



# BodyKind

## YOUTH SURVEY

Your Body Image, Your Voice.

REPORT 2022

### How to cite this report

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### Acknowledgment of Country

Butterfly acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and extend our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.

### Acknowledgment of Lived Experience

Butterfly recognises and values the knowledge and wisdom of people with lived experience, and their supporters.

### Acknowledgment of Supporters

Butterfly would like to thank the nib foundation for their generous support of the *Body Kind Youth Survey* and acknowledge all those who contributed to the development, collection and analysis of the survey and data.

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## Message from our Interim CEO



It is my pleasure to present the results of Butterfly's 2022 *Body Kind* Youth Survey – Australia's first national body image survey for young people aged 12 to 18.

To the 1,635 young people who completed the survey and shared their thoughts and experiences with us, as well as the many organisations and individuals who promoted the survey through their networks, thank you.

The *Body Kind* Youth Survey has been a significant undertaking. I would like to acknowledge Butterfly's Prevention Team, including Project Lead Helen Bird, Vogl and Blake Research Associates, Dr Andrea Phillipou and Dr Stephanie Damiano who have supported the development, analysis and reporting of the survey. To Butterfly's lived experience community and Working Group members, thank you for your insight and invaluable contribution. This survey would not have been made possible without funding from nib foundation and we are immensely grateful for their support of this survey and Butterfly's work.

As a national charity which supports Australians with eating disorders and body image concerns, we understand the vital role that data plays in informing our work and that of the field more generally, and in creating momentum for change.

The results of the survey are both enlightening and concerning, highlighting the continued prevalence of body dissatisfaction and body image concern amongst Australian youth, especially for our young women, gender diverse young people and those in the LGBTQIA+ community. As a parent, it saddens me to see that most participants rarely speak positively about their bodies, nor do they reach out and speak to someone about their body image concerns.

But the results also offer hope in the ways young people are already practising body kindness. Creating *Body Kind* environments which support young people to be kind in the way they move, nourish, nurture, and speak to their own body and to others; their schools, homes, and activity and sporting clubs – has been a priority for Butterfly for many years. We look forward to strengthening our *Body Kind* initiatives, being guided and informed by what young people share through the survey.

Our intention is that the *Body Kind* Youth Survey will continue annually to create a rich and long-term dataset to build greater understanding of young peoples' relationships with their bodies. By truly understanding the perspective of young people, who are of course the experts on their own lives and bodies, Butterfly and all of those working to support the body image, wellbeing and mental health of young people can better target our efforts.

Once again, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all those involved. Together let's create a more *Body Kind* Australia for our young people.

*Anna Cullinane*

Interim CEO  
Butterfly Foundation

## Message from our Head of Prevention

The way young people feel and think about their body and appearance plays a significant role in determining how they see and value themselves. It influences their thoughts and behaviours, and can lead to a range of challenges, impacting and distracting them from their studies, friendships, sport and other activities.

The *Body Kind* Youth Survey is an exciting initiative led by Butterfly's Prevention Team that takes a deep dive into the body image experience of young Australians. The survey results provide timely and unique insights that can help us bring about the change young people want and need in their lives.

Butterfly's Prevention Services has been working with young people, educators and other youth professionals, parents in schools, communities and sport settings since 2007, reaching over 1.7 million young people to date, Australia-wide. Our accredited trainings and seminars have provided over 12,000 educators and other youth professionals and parents with body image education and support for early intervention in response to disordered eating and eating disorders.

Our *Body Kind* programs, a key activity of Butterfly Prevention Services, empower young people to build resilience, arming them with knowledge, skills and positive strategies to support their body image to help them navigate the world.

However, to truly help young people thrive in their bodies, it is critical that we drive cultural change. This means disrupting and dismantling the harmful social norms, industries and platforms, and exposing diet culture and its dangerous messaging which suggests that to like our body or to be 'worthy' it needs to be a certain weight, shape or size.



We have some work to do and we hope that the results of this survey, and those of future years, will guide and inform this work.

We remain committed and dedicated to building a *Body Kind* Australia. We all have an important role to play, and we hope that all members of the community will join with us.

*Danni Rowlands*

Head of Prevention  
Butterfly Foundation

# About the Survey

The survey forms part of the *Body Kind* initiative.

Being *Body Kind* is about how we nourish, nurture and move our bodies.

It's about the language we use, out loud, online and in our heads. It is about finding ways to like, accept, and feel positive about a person's body and take actions to challenge the impact of unhelpful influences.

## The *Body Kind* Youth Survey is an activity of Butterfly Foundation's Prevention Services. It is the first large-scale survey of body image among Australian young people.

### Background

Body dissatisfaction occurs when an individual experiences a discrepancy between what they actually look like, and what they want to look like, with consequent negative feelings about their body (Vinkers et al., 2012). Body dissatisfaction is related to several adverse outcomes, including poor self-esteem and depressive symptoms (Fairweather-Schmidt et al., 2015; Paxton, et al., 2006; Vinkers et al., 2012), difficulties in social relationships, academic challenges, and engagement in risky health behaviours (e.g., tobacco smoking). Individuals with body dissatisfaction are also more likely to engage in risky dietary and weight loss or weight gain behaviours, and excessive exercise to alter their appearance (National Eating Disorder Collaboration, 2010). Body dissatisfaction is therefore recognised as one of the strongest risk factors for disordered eating and eating disorders (National Eating Disorder Collaboration, 2010). Eating disorders are in the top 10 leading causes of non-fatal disease burden for adolescent and adult women (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018). They have been estimated to affect around 1 million Australians every year, with a total burden of disease cost estimated in 2012 as approximately \$70 billion, of which \$19.9 billion is the cost of health services (Butterfly Foundation, 2012). In today's figures, this number is around \$80.1 billion per year.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 has had a marked impact on eating disorders within Australia and globally. Butterfly recently undertook a literature review of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on eating disorders and disordered eating behaviours. The 72 studies identified an increase in eating disorders and eating disorder behaviours, with those with a diagnosed eating disorder and children and adolescents being most negatively impacted (McLean C.P. et al., 2022).

Adolescence is a crucial time in the development of a young person's identity, thoughts and feelings about their body, and in health-related attitudes and behaviours. Negative attitudes and health-compromising behaviours formed during adolescence can have long-term ramifications on health and wellbeing. A 15-year longitudinal study following 1,455 Canadian adolescents into adulthood revealed that 95% of individuals experienced relatively stable body dissatisfaction from mid-adolescence through adulthood (Wang et al., 2019).

Previous research provides some insight into the prevalence of body dissatisfaction in young people. However, these studies are either based on international samples, or on specific geographical locations in Australia. A recent study has shown that approximately 40% of 11-to-15-year-old boys and girls, from Melbourne, Victoria, have reported moderate to severe levels of body dissatisfaction (McLean S.A. et al., 2021).

In this study, body dissatisfaction was highest among girls and young people aged 13-14.

Currently there is no national data on the body image experiences of young people aged 12-18 in Australia, which makes it difficult to answer the fundamental and frequently asked question 'how many young Australians are satisfied/dissatisfied with their bodies'? The long-running Mission Australian Youth Survey of 15- to 19-year-olds asks a valuable but singular question on 'How concerned are you about your body image?'. Without more detailed information on how young people feel about their bodies it is difficult to make the case for suitable investment in prevention and early intervention. Listening to young people is also critical for informing policies, services and resources so that they address their specific needs and priorities.

### Aims

The *Body Kind* Youth Survey was designed to explore, and better understand, the body image experience of young Australians, aged 12 to 18 years. It is Butterfly Foundation's first nationwide survey to explore the levels of body satisfaction in a large sample of young people. Of particular focus was the impact of some of the known key influences on young peoples' body image, how feelings about their bodies impact their everyday lives, and the ways in which young people are being kind to their bodies to support a positive body image. The survey also explored young peoples' levels of body image concern, their preferred sources to obtain information and education on body image, and what they feel needs to change to create a more *Body Kind* Australia.

Body image is the thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs a person has about their body and how they look, including their shape, size, weight and the way their body functions for them.

### Survey Design

The *Body Kind* Youth Survey was an anonymous online survey developed under the guidance of a Working Group, which included leading body image researchers, professionals working in the body image and eating disorder sector, educators, and a young person with lived experience of an eating disorder.

The survey's development was informed by an extensive review of the scientific literature and available assessment tools to measure body image and its determinants. The survey was also informed by lived experience, including members of the [Butterfly Collective](#) – Butterfly's online community of Australians with a personal lived/living experience of disordered eating, eating disorders or body image concerns. Twenty members of the Butterfly Collective provided information on the influences on, and changing nature of, their body image, the support they believed may have changed their body image concerns, and questions they believed should and should not be included in the survey.

**A key priority during development was to ensure the survey was informed by a 'do no harm' approach, in which questions were worded positively wherever possible.**

Following a review of the available standardised measures for body image and its determinants, validated, reliable and age-appropriate measures were included in the survey. When such measures did not exist, past Butterfly surveys were explored for options and decisions were made amongst research members of the Working Group.

Standardised measures used in the study included the Body Appreciation Scale-2 for Children (Halliwell et al., 2017), with the addition of an 'unsure' option and some wording simplified for comprehension, and the Body Image Life Disengagement Questionnaire (Atkinson & Diedrichs, 2021), with wording modified on two items to make them more appropriate for an Australian audience and one activity item added. A question about body image concern was used from Mission Australia's Annual Youth Survey (Leung et al., 2022). For the purpose of this survey, a series of multiple choice and open-ended questions were created to ask young people about appearance comparisons, importance of appearance, social media use, experience of appearance-related teasing, body image education and what can be done to help young people feel better about their bodies.

Prior to commencement of data collection, the survey was piloted with a small group of young people aged 12 to 18 to ensure readability and comprehension.



# About the Survey

## Procedure

### Ethics Approval

The survey received Human Research Ethics Committee approval from Bellberry Limited.

### Data Collection

Data collection was conducted between September and November 2022. Recruitment of 12- to 18-year-olds, living in Australia, was through a number of avenues. A social media campaign (organic and paid) was run by Butterfly Foundation, which targeted young people, and their parents, from diverse groups and geographical locations. Schools, families and sporting clubs registering for Butterfly's *Body Kind* initiatives in 2022 were also encouraged to share the survey with young people they work with and support. Organisations working with young people and families were also invited to share the survey through their networks. Participants were offered the opportunity to enter a draw to win one of 20 \$50 gift cards in recognition of their time and effort.

### Data Analysis

Analysis was undertaken on a total of 1,635 responses. Where missing data was identified for different items, only the available data were analysed. Descriptive statistics were used to characterise the data (i.e., group percentages, and means and standard deviations). Statistical analyses between groups (e.g., gender) involved analyses of variance, and to explore relationships between variables Pearson's correlations were conducted (statistical significance of  $\alpha < 0.01$ ). Responses to open-ended questions were summarised by identifying themes and using frequency analyses.

## Reporting

This report contains a summary of findings from the *Body Kind* Youth Survey 2022. Key questions were asked of young people and findings for these are first presented for the whole sample, followed by comparisons between age, gender identity, sexual identity and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people. For the key body image and body image concerns, comparisons were also highlighted between state and territory, and socioeconomic status. Snapshot reports for demographic groups will be available on the survey findings website.

Care should be taken in the interpretation of state and territory level comparisons and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander data, due to the small sample sizes.





# Executive Summary

Body dissatisfaction has long been identified as a major concern for Australian young people, and it is a leading risk factor for the development of disordered eating and an eating disorder. But body dissatisfaction also affects young people in their everyday lives. It is related to poor self-esteem, depressive symptoms, difficulties in social relationships, academic challenges, and engagement in risky behaviours. So, the prevention and early intervention of significant body dissatisfaction in young people is important, but first, we need a clearer understanding of who is experiencing body dissatisfaction and what impact it might be having on today's young Australians.

Butterfly Foundation's *Body Kind Youth Survey 2022* was the first nationwide survey to explore the levels of body satisfaction in a large sample of young people. Survey responses were analysed from 1,635 young people, aged 12-18 years, who are living in states and territories across Australia. Most respondents were aged 15-18 years (87.1%) and while respondents were diverse in their gender and sexual identity, most identified as female (48.1%) and heterosexual (48.7%).

Overall, the findings from the *Body Kind Youth Survey 2022* suggest that body dissatisfaction and concerns about body image are exceptionally high in young people in Australia, and the impact on their lives is evident.

Almost half of all young people reported being dissatisfied with how their body looks. While young people in all demographic groups are experiencing body dissatisfaction, females and young people in the LGBTQIA+ community have reported the highest levels. 14-year-olds also appeared to experience the highest levels of body dissatisfaction compared with other ages, and at this age being good looking was also most highly valued.

Young people were asked about their levels of body appreciation. It was found that poorer body appreciation was related to a greater desire for thinness, life disengagement, and social media making

young people feel more dissatisfied about their body. Nearly 4 in 10 young people reported never or rarely feeling comfortable with their body, while a quarter never or rarely respect their body.

Young people also reported rarely speaking positively about their bodies or speaking to someone if they were not feeling good about their bodies, but frequently surrounded themselves with people who like them for who they are rather than how they look.

An overwhelming majority of respondents (90.1%) reported some level of concern about their body image, with over 1 in 3 respondents reported being very or extremely concerned with their bodies. 13-year-olds reported the highest levels of concern. Males tended to be the least concerned about their body image.

More than half of all respondents wished they were thinner and more muscular.

Young people most frequently compared their bodies to their friends and other teenagers, and 13- and 14-year-olds were overall more likely to make comparisons.

Young people were asked about their body image stopping them from engaging in a range of activities. Going to the beach, clothes shopping, doing physical activity/sport, and giving an opinion or standing up for themselves were most frequently affected. Notably, body image also impacted young people's ability to focus on schoolwork and willingness to raise their hand in the classroom.

Although representing a small proportion of respondents (4.9%), Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people shared their body image experiences and concerns. The proportions of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth experiencing body dissatisfaction and body image concerns were slightly less than non-Indigenous youth, and overall, they reported similar problematic attitudes and behaviours.

In contrast, young people who had received a diagnosis of an eating disorder had particularly high body dissatisfaction, increased body image concern and increased life disengagement. Autistic young people also reported high body dissatisfaction, high concern about their body image and increased life disengagement.

When exploring some of the known risk factors for body image, it was found that the majority (around 70%) of young people have experienced appearance-related teasing, which overwhelmingly occurred at school. It's therefore not surprising that young people want schools to do more to stop it from happening. A high proportion of young people also reported appearance-related teasing online, yet when asked, most young people reported speaking kindly to their friends online.

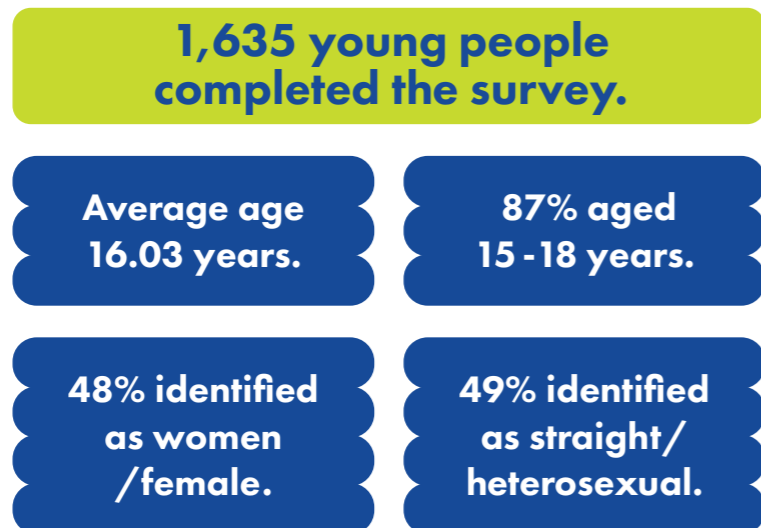
We also asked about young people's social media use in general. 6 in 10 young people said they are spending more time on social media than they would like to, and almost 50% reported that social media made them feel dissatisfied with their body. Thus, it was not surprising to learn that young people want social media platforms to take more responsibility for helping young people have a more positive body image, by changing the way body ideals and beauty standards are presented and having more controls in place regarding the promotion of dieting, weight loss and inaccurate health information.

