

Young Australians' concerns and trust are related to their family formation goals

Growing Up in Australia Snapshot Series – Issue 16 | June 2026

Key findings

- Most young Australians hope to have children, but a notable minority do not or are unsure. Among young people aged 19-20 and 23-24 years in 2023, around 7 in 10 (71%) hoped to have children, 17% did not, and 13% hadn't considered it.¹
- Trust in institutions, such as hospitals and schools, was strongly linked to hopes for having children. Among young people with higher trust in institutions, 79% hoped to have children, compared with 59% of those with lower trust.
- Economic concerns were common among young Australians. Among those most concerned about finding work or the global economy, 19% did not hope to have children, with this concern most pronounced for cisgender women.
- Concern about housing affordability was widespread (85%) but it was unrelated to young people's family formation goals.
- Environmental concern was widespread, and those who were most concerned were less likely to hope to have children. Almost 2 in 3 young people (65%) were at least somewhat concerned about the environment, and among those most concerned, 20% said they did not hope to have children.
- However, even amongst young people with the greatest concern for the environment, 67% hoped to have children at some point in the future.
- Trans and gender diverse young people² were more likely to say they did not hope to have children (32%) or hadn't considered it (33%) compared to cisgender young men and women (72% and 69% respectively). However, sample sizes were small so findings should be interpreted with caution.

Implications for policy and practice

- These findings show that while most young Australians still hope to have children, their hopes are linked to how secure and confident they feel about the future. Trust in institutions and people and concerns about jobs, the global economy and the environment are associated with family formation goals.
- In this context, encouraging and supporting young people to achieve their family formation aspirations may need to extend beyond financial supports to take a more holistic view that includes elements of climate action and building trust in public institutions.
- More research may be required to understand the types of support needed by trans and gender diverse young people, such as inclusive pathways to achieving family formation goals and strategies to reduce discrimination and strengthen trust in institutions.

¹ The proportions may not add to 100% due to rounding.

² In this snapshot, gender is reported as cisgender men, cisgender women and trans and gender diverse young people. Trans and gender diverse young people includes those who identify as a gender different to that assigned at birth, who identify as non-binary, who use a different term or who are unsure or questioning.

About Growing Up in Australia

Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) is an ongoing, nationally representative study that follows the lives of children and their families from all over Australia. In 2004, around 5,000 0–1 year olds (B cohort) and 5,000 4–5 year olds (K cohort) and their families were recruited and have been surveyed every 2 years since. With extensive information on children's physical, socio-emotional, cognitive and behavioural characteristics, development and linked biomarkers, education, health and welfare data, the study has been a unique resource providing evidence for policy makers to identify opportunities for early intervention and prevention strategies.

What do we already know?

As young people transition to adulthood, many begin to consider what they want their future to look like, including forming a family of their own. Family formation goals are attitudes, thoughts and plans on having children, including whether to have children, when to have them and how many to have.

Young adults are planning for their futures in a changing landscape. Australia's total fertility rate has declined steadily since the 1960s (Centre for Population, 2024). People are becoming parents later in life (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2025) and having fewer children than in previous decades (Qu et al., 2024).

These trends are driven by multiple factors, including rising living costs, housing affordability pressures, extended education pathways and career timing, the availability of safe and effective contraceptives and challenges accessing affordable child care (Atalay et al., 2021; Carmichael & McDonald, 2003; Testa & Bolano, 2019).

Concepts of family have also changed over time, with some research suggesting that people put as much, or more, importance on bonds of love as on blood or genetic bonds when defining a family, and that LGBTQ+ people may include chosen family or close friends in their definition of family (Budinski & Gahan, 2023; Hull & Ortyl, 2019; Relationships Australia, 2018). Against this backdrop, it is important to understand how young people's family formation goals relate to what ultimately happens.

Family formation goals do not always predict whether people eventually have children. In developed countries, completed family size is often lower than stated desires and intentions (Beaujouan & Berghammer, 2019), and studies in Australia have consistently found that people have fewer children than they would ideally want (Gray et al., 2022). Even so, understanding what shapes these goals helps to explain how young people are imagining their futures.

Family formation goals are influenced by individual, family and societal factors. Previous research shows that personal characteristics and experiences, including educational attainment (Berrington & Pattaro, 2014), the family environment during childhood (Berrington & Pattaro, 2014; Merz, 2012) and the culture and values of the individual (Ajzen & Klobas, 2013) help shape ideas around family formation. Gender role attitudes (Brinton et al., 2018), norms around family size and timing of childbearing (Bachrach & Morgan, 2013) and the institutional and policy environment (Ajzen & Klobas, 2013) may also influence family formation goals. People may adjust their family formation goals throughout the life course in response to changing situations, such as financial difficulties, trouble finding a partner or getting older (Gray et al., 2013).

Emerging research highlights that concerns about current and future conditions, including climate change, economic instability and broader social trends, can influence how young people feel about having children. People who feel uncertain about environmental or economic conditions may delay or reconsider having children or the number of children they hope to have (Bastianelli, 2025; Jayasinghe & Rackin, 2025; Lappegård et al., 2022; Puglisi et al., 2025; Sobotka et al., 2011), while those with a stronger sense of personal resilience appear less likely to adjust their family formation goals (Gatta et al., 2022).

Trust in institutions and in other people is also associated with family formation goals (Aassve et al., 2021; Kwag et al., 2024). While some studies in Australia have found that people cite the cost of raising children, the emotional value of children and job security as the most important factors in family formation decisions (Gray et al., 2022; Laß et al., 2025), less is known about how concerns about the future and societal trust are related to family formation goals in Australia.

Most research on uncertainty or concern about the future and family formation comes from countries with different policy systems, demographic profiles and social contexts from Australia. Some findings appear country-specific, such as the differing relationships between trust and family formation across high trust and low trust societies (Gortfelder et al., 2024). This highlights a need for Australian evidence.

How will this research build the evidence base?

Because the bulk of the existing research has been conducted in other countries, we do not yet know whether these forms of uncertainty are associated with young Australian's attitudes towards family formation or whether different aspects of Australia's social and economic context alter these relationships.

LSAC offers an opportunity to study how young people in Australia think about their futures during the transition to adulthood, and whether their levels of trust and concern are associated with their attitudes towards family formation.

Our analysis focuses on different forms of uncertainty and their links to hopes for having children. By comparing levels of environmental concern, economic concern, social trust and institutional trust with whether young people hope to have children, do not hope to have children or have not yet considered it, this study sheds light on how broader social conditions may influence young Australians' thoughts about family formation. Analysing these patterns separately for young cisgender men and women also reveals whether these relationships differ by gender.

