



# Inequality in Australia: A Young Person's Perspective

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## About Youth Action

Youth Action is the peak organisation representing young people and youth services in NSW. Our work helps build the capacity of young people, youth workers and youth services, and we advocate for positive change on issues affecting these groups.

It is the role of Youth Action to:

- Respond to social and political agendas relating to young people and the youth service sector.
- Provide proactive leadership and advocacy to shape the agenda on issues affecting young people and youth services.
- Collaborate on issues that affect young people and youth workers.
- Promote a positive profile in the media and the community of young people and youth services.
- Build capacity for young people to speak out and take action on issues that affect them.
- Enhance the capacity of the youth services sector to provide high quality services.
- Ensure Youth Action's organisational development, efficiency, effectiveness and good governance.

### About WESTIR

WESTIR Limited stands for Western Sydney Regional Information and Research Service. The purpose of WESTIR Limited is to respond to current and potential issues affecting the people of Greater Western Sydney by gathering, analysing and interpreting information and ensuring that such information is easily accessible to the community.

WESTIR conducted the outstanding qualitative analysis and commentary that made this report possible.

WESTIR's qualitative analysis was derived from original research carried out by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY).

# Introduction

The opinion and experiences of young people in Australia are critical to shaping the decisions that impact their lives. Engaging young people and encouraging participation in public dialogue has enormous benefit for individuals and for communities. Importantly, it enables good decision making that can provide better outcomes on the complex issues young people experience today, as young people are experts in their own experience. Yet all too often young people are sidelined in policy and decision-making processes, or their views are not acted upon.

This report delivers the views of young people on issues important to young people and in their own words in order to bridge the participation gap and ensure those views are heard in important discussions and debates.

To achieve this, we collected qualitative responses to open-ended survey questions from more than 3,400 young people. The questions addressed issues that young people have expressed a great interest in or are disproportionately affected by. The issues surveyed included employment, secondary and tertiary education, migration, housing, homelessness, LGBTI issues and more. This report analyses 500 responses from young people aged 12–25 in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Their responses were coded twice – by topic area and then by theme.

The survey overwhelmingly showed that young people care about fairness, equity and equality in the issues that affect them most. In particular, equitable access to education, housing and employment. Young people regarded these issues as essential for leading a full and healthy life. They were seen as basic or fundamental rights. Because issues in education, housing and employment were the key concerns of young people expressed, they are the focus of this report.

Through this lens of fairness, equity and equality, young people were clearly disappointed with the current government's action on issues and many cited that politicians lacked vision and failed to

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listen to young people. They felt governments were not acting in their best interests or the interests of future generations. The responses provided by young people to the three topics discussed here – education, employment, and housing – reveal a politically and socially engaged cohort who are concerned about equality, and who want to see a better future both for themselves and for generations to come. This paper aims to give young people a direct voice and to show their perspective on each of these issues.

## **Research Method**

This report analyses the responses to the open-ended survey questions by 500 young people living in NSW and the ACT. A young person is defined as being between the ages of 12 and 25 at the time of the survey. The qualitative responses were coded twice, first by topic area (education, housing, employment), then by themes (e.g. 'safety', 'hopes for the future', 'inequality', etc.). Following the coding, two clear areas of commentary from young people emerged: how young people perceive inequality in the three issue areas, and the suggestions they made for improvement in these three areas. The report explores these themes through relevant academic and policy papers and by summarising and including quotes from young people in their own words. Age, gender, location and occupation for each quote are included when supplied within the data.

# Young People and Education

Education is central to young people's lives. Adolescence is the second most important period of development in a person's life and young people's experiences during their secondary education is critical to their positive or negative interaction and outcomes from the education system.<sup>123</sup> The transition from secondary education to further education or the workplace is one of the most difficult transitions people face during their lives. The successes or difficulties experienced during this transition are predictive of outcomes well into young people's futures and have linked outcomes including employment status, health outcomes and lifetime earnings.<sup>4567</sup> Following young people's experience with their secondary education, their entry into the workforce is impacted by the combination of rising university fees, cuts to VET and TAFE programs, and more instability in the workforce, which was reflected in their responses.