Of concern, few young people are frequently engaging in social media literacy strategies (such as taking a break or unfollowing pages) when social media is making them feel bad about their body. Social media literacy strategies were most prevalent among 17- and 18-year-olds. In contrast, 12-year-olds reported the least engagement in social media literacy strategies, however, they also reported the least impact of social media on their body image. This highlights the importance of introducing social media strategies to young people very early, if not before they are using social media.

Overall, the vast majority of young people are calling for more body image support at school, at both primary and secondary levels. Young people reported wanting more resources to support their body image, trained school staff, and body image education within the curriculum. They also expressed a preference to hearing from other young people who have overcome body image issues, peer programs, and resources and information that can be delivered on social media.

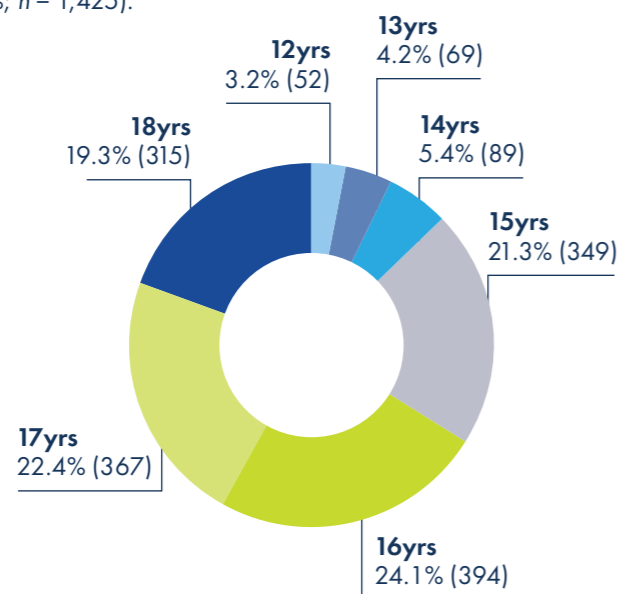
These *Body Kind Youth Survey* findings shed light on the important body image experiences and related issues for young people living in Australia, which are critical to inform the further development of resources, support services, and advocacy to support young people's relationship with their body. We have important work to do to make Australia *Body Kind* for our young people.

# Demographics



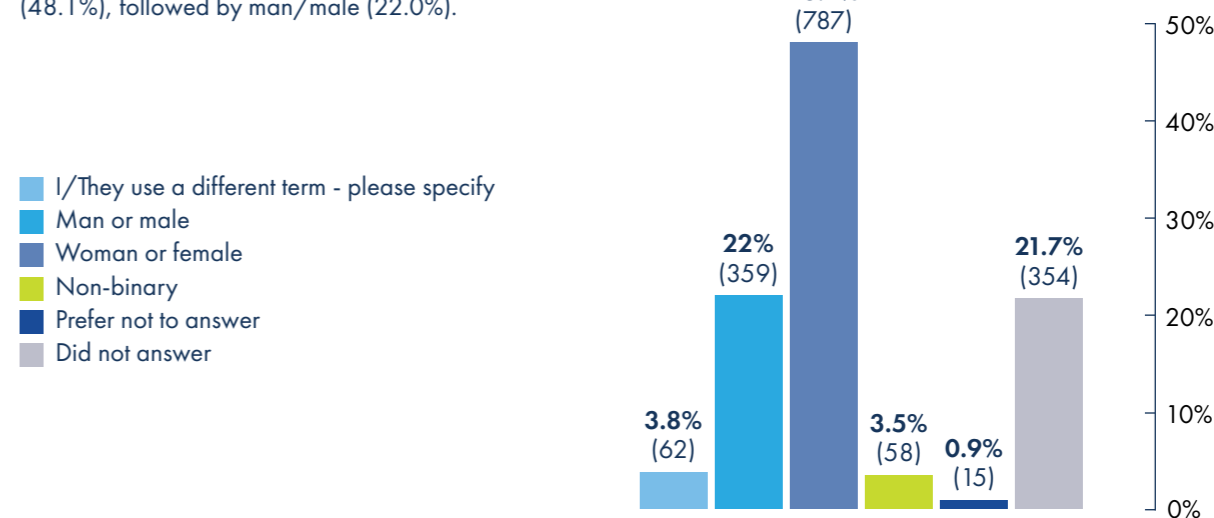
**Figure 1. Age of respondents (N = 1635)**

The majority of respondents were aged between 15 and 18 (87.1%; n = 1,425).



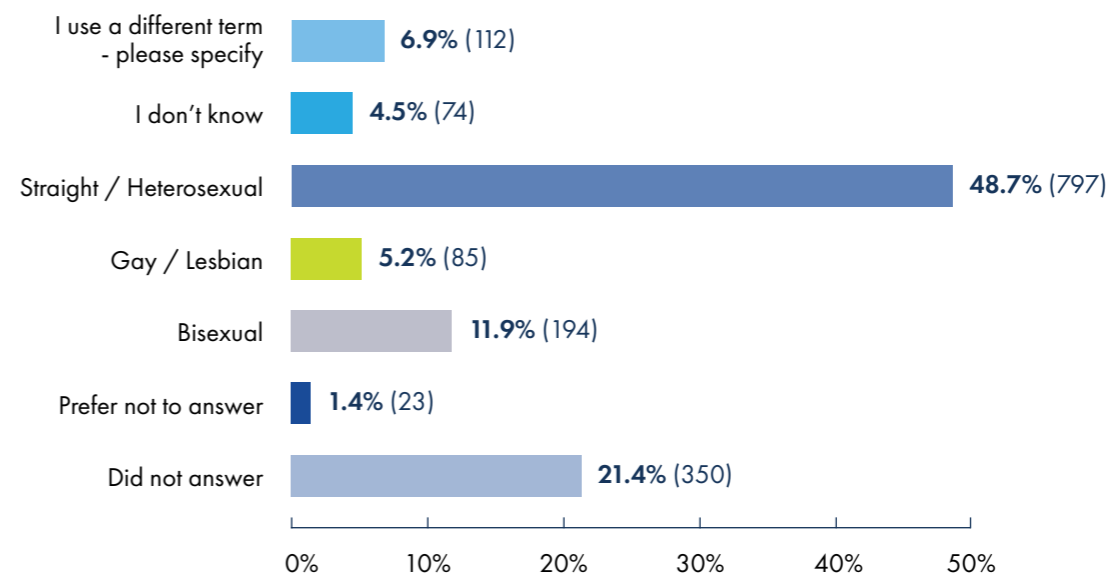
**Figure 2. Gender identity of respondents (N = 1635)**

The majority of young people identified as woman/female (48.1%), followed by man/male (22.0%).



**Figure 3. Sexual identity of respondents (N = 1635)**

Nearly half of young people described their sexuality as straight/heterosexual (48.7%).

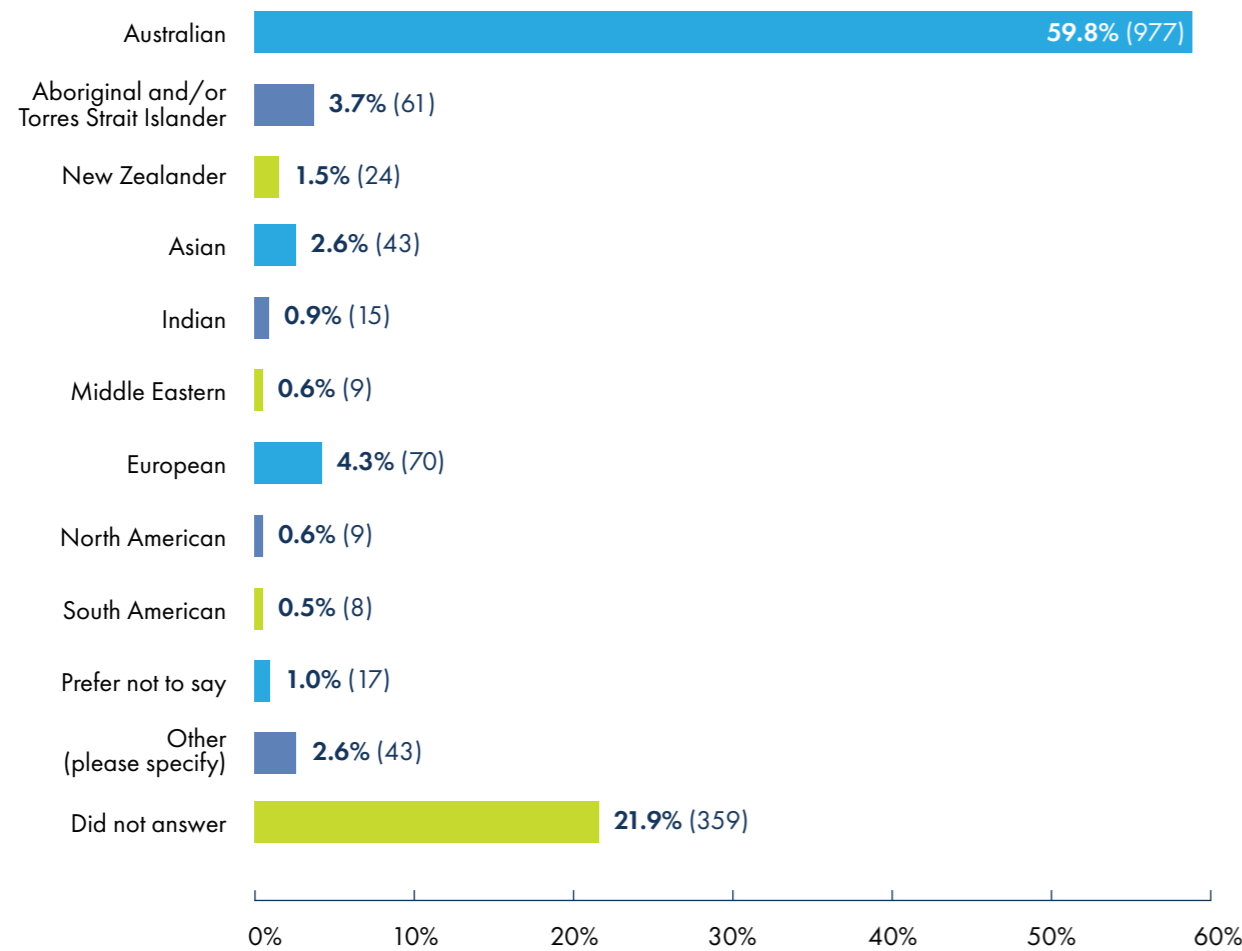




**Figure 4. Cultural background of respondents (N = 1635)**

There was diversity in the background of respondents. 59.8% identified as Australian and 3.7% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, which is comparable to the national population (3.3%; 2021 Census of Population and Housing).

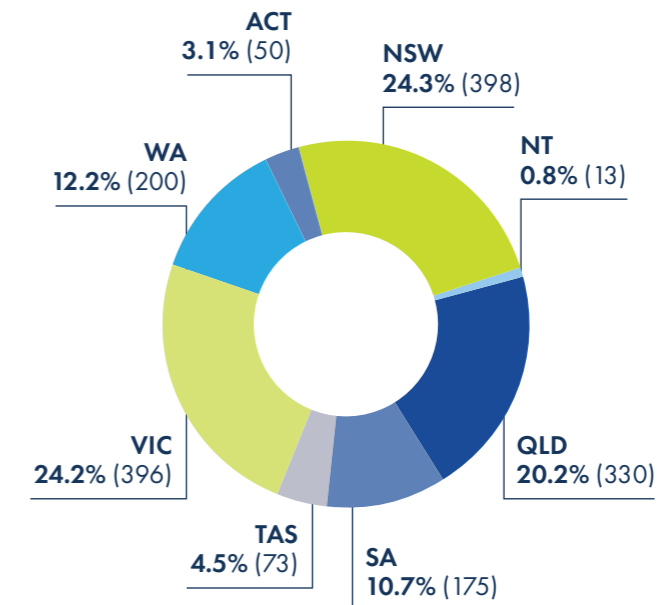
Other most frequently reported cultural backgrounds were European (4.3%), Asian (2.6%), New Zealander (1.5%) and Indian (0.9%).



**Figure 5. Location of respondents (N = 1635)**

Respondents from each state and territory of Australia were represented in the data, the majority of whom resided in NSW (24.3%), VIC (24.2%) and QLD (20.2%). Across Australia, over two thirds (67.4%) of young people resided in metropolitan areas

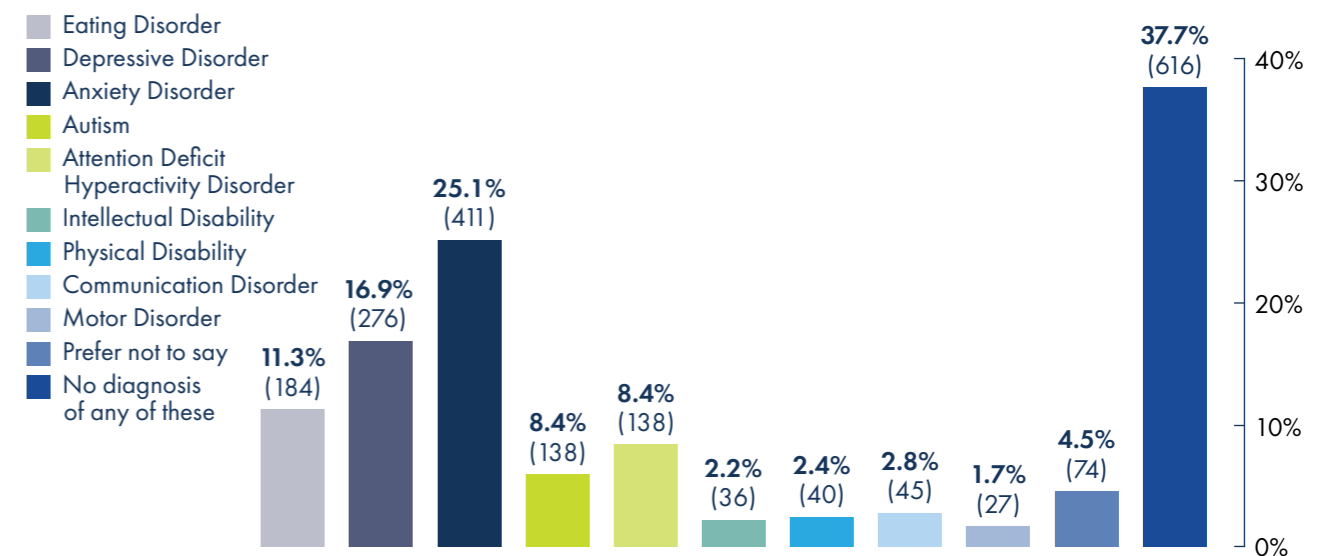
and 32.6% in regional/rural areas. Postcode data was used to identify the socioeconomic status of respondents. One in five (20.4%) young people were living in more disadvantaged areas, while 35.4% were living in more advantaged areas (SEIFA, 2016).



**Figure 6. Health history of respondents (N = 1635)**

Respondents were asked to report whether they had received a diagnosis from a list of mental health and other conditions, with the option to select more than one condition. Over one third (37.7%) reported that they had not been diagnosed with any of the specified

conditions/disorders, 25.1% reported a diagnosis of anxiety, 16.9% depression, 11.3% an eating disorder, 8.4% attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and 5.9% Autism.



