Footprints in Time

The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children
Report from Waves 11 & 12

PUBLISHED 2025

The KIDS RESEARCH INSTITUTE AUSTRALIA
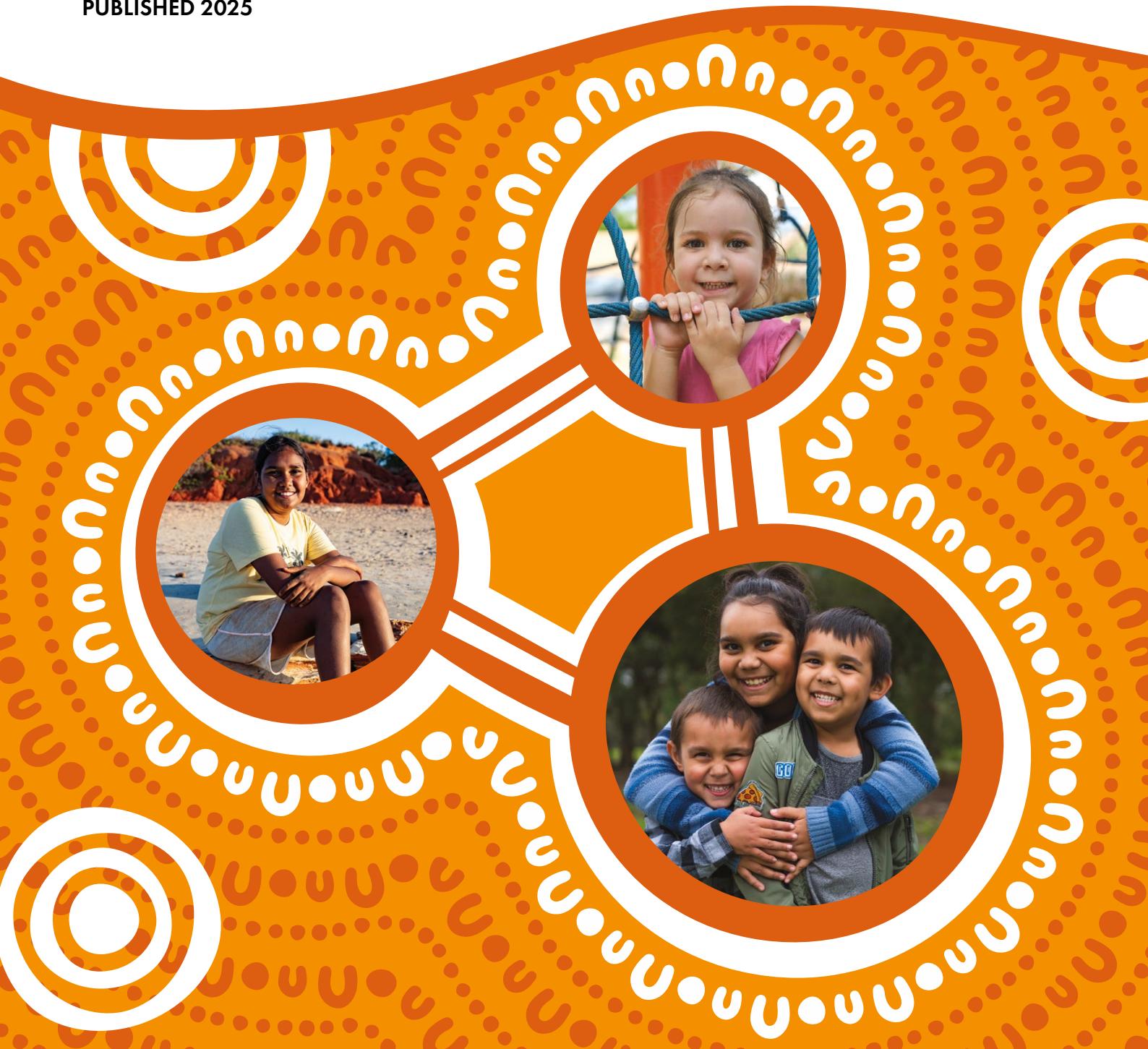
Acknowledgement of country

The Kids Research Institute Australia
acknowledges all the Traditional Owners of
the land and pays respect to their Elders past
and present. We recognise that connection to
Country, culture and family can be restorative
for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
and young people. We are committed to
working alongside our Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander colleagues and seek their
guidance and expertise.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FOR THIS REPORT

Professor John Evans

Pro Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Engagement and Professor, Swinburne University of Technology

John is from Wiradjuri country and is Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Engagement and Professor at Swinburne University of Technology. In his current role, John leads and governs a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives spanning governance, research and employment. John has extensive career in research and teaching, with a strong background in industry and community engagement. John's areas of research specialisation include Indigenous sport sociology, Indigenous sport and physical activity studies, pedagogy and coaching including both qualitative and quantitative disciplines. His prior role was as Professor of Indigenous Health Education in the School of Public Health at UTS.

Contributions to this project: cultural guidance, methodology, and data validation.

Cheryl Bridge

Head, Kulunga Aboriginal Unit, The Kids Research Institute Australia

Cheryl is a Gija woman from the Kimberley region in Western Australia and is Head of the Kulunga Aboriginal Unit at The Kids. Cheryl plays a senior role in the full integration of Aboriginal health and wellbeing research at the Institute. Cheryl's key focus is to ensure the priorities of Aboriginal communities are incorporated into research design, implementation and translation and that research at the Institute meets the Standards for the Conduct of Aboriginal Health Research. Prior to commencing with The Kids, Cheryl had a long-standing career in the public sector primarily in leadership positions in the Vocational Training sector. Over the last 20 years, Cheryl has built a large network and strong connection to community.

Contributions to this project: community liaison, cultural guidance.

Mara West

Operations Manager, Kulunga Aboriginal Unit, The Kids Research Institute Australia

Mara is a Yamatji woman from the Gascoyne Murchison region in Western Australia and is Operations Manager of the Kulunga Aboriginal Unit at The Kids. Mara's focus is supporting Institute research teams to work in partnership with Aboriginal communities to make informed decisions about research priorities, protocols, and practice. Mara facilitates the Aboriginal Research Projects forum, delivers cultural awareness training, provides Aboriginal cultural governance support, and manages relationships with external agencies and communities. She has worked in both the public and private sectors and has a vast network that she works with to build genuine collaboration and awareness of the Institute's research.

Contributions to this project: community liaison, cultural guidance, methodology.

Research teams, Committees, reference groups and other contributors

This report would not be possible without the support of the:

- The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC) Steering Committee
- The Kids Research Institute Australia project reference group
- Consultation participants
- Project team – The Kids Research Institute Australia

Further details of the members of the groups listed above can be found in **Appendix A**.

Aboriginal artist acknowledgement

The artwork elements used in this report are by Ngarrindjeri artist, Jordan Lovegrove. They represent connectedness and collaboration. The connectedness of generations and meeting to understand and support families.

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Citing this report

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ETHICS

The Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) seeks national clearance each year for new questions and procedures in *Footprints in Time* (e.g., the distress protocol and a privacy brochure) before the pilot interviews and the main wave of data collection. The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children has approval from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Ethics Committee. Additionally, state and territory and/or regional ethics clearance and support have been obtained for all *Footprints in Time* sites through state and territory Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs) or their equivalents.

State and territory departments of education and Catholic dioceses were consulted to gain permission and support for school teachers to complete questionnaires about the study children. State and territory departments managing out-of-home care were also consulted. Participant wellbeing is extremely important to everyone involved in *Footprints in Time*. If at any stage of the interview parents, carers or Study Youth (SY) became distressed, or reported distress, *Footprints in Time* interviewers were required to follow HREC-approved protocols to make sure participants were safe.

We acknowledge the role and support of the AIATSIS Ethics Committee, jurisdictional ethics committees, state and territory departments of education and Catholic dioceses in the collection of LSIC data.

If you have any concerns or complaints, you can contact the Executive Officer of the AIATSIS Human Research Ethics Committee at 51 Lawson Crescent, Acton, ACT 2601, or by email at ethics@aiatsis.gov.au.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The analyses in this report are based on the released data from Wave 11 (collected in 2018) and Wave 12 (collected in 2019) of *Footprints in Time*. Where appropriate these data have been compared to Wave 10 released data. Using earlier or later releases of *Footprints in Time* data may produce slightly different results.

The themes explored in this report were developed in consultation with the LSIC Steering Committee and community stakeholders. They represent the questions the community wanted asked of the data from Wave 11 and 12.

CULTURAL STANDPOINT

The report has been written primarily by non-Indigenous researchers from The Kids Research Institute Australia, commissioned by DSS. Every effort has been made to explore and interpret the data within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' contexts by involving community voice in the interpretation of findings for each chapter. There may, however, be areas where greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures could have aided and strengthened the story told. Readers of the report are encouraged to draw on the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and scholars, and ethically collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities when using the findings of this report.

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR READING THIS REPORT

Strengths-based approach

This report follows the advice of Thurber et al. (2020), reporting the findings from the *Footprints in Time* study in a strengths-based manner. In this way positive experiences and indicators are highlighted. Exploring factors related to strengths of the individuals and families who participate in the study can inform approaches that recognise and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' resilience and strengths.

Use of the term 'Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples'

Throughout this report we have used the term 'Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' in reference to the diversity of families and communities who take part in the *Footprints in Time* surveys and the way in which the survey questions are asked of the families by the Research Administration Officers.

Visual representation

In consultations, stakeholders emphasised the importance of presenting data visually to improve accessibility. For this reason, we have, wherever possible, presented findings using figures and infographics.

Throughout this report characters, such as those in **Figure 0.1**, are used to represent survey participants and community members. We have chosen to use the term 'Primary caregiver' to represent the parents and carers (usually Mums) who answered the Parent 1 (P1) survey for Waves 11 and 12. We acknowledge that not all Primary caregivers are female nor the birth parent of the SY, nor identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander themselves.
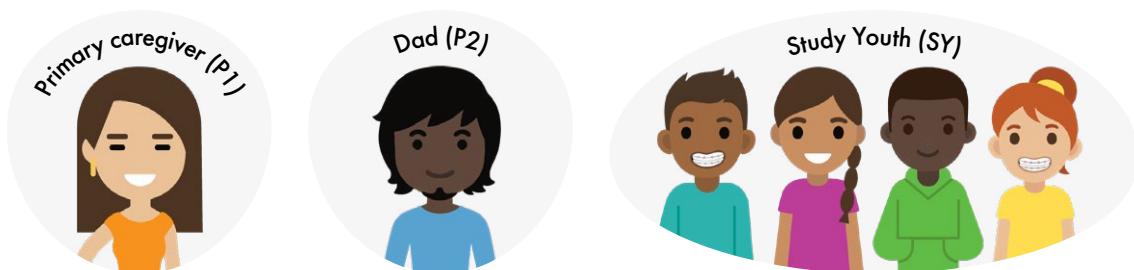
Figure 0.1 Examples of characters used in this report to represent study partipants and community members.

Data tables

In addition to the visual representation of the findings in the main body of the report, tables presenting the key findings are provided in **Appendix D** – Data Tables. To maintain the confidentiality of study participants, some categories have been combined where responses were low (≤ 5 participants) or excluded where necessary.

REPORT SUMMARY

Footprints in Time is a longitudinal study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, their families, and communities. The study is also known as the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC). Interviews are conducted annually by the Department of Social Services (DSS) under the guidance of the LSIC Steering Committee. This report explored the data collected during 2018 and 2019 (Waves 11 and 12) when the Study Youth were aged between 10 and 16 years, with the goal of continuing to improve understanding of the diversity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's lives, and what supports Indigenous children to grow up strong.

The themes explored in this report were formed by drawing on the knowledge and expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, policy makers, service providers and community members. An initial rapid review of recent research on the priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and families was conducted to identify relevant themes at this time in the youth's development. These themes were then discussed with policy makers, researchers, and community members to identify research questions that could be explored using Wave 11 and 12 data. A final round of consultations with key stakeholders was undertaken following analysis of Wave 11 and 12 data to inform the development of the story presented in this report.

While each theme has been explored separately, woven throughout the results is the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities, support for each other and the importance of knowing who they are. This can be seen in the overall value placed on knowing about culture and belonging to Country, family, and community. Participants of *Footprints in Time* reported that maintaining connection and positive relationships helped them to support each other and, as families and communities, support their children and young people to be successful.

Key themes and findings

Living environments, health, and wellbeing

The impact of housing problems, separation of families and stress related to major life events was more likely to be reported by SY and their families living in major cities. In Waves 11 and 12, some *Footprints in Time* families continued to report issues with homelessness, health problems and lack of appropriate housing. Parents and carers recognised that "having a job" had a positive effect on SY. Many Dads reported that they felt they were missing out on time with family due to work commitments and this was related to feeling less positive about work.

Relationships and family, and wellbeing

Connection to Country is important to the families of SY. There is strong recognition of the benefits of building and maintaining strong relationships that enable family and community to support children and young people. Youth also valued these relationships at this time in their lives, reflected by the importance they placed on Mum and Dad, along with Grandparents, Aunties and Uncles, and friends.

Cultural identity, cultural importance, and wellbeing

There is strength associated with knowing who you are and being proud of your culture, and it is important that connections to kin and Country are maintained. At this time in the life of youth, schools make a significant contribution to learning and development. Moreover, many SY reported learning about culture from teachers. Walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and community, schools can support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to gain knowledge of where they come from, learn language and cultural histories.

Racism and discrimination, wellbeing, and health

A strong sense of cultural identity and the ability to maintain this is an important factor in building resilience in

the face of racism. Knowing that you can seek culturally safe support from your community, including being able to acknowledge racism and creating safety to discuss racism, can play a positive role in lessening the impact of racism and discrimination. Dads responding to the survey reported that racism and discrimination are experienced regularly and most often in services or public places.

Safety online

While many SY reported having access to the internet at home or at school, gaps remained in 2019 for access to the internet in remote and very remote areas. Beyond access to the internet, safety online was identified as an important theme at this time in the lives of SY. Most SY felt they were safe online, as did their parents. Importantly, where Primary caregivers were actively involved in providing access to the internet and putting in place rules to monitor how it was used, children and young people were more likely to have higher levels of wellbeing (as reported by their Primary caregiver).

Recommendations

The exploration of the results of the *Footprints in Time* data from 2018 and 2019 (Waves 11 and 12) has highlighted areas where policy makers, services and communities can draw on the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families and build on their strengths and capacity to support communities. Recommendations include:

- Policies for housing and family support need to be informed by the diversity of contexts in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families live, recognising the strengths of large diverse families in supporting the wellbeing of children and young people.

- Housing policy and provision should consider and be responsive to family structures and the environment in which it is built and housing should incorporate appropriate adjustments for those living with disabilities.

- Services and employers need to ensure they are culturally informed and provide the flexibility needed by families. This includes considering the lived experiences and cultural needs of families in navigating systemic barriers when faced with major life events and challenges.

- Support connection to Country for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people through building and maintaining strong relationships with their Primary caregivers, close family members and important community members.

- Through education and building knowledge, improve the understanding of all Australians of the importance of culture and cultural identity for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

- Provide opportunities for the important people in young Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' lives to walk alongside them in learning. This may be through strengthening the connections between community and schools or other places where young people learn.

- Acknowledge the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their experiences of racism and discrimination and create culturally safe environments to discuss these experiences.

- Provide culturally safe support to build resilience when encountering racism and discrimination.

- Educate all Australian people to recognise the impact of racism and discrimination and that positive support can lessen the impact.

- Encourage and provide appropriate support for parents and caregivers to put in place rules for engaging with the internet for their children and creating a family agreement for keeping everyone safe.

CONSULTATION

Recognising the importance of the knowledge and expertise of people around Australia and the Torres Strait in telling the story of Indigenous youth, the authors prioritised community perspectives in the development of this report. Consultation processes were developed with the guidance of Indigenous staff at The Kids Research Institute Australia and the project reference group. Principles of yarning informed the conversations that the research team had with community members, researchers, and policy makers. Discussions were conducted online. The consultation component included the following activities:

- A desktop review of recent research that has explored priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and a review of qualitative responses from SY in Waves 11 and 12 to form themes to be explored in this report.

- Online consultation with the LSIC Steering Committee, policy makers, service providers, and community members to gather perspectives on themes identified and inform the development of research questions for inclusion in this report.

- Online consultation with policy makers, community service providers and policy experts to gather perspectives on the findings from the exploration of the 2018 and 2019 *Footprints in Time* data to enrich reporting of findings.

The desktop review and initial consultation activities were completed between February and March 2022 and the second consultation round was undertaken in March 2023. Further details are available in **Appendix C**.

Summary of consultation findings

Desktop review mind map

The desktop review and review of qualitative responses of SY highlighted a consistency of topics that were relevant and important in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in Australia today. Additionally, the perspectives of youth relative to these domains provided insight into their hopes for the future, their desire to grow their cultural and language learning, and the ways in which the world both challenges them and inspires them.

Figure 0.2 presents the desktop review mind map including the eight domains and the concepts within these that recurred across the reports and qualitative data we reviewed.

Online consultation mind map

Following consultations, a thematic analysis was applied to the field notes, to determine the frequency with which a concept or theme was discussed. Themes that had a high level of relevance to many stakeholders, as well as critical themes that were described as contemporary issues of importance, were mapped against the eight domains identified in the desktop review. From this, research questions were developed that were feasible to address with data collected up to Wave 12 in *Footprints in Time*. **Figure 0.3** provides a summary of the key issues emerging from stakeholder consultations mapped against the original desktop review mind map.

Stakeholders shared a depth of perspective and knowledge and identified clear priority areas within their work. Six areas of the mind map were most consistently discussed either as standalone topics or as domains of life that influenced others and were important to youth health, wellbeing, and educational experience. Overwhelmingly, cultural identity (a new measure for youth in Wave 11) and the experience of racism were topics of high importance that most stakeholders wanted to see explored. Stakeholders wanted to understand how these impacted aspects of children's lives. These types of insights can support policy makers and service providers to identify what makes youth strong and where changes are needed to stamp out racism in the lives of youth.

While there was a great deal of alignment between the youth priority themes identified and the work of stakeholders, a few areas of policy interest emerged through consultations, that were not previously identified and not well captured within *Footprints in Time*. These topics were described as those often not addressed and spoken about in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy. The first was inclusion of children with disability who were often missing or overlooked within analyses of the experiences of youth. The second was gender and sexuality, which was said to be difficult for youth to discuss within their communities. These have been described further in **Figure 0.3**, and while there is limited data within *Footprints in Time* to support relevant analyses at this time, these stakeholder views can inform future waves of data collection. The third topic was technology, digital inclusion, and social media, which was described as becoming more prevalent in the lives of youth, but its effects were said to be poorly understood. In particular, stakeholders emphasised their concerns about the way in which technology and social media exposes youth to racism in an unmoderated environment.

Figure 0.2 Mind map of findings from desktop and Study Youth qualitative response review.

Central node: Strengths, Values and Concerns of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Young People (YP) Across Australia

Culture & Identity
- YP identifying with each of these cultural attributes was higher in remote areas than in non-remote areas
- More opportunities to engage in cultural activities
- YP are proud of their culture
- Across all reports, many YP identified with a clan, tribal or language group
- Cultural identity and connection to country is very important
- Connecting with local Aboriginal mentors and leaders, to recognise and develop their own leadership potential
- Mentors & Leaders

Safety
- Rural and Remote communities believe that their community is safe for children
- Personal safety concerns - family and/or domestic violence

Racism & Discrimination
- Increased levels of anxiety, depression, distress and overall poorer mental health due to racism
- 'Black Lives Matter' affecting YP thoughts about the state of Australia and the world around them
- YP report being bullied in the form of racial discrimination E.g. Racial jokes, physical bullying, cyber-bullying, discrimination in education and/or employment
- Mission Australia report equity and discrimination concerns rose by 60% between 2019-2020
- Equity and discrimination is a national issue and YP are concerned about unfair treatment

Housing
- Housing affordability stress
- Housing instability linked to youth justice involvement and disengagement from education and/or employment
- Cannot be released from youth detention with no fixed address
- Housing instability, overcrowding and homelessness
- Overcrowding is a major concern for many YP
- Access to affordable and appropriate housing

Access to Services
- Experienced discrimination from non-Aboriginal health workers
- Aboriginal health workers available at health services
- Increase the number of culturally specific health services
- Request for sexual health services
- Health services to understand and recognise the importance of family, peers, community and mentors
- Increase in the use of technology to access health information online

Education
- A high proportion of YP have the desire to complete Year 12, as well as attend TAFE or University
- YP saw value in education and acknowledged the impact education can have on their future employment opportunities
- Significantly high proportion of YP love to be involved in sport, dance, and arts & crafts
- Boredom is a concern for adolescents in isolated areas
- Highly value extracurricular activities

Indigenous Language
- YP requested Indigenous languages to be taught in school
- Many YP want to learn an Indigenous language
- It was identified that YP could speak an Indigenous language, ranging from a few words, a lot of words, to fluent
- Request for Elders to teach Indigenous language to YP in schools

Employment
- Flexible working arrangements
- Concerns regarding racism and discrimination in the work place
- More support with work readiness, employment pathways and formal training
- Across all reports YP believe getting a job is extremely or very important

Relationships
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander YP highly value the relationship they have with their family and friends
- Family and kinship relationships were identified by YP as their biggest and most trusted support network

Health
- Happiness
- Mental Health
- Physical Health
- A high proportion of YP report being happy and optimistic about their future
- Top concern identified by YP
- Intergenerational trauma
- Stress and distress
- Suicide
- Do not know how to cope/manage the emotions of stress and distress
- Have experienced at least 1 'life stressor' in their lifetime
- Concerns regarding the use/impact of alcohol and other drugs on physical and mental health
- AOD rehabilitation services needed for YP
- Increase in physical health concerns since Covid-19

**Relevent to Closing the Gap targets**

Figure 0.3 Summary of questions arising from consultation with policy makers, researchers, service providers and community members on the mind map.

Cultural Safety

- Stakeholders were interested in the interrelationship between LGBTQIA+SB and cultural safety, noting that LGBTQIA+SB people experience discrimination and harassment at a higher rate than heterosexual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.
- In relation to cultural safety, stakeholders were interested in exploring the interrelationship with education and employment outcomes, and how this might differ across geography (e.g., metropolitan versus rural/remote).

Culture & Identity

- Stakeholders were interested in the interrelationship between Country and wellbeing, noting that all children and young people should have access to Country, even in areas that are not their traditional lands.
- Topics discussed included:
  - the impact of gender identity and sexual orientation on cultural identity.
  - the impact of child removal by statutory child protection agencies on culture and relationships, noting that removal can create a disconnect between family and culture.

Racism & Discrimination

- Stakeholders were interested in knowing how frequently and in what ways children experienced racism in school. Consultation participants felt that racism is prevalent in a school setting and schools are not always well equipped to handle racism.
- Topics discussed included:
  - the interrelationship between racism, health, and wellbeing.
  - experiences of racism differ depending on geographic location (regional, rural, remote, and metropolitan).
- Consultation participants described the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the justice system, noting that Indigenous youth are more likely to experience police brutality compared to non-Indigenous youth. For this reason, people wanted to know how young people view their personal safety and community safety.
- Stakeholders were also interested in the impact of racism and discrimination on employment outcomes, noting that for some young people, community perceptions about their families, can flow through to their employment outcomes (e.g., where a family member has been arrested or has been viewed as 'trouble,' the young person becomes painted with this same brush).
- Stakeholders would like to explore the relationship between cultural education and racism, because staff learning about culture and cultural safety does not always mean that an individual, school or workplace is then culturally safe.

Disability & LGBTQIA+SB

- Stakeholders were interested in disability, gender, and sexuality, noting that there is no mention of disability, intersex or LGBTQIA+SB in the LSIC data collection.
- Stakeholders would like to see more inclusive data collection, whereby data is not broken down into binary groups of male and female.
- A high proportion of stakeholders identified disability as a topic area to explore within the LSIC data, questioning why disability and inclusion is recognised as an issue in non-Indigenous communities, but not in Indigenous communities.
- Stakeholders wanted to know more about the educational and employment outcomes for Indigenous persons living with a disability.
- Stakeholders were interested in the health and wellbeing outcomes of LGBTQIA+SB young people living in rural and remote Australia, noting that LGBTQIA+SB young people who are really connected to culture and Country have to give up who they are as a person to keep the peace in their community, rather than keep peace within themselves.

Information Technology

- Stakeholders expressed concern regarding digital equity, noting that young people living in rural and remote communities may not have access to laptops, telephones, or the internet.
- Topics discussed included:
  - the education and employment outcomes for children and young people who do not have access to information technology.
  - the relationship between access to information technology and feelings of connectedness.

Social Media

- Stakeholders identified social media as an emerging issue, noting that young people are becoming disengaged from cultural activities within their community.
- Stakeholders were also interested in children's experiences of racism and bullying when using social media and the impact of social media on mental health outcomes.

Language

- Stakeholders were interested in the ways in which Indigenous language is taught in schools, noting that current debates on this topic have a focus on bilingual education to be reintegrated back into the education system to ensure language is being used correctly within communities.
- Topics discussed included:
  - the interrelationship between bilingual education and culture and identity.
  - the experience of a child and/or family when a document is presented in English and Indigenous language compared with English only presentation or information.

Education

- Stakeholders were interested in educational outcomes in relation to geographic location, noting that educational experiences of children living in rural and remote communities are restricted by what is on offer.
- Stakeholders were interested in the mental health impact and outcomes for children moving from their family and community to boarding schools in pursuit of a better education.
- Stakeholders were interested in identifying factors that promote resilience in children and young people who move away from their family, community, and Country.

Health

- Stakeholders were interested in holistic explorations of health and the relationships between emotional, social, physical, cultural, and spiritual wellbeing, as well as how this changed across the life course.
- Topics discussed included:
  - the impact of the social determinants of health on health and wellbeing.
  - experiences of young people accessing mainstream health services, verses culturally specific health services.
  - young people's access to appropriate sexual health services.
- Stakeholders were also interested in exploring the use of digital mental health and wellbeing apps for young people, noting that not all young people have access to a mobile phone, laptop, or internet.

Access to Services

- Stakeholders were interested in the experience of young people and families accessing health services, noting that families accessing Aboriginal Community Controlled services were worried that their information would be shared with the wider community.
- Questions discussed included the interrelationship between cultural safety and access to health, employment, and educational services.
- Additionally, some stakeholders were interested in the experience of LGBTQIA+SB young people accessing sexual health and wellbeing services.
- Stakeholders were also interested in how well community services work together to ensure children and families are referred to appropriate services, noting that many government and non-government organisations work in silos – although this is something that is not measured in LSIC.

Housing

- Stakeholders were interested in the impact of housing on health, education, and employment outcomes, noting that housing instability and homelessness is an issue for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Stakeholders were interested in the internal conflict Indigenous young people experience when having to decide between their own priorities versus cultural obligations. For example, young people in a supported housing placement may feel obligated to house family members that are experiencing housing instability or homelessness, regardless of the impact that it may have on their own long-term housing outcomes.
- Stakeholders were interested in exploring the relationship between housing instability and mental health outcomes.

Comments

Stakeholders noted that:

- When translating documents for community, language should be simple to break down complex concepts and ideas.
- Indigenous people are visual learners; therefore, fact sheets should be presented in a very visual way.
- Links should be drawn between the National Partnership agreement on Closing the Gap and the LSIC report.
- Analyses should disaggregate between rural, remote, and metropolitan areas, because of the diversity of experiences across geographies.

Findings from the second online consultations

A second round of consultations was conducted to unpack findings from the analyses with stakeholders. In these consultations, the importance of relationships and cultural identity were a consistent theme. This has been reflected in the summaries at the conclusion of each of the chapters in this report. The key themes diagram below shows the central theme of relationships and connections. Around this central and pervasive theme are six sub themes that were identified during discussions and key points expressed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders who participated in the consultations.

KEY THEMES

Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is linked to belonging and sense of self.

Symbols give pride and a sense of belonging.

Attending community events enhances connections.

Safe Living Environments

Safe housing is culturally safe.

The support of a strong family network provides safe living environments.

Educating everyone about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture is important and will build understanding.

Learning About Culture

Encourage people who are important to youth to be involved in school and learning about culture — Elders, grandparents, parents.

Relationships & Connections

There is a need to make it safe to talk about racism.

Racism may have become too normalised by some people.

Racism

All people should be educated enough to help, true racism is a lack of education.

The positive impact of working parents and carers on young people is breaking the stigma.

Flexibility and understanding in the workplace is important to support people to take part in cultural events and activities.

Adults can help youth navigate the risks and possible learning opportunities on the internet.

Flexibility At Work

Flexibility in the workplace is important to support working parents and carers.

Safety Online

Youth can help adults learn about how to use the internet.

Setting rules and talking about using the internet are important.

OVERVIEW OF *FOOTPRINTS IN TIME*

Footprints in Time, or the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC), started collecting data in 2008 from two cohorts, babies (6 to 18 months) and kindergarteners (aged 4-5 years old), using purposeful sampling Australia wide. The goal then and now is to follow the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, and their families across urban, regional, and remote Australia.

Data is collected annually by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Administration Officers (RAOs) who conduct interviews with study participants. They have built positive relationships with the SY and their families.