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<sup>1</sup> Pilcher, S. (2017) 'Early learning report card: Australia is improving rapidly, but there's more work to do', *The Conversation*, accessible at: <https://theconversation.com/early-learning-report-card-australia-is-improving-rapidly-but-theres-more-work-to-do-83706>

<sup>2</sup> Sayers, M., West, S., Lorains, J., Laidlaw, B., Moore, T. & Robinson, R. (2012) 'Starting School: A pivotal life transition for children and their families', *Family Matters*, no. 90, pp. 45-56, accessible at: <https://aifs.gov.au/sites/default/files/fm90d.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organisation (2017) 'Maternal, Newborn and child health', Geneva, Switzerland, accessible at: [http://www.who.int/maternal\\_child\\_adolescent/topics/adolescence/development/en/](http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/topics/adolescence/development/en/)

<sup>4</sup> Harwood, V., Hickey-Moody, A., McMahon, S. & O'Shea, S. (2017) 'The Politics of Widening Participation and University Access for Young People: Making Educational Futures', Routledge, New York.

<sup>5</sup> France, A. & Roberts, S. (2017) 'Youth and Social Class: Enduring Inequality in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand', Palgrave MacMillan, London.

<sup>6</sup> Perso, T. (2012) 'Cultural Responsiveness and School Education: With particular focus on Australia's First Peoples; A Review & Synthesis of the Literature', Darwin, Northern Territory, accessible at: <http://ccde.menzies.edu.au/sites/default/files/Literature%20review%20Cultural%20Responsiveness%20and%20School%20Education%20March%202012%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Wyn, J. (2015) 'Youth Policy and the Problematic Nexus between Education and Employment', in Kitty te Riele & Radhika Gonor (Eds.), *Interrogating Conceptions of 'Vulnerable Youth' in Theory, Policy and Practice*, Sense Publishers, Boston, United States, pp. 49-62.

### Young people's perspectives from the survey

#### Education as a 'foundation for the future'

All young people have some experience of education, which led to the largest amount of discussion and responses in the survey. Young people's responses focused heavily on education's importance as the foundation for all other functions in society to be successful. Without education, they saw that it was very difficult to achieve their goals and obtain the outcomes they desired. Young people described education as a 'foundation for the future,' giving them access to employment and housing, and allowing them to pursue their ambitions. However, young people believe that a lack of fairness and equity is denying a large proportion of young people from obtaining an adequate or excellent education. Most young people felt that access to an education was a basic right of living in Australia and many of their comments showed that they did not seem to think that this basic right was being fulfilled or addressed adequately.

Many young people called for education to be free, or vastly more affordable, but their comments about free education were more likely to stress the importance of everybody having access to a good, well-funded education system, rather than being motivated by self-interest. This was linked back to young people's belief that education is a foundation for the future and that Australia's positive future depends on a well-educated population.

#### Young Person Quotes

*Barriers to education, particularly financial barriers, foster inequality in all areas of life. Better access can not only improve quality of life for individuals but also gives more people the opportunity and means to contribute to society.*

- Female, 20–25, University student,  
Employed part-time

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*Education is essential to provide individuals with the opportunities to do their best within our society. It is also a human right to receive quality basic education and the education systems need to be adequately redressed to provide youth with the skills they need in life whilst adequately addressing social issues such as equality and mental health.*

- *Female, 17–19, University student, Employed part-time*

*An educated society (i.e. strong literacy and numeracy) is a strong one. Education should be a significant area for development as not all schools and socio-economic areas are equal in this sense.*

- *Female 17–19, University student, Unemployed*

*Education allows us to decide what we want to further ourselves in, and what we're interested in, so equal opportunities and access to education regardless of one's socio-economic status.*

- *Female 20–25, University student, Employed part-time*

## Sustainable, equitable funding

Many young people responded that the way high school funding is distributed creates an unfair advantage for private schools at the expense of public schools. They responded that money was being given to private schools to buy extras, such as better libraries, air-conditioned classrooms and recreational equipment, when public schools were struggling to obtain essentials such as textbooks and basic classroom equipment. Others thought that some schools, particularly rural, disadvantaged and special needs schools, were not adequately funded and needed more funding and assistance to address the gap.

With regards to tertiary education, many young people called for sustained, long-term funding for higher education and VET that would keep tertiary education affordable and viable as an option for all members of society. Young people's responses were highly altruistic; concern for others and their needs was a strong theme throughout their responses. Young people did not think that the current funding arrangements were fair and could only see more problems occurring if universities were deregulated or more equitable funding was not implemented.