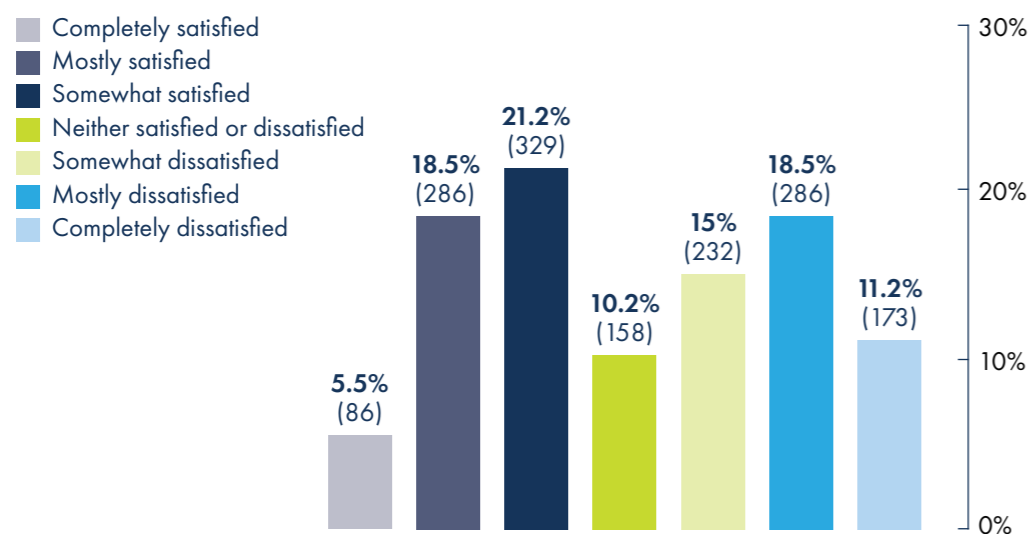
# Key Findings

## How satisfied are young people with how their body looks?

Almost half of young people reported being dissatisfied with how their body looks.

Nearly 1 in 3 young people reported being mostly or completely dissatisfied with how their body looks.

Figure 7. Level of body satisfaction– all respondents (N = 1550)



Young people were asked to rate how satisfied they were with how their body looks (i.e., their body image) using a 7-point scale, ranging from completely satisfied to completely dissatisfied. Some level of body dissatisfaction was defined as the cumulative proportion of somewhat, mostly and completely dissatisfied responses.

A high level of body dissatisfaction was defined as those who self-reported being mostly or completely dissatisfied with how their body looks.

Of the 1,550 young people who responded to this question, 45.2% reported some level of **body satisfaction**, while 44.7% reported some level of **body dissatisfaction**. Nearly 1 in 3 (29.7%) self-reported a high level of **body dissatisfaction**.

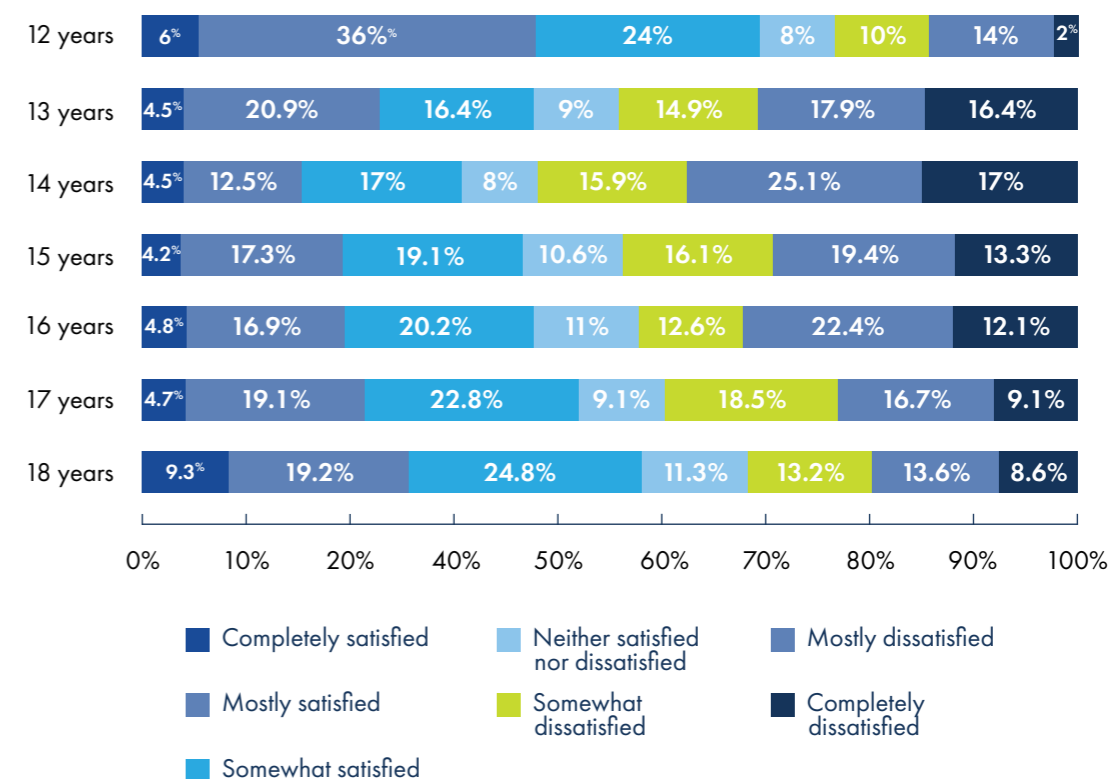
## Age differences

Body satisfaction appeared to be higher and body dissatisfaction appeared to be lower in 12- and 18-year-olds. Two thirds of 12-year-olds (66%) reported some level of **body satisfaction** compared with 53.3% of 18-year-olds and less than 46% of 13- to 17-year-olds.

Some level of **body dissatisfaction** was highest for 14-year-olds (58%), and lowest for 12-year-olds (26%) and 18-year-olds (35.4%).

42.1% of 14-year-olds reported a high level of **body dissatisfaction**, compared with 12% of 12-year-olds.

Figure 8. Level of body satisfaction (%) by age





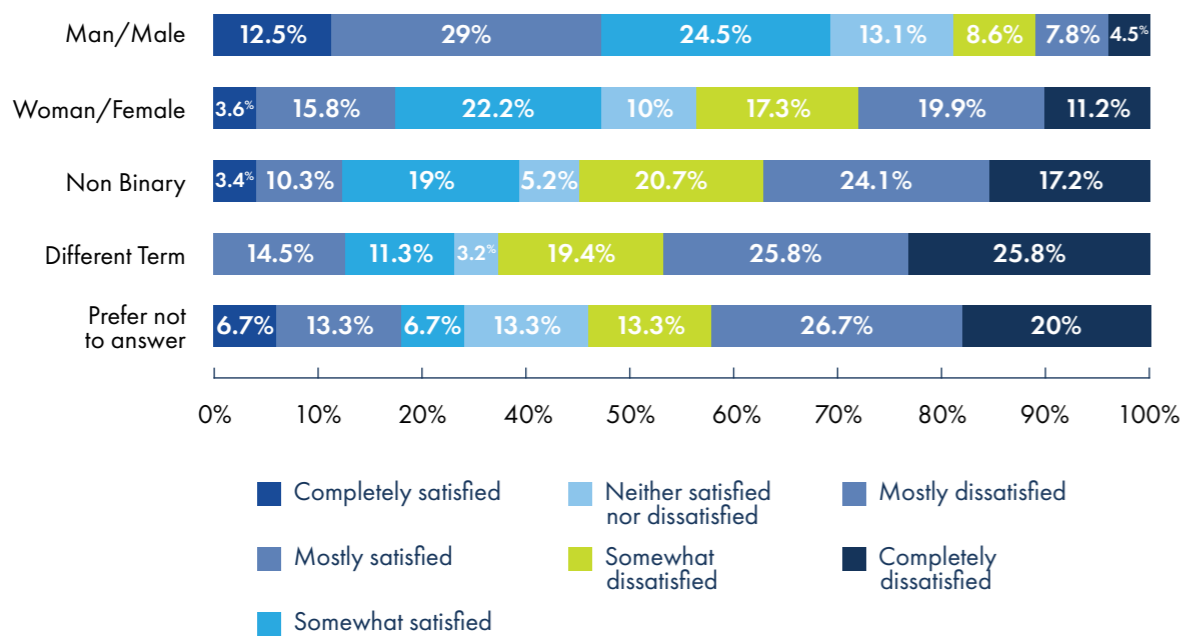
## Gender differences

Two thirds of males (66%) reported some level of **body satisfaction** compared with 41.6% of females and 32.7% of non-binary young people.

Some level of **body dissatisfaction** was reported by 48.4% of females, 20.9% of males, 62% of those who identify as non-binary, 71% of those who used a different term, and 60% of those who preferred not to say.

Over half of young people identifying under a different term (51.6%) self-reported a high level of **body dissatisfaction**, followed by 46.7% of those who preferred not to identify their gender, 41.3% of non-binary young people, 31.1% of females and 12.3% of males.

Figure 9. Level of body satisfaction (%) by gender



## Sexuality differences

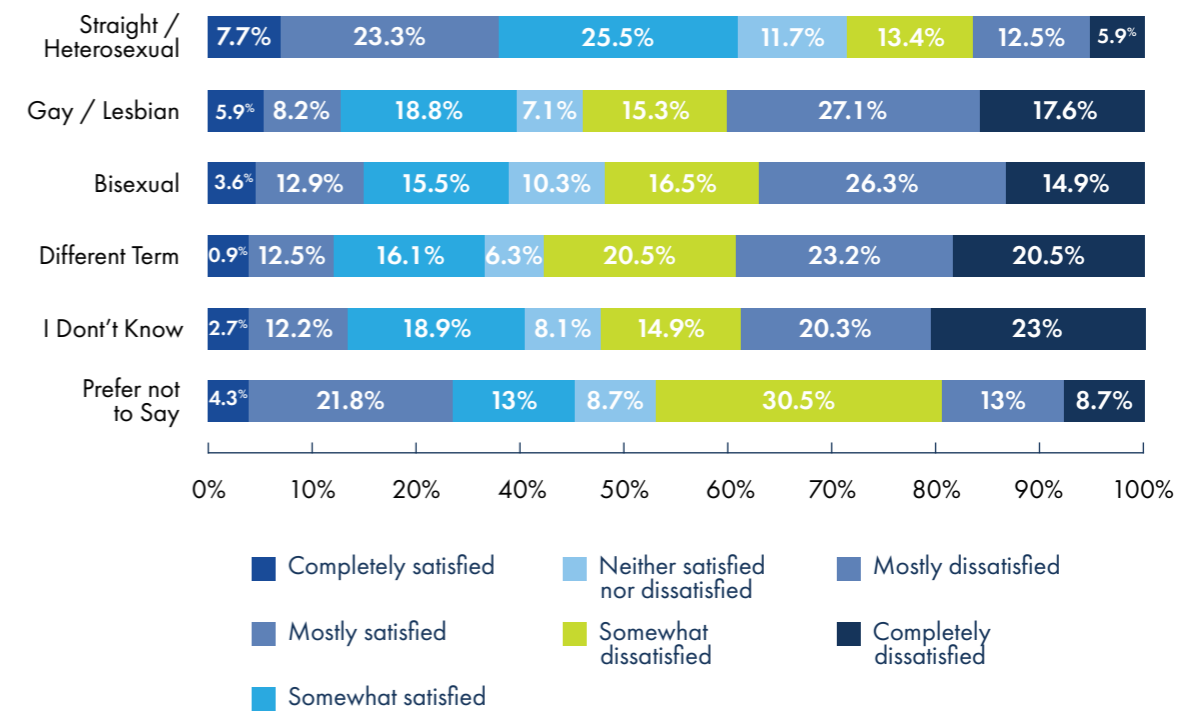
Compared with 56% of heterosexual respondents, some level of **body satisfaction** was reported by approximately 30% of young people who identified as gay/lesbian (32.9%), bisexual (32.0%), preference for a different term (29.5%), and who did not know their sexuality (33.8%), see Figure 10.

Some level of **body dissatisfaction** was reported by approximately 60% of respondents

from the LGBTQIA+ community (i.e., gay/lesbian (60.0%), bisexual (57.7%), preference for a different term (64.2%), or did not know their sexuality (58.2%)), and 31.8% who identified as straight/heterosexual.

A high level of **body dissatisfaction** was reported in over 40% of young people from the LGBTQIA+ community, compared with 18.4% of heterosexual young people.

Figure 10. Level of body satisfaction (%) by sexuality



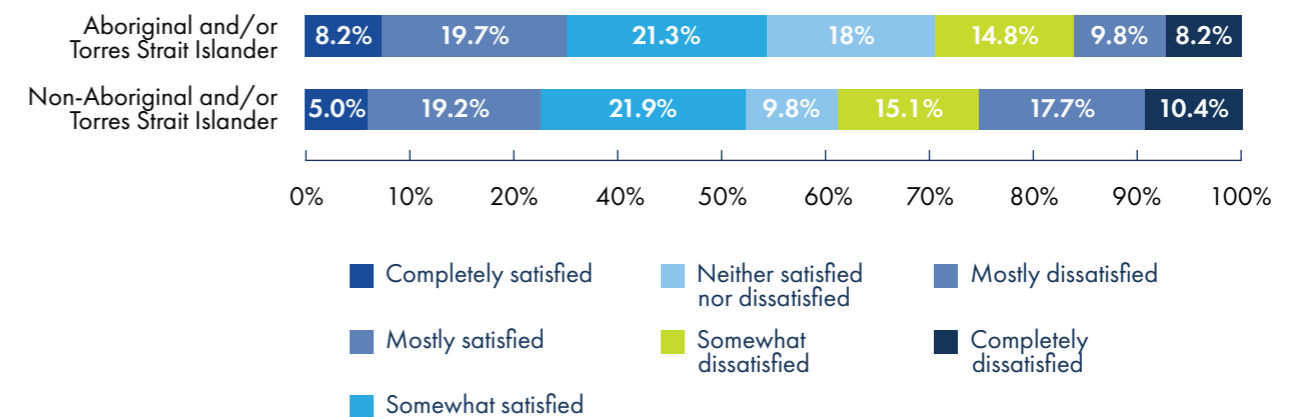
## Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people

Similar proportions of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous respondents reported some level of **body satisfaction** (49.2% and 47%, respectively).

Slightly more non-Indigenous respondents reported some level of **body dissatisfaction**

(32.8% and 43.2%, respectively) as well as a high level of self-reported **body dissatisfaction** (18.0% and 28.1%, respectively). These differences were not statistically significant. Notably, the sample of respondents who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander was small.

