



KIDS  
HELPLINE

# INSIGHTS 2016

STATISTICAL SUMMARY  
NORTHERN TERRITORY

Insights into young people in Australia

# Introduction

## What is Kids Helpline?

Kids Helpline has been operating for 26 years and is Australia's only 24/7 counselling and support service for children and young people aged between 5 and 25 years.

Tertiary qualified counsellors provide free, private and confidential support via telephone, web chat and email. Telephone and email counselling is offered 24/7 and web counselling is available from 8am to midnight (AEST) seven days a week.

The service operates a substantial website with a diverse range of resources for self-directed help-seeking by children, young people and adults. In addition, support from Optus enables Kids Helpline to deliver an early intervention and prevention program in primary schools called *Kids Helpline @ School*.

Kids Helpline is a service of **yourtown** and is 70% funded by the community through **yourtown** Art Union ticket sales, donations and corporate support. The remaining 30% is funded through State and Commonwealth Government grants.

## What this report is about and who it is for

This report is an appendix to *Kids Helpline Insights 2016: National Statistical Overview*. It provides summary data on Kids Helpline service demand and client concerns and characteristics for the Northern Territory in relation to the 2016 calendar year. It will be of value to people working in social policy and research roles, journalists and others in the community who need to understand the current and changing help-seeking needs of children and young people in Australia today.

The *Kids Helpline Insights 2016: National Statistical Overview* and other related reports can be accessed at [www.kidshelpline.com.au/reports](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au/reports).

## Notes on data collection, analysis and interpretation

Substantial missing data in relation to a number of data collection fields, most notably remoteness and cultural background, undermine the reliability of data presented in a number of tables and figures in this report. This is compounded by the small size of the Northern Territory subpopulation and the greater distorting influence of repeat contacts on frequency data in this context.

Please consult the Appendix of the *National Statistical Overview* for more detailed information on data collection, analysis and interpretation.

## Where to get more information

This report has been compiled by **yourtown** Strategy and Research. For further information, please contact

### **yourtown:**

PHONE 07 3368 3399

EMAIL [yourtown@yourtown.com.au](mailto:yourtown@yourtown.com.au)

WEB [www.yourtown.com.au](http://www.yourtown.com.au)

### **For media enquiries:**

PHONE 07 3867 1395

EMAIL [media@yourtown.com.au](mailto:media@yourtown.com.au)

## Service demand

### Attempted and answered contacts

- In 2016, 3,288 of the 356,595 attempts made to contact Kids Helpline counselling service (or 0.9%) came from the Northern Territory (NT).
- Most of these attempts were made by phone (2,955) but also by web chat (272) and email (61).
- 1,489 of these attempts were answered by counsellors, corresponding to a response rate of 45%. This compares with a response rate of 51% across Australia.
- Note that when phone attempts are adjusted to exclude callers who dropped out before the 21 second mandatory wait message, the response rate for Northern Territory phone contacts in 2016 was 60%.

### Trends over time

- From 2014 to 2016 there was an overall increase of 88% in attempted contacts from the Northern Territory across all media. Phone attempts decreased by 93%, email by 39%, while web chat attempts increased by 55%.
- Across all media, response rates for the Northern Territory have decreased from 52% in 2014 to 45% in 2016.

**Table 1. NT attempted and answered contacts – by medium and year of contact, with comparison to all states<sup>1</sup>**

Medium of contact	2014			2015			2016			% change in attempts 2014-2016
	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	
<b>Phone</b>										
NT	1,531	811	53%	2,482	1,396	56%	2,955	1,303	44%	93%
All States	300,200	173,752	58%	290,767	169,802	58%	276,960	135,719	49%	-8%
<b>Web chat</b>										
NT	175	49	28%	138	76	55%	272	124	46%	55%
All States	49,429	21,082	43%	43,464	24,115	55%	65,954	31,765	48%	33%
<b>Email</b>										
NT	44	44	100%	39	39	100%	61	61	100%	39%
All States	18,832	18,832 <sup>2</sup>	100%	15,886 <sup>3</sup>	15,886	100%	13,681 <sup>4</sup>	13,681	100%	-27%
<b>All media</b>										
NT	1,750	904	52%	2,659	1,510	57%	3,288	1,489	45%	88%
All States	368,461	213,666	58%	350,117	209,803	60%	356,595	181,165	51%	-3%