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### Young Person Quotes

*I see education as a human right not a profit-making machine reserved only for the wealthy.*

- *Female, 20–25, University student, Unemployed*

*I suggest a serious review (which does not involve the members of parliament rather a third-party review) into the system which aims to address the significant gap in funding from public to private schools. Also, a closer look at other countries such as Finland that has no private schools therefore they are all funded the same.*

- *Female, 17–19, University student, Unemployed*

*Public schools and the higher education sector must have guaranteed, long-term funding to allow for sustainable, quality education that benefits the whole of society and the economy. Australia's poor performance compared to others in the OECD when it comes to numeracy, in particular is testament to the undervaluing of education. Stripping away of TAFE to redirect funds to unethical, unscrupulous private colleges has been hugely damaging and must stop. The proposed deregulation of the university sector is also a major mistake – instead, we must continue to maintain Australia's world-class higher education sector by adequately funding research, teaching and learning.*

- *Male, 20–25, Part-time/casual worker*

*The rising cost of university degrees only serves to disenfranchise already disadvantaged young people seeking quality education.*

- *Female, 20–25, University student, Part-time/casual worker*

*I find it extremely unfair that private schools receive so much more funding from the government than public schools although they are 'private' which should mean they are self-sufficient from the government. Even though at their discretion they charge their students however much they want. Thus, allowing them the luxury of an already larger budget from the government combined with the funding from rich families putting them at a severe advantage over children with less affluent backgrounds.*

- *Female, 17–19, University student, Unemployed*

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*Stop making cuts but DO stop funding private schools or at least decrease it significantly (private for a reason, please!). Put the funding back in TAFE. Do not deregulate universities. Find your money elsewhere... by the way, where did the money from the TAFE fee increase go again?*

- *Female, 20–25, University and TAFE student, unemployed.*

*Make it easier for students by offering day and night courses for all subjects or make it easier for university students who also have to work to survive and pay bills.*

- *Female, 20–25, University student*

## Education as a necessity for Australia's future

Most of all, young people could see that Australia's future depends on young people receiving a good education and having the capacity to problem-solve. Education is seen to provide opportunities for young people to break the cycle of poverty, to impact on the future of the nation, and to develop as future leaders.

### Young person quotes

*Allocate efficient amounts of funding to education (tertiary), this is what shapes the future of the nation, and the next generation of leaders.*

- *Female, 20–25, University student, Employed part-time*

*Education is the future of our country. It is our most direct investment as it can have positive effects on all other areas.*

- *Female 17–19, University student, Employed part-time, Experience of living with a disability*

*Education has the power to break the chain of poverty, poor parental guidance and prevent poor choices from being made. It sets people up for a win on life.*

- *Male, 20–25, University student, Employed part-time*

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*The only way youth can achieve anything in this world is through education. Without access to affordable higher education, we will never be able to grow Australia.*

- *Female, 20-25, University student, Employed part-time, Experience of living with a disability*

## Young People and Housing Inequality

Housing inequality and unaffordability is a well-covered issue in Australia. Property ownership rates for young people and those up to the age of 35 is decreasing as house prices and rents have increased dramatically over the past two decades.<sup>8</sup> The Committee for Economic Development in Australia (CEDA) found 'a growing divide between generations in terms of access to housing market opportunity... as young people's access to both home ownership and property investment opportunities has lagged further and further behind the opportunities available to older age groups.'<sup>9</sup> Many young people are not concerned with home ownership but just with finding or securing any adequate or safe accommodation as young people are disproportionately affected by homelessness.

### Young people's perspectives from the survey

#### Housing – a highly personalised experience

Young people's responses highlight just how different each young person's experience, perspective and expectations were in relation to housing. Some respondents related home and living to emotional and physical wellbeing while others were concerned with the affordability of purchasing property. Many linked the cost of a house, mortgage or rent with the ability to live a happy life. For some, homelessness and finding any suitable accommodation was the priority and for others housing was a link to safety and security within the home.