Figure 11. Level of body satisfaction (%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people



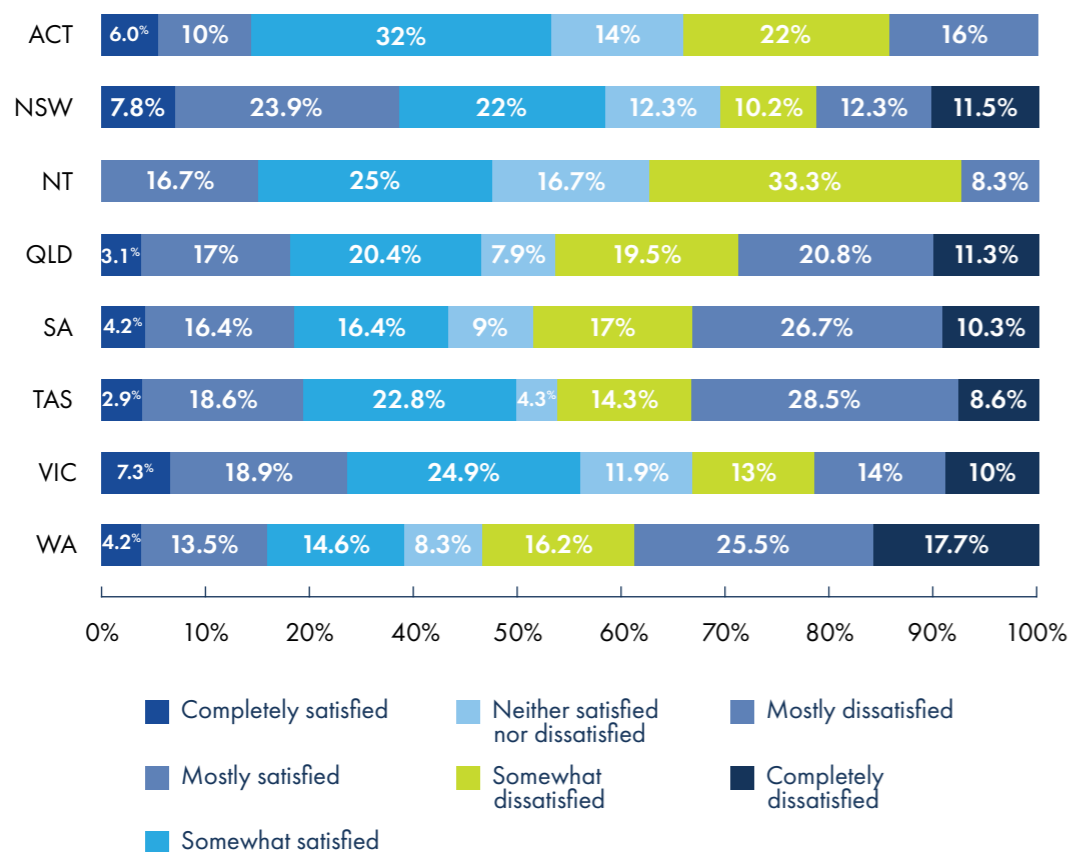
### State and territory differences

Approximately half of respondents in the ACT, NSW and VIC reported some level of **body satisfaction**, which was somewhat higher than respondents in other states.

Young people from WA reported the highest levels of **body dissatisfaction** with 59.4% reporting some level of body dissatisfaction and 43.2% reporting a high level of body dissatisfaction.

Greater proportions of young people from WA (43.2%), SA (37.0%), TAS (37.1%) and QLD (32.1%) reported high levels of **body dissatisfaction**, compared with the total survey sample (of which 29.7% reported a high level of **body dissatisfaction**).

Figure 12. Level of body satisfaction (%) by state and territory



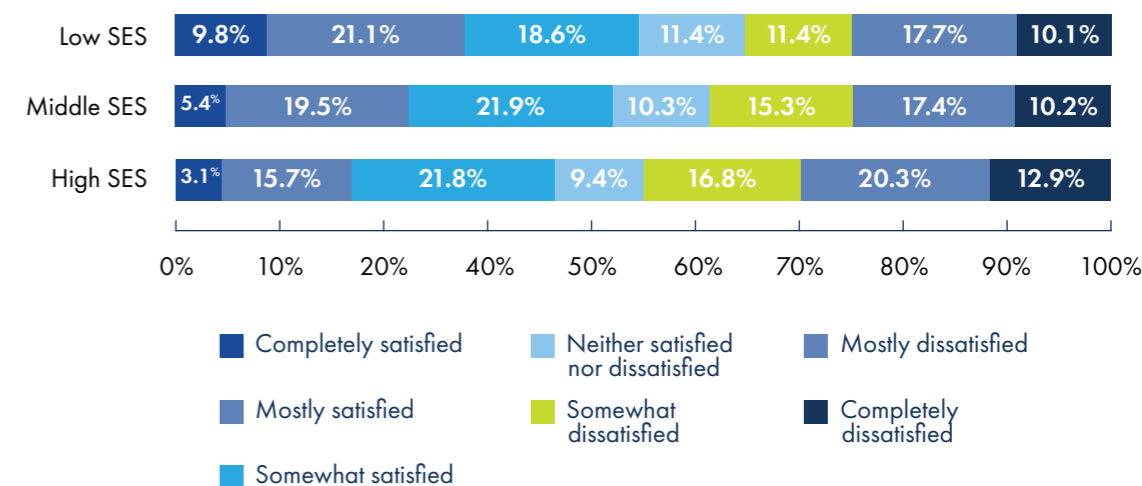
### Socioeconomic status differences

When examining the reporting of any level of body dissatisfaction (i.e., combining the proportion of somewhat to completely dissatisfied), **body dissatisfaction** was highest among High socioeconomic status (SES)

respondents (50.0%), compared with Middle (42.9%) and Low (39.2%) SES.

However, high levels of body dissatisfaction were similar across High (33.2%), Middle (27.6%) and Low (27.8%) SES.

Figure 13. Level of body satisfaction (%) by socioeconomic status





## How do young people perceive others' body satisfaction?

When young people were asked how satisfied they thought other young people are with how their body looks, half (50.7%) thought that others experienced some level of body dissatisfaction and a third (32.3%) thought that others experienced some level of body satisfaction.

These proportions are discrepant from the actual proportion of young people in the survey who reported some level of body dissatisfaction (i.e., 44.7%) and body satisfaction (i.e., 45.2%), suggesting that young people may perceive other's body image to be more of a problem than it is.

In contrast, however, 21.5% of respondents thought that other young people experienced high levels of body dissatisfaction, which is less than the proportion of young people in the survey who reported high levels of body dissatisfaction (i.e., 29.7%).

## To what extent do young people appreciate their bodies?

Body appreciation was measured using the 10-item Body Appreciation Scale-2 for Children (BAS-2C; Halliwell et al., 2017)

Young people were asked to indicate how frequently each statement was true for them, using a 5-point scale ranging from never (1) to always (5).

Respondents were also given the option to respond *not sure*. Scores are averaged across responses (scores range from 1-5), with higher scores indicating higher levels of body appreciation (i.e., more positive body image).

For the 1,484 young people who responded to this scale, the mean score was 3.13 (SD = 1.00), indicating that the sample on average reported feeling 'sometimes' positive about their bodies.

## Poorer body appreciation was associated with:

**Wishing to be thinner/leaner**  
( $r = 0.54, p < 0.01$ )

**Social media making young people feel more dissatisfied about their body**  
( $r = 0.55, p < 0.01$ )

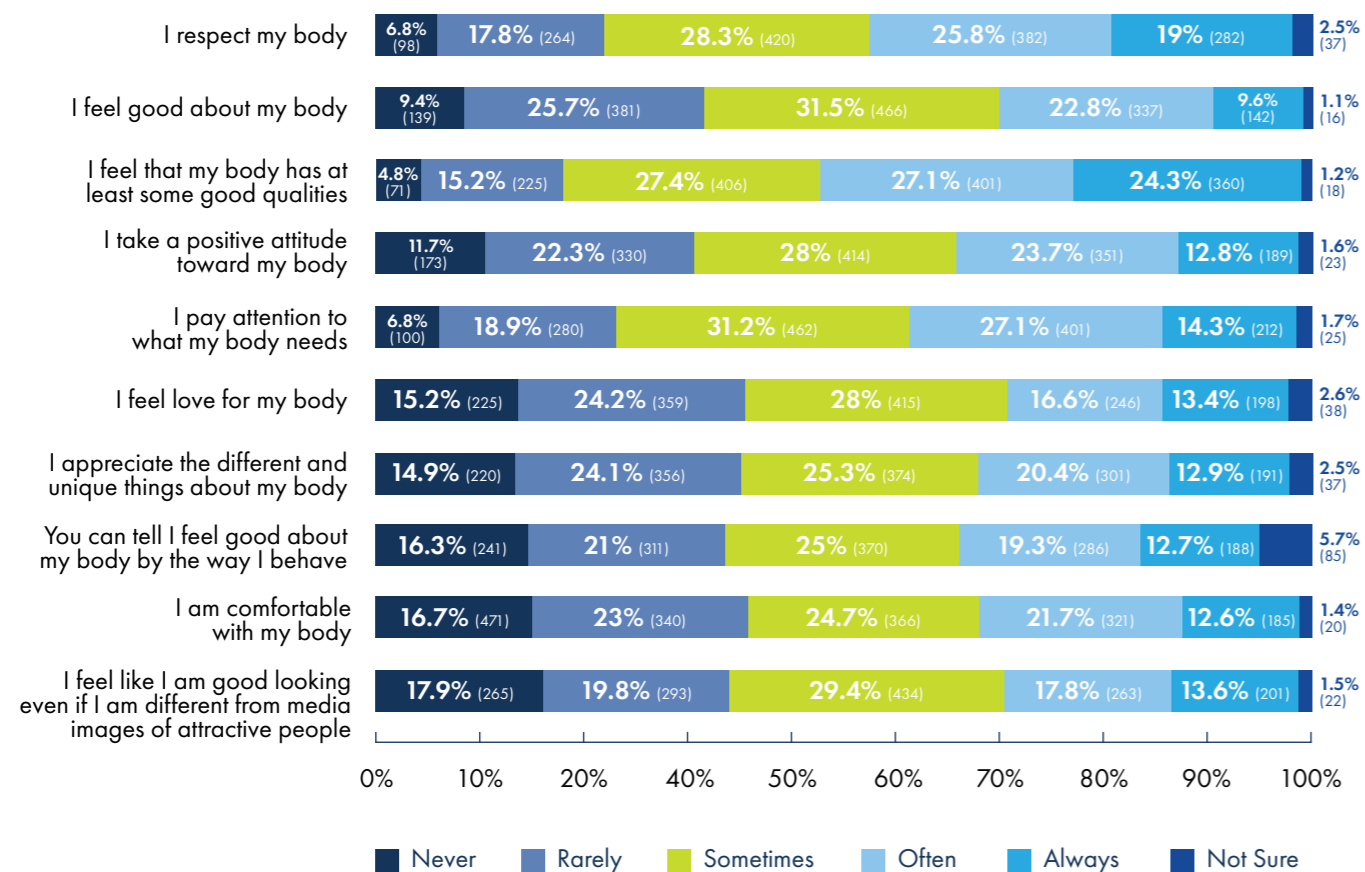
**Greater life disengagement**  
( $r = -.59, p < 0.01$ )

**A quarter of young people reported never or rarely respecting their body.**

**Over a third of young people never or rarely feel good about their body.**

**Nearly 4 in 10 young people never or rarely are comfortable with their body or appreciate the different and unique things about their body.**

**Figure 14. Level of body appreciation of young people**



Group comparisons showed that males reported greater body appreciation than all other genders, and heterosexual young people reported greater body appreciation than other sexual identities.

No statistically significant differences were found between age and state and territory groups, nor between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous young people. A summary of group statistics are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Body Appreciation Scale scores by demographic groups**

Gender	n	Mean	Std Dev
Man/Male	359	3.55	0.92
Woman/Female	787	2.96	0.96
Non-Binary	58	2.68	0.94
Different Term	62	2.47	0.98
Prefer not to answer	15	2.67	0.92

Age	n	Mean	Std Dev
12	52	3.52	1.129
13	69	3.03	1.15
14	89	2.84	1.12
15	349	2.92	1.05
16	394	2.99	1.02
17	367	3.07	0.90
18	315	3.16	0.87

Sexuality	n	Mean	Std Dev
Straight / Heterosexual	797	3.31	0.95
Gay/Lesbian	85	2.71	0.93
Bisexual	194	2.77	0.94
Different term	112	2.62	0.96
I don't know	74	2.72	1.05
Prefer not to answer	23	2.99	0.84

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people	n	Mean	Std Dev
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	61	3.16	0.96
Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	1198	3.08	0.99

State and Territories	n	Mean	Std Dev
ACT	48	3.26	0.73
NSW	353	3.23	1.06
NT	11	3.02	0.85
QLD	306	2.93	0.94
SA	155	2.87	0.93
TAS	69	2.85	0.85
VIC	353	3.20	1.03
WA	189	2.74	0.93



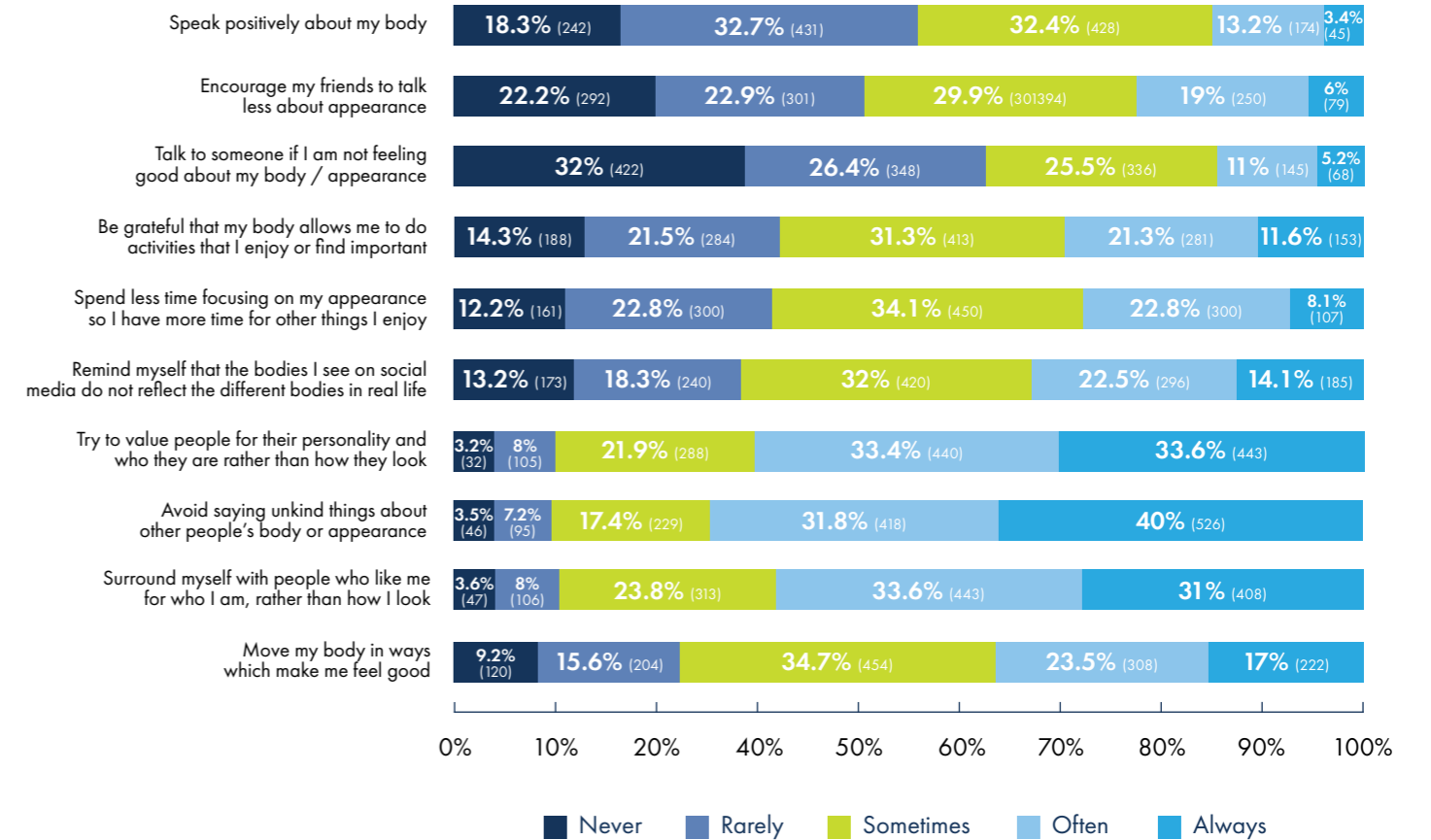
## How are young people being Body Kind?

Young people appeared to be kinder to others than themselves.

Nearly 6 in 10 young people reported never/rarely talking to someone if they were not feeling good about their body/appearance.

7 in 10 young people often/always avoided saying unkind things about other people's body or appearance.

Figure 15. Ways in which young people practice being Body Kind



Young people were asked a series of questions about the frequency in which they were practicing being Body Kind (i.e., engage in actions to support their body image), on a 5-point scale ranging from never (1) to always (5).

Of the approximate 1,320 young people who responded to these questions, the majority reported often/always:

- Valuing people for their personality over appearance (67.0%).
- Avoiding saying unkind things about other people's body or appearance (71.8%).
- Surrounding themselves with people who like them for who they are over appearance (64.6%).