1. The data presented in this table are sourced from KHL phone, web chat and email systems databases.

2. In addition to 18,832 emails received and responded to in 2014, 544 outreach emails were sent.

3. In addition to 15,886 emails received and responded to in 2015, 535 outreach emails were sent.

4. In addition to 13,681 emails received and responded to in 2016, 413 outreach emails were sent.

## Who contacted the service

### Demographic characteristics

- Kids Helpline counsellors recorded data in relation to 177,591 contacts from children and young people across Australia who were aged 5-25 years. State or territory information was available for 163,323 of these contacts, and of this subset 1,421 (or 1%) were known to be from the Northern Territory.
- Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of these contacts from the Northern Territory and compares them with the characteristics of contacts from the rest of Australia where their state or territory was known.
- As with contacts from the rest of Australia, roughly three out of four (76%) Northern Territory contacts were female and one in four (23%) male.

- In terms of other characteristics, Northern Territory contacts have a notably different demographic profile to contacts from the rest of Australia. Compared with contacts from the rest of Australia, Northern Territory contacts in 2016 were:
  - more likely to be aged 5-12 years or 19-25 years and less likely to be aged 13-18 years
  - much more likely to be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) and less likely to be from other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) or Caucasian Australian
  - much less likely to be situated in Major Cities or Inner Regional areas and much more likely to be living in Outer Regional and Remote localities
  - more likely to engage with Kids Helpline via telephone and less likely to engage via web chat.

**Table 2. Characteristics of Kids Helpline contacts 2016 aged 5-25 years – Northern Territory and rest of Australia<sup>1</sup>**

Contact characteristics	Northern Territory (N= 1,421)		Rest of Australia (N= 161,902)	
	n	%	n	%
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	569	76%	74,202	72%
Male	173	23%	27,960	27%
Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	4	1%	1,060	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>103,222</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>675</i>		<i>58,680</i>	
<b>Age group</b>				
5-12 years	127	21%	12,045	13%
13-18 years	250	41%	49,934	55%
19-25 years	229	38%	28,856	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>90,835</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>&lt;26 but age unknown</i>	<i>815</i>		<i>71,067</i>	
<b>Cultural background<sup>2</sup></b>				
Aboriginal &/or TSI	134	36%	1,482	4%
CALD	30	8%	13,534	35%
Neither ATSI nor CALD	208	56%	23,945	61%
<b>Total</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>38,961</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>1,049</i>		<i>122,941</i>	
<b>Remoteness<sup>3</sup></b>				
Major Cities	20	5%	44,021	73%
Inner Regional	1	0%	11,925	20%
Outer Regional/Remote	348	94%	4,716	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>60,662</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>1,052</i>		<i>101,240</i>	
<b>Medium</b>				
Phone	1,259	89%	129,106	80%
Web chat	138	10%	27,765	17%
Email	24	2%	5,031	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,421</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>161,902</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Type of help-seeking</b>				
Counselling contact	378	27%	58,287	36%
Information/Referral/Other contact	1,043	73%	103,615	64%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,421</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>161,902</b>	<b>100%</b>

1. Where column percentages sum to more or less than 100%, this is due to rounding.

2. TSI = Torres Strait Islander. CALD = Culturally and linguistically diverse. ATSI = Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

3. Remoteness classifications are adapted from the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. See *Kids Helpline Insights 2016: National Statistical Overview* for more information.

## Types of help-seeking

The Kids Helpline counselling and support service responds to two broad categories of help-seeking: those children and young people seeking counsellor assistance for a particular concern or problem (*counselling contacts*), and those seeking information, referral to other services, or some other form of non-counselling support, like general conversation or playful engagement (*non-counselling contacts*, also called *information, referral and other contacts*).

As shown in Table 2, 27% of contacts from Northern Territory in 2016 were seeking counselling support while 73% were seeking information/referral or other forms of non-counselling support. Northern Territory contacts were more likely to be seeking non-counselling-type support than contacts from the rest of Australia (73% c.f. 64%).

## Demographic trends over time

Table 3 presents the characteristics of Northern Territory contacts over the last three years to consider whether there have been noteworthy variations in the client group over the short term.

Key observations from the data in Table 3 include the following:

- There would appear to be moderate variation in the characteristics of Northern Territory contacts over the last three years, including:
  - an increase in the proportion of Northern Territory contacts aged 5-12 years and a corresponding decrease in the proportion of those aged 13-18 years
  - an increase in the proportion of contacts known to be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and a corresponding decrease in the proportion from a Caucasian Australian background, and
  - a decrease in the proportion who were seeking counselling support relative to non-counselling support.
- Substantial missing data, a very small subpopulation, and the greater likely influence of repeat contacts on percentage frequencies in this context, significantly undermine the reliability of these observed differences. Accordingly, observed differences may not correspond to actual differences in the characteristics of children and young people from the Northern Territory contacting Kids Helpline over this period.