The insights from this analysis provide the first national evidence on how trust and concerns are associated with thoughts on family formation among young Australians. Understanding the role of trust, and environmental and economic concerns provides a fuller picture of the conditions that support young people to feel optimistic and secure about planning their futures. This evidence helps build a more realistic foundation for policy discussions about family formation and the broader environments that shape young people's choices.

Data in focus

Study sample

This study uses data from the LSAC Baby (B) and Kinder (K) cohorts at Wave 10. The study sample consists of young people (1,837 from B cohort and 1,597 from K cohort) who reported on their family formation goals, environmental and economic concerns and social and institutional trust when they were aged 19–20 years (B cohort) and 23–24 years (K cohort) in 2023. This study also uses information gathered in Waves 1–8, when the young people were aged 0–1 years to 14–15 years (B cohort) and 4–5 years to 18–19 years (K cohort). Full details of the study sample, measurements and results are provided in the supplementary materials.

Study measures

Family formation goals

Young people who did not already have children³ were asked a series of questions about their future family formation goals. Young people were asked 'Do you hope to have children?' with the following response options:

- No
- Yes, in the next 5 years
- Yes, in the next 6–10 years
- Yes, in more than 10 years
- Haven't considered it.

Young people who indicated that they hoped to have children at some point in the future were also asked:

- 'How many children would you like to have?'

The response option was numeric, indicating the desired number of children.

³ In 2023, 172 young people (4%) had one or more children.

Concerns about the environment and economy

Young people were asked about their level of concern about 3 **environmental issues** (climate change, extreme weather events, other environmental issues) with 5 response options ranging from 'not at all' to 'very much' concerned. For participants who answered all 3 questions, an overall level of environmental concern was calculated by averaging the responses to the 3 questions.

Young people were also asked about their level of concern about 3 **economic issues** (global economic problems, being able to afford to buy a house, capacity to get a job in chosen area of training or interest) with 5 response options ranging from 'not at all' to 'very much' concerned. As with the environmental concern measure, an overall level of economic concern was calculated by averaging responses for those participants who answered all 3 questions.

Trust in society

Young people were asked about their level of trust in 5 Australian public institutions (hospitals, the police, the educational system, the law/legal system, the social welfare system), with 4 response options ranging from 'no trust' to 'a lot of trust'. For participants who answered all 5 questions, an **institutional trust** score was calculated by averaging the responses. Higher scores indicate a higher level of trust.

Young people were also asked a single question about how much they generally trusted most people, with scores ranging from 0 (not at all) to 10 (completely). This measure was used to indicate **social trust**.

Analysis

We used weighted proportions to describe young people's family formation goals, level of concern for the environment and economy and level of trust in Australian institutions and other people.

We used multinomial logistic regression to investigate whether overall levels of concern about the environment and economy and levels of trust were associated with family formation goals. This allowed us to compare the likelihood of hoping to have children, not hoping to have children or not having considered having children at different levels of trust and concern. We also analysed the individual environmental and economic issues separately to allow for more nuanced interpretation.

We adjusted the regression model for a range of socio-demographic and background factors. These factors were persistent neighbourhood disadvantage, sibling status, parental separation, main language other than English, family financial status, labour force status, study status, relationship status and remoteness. We analysed the data for the full study sample, then separately for young cisgender men and women, and we estimated marginal effects to show adjusted proportions for each outcome.

As the sample of trans and gender diverse young people was too small for separate regression analysis, we have included descriptive statistics of the key study measures in the supplementary materials. Full details of the method and all the variables included in the model are provided in the supplementary materials.

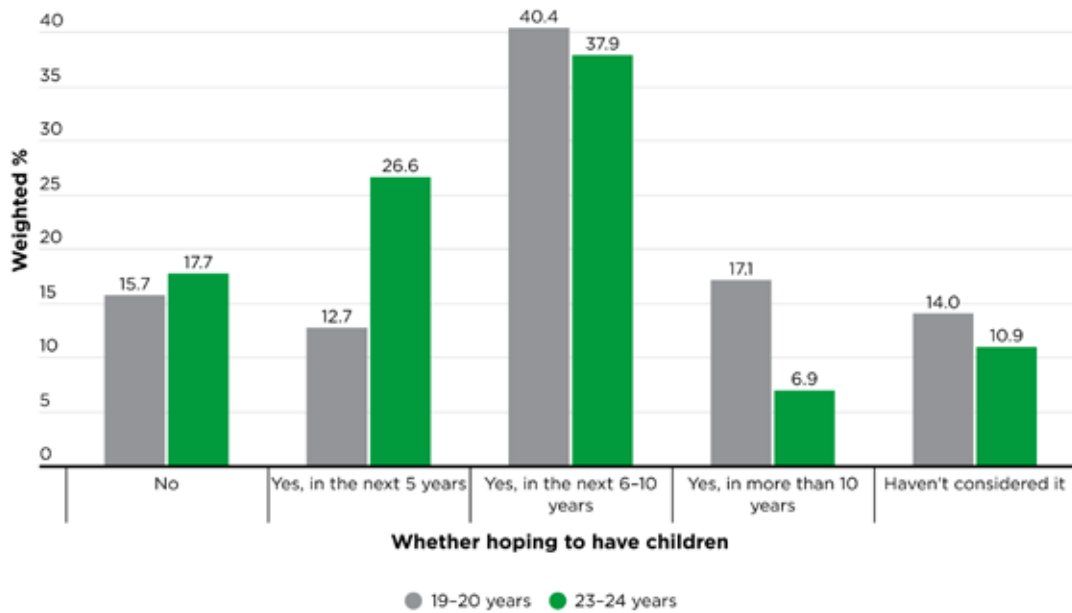
What do young people think about future family formation?

Many young people entering adulthood have hopes about future family formation, while others may not have considered it. Around 7 in 10 young people (71%) hoped to have children at some point in the future, 17% said that they did not hope to have children and 13% hadn't considered having children.⁴

The proportions of young people who said they did not hope to have children were similar in both age groups (Figure 1). The younger group was slightly more likely than the older group to say that they had not considered having children (14% compared to 11%). As might be expected, the younger group was less likely than the older group to say that they hoped to have children in the next 5 years (13% compared to 27%) and more likely to say that they hoped to have children in more than 10 years (17% compared to 7%).

