

Attachments

Youth Advisory Committee Meeting

Under Separate Cover

Thursday, 14 May 2026



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YOUTH SURVEY 2020

City of Darwin

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Background

Now in its 19th year, the Mission Australia Youth Survey continues to be the biggest annual survey of its kind. A total of 25,800 young people aged 15-19 years took part in the 2020 Youth Survey. This brief report provides an overview of responses from City of Darwin.

Demographic profile of respondents

In total, 101 respondents (61.9% females and 38.1% males) from City of Darwin aged 15-19 years responded to Mission Australia's 2020 Youth Survey. A total of 6.1% of respondents from City of Darwin identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Overall, 34.3% of respondents stated that they were born overseas, 38.5% of respondents reported speaking a language other than English at home and 48.9% of respondents stated that one or both of their parents were born overseas.

Plans for study and training

Overall, 98.5% of respondents from City of Darwin stated that they intended to complete Year 12. A greater proportion of males than females indicated that they were not planning to complete Year 12 (0% compared with 2.5%).

When asked what they planned to do after leaving school, respondents from City of Darwin most frequently reported that they planned to go to university (51.5%). Many respondents also planned to travel or go on a gap year (17.8%) or to get a job (16.8%) after school, while 5% planned to join the defence or police force and 3% planned to attend TAFE or college.

Confidence in achieving study/work goals after school

The 2020 Youth Survey asked young people how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after finishing school. Many young people from City of Darwin indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study/work goals, with 9.1% of respondents indicating that they were extremely confident and 33.3% indicating that they were very confident. However, not all respondents reported such high levels of confidence, with 6.1% being slightly confident and 3% not at all confident in their ability to achieve their post-school goals. A higher proportion of males than females reported feeling extremely confident or very confident (8.7% and 43.5% compared with 7.5% and 27.5% respectively).

What would help young people secure a job?

Young people who stated they were looking for work were asked to indicate from a number of factors what might help them secure a job. At City of Darwin, the top three factors to helping young people secure a job were more jobs in my local area (65.2%), flexible working hours (47.8%) and work experience (43.5%).

What do young people value?

Respondents were asked how much they valued culture, family relationships, financial security, friendships, getting a job, mental health, physical health and school or study satisfaction. Respondents from City of Darwin ranked friendships (other than family), family relationships and physical health as the three most highly valued items. A high value was also placed on school or study satisfaction, mental health and financial security.

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about a number of issues over the past year. At City of Darwin, the top three issues of personal concern were coping with stress, school or study problems and mental health, followed by body image and suicide.

Have young people been treated unfairly?

For the first time in 2020, young people were asked whether they had been treated unfairly because of their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason in the past year.

Overall, 35% of respondents from City of Darwin reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A greater proportion of females than males reported that they had been treated unfairly (46.7% compared with 16.7%).

Of the respondents who had been treated unfairly in the past year, 44.1% were treated unfairly because of their gender, 44.1% because of their race/cultural background and 29.4% because of their age.

Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Young people were asked whether they had witnessed someone else being treated unfairly because of their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason in the past year.

Overall, 63% of respondents from City of Darwin reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year. A greater proportion of females than males reported that they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly (73.3% compared with 50%).

Of the respondents who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 59.7% reported they witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's race/cultural background, 56.5% because of a person's sexuality and 53.2% because of a person's gender.

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

Young people were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. The top three sources of help for respondents from City of Darwin were friend/s, the internet and brother/sister (87.9%, 57.1% and 57% respectively). A high proportion of respondents also indicated that they would go to their parents/guardians (56%) and relative/family friend (49%) for help with important issues.

What do young people think are the most important issues in Australia today?

Young people were asked to list the three issues that they considered were most important in Australia today. The top three issues identified by respondents at City of Darwin were the environment (40.2%), equity and discrimination (39%) and COVID-19 (37.8%). For females, the top national issue was equity and discrimination (52.1%), followed by the environment (43.8%) and COVID-19 (41.7%). For males, the most important issue was COVID-19 (33.3%), followed by mental health (30%) and the environment (30%).