**Table 3. Characteristics of Northern Territory Kids Helpline contacts aged 5-25 years – by year<sup>1</sup>**

Contact characteristics	2014 (N = 881)		2015 (N = 1,420)		2016 (N = 1,421)	
	n	%	n	%	%	n
<b>Gender<sup>2</sup></b>						
Female	415	80%	575	76%	569	76%
Male	104	20%	179	24%	173	23%
Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	-	-	0	0%	4	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>100%</b>
Unknown	362		666		675	
<b>Age group</b>						
5-12 years	46	11%	158	29%	127	21%
13-18 years	223	53%	234	42%	250	41%
19-25 years	153	36%	159	29%	229	38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>100%</b>
<26 but age unknown	459		869		815	
<b>Cultural background<sup>3</sup></b>						
Aboriginal &/or TSI	37	18%	113	38%	134	36%
CALD	22	10%	26	9%	30	8%
Neither ATSI nor CALD	152	72%	161	54%	208	56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>100%</b>
Unknown	670		1,120		1,049	
<b>Remoteness<sup>4</sup></b>						
Major Cities	22	10%	11	4%	20	5%
Inner Regional	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Outer Regional/Remote	197	90%	293	96%	348	94%

Contact characteristics	2014 (N = 881)		2015 (N = 1,420)		2016 (N = 1,421)	
	n	%	n	%	%	n
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>100%</b>
Unknown	662		1,116		1,052	
<b>Medium</b>						
Phone	792	90%	1,328	94%	1,259	89%
Web chat	69	8%	64	5%	138	10%
Email	20	2%	28	2%	24	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>881</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,421</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Type of help-seeking</b>						
Counselling contact	325	37%	360	25%	378	27%
Information/Referral/Other contact	556	63%	1,060	75%	1,043	73%
<b>Total</b>	<b>881</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,421</b>	<b>100%</b>

1. Where column percentages sum to more or less than 100%, this is due to rounding.

2. A new gender category was introduced into Kids Helpline data collection from January 2015.

3. TSI = Torres Strait Islander. CALD = Culturally and linguistically diverse. ATSI = Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

4. Remoteness classifications are adapted from the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. See *Kids Helpline Insights 2016: National Statistical Overview* for more information.

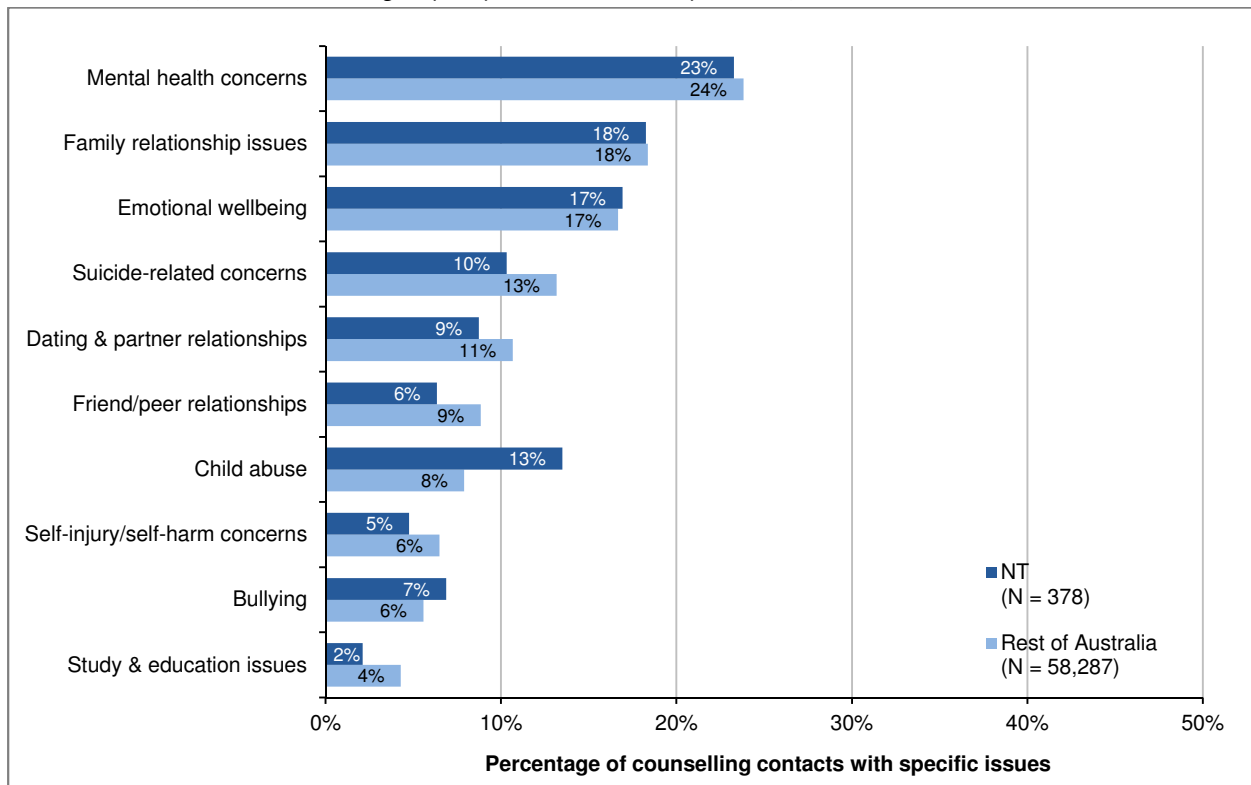
## Most common concerns of children and young people who received counselling