The key aim of *Footprints in Time* is to improve understanding of the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, their families, and their communities. It also aims to provide valuable insight for policy makers and government programs to improve the support provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Through collecting data each year, the study provides a unique view into the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and the factors that are helping them to grow up strong.

Governance

The LSIC Steering Committee is Indigenous-led and has majority Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander representation. Members of the committee provided expert advice on survey content, design, data collection methods, community engagement, ethics, cultural protocols, and data analysis and interpretation.

New topics and questions in Wave 11 (2018) and Wave 12 (2019)

Each wave of LSIC includes questions from previous years to see what has changed for SY and their families. New topics that are age appropriate or currently topical are included on the advice of the Steering Committee. In Waves 11 and 12 the Younger Baby (B) cohort were aged between 10 and 13 years. The Older Kindergarten (K) cohort were aged between 13 and 16 years.

In 2018 (Wave 11), the following new topics and questions were introduced:

- Primary caregivers, SY, and Dads were asked a series of questions about their Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander identity, developed by the LSIC Indigenous Identity Design Group lead by Professor Bodkin-Andrews.

- SY were asked about their diet and sleep habits, and in a self-completed section they were asked about suicide ideation and their experience with vaping and cigarettes.

- Primary caregivers were asked about SY's diet and if SY will board for school next year.

In 2019 (Wave 12), the following new topics and questions were introduced:

- Primary caregivers and Dads were asked questions about the security and flexibility of their work.

- Primary caregivers were asked about SY's participation in work and volunteering.

- Dads were asked about how often they talked to SY about things that were important in SY's life and future, and about how often they spent time with SY doing/assisting or watching SY in activities and events.

- SY were asked if they had adults and friends who supported them by listening to them and believing in them.

- The Older (K) cohort SY were asked about sex, pregnancy, and support for the parenting of their own children.
- The Older (K) cohort SY were also asked about their post-school plans.

Sampling

Footprints in Time uses a non-random purposive sampling design. This means the sample cannot be considered a true representation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Australia. The original sites for data collection were chosen non-randomly for the following reasons:

1. To represent the broad experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people residing across Australia.
2. To enable some general comparison of geographical areas through approximate equal representation of areas in the first year of collection.
3. Locations that contained a substantial number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and where the pilot had taken place to build on existing relationships.
4. Locations where the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interviewers could have easy access to a base within a relevant government office.

Detailed information about the *Footprints in Time* study can be found on the Department of Social Services website.

Footprints in Time –
The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC)
Study Page: www.dss.gov.au/lsic
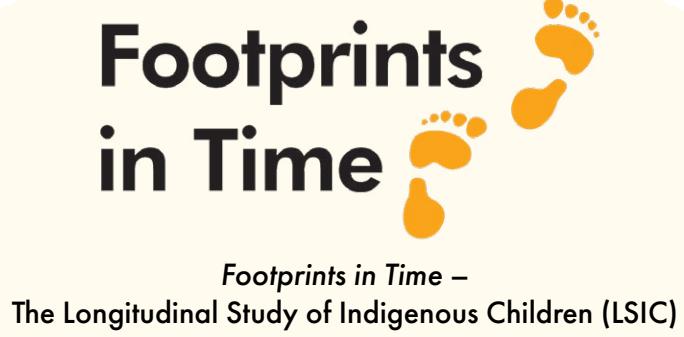
WHO ARE THE *FOOTPRINTS IN TIME* PARTICIPANTS?

In 2018 and 2019 the SY were entering adolescence. Almost two thirds were from the original Younger B cohort in both years and in 2019 there was an equal number of female and male participants. All SY are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Collection Year 2018
Wave 11

1,218 Surveys

Male **48%** | Female **52%**

Younger (B) Cohort
60%
Age 10-12 Years

Older (K) Cohort
40%
Age 13-15 Years

97%
Retained from Wave 10

Collection Year 2019
Wave 12

1,165 Surveys

Male **50%** | Female **50%**

Younger (B) Cohort
61%
Age 11-13 Years

Older (K) Cohort
39%
Age 14-16 Years

96%
Retained from Wave 11
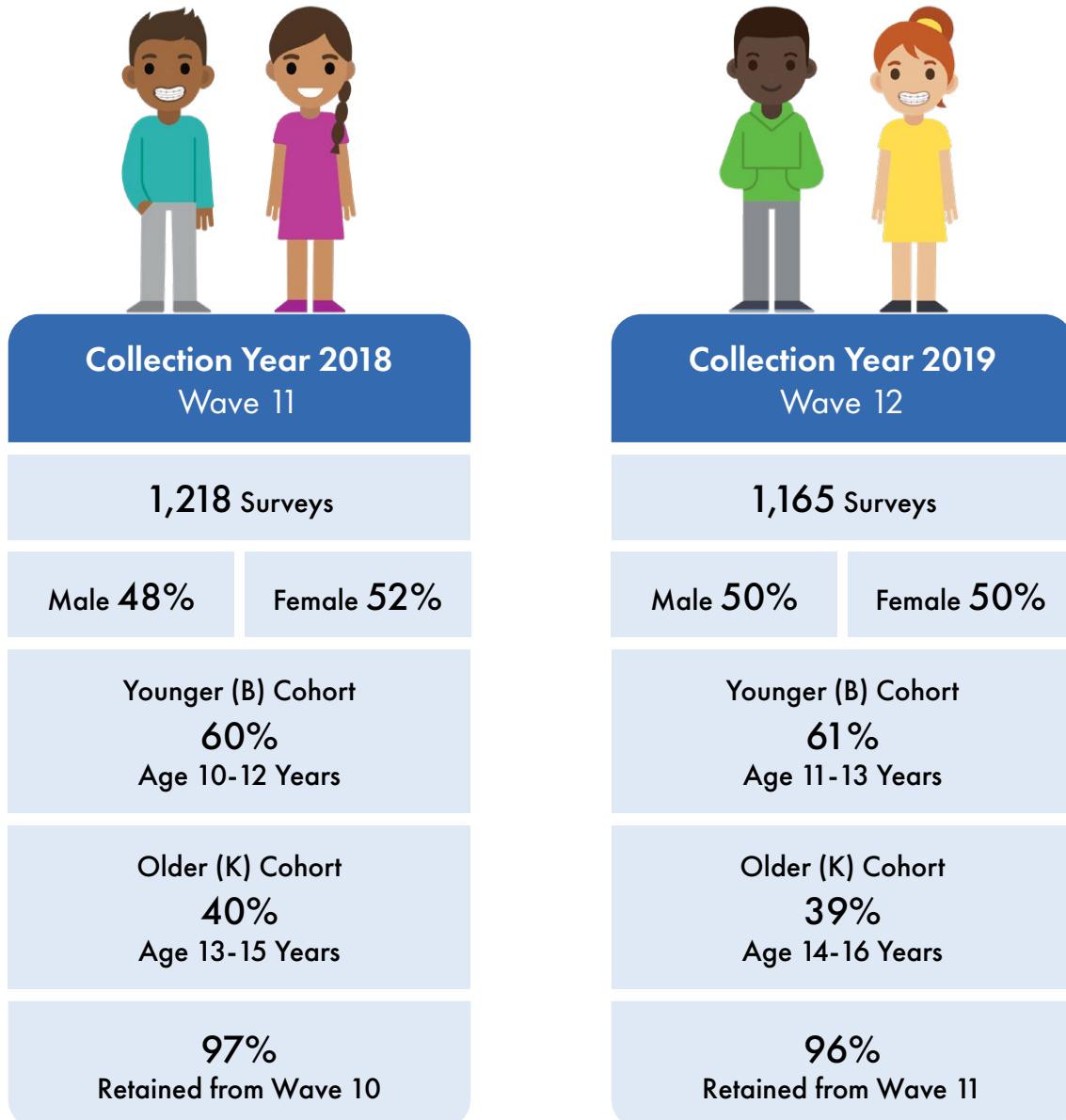
Figure 0.4 Study Youth characteristics in Wave 11 (2018) and Wave 12 (2019).

Primary caregiver (P1) is the person who identifies as the one mostly responsible for the care of SY and who knows them the best. The majority of Primary caregivers are the biological mother of SY but in some cases they are SY's Dad or another guardian. Overall retention rate from 2008 (Wave 1) was 71.2% in 2018 (Wave 11) and 68.5% in 2019 (Wave 12).

	Wave 11 (2018)	Wave 12 (2019)
Primary Caregiver Completed P1 Survey	1,253 88% Retained from 2017	1,205 86% Retained from 2018
Dad Completed P2 Survey	222	269

Figure 0.5 Primary Caregiver and Dad completions in Wave 11 (2018) and Wave 12 (2019).

Teachers of SY are either the classroom teacher in primary school or the English teacher in high school.

	Combined Wave 11 & 12	
Teacher Completed Teacher Survey	369 Primary School	395 High School

Figure 0.6 Teacher survey completions by school type (combined Wave 11 and 12).

Participant locations
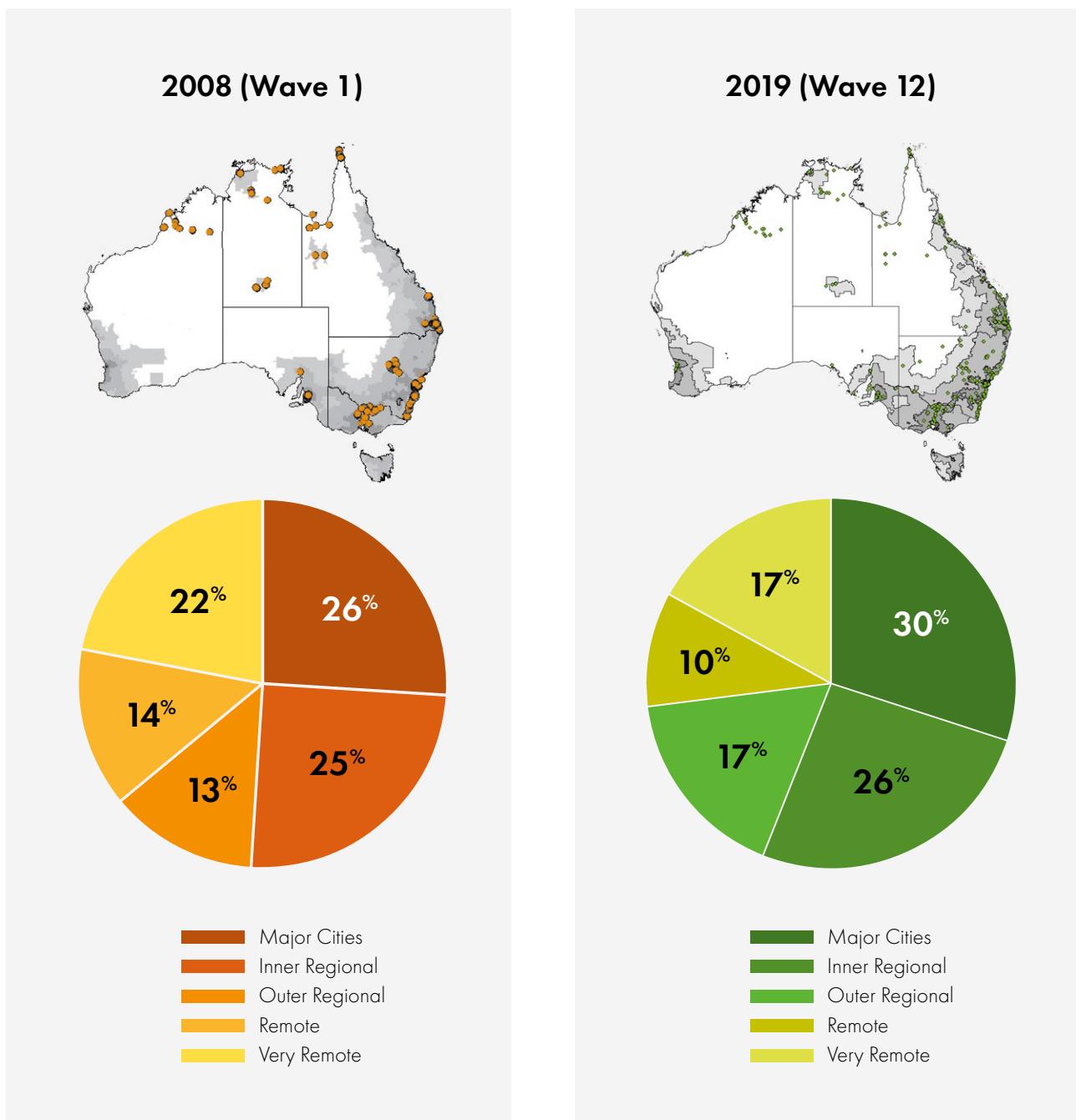
Figure 0.7 Maps showing where participating families were living at the time of interview in 2008 and 2019 categorised using ABS remoteness categories.

Notes: Based on the proportion of interviews by region, results are presented for major cities, inner and outer regional combined, and remote and very remote combined. During consultations in 2022, stakeholders noted that analyses should provide summaries by geographic locations to explore the diversity in experiences between metropolitan, rural, and remote locations. There has been some change in the proportions of study participants across geographies. This could be due to Wave 1 area categorisation having been based on 2006 ABS data and Wave 12 having been based on 2016 remoteness categorisation. It could also be due to the availability of Research Administration Officers (RAOs) or families in remote and very remote areas impacting data collection rates.

Chapter 1

LIVING ENVIRONMENTS, HEALTH, AND WELLBEING

This chapter explores the living environments of *Footprints in Time* Study Youth (SY). A view of the diversity of living environments of SY provides context for understanding the experiences contributing to their lives in early adolescence. Specifically, we explore the living contexts of the SY and their families, reflect on their experiences of housing and diversity of homes, how balancing family and work or study plays a role in wellbeing, and major life events experienced by *Footprints in Time* families. We also explore the contexts of families with SY with a disability, to aide policy makers, services providers, and communities in planning responsive supports. Focus questions that were important to community and policy makers included:

1. What were the living contexts of *Footprints in Time* SY and their families (e.g., housing stability, family structure, housing stress) and how were these factors related to health and wellbeing indicators?

2. Are there differences in the living environments of households who have a child with a disability compared to those families who do not?

3. How flexible were the jobs of study parents/carers to family demands such as providing care?

4. How much did study parents/carers enjoy their job, and feel as though the balance between work and family was going well?

5. Are these work-related measures associated with parents' wellbeing?

In Australia, there has been much attention paid to adversities in the living environments of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children, youth, and their families. In spite of the real and severe challenges that can be faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, there are vast differences in the living environments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth. It is important for this diversity to be acknowledged and understood. Importantly, a focus on deficits detracts from developing an understanding of the strengths that diverse living environments can present (Thurber et al., 2020).

Living environments

Family structure

Exploring data on members of SY households in Waves 11 and 12 demonstrate the incredibly diverse contexts in which *Footprints in Time* SY lived (**Figure 1.1**). The majority lived in households with other children (under 16 years in age) and almost two in five lived in families with both other adults and children. In contrast, one in ten SY lived with just their parents or carers. This illustrates the need to consider the broad range of family structures and relationships influencing the lives of SY.

10%
Live with parents or carers only

36%
Live in families with other children under 16 years old

38%
Live in families with other children under 16 years old and other adults

16%
Live in families with other adults
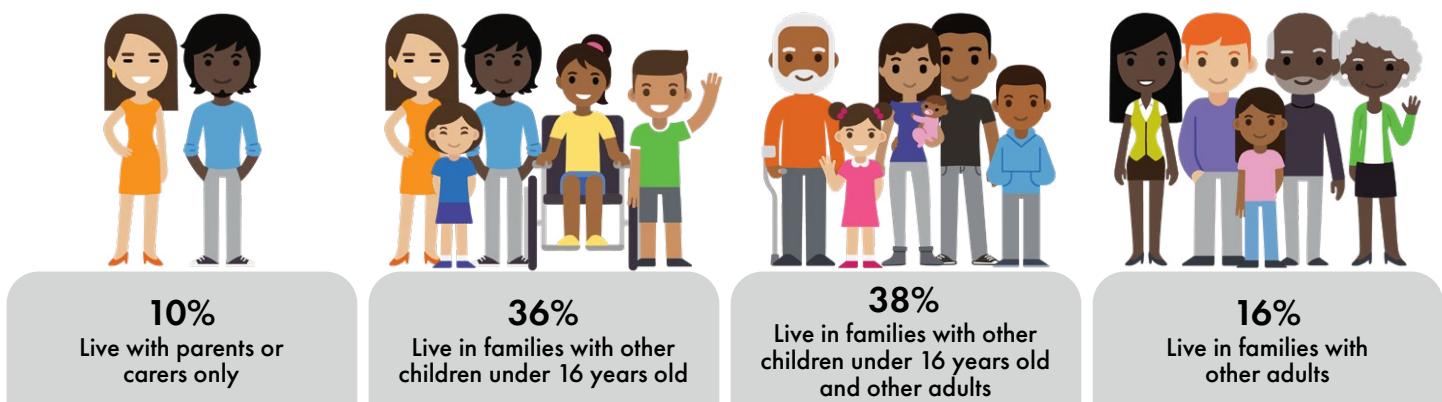
Figure 1.1 The different types of households where Study Youth were living in 2019 (Wave 12; n=1,159).

The Primary caregivers of SY were usually their Mum and often their Dad, occasionally they may have been a Grandparent or another family member or carer. In 2019, the majority of SY lived with a parent or both parents, and a little over half lived with a partnered parent or carer (**Figure 1.2**).


| **88%** | **12%** | **55%** | **45%** |
| Live with parent/s | Live with carer/s | Live with partnered parent or carer | Live with a lone parent or carer |
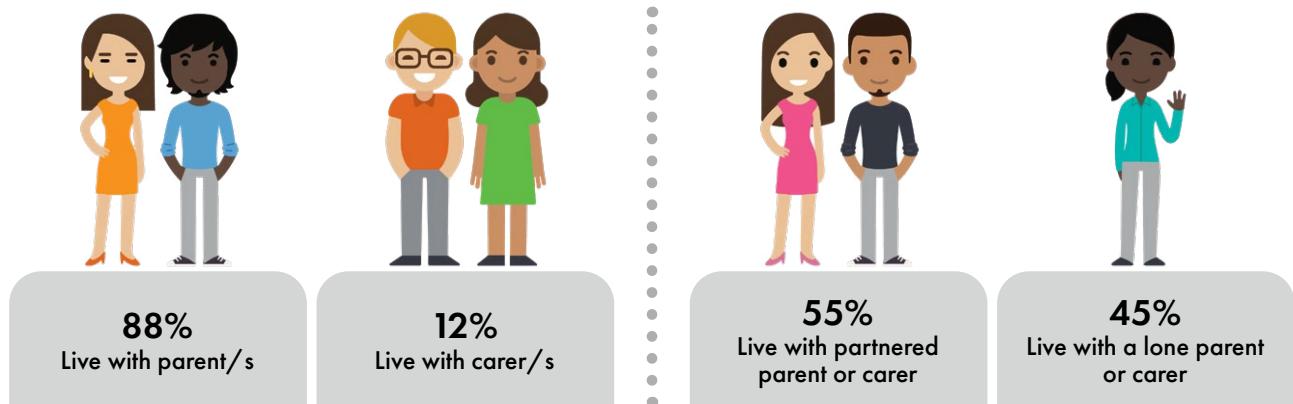
Figure 1.2 The proportion of Study Youth who lived with parent/s, carer/s and the proportion who lived with a partnered parent or carer or a lone parent or carer in 2019 (Wave 12; n=1,159).

In previous waves it had been recognised that households were often comprised of multiple extended family members and that children experienced lots of interaction outside of the households with other extended family members (Walter, 2017). This was still the case in Wave 12 (2019), with around 61% of SY living in a household with two or three adults and 22% living with four or more adults. Only 17% of SY were in a household with only one adult.

While richness in communities can be seen reflected in the diverse make up of Australia, institutions have typically used the framework of the Western nuclear family to inform policy that impacts children and families (Dunstan et al., 2019). Consequently, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of being a family have been devalued by Western social norms and policies (Walter, 2017). Western models of housing, tenancy and family structure have impacted the life experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families (Walter, 2017). Understanding the diversity of environments and how these may differ from the typical Western structure that informs policy, is important. This can challenge assumptions about living environment factors (e.g., what is a strength and what is a deficit) and how these impact children and young people, informing policy development that is culturally appropriate and resource provision that is fit-for-purpose.

Housing stress

In each wave, *Footprints in Time* parents and caregivers are asked about whether they have experienced instances of housing stress, including feeling overcrowded, moving house or other housing stress. In Wave 12, the rates of housing stress reported were similar to those reported in earlier waves (rates are presented in **Figure 1.3**). Perhaps reflecting expectations of housing standards, *Footprints in Time* parents and carers living in major cities were more likely to report feeling overcrowded in their house. While families who participated in Wave 12 were reasonably similar in size regardless of location, those living in inner/outer regional and remote/very remote areas were less likely to report feeling crowded that those in living in major cities (47% vs inner/outer regional 40%; remote/very remote 35%). In 2019 (Wave 12), families living in regional areas were, on average, more likely to have moved house (51%).

Relationship between living environments and wellbeing

While research has reported that lone parent households are consistently associated with poorer child outcomes for children in Australia, this relationship has not been consistently identified for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families (Biddle, 2011; Department of Social Services, 2015). Researchers have proposed that differences for lone parents in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households may be related to kinship structures and the social and material support these provide (Walter, 2017). Others have considered the additional demands (e.g., greater use of resources such as food and utilities, less physical space for each person) alongside the potential benefits of having other adults as part of the household can offer (e.g., contributions to care of other household members and resources, Hewitt & Walter, 2022). One such study in Western Australia found children and young people living in larger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households (by occupancy) reported better wellbeing than those with a smaller number of occupants (Zubrick et al., 2005). In combined data from Wave 1 through to Wave 12 (N=3,121), SY who lived with "Primary caregiver, partner and other adults" or "Lone carer" or "Lone carer, children <16 and other adults" had statistically significant higher SDQ Total Difficulties Scores compared to those who lived with "Primary caregiver and partner". The broad diversity of household members and family living contexts makes it difficult to draw any conclusions from this analysis alone. A more detailed exploration of household structures over time, accounting for relational factors is required to unpack protective factors along with challenges that different household mixes present to families in supporting children's wellbeing.

Connection to Country is important to supporting health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; appropriate and culturally safe living environments contribute to this (Dept of Health, 2013). Traditionally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples developed housing that was more than just a

While considered a cultural strength, kinship care has also been found to place demands on the household and can pose some challenges to children and families (Hewitt & Walter, 2022). Family and kinship relationships play a complex role for children, young people, and parents, and operate within a cultural context. It is important that in understanding the role of family and kinship, larger family structures are not reduced to a one-dimensional strength or deficit interpretation.

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire about 2-17 year olds. It exists in several versions to meet the needs of researchers, clinicians and educationalists. Four categories are combined to generate a SDQ Total Difficulties score, they are emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention and peer relationship problems. A lower score is indicative of fewer difficulties.

building, it provided for all family needs and was central to community life (Dept of Health, 2013). In contrast, contemporary models of housing in Australia have been based on Western frameworks that have been applied universally to other groups.


Wave 12 (n=330)

	Felt Crowded	Moved House	Had Housing Problem
Major Cities of Australia	47%	41%	24%
Inner/Outer Regional Australia	40%	51%	41%
Remote/Very Remote Australia	35%	30%	35%
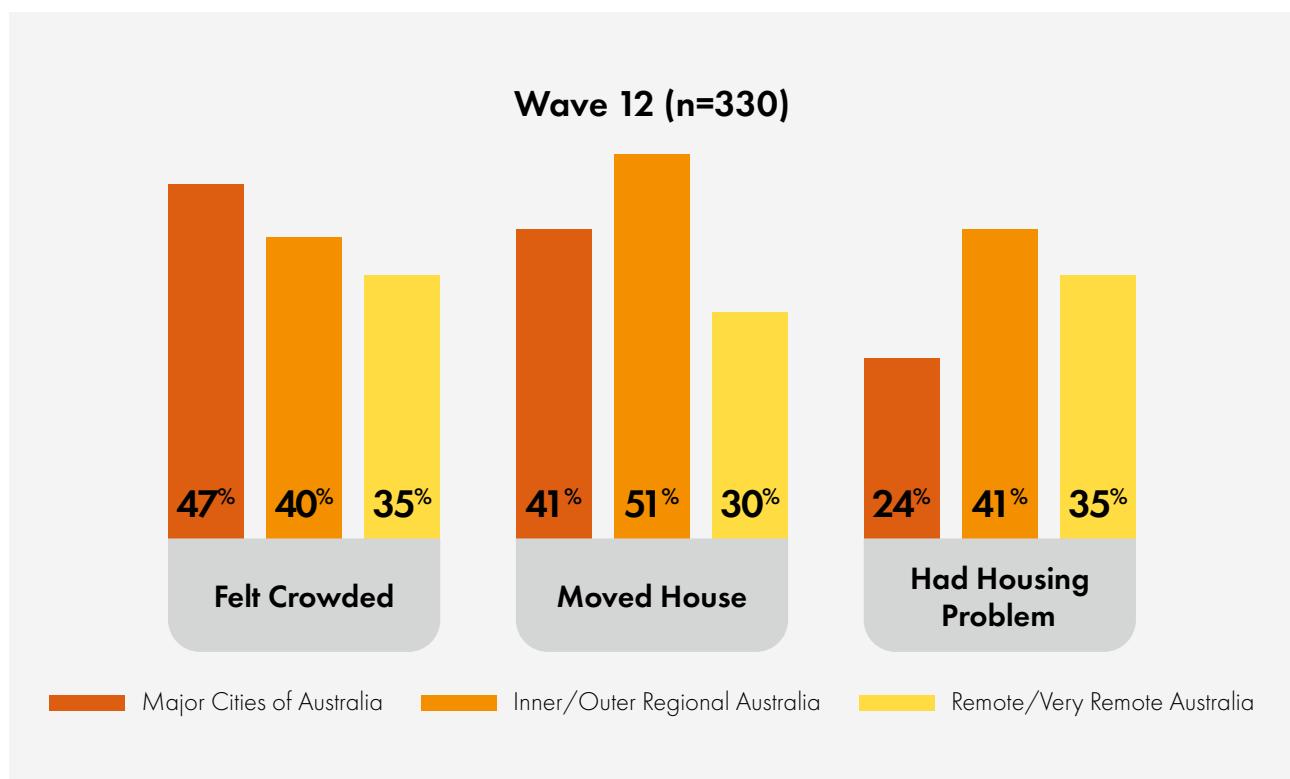
Figure 1.3 Primary caregiver (P1) experience of housing problems by geographic location in 2019 (Wave 12).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families experience overcrowding at a higher rate than the general population*. At a national level, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are over three times more likely to live in what are considered over-crowded conditions (AIHW & NIAA, 2020). Living in an overcrowded environment has implications for health and wellbeing and has been linked to a range of health and social problems for children and challenges in terms of educational achievement, wellbeing, and behaviour (AIHW, 2020). In Australia, the perception of overcrowding and housing instability is heavily influenced by Western cultural norms and concepts of family. As such, data has typically been presented in a way in which larger Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander households have been linked to adverse outcomes without recognising the strengths that larger family structures represent in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In order to address the negative health impacts of overcrowding and to retain the cultural strength of kinship and large family structures, housing policy/design must be culturally informed and driven by the needs, priorities and ways of living of communities.

*The Australian Bureau of Statistics uses the Canadian National Occupancy Standard to classify overcrowding based on the number of bedrooms in the dwelling and the composition of the household.

Housing related issues reported by Primary caregivers

Over two decades of research on the impacts of housing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' health has characterised housing in remote communities as being poorly designed and inadequately built for local environments (Birn, Pillay & Holtz, 2017; Memmott et al., 2022; Wales, 2010). Outside of remote communities, housing issues also impact families, with affordability and availability of housing decreasing over the past decade (Samarasinghe, 2021). In Australia in 2018-19, 20% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were living in houses that did not meet the definition of an acceptable standard of dwelling (AIHW, 2021). These challenges are reflected by the types of housing issues facing *Footprints in Time* families in Wave 11. These included structural risks (termites, leaking or unstable roofing, general structural damage), access to facilities for cooking and hygiene (stove problems, bathroom problems) and general safety issues ranging from physical risks such as unsafe stairs to issues with heating/cooling. Given the clear and well evidenced relationship between poor housing quality and long-term health outcomes, availability of and access to quality housing must be a priority for policy makers seeking to improve living conditions for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children (National Agreement on Closing the Gap, 2022). Housing provision that is inclusive must be culturally safe. In circumstances where policy/government seeks to improve housing conditions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, housing design must be informed by the priorities and lived experiences of the communities/families served. Inclusive housing design must place value on the importance and cultural significance of kinship and family relationships and acknowledge the ways in which well-designed living environments can support larger family structures. Remote contexts often present unique challenges (such as extreme weather and accessibility) and housing in this context must be fit for the environment. Equity in access must also be considered and refers not only to access to equitable housing opportunities but also to equitable standards in terms of functional hardware and structural aspects of the dwelling.