4 The proportions do not add to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 1: Family formation goals for young people by age group

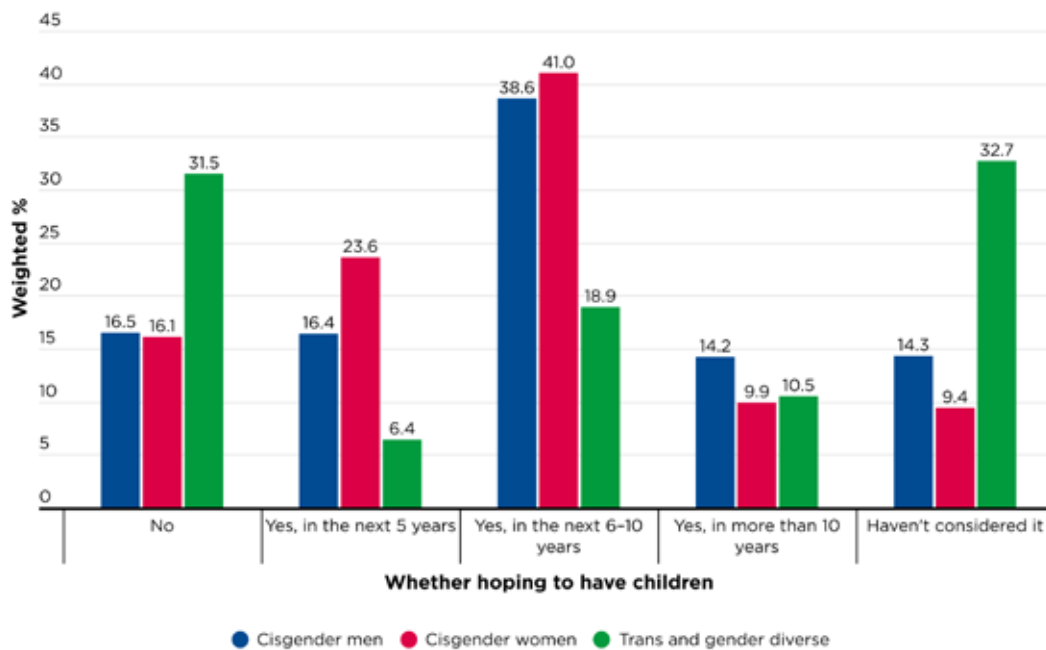


Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

The proportions of young people who said they did not hope to have children were similar between young cisgender men and young cisgender women (Figure 2). The young cisgender women were more likely than the young cisgender men to say that they hoped to have children in the next 5 years (24% compared to 16%) and less likely to say that they hoped to have children in more than 10 years (10% compared to 14%).

Young trans and gender diverse people⁵ were more likely than young cisgender men and women to say they did not hope to have children (32%) or they had not considered having children (33%). Young cisgender men were more likely than young cisgender women to say that they had not considered having children (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Family formation goals of young people by gender



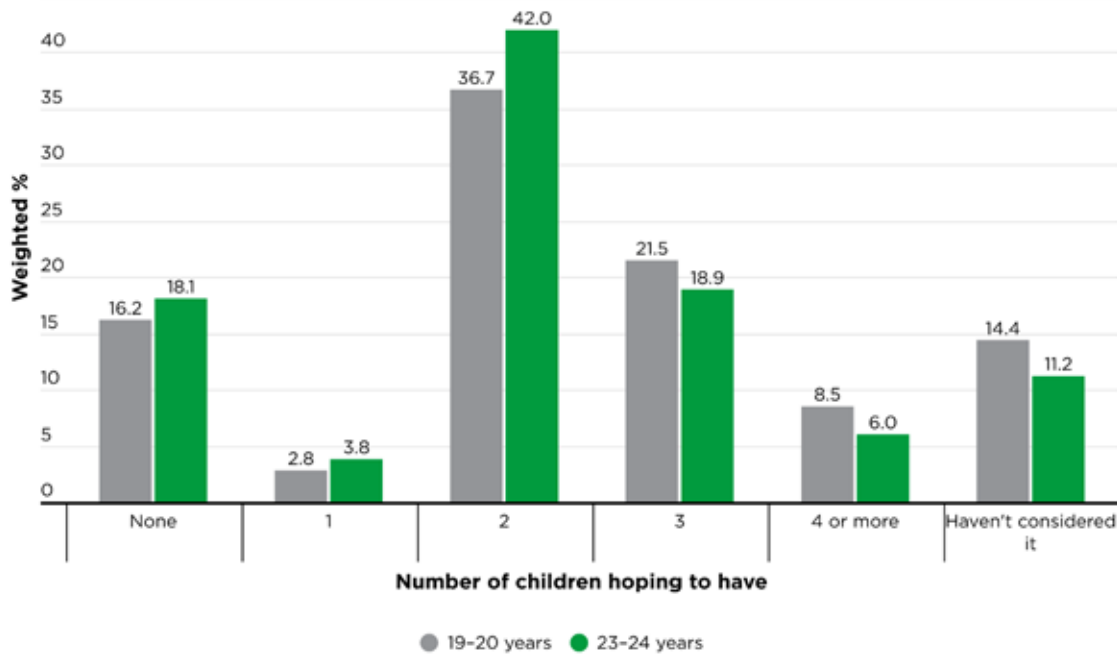
Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

⁵ In the study sample, 2.9% of young people aged 19-20 (n = 52) and 2.0% of young people aged 23-24 (n = 33) were trans and gender diverse.

More than half of young Australians hoped to have 2 or 3 children (39% and 20% respectively). Considerably smaller proportions hoped to have one child (3%) or 4 or more children (7%). These patterns were similar across age groups and for young cisgender men and women (Figures 3a and 3b).

