Mission Australia conducted its 19th annual survey of young people aged 15-19 in 2020. The survey aims to identify young people’s values, aspirations and concerns. This year’s survey had a special focus on young people’s experiences of unfair treatment and COVID-19.

**25,800 RESPONDENTS** aged 15-19 years

**Top 3 factors to securing a job:**
1. Flexible working hours 75%
2. More jobs in my local area 59%
3. Work experience 42%

**Top 3 personal concerns:**
1. Coping with stress 43%
2. Mental health 34%
3. Body image 33%

Of the 9% of young people who felt COVID-19 was their biggest personal issue:
- 33% were concerned about COVID-19 and education
- 31% were concerned about COVID-19 in general
- 21% were concerned about COVID-19 and isolation
- 17% were concerned about COVID-19 and mental health
- 7% were concerned about COVID-19 and financial problems

More than double the proportion of females were extremely/very concerned about coping with stress (56% compared with 25% of males)

**Top 3 most important issues in Australia today:**
- **Equity and discrimination** 40%
- **COVID-19** 39%
- **Mental health** 31%

Since 2019, the % of young people identifying EQUITY and DISCRIMINATION as an issue of national importance has increased from 25% to 40%

Young people were asked to comment on their biggest personal issue experienced in the past year. In 2020, the top 3 biggest personal issues were:
1. Education 34%
2. Mental health 17%
3. COVID-19 9%
Young people were asked about their experiences of unfair treatment. In the past year:

- Experienced unfair treatment: 27%
- Witnessed unfair treatment: 55%

39% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents had experienced unfair treatment compared with 29% of non-Indigenous respondents.

Of those who experienced unfair treatment:
- 41% had experienced unfair treatment due to their gender
- 30% had experienced unfair treatment due to their race/cultural background
- 26% had experienced unfair treatment due to their mental health

Of those who witnessed unfair treatment:
- 62% reported it was due to a person’s race/cultural background
- 49% reported it was due to a person’s sexuality
- 41% reported it was due to a person’s gender

“Discrimination, seen in both race and sexual or gender preference. I myself have not been victim to this discrimination but I have seen those close to me be affected by it. People should be more educated about LGBTIQA+ and race issues.” F, 17, TAS

Recommendations:
- Replicate and fund flexible and alternative learning options for young people.
- End the digital divide and ensure access to reliable internet and devices for young people.
- Focus on mental health prevention and early intervention measures, including online and outreach.
- Implement a permanent increase to income support payments for young people and their families.
- Replicate and fund early intervention services to prevent youth homelessness.
- Fund youth-specific social housing.
- Develop a new National Anti-Racism Strategy and partner with young people on anti-racism initiatives.
- Put young people at the centre of service design and development.
- Develop a national approach to supporting youth employment.

If you are a young person and need someone to talk with, you can contact Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 (24/7) kidshelpline.com.au
To download the report: missionaustralia.com.au/youthsurveyreport