

An Unequal Foundation

Findings from the Mission Australia *2025 Youth Survey* on young people's experiences of homelessness and housing instability

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MISSION AUSTRALIA

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this Country, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present for they hold the memories, the culture and dreams of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continual relationship with the land and we recognise the importance of the young people who are our future leaders.

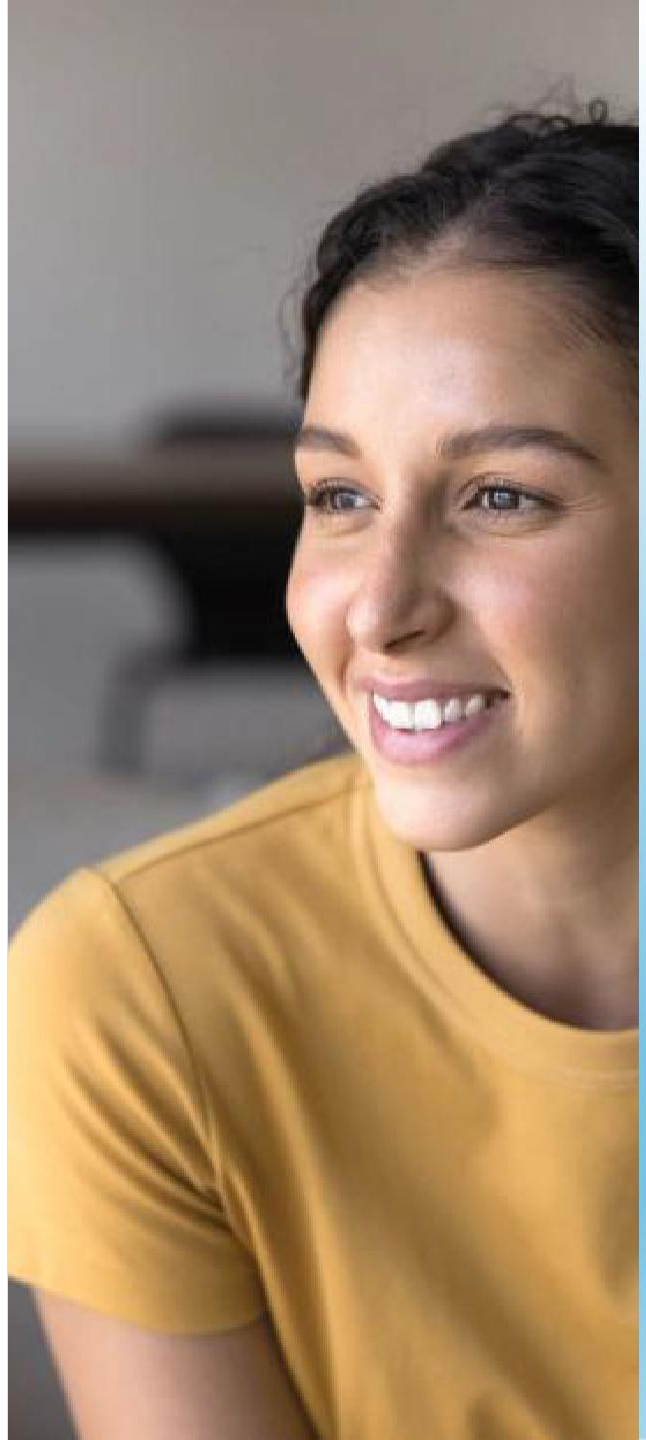
Mission Australia's Youth Survey is the largest annual survey of young people in Australia

The survey seeks to gather a range of insights into the lives of young people, aged 14-19 years, across Australia.

