.6
Family relationships	46.4	31.5	14.0	5.4	2.8
School or study satisfaction	36.2	38.5	17.5	5.7	2.1
Physical and mental health	30.8	34.7	20.3	10.2	4.1
Financial security	14.9	27.3	31.6	16.6	9.6
Getting a job	15.4	23.4	29.6	17.3	14.3
Males	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	30.4	38.4	21.3	5.5	4.4
Family relationships	34.3	31.9	20.5	7.6	5.7
School or study satisfaction	27.5	33.8	24.9	9.1	4.8
Physical and mental health	26.1	29.3	25.0	10.5	9.1
Financial security	14.8	22.8	29.1	16.8	16.5
Getting a job	15.0	20.5	24.8	20.5	19.2

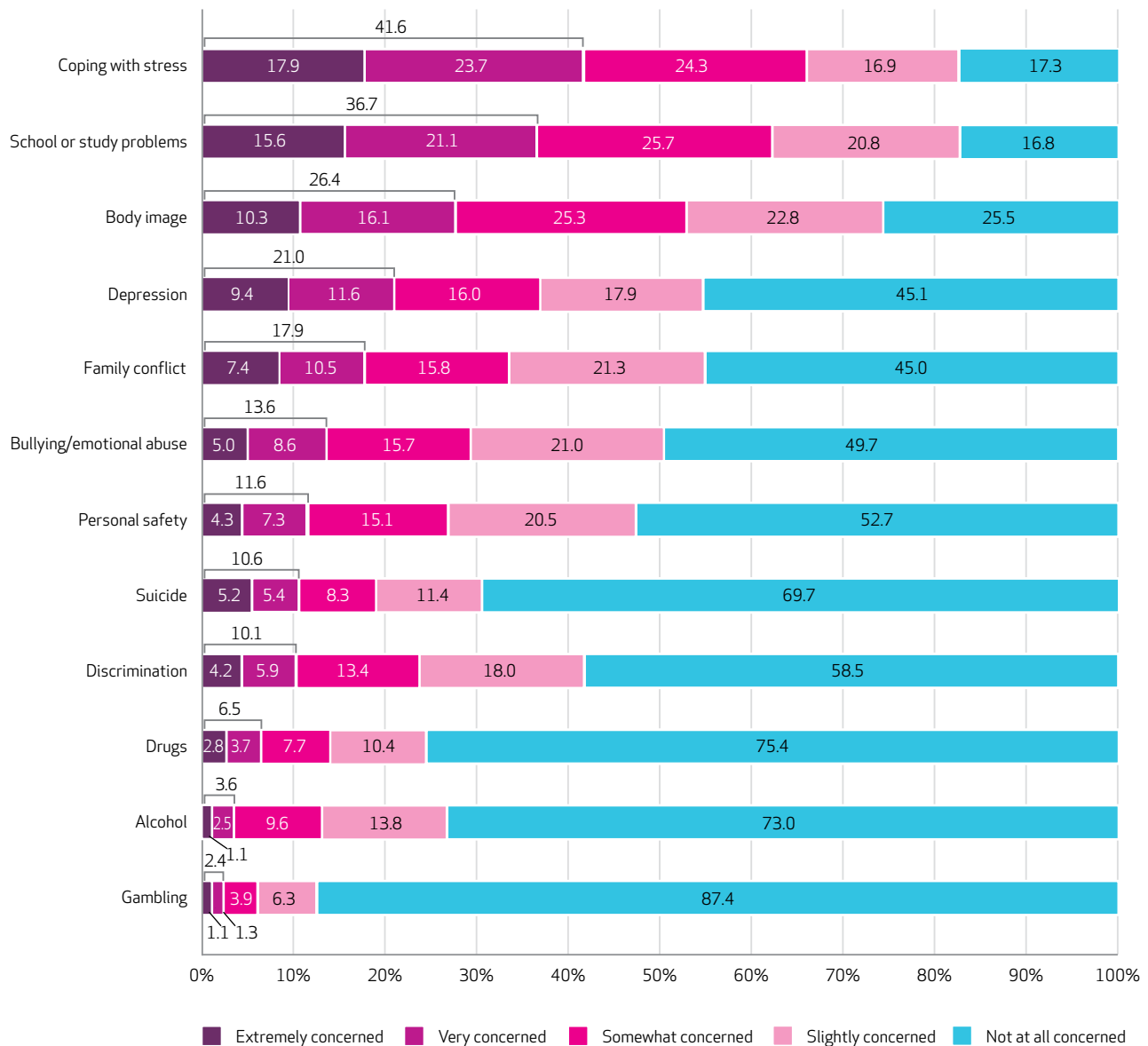
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of State frequency.

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Respondents were asked to rate how concerned they were about a number of issues, shown in Figure 7.5. Responses were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*. The items were ranked in order of concern by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* for each item. The top three issues of concern for young people from SA were *coping with stress*, *school or study problems* and *body image*. These were the same top three issues identified at the national level.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with 41.6% of respondents from SA indicating that they were either *extremely concerned* (17.9%) or *very concerned* (23.7%) about this issue.
- *School or study problems* was a major concern for 36.7% (*extremely concerned*: 15.6%; *very concerned*: 21.1%) of young people.
- *Body image* was also an important issue of concern for 26.4% of respondents (*extremely concerned*: 10.3%; *very concerned*: 16.1%).
- Around one in five respondents were either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* about *depression* and *family conflict*.

Figure 7.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item.

Gender differences

Coping with stress and *school or study problems* were the top two issues of concern for both males and females in SA, as highlighted in Table 7.5. The order of the top two issues of concern differed, however, with males indicating that *school or study problems* was their number one concern, while for females the top issue of concern was *coping with stress*. The third top issue for females was *body image* and for males the number three issue was *depression*. The proportion of females concerned about these issues (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- For over half of all females *coping with stress* was a major concern (*extremely concerned*: 26.1%; *very concerned*: 30.1%), compared with around one quarter of all males (*extremely concerned*: 8.4%; *very concerned*: 16.0%).
- Females were also more concerned about *school or study problems* with 45.4% (*extremely concerned*: 19.5%; *very concerned*: 25.9%) indicating that this was a major concern, compared with 26.5% of males (*extremely concerned*: 11.0%; *very concerned*: 15.5%).
- Concerns about *body image* were considerably higher among females, with 38.1% (*extremely concerned*: 15.8%; *very concerned*: 22.3%) indicating that *body image* was a major concern, compared with 12.6% (*extremely concerned*: 3.8%; *very concerned*: 8.8%) of males.
- For 26.9% of females (*extremely concerned*: 12.8%; *very concerned*: 14.1%) and 14.1% of males (*extremely concerned*: 5.4%; *very concerned*: 8.7%) *depression* was a major concern.

Table 7.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

Females	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	26.1	30.1	23.4	12.9	7.4
School or study problems	19.5	25.9	26.9	18.5	9.3
Body image	15.8	22.3	27.7	21.4	12.8
Depression	12.8	14.1	18.7	19.4	35.0
Family conflict	10.0	13.6	18.7	21.3	36.5
Bullying/emotional abuse	6.3	11.4	18.6	23.5	40.2
Personal safety	4.8	8.8	19.1	22.9	44.4
Suicide	6.1	6.7	9.9	14.0	63.3
Discrimination	5.3	7.1	16.3	19.7	51.7
Drugs	2.6	4.3	9.0	11.5	72.6
Alcohol	1.0	3.2	10.9	16.2	68.7
Gambling	0.8	1.0	3.9	6.4	87.9
Males	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	8.4	16.0	25.3	21.5	28.9
School or study problems	11.0	15.5	24.4	23.5	25.5
Body image	3.8	8.8	22.5	24.5	40.4
Depression	5.4	8.7	13.0	16.1	56.8
Family conflict	4.3	6.8	12.6	21.3	55.0
Bullying/emotional abuse	3.4	5.4	12.3	18.1	60.7
Personal safety	3.8	5.7	10.4	17.5	62.5
Suicide	4.2	3.9	6.4	8.4	77.2
Discrimination	2.9	4.5	10.2	16.1	66.3
Drugs	3.0	3.1	6.2	9.1	78.5
Alcohol	1.2	1.8	8.0	11.1	77.9
Gambling	1.5	1.5	4.0	6.1	86.8

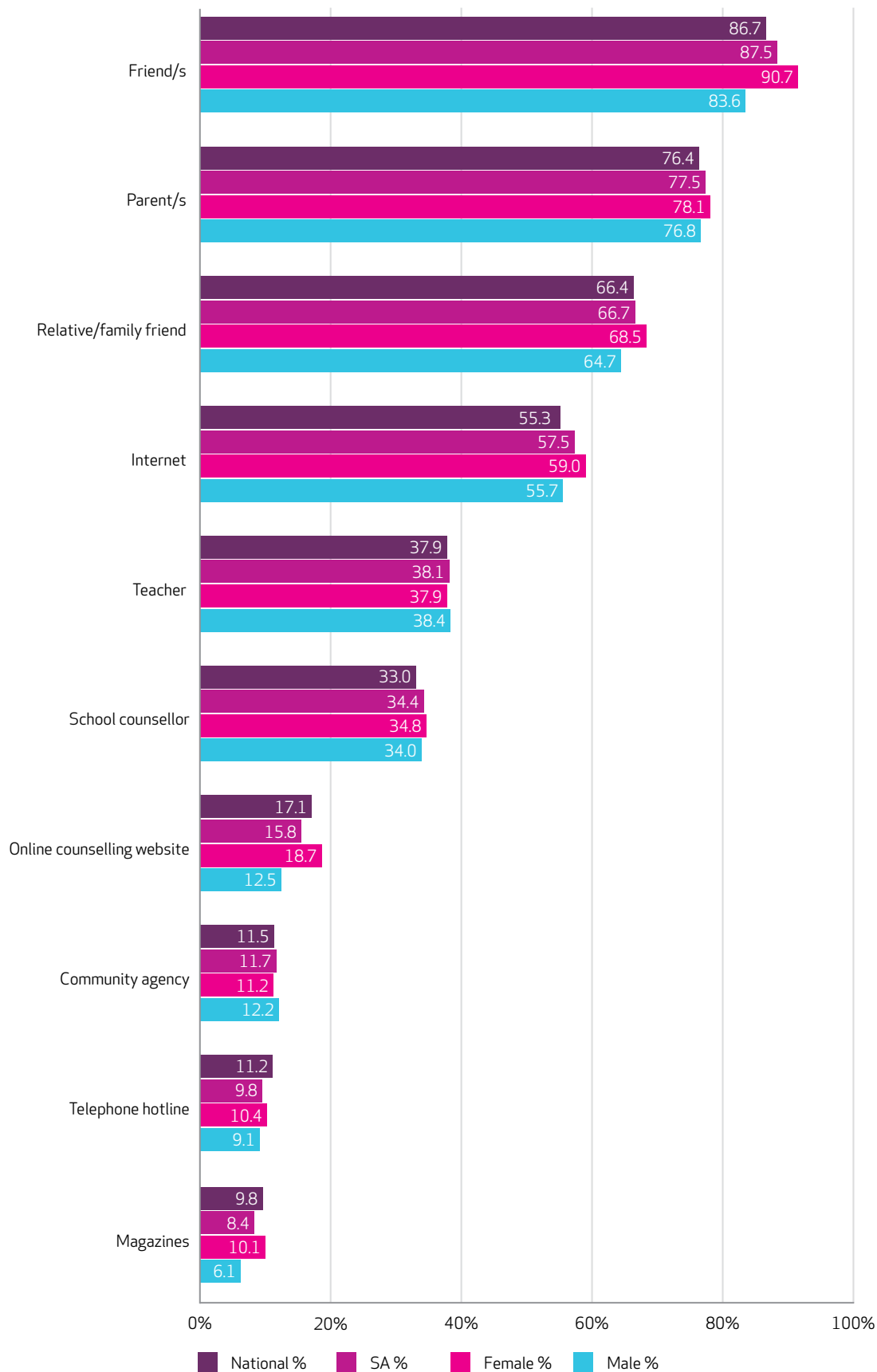
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of State frequency.

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

Young people were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 7.6 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that they would go to each source. The top three sources of help for young people in SA were *friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends*.

- *Friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends* were the three most commonly cited sources of help for young people (87.5%, 77.5% and 66.7% respectively).
- Around six in ten respondents from SA indicated that they would go to the *internet* for help with important issues in their lives.
- Almost one in four respondents indicated that they would go to their *teacher* for help and just over one third indicated that they would go to their *school counsellor* for help with important issues.

Figure 7.6: Where young people go for help with important issues



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

Gender differences

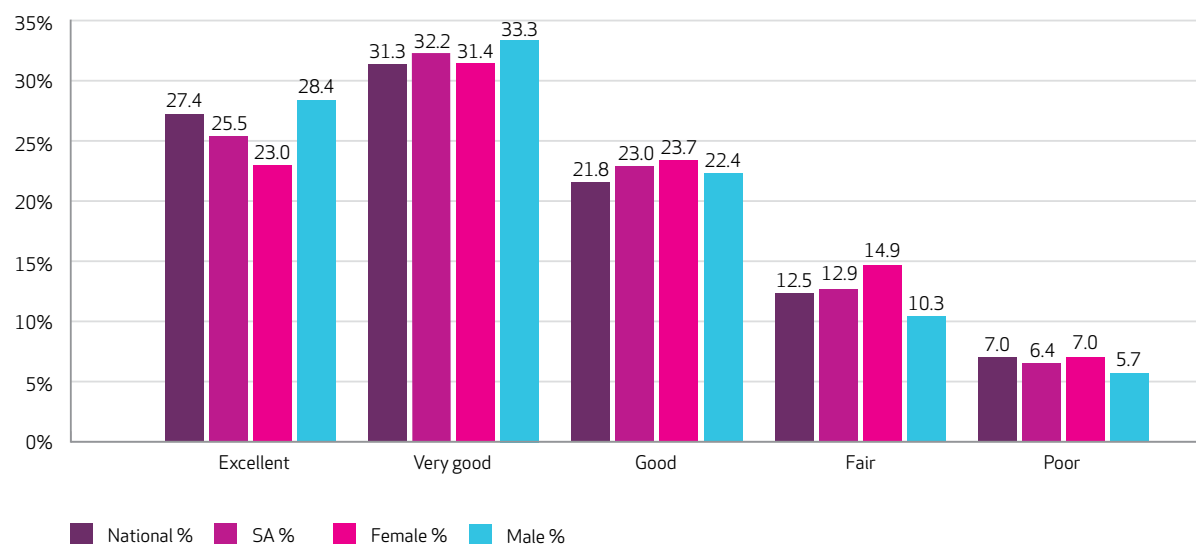
As shown in Figure 7.6, the top three sources of help for both genders were consistent with SA and national results. However, a greater proportion of female respondents than male respondents indicated that they would go to *friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends* for help with important issues.

- Around nine in ten (90.7%) female respondents and 83.6% of male respondents in SA indicated that they would go to *friend/s* for help with important issues.
- A higher proportion of female than male respondents indicated they would go to *parent/s* (78.1% compared with 76.8%) and *relatives/family friends* (68.5% compared with 64.7%) for help.
- A greater proportion of females than males from SA would also go to the *internet* (59.0% compared with 55.7%), *online counselling websites* (18.7% compared with 12.5%) and *magazines* (10.1% compared with 6.1%) for help with important issues in their lives.

How well do young people feel their families get along?

Respondents were asked how well they thought their family got along. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 7.7 shows that, in line with the national data, the majority of respondents from SA rated their family's ability to get along very positively, with 25.5% indicating that their family's ability to get along was *excellent* and 32.2% that it was *very good*. However, almost one in five young people did not report such a positive experience of family relationships, rating their family's ability to get along as either *fair* (12.9%) or *poor* (6.4%). Male and female respondents gave similar ratings of their family's ability to get along, although a greater proportion of males than females rated their family's ability to get along as *excellent* (28.4% compared with 23.0% respectively).

Figure 7.7: Family's ability to get along



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

Young people were asked to write down the three issues they considered were most important in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 7.6. In 2015 the top three issues identified by young people from SA were *alcohol and drugs*, *the economy and financial matters* and *equity and discrimination*. These were also the top three issues identified nationally, although the order of the second and third top issues was reversed.

- Around one quarter of young people from SA identified *alcohol and drugs* (24.3%) as an important issue in Australia today.
- Compared to the past two years, identification of *alcohol and drugs* as an important issue has increased among respondents.
- Around one in five respondents identified *the economy and financial matters* (22.3%), *equity and discrimination* (21.7%) and *politics* (20.8%) as major issues.
- Since 2013, there has been an increase in the proportion of young people who identified *LGBT issues* and *international relations* as important national issues. Conversely, mentions of *the economy and financial matters* and *education* have declined over this period.

Gender differences

There were some notable differences in the issues identified as the most important in Australia today by male and female respondents from SA. While *alcohol and drugs* and *the economy and financial matters* featured in the top three most important issues for both males and females, the other issues making up their top three differed. For males, the top issue facing the nation was *alcohol and drugs*, followed by *politics* and *the economy and financial matters*. For females, the top issue was *equity and discrimination* with *the economy and financial matters* as their number two issue and *alcohol and drugs* third.

- Around three in ten male respondents and one in five female respondents from SA (27.9% and 21.1% respectively) identified *alcohol and drugs* as a major issue facing Australia today.
- A greater proportion of males than females identified *politics* (25.6% compared with 16.8%) and *the economy and financial matters* (23.1% compared with 21.7%) as important national issues.
- Conversely, a greater proportion of females than males identified *equity and discrimination* (24.4% compared with 18.4%) and *mental health* (19.7% compared with 9.5%) as important issues.

Table 7.6: Most important issues in Australia today

	National %	SA 2015 %	Female %	Male %	SA 2014 %	SA 2013 %
Alcohol and drugs	27.0	24.3	21.1	27.9	22.0	19.7
The economy and financial matters	18.9	22.3	21.7	23.1	24.1	28.3
Equity and discrimination	25.0	21.7	24.4	18.4	15.5	19.4
Politics	16.1	20.8	16.8	25.6	28.6	22.2
Employment	12.7	19.7	18.7	21.0	14.2	15.9
Population issues	15.3	16.5	16.8	16.2	13.8	21.0
Mental health	14.9	15.0	19.7	9.5	15.6	10.6
The environment	12.8	12.5	13.2	11.7	9.9	14.1
Education	12.2	12.2	13.5	10.8	12.6	13.5
LGBT issues	13.2	11.6	15.1	7.5	4.3	5.7
International relations	13.4	11.3	8.4	14.8	2.0	3.5
Bullying	9.3	9.8	12.0	7.1	16.2	12.6
Health	9.5	8.9	8.4	9.6	12.1	9.2
Crime, safety and violence	10.1	8.3	8.9	7.7	10.9	10.8
Homelessness/housing	7.8	6.6	8.8	4.1	9.9	7.7

Note: Items are listed in order of State frequency.

What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities that they have been involved in over the past year from the list shown in Table 7.7. The top two activities for young people from SA, as they were nationally, were *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)*. These were also the top two activities for young people from SA in 2014 and 2013. The third most common activity for respondents from SA this year was *arts/cultural/music activities*, while nationally it was *volunteer work*. Significant proportions of young people reported involvement in each of the activities listed over the past year.

- *Sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *arts/cultural/music activities* were the three most popular activities for young people from SA in 2015.
- Just over half of respondents indicated that they had participated in *volunteer work* (51.1%).
- Just under four in ten young people reported participation in *youth groups and clubs* (38.0%) and around one third had participated in *student leadership activities* (33.9%) and *religious groups or activities* (32.2%).
- Around one in five young people from SA (20.4%) had participated in *environmental groups or activities* over the past year.

Gender differences

As shown in Table 7.7 the top activity for both genders was consistent with SA and national results, although a greater proportion of male than female respondents were involved in *sports (as a participant)*. The second top activity for females in SA was *arts/cultural/music activities* followed by *sports (as a spectator)*, while the second top activity for males from SA was *sports (as a spectator)* followed by *volunteer work*.

- 73.0% of male respondents and 66.9% of female respondents were involved in *sports (as a participant)* over the past year.
- A larger proportion of male than female respondents were involved in *sports (as a spectator)* (68.4% compared with 59.0%).
- A much higher proportion of female than male respondents were involved with *arts/cultural/music activities* (59.6% compared with 42.0%).
- Despite *volunteer work* ranking higher up the list for male respondents, overall a greater proportion of female than male respondents from SA were involved in *volunteer work* and *youth groups and clubs* (54.2% and 40.3% compared with 47.4% and 35.3% respectively).