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<sup>8</sup> Wilkins, R. 'The Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey: Selected Findings from Waves 1 to 15: The 12th Annual Statistical Report of the HILDA Survey', The University of Melbourne, accessible at:

[https://melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/2437426/HILDA-SR-med-res.pdf](https://melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/2437426/HILDA-SR-med-res.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Ong, R. (2017) 'Chapter 4: Housing futures in Australia: an intergenerational perspective' in *Housing in Australia*, pp. 79–94, accessible at: [http://adminpanel.ceda.com.au/FOLDERS/Service/Files/Documents/36002~HousingAustraliaFinal\\_Flipsnack.pdf](http://adminpanel.ceda.com.au/FOLDERS/Service/Files/Documents/36002~HousingAustraliaFinal_Flipsnack.pdf)

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### A good home life as a fundamental right

Many young people responded that having a home and being able to afford to live was a fundamental right that should be available to everyone. They linked quality of life with having enough money to purchase the necessities of life, one of which is an affordable place to live. They also said secure housing is a way for people to avoid being caught in a potential cycle of poverty.

*Everyone should have a safe place to call home. Access to affordable housing is unobtainable for most young people. We will have an entire generation of renters or homeless people.*

- Female, 20–25, Unemployed, lived experience of disability

*Everybody, no matter what age, no matter what issues, no matter what background, deserves a roof over their heads.*

- Female, 17–19, TAFE student

*Reshape social welfare to include those most vulnerable and in need. Everyone deserves to have access to minimum standards of living as a human right.*

- Female 20–25, Employed full-time

*Everybody NEEDS a safe home + living area. I think it's a human right.*

- Female, 12–16, High school student

*This is literally day-to-day survival/meeting basic needs, of course it is extremely important to me.*

- Female 20–25, Employed full-time, Carer

### Housing affordability

When young people speak about housing affordability, they speak from a variety of perspectives. For some young people, housing affordability relates to renting and moving away from home. For others it is the perceived impossibility of ever being able to purchase a house of their own. For others still, affordability is linked to their inability to find ongoing, stable accommodation. They believed that paying too much for housing left too little to live on, however, they felt that moving

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further out of the city was not seen as an adequate solution due to additional transport costs and the distance from education or employment hubs.

### Young person quotes

*I don't have parents who can guarantee a home loan and have an extensive property portfolio and can't really imagine being able to own my own home – much less comfortably afford to rent one.*

- Female, 20–25, Employed full-time, University graduate

*Hard for people to thrive (e.g. pursuing further education, pursuing their interests) if constantly worried by things like cost of living or finding somewhere to live.*

- Female 20–25, Employed full-time

## Housing and Welfare Payments

Welfare payments were considered necessary to assist with people achieving a decent living standard, but young people overwhelmingly responded that these payments were not adequate to cover the basics of living and needed to be increased immediately and made less difficult to access, particularly for those most in need and at risk of homelessness.

### Young person quotes

*Centrelink support is difficult to access, even for people in serious need and sometimes takes so long to be approved that students have to leave university to work. Newstart is not enough to live off and this does not motivate people to get work, it just causes enough stress that applying for jobs is even more difficult.*

- Female, 20–25, University student, Employed part-time, Holds Certificate IV in community sector

*Increase max payments for Youth Allowance, make rent allowance proportionate to rent in an area.*

- Female, 20–25, University student, Employed part-time

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*Centrelink needs to be more efficient and rely less on subjective assessments of staff. The application process is unnecessarily difficult and poorly supported. It does not filter out those who do not need payments and is a barrier to those who do.*

- Female, 20–25, University student, Employed part-time

## Government Policies

Young people supplied several policy suggestions aimed at lowering the cost of housing for the general population. They were highly critical when addressing some government policies such as negative gearing and capital gains tax discounts that they saw as contributing to high housing costs.

### Young person quotes

*Increase the supply of affordable housing, greater security for tenants, reform tax breaks which contribute to inequality (e.g. negative gearing and the capital gains tax discount), increase welfare payments at the very least to an amount which brings people above the poverty line.*

- Female, 20–25, Employed full-time

*We need to fix our distorted tax system and reform negative gearing, allowing Australian youth to get a foot in the door in the property market.*

- Female, 20–25, Employed full-time

*Housing in Australia is broken, there needs to be more supply released into the market, there needs to be more programs that support young people into accessing rental and owners' markets. Negative gearing and tax concessions for rich property owners needs to be stopped.*

- Young person, 12–16, University student, Employed part-time

*Mandating the development of more affordable housing and supporting young people who are required to live away from home. More co-operatives and crisis accommodation services on campuses and in communities."*

- Young person, 20–25, University student, Employed part-time

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### Homelessness

The young people who responded to this survey had a high degree of empathy for people who were experiencing homeless and made several suggestions to alleviate the problem. They felt that everyone deserved to have shelter and if they could not afford it then it should be provided to them for free.