Despite 40.5% reporting that they often/always move their body in ways that make them feel good, a quarter (24.8%) reported never/rarely doing this.

Of concern, around half of young people reported never/rarely:

- Speaking positively about their body (51.0%).
- Talking to someone if they were not feeling good about their body/appearance (58.4%).
- Encouraging friends to talk less about appearance (45.1%).

Across age groups, 12- and 13-year-olds were least likely to talk to someone if they weren't feeling good about their body or appearance (with 71.4% and 68.3%, respectively, never/rarely).

However, compared to other ages, double the 12-year-olds reported always being grateful for what their body allows them to do. No other obvious age differences were apparent.

More differences were apparent across gender groups. A greater proportion of young people who identified as female (20.4%) and non-binary (16.7%) reported often/always talking to someone if they weren't feeling good about their body, compared with less than 8% of other genders.

Young people who identified as female (78.1%), non-binary (82.4%) and preferred a different gender term (88.7%) reported the highest frequencies of avoiding saying unkind things about other people's appearance. Young people who preferred a different term reported the lowest gratitude for their body and speaking positively about their body. Males reported the highest frequency of often/always spending less time focusing on appearance (40.7%).

Although a high proportion across all gender groups reported never/rarely talking to someone if they were not feeling good about their body, or being grateful for their body, it was highest amongst the LGBTQIA+ young people.

A greater proportion of young people from the LGBTQIA+ community reported often/always avoiding saying unkind things about another's appearance (>79%) compared with straight young people (66.4%).

Non-Indigenous young people more frequently reported never/rarely speaking positively about their appearance (51.4%) and talking to someone if they weren't feeling good about their body (59.0%), compared with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people (40.9% and 49.2%, respectively).

Non-Indigenous young people also more frequently reported often/always surrounding themselves with people who value them for who they are (66.4%), valuing a person for their personality (69.0%), and avoiding saying unkind things about other's appearance (73.0%), compared with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people (44.3%, 41.0%, and 50.8%, respectively).

## How concerned are young people about their body image?

More than 90% of young people reported some level of concern about their body image.

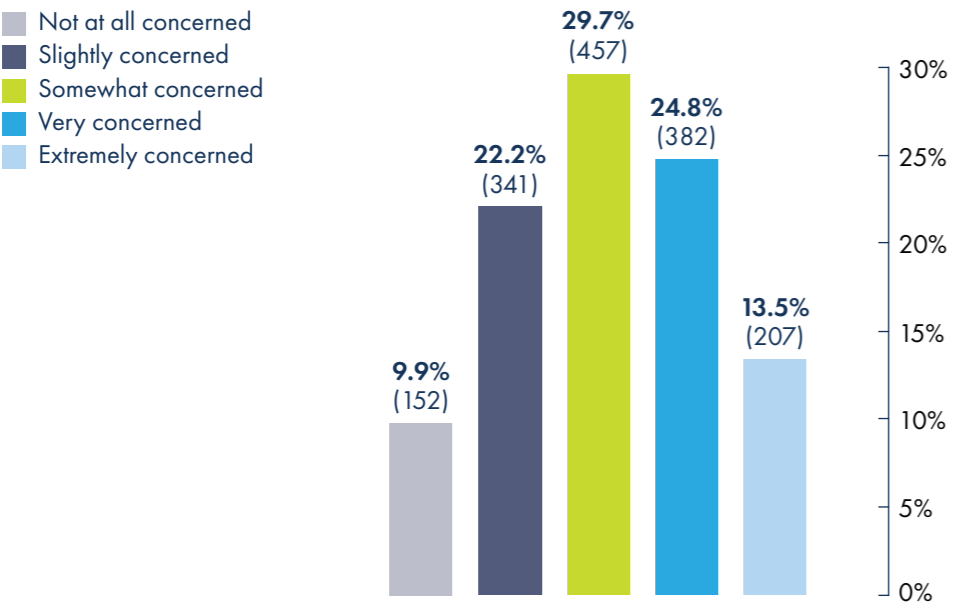
Over 1 in 3 reported being very or extremely concerned about their body image.

32.1% reported being slightly or not at all concerned.

Young people were asked to rate how concerned they were about their body image using a 5-point scale, ranging from *not at all concerned* to *extremely concerned*. Some level of concern was defined by the cumulative proportion of all responses other than not at all concerned. A high level of body image concern was defined as those who reported being very or extremely concerned.

Of the 1,539 who responded to this question, 90.1% reported **some level of concern** about their body image, leaving only 9.9% who were not at all concerned. Over one in three (38.3%) reported a **high level of concern** about their body image, which is comparable to Mission Australia Youth Survey findings.

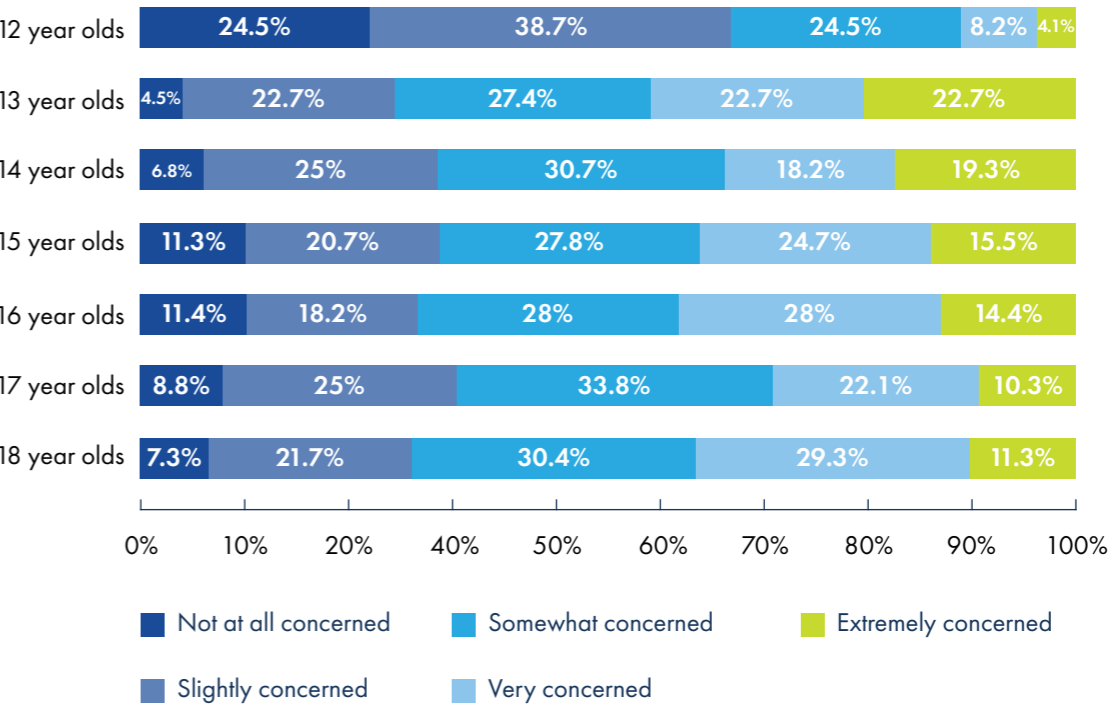
Figure 16. Level of body image concern – all respondents (N = 1539)



## Age differences

When exploring age differences, it appears that 12-year-olds were the **least concerned** about their body image (63.2% slightly or not at all concerned), while 13-year-olds, followed closely by 16-year-olds, were the **most concerned** (with 45.4% and 42.4%, respectively, reporting a **high level of concern**).

Figure 17. Level of body image concern (%) by age





## Gender differences

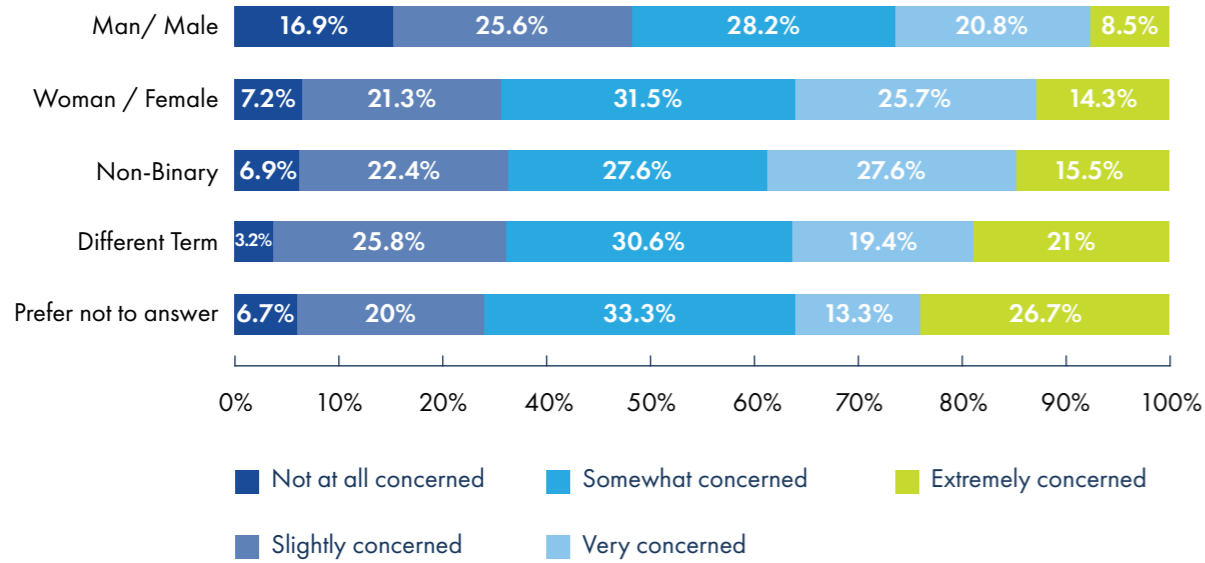
When exploring gender differences, males reported the highest frequency of **no concern** (16.9%) compared with other genders.

A similar proportion of those who identified as female, non-binary, preferred a different term, and those who preferred not to answer, reported

a **high level of concern** about their body image (>40.0% very or extremely concerned).

The **high level of body image concern** reported by females (40.0%) is slightly lower than that reported in the Mission Australia Youth Survey 2022 (44.0%).

Figure 18. Level of body image concern (%) by gender

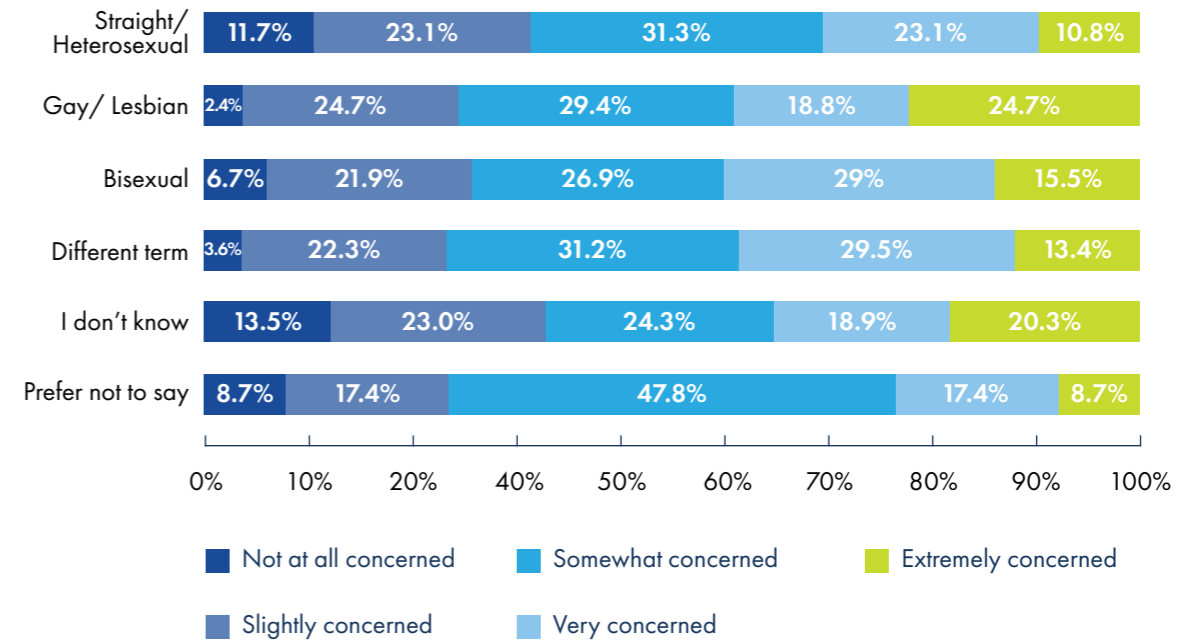


## Sexuality differences

Across sexual identity groups, heterosexual youth and those who did not know their sexual identity reported the highest frequency of **no concern** (16.7% and 13.5%, respectively) compared with other sexual identities.

A similar proportion of those who identified as gay/lesbian, bisexual, preferred a different term, and those who preferred not to answer, reported a **high level of concern** about their body image (>39.2% very or extremely concerned).

Figure 19. Level of body image concern (%) by sexuality



## Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people

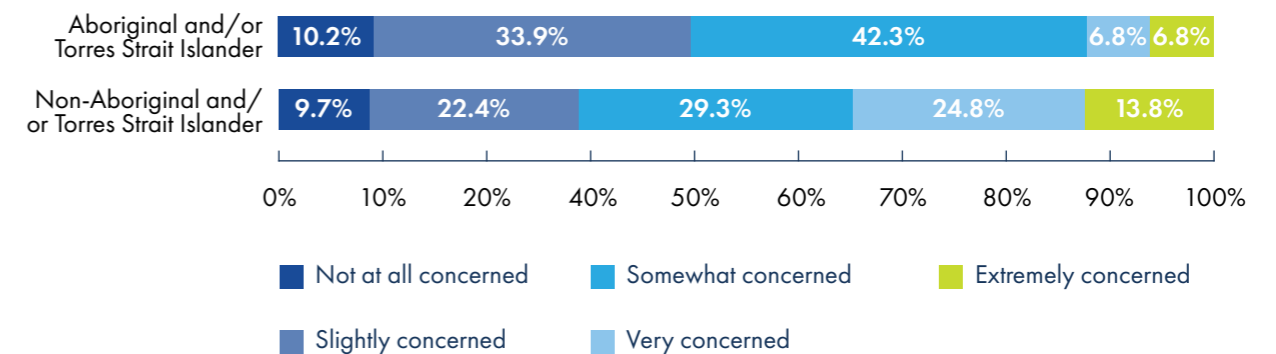
**High levels of body image concern** were significantly lower in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents compared to non-Indigenous respondents (13.6% and 38.6%, respectively, reported being very or extremely concerned).

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participants reports of being **very or extremely concerned**

about their body image was significantly lower in the Body Kind Youth Survey compared with Mission Australia's 2022 Youth Survey (13.6% vs 33.6%).

Notably, the current survey had a small sample of young people who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (n = 61) compared with the Mission Australia Youth Survey (n = 851).