Table 7.7: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	National %	SA 2015 %	Female %	Male %	SA 2014 %	SA 2013 %
Sports (as a participant)	74.3	69.8	66.9	73.0	68.0	66.1
Sports (as a spectator)	67.4	63.5	59.0	68.4	61.5	63.0
Arts/cultural/music activities	50.7	51.5	59.6	42.0	46.0	46.2
Volunteer work	51.3	51.1	54.2	47.4	44.5	48.6
Youth groups and clubs	33.1	38.0	40.3	35.3	27.7	30.7
Student leadership activities	40.0	33.9	37.6	29.7	30.5	34.0
Religious groups or activities	30.8	32.2	33.4	30.7	23.1	25.1
Environmental groups or activities	22.0	20.4	19.1	21.8	18.0	22.4
Political groups or organisations	7.7	8.0	8.2	7.8	7.1	6.4

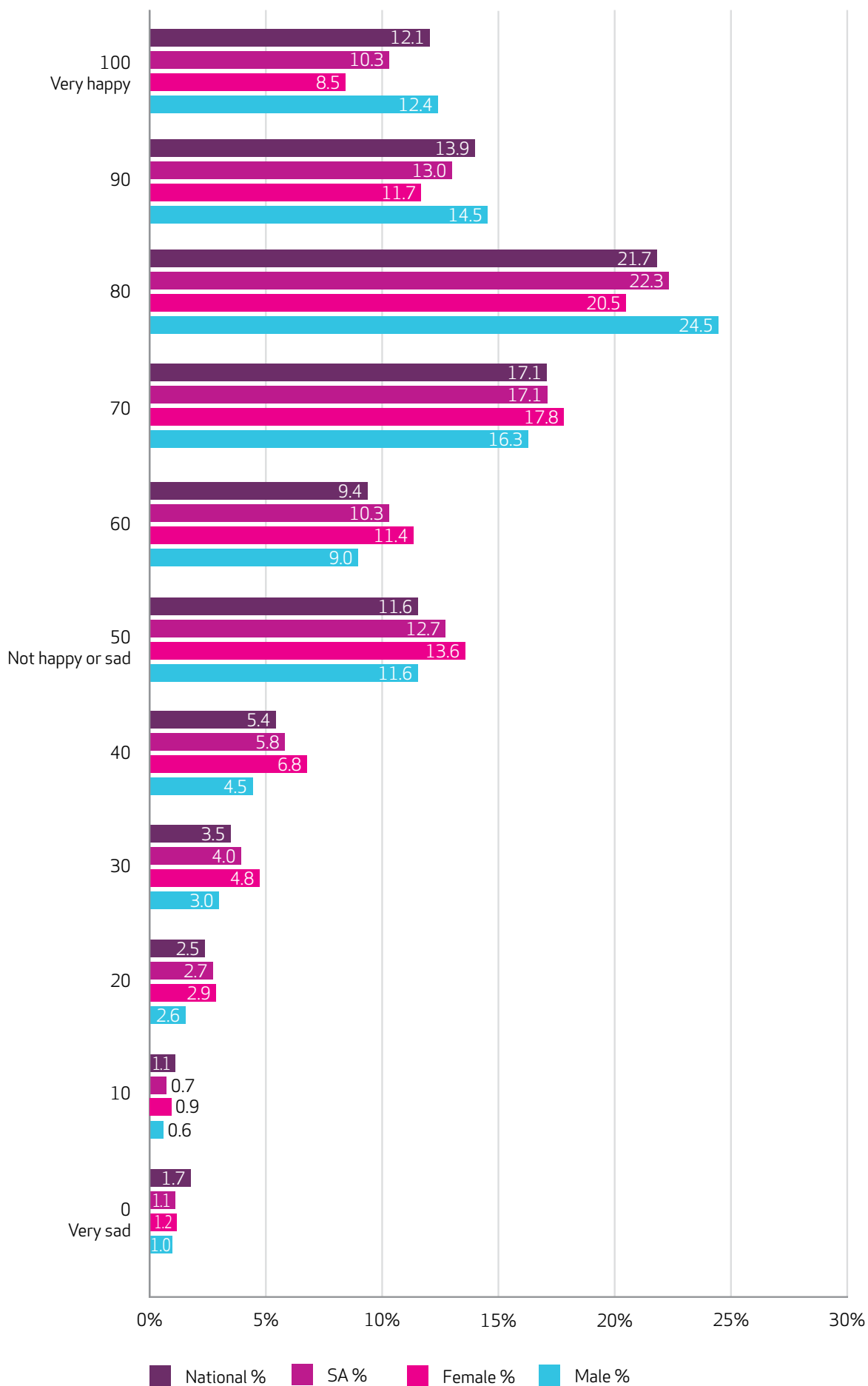
Note: Items are listed in order of State frequency.

How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being *very sad*, 5 *not happy or sad* and 10 *very happy*. In line with recommendations from the authors of this question¹, responses were standardised on a scale of 0 – 100, with 100 being the happiest. As Figure 7.8 shows, the majority of young people from SA (62.7%) responded in the range 70 to 100, indicating that they felt positive overall about their lives. This is consistent with the national results. Responses were similar for both males and females, although a greater proportion of male than female respondents indicated that they felt *very happy* with their lives as a whole (12.4% compared with 8.5%).

¹ Cummins, R.A., & Lau, A.L.D., 2005, *Personal Wellbeing Index – School Children (PWI-SC)* (English), Manual, 3rd Edition.

Figure 7.8: How happy young people are



How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked how positive they felt about the future, with responses rated on a 5 point scale from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 7.8 shows that compared to 2014 and 2013 there has been a slight decrease in the proportion of SA respondents feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future and a slight increase in those feeling *neither positive nor negative* about the future. Overall, around one in ten young people from SA felt *very negative* or *negative* about the future.

- Around six in ten respondents from SA felt either *positive* (45.5%) or *very positive* (12.4%) about the future.
- Just over three in ten respondents (31.0%) felt *neither positive nor negative* about the future.
- 8.3% of respondents felt *negative* about the future and 2.8% felt *very negative*.
- Males and females from SA were similar in terms of their feelings about the future. A larger proportion of male than female respondents, however, indicated feeling *very positive* (14.4% compared with 10.6% for females).

Table 7.8: Feelings about the future

	National %	SA 2015 %	Female %	Male %	SA 2014 %	SA 2013 %
Very positive	15.0	12.4	10.6	14.4	14.1	17.9
Positive	46.8	45.5	43.8	47.4	46.0	46.6
Neither positive nor negative	28.2	31.0	35.2	26.0	29.9	27.2
Negative	7.5	8.3	8.6	7.9	7.3	5.9
Very negative	2.5	2.8	1.7	4.2	2.8	2.4

Tasmania



Profile of respondents

In total, 807 young people from Tasmania (TAS) aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2015*.

Gender breakdown

Over half (53.1%) of respondents from Tasmania were male and 46.9% were female.

Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 71 (8.9%) respondents from Tasmania identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 55 (6.9%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 7 (0.9%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 1.1% identified as both). A higher proportion of male than female respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (11.0% compared with 6.7%).

Language background other than English

A total of 69 (8.7%) respondents from Tasmania stated that they were born overseas and 86 (10.8%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home.

Disability

A total of 71 (8.9%) respondents from Tasmania indicated that they had a disability, with a greater proportion of males (11.7%) than females (5.7%) reporting a disability. The most frequently cited disabilities in Tasmania were (in order of frequency): autism, learning disability and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD).

Detailed results

Education

As indicated in Table 8.1, 94.0% of respondents from Tasmania were studying full-time. A slightly higher proportion of female than male respondents reported that they were studying full-time (95.2% compared with 92.9% respectively), while a slightly greater proportion of males (4.0%) than females (1.9%) reported not studying at all.

Respondents who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in previous years, the majority of respondents from Tasmania reported that they were either *very satisfied* (15.0%) or *satisfied* (58.0%) with their studies. Less than one in ten were *very dissatisfied* or *dissatisfied* (1.3% and 4.4% respectively). As shown in Table 8.2, a slightly higher proportion of females than males from Tasmania reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their studies (17.3% and 60.5% of females compared with 13.2% and 56.0% of males respectively).

Table 8.1: Participation in education

	National %	TAS %	Female %	Male %
Studying full-time	94.0	94.0	95.2	92.9
Studying part-time	2.6	3.0	2.9	3.1
Not studying	3.5	3.0	1.9	4.0

Table 8.2: Satisfaction with studies

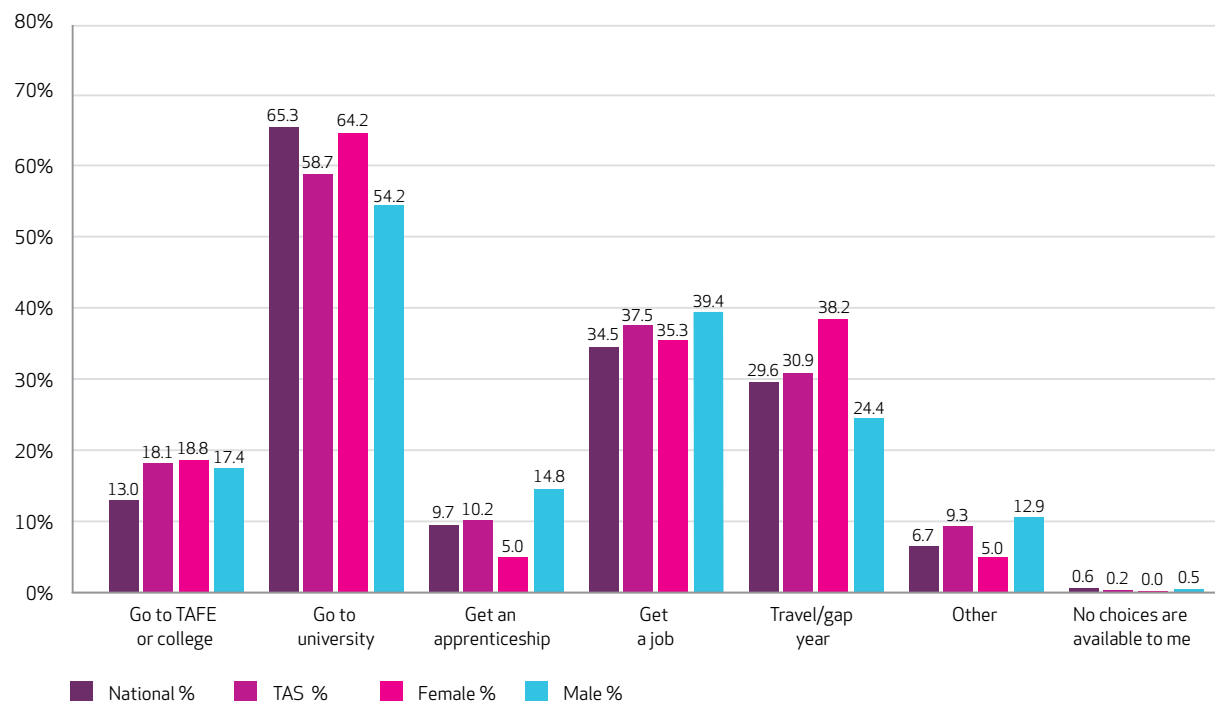
	National %	TAS 2015 %	Female %	Male %	TAS 2014 %	TAS 2013 %
Very satisfied	16.0	15.0	17.3	13.2	14.7	19.1
Satisfied	56.7	58.0	60.5	56.0	60.8	56.4
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	21.5	21.3	16.7	24.9	19.1	18.9
Dissatisfied	4.4	4.4	4.9	4.0	3.4	3.2
Very dissatisfied	1.3	1.3	0.5	2.0	1.9	2.4

In 2015, respondents who reported they were studying full-time or part-time were asked whether or not they were still at school. The majority of respondents from Tasmania (98.8%) stated they were still at school. Male and female respondents indicated that they were still at school in similar proportions (99.3% compared with 98.4% respectively). Of those who were still at school in Tasmania, 96.7% stated that they intended to complete Year 12. Around five times the proportion of males indicated that they did not intend to complete Year 12 (5.5% compared with 0.8% respectively).

Respondents who were still at school were also asked what they were planning to do after leaving school. Figure 8.1 shows that almost six in ten respondents from Tasmania planned to go to university after school (58.7%). Many respondents also indicated plans to get a job (37.5%) and to travel or go on a gap year (30.9%) after school. Overall, 18.1% of young people from Tasmania planned to attend TAFE or college and 10.2% reported plans to undertake an apprenticeship. A small minority of respondents (0.2%) indicated that they felt no choices were available to them after they left school.

While going to university was the most frequently chosen option among both male and female respondents from Tasmania, a higher proportion of females than males stated that they planned to do so (64.2% compared with 54.2% respectively). A greater proportion of female respondents also reported plans to travel or go on a gap year after school (38.2% compared with 24.4%). A larger proportion of males indicated that they were planning to undertake an apprenticeship (14.8% compared with 5.0% of females).

Figure 8.1: Plans after leaving school



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Employment

Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who answered that they had paid employment were asked to specify how many hours they worked per week, on average. Table 8.3 shows participation in paid employment amongst respondents from Tasmania. In line with the national data, only a tiny minority (0.5%) of respondents who reported paid employment were employed full-time. However, given the percentage of respondents who were still at school this is not surprising. One in four (40.9%) respondents from Tasmania reported part-time employment. Just under six in ten Tasmania respondents reported that they were not in paid employment, with 38.7% looking for work and 19.8% not looking for work.

Equal proportions of male and female respondents from Tasmania reported full-time employment (both at 0.5%), while a higher proportion of female than male respondents were employed part-time (48.9% compared with 34.1%). Conversely, a greater proportion of male than female respondents were looking for work (42.6% compared with 34.2%).

Table 8.3: Participation in paid employment

	National %	TAS %	Female %	Male %
Employed full-time	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Employed part-time	38.8	40.9	48.9	34.1
Not in paid employment, looking for work	35.9	38.7	34.2	42.6
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	24.8	19.8	16.4	22.8

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

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

In 2015, respondents were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. Responses for this question were rated on a five point scale from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. Around half of respondents from Tasmania indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve study/work goals, with 8.3% indicating that they were *extremely confident* and 38.9% indicating that they were *very confident*. However, around one in ten young people from Tasmania were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals, with 7.5% being *slightly confident* and 3.0% *not at all confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. A slightly higher proportion of male than female respondents reported feeling *extremely confident* or *very confident* (10.1% and 40.5% of males compared with 6.4% and 37.3% of females respectively).

Figure 8.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals



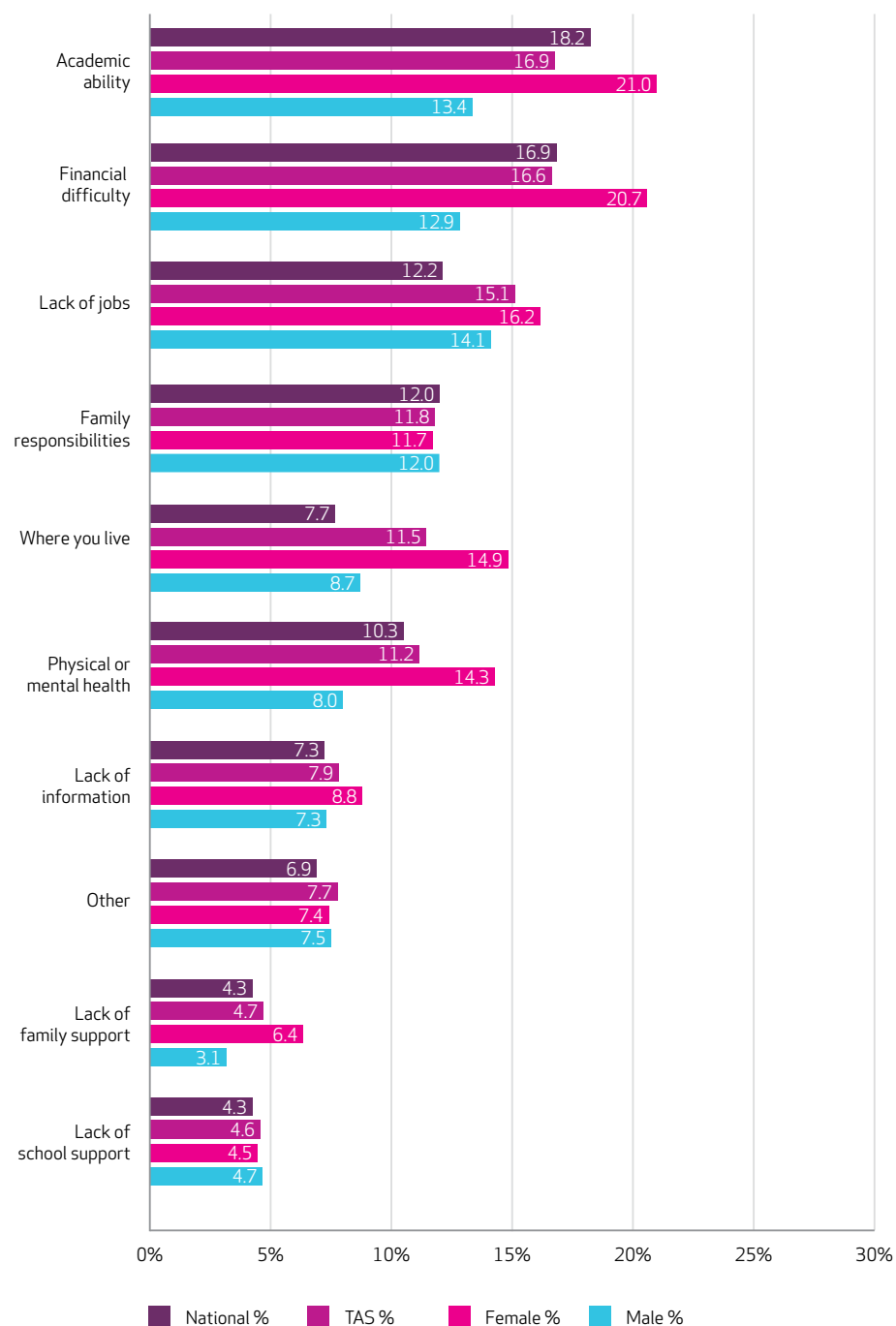
Barriers to the achievement of young people's study/work goals after school

Young people in 2015 were asked whether they felt there were any barriers which may impact on the achievement of their study/work goals after school. Just over half (55.5%) of respondents from Tasmania indicated that they felt there would be barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals, with a slightly greater proportion of females (58.3%) than males (52.8%) reporting the presence of these barriers.

Respondents who indicated the presence of barriers were asked to indicate from a number of items which barriers they saw as preventing them from achieving their goals after school. Figure 8.3 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated each item as a barrier. In Tasmania, the top three barriers young people saw impacting the achievement of their study/work goals after school were *academic ability*, *financial difficulty* and *lack of jobs*.

- *Academic ability*, *financial difficulty* and *lack of jobs* were the three most commonly cited barriers to the achievement of young people's study/work goals after school (16.9%, 16.6% and 15.1% respectively).
- Just over one in ten respondents from Tasmania indicated that they saw *family responsibilities*, *where you live* and *physical or mental health* as barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals after school.

Figure 8.3: Barriers to the achievement of study/work goals after school



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

Gender differences

As shown in Figure 8.3, while the top three barriers identified by females to the achievement of their study/work goals were consistent with Tasmanian results, the barriers identified by males differed. The top three barriers for males in Tasmania were a *lack of jobs*, *academic ability* and *financial difficulty*.

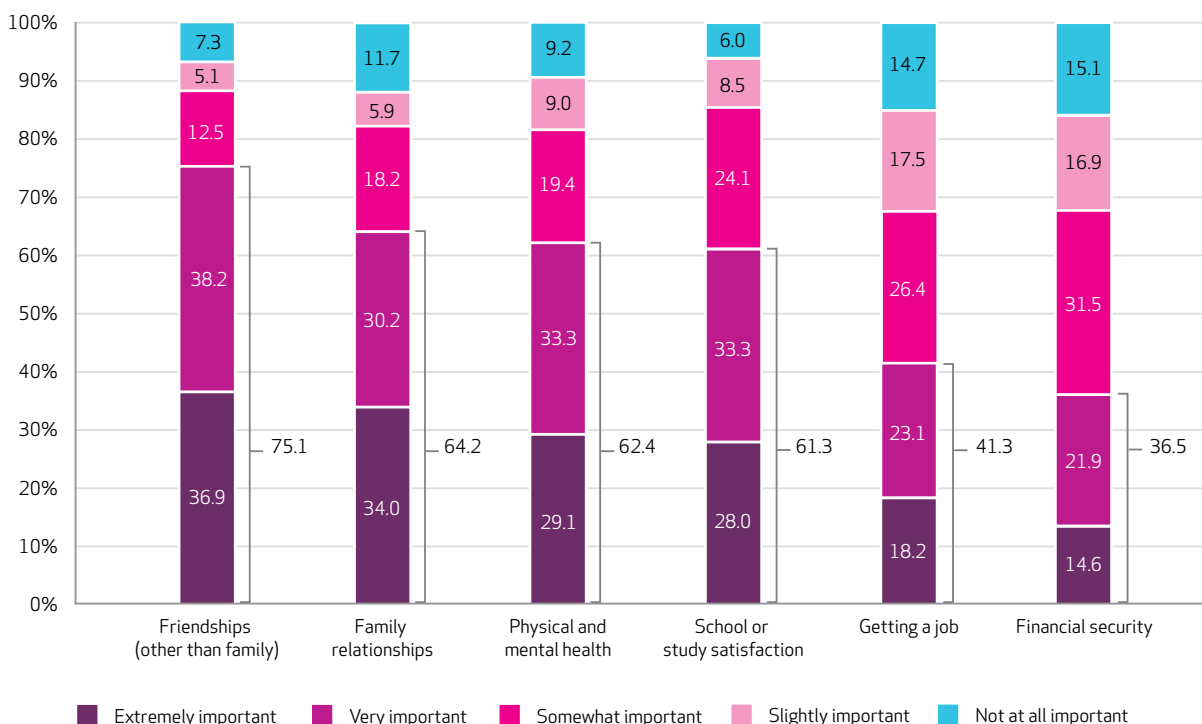
- Around one in five female respondents indicated that *academic ability* and *financial difficulty* were barriers (21.0% and 20.7% respectively compared with 13.4% and 12.9% of males).
- Despite a *lack of jobs* ranking higher up the list for male respondents, overall a greater proportion of female than male respondents from Tasmania indicated that they saw a *lack of jobs* as a barrier (16.2% compared with 14.1% respectively).