During 2016, Kids Helpline counsellors responded to 66,963 contacts from children and young people who were seeking help about specific problems or concerns (i.e. counselling contacts). Analysis of the types of issues and concerns raised by children and young people in these sessions provide a valuable insight into the help-seeking concerns of young Australians today.

### Northern Territory compared with rest of Australia

- State or territory information was available for 58,665 of these 66,963 counselling contacts and of this subset 378 (or 0.6%) were known to be from the Northern Territory.
- Figure I shows the 10 most common concerns of Northern Territory counselling contacts in 2016 and compares this with the frequency with which these concerns were raised by counselling contacts from the rest of Australia where state or territory information was known.
- The key observations to be noted from the data are that :
  - the frequency with which children and young people in the Northern Territory sought help from Kids Helpline for all of these issues is consistent with the frequency with which children and young people elsewhere in Australia sought help for these issues.
  - The one exception to this is concern about child abuse, which was recorded more commonly among contacts from the Northern Territory (13% c.f. 8%)

**Figure 1. Most frequently recorded concerns of Kids Helpline counselling contacts 2016 aged 5-25 years – Northern Territory compared with the rest of Australia (sorted in descending frequency of Northern Territory concerns)<sup>1</sup>**



1. Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Accordingly, percentages may sum to more than 100%.