#### Young person quotes

*Open up vacant houses to the homeless and those in undesirable living conditions free of charge, and begin construction of new, efficient cities where all aspects of life are truly voluntary.*

- Male, 20-25, Unemployed

*Provide shelter for people who can't afford homes.*

- Male, 12-16, High school student

*Increase spending on social security in order to provide more homes for the homeless.*

- Male, 12-16, High school, Employed part-time

## Young People and Employment

Young people's experiences with employment are different to generations before them, as they encounter high rates of unemployment and underemployment, increased casualisation and longer times to transition from study to employment.<sup>1011</sup> The existing inequalities in the employment sphere have a direct impact on young people and could negatively impact them over the course of their working lives and increase overall inequality. The major drivers of this increased inequality include the widening gap between those who can and can't afford to buy a house, those who can and can't maintain financial and job security and those who can and can't build up an adequate amount of superannuation savings in preparation for retirement.

### Young people's perspectives

#### More than just a job

Although employment was generally accepted as being the next step in life after education, respondents' comments ranged from wanting or needing a job themselves through to the impacts they had experienced personally or seen in their community or society of holding or not holding a job.

Employment was not just considered a way to earn money. Many respondents spoke about needing money for paying bills but also mentioned the positive contribution that working makes to wellbeing. They also linked unemployment to homelessness and generally lower standards of living for those affected.

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<sup>10</sup> Woodman, D. & Wyn, J. (2015) 'Youth and Generation: Rethinking change and inequality in the lives of young people', Sage Publishers, London, pp. 27-8.

<sup>11</sup> Wyn, J. (2015) 'Youth Policy and the Problematic Nexus between Education and Employment', in Kitty te Riele & Radhika Gonur (Eds.), *Interrogating Conceptions of 'Vulnerable Youth' in Theory, Policy and Practice*, Sense Publishers, Boston, United States, pp. 49-62.

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### Employment and the gap between rich and poor

In line with young people's responses about education and housing, equality was a primary concern for respondents. Many could see the relationship between not having a job and being excluded from the lifestyle that was available to employed people.

#### Young person quotes

*I've experienced difficulty finding a job, so have people I know, and there is very little help offered to those financially struggling. It's too easy to fall through the cracks.*

- Female, 20-25, University student,  
Employed full-time

*Minimum wage, unpaid internships and job insecurity are issues faced by a lot of people in my generation. This is made worse with unrealistic rental and house prices and costly uni fees!*

- Female, 20-25, University student,  
Employed part-time

*Not being employed is one of the reasons how you can be trapped in the cycle of poverty.*

- Female, 12-16, High school student

### Job seeking and equality

Some respondents were concerned that young people were finding it hard to find employment, while others mentioned people with disabilities and older jobseekers. Young people recognise their place in broader society and connect the problems they face with finding employment with those faced by other demographic groups.

#### Young person quotes

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*Wages do not always reflect the hard work that people are putting into Australia – people are being undervalued – especially women, Indigenous people, and young people. We need to re-evaluate what we value in society, rather than assess our value on money.*

- Female, 20–25, University student,  
Employed part-time

*Creating training/employment opportunities that provide pathways to employment for vulnerable young people (e.g. young people in or leaving care, ATSI) is extremely important. So is creating/supporting employment opportunities for people with disability.*

- Female, 20–25, Employed full-time

*Young people are experiencing immense difficulties getting into the job market, we need to address this.*

- Female, 20–25, Employed full-time

*All people have the right to equal opportunity for acceptable, consistent employment at a wage appropriate the current cost of living in Australia.*

- Female, 20–25, Employed part-time,  
Lived experience of mental health  
issue

*Employment enables people of all ages to engage with society. Without a sufficient income people are unable to participate and actively be a part of Australian society without some level of exclusion.*

- Female, 17–19, University student,  
Employed part-time

*Work is a dignifying activity that establishes someone's place in society to a reasonable extent. It allows individuals to also pursue other areas of life that can further establish themselves in society (socially, internally, economically).*

- Male, 20–25, University Student,  
Employed part-time

## Changes to working conditions

Young people expressed serious concerns about the lack of respect shown by employers to young people. Exploitation of workers due to changes in policy regarding working conditions, particularly reductions to penalty rates, was a very real worry due to students' reliance on casual weekend work.