What do young people value?

In 2015 young people were again asked how much they valued *family relationships*, *financial security*, *friendships*, *getting a job*, *physical and mental health* and *school or study satisfaction*. Responses for these items were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely important* to *not at all important*. In Figure 8.4 the items were ranked in order of importance by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely important* or *very important* for each item. In line with both the national data and 2014 Tasmania findings, the two most highly valued items for respondents from Tasmania this year were *friendships* and *family relationships*. The next most valued item for Tasmania respondents was *physical and mental health*, followed by *school or study satisfaction*.

- *Friendships* were highly valued by 75.1% of respondents from Tasmania (*extremely important*: 36.9%; *very important*: 38.2%). *Family relationships* were also valued highly by 64.2% of respondents (*extremely important*: 34.0%; *very important*: 30.2%).
- Around six in ten respondents highly valued *physical and mental health* (*extremely important*: 29.1%; *very important*: 33.3%) and *school or study satisfaction* (*extremely important*: 28.0%; *very important*: 33.3%).
- Around four in ten Tasmania respondents placed a high value on *getting a job* (*extremely important*: 18.2%; *very important*: 23.1%) and *financial security* (*extremely important*: 14.6%; *very important*: 21.9%).

Figure 8.4: What young people value



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

Gender differences

Friendships and family relationships were ranked as the top two highly valued items by both males and females in Tasmania, as shown in Table 8.4. The third top item for females was school or study satisfaction while for males it was physical and mental health.

- Friendships were highly valued by 80.3% of females (*extremely important*: 40.0%; *very important*: 40.3%) compared with 70.3% of males (*extremely important*: 34.1%; *very important*: 36.2%).
- Family relationships were highly valued by 69.8% of females (*extremely important*: 41.6%; *very important*: 28.2%) compared with 59.4% of males (*extremely important*: 27.4%; *very important*: 32.0%).
- 70.0% of females highly valued school or study satisfaction (*extremely important*: 33.5%; *very important*: 36.5%) compared with 54.2% of males (*extremely important*: 23.4%; *very important*: 30.8%).
- Physical and mental health was highly valued by 68.7% of females (*extremely important*: 29.7%; *very important*: 39.0%) and 56.9% of males (*extremely important*: 28.7%; *very important*: 28.2%) in Tasmania.

Table 8.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	40.0	40.3	12.2	3.2	4.3
Family relationships	41.6	28.2	21.2	3.5	5.6
Physical and mental health	29.7	39.0	18.2	9.1	4.0
School or study satisfaction	33.5	36.5	20.6	6.2	3.2
Getting a job	15.8	25.9	29.1	17.6	11.5
Financial security	16.2	24.6	35.7	14.3	9.2
Males	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	34.1	36.2	12.9	6.7	10.1
Family relationships	27.4	32.0	15.5	7.9	17.2
Physical and mental health	28.7	28.2	20.7	8.7	13.7
School or study satisfaction	23.4	30.8	26.5	10.7	8.6
Getting a job	20.4	20.6	24.0	17.5	17.5
Financial security	13.3	19.6	27.1	19.4	20.6

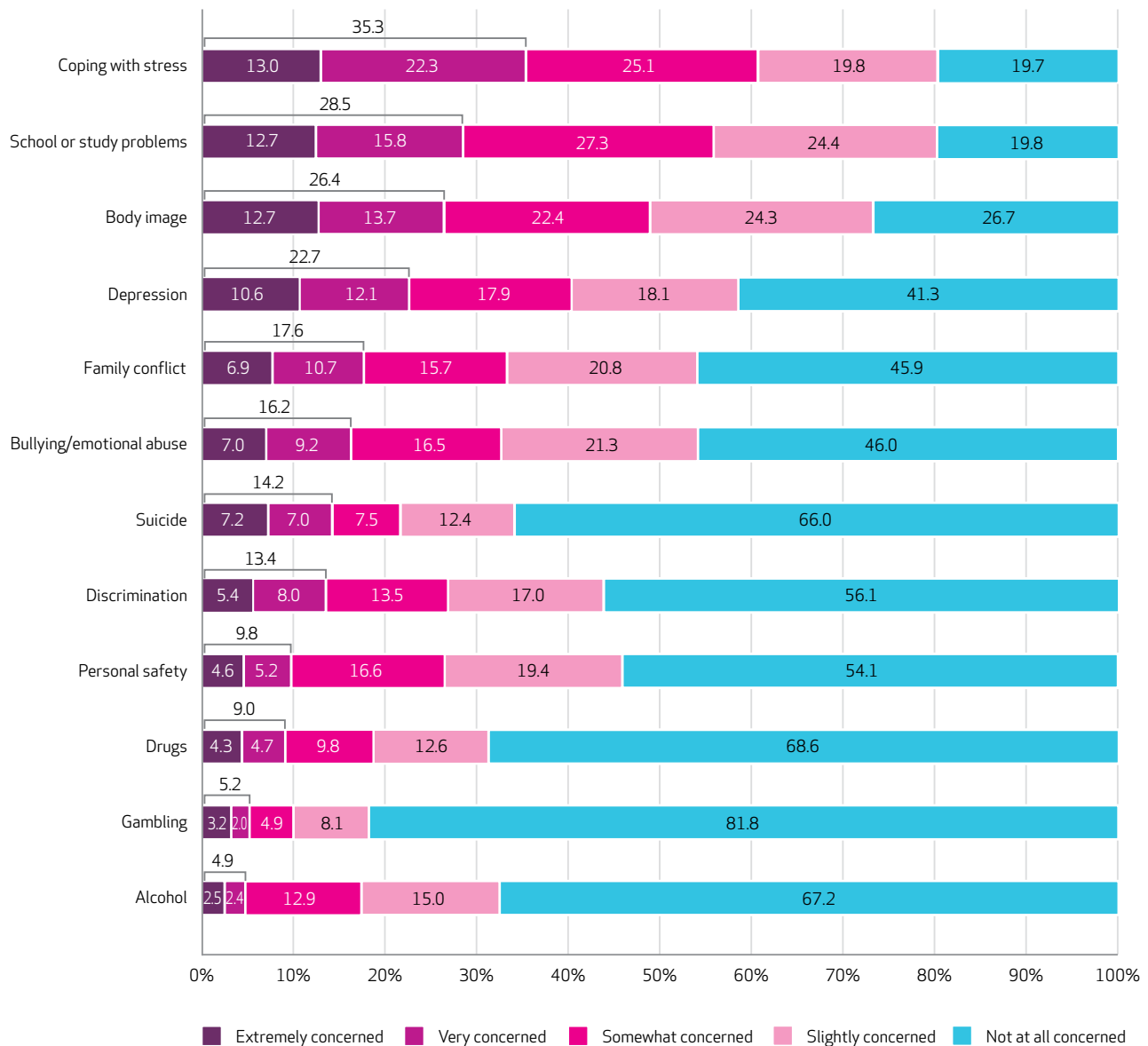
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of State frequency.

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Respondents were asked to rate how concerned they were about a number of issues, shown in Figure 8.5. Responses were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*. The items were ranked in order of concern by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* for each item. The top three issues of concern for young people from Tasmania were *coping with stress*, *school or study problems* and *body image*. These were the same top three issues identified at the national level.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with 35.3% of respondents from Tasmania indicating that they were either *extremely concerned* (13.0%) or *very concerned* (22.3%) about this issue.
- *School or study problems* was a major concern for 28.5% (*extremely concerned*: 12.7%; *very concerned*: 15.8%) of young people.
- *Body image* was also an important issue of concern for 26.4% of respondents (*extremely concerned*: 12.7%; *very concerned*: 13.7%).
- Around one in five respondents were either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* about depression and family conflict.

Figure 8.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item.

Gender differences

Coping with stress, *school or study problems* and *body image* were the top three issues of concern for both males and females in Tasmania, as highlighted in Table 8.5. The order of the top three concerns for males was consistent with Tasmania results, while for females the second top issue of concern was *body image*, followed by *school or study problems*. The proportion of females concerned about these three (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- For almost half of all females *coping with stress* was a major concern (*extremely concerned*: 19.8%; *very concerned*: 28.2%), compared with around one quarter of all males (*extremely concerned*: 7.0%; *very concerned*: 16.6%).
- Females were also more concerned about *body image* with 37.3% (*extremely concerned*: 18.8%; *very concerned*: 18.5%) indicating that this was a major concern, compared with 16.8% of males (*extremely concerned*: 7.2%; *very concerned*: 9.6%).
- Concerns about *school or study problems* were higher among females, with 35.9% (*extremely concerned*: 16.6%; *very concerned*: 19.3%) indicating that *school or study problems* was a major concern, compared with 21.7% (*extremely concerned*: 9.3%; *very concerned*: 12.4%) of males.
- For 30.8% of females (*extremely concerned*: 13.1%; *very concerned*: 17.7%) and 14.9% of males (*extremely concerned*: 8.4%; *very concerned*: 6.5%) *depression* was a major concern.

Table 8.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

Females	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	19.8	28.2	28.2	13.9	9.9
School or study problems	16.6	19.3	27.5	23.0	13.6
Body image	18.8	18.5	27.1	22.8	12.9
Depression	13.1	17.7	22.0	16.9	30.3
Family conflict	7.6	14.9	19.2	21.9	36.5
Bullying/emotional abuse	8.8	10.7	19.0	21.9	39.6
Suicide	9.9	8.9	11.0	16.1	54.0
Discrimination	5.4	11.6	17.7	16.4	48.9
Personal safety	5.1	7.0	19.5	18.4	49.9
Drugs	3.5	6.7	9.6	15.8	64.4
Gambling	1.6	2.2	4.6	9.2	82.4
Alcohol	1.6	2.7	15.1	16.4	64.2
Males	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	7.0	16.6	22.4	25.3	28.7
School or study problems	9.3	12.4	27.0	25.8	25.4
Body image	7.2	9.6	18.0	26.0	39.2
Depression	8.4	6.5	14.5	19.3	51.3
Family conflict	6.3	7.0	12.0	20.0	54.7
Bullying/emotional abuse	5.3	7.9	13.9	20.9	52.0
Suicide	4.8	4.6	4.3	9.2	77.1
Discrimination	5.3	4.6	9.7	17.6	62.8
Personal safety	4.1	3.4	13.8	20.5	58.2
Drugs	5.0	2.9	10.1	9.9	72.1
Gambling	4.6	1.9	5.3	7.2	81.0
Alcohol	3.4	2.2	11.0	13.9	69.5

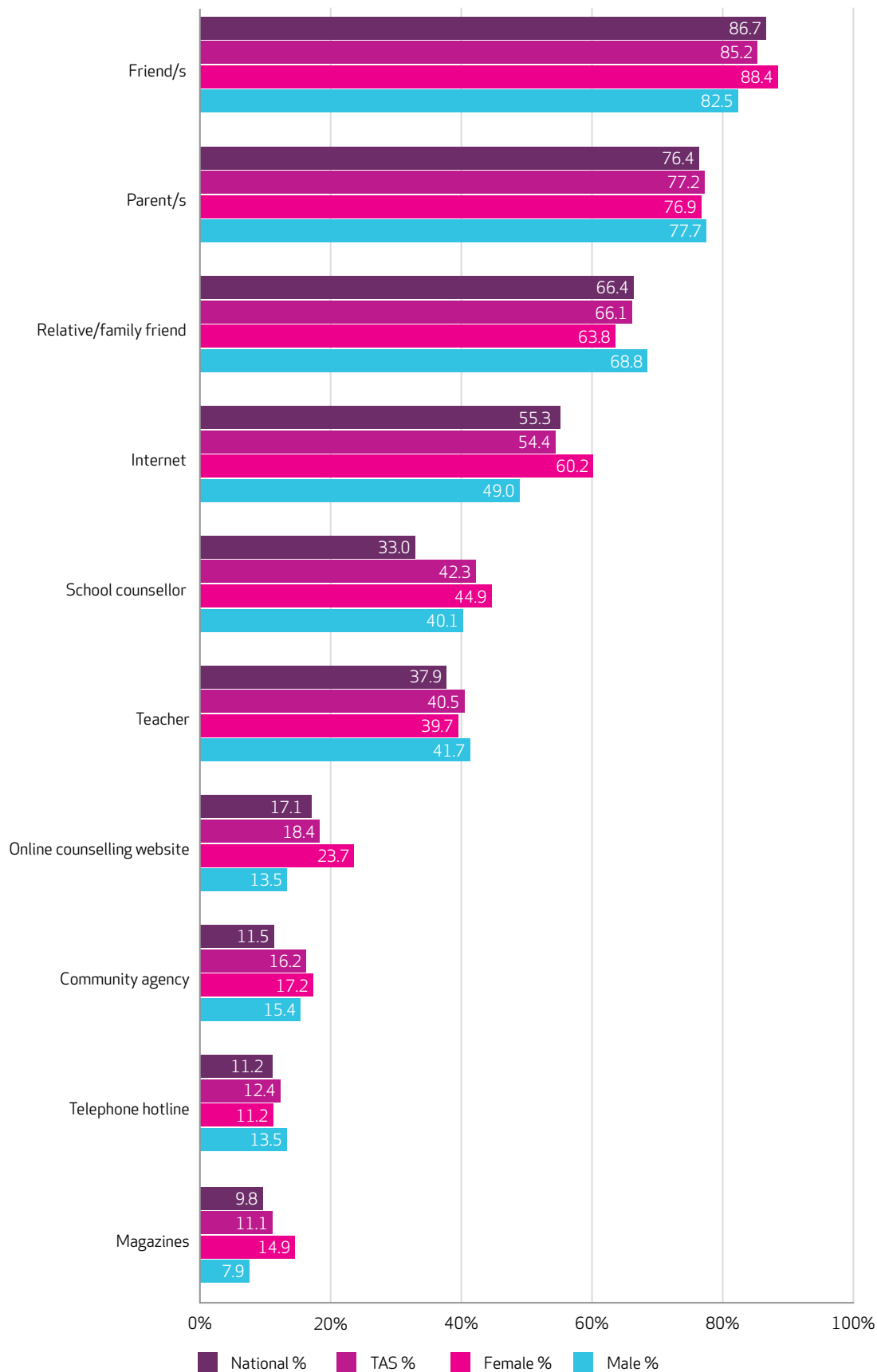
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of State frequency.

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

Young people were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 8.6 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that they would go to each source. The top three sources of help for young people in Tasmania were *friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends*.

- *Friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends* were the three most commonly cited sources of help for young people (85.2%, 77.2% and 66.1% respectively).
- Over half of respondents from Tasmania indicated that they would go to the *internet* for help with important issues in their lives.
- Around one in four respondents indicated that they would go to their *school counsellor* or *teacher* for help with important issues.

Figure 8.6: Where young people go for help with important issues



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

Gender differences

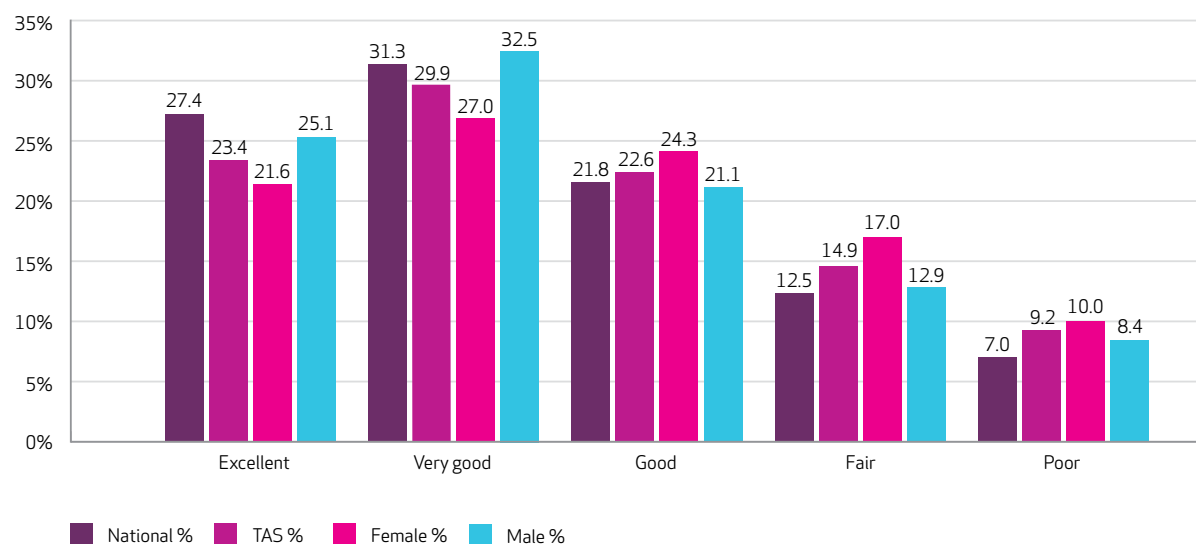
As shown in Figure 8.6, the top three sources of help for both genders were consistent with Tasmania and national results. However, a greater proportion of female respondents than male respondents indicated that they would go to *friend/s* for help with important issues, while slightly higher proportions of males would go to *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends*.

- Around nine in ten (88.4%) female respondents and 82.5% of male respondents in Tasmania indicated that they would go to *friend/s* for help with important issues.
- A higher proportion of male than female respondents indicated they would go to *parent/s* (77.7% compared with 76.9%) and *relatives/family friends* (68.8% compared with 63.8%) for help.
- A greater proportion of females than males from Tasmania would go to the *internet* (60.2% compared with 49.0%), *online counselling websites* (23.7% compared with 13.5%) and *magazines* (14.9% compared with 7.9%) for help with important issues in their lives.

How well do young people feel their families get along?

Respondents were asked how well they thought their family got along. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 8.7 shows that, in line with the national data, the majority of respondents from Tasmania rated their family's ability to get along very positively, with 23.4% indicating that their family's ability to get along was *excellent* and 29.9% that it was *very good*. However, almost a quarter of young people did not report such a positive experience of family relationships, rating their family's ability to get along as either *fair* (14.9%) or *poor* (9.2%). Male and female respondents gave similar ratings of their family's ability to get along.

Figure 8.7: Family's ability to get along



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

Young people were asked to write down the three issues they considered were most important in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 8.6. In 2015 the top three issues identified by young people from Tasmania were *alcohol and drugs*, *equity and discrimination*, and *politics*.

- Around one quarter of young people from Tasmania identified *alcohol and drugs* (26.1%) and *equity and discrimination* (25.7%) as important issues in Australia today.
- Compared to the past two years, identification of *alcohol and drugs* as an important issue has increased among respondents.
- Around one in five respondents identified *politics* (17.7%) and *the economy and financial matters* (17.6%) as major issues.
- Since 2013, *international relations* has been increasingly identified by young people as a key issue facing the nation. Conversely, mentions of *employment*, *population issues* and *education* have declined over this period.

Gender differences

There were some notable differences in the issues identified as the most important in Australia today by male and female respondents from Tasmania. While *alcohol and drugs* and *equity and discrimination* were identified among the top three issues by both males and females, the other issues making up their top three differed. For females, *equity and discrimination* was the number one issue, followed by *LGBT issues* and then *alcohol and drugs*. For males the top issue this year was *alcohol and drugs*, followed by *equity and discrimination* and then *politics*.

- Three in ten male respondents and over one in five female respondents from Tasmania (29.5% and 22.6% respectively) identified *alcohol and drugs* as a major issue facing Australia today.
- Similar proportion of males and females identified *equity and discrimination* as an important national issue (25.7% and 25.4% respectively).
- A greater proportion of females than males identified *LGBT issues* (24.1% compared with 6.6%), while a greater proportion of males than females identified *politics* as an important issue facing Australia today (22.1% compared with 12.7%).