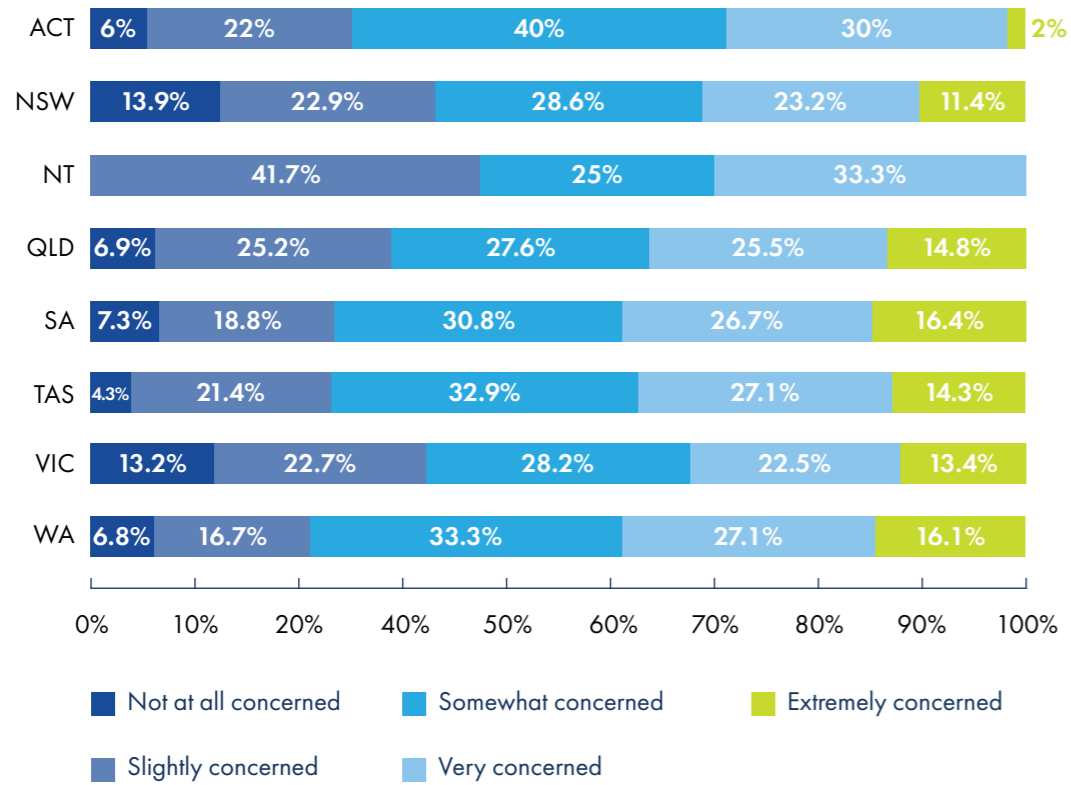
Figure 20. Level of body image concern (%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people



## State and territory differences

A **high level of body image concern** was reported by approximately 30-40% of young people across all states and territories.

Figure 21. Level of body image concern (%) by state and territory

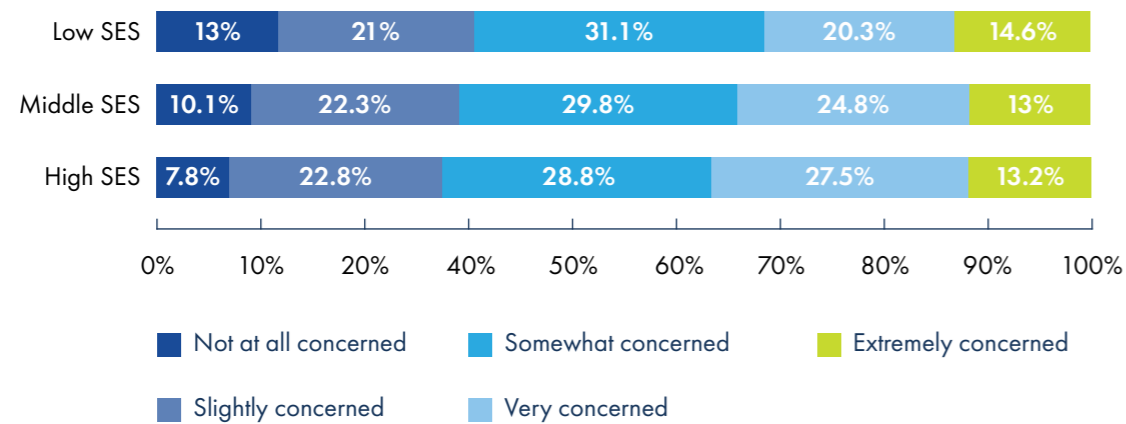


## Socioeconomic status differences

Across all socioeconomic groups, young people in Low SES areas reported the highest frequency of **no concern** (13.0%) compared with other areas.

A greater proportion of young people from High SES areas reported a **high level of concern** about their body image (40.7% very or extremely concerned) compared with Low (34.6%) and Middle (37.8%) SES areas.

Figure 22. Level of body image concern (%) by socioeconomic status



## How do young people perceive others' body image concerns?

When young people were asked how concerned they thought other young people are with their body image, 96.2% reported **some level of concern**, leaving a mere 3.8% that thought other young people would have **no concern** about their body image.

Similar to the proportion of young people reporting a **high level of body image concern** (36.1%), 35% of respondents thought that other young people have a **high level of concern** about their body image.





## What are the body ideals of young people?

62% of young people wished they were thinner/leaner.

63.7% of young people wished they were more muscular.

52.6% of young people wished they were taller.

Young people were asked to indicate on a scale from 0 – 100 if they wished they were thinner/leaner (0) or larger/heavier (100); less muscly (0) or more muscly (100); and shorter (0) or taller (100).

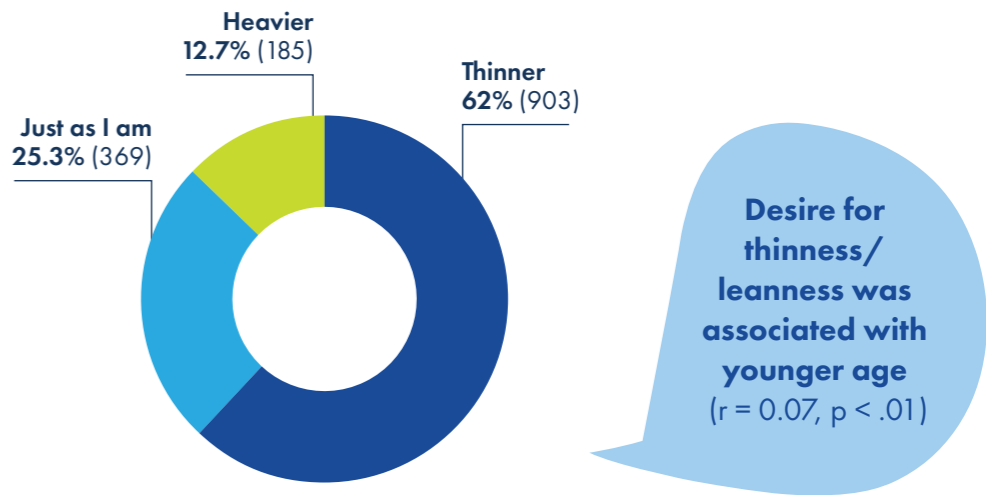
The data were split to indicate thinner/leaner, less muscly or shorter as <40 and larger/heavier, more muscly and taller as >60, and 'just as I am' in between.



### Desire for thinness/leanness

Of the 1,457 young people who indicated their ideal weight, the majority wished they were thinner/leaner (62.0%) compared to only 12.7% who wished they were larger/heavier. A quarter of young people were satisfied with their weight.

Figure 23. Ideal weight – all respondents (N = 1457)



Desire for thinness was reported by more than 55% of all age groups. Desire for thinness appeared to peak at age 13, with 73.0% of 13-year-olds wanting to be thinner than they are.

Across gender groups, young people who identified as female (69.4%), non-binary (73.1%) and those using a different gender term (76.7%) reported a significantly greater desire for thinness compared with males.

About a third of males (36.4%) desired to be thinner, while 22.2% desired to be heavier. Less than 10% of all other gender groups reported a desire to be heavier.

Over 72% of young people in the LGBTQIA+ community reported a desire to be thinner, compared with 52.9% of heterosexual young people.

Desire for thinness was reported by significantly more non-Indigenous young people (61.7%) compared with young people who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (45.9%). A greater proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people (23.0%) reported a desire to be heavier, compared with non-Indigenous young people (12.0%).

Wishing to be thinner/leaner was associated with poorer body appreciation (r = 0.54, p < .01)

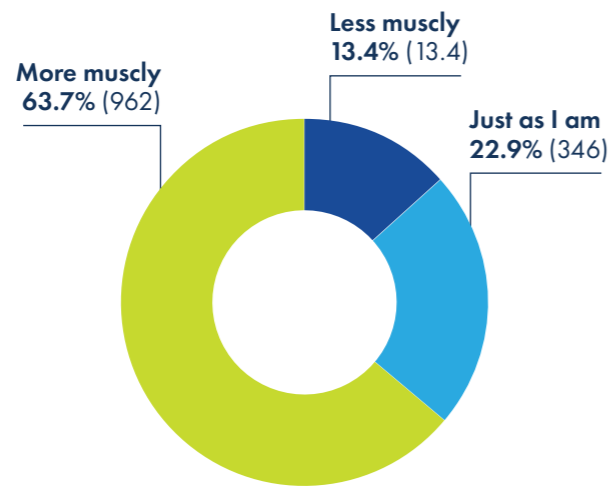
and social media making them feel more dissatisfied about their body (r = 0.43, p < .01)



## Desire for muscularity

Of the 1,510 young people who indicated their ideal muscularity, the majority wished they were more muscly (63.7%) compared to only 13.4% who wished they were less muscly. Almost a quarter of young people were satisfied with their muscularity.

Figure 24. Ideal muscularity – all respondents (N = 1510)



No significant differences for desire for muscularity were apparent across the age and sexuality groups.

Desire for muscularity was high among all gender groups, but young people who identified as non-binary (70.2%) and those who preferred a different gender term (72.6%) reported the greatest desire to be more muscular. 66.2% of males and 60.0%

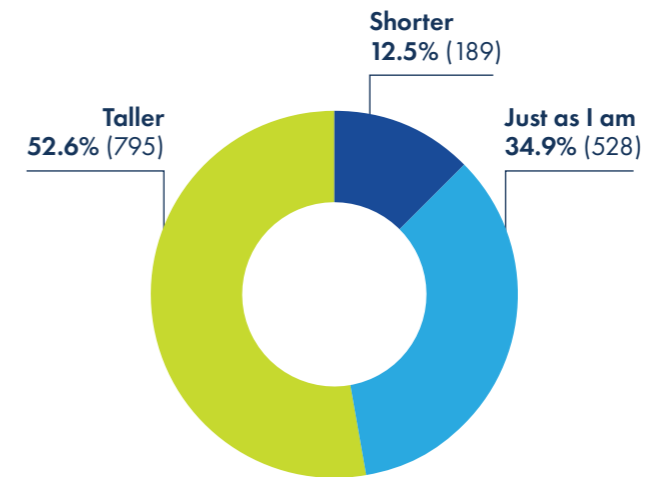
of females desired to be more muscular.

Slightly more non-Indigenous young people (63.3%) reported a desire for more muscles compared with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people (51.7%), as a third (33.3%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people were satisfied with their muscles.

## Desire for height

Of the 1,512 young people who indicated their height ideal, approximately half (52.6%) wished they were taller, compared to only 12.5% who wished they were shorter. Approximately a third of young people (34.9%) were satisfied with their height.

Figure 25. Ideal height – all respondents (N = 1512)



No significant differences for desire for being taller or shorter were apparent across the age groups, however, there was a trend towards being satisfied with their height in the late teen years (i.e., 17 and 18 years old).

No significant differences for desire for being taller were apparent across the gender groups, with over half of all genders wanting to be taller.

Around 50-60% of all sexual identities reported a desire to be taller, except for young people who identified as bisexual (44.3%).

Slightly more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people (59.0%) reported a desire to be taller compared with non-Indigenous young people (51.7%).

**Wishing to be more muscular was associated with wishing to be taller ( $r = 0.17, p < .01$ ),**



**and social media making them feel more dissatisfied about their body ( $r = 0.08, p < .01$ ).**





## Who are young people comparing their bodies to?

Young people were asked how frequently they compared their body or appearance to a varied list of people (see Figure 26). Responses were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from never (0) to always (5). Some level of comparison was defined as the cumulative proportion of sometimes, often and always responses. A very frequent comparison was defined as often or always responses.

**Young people very frequently compared their body and appearance to their friends (54.9%) and other teenagers (61.6%).**

**2 in 5 young people very frequently compared their body and appearance to celebrities and social media influencers.**

**A third of young people very frequently compared their body and appearance to models in advertisements.**

Notably, very high proportions of young people compared their body and appearance at least some of the time to friends (82.5%) and other teenagers (83.6%), while two thirds compared their body and appearance at least some of the time to celebrities (66.5%), influencers on social media (66.2%) and their younger self (67.1%).

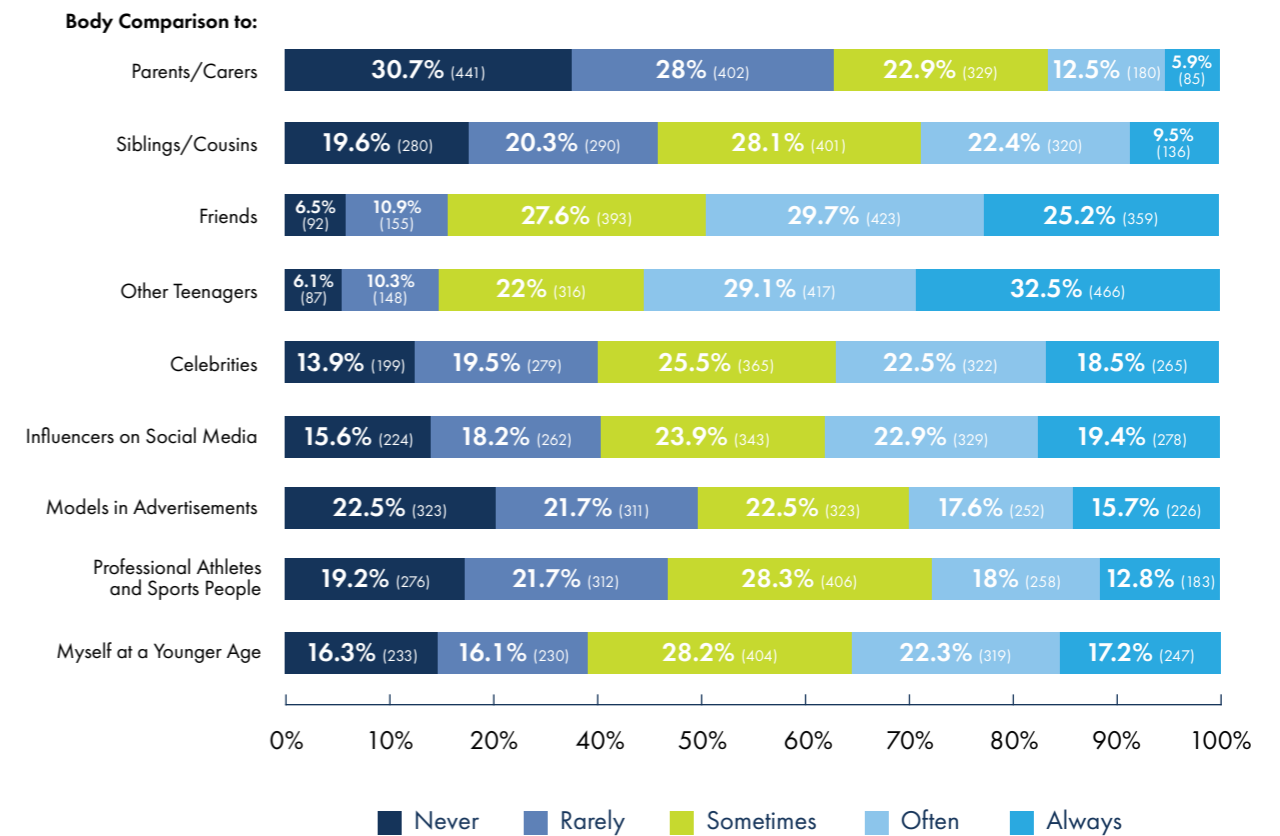
When exploring demographic group differences, it appeared that 13- and 14-year-olds were the most likely ages to frequently compare their body and appearance across all listed comparisons, aside from their younger self (which was fairly equivalent across 13-18-year-olds).

