Education
Summary

yourtown

Young people's Experience of Education

In 2021 over 3,500 young people from around Australia engaged with **yourtown's** Your Voice Project. The project gave young people (aged 15-24) with the opportunity to voice their experiences, views on how services need to be improved and provide opportunities for them to inform policy.

3,500
Young People participated in Your Voice

67%
of participants said education was an issue

73%
of 15-17 year old's said education was an issue

65%
of participants said lack of support, including for mental health, in the education system was a key issue.

14%
of participants said they left school due to a lack of support.

What young people told us about Education:

> ### My main problem with the Australian education system is a lack of support services.

Young people told us that the current education system did little to prepare them with the skills they need to successfully transition into adulthood or further employment and education.

We need to be interacting with the world, learning about all the world has to offer when we're in our final years of school, not ignoring everything in our lives, other than the exam papers, because we believe that this is the only way that we'll ever succeed. No matter what, we will always feel pressure when we're at this stage in our lives, as we try to figure out our life plan, we don't need the HSC to add completely unnecessary pressure that overshadows the pressure that is already there, and will actually help us figure our lives out. The system needs to change.

Make the content learnt in skills more applicable to the workforce and more focused on life schools e.g., cooking, fabric work, critical thinking, wood/metal working, knowing how to deal with difficult issues, such as grief, or addiction to alcohol, substances or pornography etc.

This is a crucial time in our lives where we should be interacting with the world, seeing what it has to offer and developing our soft skills, so when we do go out into the real world when school is finally finished, we don't feel like we're being thrown completely into the unknown and entirely unable to handle life's real challenges.

I believe that the school education system needs to prepare students for practical skills that they will need into adulthood. It would be helpful to have classes about taxes, how to save money efficiently etc. More help about how to get internships or experience in our chosen fields would be beneficial.

The education system is built on this principle that is very traditional and doesn't prepare students to gain real world skills straight out of high school. Instead, they sit the HSC exam to recieve an ATAR, which highlights that university is the main pathway that all students should take.

After school I wanted a job, but I had no experience. I didn't want to study because high school was enough.

READ THE FULL YOUR VOICE REPORT

Young people told us that the education system did not support their individual circumstances, or create an environment that would allow them to be successful.

The current school system does not support neurodivergent or disabled people.

General population can be very patronising as to why a young person is not in school or training or working. Older generations don't understand that young people live in such a complex time, and it's hard to do all of the above.

I'm a university student who relies on Youth Allowance as well as two casual jobs to support myself. My studies, which are crucial to my future career, suffer because of my workload. This is on top of my volunteer work, another crucial experience needed to get a job once I've finished my degree. So many of my peers are in this same position and many cannot rely on financial support from their families. If the government wants graduates who are knowledgeable, fully qualified, and brilliant individuals, greater financial support is necessary.

An ideal system would be one where no one is discriminated against. One where young people can access help with homework/schoolwork and mental health. It is a system that is able to reach everyone no matter their race, financial situation, or where they live.

I deferred it after 3 weeks, as I realised I was completely unprepared for the real world and just want to spend the year relaxed and recovering from all the mental health problems I still have that were created throughout the HSC.

Young people told us that their mental health suffered in the education system.

Reduce the immense pressure placed on students to perform well, especially in year 11 and year 12 (that is an important step in improving youth mental health; tackle the source, not the effects).

Schools are very hard on students, most people I know are suicidal because of how hard it is on us. Schools shouldn't make people want to commit suicide.

Our education system needs to be reformed. Kids and teenagers are not the same and therefore, not everyone is fit for the same education system. From my experience, completing mass amounts of homework and repetition is inefficient. Subjects should be surrounding the child's passion and interests, and that would help them engage and assist their future.

School students need more time to be kids, we are overloaded with work which I understand is necessary, but kids barely have enough time to do this work, we do 7 hours of school plus more hours worth of homework a night, we are encouraged to play sports and get enough sleep each night but no one takes into account kids that have jobs to support themselves, or their families, or when kids are supposed to have a social life because we can't with the amount of work we are given. I know there isn't much that can be done to change this but honestly think about us kids for once because its hard being a kid with so much pressure to succeed placed on you and not enough time or support to succeed in the first place.

Further, young people told us that there is a lack of support services available to them in the education system, particularly for their mental health.

I feel like mental health resources are something that can be easily accessed online, but is also a topic that isn't spoken about enough verbally. I think mental health should be a topic in our local schools and high schools to educate and spread awareness.

Honestly, I feel like it's hard to find help with mental health. School guidance counsellors are there, sure, but at the same time they tell your parents everything and I just wish everything was confidential.

At first my school wasn't accepting of my health issues, and basically told me I had to leave, which made me feel quite excluded and useless.

I believe that the biggest change that needs to occur in the education system is a more accessible and friendly mental health system. We as students are constantly told to talk to someone if we need to, but are denied the right to have a comfortable space to share our concerns and problems in. Mental health is one of the biggest reasons why student's don't do well in school, and I strongly believe that with an improved system, it would help students across Australia to better their grades and education experience in general.

Not being able to attend school due to mental health issues is really exhausting. The support from schools themselves is very poor.

Incorporation of support services for disabilities and mental health in all schools (especially public/government-run schools). Early intervention in primary schools and intervention programs in high schools to address and improve upon student mental wellbeing and learning difficulties, along with other disabilities (physical and psychological).

The Aboriginal student support at my university was very helpful and helped me find out about relevant services.