Table 8.6: Most important issues in Australia today

	National %	TAS 2015 %	Female %	Male %	TAS 2014 %	TAS 2013 %
Alcohol and drugs	27.0	26.1	22.6	29.5	18.7	13.6
Equity and discrimination	25.0	25.7	25.4	25.7	15.5	26.7
Politics	16.1	17.7	12.7	22.1	27.1	19.0
The economy and financial matters	18.9	17.6	17.3	18.0	22.8	16.0
Employment	12.7	16.6	15.5	17.8	21.2	22.8
Population issues	15.3	15.7	16.7	14.8	18.1	27.0
LGBT issues	13.2	15.2	24.1	6.6	5.3	11.3
Mental health	14.9	14.6	22.0	8.2	12.4	13.4
International relations	13.4	14.3	10.8	17.2	6.4	4.7
Health	9.5	13.7	15.8	11.7	17.7	16.3
The environment	12.8	12.3	10.2	14.2	10.0	11.9
Education	12.2	10.1	12.7	7.9	12.0	14.8
Homelessness/housing	7.8	8.9	10.8	7.1	9.0	11.0
Crime, safety and violence	10.1	8.1	6.2	9.8	9.1	6.2
Bullying	9.3	7.6	9.9	5.7	14.7	8.0
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues	4.3	5.8	7.4	4.4	0.7	2.1

Note: Items are listed in order of State frequency.

What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities that they have been involved in over the past year from the list shown in Table 8.7. The top two activities for young people from Tasmania, as they were nationally, were *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)*. The third top activity for young Tasmanians was *arts/cultural/music activities*. Significant proportions of young people reported involvement in each of the activities listed over the past year.

- *Sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *arts/cultural/music activities* were the three most popular activities for young people from Tasmania in 2015.
- Almost half of respondents indicated that they had participated in *volunteer work* (47.1%).
- Four in ten young people reported participation in *student leadership activities* (39.1%) and around one quarter had participated in *youth groups and clubs* (28.5%) and *religious groups or activities* (23.6%).
- Around one in five young people from Tasmania (21.0%) had participated in *environmental groups or activities* over the past year.

Gender differences

As shown in Table 8.7 the top two activities for both genders were consistent with the Tasmania and national results, although a greater proportion of male than female respondents were involved in *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)*. The third top activity for females in Tasmania was *arts/cultural/music activities*, while for males it was *volunteer work*.

- 77.8% of male respondents and 74.0% of female respondents were involved in *sports (as a participant)* over the past year.
- A larger proportion of male than female respondents were involved in *sports (as a spectator)* (74.3% compared with 65.0%).
- A much higher proportion of female than male respondents were involved with *arts/cultural/music activities* (58.1% compared with 38.1%).
- Despite *volunteer work* ranking higher up the list for male respondents, overall a greater proportion of female than male respondents from Tasmania were involved in *volunteer work* and *student leadership activities* (55.3% and 45.4% compared with 39.9% and 34.0% respectively).

Table 8.7: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	National %	TAS 2015 %	Female %	Male %	TAS 2014 %	TAS 2013 %
Sports (as a participant)	74.3	75.8	74.0	77.8	69.8	72.3
Sports (as a spectator)	67.4	70.0	65.0	74.3	65.3	68.2
Arts/cultural/music activities	50.7	47.2	58.1	38.1	45.0	53.1
Volunteer work	51.3	47.1	55.3	39.9	45.2	59.9
Student leadership activities	40.0	39.1	45.4	34.0	34.7	49.9
Youth groups and clubs	33.1	28.5	29.7	27.2	30.0	28.8
Religious groups or activities	30.8	23.6	24.9	22.5	21.7	26.2
Environmental groups or activities	22.0	21.0	22.5	19.7	23.6	30.7
Political groups or organisations	7.7	8.7	8.3	9.2	9.3	9.7

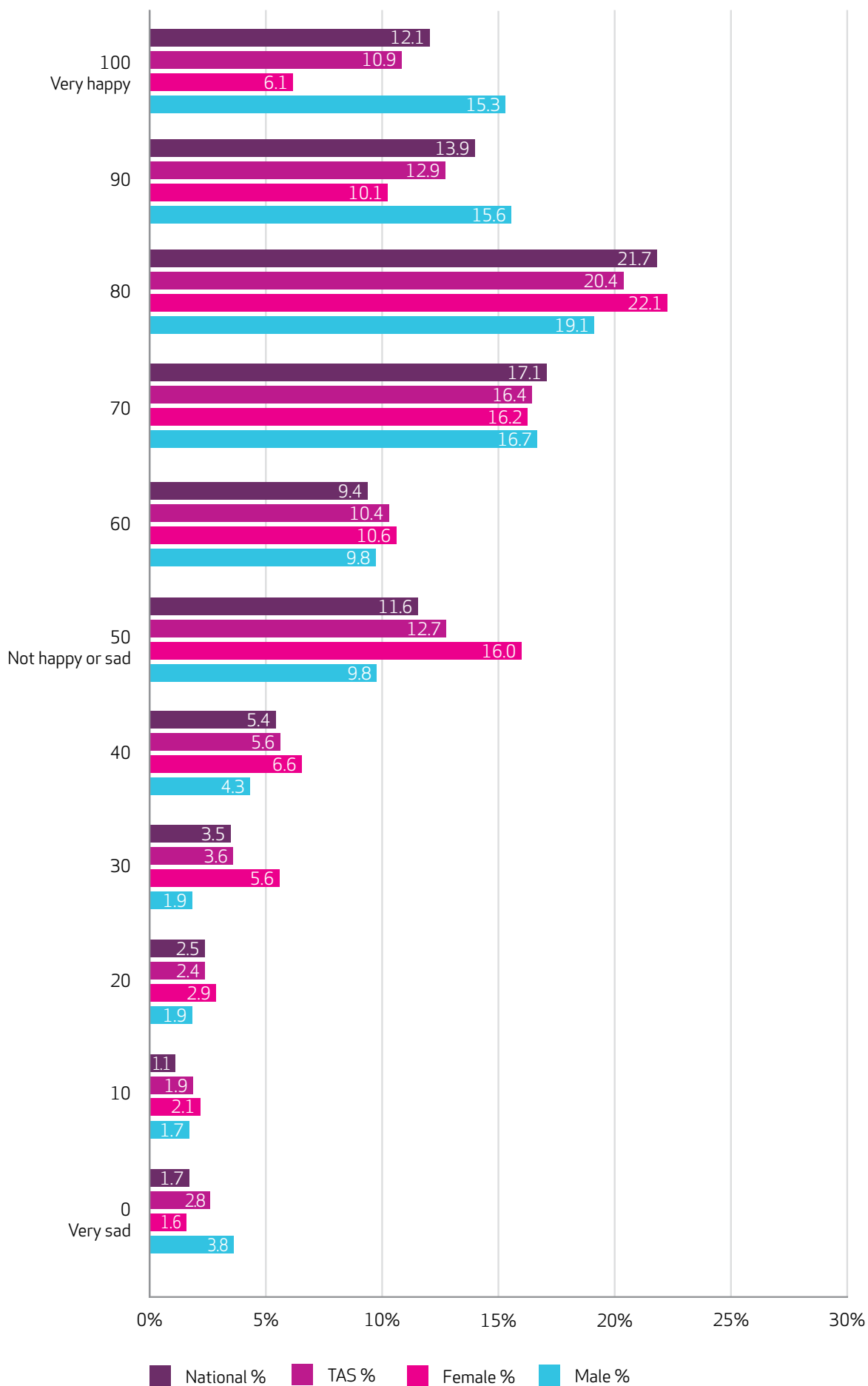
Note: Items are listed in order of State frequency.

How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being *very sad*, 5 *not happy or sad* and 10 *very happy*. In line with recommendations from the authors of this question¹, responses were standardised on a scale of 0 – 100, with 100 being the happiest. As Figure 8.8 shows, the majority of young people from Tasmania (60.6%) responded in the range 70 to 100, indicating that they felt positive overall about their lives. This is consistent with the national results. Responses were similar for both males and females, although a greater proportion of male than female respondents indicated that they felt *very happy* with their lives as a whole (15.3% compared with 6.1%).

¹ Cummins, R.A., & Lau, A.L.D., 2005, *Personal Wellbeing Index – School Children (PWI-SC) (English)*, Manual, 3rd Edition.

Figure 8.8: How happy young people are



How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked how positive they felt about the future, with responses rated on a 5 point scale from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 8.8 shows that compared to 2014 and 2013 results there has been a slight decrease in the proportion of Tasmania respondents feeling *positive* about the future and a slight increase in the proportion of those feeling *neither positive nor negative* about the future. Overall, one in ten young people from Tasmania felt *very negative* or *negative* about the future.

- Around six in ten respondents from Tasmania felt either *positive* (44.6%) or *very positive* (14.4%) about the future.
- Almost three in ten respondents (29.4%) felt *neither positive nor negative* about the future.
- 8.5% of respondents felt *negative* about the future and 3.2% felt *very negative*.
- Males and females from Tasmania were similar in terms of their feelings about the future. A larger proportion of male than female respondents, however, indicated feeling *very positive* (18.4% compared with 10.0% for females).

Table 8.8: Feelings about the future

	National %	TAS 2015 %	Female %	Male %	TAS 2014 %	TAS 2013 %
Very positive	15.0	14.4	10.0	18.4	17.4	15.6
Positive	46.8	44.6	43.2	46.2	48.0	48.9
Neither positive nor negative	28.2	29.4	34.9	24.2	26.8	21.9
Negative	7.5	8.5	9.7	7.4	4.9	7.1
Very negative	2.5	3.2	2.2	3.8	2.8	6.5

Victoria



Profile of respondents

In total, 4,645 young people from Victoria (VIC) aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2015*.

Gender breakdown

Over half (52.4%) of respondents from VIC were female and 47.6% were male.

Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 144 (3.2%) respondents from VIC identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 94 (2.1%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 34 (0.7%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.4% identified as both). A higher proportion of male than female respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (4.0% compared with 2.4%).

Language background other than English

A total of 816 (17.9%) respondents from VIC stated that they were born overseas and 1,186 (26.0%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 60 languages spoken at home in VIC, the most common were (in order of frequency): Chinese, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin and Italian.

Disability

A total of 232 (5.1%) respondents from VIC indicated that they had a disability, with a greater proportion of males (6.6%) than females (3.7%) reporting a disability. The most frequently cited disabilities in VIC were (in order of frequency): learning disability, autism and deafness or hearing impairment.

Detailed results

Education

As indicated in Table 9.1, 96.0% of respondents from VIC were studying full-time. A slightly higher proportion of female than male respondents reported that they were studying full-time (97.0% compared with 94.9% respectively), while a slightly greater proportion of males (3.2%) than females (1.6%) reported not studying at all.

Respondents who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in previous years, the majority of respondents from VIC reported that they were either *very satisfied* (17.3%) or *satisfied* (57.9%) with their studies. Less than one in twenty were *very dissatisfied* or *dissatisfied* (1.2% and 3.7% respectively). As shown in Table 9.2, a slightly higher proportion of females than males from VIC reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their studies (18.1% and 58.4% of females compared with 16.4% and 57.5% of males respectively).

Table 9.1: Participation in education

	National %	VIC %	Female %	Male %
Studying full-time	94.0	96.0	97.0	94.9
Studying part-time	2.6	1.6	1.4	1.9
Not studying	3.5	2.4	1.6	3.2

Table 9.2: Satisfaction with studies

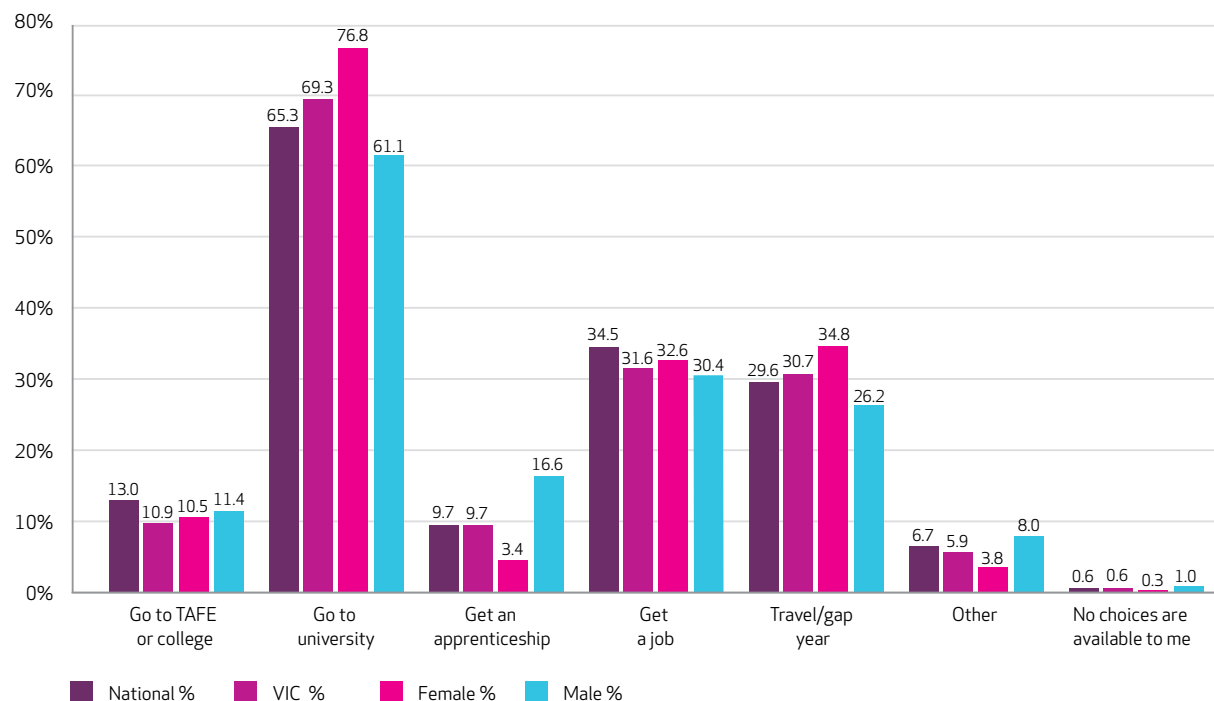
	National %	VIC 2015 %	Female %	Male %	VIC 2014 %	VIC 2013 %
Very satisfied	16.0	17.3	18.1	16.4	15.5	18.5
Satisfied	56.7	57.9	58.4	57.5	56.1	56.6
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	21.5	19.8	18.9	20.7	21.7	19.4
Dissatisfied	4.4	3.7	3.8	3.7	5.3	4.5
Very dissatisfied	1.3	1.2	0.8	1.7	1.5	1.1

In 2015, respondents who reported they were studying full-time or part-time were asked whether or not they were still at school. The majority of respondents (98.5%) from VIC stated they were still at school. Male and female respondents indicated that they were still at school in equal proportions (both at 98.5%). Of those who were still at school in VIC, 96.2% stated that they intended to complete Year 12. More than three times the proportion of males than females indicated that they did not intend to complete Year 12 (6.0% compared with 1.8% respectively).

Respondents who were still at school were also asked what they were planning to do after leaving school. Figure 9.1 shows that around seven in ten respondents from VIC planned to go to university after school (69.3%). Many respondents also indicated plans to get a job (31.6%) and to travel or go on a gap year (30.7%) after school. Overall, 10.9% of young people from VIC planned to attend TAFE or college and 9.7% reported plans to undertake an apprenticeship. A small minority of respondents (0.6%) indicated that they felt no choices were available to them after they left school.

While going to university was the most frequently chosen option among both male and female respondents from VIC, a higher proportion of females than males stated that they planned to do so (76.8% compared with 61.1% respectively). A greater proportion of female respondents also reported plans to travel or go on a gap year after school (34.8% compared with 26.2%). A larger proportion of males indicated that they were planning to undertake an apprenticeship (16.6% compared with 3.4% of females).

Figure 9.1: Plans after leaving school



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Employment

Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who answered that they had paid employment were asked to specify how many hours they worked per week, on average. Table 9.3 shows participation in paid employment amongst respondents from VIC. In line with the national data, only a small proportion (0.3%) of respondents who reported paid employment were employed full-time. However, given the percentage of respondents who were still at school this is not surprising. Just over four in ten (41.5%) respondents from VIC reported part-time employment. Almost six in ten VIC respondents reported that they were not in paid employment, with 35.4% looking for work and 22.8% not looking for work.

Similar proportions of male and female respondents from VIC reported full-time employment (0.4% compared with 0.2% respectively), while a slightly higher proportion of female respondents were employed part-time (42.6% compared with 40.2%). Conversely, a greater proportion of male than female respondents were looking for work (37.7% compared with 33.4%).

Table 9.3: Participation in paid employment

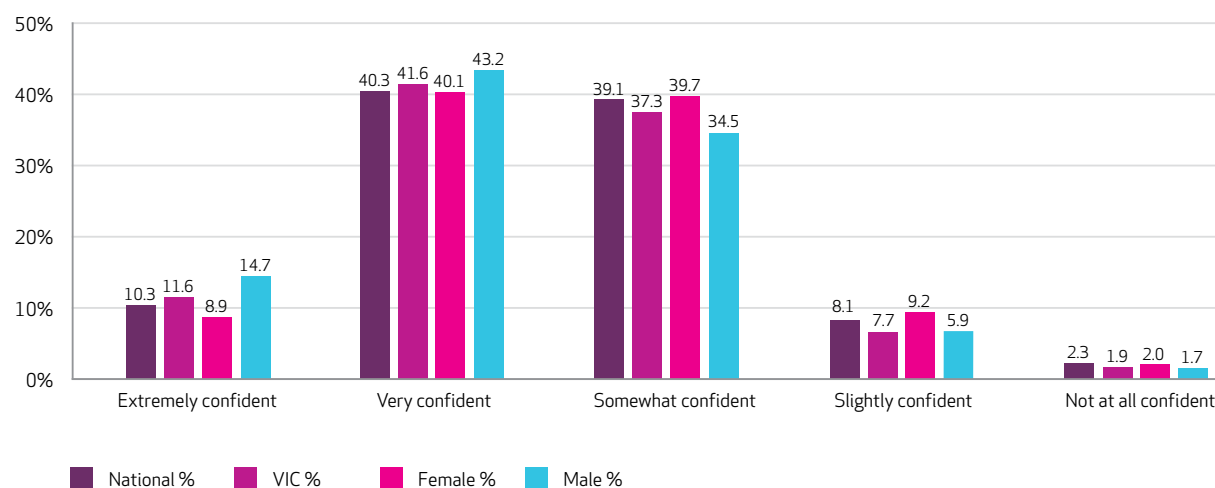
	National %	VIC %	Female %	Male %
Employed full-time	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.4
Employed part-time	38.8	41.5	42.6	40.2
Not in paid employment, looking for work	35.9	35.4	33.4	37.7
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	24.8	22.8	23.8	21.7

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

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

In 2015, respondents were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. Responses for this question were rated on a five point scale from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. Just over half of respondents from VIC indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve study/work goals, with 11.6% indicating that they were *extremely confident* and 41.6% indicating that they were *very confident*. However, around one in ten young people from VIC were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals, with 7.7% being *slightly confident* and 1.9% *not at all confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. A slightly higher proportion of male than female respondents reported feeling *extremely confident* or *very confident* (14.7% and 43.2% of males compared with 8.9% and 40.1% of females respectively).

Figure 9.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals



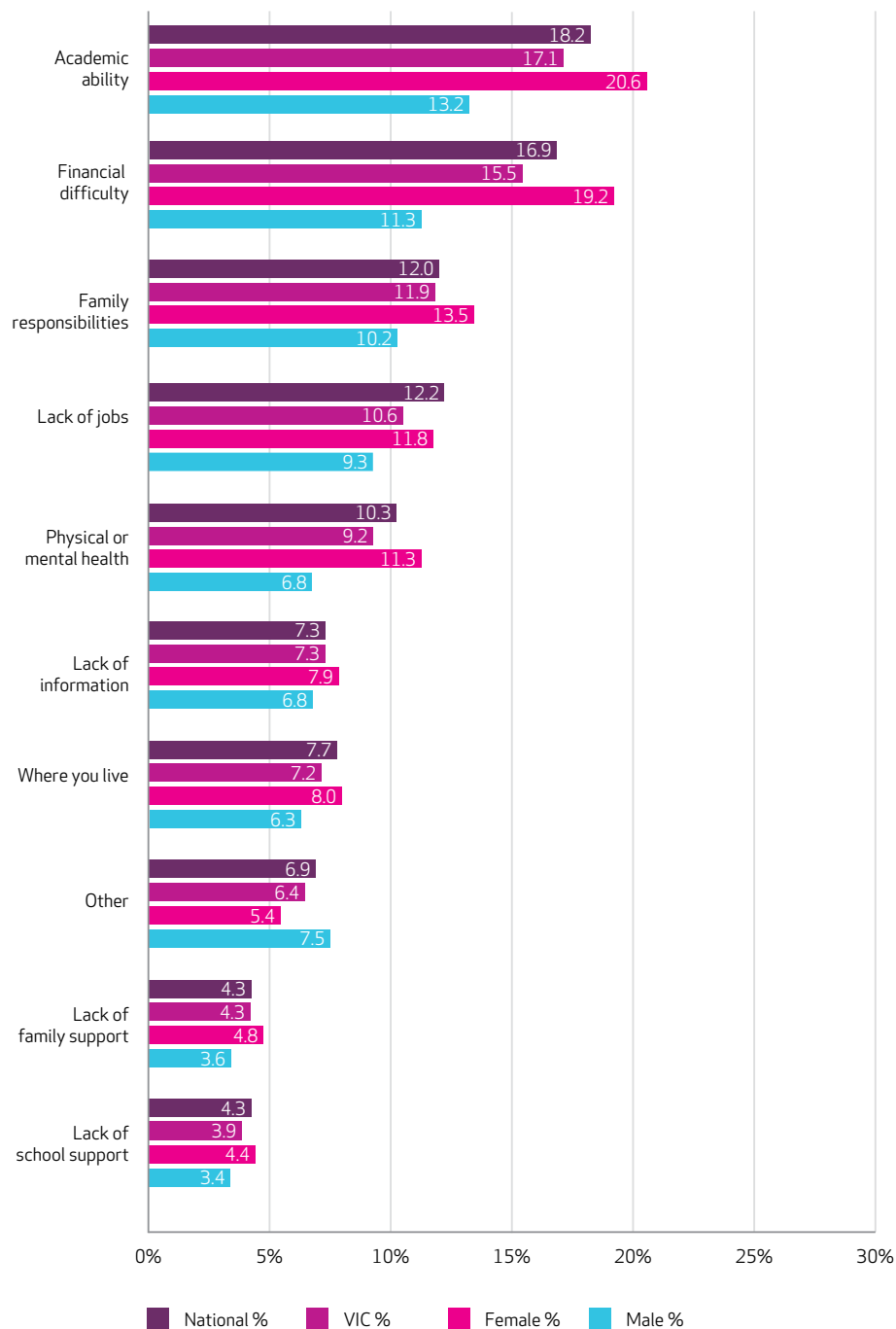
Barriers to the achievement of young people's study/work goals after school

Young people in 2015 were asked whether they felt there were any barriers which may impact on the achievement of their study/work goals after school. Just under half (47.6%) of respondents from VIC indicated that they felt there would be barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals, with a slightly greater proportion of females (51.0%) than males (43.7%) reporting the presence of these barriers.