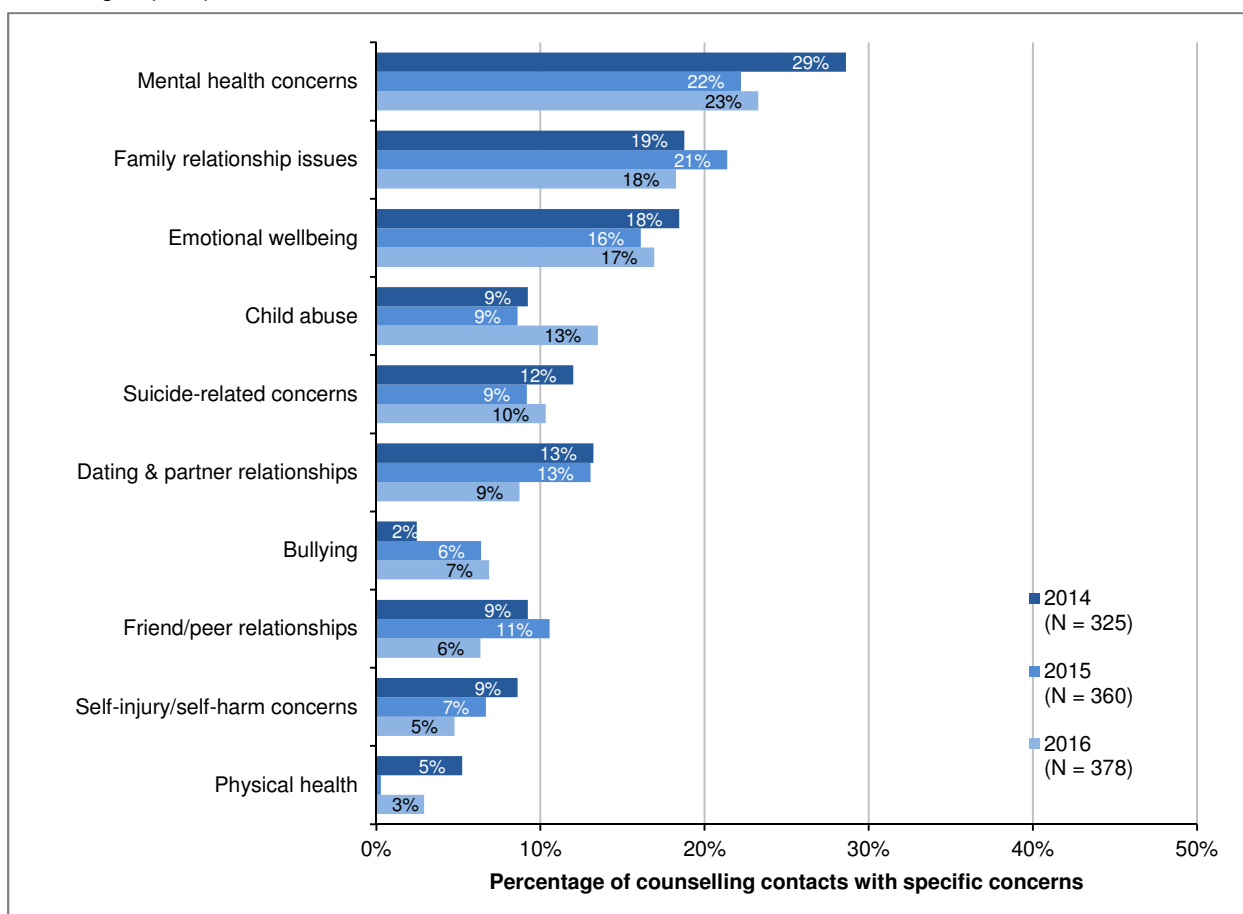
### Trends over time

Figure 2 shows the 10 most common concerns of Northern Territory counselling contacts in 2016 and compares this with the frequency with which these concerns were raised by Northern Territory contacts in 2014 and 2015.

Key observations from the data include the following:

- There is moderate, often non-systematic, variation in the frequency with which Northern Territory counselling contacts have raised most of these concerns with counsellors over the last three years.
- The small size of the Northern Territory subpopulation and the greater likely influence of repeat contacts on percentage frequencies in this context may help to account for the observed variation. In any case, these issues undermine the absolute reliability of the data presented and care needs to be taken, accordingly, with how these data are used and interpreted.

**Figure 2. Most frequently recorded concerns of Northern Territory Kids Helpline counselling contacts aged 5-25 years – by year (sorted in descending frequency of 2016 concerns)<sup>1</sup>**



1. Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Accordingly, percentages may sum to more than 100%.

## All concerns of children and young people who received counselling

Children and young people contact Kids Helpline about a very wide range of concerns, and focusing on the 10 most common concerns can obscure that diversity and the emergence of trends in other areas of less common client concern.

To address this issue, Table 4 reports the frequency with which *every concern* in the Kids Helpline’s concern classification system was raised by counselling contacts from the Northern Territory in 2016 and compares this with the frequency with which the concern was raised in 2014 and 2015. Table 4 groups individual concerns under eleven ‘concern classes’ which aggregate frequencies across conceptual clusters of client concern.

Key observations to be noted from the data in Table 4 are:

- There is slight to moderate variation in the frequency with which numerous concerns have been raised over the last three years with counsellors, although no systematic trends are apparent.
- Non-systematic variation is most likely attributable to the small size of the Northern Territory subpopulation and the greater likely influence of repeat contacts on percentage frequencies in this context.



**Table 4. Number and proportion of Kids Helpline counselling contacts 5-25 years with particular concerns and classes of concern – Northern Territory by year<sup>1</sup>**