Generally, young people who identified their gender as female or non-binary, and those who

identified their sexuality as bisexual or gay/lesbian, were more likely to frequently compare their body and appearance to others.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people tended to compare their body and appearance less than non-Indigenous young people.

Figure 26. Frequency of body comparisons – all respondents (N=1437)



## How does body image impact young people?

Young people completed a modified Body Image Life Disengagement Questionnaire (BILD; Atkinsons & Diedrichs, 2021).

Respondents were asked the degree to which their feelings about how their body looks has ever stopped them from doing 10 different life activities using a 4-point scale ranging from *hasn't stopped me (1)* to *stopped me all the time (4)*.

Respondents were also given the option to respond *not sure*. Scores were averaged across responses (scores range 1-4), with higher scores indicating greater life disengagement. A high level of disengagement was defined by the proportion of quite a bit and all the time responses.

For the 1,098 young people who responded to this scale, the mean score was 2.00 (SD = 0.78), indicating that the sample on average reported their body image stopping them engaging in life activities only 'a little bit'.

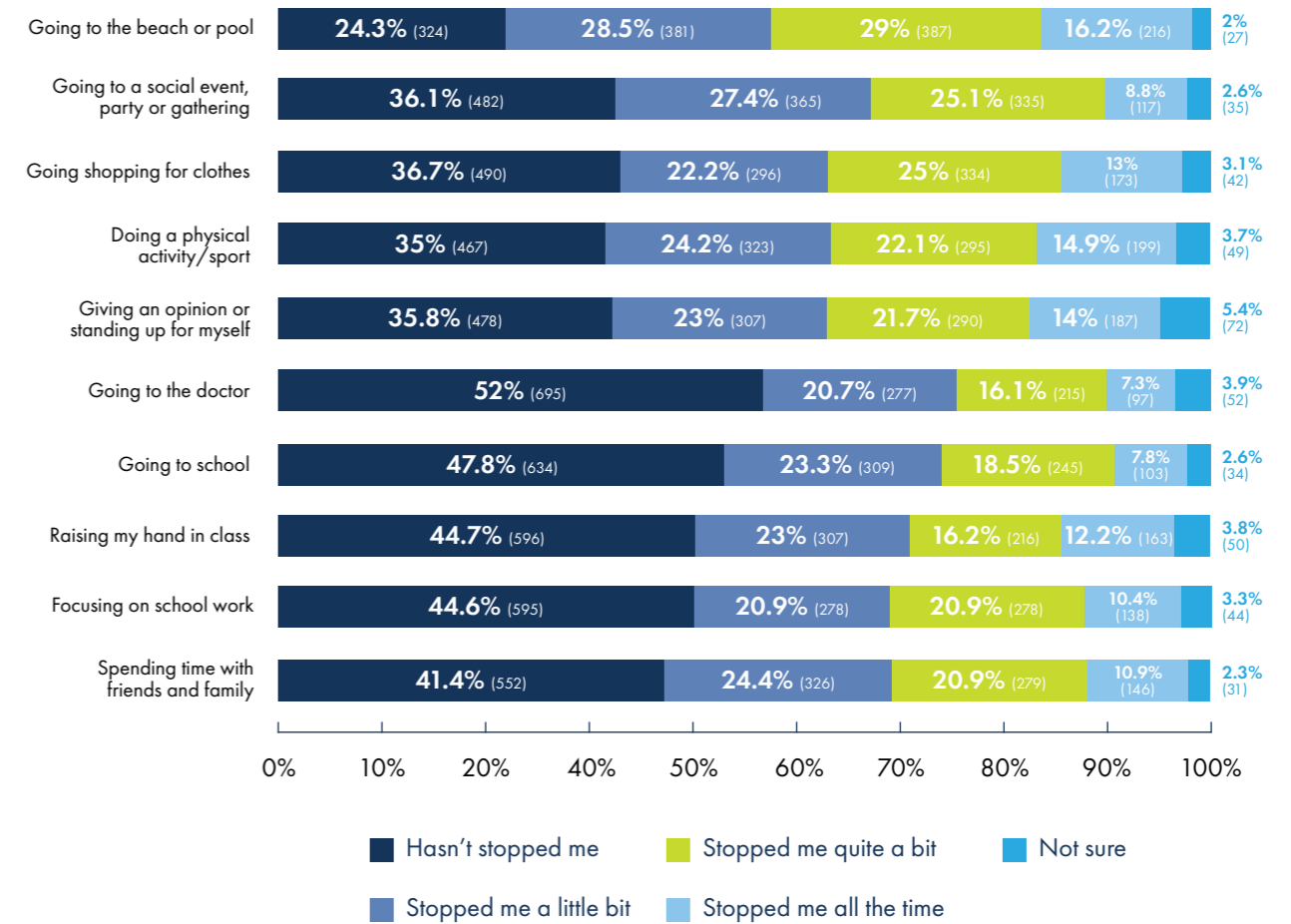
However, when exploring the activities independently, feelings about their bodies frequently stopped young people from engaging in a number of activities.

- 45.2% of young people reported a high level of disengagement from going to the beach.
- 38.0% of young people reported a high level of disengagement from going clothes shopping.
- 37.0% of young people reported a high level of disengagement from doing a physical activity/sport.
- 35.7% of young people reported a high level of disengagement from giving an opinion or standing up for themselves.

**Impact on school was also notable, with almost a third of young people reporting their body image impacting their ability to focus on schoolwork and willingness to raise their hand in the classroom, quite a bit or all the time.**



Figure 27. Level of disengagement from life activities



Life disengagement was significantly greater for young people reporting their gender as anything other than male or their sexuality anything other than heterosexual. No group differences were found for age.

## How much do young people value appearance?

Young people were asked to order what is most important to them from a list of being healthy, sporty, good looking, smart and kind.

On average, respondents placed higher importance on being healthy, kind and smart over being good looking and sporty. Only 12.4% of young people ranked being good looking as most important to them.

There were no notable differences in the importance of appearance between gender or sexuality groups, nor between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous young people.

However, a quarter of 14-year-olds, and 1 in 5 12- and 13-year-olds ranked being good looking as most important to them, which tended to decrease with age.



## Young people's social media use

81% of respondents reported using social media.

6 out of 10 said that they spend more time on social media than they would like to.

Most frequently used platforms:  
Instagram (72.0%) YouTube (61.9%) TikTok (60.6%).

Almost half of all respondents reported social media made them feel dissatisfied about their body.

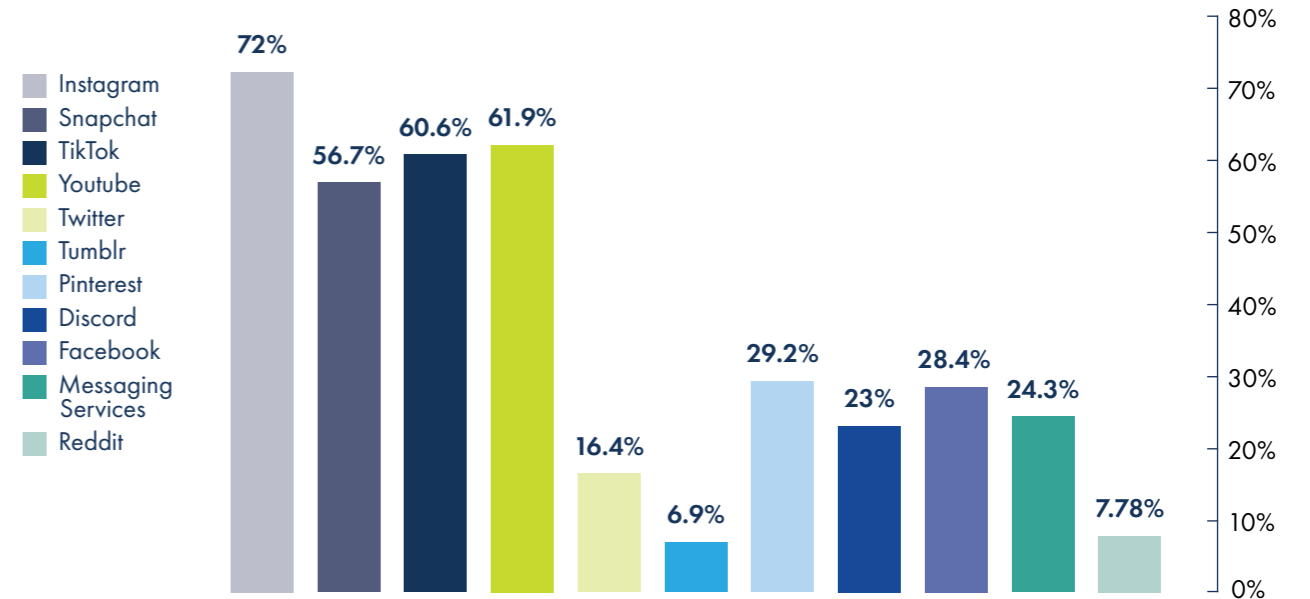
Over 70% of respondents thought that media and social media platforms need to do more to help young people have a more positive body image.



## What platforms are young people using?

Of the 1,324 young people using social media, over 70% of young people are using Instagram and over 60% of young people are using YouTube and TikTok.

Figure 28. Proportion of young people using social media platforms (%) – all respondents (N = 1324)



Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and Snapchat use was common among all ages, except 12-year-olds who less frequently used Instagram and TikTok than other ages.

## What do young people think about their social media use?

Overall, 61.9% of young people reported spending more time on social media than they would like.

Across ages, respondents were generally more likely to report that they spend more time on social media than they would like, except around half of 12- and 13-year-olds who thought their use was about right.

Around 60% of 15- to 18-year-olds spend more time on social media than they would like. No notable differences were found between genders, sexualities and cultural backgrounds.

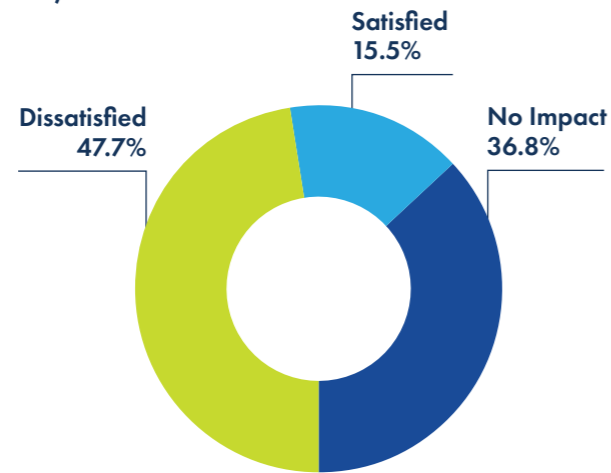
## How satisfied does social media make young people feel about how their body looks?

Young people were asked to rate how satisfied social media made them feel about how their body looks on a scale from completely dissatisfied (0) to completely satisfied (100).

The data were split to indicate dissatisfied as <40 and satisfied as >60, and 'no impact' in between.

Almost half (47.7%) of young people reported social media made them feel dissatisfied with their bodies (M = 40.56, SD = 20.98).

**Figure 29. The impact of social media on how young people feel about how their body looks – all respondents (N = 1281)**



There was a relationship between young people reporting that social media made them feel more **dissatisfied** about their bodies and desire to be thinner/leaner ( $r = 0.43, p < 0.01$ ), as well as poorer body appreciation ( $r = 0.55, p < 0.01$ ), and greater life disengagement ( $r = -.32, p < 0.01$ ).

### Group Differences

When exploring demographic group differences, a quarter of 12-year-olds (25.7%) reported that social media made them feel **dissatisfied** with their body, compared with nearly or over 50% of respondents from other age groups.

About half of all respondents, regardless of gender, reported that social media made them feel **dissatisfied** about their bodies, except for males who reported significantly less dissatisfaction (14.5%).

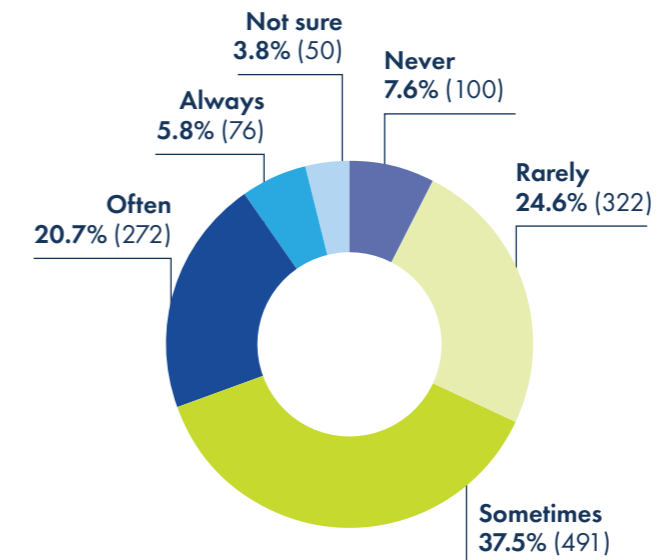
Almost half of all respondents, regardless of sexuality, reported that social media made them feel **dissatisfied** about their bodies, however, the rate was a bit lower in straight/heterosexual respondents (~40%).

Approximately a quarter (24.6%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents reported that social media made them feel **dissatisfied** about their bodies, compared to significantly more non-Indigenous respondents (48.2%).

## How often do young people see their body, shape or size represented on social media?

32.2% young people reported never or rarely seeing their bodies represented on social media.

**Figure 30. Frequency with which young people see their body presented on social media – all respondents (N = 1311)**



Across age groups, more 12-year-olds (45.9%) reported never or rarely seeing their body presented on social media, followed by 13-year-olds (41.1%). The proportion decreased with increasing age.

Across gender groups, young people who use a different term to describe their gender (46.2%) and those who preferred not to say (41.3%) most frequently reported not seeing their body presented on social media.

Young people who identified their sexuality as anything other than heterosexual more frequently reported not seeing their body presented in social media compared with heterosexual youth.

Similar proportions of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous respondents reported never or rarely seeing their body types on social media (~30%).

### Do young people think social media platforms need to do more to help them have a more positive body image?

**7 in 10 agreed that social media platforms need to do more to help young people have a more positive body image.**



## What can social media platforms do?

### Greater diversity in body sizes and shapes

"Show every size shape and colour! The raw real side to body image that our flaws aren't flaws it's beauty".

"Promote a wider range of bodies".

"Be more inclusive to all body shapes and promote them more".

"Include a range of diverse body types in targeted adverts and reduce adverts for products/programs that only support one body type for young people".

"Less content focusing on food, body size, body shape, excessive exercise and diet culture".



### Realistic unedited/filtered images

"Less photoshop and filters".

"Show more real unedited unfiltered photos".



"Not show unrealistic photos that have been edited or really posed. Or if they have, also show the unedited or unposed photo".

"Banners to alert that the photo was edited".

"Editing photos to the point where it doesn't look like you anymore to fit into your own beauty standard".

"Enforce mandatory disclaimers for images that have been edited".

### Stricter Guidelines

"Have stricter guidelines for misinformation regarding bodies, dieting, weight and stop promoting such misinformation".

"Remove videos and hashtags of toxic and unhealthy trends".

"Use their platform to educate".

"Better guidelines on hate comments and videos about body image".

"... apps like TikTok should be cracking down on the amount of pro-ED [eating disorder] and body checking videos and trends that get posted every day...".

"Stop promoting diets/exercise/weight loss so much!!!"

"Provide support lines and change their algorithms that suggests content to avoid consistently showing content tagged surrounding unhealthy topics".

## What about advertisers?

**7 in 10 agreed that advertisers need to do more to help young people have a more positive body image.**

### Here's how...

"Advertise people of all body types **WITHOUT** making it a big deal or part of a campaign to improve their image".

"Don't use filters and photoshop".

"More body diversity. I'm sick of seeing these perfect women in ads. I want to see fat, skinny, tall, short, any kind of body out there".

"Have more 'real' bodies, show stretch marks, a bit of fat, have pimples, body hair, different shapes".