Respondents who indicated the presence of barriers were asked to indicate from a number of items which barriers they saw as preventing them from achieving their goals after school. Figure 9.3 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated each item as a barrier. In VIC, the top three barriers young people saw impacting the achievement of their study/work goals after school were *academic ability*, *financial difficulty* and *family responsibilities*.

- *Academic ability*, *financial difficulty* and *family responsibilities* were the three most commonly cited barriers to the achievement of young people's study/work goals after school (17.1%, 15.5% and 11.9% respectively).
- Around one in ten respondents from VIC indicated that they saw a *lack of jobs* and *physical or mental health* as barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals after school.

Figure 9.3: Barriers to the achievement of study/work goals after school



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

Gender differences

As shown in Figure 9.3, the top three barriers identified by both genders to the achievement of their study/work goals after school were consistent with VIC and national results. A greater proportion of females than males from VIC indicated that they saw these, along with many of the other items, as barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals.

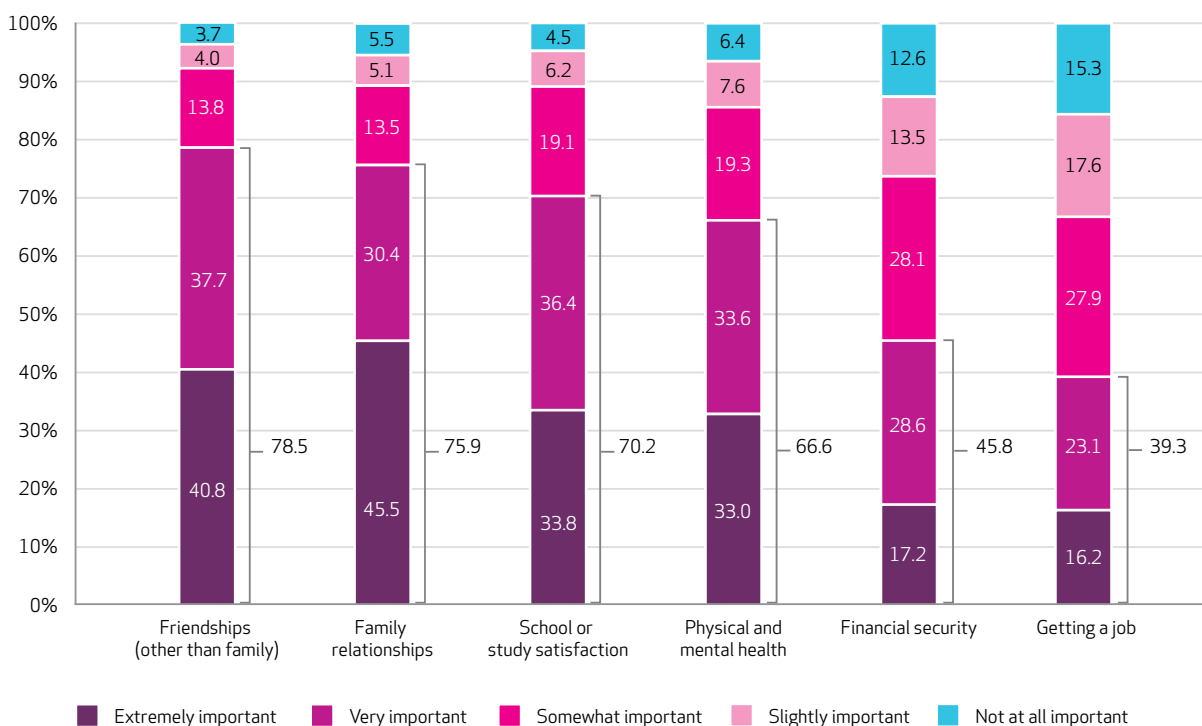
- One in five (20.6%) female respondents and 13.2% of male respondents indicated that *academic ability* was a barrier.
- A higher proportion of female than male respondents indicated that *financial difficulties* and *family responsibilities* were barriers to the achievement of future study/work goals (19.2% and 13.5% of females compared with 11.3% and 10.2% of males respectively).

What do young people value?

In 2015 young people were again asked how much they valued *family relationships*, *financial security*, *friendships*, *getting a job*, *physical and mental health* and *school or study satisfaction*. Responses for these items were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely important* to *not at all important*. In Figure 9.4 the items were ranked in order of importance by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely important* or *very important* for each item. In line with both the national data and 2014 VIC findings, the two most highly valued items for respondents from VIC this year were *friendships* and *family relationships*. The next most valued item for VIC respondents was *school or study satisfaction*, followed by *physical and mental health* (again consistent with the national results).

- *Friendships* were highly valued by 78.5% of respondents from VIC (*extremely important*: 40.8%; *very important*: 37.7%). *Family relationships* were also valued highly by 75.9% of respondents (*extremely important*: 45.5%; *very important*: 30.4%).
- Seven in ten respondents highly valued *school or study satisfaction* (*extremely important*: 33.8%; *very important*: 36.4%) and two thirds highly valued *physical and mental health* (*extremely important*: 33.0%; *very important*: 33.6%).
- Just under half of VIC respondents placed a high value on *financial security* (*extremely important*: 17.2%; *very important*: 28.6%) and almost four in ten respondents highly valued *getting a job* (*extremely important*: 16.2%; *very important*: 23.1%).

Figure 9.4: What young people value



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

Gender differences

Friendships and family relationships were ranked as the two most highly valued items by both males and females in VIC, as shown in Table 9.4. The third most highly valued item for females was school or study satisfaction, while for males it was physical or mental health. The proportion of female respondents who highly valued these, and many of the other items, was higher than the proportion of males.

- Friendships were highly valued by 81.4% of females (*extremely important*: 44.5%; *very important*: 36.9%) compared with 75.3% of males (*extremely important*: 36.8%; *very important*: 38.5%).
- Family relationships were highly valued by 80.1% of females (*extremely important*: 50.9%; *very important*: 29.2%) compared with 71.4% of males (*extremely important*: 39.6%; *very important*: 31.8%).
- School or study satisfaction was highly valued by 77.3% of females (*extremely important*: 39.7%; *very important*: 37.6%) compared with 62.2% of males (*extremely important*: 27.2%; *very important*: 35.0%).
- Physical and mental health was highly valued by 69.6% of females (*extremely important*: 35.4%; *very important*: 34.2%) and 63.4% of males (*extremely important*: 30.4%; *very important*: 33.0%) in VIC.

Table 9.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	44.5	36.9	12.9	3.5	2.1
Family relationships	50.9	29.2	11.8	4.9	3.2
School or study satisfaction	39.7	37.6	16.3	4.2	2.1
Physical and mental health	35.4	34.2	19.6	6.9	3.9
Financial security	18.7	30.2	28.4	12.8	9.9
Getting a job	14.8	23.3	30.0	17.7	14.3
Males	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	36.8	38.5	14.8	4.5	5.3
Family relationships	39.6	31.8	15.3	5.4	7.9
School or study satisfaction	27.2	35.0	22.1	8.5	7.1
Physical and mental health	30.4	33.0	18.9	8.5	9.2
Financial security	15.6	26.7	27.8	14.2	15.6
Getting a job	17.7	22.9	25.5	17.5	16.4

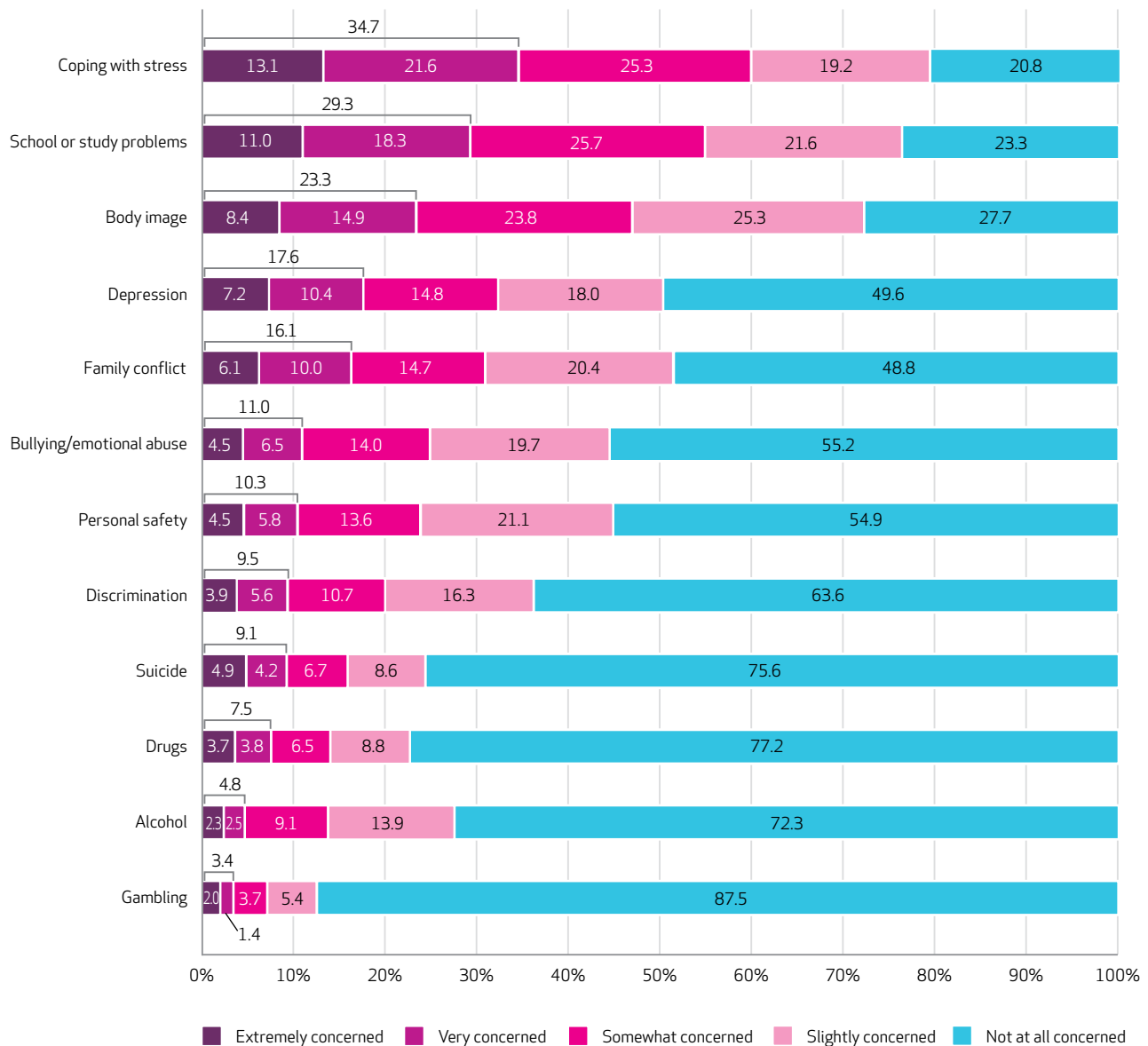
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of State frequency.

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Respondents were asked to rate how concerned they were about a number of issues, shown in Figure 9.5. Responses were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*. The items were ranked in order of concern by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* for each item. The top three issues of concern for young people from VIC were *coping with stress*, *school or study problems* and *body image*. These were the same top three issues identified at the national level.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with 34.7% of respondents from VIC indicating that they were either *extremely concerned* (13.1%) or *very concerned* (21.6%) about this issue.
- *School or study problems* was a major concern for 29.3% (*extremely concerned*: 11.0%; *very concerned*: 18.3%) of young people.
- *Body image* was also an important issue of concern for 23.3% of respondents (*extremely concerned*: 8.4%; *very concerned*: 14.9%).
- Less than one in five respondents were either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* about *depression* and *family conflict*.

Figure 9.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item.

Gender differences

Coping with stress, *school or study problems* and *body image* were among the top three issues of concern for both males and females in VIC, as highlighted in Table 9.5. The order of the top two issues of concern differed however, with males indicating that *school or study problems* were their number one concern, while for females the top issue of concern was *coping with stress*. The proportion of females concerned about these three (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- For around half of all females *coping with stress* was a major concern (*extremely concerned*: 18.5%; *very concerned*: 29.0%), compared with around one in five of all males (*extremely concerned*: 7.1%; *very concerned*: 13.3%).
- Females were also more concerned about *school or study problems* with 36.7% (*extremely concerned*: 14.8%; *very concerned*: 21.9%) indicating that this was a major concern, compared with 21.3% of males (*extremely concerned*: 6.9%; *very concerned*: 14.4%).
- Concerns about *body image* were considerably higher among females, with 32.5% (*extremely concerned*: 11.8%; *very concerned*: 20.7%) indicating that *body image* was a major concern, compared with 12.8% (*extremely concerned*: 4.5%; *very concerned*: 8.3%) of males.
- For 22.0% of females (*extremely concerned*: 9.2%; *very concerned*: 12.8%) and 12.6% of males (*extremely concerned*: 5.1%; *very concerned*: 7.5%) *depression* was a major concern.

Table 9.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

Females	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	18.5	29.0	27.0	16.0	9.4
School or study problems	14.8	21.9	26.5	21.9	14.9
Body image	11.8	20.7	27.4	24.5	15.5
Depression	9.2	12.8	16.6	19.6	41.7
Family conflict	7.6	12.3	17.8	21.9	40.4
Bullying/emotional abuse	5.2	8.2	15.4	22.0	49.2
Personal safety	4.8	6.8	15.1	24.4	48.8
Discrimination	4.2	7.0	12.3	17.8	58.7
Suicide	5.8	5.3	7.4	10.5	71.1
Drugs	3.3	4.0	6.9	9.2	76.6
Alcohol	1.6	2.9	9.5	14.6	71.5
Gambling	1.2	1.3	2.9	5.3	89.3
Males	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	7.1	13.3	23.5	22.7	33.3
School or study problems	6.9	14.4	24.9	21.3	32.5
Body image	4.5	8.3	19.8	26.1	41.2
Depression	5.1	7.5	12.6	16.3	58.5
Family conflict	4.4	7.5	11.1	18.7	58.4
Bullying/emotional abuse	3.8	4.6	12.4	17.1	62.0
Personal safety	4.3	4.8	11.7	17.6	61.6
Discrimination	3.5	4.0	8.9	14.5	69.1
Suicide	3.8	3.1	5.9	6.5	80.6
Drugs	4.1	3.5	6.1	8.3	78.0
Alcohol	3.0	2.2	8.6	13.2	73.1
Gambling	2.8	1.5	4.6	5.5	85.6

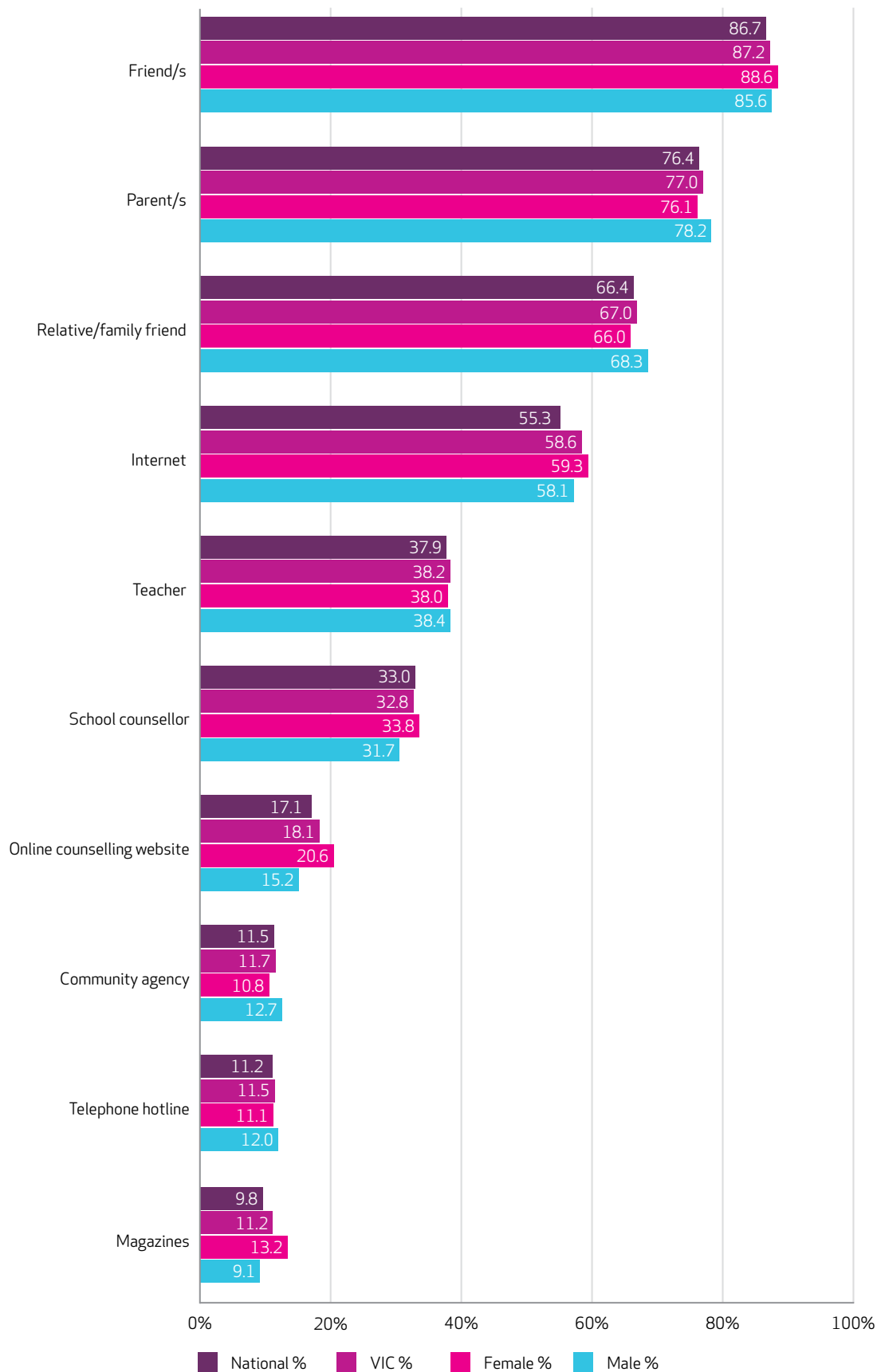
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of State frequency.

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

Young people were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 9.6 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that they would go to each source. The top three sources of help for young people in VIC were *friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends*.

- *Friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends* were the three most commonly cited sources of help for young people (87.2%, 77.0% and 67.0% respectively).
- Almost six in ten respondents from VIC indicated that they would go to the *internet* for help with important issues in their lives.
- Around one in four respondents indicated that they would go to their *teacher* for help and just under one third indicated that they would go to their *school counsellor* for help with important issues.

