

Safety Summary



Young people's Experience of Safety

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

20%

of participants said they feel
unsafe, and 59% of gender
diverse participants feel
unsafe.

20%

of participants that raised
safety as an issue have
experienced abuse.

19%

of participants have
faced mental health
stigma.

What young people told us about Safety:

Please listen to your people. Some of us are struggling and aren't being heard. Our differences shouldn't set us apart. Everyone deserves respect and human decency, a safe place, a home, a stable income, support, and a welcoming country. We need to improve our country for the benefit of [all] our people, so please help us.

Young people told us that they faced stigma, racism and discrimination for who they are.

I would also like to talk about the fact that the LGBTQIA+ and gender diverse people are given hardly any support and have no idea how to access anything. Many young people in these situations are facing hate from those around them, including family. We need support and we need to know how to find it.

Not enough is being done for young minorities, especially queer people, disabled people, and ethnic minorities. Often cycles of disadvantage impact these groups and not enough is being done.

That LGBTQIA+ kids need some real help, we get no queer sex education, no education on discrimination so kids grow up to be homophobic because they were never taught any different.

If you're a young person and your parent's aren't good, as in abusive, not supportive, homophobic, that's literally bad luck, and there's not much help. There's a lot of people who apply for youth allowance and are denied because their parents earn too much, but their parents say, 'you're 17, get out of my house!'

Everyday, I experience some form of racism, whether it be in the form of jokes, or just plain discrimination and use of stereotypes.

You need to make sure girls and women are safe and can get the education they want. They shouldn't feel scared all the time. Same with the LGBTQIA+ and Aboriginal people. We choose you to fight for us.

READ THE FULL YOUR VOICE REPORT





Many young people, especially women, told us of their experiences of abuse and violence, at home, in schools, and in society at large.

You NEED to teach boys and men about the importance of consent. I've heard too many rape stories of the guys getting off fine and the women being told their clothes were an invitation.

More needs to be done in terms of safer environments for children living in domestic violence situations. If it wasn't for my family, a child who attends school with my brother would be homeless. P.s., a local burnout pad would be nice.

From the personal stories from others and workers in the sector of foster housing and regulation, there are plenty of issues and trauma that is being swept under the mat.

Left abusive home at 14, because my mother was still technically my legal guardian and still claiming Centrelink, it made the process incredibly hard. Additionally, because of my age, I fit too close to youth allowance for special benefit but was under 16 so ineligible for youth allowance.

When I was 18, I left a DV relationship and went on the streets. I went into a youth shelter. It was such a long waiting period, and I had to be referred to this shelter, so it wasn't easy to get in. I wish more places like this existed. I used to see people waiting at the door asking to come in. It's sad - everyone is under 24. Big demand, low supply of beds.

Growing up in a household with domestic abuse was extremely difficult. My mother had no access or knowledge of how to free us from the situation. Teachers at school who saw my bruises, just stared and never once tried to help me. No one helped me, even though there were signs.

I know a few people who have been sexually assaulted and that was taken to court. The stigma was horrible, and no one knew anything about that process, let alone what a horribly hard process it was. That process is hard enough, but as a young person it's far too hard which means that people don't come forward about it.

That the education system needs to change, and it needs to change now. People aren't feeling safe in schools which should be a place that they can feel safe.

That they need to do something about the bullying that LGBTQIA+ and disabled students receive in schools.

Young people told us that a lack of safety and experiences of abuse, negatively impacted on their access to services.

There are not enough systems in place to support this nation's youth who belong to a minority group, or who do not have significant familial support. There needs to be bigger safety nets to stop these people falling through the cracks to give them the skills they need to live healthily and happily, and contribute to the Australian economy.

I would like to tell them that we need to teach kids from a young age, via education, to be respectful of others differences. We need to support refugee children as they are under so much stress of feeling different in their environment. We need to stand up for disadvantaged communities, such as ATSI, disabled kids/adults, people of colour and financially disadvantaged communities, via making equitable contributions.

I have firsthand experience being silenced, and I believe that it is vital to the wellbeing of minor's mental health as well as physical health to create a support system for children who have experienced family violence. What this would aim to do is empower young people to find this voice and speak up about violence. I want to help young people, like myself, be empowered and have a voice. For our country to have a future, we must invest in our young people. If we don't help young people who are in desperate need of our help, then we will not only see a plummet in the number of students in education, but also the number of children living with a roof over their head. We will also see the devastating effects on mental health. We must, this is not a suggestion, we must help young people find their voices in their times of trouble.

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