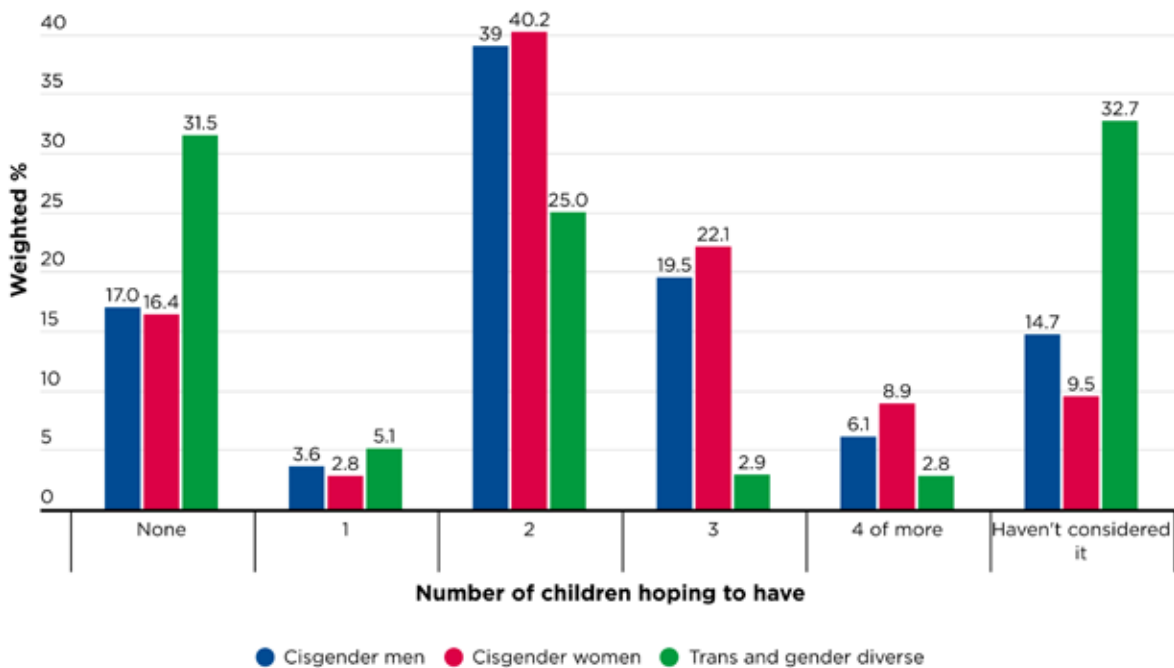
Among young trans and gender diverse people who hoped to have children, the largest proportion (25%) hoped to have 2 children (Figures 3b).

Figure 3a: Number of children young people hoped to have by age group



Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

Figure 3b: Number of children young people hoped to have by gender



Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

How concerned are young people?

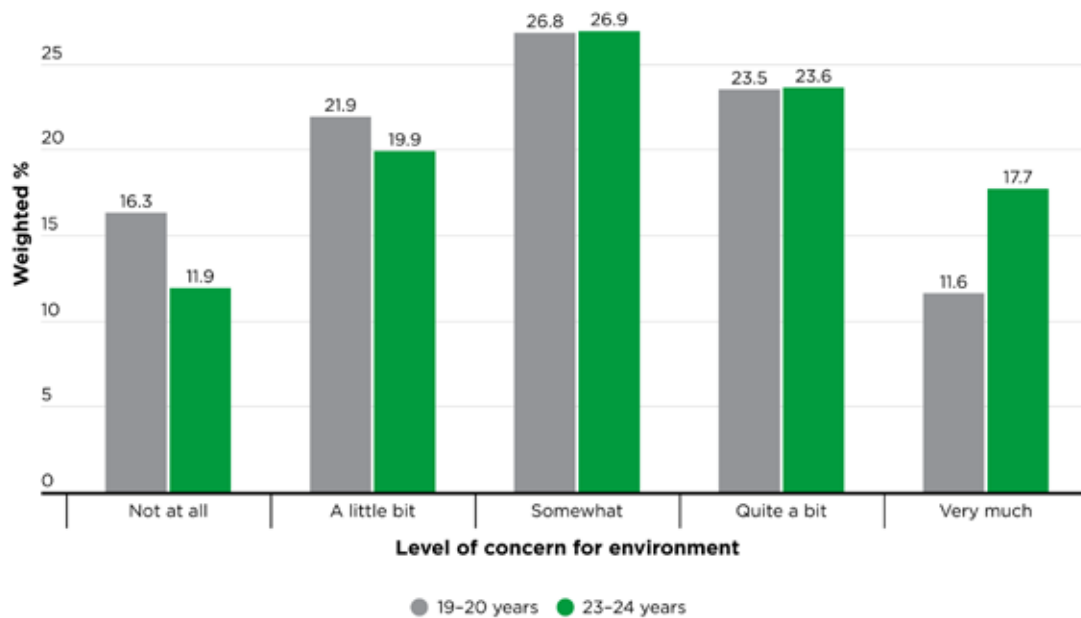
Understanding young people's concern about the environment and economy may help inform policy and practice to support wellbeing and ensure youth perspectives are considered in population planning. In this section, we provide descriptive statistics about young peoples' levels of environmental and economic concern.

Concern about the environment

Around 2 in 3 young people (65%) were at least somewhat concerned about the environment (Figure 4a). The older group were more likely than the younger group to be very much concerned (18% compared to 12%).

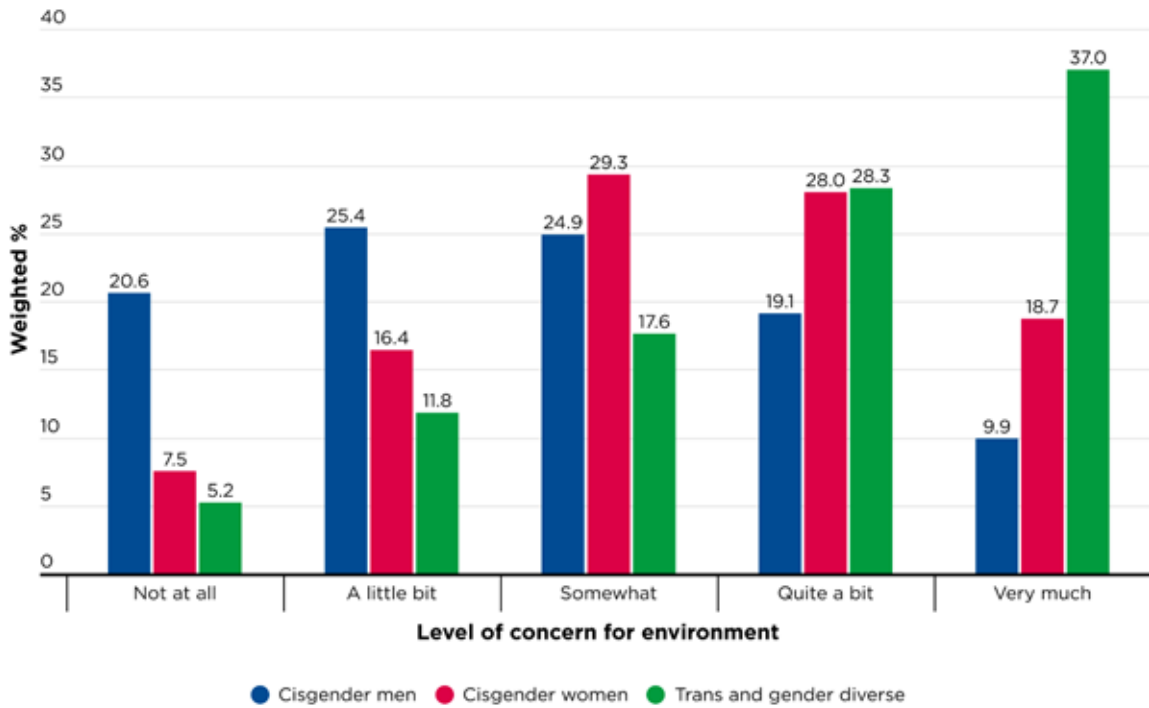
Young cisgender women and trans and gender diverse people were more likely than young cisgender men to have a higher level of concern about the environment (Figure 4b).