Figure 9.6: Where young people go for help with important issues



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

Gender differences

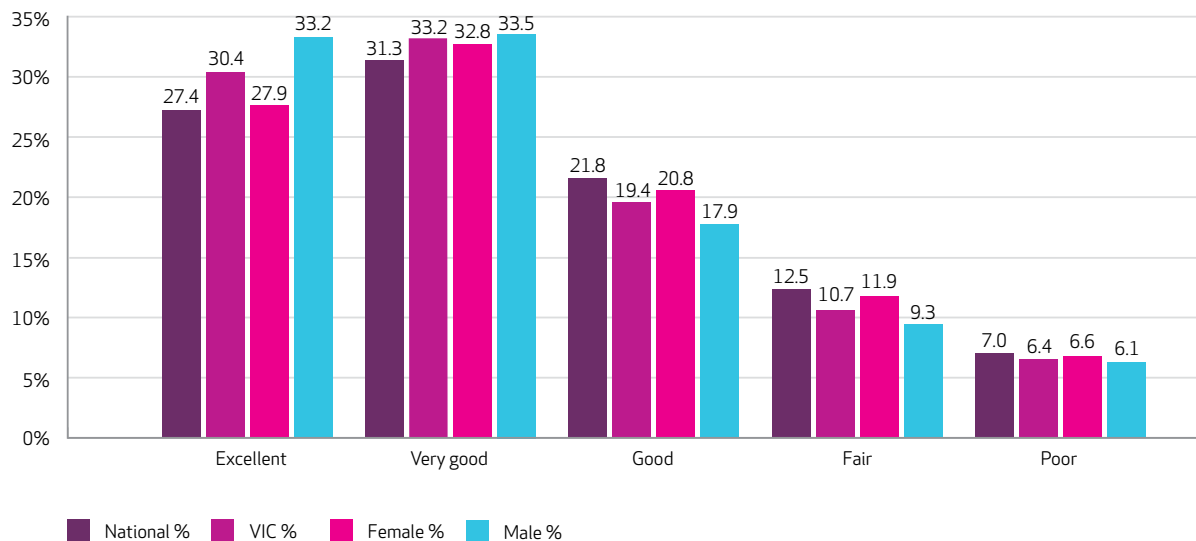
As shown in Figure 9.6, the top three sources of help for both genders were consistent with VIC and national results. However, a greater proportion of female respondents than male respondents indicated that they would go to *friend/s* for help with important issues, while greater proportions of males than females would go to *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends*.

- Around nine in ten (88.6%) female respondents and 85.6% of male respondents in VIC indicated that they would go to *friend/s* for help with important issues.
- A higher proportion of male than female respondents indicated they would go to *parent/s* (78.2% compared with 76.1%) and *relatives/family friends* (68.3% compared with 66.0%) for help.
- A slightly greater proportion of females than males from VIC would go to *online counselling websites* (20.6% compared with 15.2%) and *magazines* (13.2% compared with 9.1%) for help with important issues in their lives.

How well do young people feel their families get along?

Respondents were asked how well they thought their family got along. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 9.7 shows that, in line with the national data, the majority of respondents from VIC rated their family's ability to get along very positively, with 30.4% indicating that their family's ability to get along was *excellent* and 33.2% that it was *very good*. However, around one in five young people did not report such a positive experience of family relationships, rating their family's ability to get along as either *fair* (10.7%) or *poor* (6.4%). Male and female respondents gave similar ratings of their family's ability to get along.

Figure 9.7: Family's ability to get along



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

Young people were asked to write down the three issues they considered were most important in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 9.6. In 2015 the top three issues identified by young people from VIC were *alcohol and drugs*, *equity and discrimination*, and *the economy and financial matters*. These were also the top three issues identified nationally.

- Just under three in ten young people from VIC identified *alcohol and drugs* (28.8%) and *equity and discrimination* (27.3%) as important issues in Australia today.
- Compared to the past two years, identification of *alcohol and drugs* as an important issue has increased among respondents.
- Around one in six respondents identified *the economy and financial matters* (17.6%) and *politics* (16.2%) as major issues.
- Since 2013, the proportion of young people from VIC who identified *LGBT issues* and *international relations* as key issues facing the nation has increased. Conversely, mentions of *population issues* have declined over this period.

Gender differences

There were some notable differences in the issues identified as the most important in Australia today by male and female respondents from VIC. While *alcohol and drugs* and *equity and discrimination* were identified among the top three issues by both males and females, the other issues making up their top three differed. For females, *equity and discrimination* was the number one issue, followed by *alcohol and drugs* and then *LGBT issues*. For males the top issue this year was *alcohol and drugs*, followed by *equity and discrimination* and then *politics*.

- Almost one third of male respondents and one quarter of female respondents from VIC (32.3% and 25.5% respectively) identified *alcohol and drugs* as a major issue facing Australia today.
- A greater proportion of females than males identified *equity and discrimination* (29.0% compared with 25.4%) and *LGBT issues* (19.3% compared with 8.4%) as important national issues.
- Conversely, a greater proportion of males than females identified *politics* (19.6% compared with 13.1%) and *the economy and financial matters* (18.8% compared with 16.6%) as important issues.

Table 9.6: Most important issues in Australia today

	National %	VIC 2015 %	Female %	Male %	VIC 2014 %	VIC 2013 %
Alcohol and drugs	27.0	28.8	25.5	32.3	22.2	18.2
Equity and discrimination	25.0	27.3	29.0	25.4	19.8	25.9
The economy and financial matters	18.9	17.6	16.6	18.8	25.4	21.2
Politics	16.1	16.2	13.1	19.6	25.7	24.9
Population issues	15.3	15.1	15.0	15.2	18.7	24.2
LGBT issues	13.2	14.1	19.3	8.4	8.9	8.9
International relations	13.4	13.4	10.5	16.7	3.1	2.6
The environment	12.8	13.2	13.6	12.8	12.8	14.1
Crime, safety and violence	10.1	12.6	12.2	13.0	9.3	11.6
Mental health	14.9	11.9	15.6	7.9	18.3	13.1
Employment	12.7	11.5	10.6	12.6	8.6	11.6
Education	12.2	11.4	12.7	9.9	16.2	12.3
Health	9.5	8.9	11.0	6.7	12.6	10.8
Bullying	9.3	8.8	10.4	7.0	13.1	8.8
Homelessness/housing	7.8	7.9	10.0	5.6	5.8	7.0

Note: Items are listed in order of State frequency.

What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities that they have been involved in over the past year from the list shown in Table 9.7. The top two activities for young people from VIC, as they were nationally, were *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)*. These were also the top two activities for young people from VIC in 2014 and 2013. The third most common activity for Victorian respondents this year was *arts/cultural/music activities*, while nationally it was *volunteer work*. Significant proportions of young people reported involvement in each of the activities listed over the past year.

- *Sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *arts/cultural/music activities* were the three most popular activities for young people from VIC in 2015.
- Around half of respondents indicated that they had participated in *volunteer work* (46.3%).
- Over one third of young people reported participation in *student leadership activities* (36.5%).
- Around one quarter of young people from VIC had participated in *youth groups and clubs* (26.9%), *religious groups or activities* (26.5%), and *environmental groups or activities* (22.1%) over the past year.

Gender differences

As shown in Table 9.7 the top three activities for both genders were consistent with VIC and national results, although a greater proportion of male respondents than female respondents were involved in *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)*.

- 80.6% of male respondents and 71.2% of female respondents were involved in *sports (as a participant)* over the past year.
- A larger proportion of male than female respondents were involved in *sports (as a spectator)* (74.7% compared with 61.3%).
- A much higher proportion of female than male respondents were involved with *arts/cultural/music activities* (56.3% compared with 39.5%).
- Overall, a greater proportion of female than male respondents from VIC were involved in *volunteer work* and *student leadership activities* (53.2% and 41.7% compared with 38.6% and 30.6% respectively).

Table 9.7: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	National %	VIC 2015 %	Female %	Male %	VIC 2014 %	VIC 2013 %
Sports (as a participant)	74.3	75.6	71.2	80.6	76.4	78.0
Sports (as a spectator)	67.4	67.7	61.3	74.7	69.7	72.5
Arts/cultural/music activities	50.7	48.5	56.3	39.5	54.1	53.9
Volunteer work	51.3	46.3	53.2	38.6	49.9	53.2
Student leadership activities	40.0	36.5	41.7	30.6	40.0	42.7
Youth groups and clubs	33.1	26.9	27.9	25.8	31.1	30.3
Religious groups or activities	30.8	26.5	29.1	23.5	27.9	28.1
Environmental groups or activities	22.0	22.1	23.4	20.6	25.6	25.3
Political groups or organisations	7.7	7.1	6.9	7.3	8.9	9.1

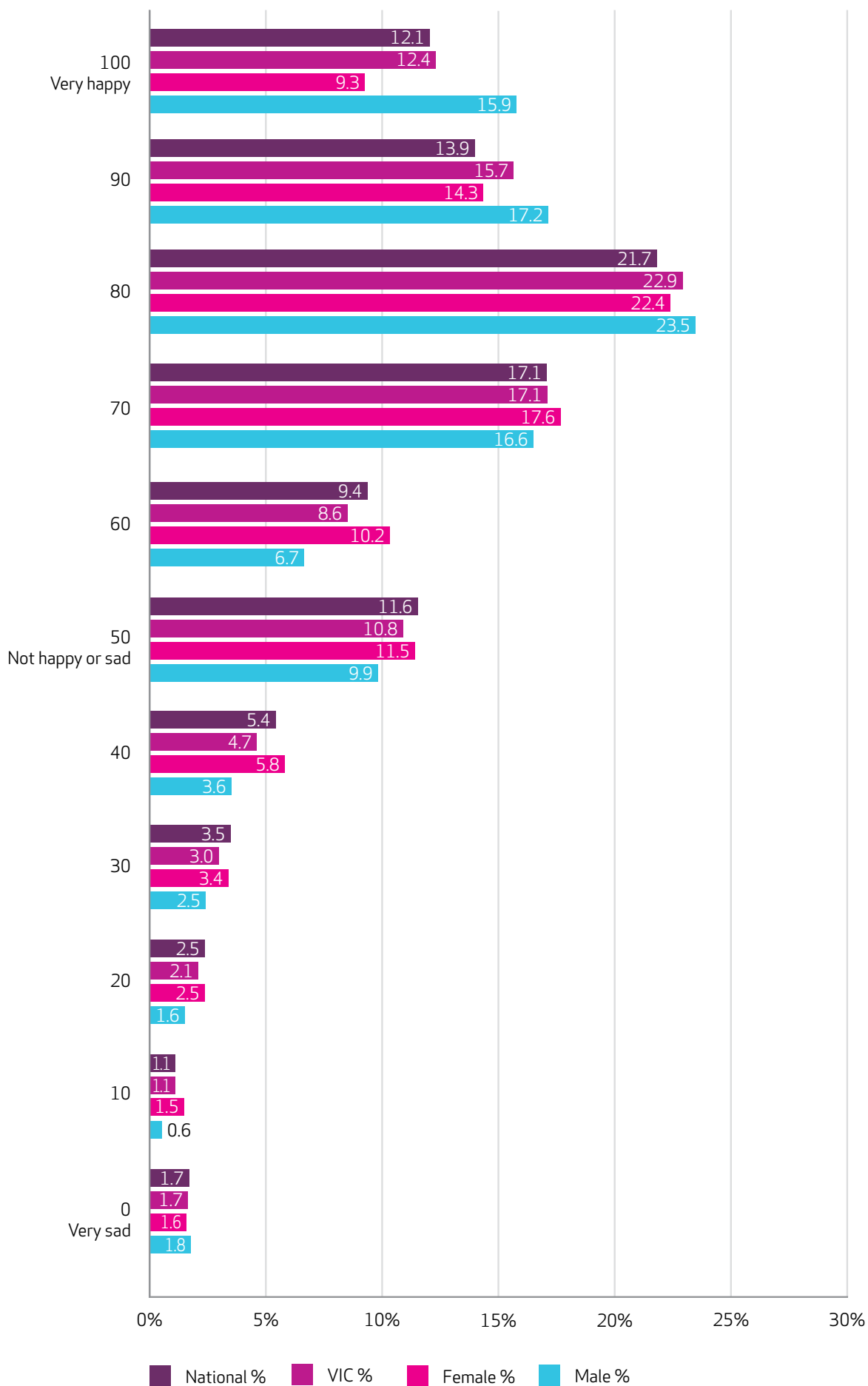
Note: Items are listed in order of State frequency.

How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being *very sad*, 5 *not happy or sad* and 10 *very happy*. In line with recommendations from the authors of this question¹, responses were standardised on a scale of 0 – 100, with 100 being the happiest. As Figure 9.8 shows, the majority of young people from VIC (68.1%) responded in the range 70 to 100, indicating that they felt positive overall about their lives. This is consistent with the national results. Responses were similar for both males and females, although a greater proportion of male than female respondents indicated that they felt *very happy* with their lives as a whole (15.9% compared with 9.3%).

¹ Cummins, R.A., & Lau, A.L.D., 2005, *Personal Wellbeing Index – School Children (PWI-SC)* (English), Manual, 3rd Edition.

Figure 9.8: How happy young people are



How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked how positive they felt about the future, with responses rated on a 5 point scale from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 9.8 shows that compared to 2014 and 2013 results there has been a slight increase in the proportion of VIC respondents feeling *neither positive nor negative* about the future. Overall, less than one in ten young people from VIC felt *very negative* or *negative* about the future.

- Around six in ten respondents from VIC felt either *positive* (47.4%) or *very positive* (16.5%) about the future.
- Just over one quarter of respondents (26.5%) felt *neither positive nor negative* about the future.
- 7.0% of respondents felt *negative* about the future and 2.6% felt *very negative*.
- Males and females from VIC were similar in terms of their feelings about the future. A larger proportion of male than female respondents, however, indicated feeling *very positive* (19.1% compared with 14.2% respectively).

Table 9.8: Feelings about the future

	National %	VIC 2015 %	Female %	Male %	VIC 2014 %	VIC 2013 %
Very positive	15.0	16.5	14.2	19.1	16.2	17.7
Positive	46.8	47.4	46.9	48.0	47.2	50.7
Neither positive nor negative	28.2	26.5	29.5	23.1	26.2	23.7
Negative	7.5	7.0	7.6	6.4	7.9	5.8
Very negative	2.5	2.6	1.8	3.4	2.4	2.1

Western Australia



Profile of respondents

In total, 1,543 young people from Western Australia (WA) aged 15 to 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2015*.

Gender breakdown

Half (50.1%) of respondents from WA were female and 49.9% were male.

Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 110 (7.3%) respondents from WA identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 92 (6.1%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 10 (0.7%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.5% identified as both). A higher proportion of male than female respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (8.3% compared with 6.2%).

Language background other than English

A total of 275 (18.2%) respondents from WA stated that they were born overseas and 219 (14.5%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 50 languages spoken at home in WA, the most common were (in order of frequency): Afrikaans, Chinese, Italian, Spanish and Indigenous languages.

Disability

A total of 99 (6.6%) respondents from WA indicated that they had a disability, with a greater proportion of males (8.0%) than females (4.9%) reporting a disability. The most frequently cited disabilities in WA were (in order of frequency): learning disability, physical disability and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD).

Detailed results

Education

As indicated in Table 10.1, 91.9% of respondents from WA were studying full-time. A slightly greater proportion of female than male respondents reported that they were studying full-time (93.4% compared with 90.3% respectively), while a slightly greater proportion of males (5.9%) than females (3.9%) reported not studying at all.

Respondents who reported they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. As in previous years, the majority of respondents from WA reported that they were either *very satisfied* (12.4%) or *satisfied* (56.2%) with their studies. Less than one in ten were *very dissatisfied* or *dissatisfied* (1.4% and 4.9% respectively). As shown in Table 10.2, similar proportions of both females and males from WA reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their studies (11.0% and 58.7% of females compared with 14.0% and 53.6% of males respectively).

Table 10.1: Participation in education

	National %	WA %	Female %	Male %
Studying full-time	94.0	91.9	93.4	90.3
Studying part-time	2.6	3.3	2.6	3.8
Not studying	3.5	4.9	3.9	5.9

Table 10.2: Satisfaction with studies

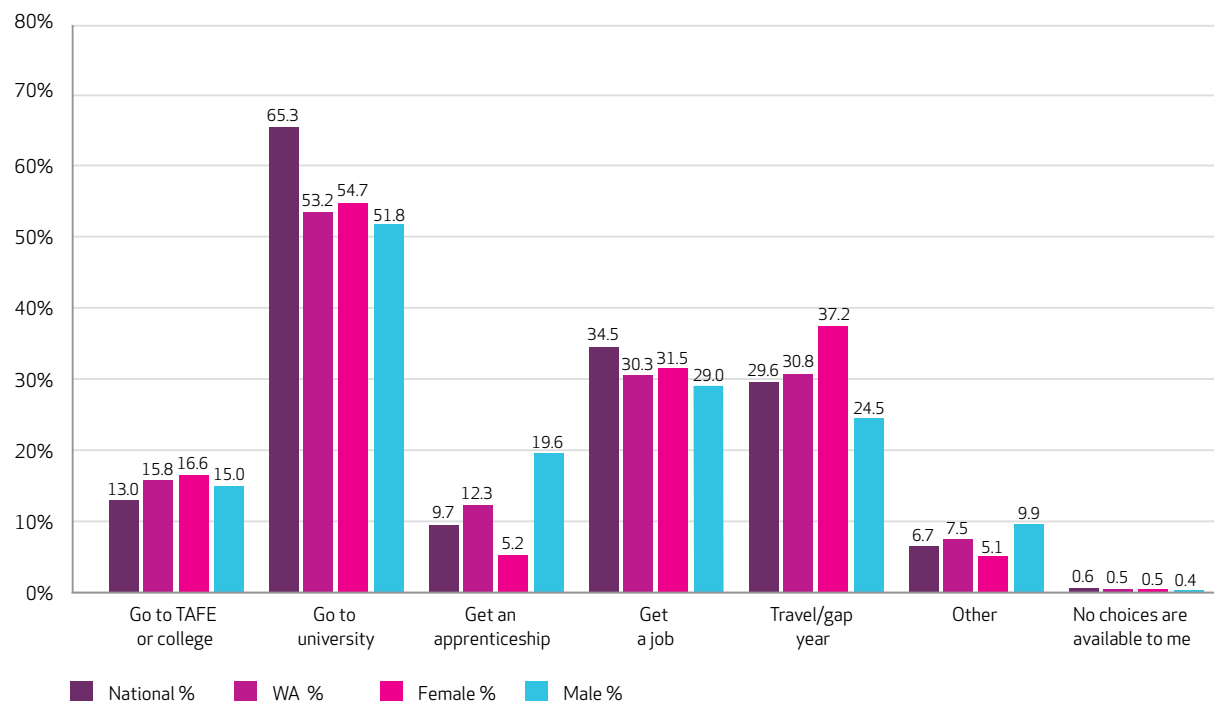
	National %	WA 2015 %	Female %	Male %	WA 2014 %	WA 2013 %
Very satisfied	16.0	12.4	11.0	14.0	12.7	14.2
Satisfied	56.7	56.2	58.7	53.6	52.8	53.9
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	21.5	25.0	23.8	26.2	26.2	24.5
Dissatisfied	4.4	4.9	4.8	5.2	5.8	4.9
Very dissatisfied	1.3	1.4	1.7	1.1	2.5	2.5

In 2015, respondents who reported they were studying full-time or part-time were asked whether or not they were still at school. The majority of respondents from WA (93.7%) stated they were still at school. A slightly greater proportion of females than males indicated that they were still at school (95.5% compared with 91.9% respectively). Of those who were still at school in WA, 96.4% stated that they intended to complete Year 12. Similar proportions of males and females indicated that they did not intend to complete Year 12 (4.1% compared with 3.1% respectively).

Respondents who were still at school were also asked what they were planning to do after leaving school. Figure 10.1 shows that just over one half of respondents from WA planned to go to university after school (53.2%). Many respondents also indicated plans to travel or go on a gap year (30.8%) and to get a job (30.3%) after school. Overall, 15.8% of young people from WA planned to attend TAFE or college and 12.3% reported plans to undertake an apprenticeship. A small minority of respondents (0.5%) indicated that they felt no choices were available to them after they left school.

While going to university was the most frequently chosen option among both male and female respondents from WA, a slightly higher proportion of females than males stated that they planned to do so (54.7% compared with 51.8% respectively). A greater proportion of female respondents also reported plans to travel or go on a gap year after school (37.2% compared with 24.5%). A much larger proportion of males indicated that they were planning to undertake an apprenticeship (19.6% compared with 5.2% of females).

Figure 10.1: Plans after leaving school



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Employment

Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who answered that they had paid employment were asked to specify how many hours they worked per week, on average. Table 10.3 shows participation in paid employment amongst respondents from WA. In line with the national data, only a small proportion (1.2%) of respondents who reported paid employment were employed full-time. However, given the percentage of respondents who were still at school this is not surprising. Four in ten (40.9%) respondents from WA reported part-time employment. Just under six in ten WA respondents reported that they were not in paid employment, with 36.2% looking for work and 21.6% not looking for work.

Similar proportions of male and female respondents from WA reported full-time employment (1.5% compared with 1.0% respectively), while a higher proportion of female respondents were employed part-time (47.3% compared with 34.4%). Conversely, a greater proportion of male than female respondents were looking for work (39.8% compared with 32.8%).