Concern and concern class	2014 (N= 325)		2015 (N= 360)		2016 (N= 378)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Mental health &amp; emotional wellbeing</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>60.9%</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>48.6%</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>51.6%</b>
Mental health concerns	93	28.6%	80	22.2%	88	23.3%
Emotional wellbeing	60	18.5%	58	16.1%	64	16.9%
Suicide-related concerns	39	12.0%	33	9.2%	39	10.3%
Self-injury/self-harm concerns	28	8.6%	24	6.7%	18	4.8%
Loss and grief	16	4.9%	4	1.1%	8	2.1%
<b>Friends, peers, partners &amp; dating</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>21.8%</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>23.3%</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>14.8%</b>
Dating and partner relationships	43	13.2%	47	13.1%	33	8.7%
Friends/peer relationships	30	9.2%	38	10.6%	24	6.3%
<b>Family relationships</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>18.8%</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>18.3%</b>
Child-parent relationships	37	11.4%	46	12.8%	53	14.0%
Other family relationships	12	3.7%	19	5.3%	11	2.9%
Changing family structures	17	5.2%	13	3.6%	7	1.9%
Parenting own children	3	0.9%	2	0.6%	2	0.5%
<b>Identity &amp; self-concept</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5.8%</b>
Self-concept (global)	8	2.5%	10	2.8%	9	2.4%
Body image	2	0.6%	1	0.3%	5	1.3%
Sexual orientation	2	0.6%	5	1.4%	3	0.8%
Gender/sex identification	0	0.0%	2	0.6%	2	0.5%
Disability-related concerns	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Cultural identity	0	0.0%	1	0.3%	3	0.8%
<b>Violence &amp; abuse (non-family)</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>10.3%</b>
Bullying - school related	7	2.2%	18	5.0%	23	6.1%
Bullying - other	1	0.3%	5	1.4%	3	0.8%
Sexual assault or abuse (non-family)	5	1.5%	1	0.3%	6	1.6%
Dating and partner violence	0	0.0%	7	1.9%	8	2.1%
Harassment and assault (non-sexual)	0	0.0%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
Sexual harassment	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Child abuse &amp; family violence</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>13.5%</b>
Physical abuse	15	4.6%	16	4.4%	34	9.0%
Sexual abuse	6	1.8%	6	1.7%	2	0.5%
Emotional abuse	3	0.9%	6	1.7%	12	3.2%
Neglect of child	1	0.3%	1	0.3%	3	0.8%
Exploitation by family member	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Exposure to family violence	3	0.9%	5	1.4%	8	2.1%
Living-in-care issues	3	0.9%	1	0.3%	3	0.8%
<b>School, education &amp; work</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4.2%</b>
Study and education issues	10	3.1%	10	2.8%	8	2.1%
Employment issues	3	0.9%	3	0.8%	7	1.9%
School authority issues	1	0.3%	1	0.3%	1	0.3%
<b>Physical or sexual health &amp; development</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5.6%</b>
Physical health concerns	17	5.2%	1	0.3%	11	2.9%
Pregnancy-related concerns	3	0.9%	2	0.6%	6	1.6%
Sexual activity	2	0.6%	8	2.2%	4	1.1%
Physical/sexual development	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Contraception/safe sex	0	0.0%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
<b>Homelessness &amp; basic needs assistance</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3.4%</b>
Homelessness	4	1.2%	9	2.5%	9	2.4%
Practical/material assistance	3	0.9%	4	1.1%	3	0.8%

Concern and concern class	2014 (N= 325)		2015 (N= 360)		2016 (N= 378)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Financial assistance/concerns	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	1	0.3%
<b>Substance use, addictions &amp; risk-taking</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.1%</b>
Drug use	2	0.6%	2	0.6%	2	0.5%
Alcohol use	3	0.9%	0	0.0%	2	0.5%
Addictive behaviours (not drugs/alcohol)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Physical risk-taking	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Gang/cult involvement	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Offending, abusive or violent actions</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
Illegal/offending behaviour	0	0.0%	1	0.3%	2	0.5%
Abusive or violent actions	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	1	0.3%
Sexual violence/offending actions	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

1. Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Totals provided for class of concern will be less than the sum of the individual concerns that make up that class due to the fact that multiple concerns within the class may have been identified in a single contact.



**24/7 HELP FOR CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 5–25 YEARS**

**Kids Helpline  
1800 55 1800  
kidshelpline.com.au**

This regional report is supported by the **Kids Helpline Insights 2016: National Statistical Overview**, which provides extensive data about the issues affecting children and young people across Australia, and the **Kids Helpline Insights 2016** summary report.

These can be accessed at  
**kidshelpline.com.au/reports**

**Contact us:**

07 3368 3399  
kidshelpline.com.au  
facebook.com/KidsHelpline

**Media contact:**

07 3867 1395  
media@yourtown.com.au

**Help us:**

facebook.com/yourtownprizehomes  
kidshelpline.com.au/support  
corporaterelations@yourtown.com.au