Figure 4a: Young people's level of concern for the environment by age group



Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

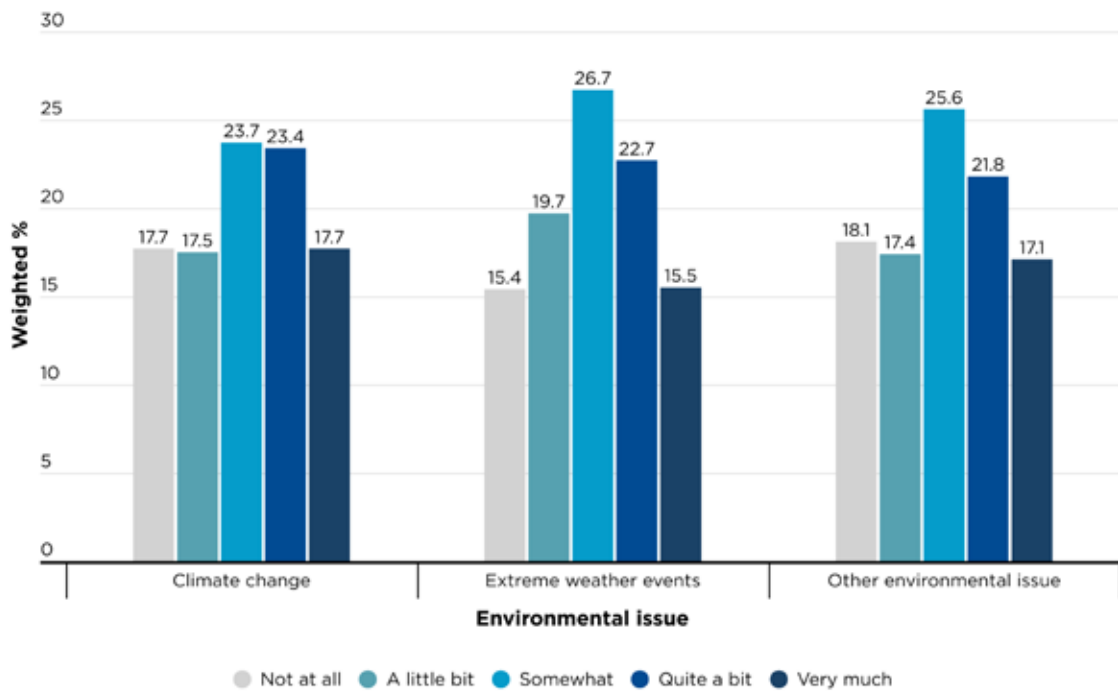
Figure 4b: Young people’s level of concern for the environment by gender



Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

Young peoples’ levels of concern were similar for climate change, extreme weather events and other environmental issues (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Young people’s level of concern for 3 environmental issues



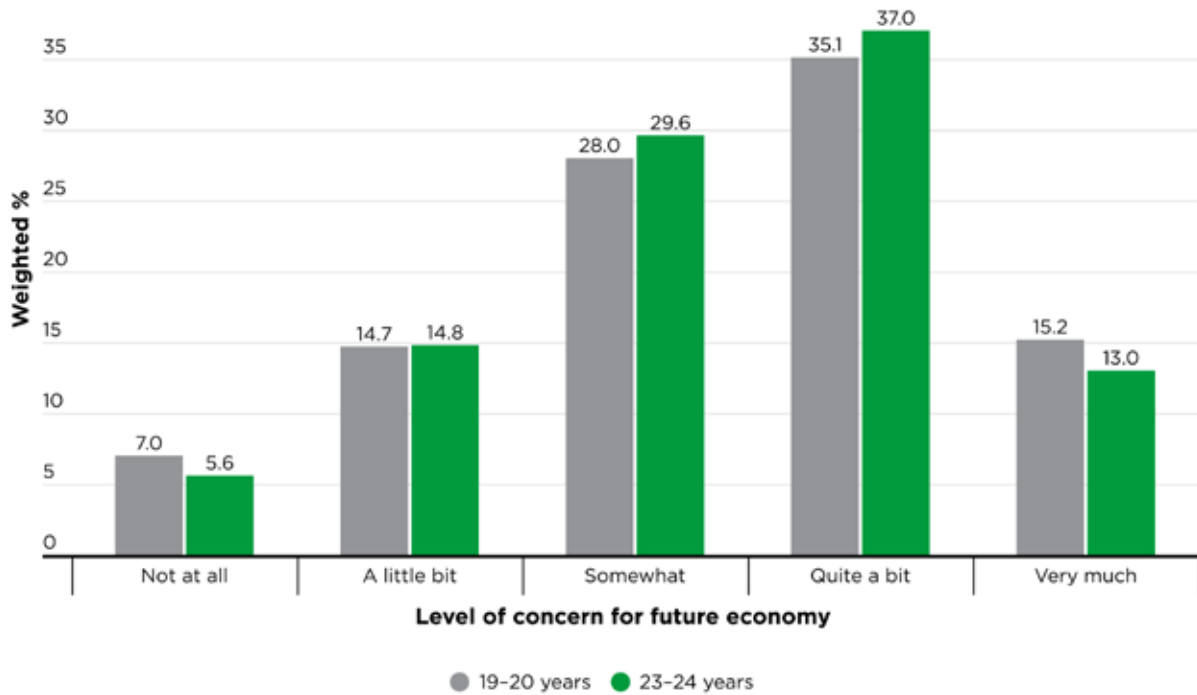
Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

Concern about the economy

Around 4 out of 5 young people (79%) were at least somewhat concerned about the future economy, and this was similar for both age groups (Figure 6a).