Study Youth with a disability

Families supporting a child with a disability face additional challenges in finding suitable housing. In major cities, housing has been found to be inappropriate, substandard or unsuitable for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities (Grant et al., 2017). Recent research has reported increased mobility of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people living with disabilities, often moving between houses or in with other family members (Grant et al., 2017). In 2018, 62 *Footprints in Time* SY (5% of respondents) were recorded as having a disability. In the 2016 census, 7% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people identified they required assistance for a disability, noting this is for all ages.

The majority of Wave 12 *Footprints in Time* SY who have a disability lived with their parents (89%). Over half (57%) lived with a lone parent. Almost half lived in families with other children and adults, with one in four living in families with other children and one in ten living with parents or caregivers only. Around 11% of *Footprints in Time* SY with a disability lived with a carer. Experiences of stressful life events were similar for *Footprints in Time* families who had a child with a disability or without, but overall families of SY with disability reported slightly lower rates of stressful life events in Waves 11 and 12.

Major life events

In the course of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's lives many families face challenges that add additional stress at a time when children are sensitive to environmental adversities (Askew et al., 2013). Understanding the types of adversities faced by families can ensure communities, policy makers and service providers are best placed to provide responsive supports. For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families it is particularly important that these supports are culturally informed to improve accessibility and efficacy. Here we explore the types of challenges faced by families during Waves 11 and 12, when SY were 10 to 16 years old.

Grief and loss

In Wave 11 and 12, half of *Footprints in Time* Primary caregivers reported that they had experienced sorry business (Wave 11 and 12 combined), this was higher for Primary caregivers in very remote Australia (62%).

Access to education

Primary caregivers were more likely to report they had returned to study or work if they were living in major cities (27%) or inner regional areas (31%). Fewer *Footprints in Time* Primary caregivers in outer regional (25%), remote (24%) or very remote (21%) areas reported they had returned to study or work.

Financial stress

In Waves 11 and 12, around 1 in 3 parents worried about money or experienced housing problems with rates tending to be lower in very remote, remote and sometimes regional areas (patterns differed slightly for money and housing).

Family separation

In Waves 11 and 12, less than one in 10 families reported they had separated in the past twelve months . These rates were slightly higher for the younger (B) cohort (7% vs 4%) and those living in major cities (6%) and inner regional (8%) Australia.

In addition to these life events, parents were asked to report any other stressful situations they had faced in the past year. A small number of Primary caregivers responded, highlighting challenges they faced receiving appropriate and adequate supports from services. They also reflected on the impact of grief and loss. Incidences of housing problems, employment or study and money worries tended to decrease with increasing remoteness (**Figure 1.4**).

These challenges highlight that when exploring the impact of living environment on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families, systemic barriers as well as challenges faced within the context of family and relationships need to be considered. The cultural lens through which these challenges and barriers are experienced should also be considered alongside the physical/structural aspect of housing. Some differences in parents' experiences between remote and urban areas suggest that urban and remote environments may have some influence on the types of stressors families face. Remote and urban contexts each present unique strengths and challenges. How these contexts differ in terms of the lived experiences of families should be explored further and reflected in policy responses. These findings highlight the importance of community, policy makers and service providers considering how access to supports for youth may be impacted by the challenges facing families. The diverse contexts necessitate flexibility in provisions for youth to ensure equitable access to support during this critical time of change and identity formation, characteristic of early adolescence.

How often have you experienced these major life events in the past year?
(Waves 11 and 12 combined)

50%
of Primary caregivers reported that they had experienced sorry business

30%
of Primary caregivers had housing problems

28%
of Primary caregivers got a job or returned to study

27%
of Primary caregivers had money worries

6%
of Primary caregivers family had separated

There is diversity in the way Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are involved in the protocols and practices of sorry business (Dudgeon et al., 2020). Community members have noted the inclusion of children and young people in the family and community at these times as a strength of relationship and kinship building. In some workplaces there remains a stigma around cultural leave, which has been noted by community as adding additional stress (Dudgeon et al., 2014).

As with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people, participation in study and work may be influenced by several factors including access to education in these areas or the need to leave family or Country to attend training (Dudgeon et al., 2014).


Major Life Events

	Experienced Sorry Business	Housing Problems	Got a Job / Return to Study	Worries About Money	Family Separation
Major Cities of Australia	44%	33%	35%	31%	7%
Inner/Outer Regional Australia	45%	30%	27%	26%	6%
Remote/Very Remote Australia	62%	26%	23%	26%	4%
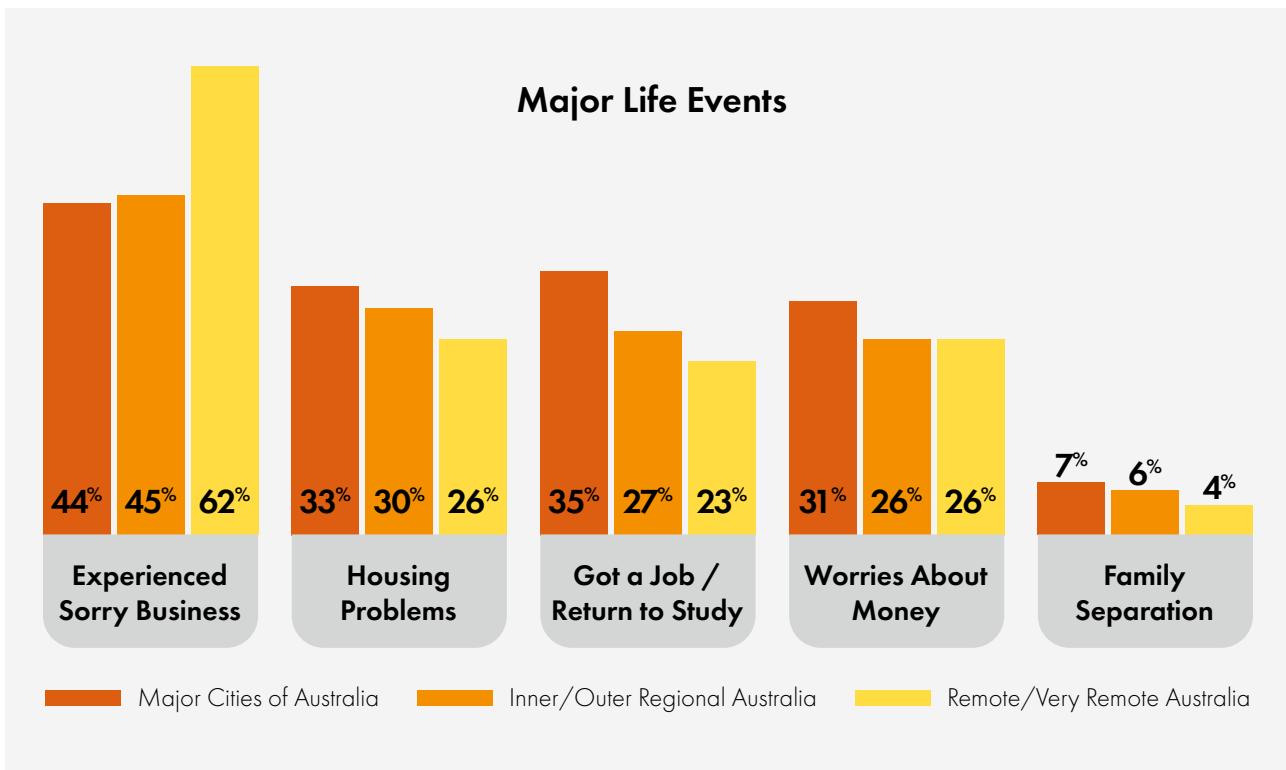
Figure 1.4 Selected major life events in the last 12 months reported by Primary caregivers (P1; Wave 11 and 12 combined, N=1,205-1,243).

Employment

In Waves 11 and 12, around 60% of parents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they had freedom to decide how they do their work. This was similar across geographic regions except for very remote Australia where more parents 'agreed' rather than 'strongly agreed' compared with other regions. Around 70% of parents felt their jobs had a positive effect on their children and this was consistent across regions. Over 80% of parents felt that working helped them appreciate time with their children and around 74% felt they were better parents because of work. Only 39% felt they had enough time to get everything done in their jobs. 83% felt that having both work and family responsibilities made them feel competent. Around 43% felt they missed out on home or family activities because of work and 22% felt family time was less enjoyable and more pressured due to work. In contrast 22% of parents reported turning down work due to family responsibilities and 17% felt their job was less enjoyable and pressured due to family responsibilities.

Access to employment is considered a protective factor for adults (Dockery, 2017). Having the potential to bring increased access to socio-economic resources and engagement with meaningful pursuits can improve adult wellbeing (Dockery, 2017). For parents it is particularly important that employment provides flexibility to accommodate their caring responsibilities (Dudgeon et al., 2014).

WORKING AND WELLBEING

4 in 5 parents/caregivers *agree or strongly agree*:

✅ Work helps them appreciate time with their children

✅ Having both work and family responsibilities makes them feel competent

✅ Their job has positive effects on their children

FREEDOM AND FLEXIBILITY AT WORK

2 in 5 ❯ Don't have enough time to get everything done in their job

2 in 3 ❯ Feel they have the freedom to decide how to do their own work

BALANCING FAMILY AND WORK

1 in 2 parents/caregivers:

❌ Turned down work opportunities due to family responsibilities

❌ Feel family time is less enjoyable due to work

❌ Felt they missed out on family activities because of work

Primary caregivers and Dads who had higher distress scores, as determined by questions based on the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, were statistically significantly more likely to feel that their job was not having a positive effect on SY.

Primary caregivers and Dads were also more likely to feel that having both work and family responsibilities was related to decreased wellbeing. Recent research has reported increased difficulties experienced by parents when it comes to combining work and family-care commitments (Leach et al., 2021). It is important to outline ways of reducing parent and carer stress around work-family responsibilities; and to provide support to reduce potential negative effects and improve mental health for children and young people (Leach et al., 2021).

In Waves 11 and 12, parents who scored lower on the distress scale were more likely to take on additional work activities or opportunities regardless of family responsibilities. Primary caregiver employment and other factors related to income have been reported in previous analysis of *Footprints in Time* waves as positive indicators of lower distress by the SDQ score (Lovett, 2017).

> The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) is a psychological screening tool designed to identify adults with significant levels of psychological distress. It is widely used in Australia and often used in primary care settings to identify people with clinically significant psychological distress.

One third of the total health gap between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians can be attributed to social determinates, of this over one quarter is explained by household income and employment (AIHW, 2020). In 2018/19 almost half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (aged 15 to 64) were employed, compared to three quarters of non-Indigenous Australians. At a family level, almost half of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households (both lone parent/carer and partnered parent/carer) had no adult in paid employment (AIHW, 2021).

Living environments for health and wellbeing

Understanding Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander family ways of being is important and provides a greater understanding of the diverse needs of families and communities that often differs from the Western ideas of housing (Walter, 2017). This chapter specifically highlighted that many of the *Footprints in Time* families who are living in major cities are feeling crowded, reported housing problems and were more likely to have experienced family separation.

In Waves 11 and 12, *Footprints in Time* participants continued to experience issues with health, homelessness, and a lack of appropriate housing. These findings were discussed in online consultations (see appendix C). Discussions highlighted that often the diversity of needs is unequally matched by the diversity of reasons families may not be living in their preferred environment. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people come from big family support systems and families consider safe housing is a place where you have your support network around you. They reflected on the idea that allocation of housing often means families are not living closely together and this can reduce feelings of cultural safety. Many families choose to live in larger households, providing them with a network of support for wellbeing and in some cases more financial safety. Community members who took part in consultations recommended asking each individual community what safe and secure housing looks like for them and really listening, then developing housing solutions that recognise and cater for those specific needs.

Stress related to major life events was more often reported by families in major cities. *Footprints in Time* families in regional and remote areas reported less stress in relation to housing problems and separation of families. Children and young people in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are included in all major life events with family and community as this is considered "the way it is meant to be" (online consultation participant). There have been recent improvements in flexible work arrangements that enable people to take leave from work to participate in cultural activities related to major life and community events. This flexibility is, however not the case for youth who are in school and education institutions. Family and cultural events are extremely important to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, and this needs to be more universally recognised. An increase in education about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture and ways of being could lead to greater opportunities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to attend events and share culture. Education systems need to ensure flexible options are available for students to be included in cultural and community events while continuing their learning journey.

Key findings and recommendations

- Study Youth live in diverse family contexts which should inform support policies and community services.

- Changes to housing policies should seek to understand each community's requirements for safe and secure housing.

- Parents felt having a job and working made them better parents and had a positive effect on their children.

- Job flexibility and being able to balance work and family commitments are important.

- Services and employers need to be culturally informed, considering systemic barriers and the cultural lens of experiences, challenges and major life events.

The majority of the *Footprints in Time* parents felt their job has a positive effect on SY. Despite this, Dads were more likely to feel they are missing out on family activities due to work, making them less positive about their work. Parents reporting higher levels of stress were less likely to think their job was having a positive effect on their child and their own health and wellbeing. Community members involved in online consultations noted that parents having work and being proud of their work is valuable in role modelling to children and young people they can feel proud of what they do.

While research has reported the impact that adversities in living environments can have on children and their families (Hewitt & Walter, 2022), there has been little investigation of what aspects of diverse living environments support health and wellbeing in Australia. Understanding diversity and the positive impacts this can have on children and youth is critical to the development of culturally informed policy in the areas of housing, employment, and social support services.

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Chapter 2

RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILY, AND WELLBEING

Families are central to maintaining and sustaining relationships and culture for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Walter, 2017). Lohoar et al. (2014) noted that Aboriginal kinship and family relationships represent a complex and dynamic system underpinned by cultural and spiritual significance. This complexity is not captured within predominant non-Indigenous definitions and understanding of family, which tend to be based on physical proximity and biological relation (Lohoar et al., 2014). Within the literature, kinship and family structures are identified as a key cultural strength for Aboriginal children and families (Zubrick et al., 2005; Dockery, 2020). To move towards a strengths-based approach in understanding the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, the complex and nuanced nature of family and kinship relationships and their importance across all domains of life must be considered.

In previous *Footprints in Time* reports, study families reported high levels of interaction with other family and extended family members at home and in the community (Walter, 2017). Families are known to regularly engage with community leaders and Elders, sharing knowledge and often meals together (Walter, 2017).

Previously the *Footprints in Time* study has identified attending 'cultural events' and 'being with family' as factors that enhance resilience (Lovett, 2017). Greater levels of resilience are seen in Study Youth (SY) who report positive relationships with people important to them such as family and other adults who provide support.

Based on the views shared during early consultations for this report, the following key questions are explored with regards to relationships, family and wellbeing:

1. How do SY connect with Country? How often do they visit Country?

2. How much time do SY perceive that they get with their Primary caregivers, and how do they perceive the quality of their Primary caregivers relationships?

3. Are contextual factors such as geographic remoteness, level of relative isolation, or socioeconomic status related to these perceptions of relationship strength?

4. How well do SY get along with their siblings and other family members?

5. How diverse are SY's friendships?

6. How are family relationships and connection to Country associated with health and wellbeing?

7. Who are the important people in the lives of SY? What does the social network look like for SY, which relationships with family, friends, and other members of the community are important to them?

"When we talk about traditional 'Country'…we mean something beyond the dictionary definition of the word. …we might mean homeland, or tribal or clan area and we might mean more than just a place on the map. For us, Country is a word for all the values, places, resources, stories and cultural obligations associated with that area and its features. It describes the entirety of our ancestral domains. While they may all no longer necessarily be the title-holders to land, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are still connected to the Country of their ancestors and most consider themselves the custodians or caretakers of their land." Professor Mick Dodson (reconcilitation.org.au)

Connection with Country

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples see their connection to Country as part of who they are. It is not just connection to the physical land and sea as others may understand Country to be, rather connection to Country is a key part of identity and a sense of belonging (Dudgeon et al., 2020). The holistic way in which Aboriginal peoples view wellbeing supports the notion that spirituality, culture, relationships, ancestry, and connection to Country are inextricably linked and interconnected (Murrup-Stewart, 2021). As such, the experiences of young Aboriginal peoples in terms of their connection to Country has implications not only in

terms of fulfilling a cultural role, but also in terms of impact on relationships, mental health, belonging, self-concept, and overall wellbeing (Salmon et al., 2019).

In Waves 11 and 12, primary caregivers were asked about SY's identity, including if they believed SY had a connection to Country or place, and if the place was not where they currently live, how often they visit the Country or place they have a connection with. In earlier waves of *Footprints in Time*, primary caregivers identified connection to Country as important for both personality traits and identity to help their children grow up strong (Martin, 2017, Chap 5). In the development of the community-lead Mayi Kuwayu questionnaire to measure culture, Bourke et al. (2022) identified six overarching domains as important factors for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, which included "Connection to Country", "Family, kinship, and community", "Language", "Beliefs and knowledge", "Cultural expression and continuity", and "Self-determination and leadership".

In Wave 11, Primary caregivers (N=1,188) said that over seven in 10 SY (76%) had a connection to Country (ancestral). Where Primary caregivers reported that SY had connection to Country (n=544), of these SY, 46% were connected to the Country where they lived, and 30% had connection to Country in a place other than where they lived. Around one in four SY were reported as not having connection to Country. The percentage of SY having connection to Country where they live was substantially higher in remote and very remote Australia and lowest in major cities (**Figure 2.1**). In major cities, one in three SY were reported to have no connection to Country.
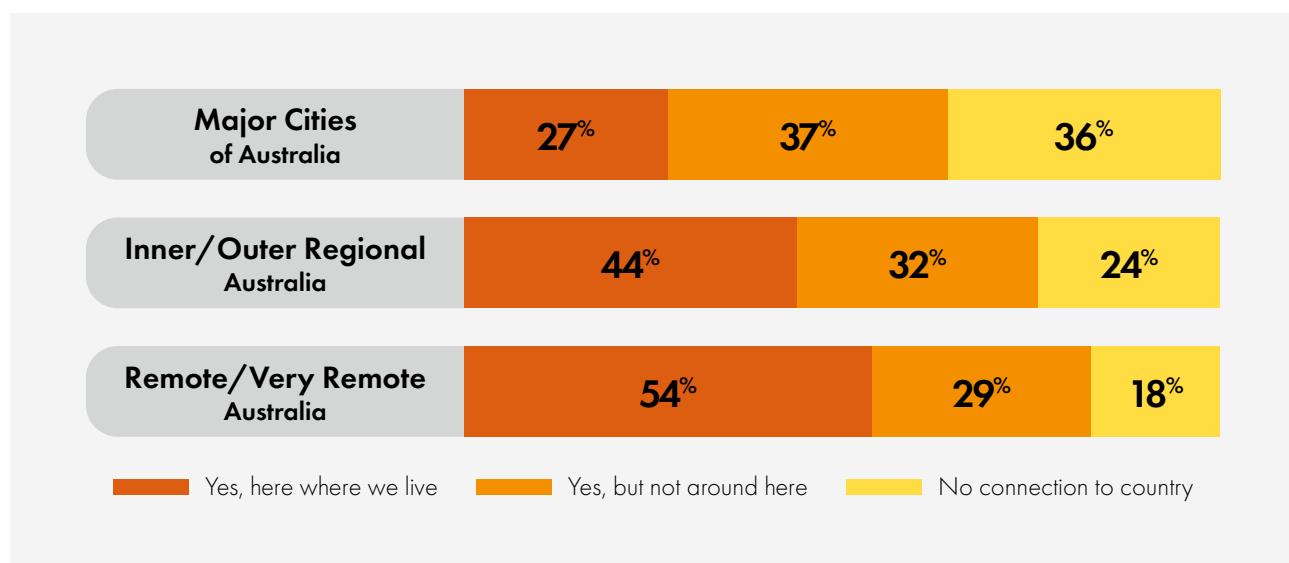

Figure 2.1 Connection to Country for Study Youth in relation to where they live as reported by primary caregivers in Wave 11, 2018 (N=1,188).

SY not currently living on Country they are connected with (n=352, **Figure 2.2**) reported very irregular or no visits to Country irrespective of geographical location. It is not clear from the Wave 11 data if this is because of choices being made by the family or if they would increase the number of visits with more opportunity to do so. No statistically significant differences were found between genders or *Footprints in Time* cohorts in relation to connection to Country. Evidence from previous research suggests the value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents place on connection to Country encourages children to visit Country as often as they can (Bourke et al., 2022; Martin, 2017).
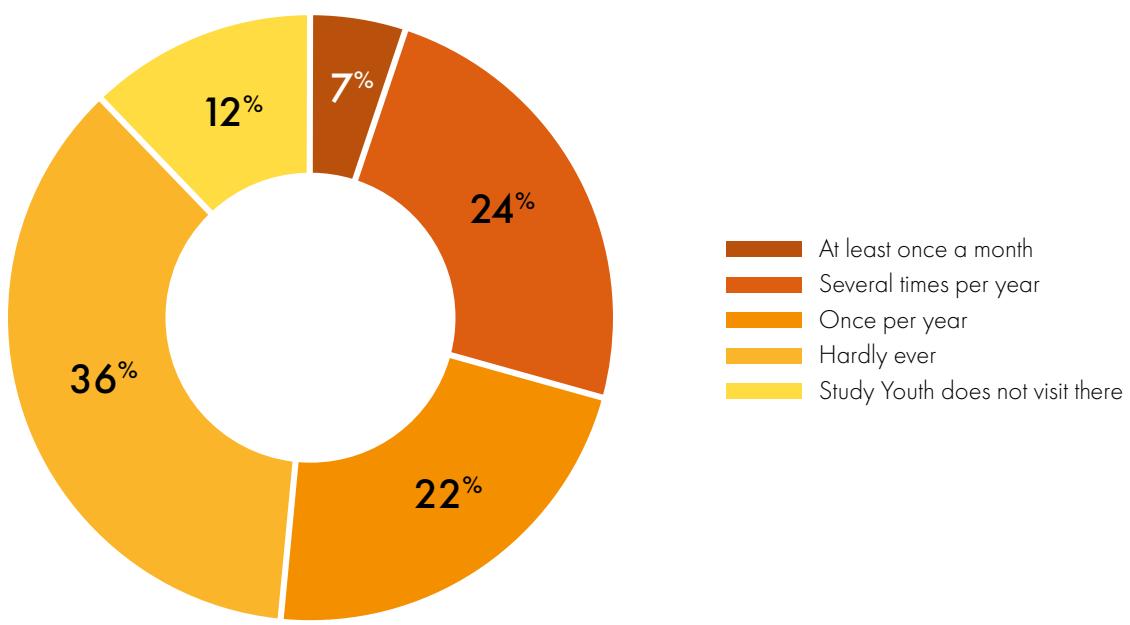

Figure 2.2 How often Study Youth visit Country if they do not currently live on Country in Wave 11, 2018 (n=352).

Strong relationships

Child rearing approaches that are central to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture bring values of interconnection, unity and community in contrast to individualistic approaches favoured by many Western cultures (Lohoar et al., 2014). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities recognise the benefits of supporting their children and young people to grow up strong (Prehn et al., 2021).

In Wave 11, SY reported strong relationships with their parents. Increasing remoteness and younger age tended to be related to stronger relationships across most aspects of relationships measured. Overall, the differences between cohorts and genders were small with SY rating both being understood by and trusting Mum and Dad.

> The resilience and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander approaches to family and kinship are evident in the endurance of these benefits across decades of forced disruption, intergenerational trauma and systemic barriers, and Western-centric policy (Dudgeon & Bray, 2019).

Relationship with Mum

71% Male **64%** Female

Study Youth believe that their Mum 'always' understands them

Most *Footprints in Time* SY said they trust their Mum 'always' or 'most of the time' (93%) and they **felt understood** by their Mum 'always' and 'most of the time' (90%). Almost nine in 10 SY felt they could go to their Mum if they had a problem. Spending time with their Mum was important to them, and eight in 10 felt their Mum spent time with them 'always' or 'most of the time'. The majority of SY felt they could talk with their Mum about how they felt (71%).

Study Youth will 'always' speak to their Mum about their feelings

56% Younger (B) Cohort **44%** Older (K) Cohort

Relationship with Dad

64% Male **54%** Female

Study Youth believe that their Dad 'always' understands them

SY said they had similar patterns in their relationships with their Dads, with most SY rating these strongly when asked if they **trust** their Dad 'always' or 'most of the time' (86%), feel understood (81%) and **can ask for help** (75%). Younger (B) cohort children (74%) were more likely to talk to their Dad about their feelings than Older (K) cohort children.

Study Youth will 'always' speak to their Dad about their feelings

42% Younger (B) Cohort **32%** Older (K) Cohort

Figure 2.3 Study Youth relationship strengths with Mum and Dad.

Positive childhood experiences for children and young people include feelings of safety (such as being able to talk to family or trusted adults about feelings, having family support when things are difficult, having other adults who care) and feelings of belonging to community (through community events and traditions, belonging at school, support from friends). Research has shown that more "doses" of positive childhood experiences a child or young person leads to a higher level of resilience and good mental health in adulthood (Bethell et al., 2019).

Recent research has found that protective factors that can help support the development of resilience in children and young people include the ability to talk to their parents about concerns that they have and feel supported by their family and other trusted adults (Bethell et al., 2019). In contrast to earlier research that took a focus on adverse experiences of children and young people and how this shaped concerning behaviours, more recent research has investigated how positive experiences can have a mediating effect on adverse experiences (Bethell et al., 2019). During adolescence it is likely children will still seek out a parent (or a trusted adult) for support, especially during times of high stress (Allen, 2016). The data from *Footprints in Time* reflects this in the high proportion of SY who feel they can trust and be understood by their Mum and Dad. At the beginning of the SY survey each SY participant is asked if it is okay if questions are asked later about their parents or the person/people who are like their parents. In Wave 11, 95% (n=1,135) of SY agreed to being asked questions about their Mum or the person who is like a Mum to them and 78% (n=934) agreed to being asked questions about their Dad or the person who is like a Dad to them.

In Waves 11 and 12, most SY felt they spent the right amount of time with Mum (73%) and Dad (61%). A small proportion of around 17% of SY felt they did not spend enough time with their Mum and 28% felt they did not spend enough time with their Dad. SY living with a lone parent or lone caregiver were more likely to report they felt a more distant relationship with Mum or Dad and more likely to feel they do not spend enough time with them (**Figure 2.4**).
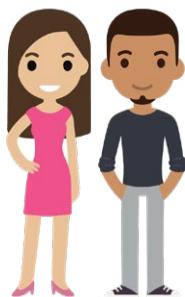
Parent with partner families

SY reported closer relationship with Mum and with Dad

SY reported spending more time, 'about right' and 'too much', with Mum and Dad

Lone parent families

SY were more likely to report more distant relationships with Mum and Dad

SY were less likely to report spending 'about right' or 'too much' time with Mum and Dad

Figure 2.4 Differences in Study Youth reports of closeness with Mum and Dad by those living with Parent with partner families and Lone parent families.

There were some differences by location with SY in remote and very remote areas, where one in five SY said they spend too much time with Mum or Dad (**Figure 2.5**). Just over half of those living in remote and very remote areas felt they spent about the right amount of time with Dad. As noted earlier in this chapter, being able to talk to adults to ask for support can be beneficial for adolescents (Allen, 2016; Bethell et al., 2019). SY acknowledging that the time they were spending with Mum and Dad is 'about right' may indicate these relationships are supporting them. Future research focused on this could utilise *Footprints in Time* data to explore what these relationships or an absence of them mean for youth.