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The rise of unpaid internships was also a serious issue raised by young people, as they signalled that they felt pressure to give away their time for free, even as graduates, to be able to potentially be offered a paid position. Overall, workers' rights were a common theme in the employment responses of the survey.

### Young person quotes

*Working in the hospitality industry, it is appalling the decreasing of the minimum wages and elimination of paid breaks. For those who rely on such jobs as a living it is becoming impossible to maintain a healthy wage and balanced lifestyle, therefore devaluing the country's need for full-time employees in hospitality jobs.*

- Female, 17-19, University student, Employed part-time

*The mistreatment of part-time and casual workers (in particular 14-18-year-olds) is an underlying issue that is not recognised. The amount of young casual workers that are payed below the minimum is also extremely prominent and the illegal employment of young workers is also an issue, particularly in the hospitality industry. From personal experience this mistreatment of youthful casual workers impacts largely on individuals and their mental wellbeing.*

- Female, 12-16, High school student

*We all need jobs to keep our heads above water. There is an oversaturated graduate market and not enough jobs; there are growing residential areas and no work close to home, congested roads and public transport.*

- Male, 18-25, University Student, Employed part-time

*Workers' rights are fundamental to a functioning and fair society.*

- Female, 20-25, University student, Employed part-time

*PAID INTERNSHIPS NOT UNPAID INTERNSHIPS.*

- Female, 17-19, University student, Employed part-time

### Alternative political comments

The following quotes indicate that young people were thinking about employment along partisan political lines and were informed by a range of different political philosophies. It was beyond our scope in this report, but it would be interesting to see how these views align with political and media discourse.

### Young person quotes

*Society progresses better when people are working. Also, lots of people work hard and don't earn any money and those people should be rewarded and it would improve the economy.*

- Female, 20–25, University student, Unemployed

*Remove penalty rates to make it easier for small businesses to employ more people more often. Create a national service scheme where people seeking youth unemployment benefits (who aren't studying or skilling for work) earn their benefits by completing rotations through health-care, child-care, military, industry work-placements which also gives them employable skills to move off benefits.*

- Male, 20–25, University student, Employed full-time

*Youth unemployment is becoming more of an issue as most kids when they leave high school go on job seekers' allowance and don't look for jobs maybe cutting the job seeker allowance will make the young kids want to apply for jobs and be more motivated.*

- Female, 17–19, ATSI, TAFE student, Employed full-time

*Young people from the age of 15 have to work a part-time job at least. Homeless people should be assisted to find a job in order to be given a home and start over. People who are unemployed need assistance from special job agencies to find a job that suits them.*

- Female, 20–25, University student, Employed part-time

## **Young People, Inequality, and Hope for the Future**

The topics of education, employment and housing are just three of many that young people commented on in the original survey. Comments on equality were not limited to education, housing and employment. They encompassed all aspects of life. The survey results included comments and ideas on health, the environment and social justice. The overwhelming finding from the qualitative responses to this survey was that young people are concerned with fairness, equity and equality. The suggestions and advice they offered going forward then focused on the existing or perceived inequalities in the current system. The three issues discussed in this paper, education, employment and housing, were linked in the responses of the young people and each one was an integral part of the others.

Equitable access to education, housing and employment was regarded as essential for leading a full and healthy life. Interestingly, of the three topics, housing was seen as the area with the most entrenched inequality, with no respondents citing that affordability or inequality was not an issue or calling for policy actions that might increase inequality. In the topics of education and employment, some young people argued for further privatisation and deregulation – policy approaches that arguably would increase existing inequalities. However, housing was viewed by all respondents as a fundamental right. Young people were worried about the future, seeing education as a pathway to gain the qualifications needed for a fulfilling, well-paying job, which would allow them to afford rent and maybe buy a house in the future. However, buying a house was a distant and perhaps impossible dream rather than something they could plan. The responses provided by young people to the three topics discussed here, education, employment, and housing, reveal a politically and socially engaged cohort who are concerned about equality, and who want to see a better future both for themselves and for generations to come.