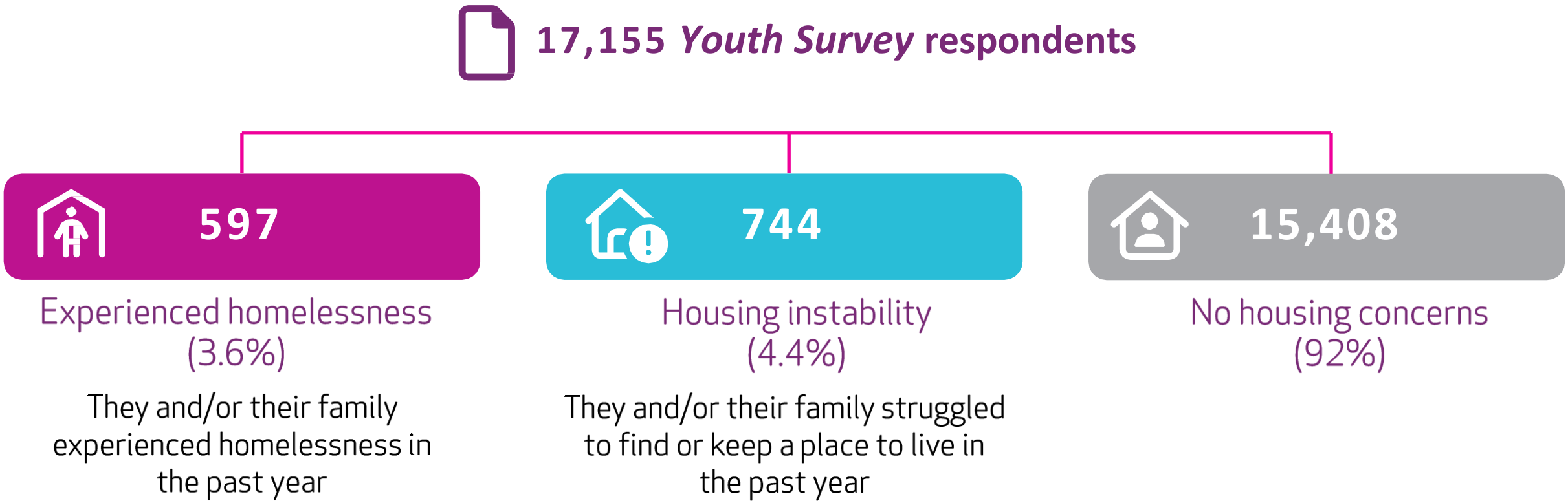
We asked about a range of topics including:

- National issues and personal stress
- Housing and financial situation
- Wellbeing and hopes for the future
- Support and connectedness
- Engagement with education and employment

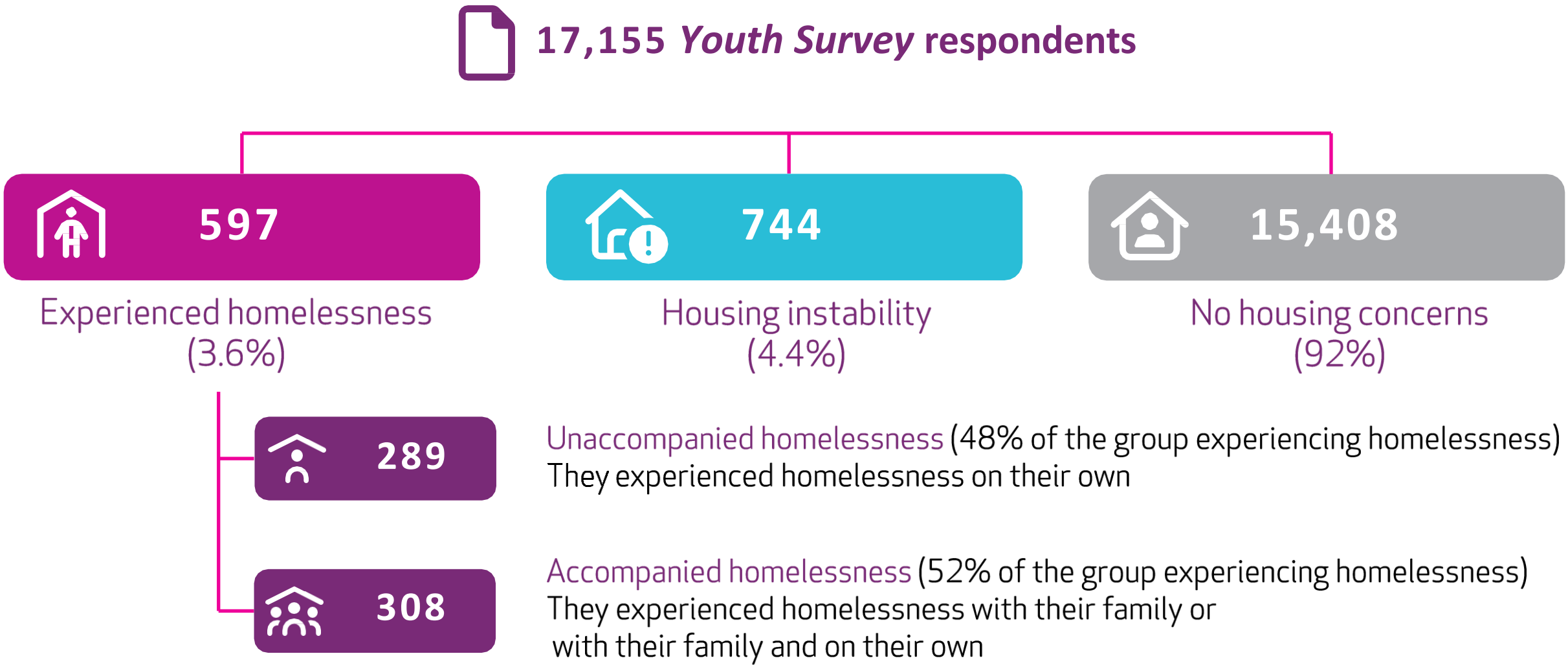
17,155 young people responded to the 2025 Youth Survey