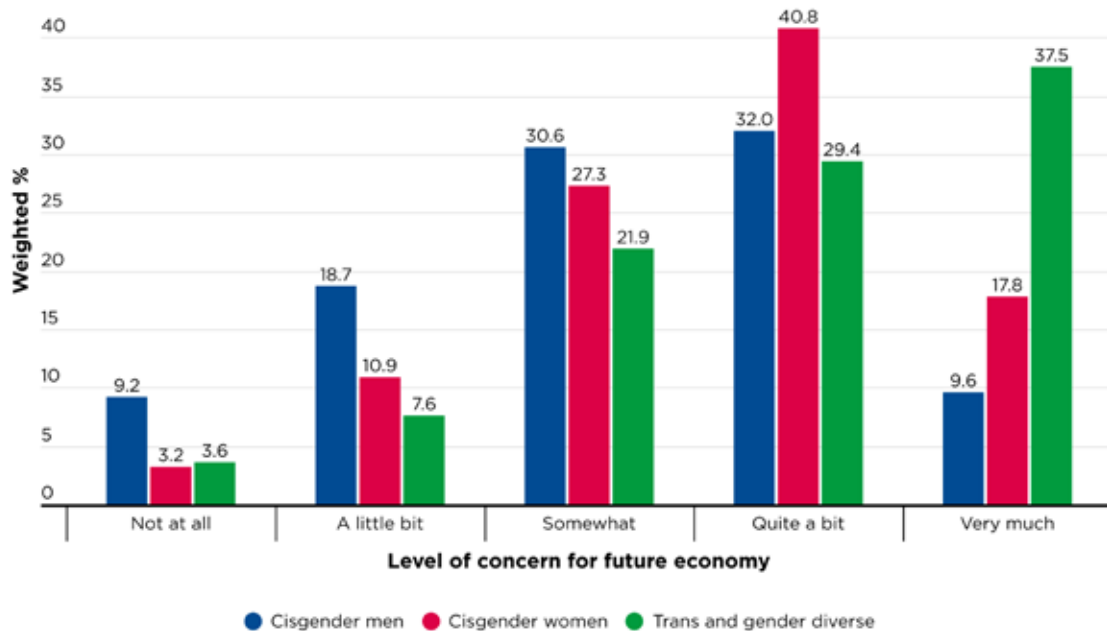
Young cisgender women and trans and gender diverse people were more likely than young cisgender men to be quite a bit or very much concerned about the future economy (Figure 6b). This was similar to the pattern of concern about the future environment, above.

Figure 6a: Young people’s level of concern for the future economy by age group



Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

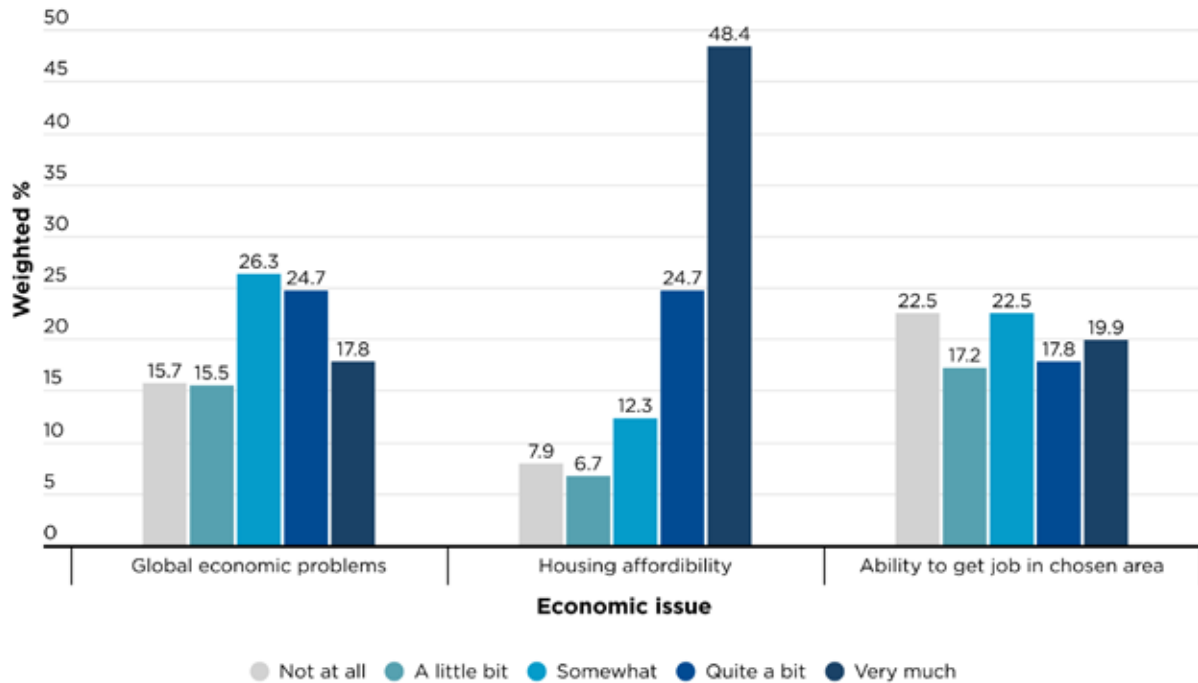
Figure 6b: Young people’s level of concern for the future economy by gender



Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

Young people's levels of concern varied across economic issues. Almost half of young people were very much concerned about housing affordability (48%), compared to around 1 in 5 who were very much concerned about their ability to get a job in their chosen field of training or interest (20%) and global economic problems (18%) (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Young people's levels of concern for 3 economic issues



Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

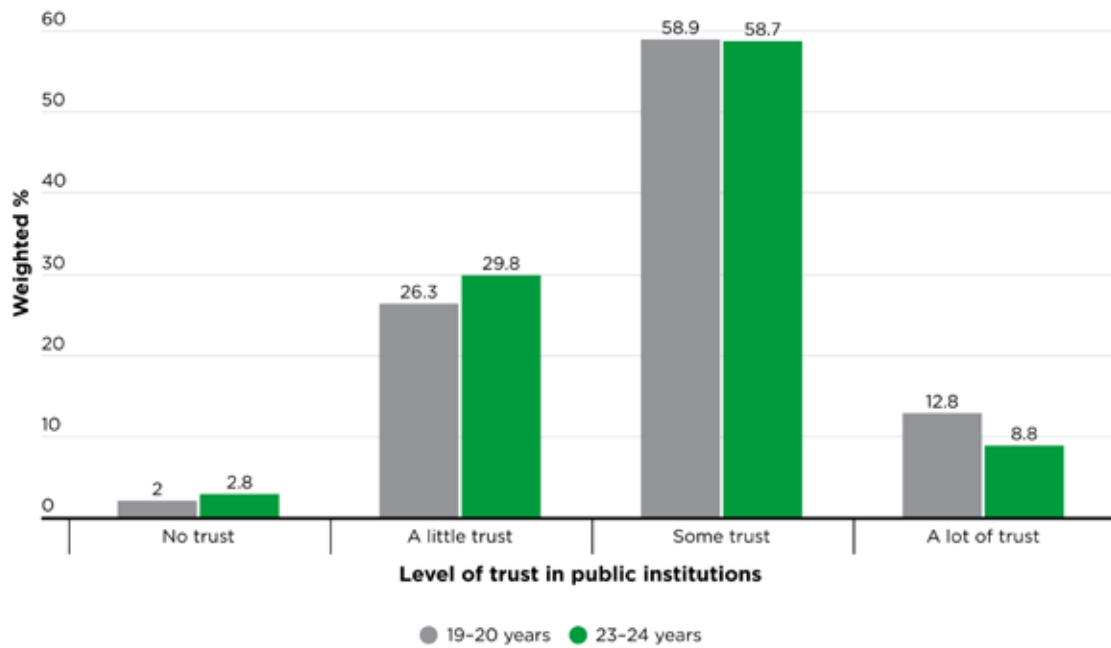
How much trust do young people have?