Wave 11 - Mum spends enough time with Study Youth (n=964)

	Not enough	About right	Too much
Major Cities of Australia	14%	80%	6%
Inner/Outer Regional Australia	19%	73%	8%
Remote/Very Remote Australia	16%	63%	21%
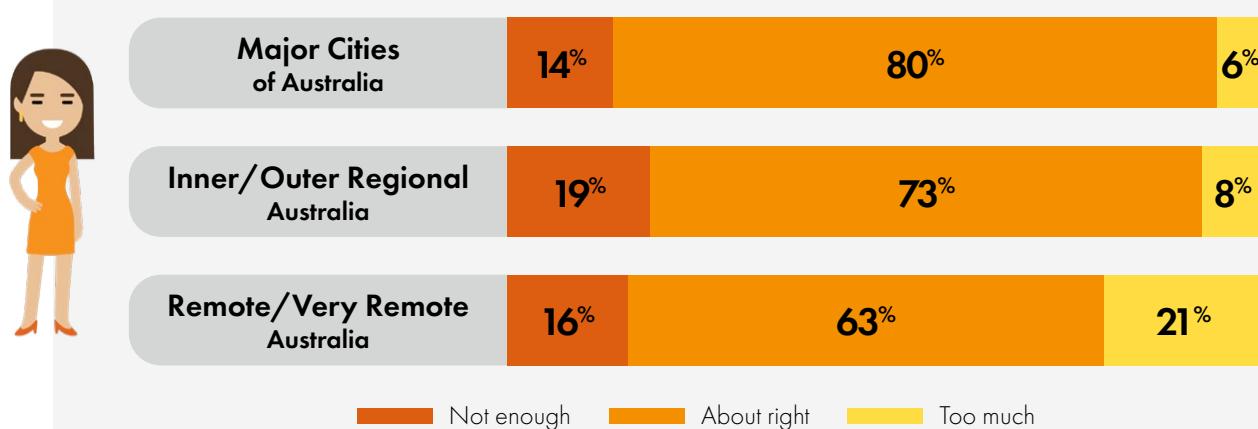
Wave 11 - Dad spends enough time with Study Youth (n=789)

|	Not enough	About right	Too much
Major Cities of Australia	25%	69%	6%
Inner/Outer Regional Australia	31%	61%	8%
Remote/Very Remote Australia	25%	53%	22%
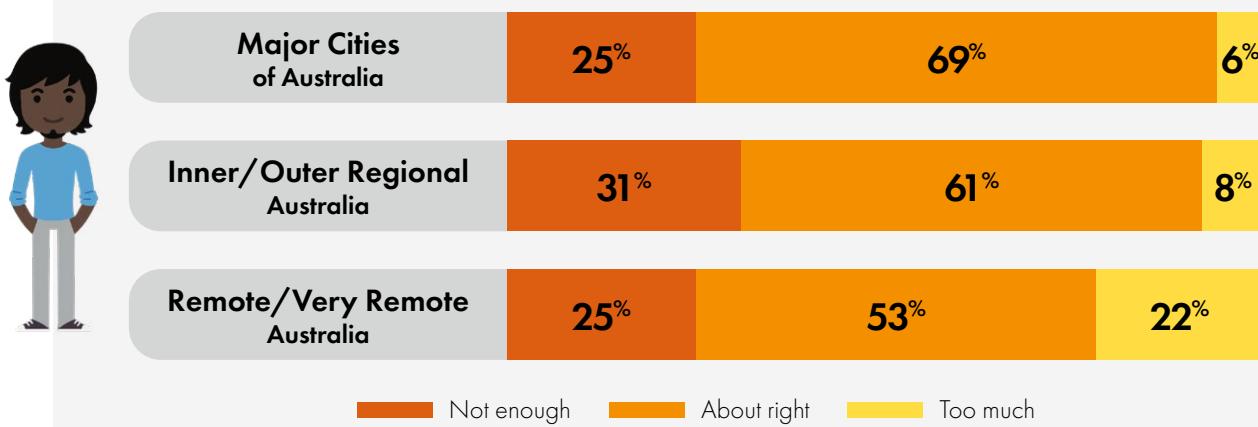
Figure 2.5 Percentage of Study Youth and how they feel about the amount of time spent with Mum or Dad by geographic area.

Family

In Wave 11, around 80% of SY reported that their family get along with each other 'always' and 'most of the time'. This was similar across all geographic locations, between genders and between *Footprints in Time* cohorts. When asked if they get along with brothers, sisters and cousins 77% answered 'always' or 'most of the time'. This was similar across geographic locations and highest in very remote Australia (83%). Walter (2017) describes the closeness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families as 'doing' family and contrasts this to Westernised concepts of the entity of a family as a unit to 'observe'. Being part of a family is the foundation of community and involves all interactions from everyday living to unique situations.

Friendships

In Wave 11, SY reported a diversity of friendships with a mix of boys and girls (77%), as well as a mix of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous friends (71%). Around one in four males had all male friends and just under one in five female SY females had all female friends.

A majority of SY living in very remote areas reported having 'some' or 'all' Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander friends and although this differed in major cities, 78% of SY living in major cities still reported that 'some' or 'all' of their friends were Indigenous. Importantly, diversity in friendships supports youth to develop an understanding of others and difference in lived experiences. This can support youth to grow their empathy. Connections with friends are also important for youth wellbeing during early adolescence. It has been noted that as youth become older they appear to be more likely to socialise more with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander friends as a preference, particularly during school sport (Kickett-Tucker, 2009). Data from Waves 13 and 15 may provide an opportunity to explore the extent to which this is consistent with the experiences of *Footprints in Time* SY.

> Connection to kin and community provides strong cultural identity guidance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families (Kickett-Tucker, 2009). Socialising with friends, including both those who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and those who are non-Indigenous, is valued by children and young people for the role it plays in forming their cultural identity (Kickett-Tucker, 2009).

Quality relationships

Exploring the relationship between the quality of children's relationships with their parents and siblings and wellbeing, demonstrated positive associations between relationship quality and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) Total Difficulty Scores (i.e., lower scores with more favourably rated relationships (**Figure 2.6**). Previous waves of *Footprints in Time* results have shown immediate loving support from trusted family members is an important factor in building and enhancing resilience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people (Lovett, 2017). The findings from the exploration of Waves 11 and 12, show that continuing strengths in relationships for SY continue to be related to higher wellbeing.

Stronger relationship ratings with parents and siblings

Higher wellbeing

(Lower SDQ Total Difficulties Scores) i.e., fewer emotional problems, conduct problems, hyperactivity and peer problems
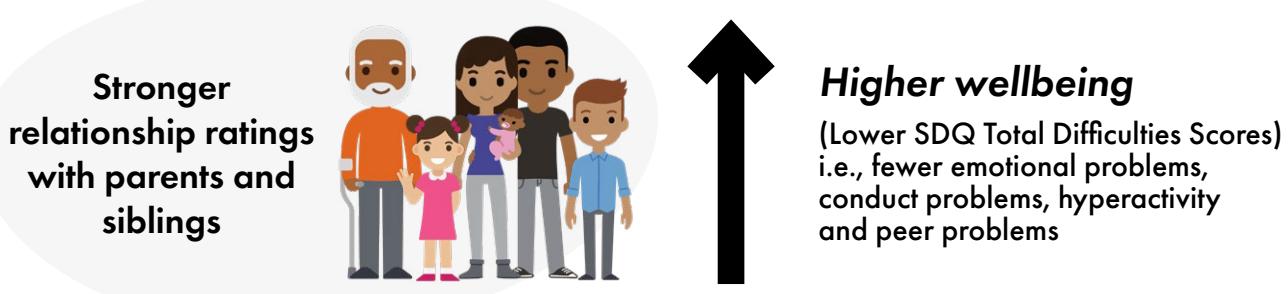
Figure 2.6 Strength of relationships with close family and relationship to SDQ Total Difficulties Score. (N=486).

Important relationships for SY were similarly patterned across geographies, ages and genders. To explore the closeness of relationships with important people in the lives of SY, the online self-completed component of SY surveys included a relationship ring question. SY were presented with a circle image containing six rings where SY (indicated by "me") were in the centre and the names of other people are located around the outer of the six circles. SY were instructed to indicate how close they felt to a person by moving the icon of the person into the circle. In Wave 12, SY tended to report feeling closest to their Mum, followed by Dad, sister and brother, and grandmother. Friends, grandfather, cousins, pets, aunties and uncles were rated fairly closely with some SY now also including girlfriends and boyfriends in their network. Previous research investigating attachment during adolescence has shown that mothers are more likely to remain the most important individual during the transition from childhood, through adolescence and into adulthood (Rosenthal & Kobak, 2010). Adolescence is also the period of time where peers and others (such as romantic friendships) become more important (Allen, 2016). **Figure 2.7** highlights this closeness for *Footprints in Time* SY, the breadth of people in their lives, and the emergence of different types of relationships at this age.
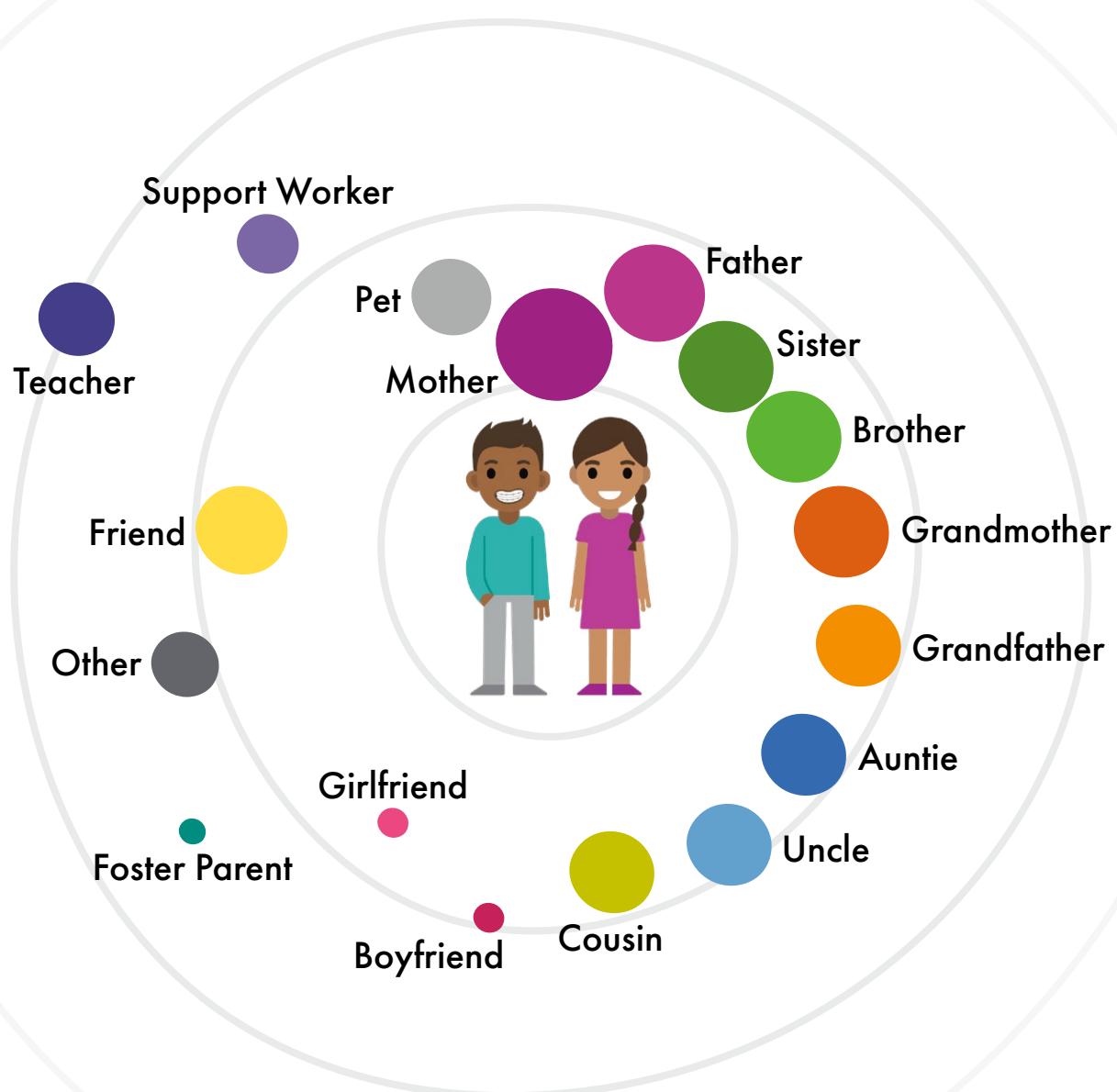

Figure 2.7 People in Study Youth's life rated by closeness
(closer to centre = higher rated closeness; Size of dot indicates proportion of youth who selected person).

Youth developing and maintaining connection with Country and positive relationships

The results suggest connection to Country is important to Primary caregivers and they are facilitating this, reporting that their child visits Country several times a year. SY in early adolescence have indicated they mostly learn about culture from their Mum, Dad and Grandmother, they also included their teacher (see chapter 3). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities recognise the benefits of family and community support in growing their children and young people up strong (Martin, 2017). They value strong relationships and maintaining those relationships. In consultations, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participants shared that building connection to Country could be supported by providing children and youth opportunities to learn from important people in their lives about who their mob is and where they are from (see **Appendix C**). Families and communities could be supported to facilitate connection to Country and culture by being afforded flexibility at work and school.

Key findings and recommendations

Families are diverse, each with individual strengths and support needs.

Relationships with family and friends are important. Positive relationships can encourage learning, cultural identity and building of resilience.

Parents recognise that connection to Country is important for their young people.

Services and work places need to be flexible to enable parents to spend more time. with family.

Communities and services can provide spaces to encourage families to spend time together.

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Chapter 3

CULTURAL IDENTITY,
CULTURAL IMPORTANCE,
AND WELLBEING

The Study Youth (SY) in 2018 and 2019 (Wave 11 and 12) of *Footprints in Time* are transitioning into adolescence, a time when young people's identity exploration is expanding beyond their familial attachments. This is a time where children explore their own identity and begin to differentiate it from the identity of others (Allen & Tan, 2018). For Indigenous peoples, culture is an important aspect of identity. This cultural identity is known to be important to how people feel about and see their place in the world (Martin, 2017). This chapter explores how SY in *Footprints in Time* view culture and how their cultural identity is forming at this stage of life, what is important to them, and how they learn about culture. Four questions related to culture emerged from consultations with Community and policy makers:

1. How does the importance of cultural identity vary for SY?

2. What aspects of cultural identity are important for SY and how does this vary by geographic remoteness?

3. How do SY learn culture?

4. How culturally aligned are schools to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students – specifically do teachers know any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages? Are the teachers Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander themselves?

Importance of cultural identity

Footprints in Time asked parents, caregivers and SY what being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander meant to them. Almost 70% of SY rated their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity as important and around one in four SY wanted to learn more about being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Indigeneity was important for the majority of respondents, with it being central to the identity of almost 60% of Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander parents and caregivers[1] ('Primary caregiver' respondents) and important to over 80% of all adult respondents (i.e., 'Primary caregiver' and 'Dad' respondents, see **Figure 3.1**).

	The most important thing (central to who you are)
Primary caregiver (n=997)	58% · 24% · 16% · 2%
Dad (n=309)	50% · 35% · 9% · 6%
Study Youth (n=423)	37% · 31% · 24% · 8%

Legend:
- The most important thing (central to who you are)
- Important, but not the only thing
- Something you don't know enough about and want to know more about
- Something you rarely think about
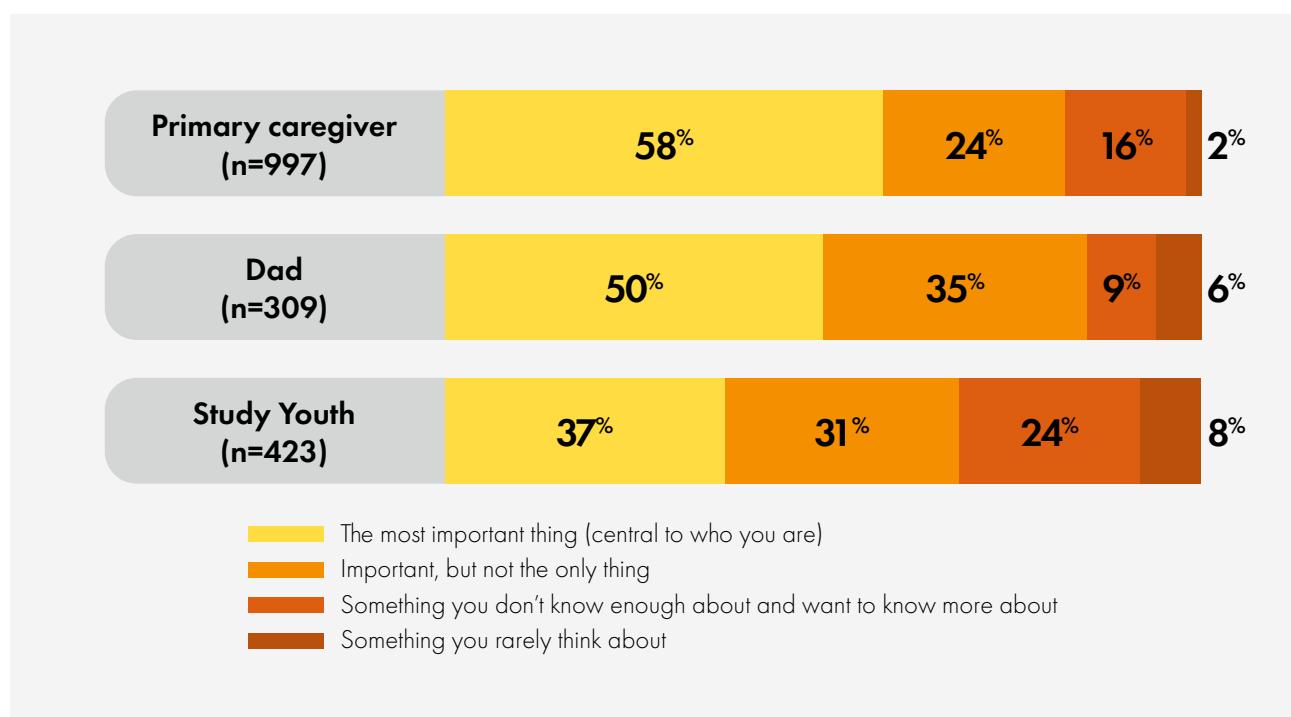
**Figure 3.1** What being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander means to *Footprints in Time* Study Youth and their parents/caregivers (Wave 11).

[1] Only Primary caregivers who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander were asked the questions related to cultural identity in Wave 11, 231 of the Parent 1 respondents were not Indigenous and so were not asked this question.

Most important aspects of culture

To understand how SY view Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture, they were asked to rate the importance of various aspects of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity. SY responses demonstrate the many different ways culture is experienced, with all aspects of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity rated highly. **Figure 3.2** shows the proportion of SY responding 'important' or 'extremely important' to aspects of culture. The most prominent aspects of culture that resonated with SY were: the 'Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander flag', 'being strong and deadly', 'your Country', 'knowing about your Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander family connections', 'Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander symbols, design and artwork', and 'your people, your mob'. Exploring the top six aspects provides a view of how SY most consistently connect with culture.

79% Knowing about your Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander family connections

DEADLY

86% Being strong and deadly

79% Your people, your mob

76% Knowing about your community connections

69% Having Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander friends

67% Knowing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stories

87% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags

82% Knowing about your Country

79% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander symbols, design and artwork

77% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander events

72% Learning from strong Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander role models

68% Knowing the language of your people

60% Bush food /medicine

Figure 3.2 Proportion of Study Youth responding 'important' or 'extremely important to me' for cultural aspects of being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (n=414-433).

Aspects of culture that resonated most strongly with SY demonstrate pride in their Indigeneity, and the importance of connections with kin and Country (with these connections rated as important by approximately 8 in 10 SY). SY responses are aligned with parent and caregiver views reported in previous research, that pride in their culture and sense of belonging will help children grow up strong (Colquhoun & Dockery, 2012).

To understand if there are differences in importance of cultural aspects relative to where SY are located, data were explored by remoteness area (RA; ABS, 2016). SY in very remote Australia tended to rate the importance of aspects of their Indigeneity more highly than those in major cities, inner and outer regional, and remote areas. The differences were small with all SY rating the top five aspects as 'important' or 'extremly important'. **Figure 3.3** shows the top five rated responses by geographical area.

Kinship and community connectedness featured prominently for SY across regions in Australia. This connection between kinship and cultural identity has been described as essential to understanding culture (Bishop et al., 2006), with culture intricately linked to the sense of community and social structure of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Findings here reflect the literature, that describe family and kinship as central to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies, enabling the maintenance of relationships and interconnectedness (Gee et al., 2014).

Demonstrating the flag's continued importance to the next generation, *Footprints in Time* SY identified the Aborignal and/or Torres Strait Islander flags as highly important to their sense of cultural identity (**Figure 3.2**). The Aboriginal flag is a symbol of national identity and unity (Korff, 2022). The Torres Strait Islander flag represents the people, environment and culture of the Torres Strait Islander peoples (AIATSIS, n.d.). Together the flags represent sovereignty and the self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The term 'being strong and deadly' was the second highest rated aspect of culture identified by SY. For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth, the word 'deadly' means something is 'awesome' or 'great' (Evolves, n.d.). Echoing the significance of sovereignty and acknowledging the strengths associated with pride in self and culture, it is used in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to exemplify pride and excellence (Victoria State Government, n.d.).
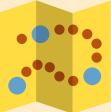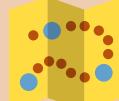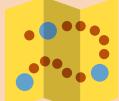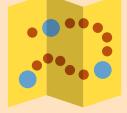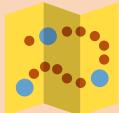
	Major Cities	Inner Regional	Outer Regional	Remote	Very Remote
1st	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Flags	DEADLY — Being strong & deadly	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Flags	DEADLY — Being strong & deadly	Having Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander friends
2nd	DEADLY — Being strong & deadly	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Flags	DEADLY — Being strong & deadly	Knowing about your Country	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Flags
3rd	Knowing about your Country	Knowing about your Country	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander symbols, design & artwork	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander family connections	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander symbols, design & artwork
4th	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander family connections	Community connections	Knowing about your Country	MY MOB — Your people, your mob	MY MOB — Your people, your mob
5th	Community connections	Knowing about your Country	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander family connections	Having Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander friends	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander family connections

Figure 3.3 Top five rated cultural aspects by remoteness area (n=407-433).

Parents of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth believe cultural identity is strongly related to their children growing up strong (Martin, 2017). Previous research has identified the positive benefits of cultural engagement and cultural identification for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, more recent research by Dockery (2020) noted this has not always been translated into policy. It was suggested by the researchers that in order to address disadvantages faced by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, policy could take into account these beneficial associations and position Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture as a key element to enhancing wellbeing. This would include taking into account geographical differences and the need for policy to address this.

Peacock and Guerzoni (2022) noted positive outcomes in maturation, educational achievement and wellbeing (both emotional and physical) are found for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth who are connected to and secure in their Indigeneity. This positive relationship between cultural development and development in other domains, lends support to educational approaches for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people that focus on holistic development. Seeking to support not only maturation, learning and wellbeing, but the formation and nurturing of cultural identity. This is reflected in parental aspirations for their youth, and the value families place on learning about culture and connecting to community.

In Wave 11 and 12, Dads were asked to talk about what they wanted others to know about being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The comments by 188 Dads across both waves (some Dads may have provided comments in both waves) were thematically analysed by the researchers and a cultural advisor, several key themes emerged. The themes that emerged from Dads' responses highlight the importance *Footprints in Time* families placed on culture, the strengths they felt were associated with cultural connection, and the desire to share and grow understanding of what it is to be Indigenous.

"What do you want other people to know about what it means to be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander? (Dad survey)"

"Be very proud of your culture, don't be embarrassed about your culture"

"Being an Aboriginal person is being proud of our culture and people and where they're going"

"I am very proud of my heritage and my Elders, people should have more respect and try to understand our culture and values"

"I'm a proud member of one of the oldest and exclusive culturally diverse communities that are forging ahead in leaps and bounds"

"That we are normal people living in a diverse society. That we have cultural beliefs that are unique to only our culture. That we should be treated as equals"

Learning about culture

When asked how they learn about culture, SY responses highlighted the importance of kin but also the role educators play. In Wave 11, one in three SY said they learned about being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander from their mothers (**Figure 3.4**) and around one in four from their fathers and their grandmothers. Teachers were the second most identfed group, with more than one in four SY reporting learning about culture from their teacher.

Mum	36.8%
Teacher or Carer	27.7%
Dad	26.4%
Grandmother	24.1%
Elders	21.5%
Auntie	13.9%
Grandfather	13.3%
Uncle	12.2%
Cousin	5.8%
Friend	4.3%
Brother	4.0%
Sister	3.6%
Stepmother/Foster Mother	0.6%
Stepfather/Foster Father	0.5%
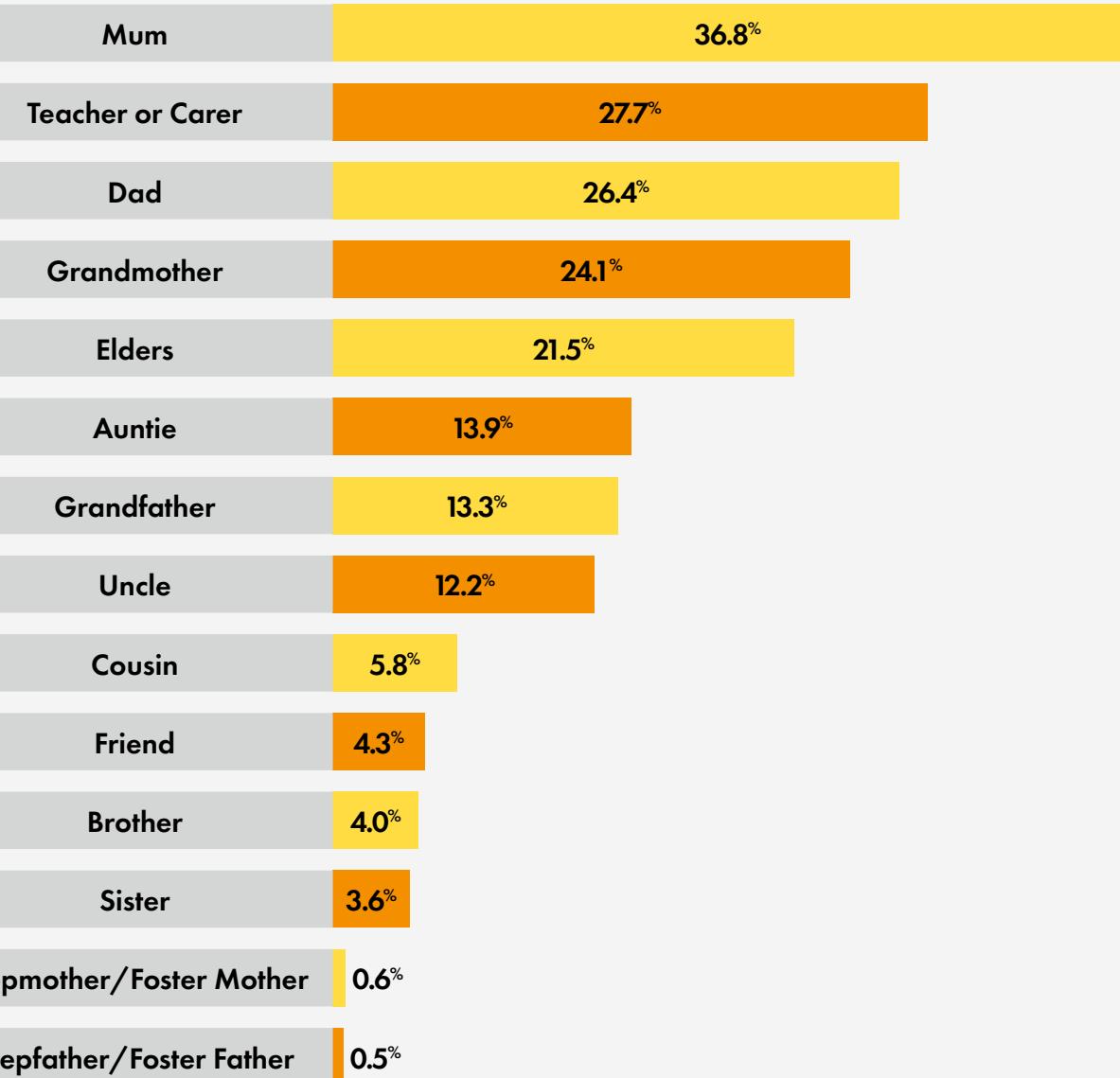
Figure 3.4 From whom do Study Youth learn culture (%, n=1,143).

In an analysis of earlier waves of the *Footprints in Time* data, Prehn, Guerzoni and Peacock (2021) showed that according to participants, learning about culture, family and identity are components that help children grow up strong. Martin (2017) highlights the most formative contexts in which children and young people learn are with their Primary caregiver who are the first key sources of values, beliefs and knowledge. For SY, who are now adolescents or transitioning to adolescence, the responses suggest the primary people in their lives, potentially the people they spend the most time with, are where they continue to learn about culture and identity.

Language is also an important component of learning about culture. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's speech and language competence is promoted through family and community experiences, including book reading and storytelling (McLeod & Verdon, 2015). Under article 13 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples it is stated that Indigenous peoples have a right to strengthen and use first languages to teach language, culture, tradition and histories; and to use their own names for places, people and communities (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010).

Teachers of *Footprints in Time* students were asked if they identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. For comparison, all responses from teachers across Wave 11 and 12 were combined and split into primary school (preschool to Year 6) and high school (Year 7 to Year 12)[2]. Across both waves 7% (n=24) of teachers in primary school and 4% (n=15) of those in high school identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (**Figure 3.5**). The results suggest the proportion of teachers in major cities and regional areas who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander was similar between Wave 11 and 12.