Table 10.3: Participation in paid employment

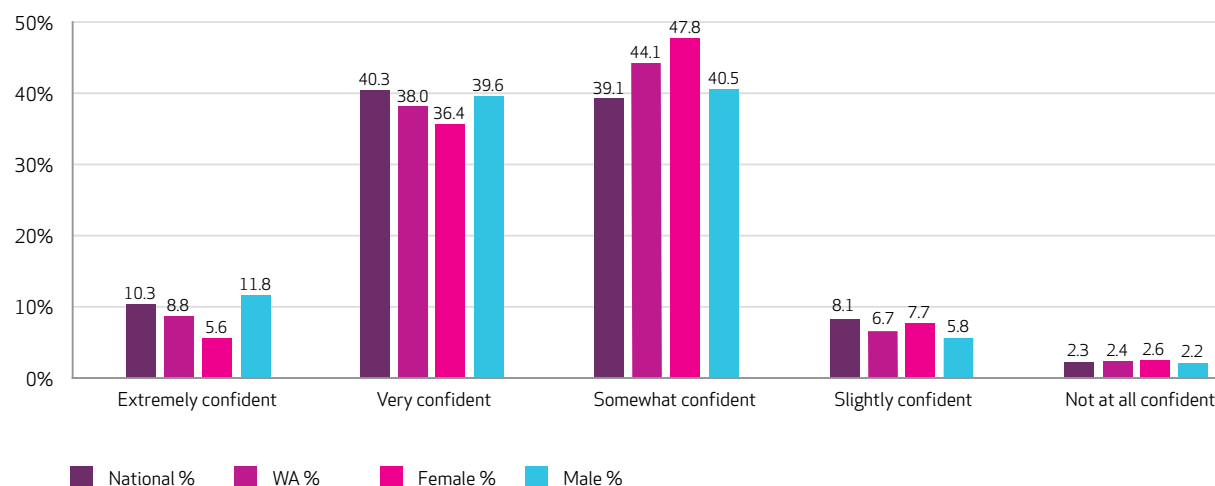
	National %	WA %	Female %	Male %
Employed full-time	0.5	1.2	1.0	1.5
Employed part-time	38.8	40.9	47.3	34.4
Not in paid employment, looking for work	35.9	36.2	32.8	39.8
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	24.8	21.6	19.0	24.3

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

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

In 2015, respondents were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. Responses for this question were rated on a five point scale from *extremely confident* to *not at all confident*. Around half of respondents from WA indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve study/work goals, with 8.8% indicating that they were *extremely confident* and 38.0% indicating that they were *very confident*. However, around one in ten young people from WA were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals, with 6.7% being *slightly confident* and 2.4% *not at all confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. A slightly higher proportion of male than female respondents reported feeling *extremely confident* or *very confident* (11.8% and 39.6% of males compared with 5.6% and 36.4% of females respectively).

Figure 10.2: Confidence in achieving study/work goals



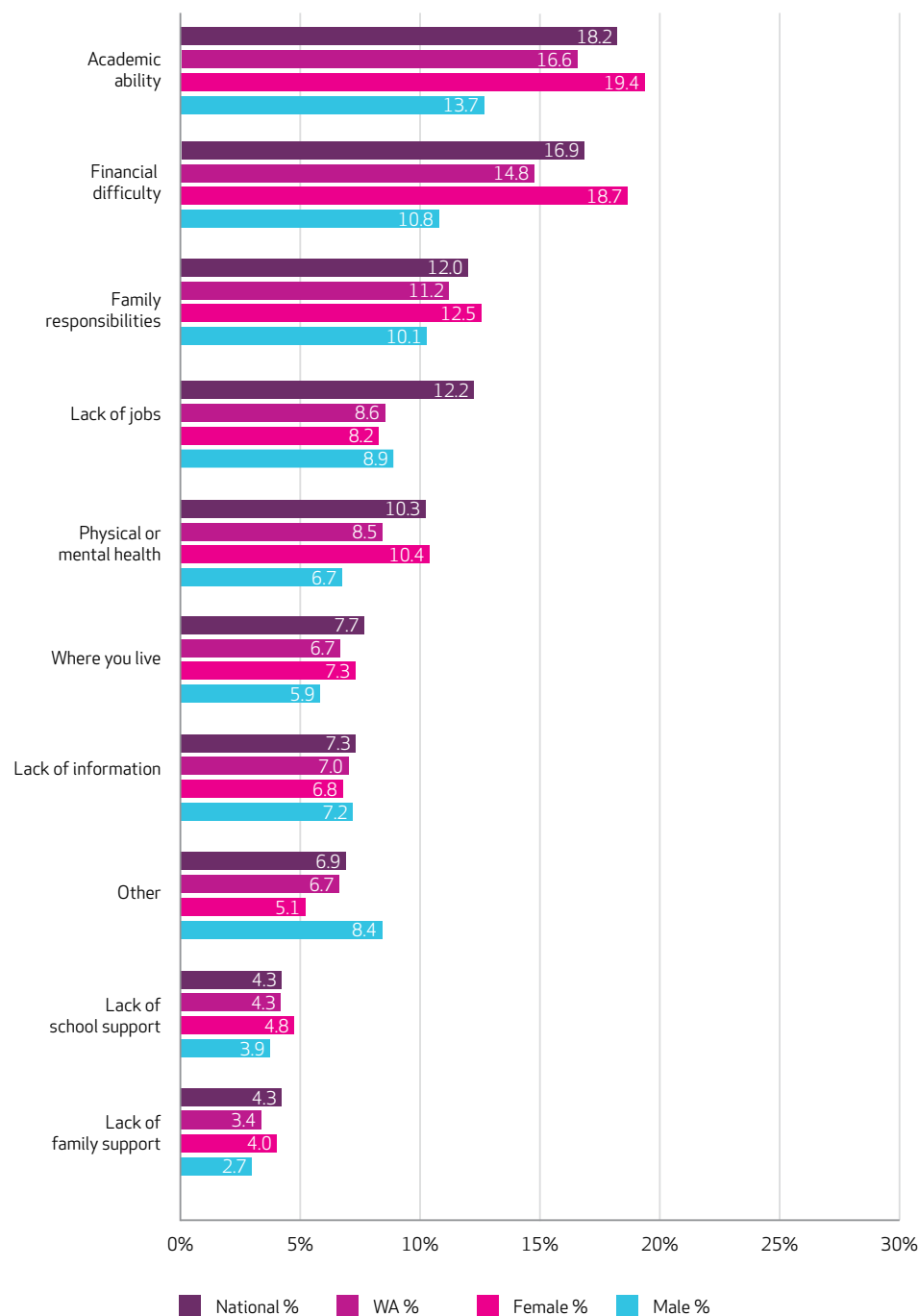
Barriers to the achievement of young people's study/work goals after school

Young people in 2015 were asked whether they felt there were any barriers which may impact on the achievement of their study/work goals after school. Half (50.3%) of respondents from WA indicated that they felt there would be barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals, with a slightly greater proportion of females (53.8%) than males (47.0%) reporting the presence of these barriers.

Respondents who indicated the presence of barriers were asked to indicate from a number of items which barriers they saw as preventing them from achieving their goals after school. Figure 10.3 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated each item as a barrier. In WA, the top three barriers young people saw impacting the achievement of their study/work goals after school were *academic ability*, *financial difficulty* and *family responsibilities*.

- *Academic ability*, *financial difficulty* and *family responsibilities* were the three most commonly cited barriers to the achievement of young people's study/work goals after school (16.6%, 14.8% and 11.2% respectively).
- Less than one in ten respondents from WA indicated that they saw a *lack of jobs* and *physical or mental health* as barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals after school.

Figure 10.3: Barriers to the achievement of study/work goals after school



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

Gender differences

As shown in Figure 10.3, the top three barriers identified by both genders to the achievement of their study/work goals after school were consistent with WA results. A greater proportion of females than males from WA indicated that they saw these, along with many of the other items, as barriers to the achievement of their study/work goals.

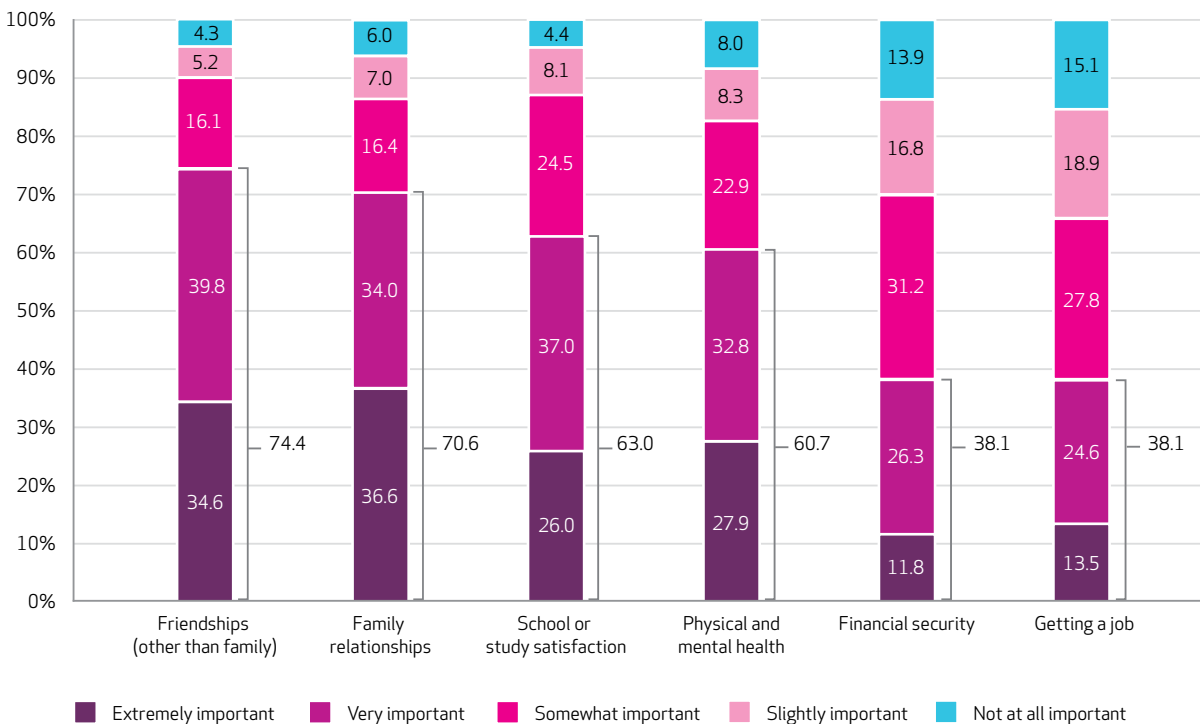
- Almost one in five (19.4%) female respondents and 13.7% of male respondents indicated that *academic ability* was a barrier.
- A higher proportion of female than male respondents indicated that *financial difficulties* and *family responsibilities* were barriers to the achievement of future study/work goals (18.7% and 12.5% of females compared with 10.8% and 10.1% of males respectively).
- Similar proportions of both males and females indicated that a *lack of jobs* was a barrier (8.9% compared with 8.2% respectively), while a greater proportion of females (10.4%) than males (6.7%) saw *physical or mental health* as a barrier to their study/work goals.

What do young people value?

In 2015 young people were again asked how much they valued *family relationships*, *financial security*, *friendships*, *getting a job*, *physical and mental health* and *school or study satisfaction*. Responses for these items were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely important* to *not at all important*. In Figure 10.4 the items were ranked in order of importance by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely important* or *very important* for each item. In line with both the national data and 2014 WA findings, the two most highly valued items for respondents from WA this year were *friendships* and *family relationships*. The next most valued item for WA respondents was *school or study satisfaction*, followed by *physical and mental health* (again consistent with the national results).

- *Friendships* were highly valued by 74.4% of respondents from WA (*extremely important*: 34.6%; *very important*: 39.8%). *Family relationships* were also valued highly by 70.6% of respondents (*extremely important*: 36.6%; *very important*: 34.0%).
- Just under two thirds of respondents highly valued *school or study satisfaction* (*extremely important*: 26.0%; *very important*: 37.0%) and six in ten highly valued *physical and mental health* (*extremely important*: 27.9%; *very important*: 32.8%)
- Around four in ten WA respondents placed a high value on *financial security* (*extremely important*: 11.8% *very important*: 26.3%) and *getting a job* (*extremely important*: 13.5%; *very important*: 24.6%).

Figure 10.4: What young people value



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

Gender differences

Friendships, family relationships and school or study problems were ranked as the three most highly valued items by both males and females in WA, as shown in Table 10.4. The proportion of female respondents who highly valued these, and many of the other items, was higher than the proportion of males.

- Friendships were highly valued by 78.0% of females (*extremely important*: 39.7%; *very important*: 38.3%) compared with 70.6% of males (*extremely important*: 29.6%; *very important*: 41.0%).
- Family relationships were highly valued by 74.0% of females (*extremely important*: 43.2%; *very important*: 30.8%) compared with 67.3% of males (*extremely important*: 30.1%; *very important*: 37.2%).
- 68.0% of females highly valued school or study satisfaction (*extremely important*: 31.6%; *very important*: 36.4%) compared with 57.9% of males (*extremely important*: 20.4%; *very important*: 37.5%).
- Physical and mental health was highly valued by 65.0% of females (*extremely important*: 32.3%; *very important*: 32.7%) and 56.5% of males (*extremely important*: 23.6%; *very important*: 32.9%) in WA.

Table 10.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	39.7	38.3	14.0	4.5	3.5
Family relationships	43.2	30.8	13.9	7.6	4.5
School or study satisfaction	31.6	36.4	22.1	6.6	3.2
Physical and mental health	32.3	32.7	20.9	8.0	6.1
Financial security	13.5	29.2	31.6	16.1	9.5
Getting a job	15.4	27.3	26.9	16.6	13.8
Males	Extremely important %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	29.6	41.0	18.2	5.9	5.2
Family relationships	30.1	37.2	18.9	6.4	7.5
School or study satisfaction	20.4	37.5	26.9	9.6	5.6
Physical and mental health	23.6	32.9	24.8	8.7	10.0
Financial security	10.1	23.3	31.0	17.4	18.3
Getting a job	11.6	22.0	28.6	21.3	16.5

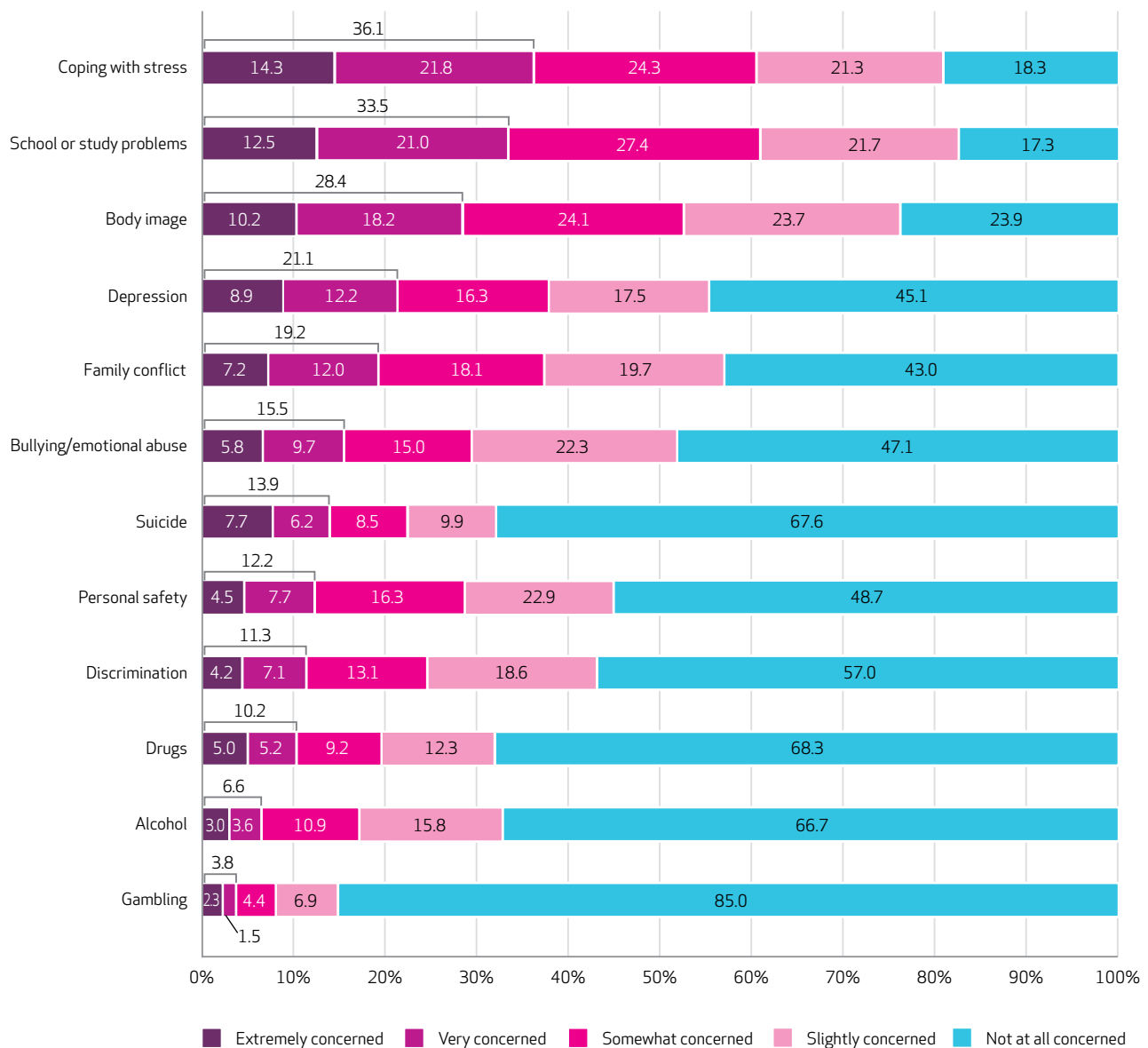
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item. Items are listed in order of State frequency.

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Respondents were asked to rate how concerned they were about a number of issues, shown in Figure 9.5. Responses were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*. The items were ranked in order of concern by summing together the number of respondents who selected either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* for each item. The top three issues of concern for young people from WA were *coping with stress*, *school or study problems* and *body image*. These were the same top three issues identified at the national level.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with 36.1% of respondents from WA indicating that they were either *extremely concerned* (14.3%) or *very concerned* (21.8%) about this issue.
- *School or study problems* was a major concern for 33.5% (*extremely concerned*: 12.5%; *very concerned*: 21.0%) of young people.
- *Body image* was also an important issue of concern for 28.4% of respondents (*extremely concerned*: 10.2%; *very concerned*: 18.2%).
- Around one in five respondents were either *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* about depression and family conflict.

Figure 10.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item.

Gender differences

School or study problems and *coping with stress* were among the two issues of concern for both males and females in WA, as highlighted in Table 10.5. The top issue of concern for females was *coping with stress*, followed by *body image* and then *school or study problems*. Comparatively, the top issue of concern for males was *school or study problems*, followed by *coping with stress* and then *depression*. The proportion of females concerned about these three (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- For over half of all females *coping with stress* was a major concern (*extremely concerned*: 22.5%; *very concerned*: 28.9%), compared with around one in five of all males (*extremely concerned*: 6.3%; *very concerned*: 14.7%).
- Despite *school or study problems* ranking as the number one concern for male respondents (*extremely concerned*: 7.6%; *very concerned*: 17.0%), a greater proportion of female respondents from WA were concerned by *school or study problems* (*extremely concerned*: 17.6%; *very concerned*: 24.8%).
- Concerns about *body image* were considerably higher among females, with 43.5% (*extremely concerned*: 15.5%; *very concerned*: 28.0%) indicating that *body image* was a major concern, compared with 13.0% (*extremely concerned*: 4.7%; *very concerned*: 8.3%) of males.
- For 27.7% of females (*extremely concerned*: 11.3%; *very concerned*: 16.4%) and 14.7% of males (*extremely concerned*: 6.5%; *very concerned*: 8.2%) *depression* was a major concern.

