

## Conclusion

This report provides a critical insight into the views and experiences of children and young people in regions across WA. The similarities and differences across the state highlights some key areas where services or developments at the community level can make a difference to children and young people's lives.

Many children and young people in regional and remote locations drew attention to not having access to recreational facilities that are available in the Perth metropolitan area. All children and young people across WA should have access to community-based environments that provide space for safe and accessible recreational activity. It is essential that government and non-government sectors work together to build community spaces and activities which support children and young people's healthy development.

Children and young people across the state were often not asking for much, perhaps a better bike trail, some shade or a water fountain at their local park or a safe space to hang out.

### ■ ■ A better park? There's only one small oval, basically grass. ■ ■

*(15 year-old, Pilbara)*

*“Add a big park with playground that doesn't get needles on the ground.”*

*(11 year-old, Goldfields)*

*“Add lights to my local basketball court.”*

*(14 year-old, South Metropolitan)*

There are also clear differences in terms of feeling safe, with students in the Kimberley and Pilbara much less likely to feel safe in their local area than students in other regions. A high proportion of female secondary students in all regions across the state do not feel safe in their local area.

The children and young people who raised safety in their local area as an issue often wanted better lighting, footpaths and also safer places for them to hang out in the community.

### ■ ■ Making more parks and spaces to connect for kids that are safe and secure. ■ ■

*(12 year-old, North Metropolitan)*

*“To add more lights on the sidewalks, because when I am walking home at night it's scary.”*

*(13 year-old, Goldfields)*

*“More places for young people to go that are safe so we have something to do that's positive.”*

*(16 year-old, Kimberley)*

In terms of material disadvantage, children and young people in the Goldfields and the Kimberley are more likely to report that they are missing out on material basics, with one in seven students (around 14%) in the Kimberley and Goldfields only sometimes or less having enough food to eat at home (all of WA: 9.6%). Almost one-third (29.8%) of secondary students in the Kimberley and one-quarter (26.4%) of secondary students in the Wheatbelt do not have their own laptop, tablet or computer.

Aboriginal children and young people across the state are particularly affected by material disadvantage with around one in five Aboriginal children and young people in the Wheatbelt, Goldfields and metropolitan area not always having enough food to eat at home. Critically, the highest proportions of Aboriginal children and young people not always having enough food at home are in the metropolitan area.

Most children and young people across WA like school and believe that it is important to go to school. However, many students do not feel like they belong at school, particularly female secondary students.

**Most children and young people across WA like school and believe that it is important to go to school.**

Results also show that the proportion of students doing homework every day or almost every day differs greatly across the state with students in the metropolitan area more likely to be doing homework every day or almost every day. In line with this, secondary students in the metropolitan area (and the South West) are more likely to report feeling very pressured by their schoolwork.

Children and young people have differing needs, experiences and perspectives to those of adults and they should be supported to share their views and be involved in finding solutions to local challenges.

The aim in producing more detailed individual regional chapters is to provide government and non-government sectors with the information and incentive to determine how they could further support children and young people in their regions and communities to lead healthy and happy lives. It is recommended that, in addition to heeding the views of the children and young people in the Speaking Out Survey, organisations also ask children and young people what they need to lead better lives and involve them in designing solutions.



# Appendix A Methodology

## Speaking Out Survey 2021

In SOS21, a total of 16,532 Year 4 to Year 12 students from 94 schools in all regions of WA consented to participate.

The SOS21 sampling approach included randomly selecting schools stratified by sector (government, Catholic, independent) and by remoteness classification (major cities, inner/outer regional and remote/very remote). Student responses were weighted so that survey results are representative of the population of WA students enrolled in Years 4 to 6 and 7 to 12 by remoteness classification.

SOS21 is fully representative and has a significantly larger sample size than SOS19, allowing for reliable disaggregation of data.

Aboriginal students are represented in the main sample proportionate to their population in WA. In total, 1,145 or 8.4 per cent of participating students identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

For further information on the survey methodology of SOS21 refer to the [Speaking Out Survey 2021: The views of WA children and young people on their wellbeing – a summary report](#).

## How are results reported by region?

The sampling methodology for SOS21 did not require minimum representation for each education region, and as a result some of the smaller regions had fewer participating schools. It was therefore anticipated that reliable estimates may not be possible for some regions, hence, additional schools were invited to participate in the survey who were not part of the random selection. The data in this report include the results from these additional schools.

These additional schools were not included in the estimates published in the SOS21 summary report. Overall, 15 additional schools participated in the child survey (Years 4 to 6) and 12 in the youth survey (Years 7 to 12). Many of the additional schools had been randomly selected for either the child survey or the youth survey and it was decided to include the non-selected group (child or youth) to have a chance to answer the survey.

In total, 1,488 or 9.1 per cent of participating students identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

For these reasons, a regional weighting process was completed on the full sample, including the additional schools, to provide the best estimates for regional results.

## Are the results representative of students in the regions?

No, the percentages reported herein are weighted estimates of the total proportion of students in each region who would answer a particular question in a particular way. For smaller regions with smaller samples, the lack of randomly selected schools (and therefore students) means that these regions effectively have a convenience sample, not a representative one.

Thus, these estimates are not representative and should be interpreted as indicative only.

In this report, results for 'All of WA' are also provided for some comparison. These results are based on the full sample (with additional schools) and the regional weightings. While similar, these results do not directly correspond to the representative SOS21 results in the Summary Report. These regionally weighted 'All of WA' results have been used to ensure a consistent approach across the variables being reported.

## Estimate calculations

It should be noted that not all students answered all questions. This could be due to students skipping questions, not getting through all questions or that the students did not receive 'masked' question(s) due to the branching logic of the survey – masked questions are follow-up questions that are only received by a student if they answer certain questions in a particular way.

The percentages presented in this report represent the proportion of students who answered a particular question in a particular way. They are calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{N students answering X to question Y}}{\text{N students who provided a response to question Y}}$$

i.e. 'NAs' for the particular question are removed from denominator before calculating proportion.

## Qualitative responses

Participants in the Speaking Out Survey were asked the following open text questions during the survey:

- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with seeking help for health issues including mental health worries?
- Thinking about mental health and other emotional worries like stress, anxiety or depression, what are some of the ways families, communities, schools or adults in general could be more helpful?
- Thinking about personal safety and feeling safe at home, school or in the community, what are some of things you would like families, schools, or adults in general to know?
- What are some of the things that make you feel unsafe? (for those who responded they felt unsafe).
- The majority of secondary school students feel stressed by school work or study. What do you think are the main reasons for this?
- If there was one thing you could change about your local area, what would it be?
- Please tell us what you thought about this survey or would like the Commissioner to know.