7%
of **Primary School** teachers identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

4%
of **High School** teachers identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
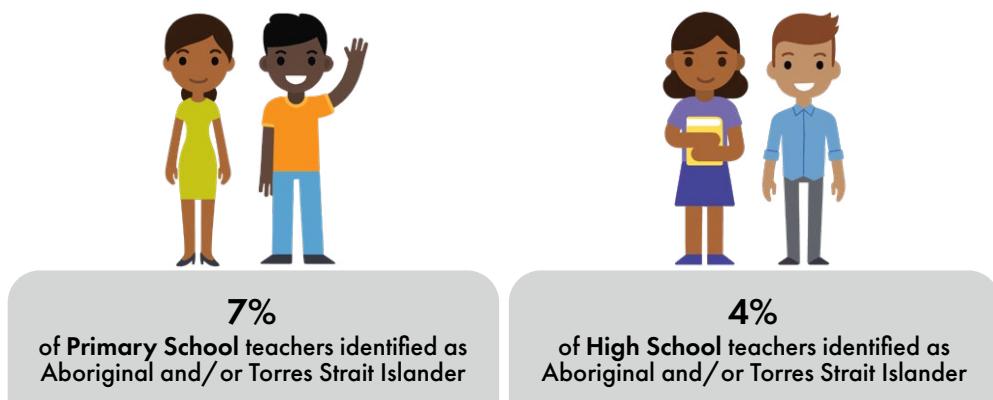
Figure 3.5 Proportion of responding teachers in Primary School and High School in Wave 11 and 12 (combined) who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

In comparison to previous waves, in Wave 11 and 12 fewer responding teachers identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in remote and very remote areas. Between Wave 11 and 12, half of the SY in the birth cohort transitioned to High School, making it difficult to compare these findings over time and across the different contexts in Primary Schools and High Schools. A recent report exploring the journey of *Footprints in Time* SY through Primary School (Waves 1 through to 12) found that 12% of the responding teachers identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in preschool (the year prior to school) and was lowest in Year three (4%, when children were aged approximately 8 years old) (Rogers et al., 2023).

Teachers were also asked to identify if they speak, read or write in any Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander languages (**Figure 3.6**). In major cities fewer than 5% of the teachers surveyed spoke, read or wrote in an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language. In the *Footprints in*

Very few teachers speak, read and write an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language

• • • • • •

Around 1 in 3 speak a few words in very remote areas

[2] In South Australia, Primary Schools include Year 7 students, the small number of students who are in Year 7 in South Australia (n=21) in Wave 11 and 12 have been included in the High School analysis.

Time study, more teachers located in remote and very remote areas reported speaking, reading or writing in an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language, despite a decrease in the proportion of teachers identifying themselves as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Overall, in Wave 11 approximately one in four teachers had some language skills (e.g., speak a few words) and this increased to one in three at Wave 12. A recent report by Rogers et al. (2023) recommended that there be a focus on improving equitable access to multilingual teachers, especially in remote areas of Australia.

In 2019 (Wave 12)

Major Cities of Australia — Less than **5%** of responding teachers **speak a few words**

Inner/Outer Regional Australia — Less than **3% speak, read and write**
Less than **10% speak a few words**

Remote/Very Remote Australia — Less than **7% speak, read and write**
Less than **30% speak a few words**
Majority do not speak, read or write an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language
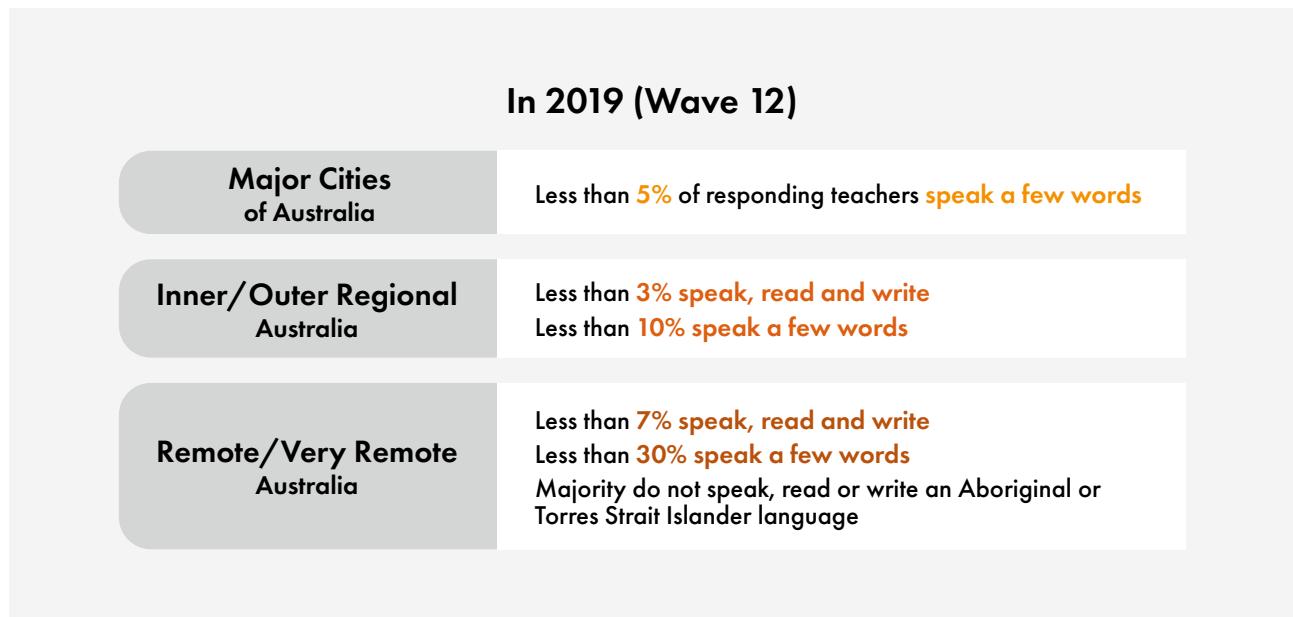
Figure 3.6 Proportion of teachers who responded to the teacher survey that in 2019 they could speak, read or write in an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language (n= 581, Wave 12).

Parents have reported that growing up strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people happens through learning in a number of ways. Emphasis has been put on children and young people learning in schools, learning about traditional culture, and learning about the support they can get from the communities to which they belong. (Colquhoun & Dockery, 2012). Importantly, when all types of learning are integrated into schooling this has benefits for engagement in learning and success at school. Learning about culture and community in schools has been found to be supported by specialist educators (e.g., Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education staff). Research has reported a positive impact for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children when these specialist educators are present throughout the school day or some of the time (Peacock & Prehn, 2021). The finding that one in four SY reported that they learned about culture from their teachers highlights the importance of teachers having knowledge and skills to support this learning. Classrooms and schools that support cultural learning are culturally safe and have educators who are trained in cultural awareness and competence. From Wave 14 onwards *Footprints in Time* includes an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Worker survey, which will collect additional information on other roles in schools supporting cultural learning.

Past research has found that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people with a strong sense of cultural identity within their classroom and school are more likely to want to complete further education (Peacock & Guerzoni, 2022). To achieve this within schools, it is critical that the school system values and prioritises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educator recruitment and retention.

Supporting youth to develop and maintain connection to culture

The experiences of SY in Wave 11 and 12 provide indications of how forming and maintaining cultural identity can support improved wellbeing for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth. Symbols of unity and positive acknowledgements of success are extremely important to SY, across all geographic areas of Australia. Kinship, Country, pride in where they come from and remaining connected are very important to the *Footprints in Time* families. The community members, policy representatives and academics who contributed to the online consultation discussions in early 2023 agreed the flag and being "deadly" show a sense of pride and sense of self and belonging. They identified this is a way of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples saying, "This is me" and "I am proud".

The *Footprints in Time* Dads reflected on the strengths associated with connecting to culture for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families. They said that it is important for everyone to share what it means to be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander to help to grow understanding. Knowing about where they come from, family and kinship, encourages supportive relationships and connectedness (Gee et al., 2014).

At school, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people are often not able to express who their mob are. This presents an opportunity to invite their special person (parent, family, grandparent) to visit and walk alongside them, their peers and teachers, to help them understand where they come from and "who their mob are". Contributors to consultations suggested there was a real need to get children and young people excited to learn about who they are, and this might be achieved by including people they feel connected with to be part of their learning at school. The *Footprints in Time* families and community members felt educators should be encouraged to step outside of their current system-focused way of thinking and encourage deeper understanding and learning for all by walking with the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander members of their school communities to encourage learning and being excited about knowing where they come from.

To improve upon current knowledge of culture and language, it will be necessary to ensure that educators and support staff have access to high quality resources and training. Recent initiatives have funded the development of resources to improve teacher capability and confidence in fostering cultural learning and teaching Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children (see resources by: Australian Academy of Science, Australians Together and Crackerjack Education). Promotion of the resources can help grow awareness and increase uptake of cultural learning by the teaching workforce in Australia. In addition to improving workforce capacity, increasing the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workforce can support students to build connectedness to school (Peacock & Prehn, 2021).

Key findings and recommendations

- Study Youth are proud of where they come from and identify with symbols of unity.

- Parents of Study Youth want to share what it means to be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

- Sharing knowledge and improving understanding of culture, supports relationships and connectedness.

- Including important people in Study Youth's life at school can help them to understand where they come from and get them excited about learning more.

- Schools and education systems should be ensuring their staff have the appropriate knowledge and skills to support learning about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples ways of being and encouraging community relationships to support this learning through collaboration.

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Chapter 4

RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION,
WELLBEING, AND HEALTH

As noted by Thurber et al. (2022) it can be difficult for self-report surveys to capture all types of racism and discrimination. They also note only experiences that the participants are aware of may be captured and this can impact on the overall reporting of racism and discrimination (Thurber et al., 2022). It is important to keep this in mind when exploring the results from Waves 11 and 12 of the *Footprints in Time* data.

Racism and discrimination are a significant social determinant of mental health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people (Cave, 2019). Exposure to racism has been shown to directly harm health, wellbeing, and quality of life (Guo et al., 2021; Thurber et al., 2022). Presently, racism is a well-documented challenge facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. Thus, initiatives seeking to improve the wellbeing of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth must be informed about the ways in which youth and their families experience racism and how this impacts their wellbeing.

Racism is not only experienced at a personal level but also at a macro (societal) level. In social discourse (politics, news, television, etc.), messaging can perpetuate stereotypes and contribute to the acceptance of the status quo - in this instance individual's racist attitudes and treatment of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. For instance, Mellor (2003) described the complicated and diverse construct of racism that is perpetuated by the media, where Australia's history of colonisation, marked by violence and oppression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, is too often misrepresented.

This chapter explores how Study Youth (SY) and the Dads of SY in *Footprints in Time* viewed racism and discrimination, how and where it was experienced, the impact it has on them and their resilience in the face of racism. The following questions that emerged from consultations with Community and policy makers were explored:

1. How frequently were *Footprints in Time* participants experiencing racism?

2. In what ways were they experiencing racism and in which contexts?

3. Were SY perceiving racism and discrimination in the media?

4. Was exposure to fewer incidences of racism associated with better indications of mental health and wellbeing for SY?

5. Had SY been exposed to racist bullying?

6. Did SY perceive teachers to engage in behaviours that are racist or discriminatory?

7. How did the experience of racist bullying relate to SY wellbeing and how is earlier bullying related to later wellbeing?

In earlier investigations using the *Footprints in Time* data (Bodkin-Andrews, 2017a) it was suggested that the earlier items, used prior to Wave 10, to explore experiences of racism may not be clear enough to fully understand the extent of undisguised racism and frequency of experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Bodkin-Andrews (2017a) noted the *Footprints in Time* questions regarding racism were not always clear in naming or describing racism, such as asking specifically about rude physical gestures or distinct name calling. A revision of the items included in the *Footprints in Time* surveys through a working group led by Professor Bodkin-Andrews refined the questions and the new items were included from Wave 10 (2017a). Previous research has suggested that the everyday occurrence of racism can come from many different sources impacting every part of the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families (Mellor, 2003; Bodkin-Andrews et al., 2017b).

Experiences of racism and discrimination

Footprints in Time Dads (who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the survey) were asked in Waves 10, 11 and 12 (2017 to 2019) about their personal experiences of racism and the intensity of those experiences.

Overall, 77% of Dads reported experiencing at least one type of experience of racism between 2017 and 2019, with 23% noting they had 'never' had an experience of any of the items. **Figure 4.1** highlights the prevalence of each type of experience of racism. In exploring this data, it is important to note that racism takes many forms and is shaped by the contexts in which people experience it. The Dads survey included eight items to explore how often Dads experienced racism (**Figure 4.1**).

	Always/Most of the time/Fair bit	Little bit/Not much	Never
Did people try to pick fights with you because you're Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?	4%	18%	78%
Were you told that you're not Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?	5%	12%	83%
Were you told you get all this free stuff because you're Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?	13%	24%	63%
Were you stared at rudely because you're Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?	11%	25%	64%
Were you ignored by people because you're Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?	10%	26%	64%
Did some Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people say you don't look Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?	6%	19%	75%
Were you told that you're too sensitive (too worried) about racism?	9%	14%	77%
Did you see people being treated unfairly simply because they are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?	34%	32%	34%

Figure 4.1 Personal experiences of racism in the previous 12 months, as reported by Dads of Study Youth who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (combined first response from Dad in any of Waves 10, 11 or 12; N=307-314).

Note: The data was populated by the first response each Dad provided across Wave 10, 11 or 12. This creates a view of experiences of racism over three years.

A racism experience score was developed to explore the extent to which experiences of racism were related to wellbeing. Combined data from Waves 10, 11 and 12 were explored using factor analysis to identify relationships between the items about personal experiences of racism asked in the Dad survey. Two factors were identified. The first factor included four items related to being ignored, stared at, having fights picked with them, and being treated unfairly (**Figure 4.2**). This factor can be described as personal discriminatory and confrontational experiences of racism.

The second factor included two items, these were related to being "told you don't look Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander" and being "told you are not Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander". (**Figure 4.2**). This factor can be described as denying the personal identity of Dad as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

	Personal experiences of racism **Dads were asked - In the last 12 months how often…?**
FACTOR 1 **Discriminatory & confrontational experiences of racism**	• Did people try to pick fights with you because you're Aboriginal and/or a Torres Strait Islander • Were you stared at rudely because you're Aboriginal and/or a Torres Strait Islander • Were you ignored by people because you're Aboriginal and/or a Torres Strait Islander • Did you see people being treated unfairly simply because they are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
FACTOR 2 **Denial of personal identity as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander**	• Were you told that you're not Aboriginal and/or a Torres Strait Islander • Did some Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people say you don't look Aboriginal and/or a Torres Strait Islander

Figure 4.2 Items asked of the Dads in Waves 10, 11 and 12 related to the two factor model of experiences of personal racism.

Dads were asked:
When you come into contact with racism, discrimination or prejudice, how do you usually react?

"Make a joke"

"Try to correct and educate the person"

"Depends on the situation"

"Depends on how I'm feeling at the time, if I'm by myself I will say something, but if my children are with me I would probably shrug it off — but my kids would go off"

"It depends on the situation, sometimes I'd make a point of correcting, other times I'd assess the situation and just walk away if I know that no matter what I say it won't help the situation"

Dads were asked how they deal with their experiences of racism. Their answers conveyed that how people cope in the face of racism depends on both the situation and how they are feeling. Dads said they responded in both peaceful and assertive ways. This included removing themselves from the situation (such as ignoring or walking away) or taking the opportunity to educate the other person or challenge the racism. The ways in which Dads show resilience and coping strategies in the face of racism are similar to the findings of Uink et al. (2022), who noted Indigenous athletes in Canada often employ similar strategies. While these findings highlight the courage people display in their interactions and the immediate impact an experience has on a person, they do not provide insight into how people cope with repeated and chronic exposures to racism.

Supportive coping strategies, that can be used when faced with racism, have been found to be most effective when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are able to seek support from a strong kinship network and have a strong sense of cultural identity (Bodkin-Andrews & Craven, 2013).

How and where racism is experienced

Understanding the contexts in which people experience different forms of racism is important for improving the cultural safety of environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. Dads who reported having experienced or having seen others experiencing racism were asked to identify where this had occurred. **Figure 4.3** presents the prevalence of the types of experiences of racism across four environments; services, public places, police or security, and work. The pattern of findings highlights that public places and services are common places for people to experience discriminatory or confrontational racism. In contrast, forms of racism that deny a person's Aboriginality were most commonly experienced in workplaces. These findings suggest that efforts to reduce racism may require nuance to target the ways in which racism is manifested.

	At services	In public places	By police or security	At work
People picked fights with Dad (n=60)	22%	47%	18%	28%
Dad told that are not Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (n=50)	20%	30%	16%	44%
Dad told they get free stuff (n=104)	24%	34%	8%	40%
Dad was stared at rudely (n=96)	59%	61%	24%	24%
Dad was ignored by people (n=101)	74%	41%	14%	20%
Dad told they don't look Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (n=66)	26%	41%	*	41%
Dad told they are too sensitive about racism (n=62)	34%	42%	*	42%
Dad saw others being treated unfairly (n=183)	55%	57%	42%	27%

Figure 4.3 Where Dads had experienced or observed racism and discrimination in Wave 11 (multiple responses allowed).

Note: * Proportion of sample too small for reporting (<5 respondents).

Racism and discrimination in media

In *Footprints in Time*, the experience of racism at the macro level was explored for Dads who responded in in one of Waves 10, 11 or 12 (combined). Dads were asked about their thoughts on how Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are represented in social discourse (social media, politics and the news). Macro experiences of racism were more commonly reported than interpersonal experiences of racism. Overall, 95% of Dads reported experiencing at least one type of experience of racism, with 5% noting they had 'never' had an experience of any of the items. Over half of the Dads felt that history is not represented truthfully in the media, politicians do not care about important issues and social media allows 'people to say horrible things' ('always' or 'most of the time'; **Figure 4.4**). Further to the way Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented, almost half of the Dads felt that too many politicians blamed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for everything and there continued to be a focus on bad news stories in the media (**Figure 4.4**). The lived experience of societal racism by *Footprints in Time* Dads, highlights the work that needs to be done to shift the narrative in the media, politics and social media. Shifting the Australian narrative must be a focus alongside efforts to educate people about interpersonal experiences of racism. Without a societal shift in the way we think and talk about racism, efforts to improve interpersonal experiences will be undermined by the perpetuation of current racist narratives.
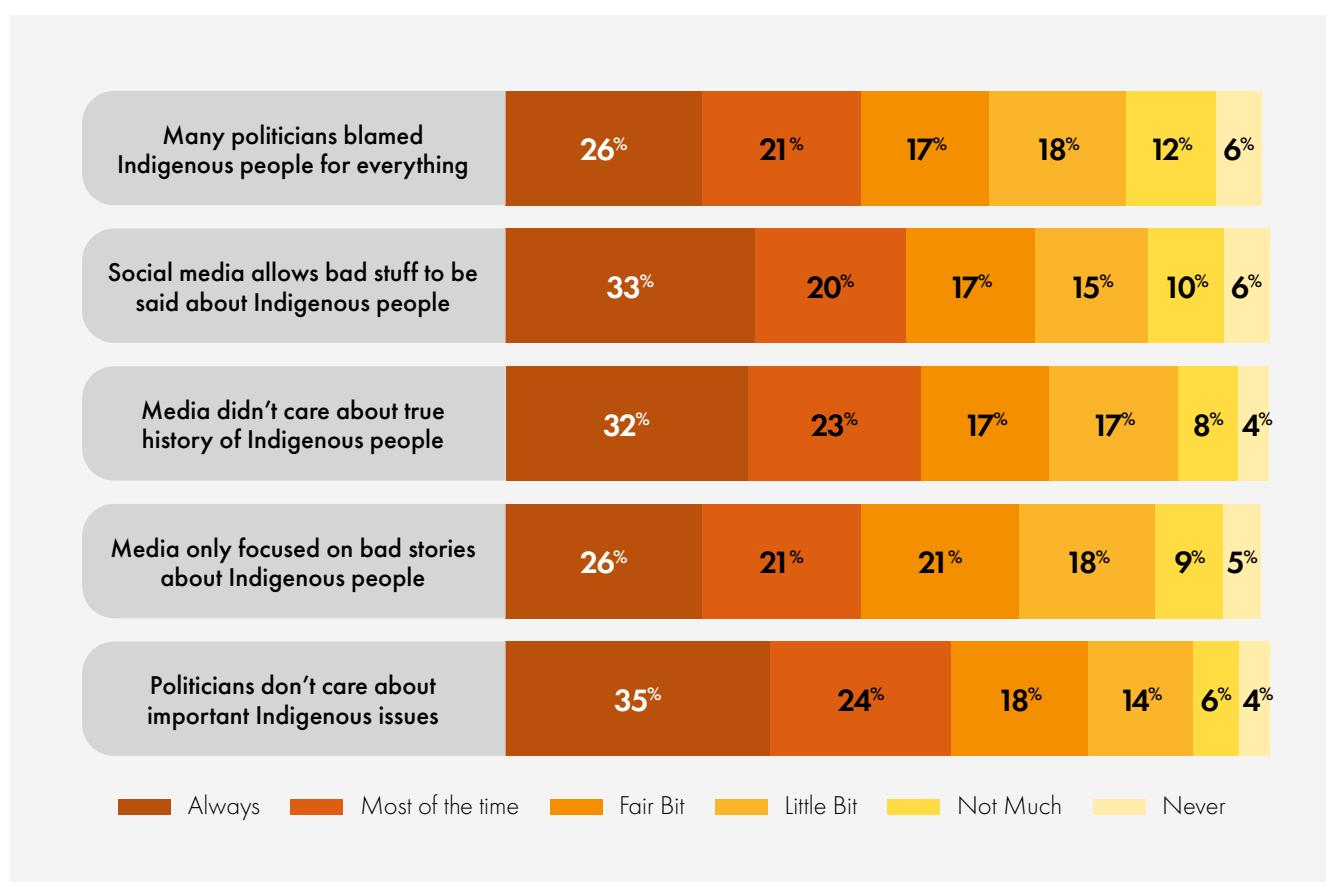
Figure 4.4 Dad's responses to how Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are talked about in the news and on social media (combined first response from Dad in any of Waves 10, 11 or 12; N=287-305).

Note. The data was populated by the first response each Dad provided across Waves 10, 11 and 12.
This creates a view of experiences of racism over three years.

Incidences of racism and relationship to Study Youth health and wellbeing

To contribute to the understanding of the relationship between experiences of racism and wellbeing, *Footprints in Time* data about experiences of racism in Wave 10 SY were explored alongside Wave 10 and 12 Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) Total Difficulties scores.

The results suggested that more frequent experiences of racism in 2017 (Wave 10) were significantly related to higher SDQ Total Difficulties scores in both Waves 10 and 12 (2019, **Figure 4.5**). This indicated a close relationship between poorer wellbeing and more frequent experiences of racism. This finding adds to the body of work that has demonstrated the ongoing negative impact that racism has on mental health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (Cave, 2019).

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire about 2-17 year olds. It exists in several versions to meet the needs of researchers, clinicians and educationalists. Four categories are combined to generate a SDQ Total Difficulties score, they are emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention and peer relationship problems. A lower score is indicative of less difficulties.

More experiences of racism (Wave 10)

Higher Total Difficulties score in both Wave 10 and Wave 12

Experience of racism reported by SY
- People picked fights with SY
- SY was stared at rudely
- SY was ignored by people
- SY saw other people treated unfairly
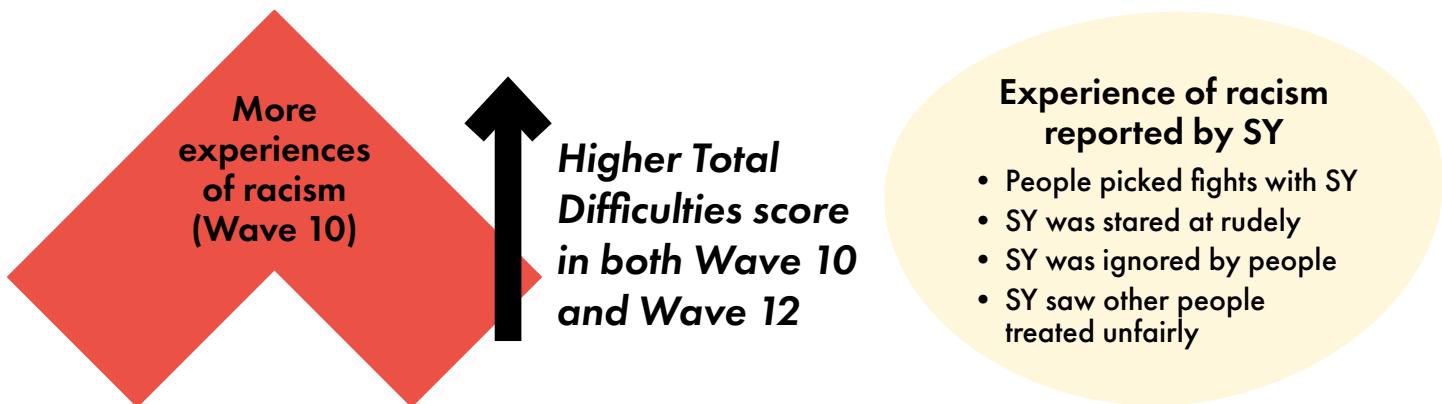
Figure 4.5 Relationship between Study Youth reported experiences of racism in Wave 10 (2017) and SDQ Total Difficulties score in Wave 10 and Wave 12 (2019).

Note: Experiences of racism not asked of SY in Wave 11 or 12 and SDQ not asked in Wave 11.

Exposure to incidents of racism has been shown to negatively impact mental health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people (Cave et al., 2019). The goal of services and institutions should be to reduce exposure to racism and discrimination (Cave et al., 2019). This is in line with Priority Reform Three within the National agreement on Closing the Gap (COAG, 2019). Doing so will reduce the impact of racism on the mental health and wellbeing of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Given that racism is a systemic issue caused by the ongoing impacts of colonisation, governments have an important role to play in examining the proliferation of racism within institutions. There is, however, a larger imperative to address racism beyond government that sits with society.

Bullying of children and young people

Research has reported mixed findings on prevalence of racist bullying reported by youth and their parents. While some research has found many youth feel they have been harassed because they are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders (Zubrick et al., 2005), other research has reported low rates of self-reported experiences of racist bullying (Bodkin-Andrews et al., 2017a). In Wave 11 and 12, around one in four Primary caregivers reported that SY were bullied because they were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander 'always' or 'sometimes'. This suggests that Primary caregivers of SY in 2018 and 2019 were more likely to feel their child had been bullied than what had been reported in previous *Footprints in Time* waves by youth themselves.

Exploring differences in these experiences across, gender, location and age demonstrated that racist bullying is experienced with increasing frequency as youth age and more often in major cities and regional areas. An exploration of experiences of bullying over the three-year period from 2017 to 2019 (Wave 10 to 12) showed almost two in five SY in major cities and just over one third in regional areas reported experiences of bullying, which was three times the proportion reported by SY in remote or very remote areas (**Figure 4.6**).

Higher rates of bullying
- Girls in Wave 11
- Older cohort in both Waves (11 ½ to 16 years)
- Major cities
- Inner and outer regional

Lower rates of bullying
- Very remote Australia
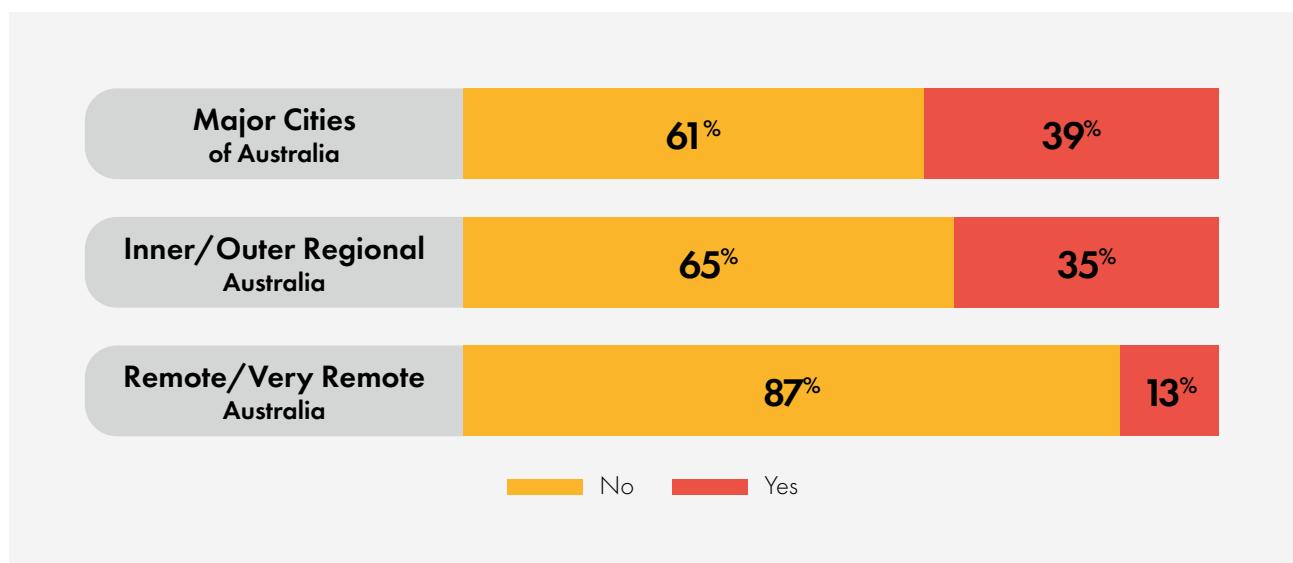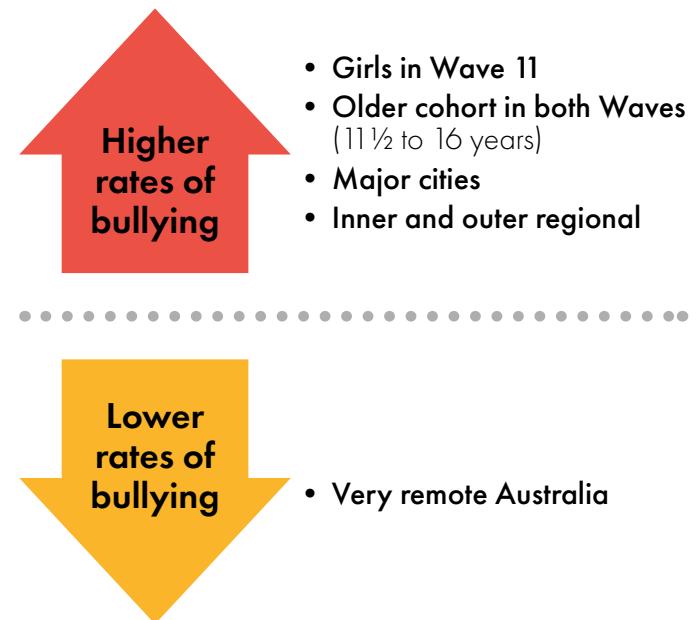
Figure 4.6 Study Youth reports of being bullied because they are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (Wave 10, 11 and 12, n=681).