Understanding how much trust young people have in institutions and in other people gives us insight into how young people feel about the broader social climate and may suggest ways to improve their connections to institutions and services. In this section, we provide descriptive statistics about young peoples' levels of institutional and social trust.

Trust in Australian public institutions

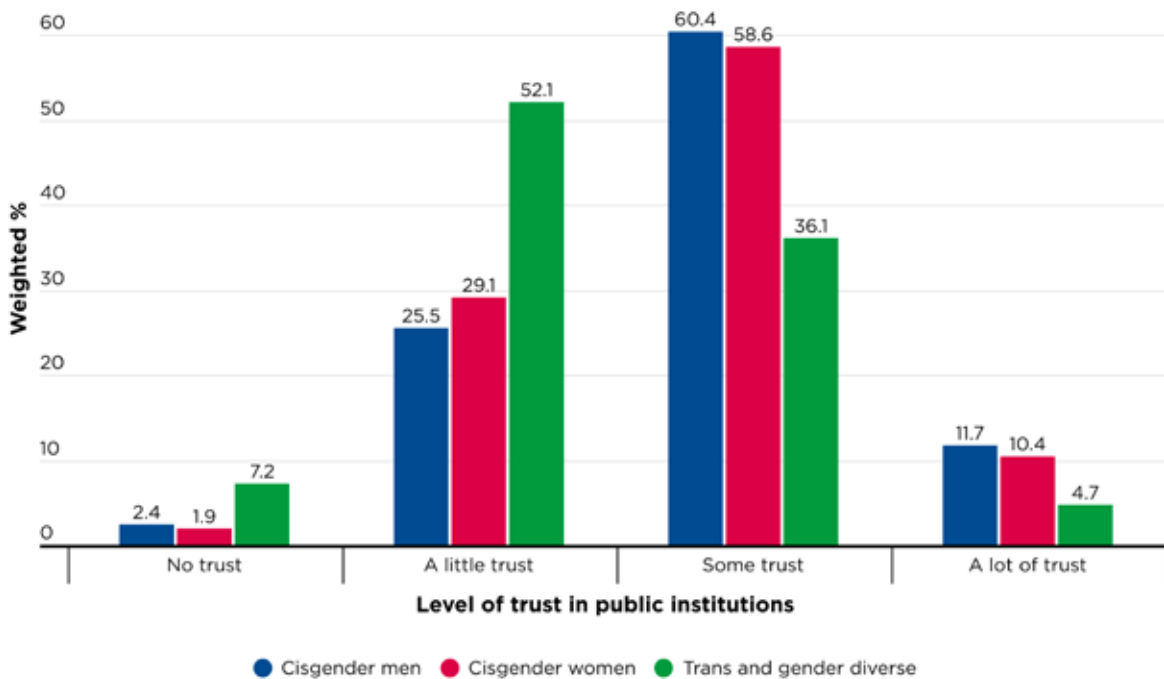
Around 7 in 10 young people had some or a lot of trust in Australian public institutions, on average, and proportions were similar across both age groups (Figure 8a). Young cisgender men and women had similar levels of average trust (Figure 8b). However, young trans and gender diverse people were less likely to have some or a lot of trust in Australian public institutions (41% of young trans and gender diverse people compared to 72% of cisgender men and 69% of cisgender women)

Figure 8a: Trust in Australian public institutions by age group



Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

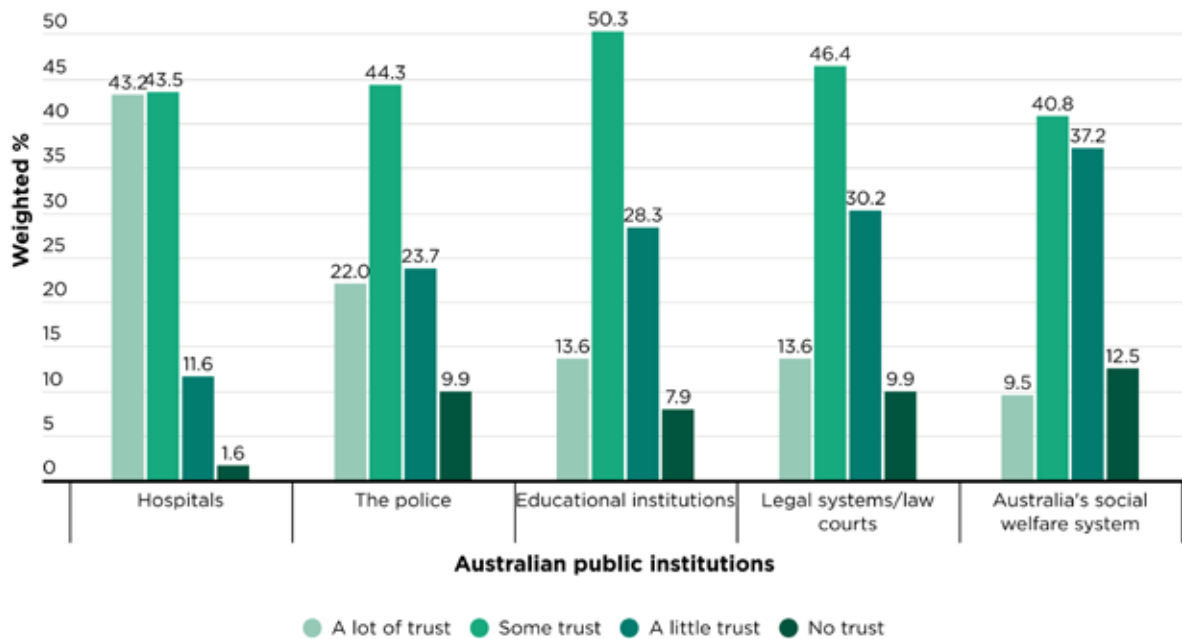
Figure 8b: Trust in Australian public institutions by gender



Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

Young people trusted some Australian public institutions more than others (Figure 9). Young people had the highest levels of trust in hospitals (43%) and, to a lesser extent, the police (22%). In contrast, more young people had no trust in Australia’s social welfare system (13%) than had a lot of trust (9%). Interestingly, young people had relatively low levels of trust in educational institutions (14%) compared to the higher levels of trust in hospitals.