Table 10.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

Females	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	22.5	28.9	22.8	16.9	8.9
School or study problems	17.6	24.8	26.1	20.1	11.4
Body image	15.5	28.0	24.5	20.0	11.9
Depression	11.3	16.4	18.1	17.7	36.5
Family conflict	9.0	15.3	20.5	22.4	32.8
Bullying/emotional abuse	7.1	12.3	17.3	24.2	39.1
Suicide	8.2	9.0	10.0	11.0	61.8
Personal safety	4.6	9.4	19.1	24.8	42.0
Discrimination	3.8	8.6	15.0	19.9	52.7
Drugs	4.8	5.7	9.6	13.6	66.4
Alcohol	1.7	4.5	12.1	17.4	64.3
Gambling	1.6	0.9	3.3	6.8	87.4
Males	Extremely concerned %	Very concerned %	Somewhat concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	6.3	14.7	25.7	25.9	27.5
School or study problems	7.6	17.0	28.6	23.4	23.3
Body image	4.7	8.3	23.8	27.4	35.8
Depression	6.5	8.2	14.4	17.4	53.5
Family conflict	5.5	8.7	15.7	16.9	53.3
Bullying/emotional abuse	4.6	7.0	12.9	20.6	55.0
Suicide	7.3	3.3	7.2	8.7	73.4
Personal safety	4.3	5.9	13.6	21.0	55.3
Discrimination	4.5	5.6	11.3	17.4	61.1
Drugs	5.3	4.7	8.9	11.1	70.0
Alcohol	4.3	2.7	9.7	14.3	69.1
Gambling	3.1	2.0	5.5	7.1	82.4

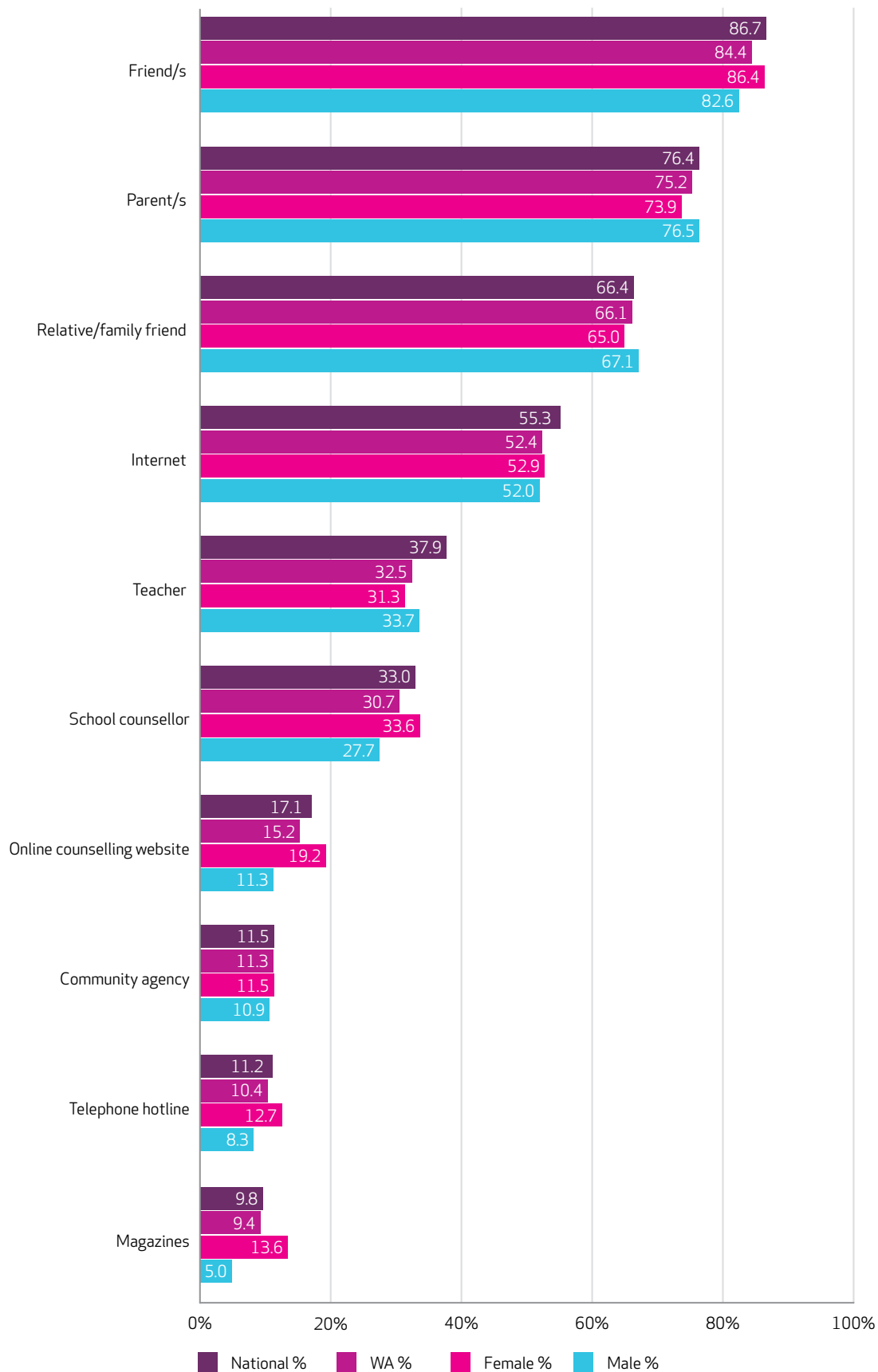
Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item. Items are listed in order of State frequency.

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

Young people were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 10.6 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that they would go to each source. The top three sources of help for young people in WA were *friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends*.

- *Friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends* were the three most commonly cited sources of help for young people (84.4%, 75.2% and 66.1% respectively).
- Just over half of respondents from WA indicated that they would go to the *internet* for help with important issues in their lives.
- Around three in ten respondents indicated that they would go to their *teacher* or *school counsellor* for help with important issues.

Figure 10.6: Where young people go for help with important issues



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

Gender differences

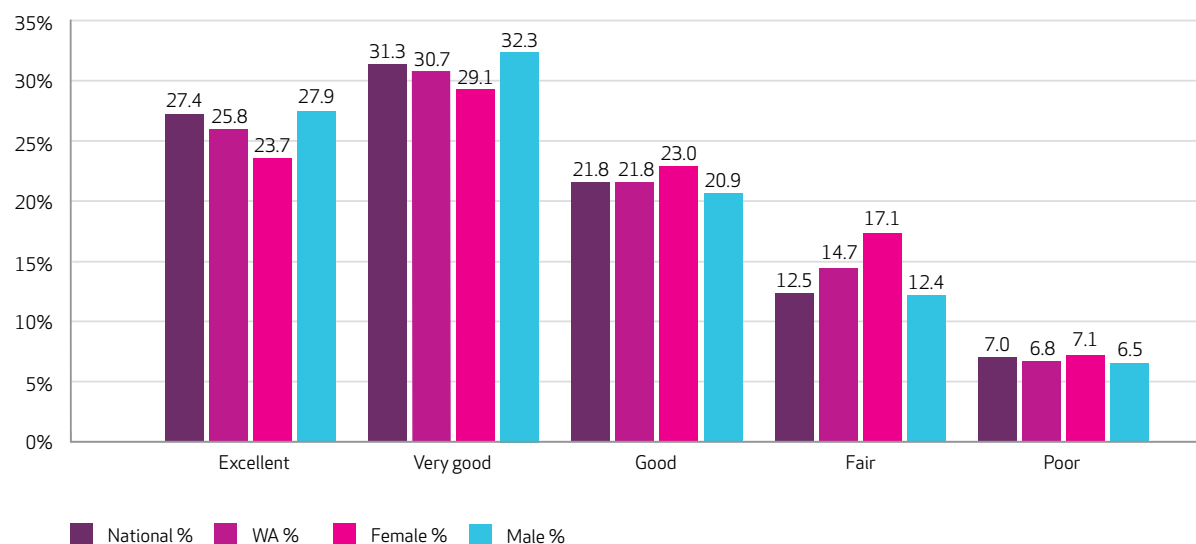
As shown in Figure 10.6, the top three sources of help for both genders were consistent with WA and national results. However, a greater proportion of female respondents than male respondents indicated that they would go to *friend/s* for help with important issues, while greater proportions of males would go to *parent/s* and *relatives/family friends*.

- Around nine in ten (86.4%) female respondents and 82.6% of male respondents in WA indicated that they would go to *friend/s* for help with important issues.
- A higher proportion of male than female respondents indicated they would go to *parent/s* (76.5% compared with 73.9%) and *relatives/family friends* (67.1% compared with 65.0%) for help.
- A greater proportion of females than males from WA would go to their *school counsellor* (33.6% compared with 27.7%), *online counselling websites* (19.2% compared with 11.3%) and *magazines* (13.6% compared with 5.0%) for help with important issues in their lives.

How well do young people feel their families get along?

Respondents were asked how well they thought their family got along. Responses to this question were rated on a 5 point scale, ranging from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 10.7 shows that, in line with the national data, the majority of respondents from WA rated their family's ability to get along very positively, with 25.8% indicating that their family's ability to get along was *excellent* and 30.7% that it was *very good*. However, almost one in five young people did not report such a positive experience of family relationships, rating their family's ability to get along as either *fair* (14.7%) or *poor* (6.8%). Male and female respondents gave similar ratings of their family's ability to get along.

Figure 10.7: Family's ability to get along



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

Young people were asked to write down the three issues they considered were most important in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 10.6. In 2015 the top three issues identified by young people from WA were *alcohol and drugs*, *equity and discrimination*, and *the economy and financial matters*. These were also the top three issues identified nationally.

- Around three in ten young people from WA identified *alcohol and drugs* (32.7%) and *equity and discrimination* (28.1%) as important issues in Australia today.
- Compared to the past two years, identification of *alcohol and drugs* as an important issue has increased among respondents.
- Close to one in five respondents identified *the economy and financial matters* (18.6%) and 15.5% identified *mental health* as major issues.
- Since 2013, *LGBT issues* have been increasingly identified by young people as a key issue facing the nation. Conversely, mentions of *the economy and financial matters*, *population issues*, *politics*, *employment* and *crime, safety and violence* have declined over this period.

Gender differences

There were some notable differences in the issues identified as the most important in Australia today by male and female respondents from WA. While *alcohol and drugs* and *equity and discrimination* were identified among the top three issues by both males and females, the other issues making up their top three differed. For females, *equity and discrimination* was the number one issue, followed by *alcohol and drugs* and then *mental health*. For males the top issue this year was *alcohol and drugs*, followed by *equity and discrimination* and then *the economy and financial matters*.

- Just under four in ten male respondents and almost three in ten female respondents from WA (36.8% and 28.7% respectively) identified *alcohol and drugs* as a major issue facing Australia today.
- A greater proportion of females than males identified *equity and discrimination* (29.2% compared with 26.9%) and *mental health* (21.3% compared with 9.8%) as important issues.
- Conversely, a greater proportion of males than females identified *the economy and financial matters* (19.2% compared with 18.1%) as an important national issue.

Table 10.6: Most important issues in Australia today

	National %	WA 2015 %	Female %	Male %	WA 2014 %	WA 2013 %
Alcohol and drugs	27.0	32.7	28.7	36.8	29.9	28.4
Equity and discrimination	25.0	28.1	29.2	26.9	19.6	20.2
The economy and financial matters	18.9	18.6	18.1	19.2	19.5	21.0
Mental health	14.9	15.5	21.3	9.8	19.0	14.1
Population issues	15.3	13.7	11.6	15.9	14.9	19.8
Politics	16.1	13.3	12.0	14.5	18.8	19.4
International relations	13.4	12.7	10.3	15.3	1.7	2.4
Education	12.2	12.3	14.7	9.9	15.7	12.3
LGBT issues	13.2	10.3	13.8	6.7	7.9	5.9
Bullying	9.3	9.9	11.9	8.1	14.8	11.1
The environment	12.8	9.8	10.8	8.9	9.2	11.4
Employment	12.7	9.6	8.7	10.4	9.9	10.2
Crime, safety and violence	10.1	9.1	7.9	10.4	10.6	14.0
Homelessness/housing	7.8	8.1	9.7	6.6	6.9	7.6
Health	9.5	7.4	6.8	7.8	11.6	9.3

Note: Items are listed in order of State frequency.

What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities that they have been involved in over the past year from the list shown in Table 10.7. The top three activities for young people from WA, as they were nationally, were *sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *volunteer work*. Significant proportions of young people reported involvement in each of the activities listed over the past year.

- *Sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *volunteer work* were the three most popular activities for young people from WA in 2015.
- Around half of respondents indicated that they had participated in *arts/cultural/music activities* (45.8%).
- Almost four in ten young people reported participation in *youth groups and clubs* (38.7%) and around one third had participated in *religious groups or activities* (33.6%) and *student leadership activities* (33.1%).
- Almost one quarter of young people from WA (23.0%) had participated in *environmental groups or activities* over the past year.

Gender differences

As shown in Table 10.7 the top two activities for both genders were consistent with WA and national results, although a greater proportion of male respondents than female respondents were involved in *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)*. The third top activity for females in WA was *arts/cultural/music activities*, while the third top activity for males from WA was *volunteer work*.

- 81.5% of male respondents and 73.3% of female respondents were involved in *sports (as a participant)* over the past year.
- A larger proportion of male than female respondents were also involved in *sports (as a spectator)* (73.4% compared with 63.1%) and *volunteer work* (54.6% compared with 52.4%).
- A much higher proportion of female than male respondents were involved with *arts/cultural/music activities* (53.3% compared with 38.1%).

Table 10.7: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	National %	WA 2015 %	Female %	Male %	WA 2014 %	WA 2013 %
Sports (as a participant)	74.3	77.4	73.3	81.5	73.8	73.2
Sports (as a spectator)	67.4	68.3	63.1	73.4	66.9	66.7
Volunteer work	51.3	53.5	52.4	54.6	54.7	52.0
Arts/cultural/music activities	50.7	45.8	53.3	38.1	55.8	52.4
Youth groups and clubs	33.1	38.7	38.4	39.1	39.3	44.5
Religious groups or activities	30.8	33.6	35.0	32.0	31.9	39.5
Student leadership activities	40.0	33.1	34.1	32.1	39.1	40.0
Environmental groups or activities	22.0	23.0	24.6	21.7	23.0	27.0
Political groups or organisations	7.7	5.9	4.7	7.2	9.6	8.8

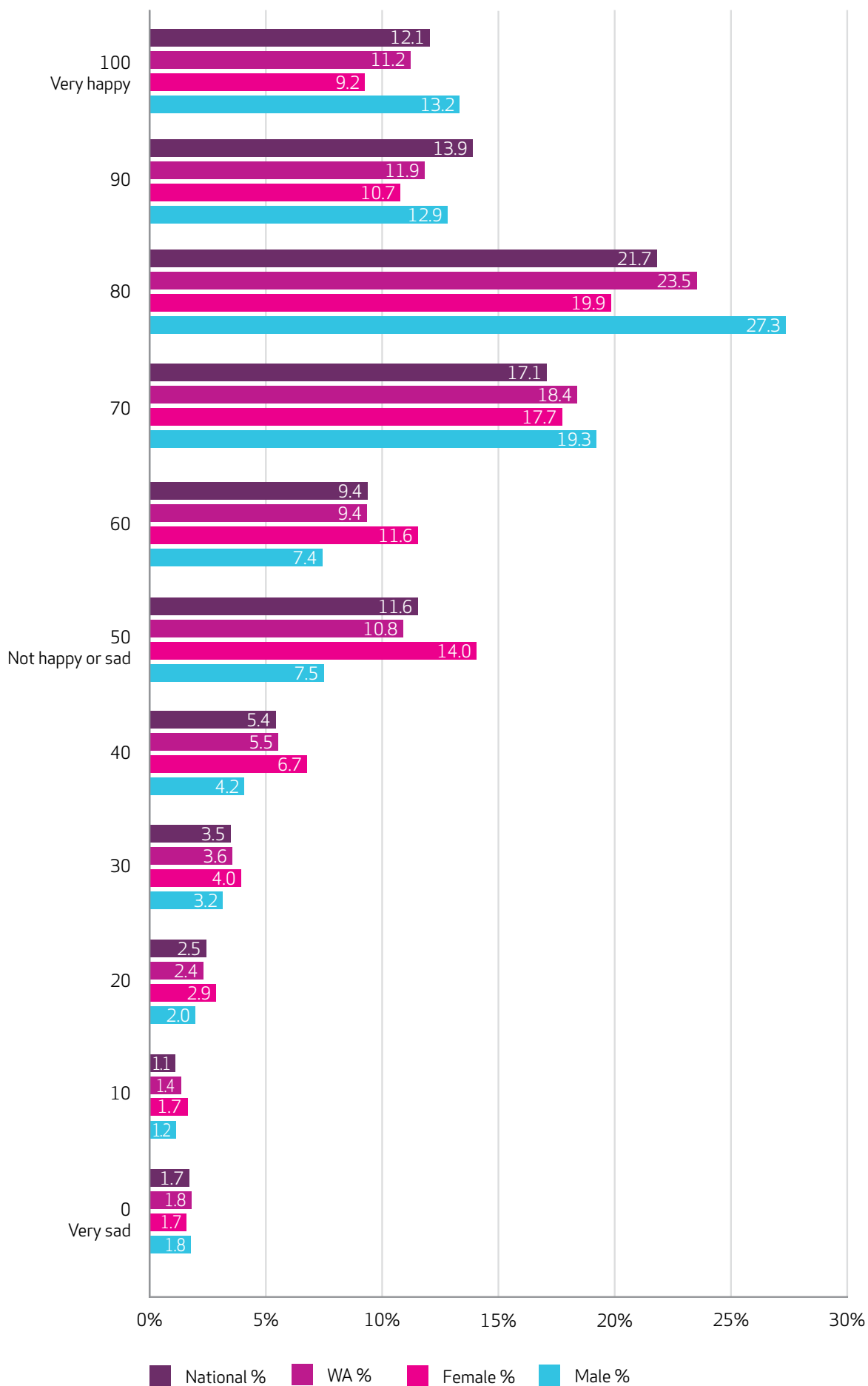
Note: Items are listed in order of State frequency.

How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being *very sad*, 5 *not happy or sad* and 10 *very happy*. In line with recommendations from the authors of this question¹, responses were standardised on a scale of 0 – 100, with 100 being the happiest. As Figure 10.8 shows, the majority of young people from WA (65.0%) responded in the range 70 to 100, indicating that they felt positive overall about their lives. This is consistent with the national results. Responses were similar for both males and females, although a greater proportion of male than female respondents indicated that they felt *very happy* with their lives as a whole (13.2% compared with 9.2%).

¹ Cummins, R.A., & Lau, A.L.D., 2005, *Personal Wellbeing Index – School Children (PWI-SC)* (English), Manual, 3rd Edition.

Figure 10.8: How happy young people are



How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked how positive they felt about the future, with responses rated on a 5 point scale from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 10.8 shows that compared to 2014 and 2013 WA results there has been a slight decrease in the proportion of WA respondents feeling *very positive* about the future. Overall, less than one in ten young people from WA felt *very negative* or *negative* about the future.

- Around six in ten respondents from WA felt either *positive* (48.5%) or *very positive* (13.2%) about the future.
- Almost three in ten respondents (28.4%) felt *neither positive nor negative* about the future.
- 6.7% of respondents felt *negative* about the future and 3.2% felt *very negative*.
- Males and females from WA were similar in terms of their feelings about the future. A larger proportion of male than female respondents, however, indicated feeling *very positive* (14.3% compared with 12.0% for females).

Table 10.8: Feelings about the future

	National %	WA 2015 %	Female %	Male %	WA 2014 %	WA 2013 %
Very positive	15.0	13.2	12.0	14.3	14.5	19.1
Positive	46.8	48.5	47.8	49.5	48.4	46.9
Neither positive nor negative	28.2	28.4	29.9	26.8	28.1	24.6
Negative	7.5	6.7	7.0	6.3	6.8	6.0
Very negative	2.5	3.2	3.2	3.1	2.1	3.3

Acknowledgements

Mission Australia would like to thank the many educational institutions, youth and community organisations, government agencies, corporates, philanthropic organisations and others who helped to distribute the Youth Survey 2015.

These include:

- Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies
- Australian Council of State School Organisations
- Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth
- Autism Spectrum Australia
- Banyule City Council
- Bass Coast Shire Council
- Berry Street
- Brisbane City Council
- Catholic Education Offices nationally
- Cessnock Youth Interagency
- City of Marion
- Future Leaders Influencing our Community (Bass Coast)
- Girl Guides Australia
- Hobsons Bay City Council
- Hume Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network
- Maribyrnong City Council
- Northern Settlement Services
- Northern Territory Youth Affairs Network
- Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria
- Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People, New South Wales Government
- Office of Youth Affairs, Department of the Chief Minister, Northern Territory Government
- Royal Darwin Hospital – Women, Children and Youth Division
- Shire of Nillumbik
- Shoalhaven City Council
- State and Territory Education Departments
- Wyndham City Council – Youth Services
- Wyong Shire Council
- Youth Action & Policy Association NSW
- Youth Affairs Council of South Australia
- Youth Affairs Council of Victoria
- Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia
- Youth Affairs Network Queensland
- Youth Coalition of the ACT
- Youth Network of Tasmania
- Youth Without Borders

Mission Australia would also like to acknowledge the many organisations and individuals who promoted the survey via social media.

Who is Mission Australia?

Mission Australia is a non-denominational Christian community service organisation, with more than 155 years of experience in standing together with Australians in need on their journey to independence.

Our evidence-based, client-centred services are focused on reducing homelessness and strengthening communities across Australia. Our services are tailored to the needs and preferences of the clients and communities we serve. Our programs range from early intervention to intensive wrap-around services. They include services targeting homelessness; providing integrated family support; parenting programs; early childhood education; mental health services; residential drug and alcohol programs; youth programs; access to safe and secure housing; and programs to build capacity, resilience and opportunity for local communities.

We work in partnership with others to achieve our goal. This includes communities, supporters, government, businesses and other organisations. We measure our impact, collecting evidence of what works to inform our service design and delivery, and to advocate for change.


We stand together with Australians in need until they can stand for themselves.


Thank you


This publication would not have been possible without the almost 19,000 young people who completed Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2015*. Our special thanks to them, the staff of Mission Australia and the many other organisations who supported their involvement.

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