How stressed are young people?

For the first time in 2020, young people were asked to report on how much of the time they felt stressed in the past four weeks. A high percentage of respondents at City of Darwin felt stressed either all of the time or most of the time (16% and 27% respectively) while 21% of respondents felt stressed a little of the time and 6% none of the time.

How well do young people feel their family gets along?

Young people were asked how well they thought their family got along. The majority of respondents at City of Darwin were positive about their family relationships, with 23.2% rating their family's ability to get along as excellent, and 25.3% as very good. However, some respondents did not have such a positive experience of family relationships, rating their family's ability to get along as either fair (14.1%) or poor (9.1%).

Mental health

Based on established scoring criteria, the wellbeing questions have been used to classify respondents from City of Darwin into two groups - those who qualify as having psychological distress and those who do not. 33.3% of respondents from City of Darwin reported experiencing psychological distress.

How happy are young people and how do they feel about the future?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole. The majority of young people in City of Darwin (51.5%) felt happy overall with their lives. Young people were also asked to rate how positive they felt about the future. Overall, respondents from City of Darwin reported feeling positive about their future with the majority of respondents feeling either very positive (14.1%) or positive (34.3%) about the future. In total, 35.4% of respondents felt neither positive nor negative about the future, while 11.1% felt negative and 5.1% felt very negative.

Data Breakdown

This report is based on the responses of 101 young people at City of Darwin.

Note: Data were collected using a self-report questionnaire. Missing data have been excluded from the calculation of these tables.

Table: Gender profile

	City of Darwin	City of Darwin %	NT %
Female	60	61.9	60.6
Male	37	38.1	39.4

Table: Identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

	City of Darwin %	NT %
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	6.1	10.5
Non-Indigenous	93.9	89.5

Table: Country of birth

	City of Darwin %	NT %
Australia	65.7	78.2
Other	34.3	21.8

Table: Language background other than English

	City of Darwin %	NT %
English	61.5	73.8
Language other than English	38.5	26.2

Table: Plans to complete Year 12

	City of Darwin %	NT %
Yes	98.5	96.3
No	1.5	3.7

Table: Plans to complete Year 12, by gender

	City of Darwin Female %	City of Darwin Male %
Yes	97.5	100.0
No	2.5	0.0

Table: Satisfaction with studies

	City of Darwin %	NT %
Very satisfied	18.1	8.8
Satisfied	50.0	50.3
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	24.5	31.0
Dissatisfied	6.4	7.7
Very dissatisfied	1.1	2.2

Table: Satisfaction with studies, by gender

	City of Darwin Female %	City of Darwin Male %
Very satisfied	8.6	36.4
Satisfied	56.9	33.3
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	25.9	24.2
Dissatisfied	8.6	3.0
Very dissatisfied	0.0	3.0

Table: Confidence in achieving post-school plans

	City of Darwin %	NT %
Extremely confident	9.1	8.8
Very confident	33.3	33.4
Somewhat confident	48.5	45.6
Slightly confident	6.1	6.1
Not at all confident	3.0	6.1

Table: Confidence in achieving post-school plans, by gender

	City of Darwin Female %	City of Darwin Male %
Extremely confident	7.5	8.7
Very confident	27.5	43.5
Somewhat confident	52.5	43.5
Slightly confident	10.0	0.0
Not at all confident	2.5	4.3

Table: Plans after leaving school

	City of Darwin %	NT %
Go to university	51.5	55.6
Travel/gap year	17.8	24.9
Get a job	16.8	30.7
Join the defence or police force	5.0	8.3
Go to TAFE or college	3.0	4.3
Get an apprenticeship	2.0	8.3
No choices are available to me	0.0	0.6
Other	0.0	3.4

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Table: Plans after leaving school, by gender