Note: The sample includes those who responded at least once in three waves.

The data were investigated to understand the relationship between previous experiences of racist bullying (in 2017, Wave 10) or persistent bullying and scores on the SDQ Total Difficulties measure. No statistically significant relationship was found. Previous research has noted that bullying can have a range of negative impacts including increases in anxiety and poorer educational outcomes (Bodkin-Andrews et al., 2017). It has also been noted that the understanding of what bullying is may be contextual, suggesting that the way Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth conceptualise bullying may differ (Bodkin-Andrews et al., 2017). This understanding of what constitutes bullying may have influenced the self-reporting of being bullied by SY and the results should be interpreted with care.

Supporting youth to identify and address incidents of racism

The target for Priority Reform Three within the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (COAG, 2019) is to reduce the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have experiences of racism. In consultations about the findings presented in this report, people noted that reducing racism required efforts to grow understanding about racism and its impact on people. Acknowledging racism and making it safe to talk about racism was said to be key to improving the lived experience of people subjected to racism. Being able to identify and challenge racism and discrimination was also seen as personally empowering for people experiencing racism. Current findings indicate that these efforts must be informed by an understanding of how and where racism and discrimination are experienced.

In discussing the current findings on racism and wellbeing, in consultations with policy makers, researchers and community members, people also identified the importance of supporting youth to build resilience in the face of racism. Much work has been undertaken in recent times to identify resilience and strengths in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. For example, in the *Bubalamai Bawa Gumada* ('Healing the Wounds of the Heart') research project, Bodkin-Andrews and colleagues (2013) spoke with high achieving Aboriginal Australian postgraduate students and identified diverse ways to support resilience in the face of racism and discrimination. While the onus is on Australia to eradicate racism, the current reality for many youth highlights the need to buffer people from the negative impacts of racism in the here and now.

Culture and connection to community have been identified as underpinning resilience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youths. Specifically, developing and maintaining a sense of cultural identity has been set at the heart of building resilience against racism (Bodkin-Andrews et al., 2013). Alongside cultural identity, youth must be supported to seek support. Talking about their experiences in culturally supportive environments can lessen the negative impacts of racism and discrimination (Neblett et al., 2012). In addition to knowing that you can seek support, a strong kinship network provides validation and contributes to the building of a strong sense of cultural identity (Bodkin-Andrews & Craven, 2013).

Key findings and recommendations

- Reducing racism requires growth in understanding about racism and the impact it has on people.

- Acknowledging racism and making it safe to talk about is important for improving the lives of those who experience racism.

- Culture and connection to community support growing resilience for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth.

- It is important that youth be supported to know where they can feel safe to talk about their experiences and who they can seek support from.

- Youth should be supported to grow a strong kinship network to validate and build their cultural identity.

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Chapter 5

SAFETY ONLINE

Access to and use of the internet can develop a range of skills for youth and provide broad access to resources valuable for learning (eSafety Commissioner, 2022). For children and young people learning how to safely interact online can have benefits for accessing educational content and for their future interactions with services such as government and health services (Hunter & Randoll, 2020). Despite these positives, access to the internet, via an increasing variety of shared and personal devices, can also be risky (eSafety Commissioner, 2022). There is the possibility that children and young people may access content not appropriate for them (Livingstone & Helsper, 2013). Online environments also pose risks to children and young people's safety, with people able to communicate anonymously and in potentially harmful ways (e.g., bullying or inappropriate exposure to adult interactions).

Children and young people need to be supported to interact in an increasingly online world and be mindful of the risks and potential harms they may encounter (eSafety Commissioner, 2022). Four questions that emerged from consultations (details in **Appendix C**) with Community and policy makers are explored:

1. How did Study Youth (SY) use the internet?

2. Was there a relationship between internet use and contextual factors such as geographic remoteness?

3. How did parents/caregivers set boundaries for SY to assist with keeping them safe while using the internet?

4. Was internet use and safety associated with mental wellbeing?

Using the internet

Footprints in Time explored where and how SY access the internet. Insights from this data can support communities and policy makers to consider the implications for children and young people's learning and wellbeing.

Around three in four *Footprints in Time* SY used the internet at Wave 12 (when SY ranged in age from 11 to 16 years). Of those using the internet, 79% used the internet at home and 74% used the internet at school. The percentage of youth using the internet at home decreased with increasing remoteness (**Figure 5.1**). School internet usage similarly decreased with remoteness, but to a lesser extent. *Footprints in Time* Primary caregivers reported that one in five youth living in very remote communities did not use the internet. SY living in in remote and very remote areas are more likely to use the internet at school than at home. Those living in major cities and regional areas are more likely to access the internet at home.

The Wave 11 and 12 *Footprints in Time* data were collected before the COVID-19 pandemic. The lack of access to the internet in remote and very remote areas was further highlighted by the pandemic and increased the urgency with which the digital divide needed to be addressed (World Vision, 2021; Wilson et al., 2022). While COVID-19 underscored the digital inequities faced by remote communities, whether this has translated to a meaningful increase in access to technology and tangible improvements in reducing the divide is yet to be seen. Results from Wave 11 and 12 will provide a useful comparison point for future *Footprints in Time* waves that can support exploration of this issue.

Data from the 2016 ABS Census reported just under 75% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples had household access to the internet, which is just over 10% less than non-Indigenous households (Hunter & Radoll, 2020). Lack of household internet access for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households is also evident in the initial findings from the Mapping the Digital Gap research project which is currently tracking changes in digital inclusion levels in 12 remote communities across four years (Featherstone et al., 2022).
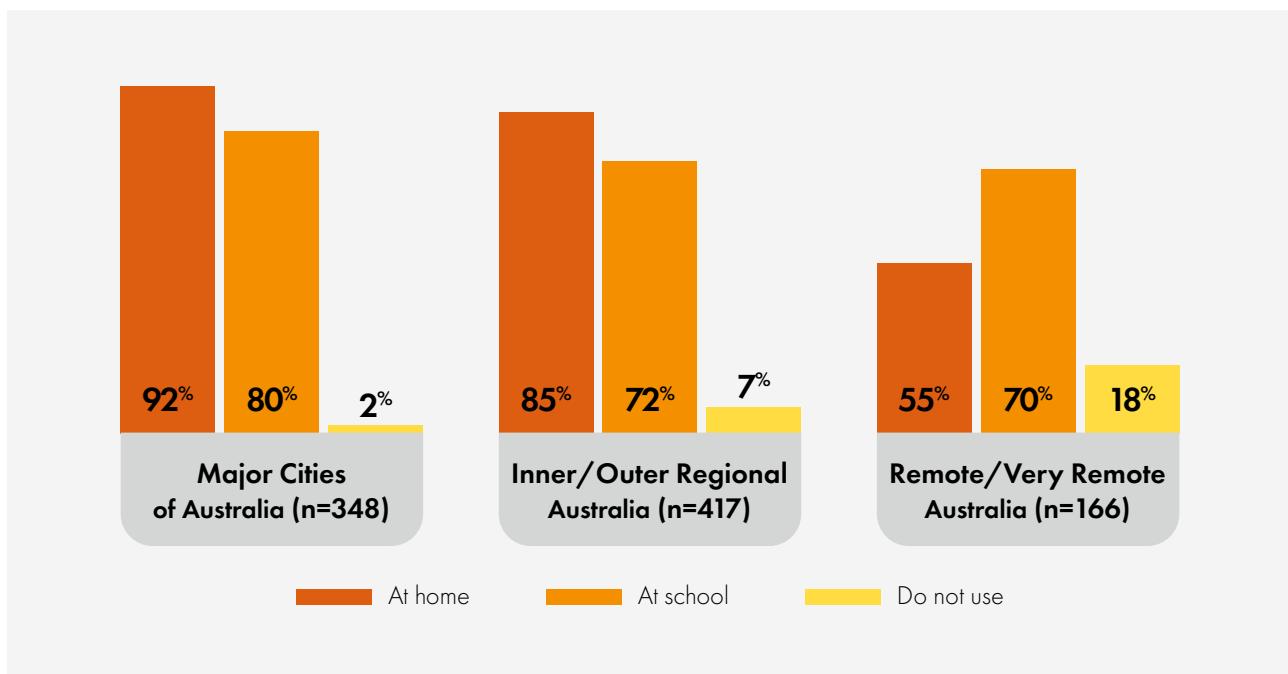
Figure 5.1 Study Youth internet usage at home, at school and no use by remoteness as reported by Primary caregivers in Wave 12.

The way youth access the internet can influence the impact that internet use can have on their safety and wellbeing and, in turn, inform which strategies might best support them (eSafety Commissioner, 2021; Burns et al., 2016; Rice et al., 2016). Access on personal devices, shared devices or public devices can bring different opportunities and challenges for promoting safe online behaviours. Livingstone et al. (2017) reported that internet access tends to begin in late childhood, initially involving access via shared family devices rather than personal devices. This is reflected in *Footprints in Time*, where 27% of the younger (B) cohort were more likely to use a family shared device compared with 18% of the older (K) cohort. The older (K) cohort were more likely to use their own mobile phone (82%). Overall, two in three SY used their own mobile to access the internet. Two in five of all SY used a school device to access the internet. Using a computer or tablet at school to access the internet was higher in the younger (B) cohort (44%) when compared with the older (K) cohort (39%). Findings also reflect those of the eSafety Commissioner (2022) regarding digital engagement, who reported that older children and children living in metropolitan areas were more likely to access the internet.

While recent research has begun to investigate how these benefits and harms vary for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (Carlson & Day, 2023; Frazer et al., 2022; Morris et al., 2022), there is limited focus on the unique ways in which they may impact Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth specifically. For example, in consultations for this report, consultees wanted to know how youth experience racism in online environments and the extent to which this impacts their wellbeing. Future collections of *Footprints in Time* data are including specific questions to explore how and where this might be occurring.

A review of adolescent wellbeing and technology use found that for most adolescents, the use of digital technology takes place on mobile devices and that active use of digital technology for establishing meaningful connections can have a positive effect on wellbeing (Dienlin & Johannes, 2020). This type of use is evident for

The way youth use the internet has been explored in relation to their wellbeing and safety (Shankleman et al., 2021). The topic has drawn a great deal of attention recently, with youth themselves recognising the potential for good as well as harm (Moody et al., 2021).

SY, where the most frequent use of personal devices with access to the internet was reported for entertainment and social connection. Over half of SY reported using the internet on their mobile phone to watch YouTube or listen to music (71%), while two in three were using their mobile device to keep in contact with family and friends (66%). Just under half of the SY reported using their mobile phone for gaming and online gaming (not gambling; 47%) and a similar number reported productive use of electronic devices (e.g., as a calendar/alarm clock or for organisation; 46%). *Footprints in Time* SY reports of internet use reflects other Australian findings reported by the eSafety Commissioner (2022), who explored how children and youth use the internet. For Australian youth the most reported uses of the internet included watching video content (e.g., YouTube), learning, gaming and accessing social media (eSafety Commissioner, 2022).

Guidance for using the internet

Given the potential risks associated with internet use, adults play an important role in monitoring usage and safety, while facilitating access for types of use that can promote learning and wellbeing. In *Footprints in Time*, the majority of parents reported implementing internet usage rules related to content (67%) or time (60%) on the internet. Again, this is reflective of broader Australian findings reported by the eSafety Commissioner (2022) who investigated how aware parents are of the risks that are associated with being online. Nevertheless, around one in five *Footprints in Time* parents had no rules related to internet usage. Overall, parents and caregivers reported implementing rules around content for 67 % of SY and rules related to time online for 60% of SY (**Figure 5.2**). The extent to which parents reported implementing usage rules varied by age (**Figure 5.2**) and geographic location (**Figure 5.3**).

Rules about how much time Study Youth can access the internet
- 51% — Older (Kids) cohort
- 65% — Younger (Babies) cohort

Rules about what content Study Youth can access
- 54% — Older (Kids) cohort
- 75% — Younger (Babies) cohort

Older (Kids) cohort (n=378)   Younger (Babies) cohort (n=621)
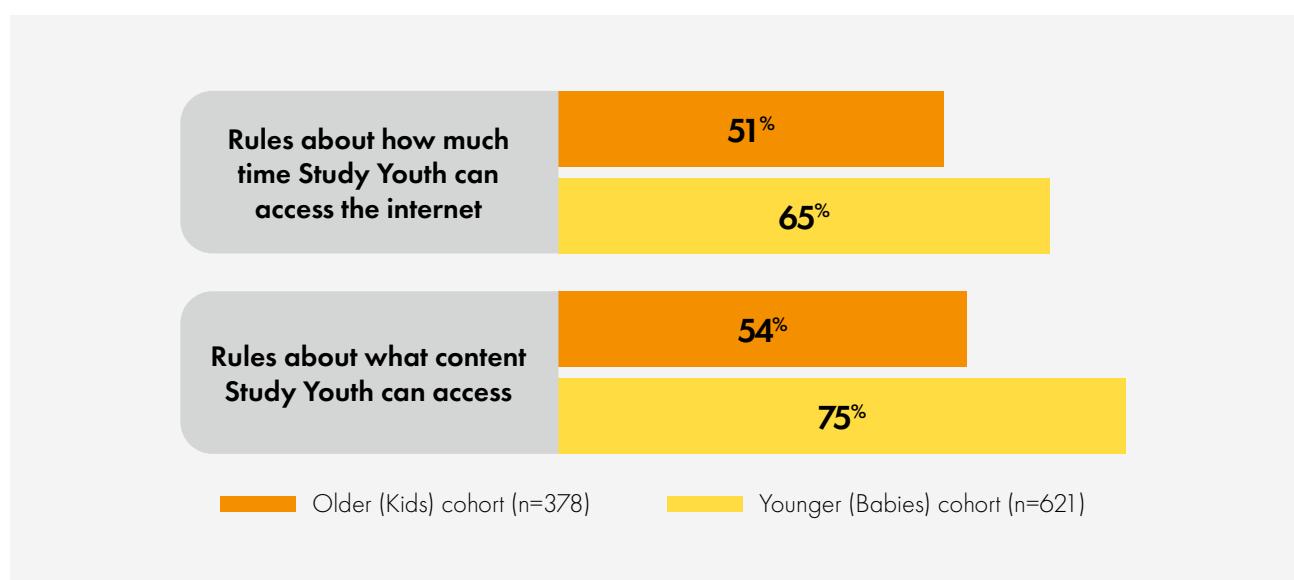
Figure 5.2 Proportion of Primary caregiver reported rules for accessing internet content and amount of time accessing the internet by Study Youth cohort in Wave 12.
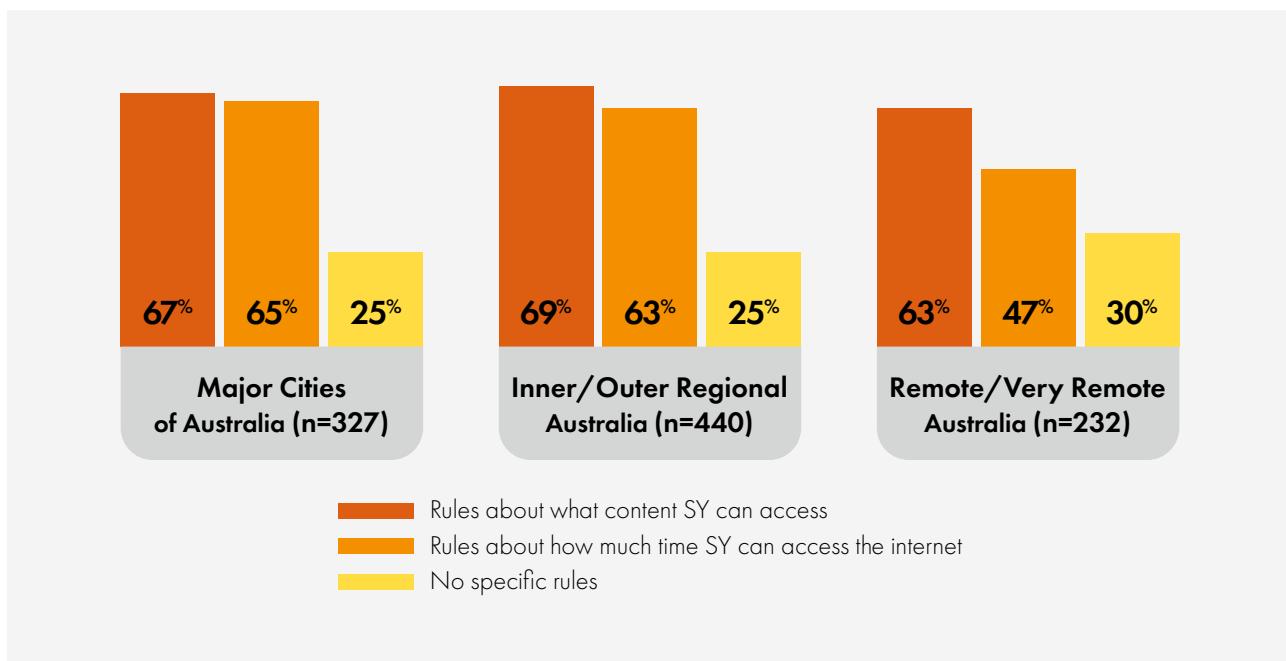
Figure 5.3 Parent and caregiver reported implementation of rules for internet content and time by geographical location.

The extent to which parents implement rules related to internet use is likely related to their perception of risks in online environments as well as their capacity for enforcing the rules. International research has shown that where parents and caregivers provide access to the internet, they are more likely to restrict access, be more observant of use and wait until children are older to enable internet access (most prominent for female children; Livingstone et al., 2017). This is perhaps in response to a higher perception of risks for female children, who have also been found to have a higher likelihood of being exposed to negative online experiences, such as sexual or violence related problems (Livingstone et al., 2017).

Footprints in Time explored perceptions of the safety of online environments from the perspective of parents and SY. Around four in five *Footprints in Time* Primary caregivers felt their child was safe on the internet (Wave 12; 84%). This varied across regions, with Primary caregivers in remote and very remote areas more likely to feel their child was not safe on the internet when compared with Primary caregivers in regional areas and major cities (**Figure 5.4**). *Footprints in Time* Primary caregivers also felt that females were less likely to be safe on the internet (18%) than males (14%).

Adverse exposures online are not uncommon in Australia, with almost two thirds of young people aged 14 to 17 years reporting exposure to negative content in the past 12 months (eSafety Commissioner, 2022). While adults have an important role to play in actively managing these risks, young peoples' knowledge and choices are important to online safety especially with a great deal of internet use not monitored by adults. The active role young people play in managing their safety online was reflected in self-reported awareness of the risks and disadvantages related specifically to social media use and active use of strategies to keep themselves safe (Livingstone et al., 2017).
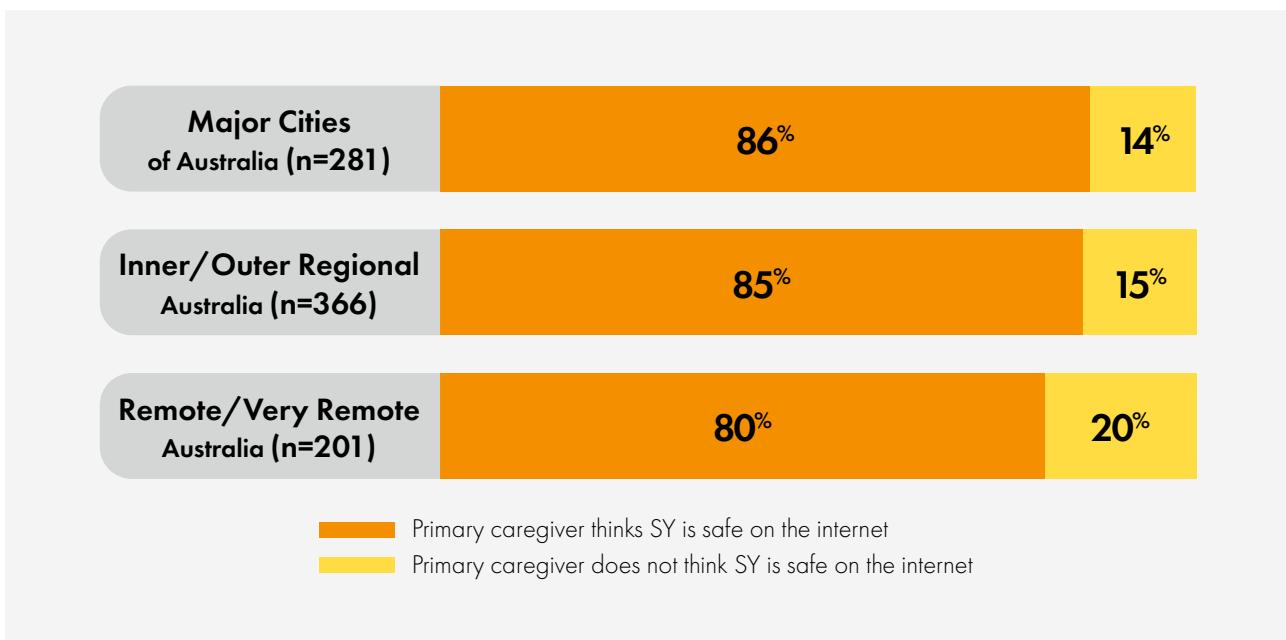
Figure 5.4 The proportion of *Footprints in Time* Primary caregivers who think their child (SY) is safe online.

Footprints in Time SY were asked if they feel safe on the internet with the majority of those responding that they do (68%). Young people reported a variety of reasons for feeling safe online relating to their own actions to protect themselves, supervision they experienced, and restrictions adults placed on their online access (see **Figure 5.5**). Conversely, some SY who did not feel safe on the internet were concerned about who could access information about them, stating "Everything you do is being watched" and noting "I don't know who is on there".
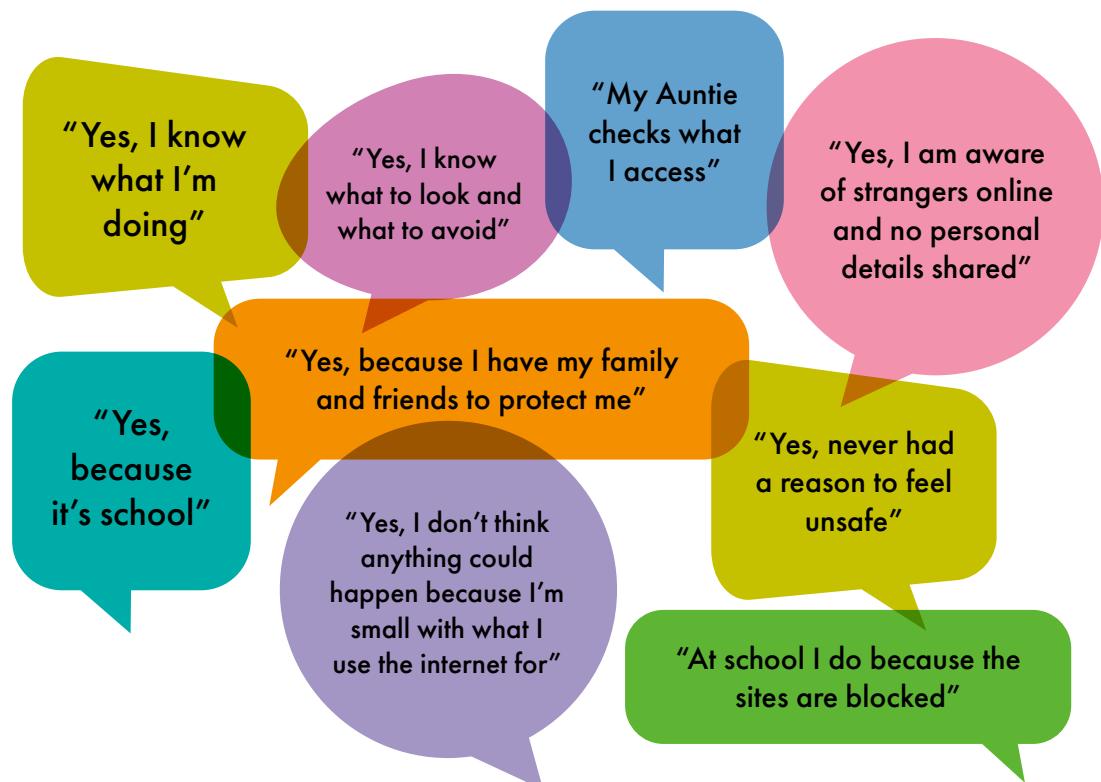
Figure 5.5 Examples of *Footprints in Time* SY responses to the question "Do you feel safe on the internet?" (Wave 12).

Relationship between internet use and wellbeing

Footprints in Time enabled the first exploration (to our knowledge) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth wellbeing relative to internet use in Australia. Reflective of the broader literature, where moderate use of the internet as opposed to very little use or extreme use has been found to be related to greater wellbeing for adolescents (Dienlin & Johannes, 2020). When Primary caregivers completed the SDQ in 2019 for SY, higher wellbeing as indicated by a lower SDQ Total Difficulties Score was significantly positively related to using the internet at school, having rules about time spent online, though both relationships were considered small. SY whose Primary caregivers felt that they were safe on the internet also had significantly lower SDQ Total Difficulties Scores. SY wellbeing was lower (Higher SDQ Total Difficulties Score) where Primary caregivers reported their knowledge of cyber safety was "not much" These findings reflect the potential benefits related to internet use for youth (such as friendships, connection, creativity and support) and highlight that adult supervision may play a role in facilitating positive internet use (Anderson et al., 2022; eSafety Commissioner, 2022). Importantly, for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth, little is known about how exposures to risks specifically related to racism impact on the development of cultural identity and the extent to which this relates to wellbeing. From Wave 13, *Footprints in Time* data collection will include items that ask youth more about their online experiences of racism and explore these in relation to their wellbeing and formation of their cultural identity.

> **Wellbeing was measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), a brief behavioural screening questionnaire with 5 categories (Goodman, 2001). Four of the categories are grouped to present the SDQ Total Difficulties Score, which reflects emotional distress, behavioural difficulties, hyperactivity and attention difficulties, and difficulties getting along with other children, with the fifth category representing the SDQ Prosocial Score (Goodman, 2001). Higher SDQ Total Difficulties Scores are indicative of greater difficulty and lower levels of wellbeing (Goodman & Goodman, 2009).**

Supporting online safety and positive interactions online for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth

The benefits of knowing how to safely use the internet to access services and safely interact with other people online are valuable for all children and young people (Hunter & Radoll, 2020). Internet usage for *Footprints in Time* SY is reflective of the national data on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander household usage for access at home (Hunter & Radoll, 2020). However, as reported above in 2019 there remained a gap in usage for remote and very remote SY at both home and school. Increased accessibility to devices and knowledge of how to maintain safe and secure interactions can be supported by both communities and governments.

As reported above, Primary caregivers of the *Footprints in Time* SY are often involved in setting guidelines and rules for SY when using the internet. Parents and caregivers who provide access to the internet for their children are more likely to actively monitor and provide rules for use. This was more evident in major cities and declined slightly in regional areas and more so in remote areas. Children and young people can benefit from parents learning more about how to keep everyone safe when accessing the internet. Providing supportive information in a culturally appropriate way, that recognises the strengths of parents and caregivers in keeping their children safe, will have future benefits for all families and communities.

Setting rules and enabling moderate use of the internet has been shown to have positive effects on wellbeing (Dienlin & Johannes, 2020). The eSafety Commission is working with community towards a guide for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. It recommends that children and young people who are teaching their caregivers and other family about using technology also benefit from learning about how to use technology themselves. This type of model for two-way learning can be very beneficial and should be considered by communities and services to support parents and caregivers in knowing about monitoring internet usage and facilitating positive interactions online.

Key findings and recommendations

Communities and governments can support young people to use devices to safely and securely access the internet.

Information about monitoring and rules for safe internet which recognises the strengths parents and caregivers have in keeping their children safe needs to be provided in culturally appropriate ways.