## How are young people being Body *Kind* online?

Young people were asked a series of questions on the frequency of actions they had taken in the last 12 months in relation to their social media use and feelings about their bodies, as shown in Figure 28 and Figure 29. Responses were rated on a 5-point from never (1) to always (5). Young people were also given the opportunity to say 'not sure'.

**64.8% reported never or rarely taking a break from social media because it was affecting how they felt about their bodies.**

**Nearly 50% said they never or rarely unfollowed pages or people that made them feel bad about their bodies.**

**41.6% said they never or rarely posted unfiltered or unedited photos of themselves.**

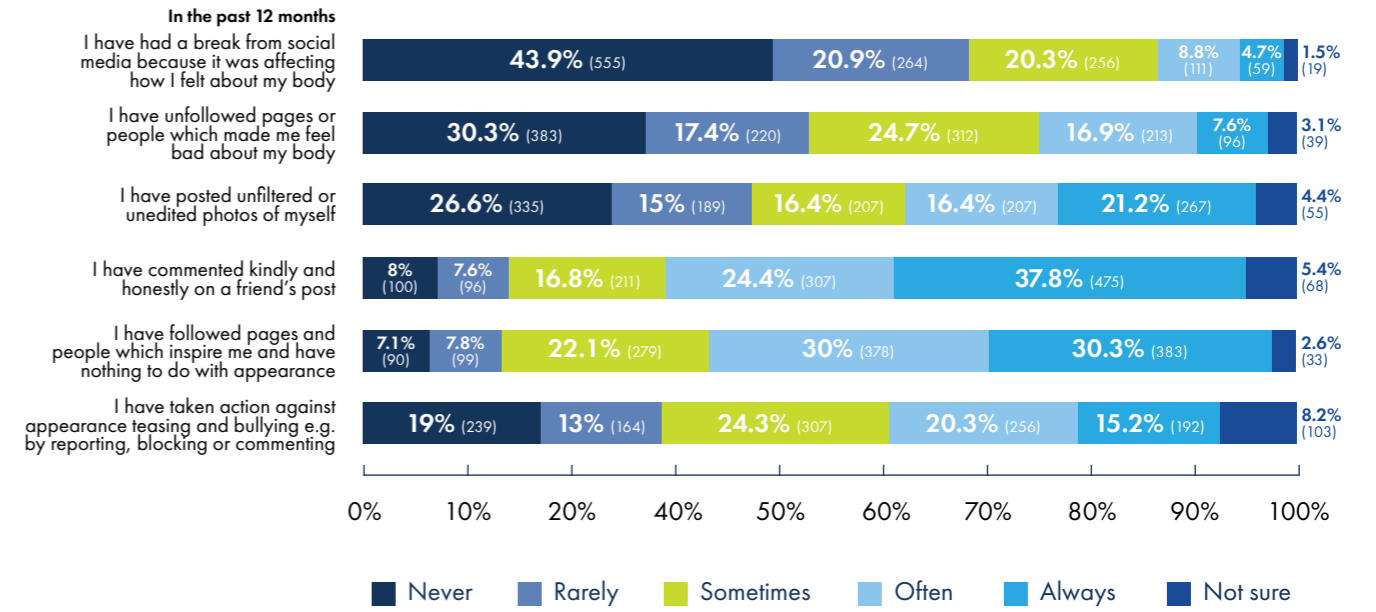
On the other hand,

**62.2% reported often or always commenting kindly and honestly on friends' posts.**

**6 in 10 young people reported often or always following pages and people that inspire them (and have nothing to do with appearance).**

**Whilst nearly 1 in 5 reported never taking action against appearance bullying and teasing online, over a third (35.7%) said they did often or always.**

Figure 31. Use of social media literacy strategies – all respondents



### Who is engaging in social media literacy strategies?

12-year-olds were least likely to take a break from social media because it was affecting how they felt about their body (56.8%), unfollow pages or people that made them feel bad about their body (54.1%), and post unfiltered/unedited photos of themselves (40.5%).

Compared to non-Indigenous respondents, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people were:

- More likely to take a break from social media and unfollow pages that made them feel bad about their body.
- More likely to post unfiltered or unedited photos of themselves.





## What is young people's experience of appearance-related teasing?

Almost 7 in 10 young people have received negative comments, or been teased, about their appearance\*

Of those who have experienced teasing:

37.9% in the last month.

28.9% in the last 6 months.

24.9% in the last 12 months.

29.3% more than a year ago.

\*Of the 1,352 young people who responded to this question

### Where is it happening?

Those who have experienced teasing report the top four locations where this most frequently occurred as being at school (72.5%), at home (33.8%) on social media (31.1%), and at family events (24.3%).

### Who is it happening most to?

Appearance-related teasing was:

- Frequent across all ages, with 13-year-olds most frequently reporting ever having been teased (79%) and 18-year-olds the least frequently (57.7%).
- Frequent across all genders, but was more frequently reported by young people using a different gender term (87.1%), those who identified as non-binary (79.3%) and females (70.3%), compared with males (54.6%).

- Frequent across all sexualities, but was more frequently reported by young people reporting their sexual identity as bisexual (84.5%), those using a different term (82.1%), and gay/lesbian respondents (74.1%), compared with heterosexual respondents (59.5%).
- Similar between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous young people.

### What about teasing of others?

A quarter of young people admit to commenting negatively or teasing someone about their appearance, most commonly whilst at school\*

\*Of the 1,345 young people who responded to this question.

## What do young people think about schools and body image?

### Should schools do more to support positive body image?

Young people were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed with a series of statements about school support for body image, as shown in Figure 29. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

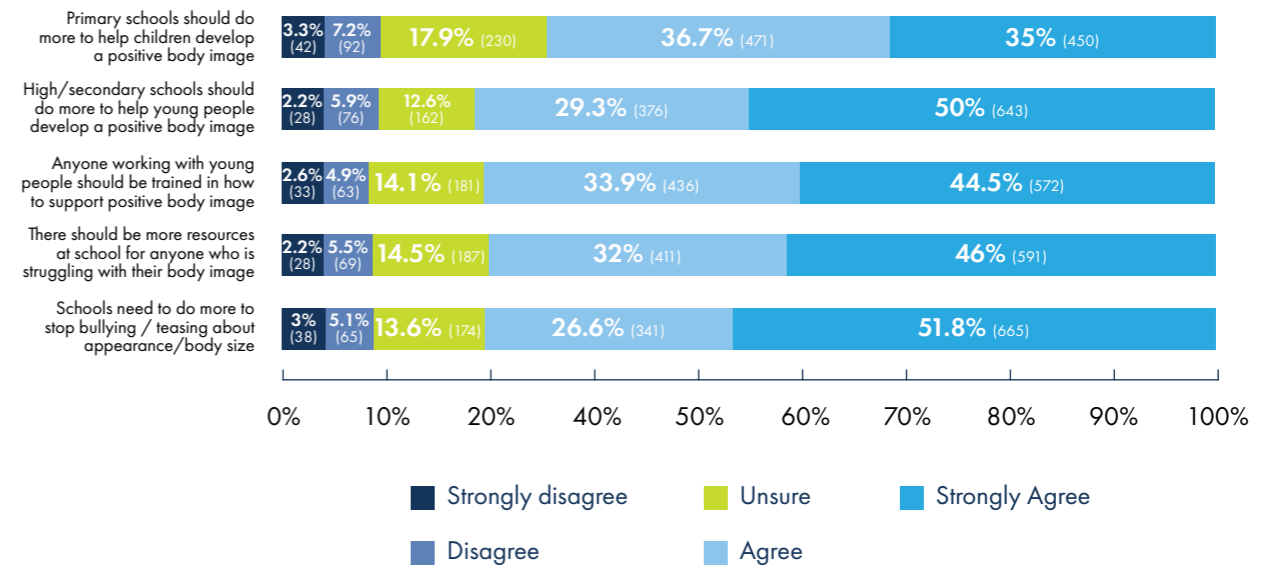
Nearly 8 out of 10 agreed that:

- Those working in schools should be trained in how to support body image (78.4%).
- More resources should be provided at schools for anyone struggling with body image (78%).
- Schools need to do more to stop bullying and teasing around appearance (78.4%).

7 in 10 agreed that primary schools should do more.

8 in 10 agreed that high/secondary schools should do more.

Figure 32. Young people's views on body image education and support in schools – all respondents



### Have young people ever been given strategies for positive body image?

Around 1 in 5 said they had received body image strategies at primary school.

Around 1 in 3 said they had received body image strategies at high/secondary school.

45.9% said they had received body image strategies from their parents.

### How would young people like to learn ways to improve their body image from school?

Young people's top four preferences for delivery of school-based body image education were:

- Delivered by a person who had overcome their own body image concerns (44.4%).
- Included in normal school lessons as part of the curriculum (40.8%).
- Delivered by young people who are trained to deliver the skills (38.9%).
- An online, self-paced program (32.2%).

## What ways do young people want to receive information about body image?

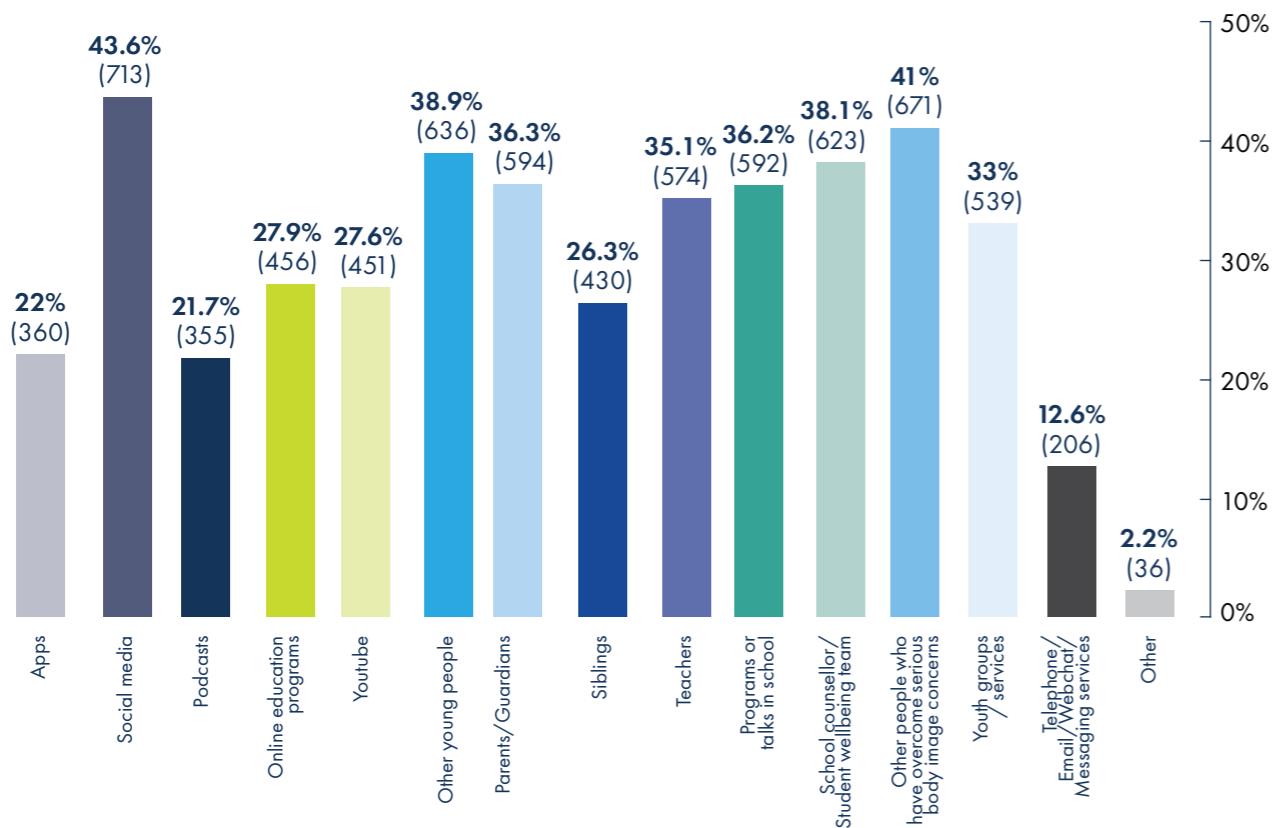
Young people were asked to indicate, from a list, the best ways for young people to get information about body image. They were able to tick more than one response.

Social media was most frequently indicated (43.6%), followed by other people who

have overcome serious body image concerns (41.0%), and other young people more generally (38.9%).

The least preferred methods were through telephone/email/webchat services (12.6%), podcasts (21.7%) and Apps (22%).

Figure 33. Preferred sources of information about body image – all respondents





## If young people had a magic wand, what would they do to help young people feel good in their bodies?

Anonymous quotes provided by young people generally tackled the issues of diversity in the media, and addressing beauty standards and diet culture.

"Change everybody's judgement and bias against different body types and reset the idea that some body types and sizes are 'ugly'. Just let everyone do whatever they want with their appearance with no judgement".

" 'Delete' beauty standards and gender stereotypes so all people can feel confident in the way they look and choose to present themselves".



"Well if I had a magic wand that could change the world, I'd make everyone stop thinking about their bodies in a negative way, but with changing the world, I'd probably stop social media platforms from allowing influencers to post highly photoshopped images of themselves".

"Ban photoshopping in magazines and social media, or make it compulsory to add a disclaimer".

"I would end bullying, stereotyping and the expectation to be thin".



"Remind people that it's okay to not be able to find the things you don't like about your body beautiful, you just have to accept yourself for who you are and recognise that your body is yours only and it has got you to where you are now".

"Make companies / influencers be more transparent when they photoshop / use filters".



"Make everyone feel that they can love themselves for who they are".

"Remove filters that alter people's bodies".

"Remove the pesky voice in people's head that says they're not good enough".

"Stop unrealistic body standards and diet culture".

"Stop unrealistic photo editing on social media posts".

"Well if I had a magic wand that could change the world, I'd make everyone stop thinking about their bodies in a negative way, but with changing the world, I'd probably stop social media platforms from allowing influencers to post highly photoshopped images of themselves".



## How did completing the survey make young people feel?

Before leaving the survey, respondents were asked to indicate how participating in the survey made them feel. Only 8.6% felt sad and 5.3% felt embarrassed, otherwise 54.5% were OK, 12.2% felt empowered, 10.3% happy, and 9.1% bored.



## Conclusions

The purpose of this survey was to better understand the body image experiences and related issues among young people living in Australia.

The findings of this survey suggest that body dissatisfaction is exceptionally high among young people in Australia. Almost half of young people were dissatisfied with how their body looks, and over 90% reported being concerned about their body image. Body dissatisfaction was experienced across all demographic groups but females and young people in the LGBTQIA+ community appear most at risk.

Poorer body appreciation was related to a greater desire for thinness, life disengagement and dissatisfaction with how social media made young people feel about their body.

Young people think that more should be done to help them develop a positive body image through programs at primary and secondary schools. An overwhelming proportion of young people have experienced appearance-related teasing, and they want schools to do more to stop it from happening.

It was also evident that young people may be positive towards others, but rarely spoke positively about their own bodies or sought help if they were not feeling good about their bodies.

We learned more about young people's social media use, and it was reported by almost half of young people that social media made them feel dissatisfied about their bodies. Thus, it was not surprising to hear from young people that they want to see changes in the way media/social media present body ideals and beauty standards, as a means of improving young people's body image.

It is intended that this survey will be conducted annually to track the changes in prevalence and impact of body image issues among young people over time.

This year's findings will be used by Butterfly to inform our prevention programs and resources. Perhaps more importantly, these survey findings provide new insights for researchers, policy makers and education, youth, and mental health service providers.

The findings also support Butterfly's ongoing advocacy for stronger public investment in body image, including a national focus on research, investigation of the economic and social costs of body dissatisfaction, greater support for prevention and early intervention initiatives, and an investigation of options for regulatory and policy change to reduce the social determinants of body dissatisfaction among young people.



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