	City of Darwin Female %	City of Darwin Male %
Go to university	48.3	54.1
Travel/gap year	18.3	18.9
Get a job	15.0	18.9
Join the defence or police force	5.0	5.4
Go to TAFE or college	5.0	0.0
Get an apprenticeship	1.7	2.7
No choices are available to me	0.0	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Table: Factors to securing a job

	City of Darwin %	NT %
More jobs in my local area	65.2	39.8
Flexible working hours (to work around school etc.)	47.8	64.1
Work experience	43.5	32.0
Improved skills in resume writing/interviews	26.1	28.1
Training/skill development programs	21.7	19.5
Volunteering opportunities	21.7	18.0
More school support	13.0	11.7
Networking	13.0	7.0
More parent/family support	8.7	13.3
Job services/agencies	8.7	6.3
Mentors	4.3	10.9
Other	4.3	5.5

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Table: What young people value

City of Darwin %	Extremely important	Very important	Somewhat important	Slightly important	Not at all important
Friendships (other than family)	36.4	48.5	11.1	2.0	2.0
Family relationships	38.4	35.4	16.2	8.1	2.0
Physical health	21.2	47.5	21.2	7.1	3.0
School or study satisfaction	32.7	35.7	23.5	7.1	1.0
Mental health	29.3	37.4	18.2	9.1	6.1
Financial security	15.2	43.4	27.3	9.1	5.1
Getting a job	7.1	33.3	29.3	17.2	13.1
Culture	9.0	27.0	37.0	16.0	11.0

Table: Issues of personal concern to young people

City of Darwin %	Extremely concerned	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Slightly concerned	Not at all concerned
Coping with stress	22.2	28.3	23.2	13.1	13.1
School or study problems	19.4	25.5	27.6	14.3	13.3
Mental health	23.2	18.2	28.3	9.1	21.2
Body image	21.2	16.2	26.3	17.2	19.2
Suicide	16.2	15.2	8.1	11.1	49.5
Family conflict	11.1	20.2	12.1	18.2	38.4
Physical health	11.1	18.2	33.3	19.2	18.2
Personal safety	13.1	12.1	29.3	18.2	27.3
Discrimination	14.3	10.2	24.5	16.3	34.7
Bullying/emotional abuse	6.1	18.2	18.2	20.2	37.4
LGBTIQA+ issues	13.1	9.1	10.1	6.1	61.6
Financial security	11.2	9.2	18.4	27.6	33.7
Social media	4.0	16.2	22.2	24.2	33.3
Domestic/family violence	11.1	9.1	8.1	9.1	62.6
Drugs	2.0	10.1	10.1	10.1	67.7
Alcohol	1.0	5.1	16.2	11.1	66.7
Gambling	0.0	5.1	6.1	5.1	83.8

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for extremely concerned and very concerned for each item.

Table: Have young people been treated unfairly?

	City of Darwin	
	%	NT %
Yes	35.0	36.6
No	65.0	63.4

Table: Have young people been treated unfairly?

	City of Darwin Female %	City of Darwin Male %
Yes	46.7	16.7
No	53.3	83.3

Table: Reasons for unfair treatment

	City of Darwin %	NT %
Gender	44.1	40.4
Race/cultural background	44.1	35.1
Age	29.4	20.5
Sexuality	23.5	22.5
Mental health	17.6	19.9
Religion	17.6	20.5
Other	8.8	11.3
Disability	2.9	4.0
Financial background	2.9	8.6

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Table: Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

	City of Darwin %	NT %
Yes	63.0	65.4
No	37.0	34.6

Table: Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?, by gender

	City of Darwin Female %	City of Darwin Male %
Yes	73.3	50.0
No	26.7	50.0

Table: Reasons of witnessed unfair treatment

	City of Darwin %	NT %
Race/cultural background	59.7	60.4
Sexuality	56.5	53.4
Gender	53.2	41.0
Religion	35.5	29.9
Mental health	29.0	29.1
Disability	24.2	29.9
Age	24.2	16.4
Financial background	14.5	16.4
Other	3.2	4.9

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Table: How stressed are young people?