Rules about how and for how long young people can access the internet, can have a positive effect on their wellbeing.

Children and young people benefit from teaching other family members about how to use the internet by improving their own knowledge.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Acknowledgements

LSIC Steering Committee Members for 2017-2018 (the years Waves 11 and 12 were developed), in addition to some design groups.

LSIC Steering Committee Member 2017-2018
• Prof Michael Dodson • A/Prof Karen Martin • Dr Vanessa Lee • Prof Lester Rigney • Prof Stephen Zubrick • Dr Ray Lovett • Prof Ann Sanson • Prof Margaret Walter

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- **Neida Sechague Monroy**, Research Assistant

- **Honey Ramanian**, Research Assistant

- **Sophie Crouch**, Summer Intern

Appendix B: Glossary of terminology and definitions

ABS remoteness categories	Australian Bureau of Statistics remoteness categories.
AIATSIS	The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Australia's only national institution focused exclusively on the diverse history, cultures and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia.
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, is an independent statutory Australian Government agency that provides meaningful health and welfare information and data for the benefit of all Australian people.
Dad/P2	Primary caregiver's partner or another adult with a carer role for Study Youth, completed the P2 survey.
DSS	Department of Social Services.
Footprints in Time	The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children.
Kessler scale © World Health Organization 2003	The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) is a psychological screening tool designed to identify adults with significant levels of psychological distress. It is widely used in Australia and often used in primary care settings to identify people with clinically significant psychological distress.
LSIC (see also *Footprints in Time*)	The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children.
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency.
Older (K) cohort	Study Youth born between 2003 and 2005, Kids cohort. They were aged 13-15 years in 2018 (Wave 11) and 14-16 years in 2019 (Wave 12).
Primary caregiver/P1	Parent or caregiver of Study Youth who completed the P1 survey.
SDQ © Goodman, R.	The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire about 2-17 year olds. It exists in several versions to meet the needs of researchers, clinicians and educationalists. Four categories are combined to generate a Total Difficulties score, they are emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention and peer relationship problems.
Study Youth/SY	The focus of the *Footprints in Time* study, each child or young person is tracked and invited to be interviewed during each wave.
Teacher	The classroom teacher of Primary school aged Study Youth and the English teacher of those Study Youth attending High school.
Wave 10	Period of data collection in 2017.
Wave 11	Period of data collection in 2018.
Wave 12	Period of data collection in 2019.
Younger (B) Cohort	Study Youth born between 2006 and 2008, Babies cohort. They were aged 10-12 years in 2018 (Wave 11) and 11-13 years in 2019 (Wave 12).

Appendix C: Detailed consultation methodology

Desktop review and consultation

The Department of Social Services (DSS) contracted The Kids Research Institute Australia (in partnership with the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute and University of Technology Sydney) to undertake scheduled reporting of LSIC Wave 11 and 12 data along with stakeholder consultations to ensure the report reflects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priorities and understandings.

Consultation approach

The consultation component included two activities:

- Desktop review to identify priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and young people.
- Online yarning circles with the LSIC Steering Committee, government policy makers and community service providers to gather their perspectives on topics of interest for inclusion in the report.

These activities were completed between February and March 2022.

Desktop review of youth priorities

The desktop review was designed to ensure perspectives, questions and priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and families are incorporated into the report. The Kids Research Institute Australia was unable to consult with study parents and youth directly during the first round of consultations as project timelines conflicted with protocols for when contact with study participants is permitted. In addition, DSS were conscious of introducing any actual or perceived respondent burden associated with participation in yarning circles related to the LSIC study.

To address this, information sources for the desktop review included: (i) qualitative study data from parents and children in Wave 11 and 12, and (ii) key publications, reports, and surveys of young people available in the literature.

The documents were thematically reviewed and codified to identify emerging themes. The emerging themes were then populated into a heat table to represent the level of frequency in which they were discussed. From the heat table, eight domains or priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth were summarised in a mind map (see **Figure 0.2**) to guide subsequent stakeholder consultation and development of the analysis plan. We note that the priorities identified in the desktop review are not intended to be generalised at a population level and are limited to the sources reviewed.

Online consultations with policy makers and community service providers

Online consultations, informed and shaped by yarning circle principles (advised by the Kulunga Team) were conducted with three stakeholder groups: the LSIC Steering Committee, government policy makers, and community service providers. The purpose of the consultations was to gather perspectives of those working to develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy and programs, on priority areas for inclusion in the report.

- LSIC Steering Committee – responsible for overseeing the design, development, and implementation of the LSIC study and provide expertise in areas including ethics, cultural protocols, community engagement, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs, data analysis and interpretation.
- Policy makers – includes national government departments and peak bodies responsible for decision making and advocacy for the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and families.
- Community service providers – includes government and non-government providers with a specialised or regional focus who deliver programs and services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Participants

To identify stakeholders to invite to take part in consultations, we undertook a mapping exercise of Commonwealth departments and community service providers working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs or service delivery. The initial list of organisations was extensive (n = 189), therefore a sampling process was applied to narrow the list of stakeholders into a feasible number for consultations while ensuring representation across the priority domains identified in the desktop review. The list was first narrowed by prioritising agencies with national reach. The areas of work of these national agencies were reviewed to identify any gaps in coverage of the youth priority themes. The original list was then searched for agencies with services or expertise in any missing areas that had a statewide remit, and if none were found then those that worked in smaller scale program delivery were sought. Services that work in areas where LSIC participants live were prioritised if there were multiple agencies that filled a gap.

The remaining stakeholders (n=39) were then divided into three groups, Commonwealth Departments (n=9), community service providers (n=24), and peak bodies (n=6). Where possible, we identified individuals, not just organisations, with the intent to include a rich diversity of stakeholders who embodied a variety of expertise. The final stakeholder list was sent to DSS for approval and feedback.

The Kids Research Institute Australia distributed invitations to selected agencies to register for the yarning circles via email. A total of 39 agencies were contacted, and from these eight agencies registered to attend, and six attended (2 agencies accepted but did not attend). A total of seven yarning circles were conducted. **Figure 0.8** presents a breakdown of the agencies involved in the yarning circles and participant numbers from each.

Agency	Participants
LSIC Steering Committee	6
Department of Social Services	5
Department of Education, Skills and Employment	3
Productivity Commission	2
Torres Strait Regional Authority	1
SYC Inc	1
BlaQ	1
Saving the Children	2

Figure 0.8 Online consultation February and March 2022 participant summary.

Summary of consultation findings

Desktop review mind map

The desktop review highlighted a consistency of topics that were relevant and important in the lives of youth. Additionally, the perspectives of youth relative to these domains, provided insight into their hopes for the future, their desire to grow their cultural and language learning, and the ways in which the world both challenges them and inspires them.

Figure 0.2 presents the desktop review mind map including the eight domains and the concepts within these that recurred across the varying reports and qualitative data we reviewed.

Consultation mind map

Following consultations, a thematic analysis was applied to the field notes, to determine the frequency with which a concept or theme was discussed. Themes that had a high level of relevance to many stakeholders as well as critical themes that were described as contemporary issues of importance, were mapped against the eight domains identified in the desktop review. From this, research questions were developed that were feasible to address with data collected up to Wave 12 in the LSIC study. **Figure 0.3** provides a summary of the key issues emerging from stakeholder consultations mapped against the original desktop review mind map.

Stakeholders shared a depth of perspective and knowledge and identified clear priority areas within their work. Six areas of the mind map were most consistently discussed either as standalone topics or as domains of life that influenced others and were important to youth health, wellbeing, and educational experience. Overwhelmingly, cultural identity (a new measure for youth in Wave 11) and the experience of racism were topics of high importance that most stakeholders wanted to see explored. Stakeholders wanted to understand how these presented across facets of children's lives. These types of insights can support policy makers and service providers to identify what makes youth strong and where changes are needed to stamp out racism in the lives of youth.

While there was a great deal of alignment between the youth priority themes identified and the work of stakeholders, a few areas of policy interest emerged through yarning, that were not previously identified and that are also not well captured within the LSIC study. These topics were described as often not addressed and spoken about in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy. The first was inclusion of children with disability who were often missing or overlooked within analyses of the experiences of youth. The second was gender and sexuality, which was said to be difficult for youth to discuss within their communities. These have been described further in **Figure 0.3**, and while there is limited data within LSIC to support relevant analyses at this time, these views of stakeholders can help inform future waves of data collection. The third topic was technology, digital inclusion, and social media, which was described as becoming more prevalent in the lives of youth, but its effects are still poorly understood. This was especially true of the way in which technology and social media exposes youth to racism in an unmoderated environment.

Appendix D: Data tables

LIVING ENVIRONMENTS, HEALTH, AND WELLBEING

Table 1.a

Primary caregiver identified that Study Youth has a disability or does not have a disability — Wave 11 (N=1,221).

	SY has an identified disability n = 62		SY does not have an identified disability n = 1,159	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Family Type				
Parent or carers	7	11.3	113	9.7
Family with other children (under 16 yrs old)	17	27.4	419	36.2
Family with other children (under 16 yrs old) and other adults	28	45.2	443	38.2
Families with other adults	10	16.1	184	15.9
Parent or Carer				
Parents	55	88.7	1016	87.7
Carer/s	7	11.3	143	12.3
Partner or Lone				
Partnered parent or carer	27	43.5	633	54.6
Lone parent or carer	35	56.5	526	45.4

Table 1.b

Primary caregiver reported major life events in the past 12 months — Wave 12.

Experienced sorry business (N = 1,147)	Yes n = 584 (50.9%)		No n = 563 (49.1%)	
	n	%	n	%
Remoteness				
Major Cities of Australia	153	44.2	193	55.8
Inner Regional Australia	139	46.8	158	53.2
Outer Regional Australia	98	49.2	101	50.8
Remote Australia	54	49.1	56	50.9
Very Remote Australia	140	71.8	55	28.2
Cohort				
Younger (B) cohort	358	50.1	356	49.9
Older (K) cohort	226	52.2	207	47.8
Gender				
Male	288	50.5	282	49.5
Female	296	51.3	281	48.7

Got a job/returned to study (N = 1,142)	Yes n = 303 (26.5%)		No n = 839 (73.5%)	
	n	%	n	%
Remoteness				
Major Cities of Australia	94	27.3	250	72.7
Inner Regional Australia	93	31.4	203	68.6
Outer Regional Australia	50	25.1	149	74.9
Remote Australia	26	23.9	83	76.1
Very Remote Australia	40	20.6	154	79.4
Cohort				
Younger (B) cohort	182	25.5	531	74.5
Older (K) cohort	121	28.2	308	71.8
Gender				
Male	147	25.9	420	74.1
Female	156	27.1	419	72.9

Worries about money (N = 1,139)	Yes n = 341 (29.9%)		No n = 798 (70.1%)	
	n	%	n	%
Remoteness				
Major Cities of Australia	126	36.5	219	63.5
Inner Regional Australia	82	27.9	212	72.1
Outer Regional Australia	58	29.3	140	70.7
Remote Australia	39	36.1	69	63.9
Very Remote Australia	36	18.6	158	81.4
Cohort				
Younger (B) cohort	215	30.4	493	69.6
Older (K) cohort	126	29.2	305	70.8
Gender				
Male	181	31.9	386	68.1
Female	160	28.0	412	72.0

Housing problems (N = 1,147)	Yes n = 330 (28.8%)		No n = 817 (71.2%)	
	n	%	n	%
Remoteness				
Major Cities of Australia	109	31.5	237	68.5
Inner Regional Australia	86	29.0	211	71.0
Outer Regional Australia	52	26.3	146	73.7
Remote Australia	30	27.5	79	72.5
Very Remote Australia	53	26.9	144	73.1
Cohort				
Younger (B) cohort	208	29.1	506	70.9
Older (K) cohort	122	28.2	311	71.8
Gender				
Male	159	27.9	411	72.1
Female	171	29.6	406	70.4

Family separated (N = 1,126)	Yes n = 65 (5.8%)		No n = 1,061 (94.2%)	
	n	%	n	%
Remoteness				
Major Cities of Australia	20	5.8	327	94.2
Inner Regional Australia	24	8.1	273	91.9
Outer Regional Australia	8	4.1	187	95.9
Remote Australia	4	3.7	104	96.3
Very Remote Australia	9	5.0	170	95.0
Cohort				
Younger (B) cohort	47	6.6	662	93.4
Older (K) cohort	18	4.3	399	95.7
Gender				
Male	33	5.9	529	94.1
Female	32	5.7	532	94.3

Table 1.d

Primary Caregiver reported experiences of housing problems — Wave 12.

Felt crowded (N = 330)	Yes n = 135 (40.9%)		No n = 195 (59.1%)	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Remoteness				
Major Cities of Australia	51	46.8	58	53.2
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	55	39.9	83	60.1
Remote & Very Remote Australia	29	34.9	54	65.1
Cohort				
Younger (B) cohort	79	38.0	129	62.0
Older (K) cohort	56	45.9	66	54.1
Gender				
Male	63	39.6	96	60.4
Female	72	42.1	99	57.9

Moved house (N = 330)	Yes n = 140 (42.4%)		No n = 190 (57.6%)	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Remoteness				
Major Cities of Australia	45	41.3	64	58.7
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	70	50.7	68	49.3
Remote & Very Remote Australia	25	30.1	58	69.9
Cohort				
Younger (B) cohort	95	45.7	113	54.3
Older (K) cohort	45	36.9	77	63.1
Gender				
Male	64	40.3	95	59.7
Female	76	44.4	95	55.6

Had housing problem (N = 330)	Yes n = 88 (26.7%)		No n = 242 (73.3%)	
	n	%	n	%
Remoteness				
Major Cities of Australia	26	23.9	83	76.1
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	28	20.3	110	79.7
Remote & Very Remote Australia	34	41.0	49	59.0
Cohort				
Younger (B) cohort	54	26.0	154	74.0
Older (K) cohort	34	27.9	88	72.1
Gender				
Male	48	30.2	111	69.8
Female	40	23.4	131	76.6

Table 1.e

Dad responses for the job they were doing the most work in at the time of the survey — Wave 12.

	Strongly agree or Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree or Strongly disagree		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N
Dad has freedom to decide how to do his own work	115	64.6	30	16.9	33	18.5	**178**
Dad's job has positive effects on his child(ren)	141	79.7	17	9.6	19	10.7	**177**
Working helps Dad to better appreciate the time spent with his child(ren)	148	83.6	14	7.9	15	8.5	**177**
Dad is a better parent because of work	129	73.3	28	15.9	19	10.8	**176**
Dad never has enough time to get everything done in his job	60	34.1	51	29.0	65	36.9	**176**
Having both work and family responsibilities makes Dad feel competent	148	85.1	20	11.5	6	3.4	**174**
Dad missed out on home/family activities because of work responsibilities	98	56.6	41	23.7	34	19.7	**173**
Dad's family time is less enjoyable & more pressured due to work	53	30.1	44	25.0	79	44.9	**176**
Dad turned down work activities/ opportunities due to family responsibilities	48	27.6	42	24.1	84	48.3	**174**
Dad's job is less enjoyable & more pressured due to family responsibilities	87	50.3	50	28.9	36	20.8	**173**

Table 1.f

Relationship between Primary caregiver response to thinking about the job they were working the most hours in and Kessler total score — Wave 12.

Statement	Total N	Strongly Agree	Agree ß	Agree SE	Neither agree nor disagree ß	Neither agree nor disagree SE	Disagree ß	Disagree SE	Strongly disagree ß	Strongly disagree SE
I have a lot of freedom to decide how I do my own work	539	Ref	1.79*	-0.01	1.99*	-0.03	1.41	-0.14	2.50	-0.09
My working has a positive effect on my child(ren)	542	Ref	1.19*	-0.05	1.17	-0.28	5.53***	0.00	4.04*	-0.01
Working helps me to better appreciate the time that I spend with my child(ren)	542	Ref	1.39*	-0.02	2.19*	-0.04	4.02*	-0.02	4.01*	-0.01
the fact that I work makes me a better parent	537	Ref	1.33*	-0.05	1.80*	-0.03	2.67	-0.06	3.03*	-0.04
I never have enough time to get everything done in my job	538	Ref	1.01	-0.31	1.15	-0.27	1.23	-0.21	-0.15	-0.90
Having both work and family responsibilities makes me feel competent	528	Ref	1.40*	-0.03	3.07**	0.00	8.30***	0.00	2.10	-0.32
Because of my work responsibilities I have missed out on home or family activities that I would like to have taken part in	536	Ref	0.07	-0.94	-0.90	-0.42	-2.23*	-0.04	-3.05*	-0.02
Because of my work responsibilities my family time is less enjoyable and more pressured	535	Ref	1.28	-0.35	0.80	-0.55	-1.47	-0.25	-2.41	-0.09
Because of my family responsibilities I have had to turn down work activities or opportunities that I would prefer to take on	533	Ref	-0.48	-0.75	-0.46	-0.77	-2.41	-0.10	-4.30**	-0.01
Because of my family responsibilities the time I spend working is less enjoyable and more pressured	534	Ref	2.56	-0.18	0.49	-0.79	-0.81	-0.65	-2.46	-0.20

Note: Each row reports results from a separate regression model.
Adjusted for gender, cohort, and geographical remoteness.
Significance levels: * p< 0.5 ** p < 0.01 *** p < 0.001

Table 1.g

Relationship between Study Youth living arrangements and teacher-reported SDQ total difficulties score — combined Wave 1 to Wave 12 (N=3,121).

SY lives with...	SDQ Total Difficulties Score Reported by Teacher	
	ß	SE
Parent & partner	Ref	-
Parent & partner, other adults	-0.05	0.95
Parent & partner, children <16	-0.33	0.63
Parent & partner, children <16, other adults	-0.54	0.45
Lone parent	0.87	0.36
Lone parent, other adults	1.25	0.14
Lone parent, children <16	0.48	0.50
Lone parent, children <16, other adults	0.43	0.55
Carer & partner	4.11	0.06
Carer & partner, other adults	4.87**	0.00
Carer & partner, children <16	2.60	0.08
Carer & partner, children <16, other adults	1.08	0.37
Lone carer	5.33**	0.00
Lone carer, other adults	0.76	0.52
Lone carer, children <16	1.89	0.13
Lone carer, children <16, other adults	2.34*	0.03

Note: Regression analysis; Ref = Reference category
Adjusted for gender, cohort, and geographical remoteness.
$* \ p < 0.05, \ ** \ p < 0.01, \ *** \ p < 0.001$

RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILY, AND WELLBEING

Table 2.a

Study Youth connection to Country reported by Primary Caregiver (N = 1,188) — Wave 11.

	Yes, here n = 544 (45.8%)		Yes, not around here n = 358 (30.1%)		No n = 286 (24.1%)	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Remoteness						
Major Cities of Australia	90	27.3	121	36.7	119	36.1
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	230	43.8	170	32.4	125	23.8
Remote & Very Remote Australia	224	67.3	67	20.1	42	12.6
Cohort						
Younger (B) cohort	336	46.9	210	29.3	170	23.7
Older (K) cohort	208	44.1	148	31.4	116	24.6
Gender						
Male	256	44.4	178	30.9	142	24.7
Female	288	47.1	180	29.4	144	23.5

Table 2.b

How often Study Youth visited Country if they were not currently living on them (N = 352) — Wave 11.

	Monthly n = 23 (6.5%)		Several times a year n = 83 (23.6%)		Once a year n = 79 (22.4%)		Hardly ever n = 126 (35.8%)		Never n = 41 (11.6%)	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Cohort										
Younger (B) cohort	15	7.3	43	20.9	49	23.8	74	35.9	25	12.1
Older (K) cohort	8	5.5	40	27.4	30	20.5	52	35.6	16	11.0
Gender										
Male	16	9.2	30	17.3	40	23.1	65	37.6	22	12.7
Female	7	3.9	53	29.6	39	21.8	61	34.1	19	10.6

Table 2.c

Study Youth reported thinking their Mum understands them (N = 1,110) — Wave 11.

	Always/ Most of the time n = 998 (89.9%)		Fair bit/Little bit n = 82 (7.4%)		Not much/Never n = 30 (2.7%)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Remoteness						
Major Cities of Australia	299	89.5	29	8.7	6	1.8
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	454	88.3	38	7.4	22	4.3
Remote & Very Remote Australia	245	94.2	15	5.8	*	*
Cohort						
Younger (B) cohort	630	92.0	41	6.0	14	2.0
Older (K) cohort	368	86.6	41	9.6	16	3.8
Gender						
Male	482	91.1	37	7.0	10	1.9
Female	516	88.8	45	7.7	20	3.4

Note: * Responses ≤5 not reported. Additional minor suppressions have occurred where necessary to preserve confidentiality of related suppressions.

Table 2.d

Study Youth reported feeling they trust their Mum (N = 1,114) — Wave 11.

	Always/ Most of the time n = 1,034 (92.8%)		Fair bit/Little bit n = 60 (5.4%)		Not much/Never n = 20 (1.8%)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Remoteness						
Major Cities of Australia	314	93.5	14	4.2	8	2.4
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	469	91.1	35	6.8	11	2.1
Remote & Very Remote Australia	251	95.8	11	4.2	*	*
Cohort						
Younger (B) cohort	649	94.3	28	4.1	11	1.6
Older (K) cohort	385	90.4	32	7.5	9	2.1
Gender						
Male	496	93.4	28	5.3	7	1.3
Female	538	92.3	32	5.5	13	2.2

Note: * Responses ≤5 not reported. Additional minor suppressions have occurred where necessary to preserve confidentiality of related suppressions.

Table 2.e

Study Youth reported their Mum helps them when they have a problem (N = 1,108) — Wave 11.

	Always/ Most of the time n = 987 (89.1%)		Fair bit/Little bit n = 86 (7.8%)		Not much/Never n = 35 (3.2%)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Remoteness						
Major Cities of Australia	295	88.3	30	9.0	9	2.7
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	455	88.7	37	7.2	21	4.1
Remote & Very Remote Australia	237	92.6	19	7.4	*	*
Cohort						
Younger (B) cohort	625	91.2	38	5.5	22	3.2
Older (K) cohort	362	85.6	48	11.3	13	3.1
Gender						
Male	464	87.4	48	9.0	19	3.6
Female	523	90.6	38	6.6	16	2.8

Note: * Responses ≤5 not reported. Additional minor suppressions have occurred where necessary to preserve confidentiality of related suppressions.

Table 2.f

Study Youth reported thinking Mum spends enough time with them (N = 1,114) — Wave 11.

	Always/ Most of the time n = 870 (78.1%)		Fair bit/Little bit n = 183 (16.4%)		Not much/Never n = 61 (5.5%)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Remoteness						
Major Cities of Australia	258	77.0	57	17.0	20	6.0
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	399	77.3	82	15.9	35	6.8
Remote & Very Remote Australia	213	81.0	44	16.7	6	2.3
Cohort						
Younger (B) cohort	555	80.7	98	14.2	35	5.1
Older (K) cohort	315	73.9	85	20.0	26	6.1
Gender						
Male	422	79.5	79	14.9	30	5.6
Female	448	76.8	104	17.8	31	5.3

Note: * Responses ≤5 not reported. Additional minor suppressions have occurred where necessary to preserve confidentiality of related suppressions.

Table 2.g

Study Youth reported they talk with Mum about how they feel (N = 1,107) — Wave 11.

	Always/ Most of the time n = 780 (70.5%)		Fair bit/Little bit n = 189 (17.1%)		Not much/Never n = 138 (12.5%)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Remoteness						
Major Cities of Australia	237	71.2	48	14.4	48	14.4
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	345	67.3	101	19.7	67	13.1
Remote & Very Remote Australia	198	75.9	40	15.3	23	8.8
Cohort						
Younger (B) cohort	521	76.2	97	14.2	66	9.6
Older (K) cohort	259	61.2	92	21.7	72	17.0
Gender						
Male	363	68.6	97	18.3	69	13.0
Female	417	72.1	92	15.9	69	11.9

Table 2.h

Study Youth reported feeling Dad understands them (N = 897) — Wave 11.

	Always/ Most of the time n = 728 (81.2%)		Fair bit/Little bit n = 92 (10.3%)		Not much/Never n = 77 (8.6%)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Remoteness						
Major Cities of Australia	216	80.0	31	11.5	23	8.5
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	333	80.0	40	9.6	43	10.3
Remote & Very Remote Australia	179	84.8	21	10.0	11	5.2
Cohort						
Younger (B) cohort	480	85.4	47	8.4	35	6.2
Older (K) cohort	248	74.0	45	13.4	42	12.5
Gender						
Male	367	86.4	36	8.5	22	5.2
Female	361	76.5	56	11.9	55	11.7

Table 2.i

Study Youth reported feeling they trust Dad (N = 904) — Wave 11.

	Always/ Most of the time n = 779 (86.2%)		Fair bit/Little bit n = 70 (7.7%)		Not much/Never n = 55 (6.1%)	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Remoteness						
Major Cities of Australia	239	87.2	17	6.2	18	6.6
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	352	84.2	36	8.6	30	7.2
Remote & Very Remote Australia	188	88.7	17	8.0	7	3.3
Cohort						
Younger (B) cohort	505	89.5	34	6.0	25	4.4
Older (K) cohort	274	80.6	36	10.6	30	8.8
Gender						
Male	376	87.6	32	7.5	21	4.9
Female	403	84.8	38	8.0	34	7.2

Table 2.j

Study Youth reported their Dad helps them when they have a problem (N = 898) — Wave 11.

	Always/ Most of the time n = 675 (75.2%)		Fair bit/Little bit n = 119 (13.3%)		Not much/Never n = 104 (11.6%)	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Remoteness						
Major Cities of Australia	207	76.7	35	13.0	28	10.4
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	302	72.9	56	13.5	56	13.5
Remote & Very Remote Australia	166	77.6	28	13.1	20	9.3
Cohort						
Younger (B) cohort	450	79.9	62	11.0	51	9.1
Older (K) cohort	225	67.2	57	17.0	53	15.8
Gender						
Male	341	79.9	50	11.7	36	8.4
Female	334	70.9	69	14.6	68	14.4

Table 2.k

Study Youth reported Dad spends time with them (N = 902) — Wave 11.

	Always/ Most of the time n = 621 (68.8%)		Fair bit/Little bit n = 172 (19.1%)		Not much/Never n = 109 (12.1%)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Remoteness						
Major Cities of Australia	194	71.6	49	18.1	28	10.3
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	275	65.9	81	19.4	61	14.6
Remote & Very Remote Australia	152	71.0	42	19.6	20	9.3
Cohort						
Younger (B) cohort	414	73.5	99	17.6	50	8.9
Older (K) cohort	207	61.1	73	21.5	59	17.4
Gender						
Male	310	72.1	79	18.4	41	9.5
Female	311	65.9	93	19.7	68	14.4

Table 2.l

Study Youth reported they can talk with Dad about how they feel (N = 901) — Wave 11.

	Always/ Most of the time n = 522 (57.9%)		Fair bit/Little bit n = 169 (18.8%)		Not much/Never n = 210 (23.3%)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Remoteness						
Major Cities of Australia	158	58.3	51	18.8	62	22.9
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	227	54.6	71	17.1	118	28.4
Remote & Very Remote Australia	137	64.0	47	22.0	30	14.0
Cohort						
Younger (B) cohort	359	63.8	100	17.8	104	18.5
Older (K) cohort	163	48.2	69	20.4	106	31.4
Gender						
Male	263	61.2	85	19.8	82	19.1
Female	259	55.0	84	17.8	128	27.2

Table 2.m

Mum Spends Enough Time with Study Youth (N = 964) — Wave 11.

	Not enough n = 160 (16.6%)		About right n = 703 (72.9%)		Too much n = 101 (10.5%)	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Remoteness						
Major Cities of Australia	41	13.9	234	79.6	19	6.5
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	84	18.7	330	73.5	35	7.8
Remote & Very Remote Australia	35	15.8	139	62.9	47	21.3
Cohort						
Younger (B) cohort	99	17.1	411	70.9	70	12.1
Older (K) cohort	61	15.9	292	76.0	31	8.1
Gender						
Male	70	15.2	346	74.9	46	10.0
Female	90	17.9	357	71.1	55	11.0

Table 2.n

Dad Spends Enough Time with Study Youth (N = 789) — Wave 11.

	Not enough n =221 (28.0%)		About right n = 483 (61.2%)		Too much n = 85 (10.8%)	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Remoteness						
Major Cities of Australia	60	25.1	165	69.0	14	5.9
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	114	31.5	219	60.5	29	8.0
Remote & Very Remote Australia	47	25.0	99	52.7	42	22.3
Cohort						
Younger (B) cohort	127	26.0	298	60.9	64	13.1
Older (K) cohort	94	31.3	185	61.7	21	7.0
Gender						
Male	92	24.3	243	64.3	43	11.4
Female	129	31.4	240	58.4	42	10.2

Table 2.o

Study Youth reported of mix of friends by gender (N = 1,131) — Wave 11.