A number of survey respondents have direct experience of homelessness



A number of survey respondents have direct experience of homelessness



Financial hardship was widespread among young people experiencing homelessness or housing instability

	Experienced homelessness	Housing instability	No housing concerns
Experienced financial hardship	68%	52%	11%
Missed at least one meal due to financial hardship	35%	18%	2.4%
Couldn't participate in activities or hobbies	34%	26%	6.0%
Couldn't afford clothes or other essential items	29%	19%	2.5%
Relied on external financial support	51%	43%	11%
Government allowance	36%	28%	6.7%
Charity or foundation	12%	4.2%	0.8%



"(My biggest personal challenge in the past year was) finances. With the cost at the supermarket, petrol stations, electricity, and water bills I find my parents are a lot more stressed about money."

17-year-old from NSW

Young people experiencing homelessness or housing instability reported poorer mental health and wellbeing

Areas of distress	Experienced homelessness	Housing instability	No housing concerns
High psychological distress	40%	40%	18%
Lonely all/most of the time	34%	36%	15%
Negative views about the future	26%	18%	11%
Very sad/sad about life	25%	15%	6.7%
Felt stressed about…			
Mental health	55%	57%	38%
Family problems	55%	56%	25%
Cost of living	49%	46%	18%
Feeling safe	27%	12%	5.9%



"The dynamics at home were mentally stressful for me and it impacted my mental health and made me really anxious and depressed."

15-year-old from VIC

Young people who experienced homelessness had weaker support networks and family relationships

	Experienced homelessness	Housing instability	No housing concerns
Have someone to turn to when unsure about important decisions in life	49%	62%	77%
Family's ability to get along was poor/fair	51%	43%	16%
Didn't use/unsure of use…			
Housing support	53%		
Non-housing support	48%		
Sources of support they found helpful…			
Friend	62%	67%	78%
Pets	54%	54%	56%
Parents/guardians	47%	60%	78%



"The biggest personal challenge I've faced in the past year is family trouble. There's been a lot of arguments and violence over money and other things, and it's been affecting my mental health."

17-year-old from NSW

Young people experiencing homelessness alone reported the greatest challenges

Experienced homelessness…	alone	with others	Diff (p.p.)
Mental health and wellbeing			
Felt stressed about feeling safe in the past year	33%	22%	+11
Felt very sad/sad about life	37%	15%	+22
Felt very negative/negative about the future	32%	21%	+11
Reported no/almost no control over life	29%	20%	+9

Experienced homelessness…	alone	with others	Diff (p.p.)
Financial circumstances			
Experienced financial hardship in the past year because they couldn't buy essential items	35%	24%	+11
Support and connectedness			
Have someone to turn to for support when unsure about important decisions in life	40%	56%	-16
Reported family's ability to get along as poor	60%	43%	+17



Young people showed determination and resilience despite their housing challenges

Many young people who experienced homelessness remained engaged in education, community and future planning

89% were students

83% of students planned to complete Year 12

70% participated in activities outside school hours

56% identified financial security or home ownership as a key future aspiration

49% identified employment or career success as a key future aspiration

Many young people remained engaged in education and work despite housing challenges

Reasons for missing school…	Experienced homelessness	Housing instability	No housing concerns
Anxiety, depression or other mental health issues	34%	36%	16%
Can't get to school	20%	17%	7.2%
Caring responsibilities	16%	10%	3.8%
Don't have things for school	7.1%	3.4%	1.1%
Worried about safety at school	6.9%	2.7%	1.1%
Employment status…			
Looking for work	37%	41%	31%
Working full-time	4.3%	1.7%	0.7%
Reasons for working…			
Help pay bills/expenses	36%	28%	7.5%
Help pay rent/mortgage	26%	9.5%	2.1%



"(My biggest personal challenge in the past year was) earning enough money to save for a car and support my family in fees alongside school studies and afterschool extracurricular dance commitments."

16-year-old from Qld

Three key findings from the report

Young people experiencing homelessness reported challenges across multiple areas of life

Including financial hardship, poorer mental health and wellbeing, weaker support networks, and disruptions to education and employment.

Young people experiencing homelessness alone reported the greatest challenges

Across many of the measures examined in the report, young people experiencing unaccompanied homelessness reported poorer outcomes than those who experienced homelessness with family members or others.

Young people retained aspirations and engagement despite their housing challenges

Many young people remained engaged in education, participated in activities outside school and continued to aspire to employment, financial security and home ownership.



Thank you

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