	City of Darwin %	NT %
All of the time	16.0	13.3
Most of the time	27.0	28.8
Some of the time	30.0	28.8
A little of the time	21.0	20.6
None of the time	6.0	8.5

Table: How stressed are young people, by gender?

	City of Darwin Female %	City of Darwin Male %
All of the time	20.0	11.1
Most of the time	28.3	19.4
Some of the time	23.3	41.7
A little of the time	23.3	19.4
None of the time	5.0	8.3

Table: Where young people go for help with important issues in their lives

	City of Darwin %	NT %
Friend/s	87.9	80.9
Internet	57.1	44.5
Brother/sister	57.0	48.1
Parent/s or guardian/s	56.0	64.9
Relative/family friend	49.0	51.0
GP or health professional	39.8	37.9
Mobile apps	33.3	26.2
School counsellor	32.3	27.4
Teacher	27.3	26.2
Social media	23.2	16.1
Community service	19.2	14.1
Spiritual/religious mentor	17.2	16.4

Table: Most important issues in Australia today

	City of Darwin %	NT %
The environment	40.2	34.7
Equity and discrimination	39.0	39.9
COVID-19	37.8	35.0
Mental health	35.4	26.8
The economy and financial matters	20.7	16.0

Note: Participants provided three open-ended responses, which were coded and aggregated. This table shows only the top 5 issues for City of Darwin. It may not include the top 5 issues in NT.

Table: Most important issues in Australia today, females

	City of Darwin Female %
Equity and discrimination	52.1
The environment	43.8
COVID-19	41.7
Mental health	35.4
The economy and financial matters	18.8

Table: Most important issues in Australia today, males

	City of Darwin Male %
COVID-19	33.3
Mental health	30.0
The environment	30.0
The economy and financial matters	26.7
Politics	20.0

Table: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	City of Darwin %	NT %
Sports (as a spectator)	58.9	57.2
Sports (as a participant)	54.0	66.7
Arts/cultural/music activities	51.5	52.1
Volunteer work	48.5	44.7
Youth groups/activities	41.2	38.9
Student leadership activities	34.7	34.6
Religious groups/activities	33.7	12.6
Environmental groups/activities	25.8	23.2
Political groups/organisations	17.3	31.4

Table: Family's ability to get along

	City of Darwin %	NT %
Excellent	23.2	19.1
Very good	25.3	27.6
Good	28.3	28.8
Fair	14.1	15.7
Poor	9.1	8.7

Table: Family's ability to get along, by gender

	City of Darwin Female %	City of Darwin Male %
Excellent	18.6	33.3
Very good	22.0	27.8
Good	28.8	25.0
Fair	18.6	8.3
Poor	11.9	5.6

Table: Psychological distress (Kessler 6)

	City of Darwin %
Psychological distress	33.3
No psychological distress	66.7

Table: Feelings about the future

	City of Darwin %	NT %
Very positive	14.1	13.1
Positive	34.3	35.4
Neither positive nor negative	35.4	32.9
Negative	11.1	13.1
Very negative	5.1	5.6

Table: Feelings about the future, by gender

	City of Darwin Female %	City of Darwin Male %
Very positive	10.2	22.2
Positive	39.0	27.8
Neither positive nor negative	32.2	36.1
Negative	13.6	8.3
Very negative	5.1	5.6

Table: How happy young people are

	City of Darwin %	NT %
100	14.1	11.1
90	7.1	7.5
80	12.1	15.5
70	18.2	18.6
60	9.1	10.2
50	12.1	15.3
40	5.1	8.5
30	8.1	4.4
20	5.1	3.4
10	3.0	1.7
0	6.1	3.9

Thank you
to the 25,800 young
people who took part in
the 2020 Youth Survey!

Want to get your school involved in the 2021 Youth Survey? Register your interest **now** at youthsurvey@missionaustralia.com.au

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