	All girls n =123 (10.9%)		All boys n = 141 (12.5%)		Some boys and some girls n = 867 (76.7%)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Remoteness						
Major Cities of Australia	31	9.1	34	10.0	275	80.9
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	41	7.8	60	11.3	428	80.9
Remote & Very Remote Australia	51	19.5	47	17.9	164	62.6
Cohort						
Younger (B) cohort	86	12.4	96	13.8	513	73.8
Older (K) cohort	37	8.5	45	10.3	354	81.2
Gender						
Male	7	1.3	135	25.0	397	73.7
Female	116	19.6	6	1.0	470	79.4

Table 2.p

Study Youth rating of closeness of important people in Study Youth's life by Mean and proportion of SY who included person in their rating (N =1,120) — Wave 12.

Person	M[a]	%[b]		Person	M[a]	%[b]
Mother	1.17	91		Boyfriend	1.95	6
Father	1.55	79		Girlfriend	1.64	7
Sister	1.41	72		Foster parent	2.50	2
Brother	1.48	72		Friend	1.74	69
Grandmother	1.59	70		Teacher	2.94	43
Grandfather	1.76	53		Support worker	2.34	22
Auntie	1.81	64		Pet	1.54	53
Uncle	1.89	61		Other	2.14	29
Cousin	1.75	64				

Note: [a] Average importance of each person (1 = most important, 5 = less important).
[b] Proportion of Study Youth who put person into relationship rings.

Table 2.q

Relationship between Study Youth connection to Country and teacher-reported SDQ total difficulties score — Wave 11.

SY connection to country...	SDQ Total Difficulties Score Reported by Teacher	
	ß	SE
Yes	Ref	-
No	1.19	0.15
Yes, not around here	-0.38	0.65

Note: n = 477. Ref = Reference category
Adjusted for gender, cohort, and geographical remoteness.
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table 2.r

Relationship between closeness of Mum and closeness of Dad with teacher-reported SDQ total difficulties score — Wave 11 (Beta and Standard error).

SDQ Total Difficulties Score Reported by Teacher	Mum understands SY (n = 470)		Dad understands SY (n = 391)	
	ß	SE	ß	SE
Always	Ref	-	Ref	-
Most of the time	0.23	0.78	-0.82	0.33
Fair bit	4.06**	0.01	1.55	0.27
Little bit	5.03**	0.01	6.52**	0.00
Not much	7.76**	0.01	2.98	0.15
Never	11.12***	0.00	7.46***	0.00

SDQ Total Difficulties Score Reported by Teacher	SY trusts Mum (n = 471)		SY trusts Dad (n = 393)	
	ß	SE	ß	SE
Always	Ref	-	Ref	-
Most of the time	2.72*	0.02	2.05*	0.05
Fair bit	0.39	0.85	1.29	0.49
Little bit	2.68	0.18	4.92**	0.01
Not much	9.01	0.21	5.88	0.09
Never	10.35***	0.00	8.50***	0.00

SDQ Total Difficulties Score Reported by Teacher	Mum helps SY when SY has a problem (n = 473)		Dad helps SY when SY has a problem (n = 390)	
	ß	SE	ß	SE
Always	Ref	-	Ref	-
Most of the time	1.29	0.18	-0.24	0.78
Fair bit	3.53*	0.03	2.37	0.06
Little bit	-0.96	0.69	2.45	0.13
Not much	8.74**	0.00	4.32*	0.03
Never	10.63***	0.00	6.33***	0.00

SDQ Total Difficulties Score Reported by Teacher	Mum spends time with SY (n = 472)		Dad spends time with SY (n = 391)	
	ß	SE	ß	SE
Always	Ref	-	Ref	-
Most of the time	-0.71	0.36	-0.31	0.73
Fair bit	2.45*	0.04	0.16	0.89
Little bit	2.90	0.05	3.39*	0.01
Not much	0.72	0.71	2.31	0.27
Never	7.65**	0.00	5.04***	0.00

SDQ Total Difficulties Score Reported by Teacher	SY talks with Mum about how SY feels (n = 470)		SY talks with Dad about how SY feels (n = 391)	
	ß	SE	ß	SE
Always	Ref	-	Ref	-
Most of the time	-0.64	0.47	-1.57	0.09
Fair bit	0.22	0.85	-0.11	0.93
Little bit	3.65**	0.01	1.35	0.30
Not much	2.17	0.13	-0.26	0.84
Never	5.63***	0.00	4.93***	0.00

Note: Separate regression model is presented for each aspect. Ref = Reference category
Adjusted for gender, cohort, and geographical remoteness.
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 2.s

Relationship between mum and dad spending enough time with study youth and teacher-reported SDQ total difficulties score — Wave 11.

	SDQ Total Difficulties Score Reported by Teacher	
	ß	SE
Mum spends enough time with SY (n = 409)		
Not enough	Ref	-
About right	-3.00**	0.00
Too much	-1.48	0.28
Dad spends enough time with SY (n = 345)		
Not enough	Ref	-
About right	-2.34**	0.01
Too much	-0.93	0.50

Note: Ref = Reference Category
Adjusted for gender, cohort, and geographical remoteness.
$* \ p < 0.05, \ ** \ p < 0.01, \ *** \ p < 0.001$

Table 2.t

Relationship between Study Youth relationships with family and teacher-reported SDQ total difficulties score — Wave 11.

	SDQ Total Difficulties Score Reported by Teacher	
	ß	SE
Study Youth gets along with their brothers/sisters/cousins (n = 486)		
Always	Ref	-
Most of the time	-0.52	0.50
Fair bit	-0.02	0.99
Little bit	1.04	0.45
Not much	2.86	0.23
Never	6.56**	0.00
Study Youth's family get along with each other (n = 491)		
Always	Ref	-
Most of the time	-1.08	0.15
Fair bit	0.77	0.51
Little bit	-0.66	0.67
Not much	0.38	0.87
Never	4.61	0.28

Note: Ref = Reference Category
Adjusted for gender, cohort, and geographical remoteness.
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

CULTURAL IDENTITY, CULTURAL IMPORTANCE, AND WELLBEING

Table 3.a

What being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander means to *Footprints in Time* Study Youth and their parents/caregivers — Wave 11.

	Importance of being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander to Primary Caregiver N = 997		Importance of being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander to Dad N = 309		Importance of being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander to Study Youth N = 423	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
The most important thing (central to who you are)	577	57.9	156	50.5	155	36.6
Important, but not the only thing	241	24.2	107	34.6	133	31.4
Something you don't know enough about and want to know more	156	15.6	28	9.1	101	23.9
Something you rarely think about	23	2.3	18	5.8	34	8.0

Table 3.b

Cultural aspects of being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, reported by Study Youth — Wave 11.

	Not very important		2		3		4		Extremely important		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N
The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander flag	8	1.8	14	3.2	36	8.3	64	14.8	311	71.8	433
Being strong and deadly	9	2.1	11	2.6	38	8.9	64	15.0	304	71.4	426
Knowing about your Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander family connections	11	2.6	23	5.4	54	12.8	82	19.4	253	59.8	423
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander symbols, design and artwork	15	3.5	23	5.3	53	12.2	86	19.9	256	59.1	433
Your country	9	2.1	13	3.0	54	12.6	104	24.4	247	57.8	427
Your people, your mob	13	3.1	23	5.5	53	12.6	92	22.0	238	56.8	419
Ways and laws of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ancestors	31	7.6	31	7.6	52	12.7	64	15.6	232	56.6	410
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander events	24	5.6	24	5.6	52	12.2	95	22.2	232	54.3	427
Knowing about your community connections	14	3.4	28	6.8	58	14.1	90	21.8	222	53.9	412
Learning from strong Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander role models	24	5.8	19	4.6	74	17.9	76	18.4	220	53.3	413
Having Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander friends	36	8.4	33	7.7	63	14.8	72	16.9	223	52.2	427
Knowing the language of your people	41	9.9	29	7.0	63	15.1	69	16.6	214	51.4	416
Knowing the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stories	15	3.7	32	7.9	88	21.6	70	17.2	202	49.6	407
Bush foods, medicine	33	8.0	45	11.0	86	21.0	78	19.0	168	41.0	410
News/media organisations that tell you about your culture	40	9.7	50	12.1	82	19.8	75	18.1	167	40.3	414

Table 3.c

Cultural aspects of being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander by geographical remoteness, reported by Study Youth — Mean (M) and SD, Wave 11.

	Major Cities of Australia		Inner Regional Australia		Outer Regional Australia		Remote Australia		Very Remote Australia	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Your people, your mob	4.08	1.22	4.29	1.02	4.16	1.01	4.29	1.22	4.51	0.74
Your country	4.29	1.05	4.33	0.83	4.25	1.02	4.38	0.95	4.44	0.93
Knowing about your Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander family connections	4.22	1.20	4.24	1.02	4.25	1.01	4.32	0.94	4.51	0.88
Learning from strong Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander role models	3.96	1.28	4.04	1.13	4.09	1.18	4.18	1.22	4.38	1.09
Ways and laws of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ancestors	3.88	1.47	4.04	1.21	3.96	1.31	4.18	1.26	4.49	0.99
Knowing the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stories	3.85	1.29	4.06	1.10	3.96	1.06	3.97	1.24	4.36	1.06
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander events	4.03	1.22	4.26	1.13	4.13	1.14	3.79	1.24	4.30	1.14
Being strong and deadly	4.46	1.02	4.57	0.87	4.53	0.83	4.53	0.86	4.44	0.95
Knowing about your community connections	4.02	1.24	4.13	1.08	4.19	1.00	4.21	1.19	4.43	0.96
Having Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander friends	3.37	1.53	3.99	1.23	4.19	1.14	4.25	1.11	4.66	0.81
Knowing the language of your people	3.51	1.60	4.02	1.27	4.07	1.14	3.97	1.27	4.37	1.06
Bush foods, medicine	3.30	1.47	3.77	1.17	3.68	1.25	3.97	1.38	4.47	0.88
The Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander flag	4.48	0.96	4.51	0.85	4.64	0.83	4.19	1.12	4.63	0.88
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander symbols, design and artwork	4.05	1.23	4.27	0.98	4.35	1.01	4.18	1.22	4.56	0.94
News/media organisations that tell you about your culture	3.46	1.42	3.77	1.29	3.63	1.40	3.70	1.36	3.92	1.31

Table 3.d

Who do Study Youth report they learn about culture from (N = 1,143) — Wave 11.

	Yes		No	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Mum	421	36.8	722	63.2
Teacher	317	27.7	826	72.3
Dad	302	26.4	841	73.6
Grandmother	275	24.1	868	75.9
Elders	246	21.5	897	78.5
Auntie	159	13.9	984	86.1
Grandfather	152	13.3	991	86.7
Uncle	140	12.2	1003	87.8
No one	84	7.3	1059	92.7
Cousin	66	5.8	1077	94.2
Friend	49	4.3	1094	95.7
Brother	46	4.0	1097	96.0
Sister	41	3.6	1102	96.4

Table 3.e

Teacher reported identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander by schooling level — Wave 11 and 12 combined.

	Primary School Teachers		High School Teachers	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	24	6.5	15	3.8
Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander	345	93.5	380	96.2

Note: In South Australia, Primary Schools included Year 7 students in 2018/19, the small number of students who were in Year 7 in South Australia (n=21) in Wave 11 and 12 have been included in the High School analysis.

Table 3.f

Teacher can speak, read or write Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander languages
— Wave 11 and 12 combined.

	Primary School Teachers		High School Teachers	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Speak, read, and write	11	2.9	6	1.4
Speak a few words only	49	12.8	45	10.5
No	318	83.2	362	84.6

Note: In South Australia, Primary Schools included Year 7 students in 2018/19, the small number of students who were in Year 7 in South Australia (n=21) in Wave 11 and 12 have been included in the High School analysis.

Table 3.g

Relationship between who Study Youth learns about being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander from and teacher-reported SDQ total difficulties score — Wave 11 (N=480).

Study Youth learns about being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander from...	SDQ Total Difficulties Score Reported by Teacher	
	ß	SE
Mother	-1.98**	0.00
Father	-3.24***	0.00
Stepmother / Foster Mother	-2.60	0.42
Stepfather / Foster Father	0.07	0.98
Grandmother	-1.31	0.09
Grandfather	-1.85	0.05
Auntie	-1.98*	0.04
Uncle	-0.69	0.49
Sister	-2.05	0.20
Brother	-2.84	0.07
Cousin	-1.98	0.14
Friend	-0.06	0.97
Teacher or Carer	-0.41	0.58
Elders	0.22	0.79
No one	2.17	0.08

Note: Separate regression model is presented for each item response.
Adjusted for gender, cohort, and geographical remoteness.
$* p < 0.05$, $** p < 0.01$, $*** p < 0.001$

RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Table 4.a

Personal experiences of racism as reported by Dads who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander — Combined Waves 10, 11 and 12.

	Always/ Most of the time/ Fair bit		Little bit/ Not much		Never		Total
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**N**
People picked fights with Dad	12	3.8	56	17.8	246	78.3	**314**
Dad told not Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	16	5.1	38	12.2	258	82.7	**312**
Dad told they get free stuff	41	13.1	74	23.7	197	63.1	**312**
Dad was stared at rudely	34	11.0	76	24.7	198	64.3	**308**
Dad was ignored by people	31	10.1	81	26.4	195	63.5	**307**
Dad told they don't look Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	18	5.8	60	19.2	235	75.1	**313**
Dad was told they are too sensitive	27	8.7	44	14.2	239	77.1	**310**
Dad saw other people treated unfairly	104	33.9	98	31.9	105	34.2	**307**

Note: Only asked of Dads who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
The data was populated by the first time Dad responded to any of the items across Waves 10, 11 and 12.
This creates a view of experiences of racism over three years (2017 – 2019).

Table 4b

Where Dads had experienced or observed racism and discrimination by location — Combined Waves 10, 11 and 12; multiple responses allowed for each item.

People picked fights with Dad (n = 60)	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
At services	13	21.7	47	78.3
In public places	28	46.7	32	53.3
At sporting events	14	23.3	46	76.7
On transport	7	11.7	53	88.3
By police or security	11	18.3	49	81.7
Online in social media	8	13.3	52	86.7
At work	17	28.3	43	71.7
At child's school	*	*	*	*

Dad was stared at rudely (n = 96)	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
At services	57	59.4	39	40.6
In public places	59	61.5	37	38.5
At sporting events	20	20.8	76	79.2
On transport	23	24.0	73	76.0
By police or security	23	24.0	73	76.0
Online in social media	9	9.4	87	90.6
At work	23	24.0	73	76.0
At child's school	11	11.5	85	88.5

Dad was ignored by people (n = 101)	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
At services	75	74.3	26	25.7
In public places	41	40.6	60	59.4
At sporting events	20	19.8	81	80.2
On transport	16	15.8	85	84.2
By police or security	14	13.9	87	86.1
Online in social media	7	6.9	94	93.1
At work	20	19.8	81	80.2
At child's school	10	9.9	91	90.1

Dad saw other people treated unfairly (n = 183)	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
At services	100	54.6	83	45.4
In public places	104	56.8	79	43.2
At sporting events	43	23.5	140	76.5
On transport	39	21.3	144	78.7
By police or security	76	41.5	107	58.5
Online in social media	56	30.6	127	69.4
At work	50	27.3	133	72.7
At child's school	21	11.5	162	88.5

Dad told they're not Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (n = 50)	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
At services	10	20	40	80
In public places	15	30	35	70
At sporting events	9	18	41	82
On transport	6	12	44	88
By police or security	8	16	42	84
Online in social media	7	14	43	86
At work	22	44	28	56
At child's school	6	12	44	88

Dad told they don't look Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (n = 66)	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
At services	17	25.8	49	74.2
In public places	27	40.9	39	59.1
At sporting events	18	27.3	48	72.7
On transport	6	9.1	60	90.9
By police or security	*	*	*	*
Online in social media	10	15.2	56	84.8
At work	27	40.9	39	59.1
At child's school	*	*	*	*

Note: * Responses ≤5 not reported. Additional minor suppressions have occurred where necessary to preserve confidentiality of related suppressions.

Note: Only asked of Dads who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
The data was populated by the first time Dad responded to any of the items across Waves 10, 11 and 12.
This creates a view of experiences of racism over three years (2017 – 2019).

Table 4.c

Dad's responses to how Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are talked about in the news and on social — Combined Waves 10, 11 and 12.

	Always		Most of the time		Fair Bit		Little Bit		Not Much		Never		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N
Politicians don't care about important Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander issues	104	35.0	70	23.6	53	17.8	40	13.5	18	6.1	12	4.0	297
Media only focused on bad stories about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	80	26.2	65	21.3	65	21.3	54	17.7	27	8.9	14	4.6	305
Media didn't care about true history of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	96	31.5	70	23.0	51	16.7	51	16.7	24	7.9	13	4.3	305
Social media allows bad stuff to be said about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	94	32.8	56	19.5	50	17.4	42	14.6	29	10.1	16	5.6	287
Many politicians blamed Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people for everything	75	25.5	61	20.7	51	17.3	53	18.0	36	12.2	18	6.1	294

Note: Only asked of Dads who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
The data was populated by the first time Dad responded to any of the items across Waves 10, 11 and 12.
This creates a view of experiences of racism over three years (2017 – 2019).

Table 4.d

Study Youth reported they were bullied because they are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (N = 681) — Combined Waves 10, 11 and 12.

	Yes n = 206 (30.2%)		No n = 475 (69.8%)	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Remoteness				
Major Cities of Australia	83	39.3	128	60.7
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	99	34.7	186	65.3
Remote & Very Remote Australia	24	13.0	161	87.0
Cohort				
Younger (B) cohort	130	30.1	302	69.9
Older (K) cohort	76	30.5	173	69.5
Gender				
Male	107	31.9	228	68.1
Female	99	28.6	247	71.4

Note: The sample includes those who responded at least once in any of Wave 10, 11 or 12.

Table 4.d

Relationship between Study Youth reported experiences of racism in Wave 10 (2017) and SDQ Total Difficulties Score — Wave 10 and Wave 12 (2019).

	Wave 10 SDQ Total Difficulties Score (n=394)		Wave 12 SDQ Total Difficulties Score (n = 289)	
	ß	**SE**	**ß**	**SE**
Wave 10 Study Youth Experiences of Racism	0.85***	0.00	0.51***	0.00

Note: Experiences of racism were not asked of Study Youth in Wave 11 or 12 and SDQ not asked in Wave 11.
Significance levels: *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$

Table 4.f

Primary Caregiver report of Study Youth experiencing racist bullying (N = 676 — Combined Waves 11 and 12.

	n	%
Yes, always for this reason	37	5.5
Sometimes for this reason	133	19.7
No	506	74.8

Table 4.g

Relationship between experiencing racist bullying and primary caregiver-reported SDQ total difficulties score — Wave 12.

	SDQ Total Difficulties Score Reported by Primary Caregiver	
	ß	SE
Distant history of racist bullying	1.77	0.18
Persistent bullying over childhood	0.33	0.84

Note: n = 500. Adjusted for gender, cohort, and geographical remoteness.
$*\ p < 0.05,\ **\ p < 0.01,\ ***\ p < 0.001$

Table 4.h

Relationship between experiencing racist bullying and study youth-reported SDQ Total Difficulties Score — Wave 12.

	SDQ Total Difficulties Score Reported by Study Youth	
	ß	SE
Distant history of racist bullying	0.628	0.62
Persistent bullying over childhood	-0.25	0.87

Note: n = 478. Adjusted for gender, cohort, and geographical remoteness.
$*\ p < 0.05,\ **\ p < 0.01,\ ***\ p < 0.001$

Table 4.i

Relationship between collection waves and family experience of racism, discrimination or prejudice.

	Family experiences racism, discrimination or prejudice	
	ß	SE
Wave 3	Ref	-
Wave 5	-0.02	0.86
Wave 8	0.13	0.22
Wave 11	-0.73***	0.00

Note: n = 3,977. Ref = Reference category
Adjusted for gender, cohort, and geographical remoteness.
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

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Table 5.a

Study Youth internet usage at Home, at School and do not use internet as reported by Primary Caregiver — Wave 12.

At home (N = 1,138)	Yes n = 902 (79.3%)		No n = 236 (20.7%)	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Remoteness				
Major Cities of Australia	319	91.7	29	8.3
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	417	85.1	73	14.9
Remote & Very Remote Australia	166	55.3	134	44.7
Cohort				
Younger (B) cohort	549	77.1	163	22.9
Older (K) cohort	353	82.9	73	17.1
Gender				
Male	435	77.0	130	23.0
Female	467	81.5	106	18.5

At school (N = 1,138)	Yes n = 841 (73.9%)		No n = 297 (26.1%)	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Remoteness				
Major Cities of Australia	280	80.5	68	19.5
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	351	71.6	139	28.4
Remote & Very Remote Australia	210	70.0	90	30.0
Cohort				
Younger (B) cohort	533	74.9	179	25.1
Older (K) cohort	308	72.3	118	27.7
Gender				
Male	404	71.5	161	28.5
Female	437	76.3	136	23.7

Do not use internet (N = 1,124)	Yes n = 92 (8.2%)		No n = 1,032 (91.8%)	
	n	%	n	%
Remoteness				
Major Cities of Australia	6	1.8	336	98.2
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	33	6.8	450	93.2
Remote & Very Remote Australia	53	17.7	246	82.3
Cohort				
Younger (B) cohort	65	9.2	640	90.8
Older (K) cohort	27	6.4	392	93.6
Gender				
Male	56	10.0	504	90.0
Female	36	6.4	528	93.6

Table 5.b

Devices Study Youth use to access the internet (N = 1,033) — Wave 12.

	Yes		No	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Study Youth's mobile	**665**	**64.4**	**368**	**35.6**
Younger (B) cohort	340	53.3	298	46.7
Older (K) cohort	325	82.3	70	17.7
Someone else's mobile	**93**	**9.0**	**940**	**91.0**
Younger (B) cohort	66	10.3	572	89.7
Older (K) cohort	27	6.8	368	93.2
Family computer or iPad/tablet at home	**247**	**23.9**	**786**	**76.1**
Younger (B) cohort	175	27.4	463	72.6
Older (K) cohort	72	18.2	323	81.8
Study Youth's own computer or iPad/tablet at home	**263**	**25.5**	**770**	**74.5**
Younger (B) cohort	167	26.2	471	73.8
Older (K) cohort	96	24.3	299	75.7
Computer or tablets at school	**434**	**42.0**	**599**	**58.0**
Younger (B) cohort	280	43.9	358	56.1
Older (K) cohort	154	39.0	241	61.0
Public computers e.g., at the library	**27**	**2.6**	**1006**	**97.4**
Younger (B) cohort	23	3.6	615	96.4
Older (K) cohort	*	*	*	*
Gaming console	**47**	**4.5**	**986**	**95.5**
Younger (B) cohort	38	6.0	600	94.0
Older (K) cohort	9	2.3	386	97.7
Other	**16**	**1.5**	**1017**	**98.5**
Younger (B) cohort	14	2.2	624	97.8
Older (K) cohort	*	*	*	*

Note: * Responses ≤5 not reported. Additional minor suppressions have occurred where necessary to preserve confidentiality of related suppressions.

Table 5.c

Primary caregiver reported implementation of rules for content and amount of time using the internet — Wave 12.

Rule for content accessed on the internet (N = 999)	Yes n = 671 (67.2%)		No n = 328 (32.8%)	
	n	%	n	%
Remoteness				
Major Cities of Australia	220	67.3	107	32.7
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	305	69.3	135	30.7
Remote & Very Remote Australia	146	62.9	86	37.1
Cohort				
Younger (B) cohort	467	75.2	154	24.8
Older (K) cohort	204	54.0	174	46.0
Gender				
Male	323	65.8	168	34.2
Female	348	68.5	160	31.5

Rules for the amount of time accessing the internet (N = 999)	Yes n = 597 (59.8%)		No n = 402 (40.2%)	
	n	%	n	%
Remoteness				
Major Cities of Australia	211	64.5	116	35.5
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	276	62.7	164	37.3
Remote & Very Remote Australia	110	47.4	122	52.6
Cohort				
Younger (B) cohort	404	65.1	217	34.9
Older (K) cohort	193	51.1	185	48.9
Gender				
Male	307	62.5	184	37.5
Female	290	57.1	218	42.9

No Specific Rules (N = 999)	Yes n = 260 (26.0%)		No n = 739 (74.0%)	
	n	%	n	%
Remoteness				
Major Cities of Australia	83	25.4	244	74.6
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	108	24.5	332	75.5
Remote & Very Remote Australia	69	29.7	163	70.3
Cohort				
Younger (B) cohort	117	18.8	504	81.2
Older (K) cohort	143	37.8	235	62.2
Gender				
Male	134	27.3	357	72.7
Female	126	24.8	382	75.2

Table 5.d

Primary caregiver thinks Study Youth is safe on the internet (N = 848) — Wave 12.

	Yes n = 713 (84.1%)		No n = 135 (15.9%)	
	n	%	n	%
Remoteness				
Major Cities of Australia	241	85.8	40	14.2
Inner & Outer Regional Australia	311	85.0	55	15.0
Remote & Very Remote Australia	161	80.1	40	19.9
Cohort				
Younger (B) cohort	424	80.8	101	19.2
Older (K) cohort	289	89.5	34	10.5
Gender				
Male	360	86.3	57	13.7
Female	353	81.9	78	18.1

Table 5.e

How Study Youth use the internet by device type — Wave 12.

Study Youth uses mobile phone	Yes		No		Total
	n	%	n	%	N
Keeping in contact with family and friends	710	66.7	354	33.3	1064
Meeting new people	190	18.3	850	81.7	1040
Emails	275	26.2	776	73.8	1051
School work	131	12.3	931	87.7	1062
Using software like Microsoft Office	71	6.8	978	93.2	1049
Searching internet for information	359	34.1	694	65.9	1053
Watching tv, movies	468	43.9	598	56.1	1066
YouTube, listening to music	769	71.6	305	28.4	1074
Gaming & online gaming (not gambling)	507	47.4	563	52.6	1070
Gambling, sports betting	18	1.7	1024	98.3	1042
Banking	90	8.6	959	91.4	1049
Calendar, alarm clock, organisation	496	46.3	575	53.7	1071
Creative activities	287	26.9	781	73.1	1068
Supporting a cause online	47	4.5	989	95.5	1036

Study Youth uses tablet/computer	Yes		No		Total
	n	%	n	%	N
Keeping in contact with family and friends	110	10.3	954	89.7	1064
Meeting new people	36	3.5	1004	96.5	1040
Emails	226	21.5	825	78.5	1051
School work	644	60.6	418	39.4	1062
Using software like Microsoft Office	596	56.8	453	43.2	1049
Searching internet for information	522	49.6	531	50.4	1053
Watching tv, movies	412	38.6	654	61.4	1066
YouTube, listening to music	429	39.9	645	60.1	1074
Gaming & online gaming (not gambling)	349	32.6	721	67.4	1070
Gambling, sports betting	9	0.9	1033	99.1	1042
Banking	21	2.0	1028	98.0	1049
Calendar, alarm clock, organisation	84	7.8	987	92.2	1071
Creative activities	213	19.9	855	80.1	1068
Supporting a cause online	20	1.9	1016	98.1	1036

Study Youth doesn't use either	Yes		No		Total
	n	%	n	%	N
Keeping in contact with family and friends	317	29.8	747	70.2	**1064**
Meeting new people	824	79.2	216	20.8	**1040**
Emails	617	58.7	434	41.3	**1051**
School work	339	31.9	723	68.1	**1062**
Using software like Microsoft Office	408	38.9	641	61.1	**1049**
Searching internet for information	357	33.9	696	66.1	**1053**
Watching tv, movies	331	31.1	735	68.9	**1066**
YouTube, listening to music	84	7.8	990	92.2	**1074**
Gaming & online gaming (not gambling)	325	30.4	745	69.6	**1070**
Gambling, sports betting	1016	97.5	26	2.5	**1042**
Banking	943	89.9	106	10.1	**1049**
Calendar, alarm clock, organisation	540	50.4	531	49.6	**1071**
Creative activities	628	58.8	440	41.2	**1068**
Supporting a cause online	971	93.7	65	6.3	**1036**

Table 5.f

Relationship between internet use and safety associated with mental wellbeing, Reported by Primary Caregiver — Wave 11.

	SDQ Total Difficulties Score	
	ß	SE
Does Study Youth use the internet at school? (n=1109)		
No	Ref	-
Yes	-1.37**	0.00
Do you have rules about how much time Study Youth can spend on the internet? (n=981)		
No	Ref	-
Yes	-1.10**	0.01
How much do you know about cyber safety? (n=1006)		
Lots	Ref	-
Fair bit	-0.59	0.23
Little bit	0.02	0.98
Not much	1.84**	0.01
Do you think Study Youth is safe on the internet? (n=833)		
No	Ref	-
Yes	-3.02***	0.00

Note: Each question reports results from a separate regression model.
Adjusted for gender, cohort, and geographical remoteness.
** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table 5.g

Relationship between safety on the internet reported by Primary caregiver and mental wellbeing (SDQ Total Difficulties Score) reported by Study Youth — Wave 12.

	SDQ Total Difficulties Score Reported by Study Youth	
	ß	SE
Reported by Primary Caregiver **Do you think Study Youth is safe on the internet? (n=848)**		
No	Ref	-
Yes	-1.79*	0.02

Note: Adjusted for gender, cohort, and geographical remoteness.
* $p < 0.05$

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