Figure 9: Trust in Australian public institutions

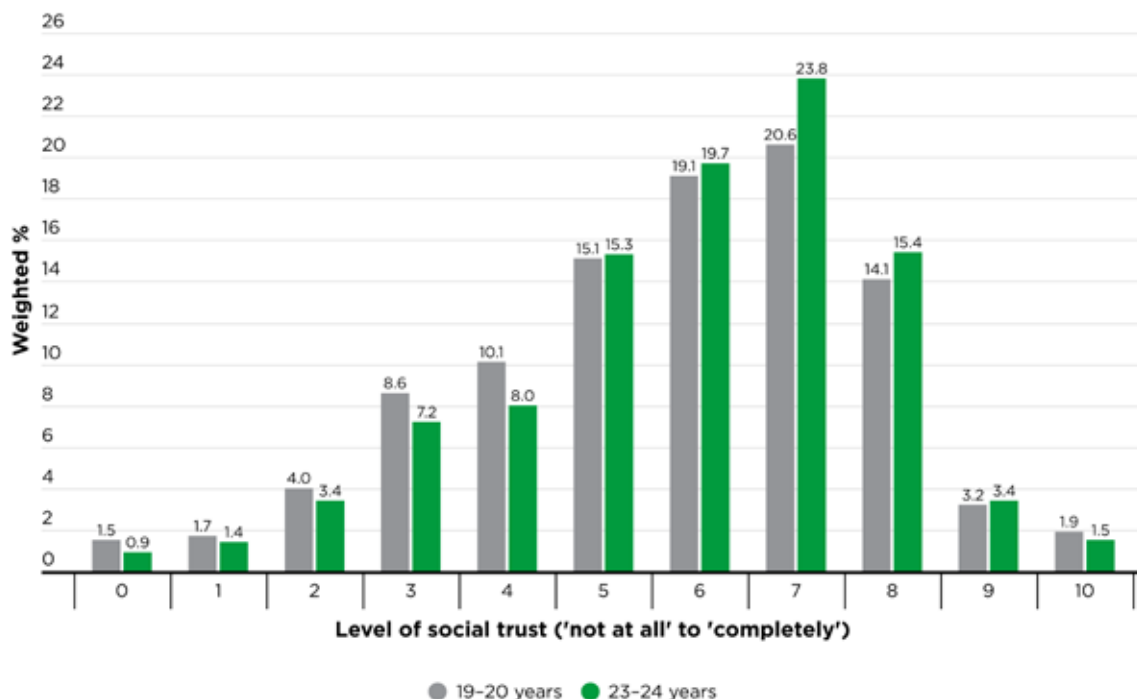


Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

Trust in people

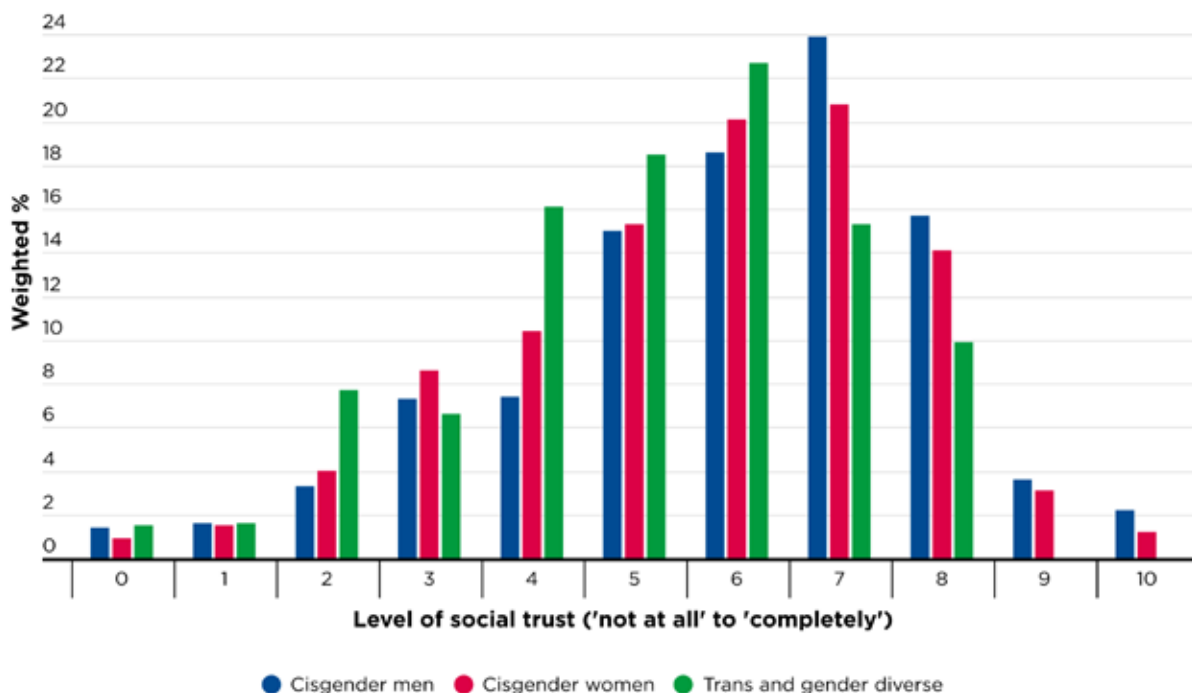
Levels of social trust were similar across both age groups, with a mean of 5.7 for the younger group and 5.9 for the older group. Young cisgender men and women had similar levels of social trust (mean 5.9 for men and 5.7 for women), while young trans and gender diverse people had slightly lower levels of trust in other people (mean 5.2) (Figures 10a and 10b).

Figure 10a: Social trust by age group



Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

Figure 10b: Social trust by gender



Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

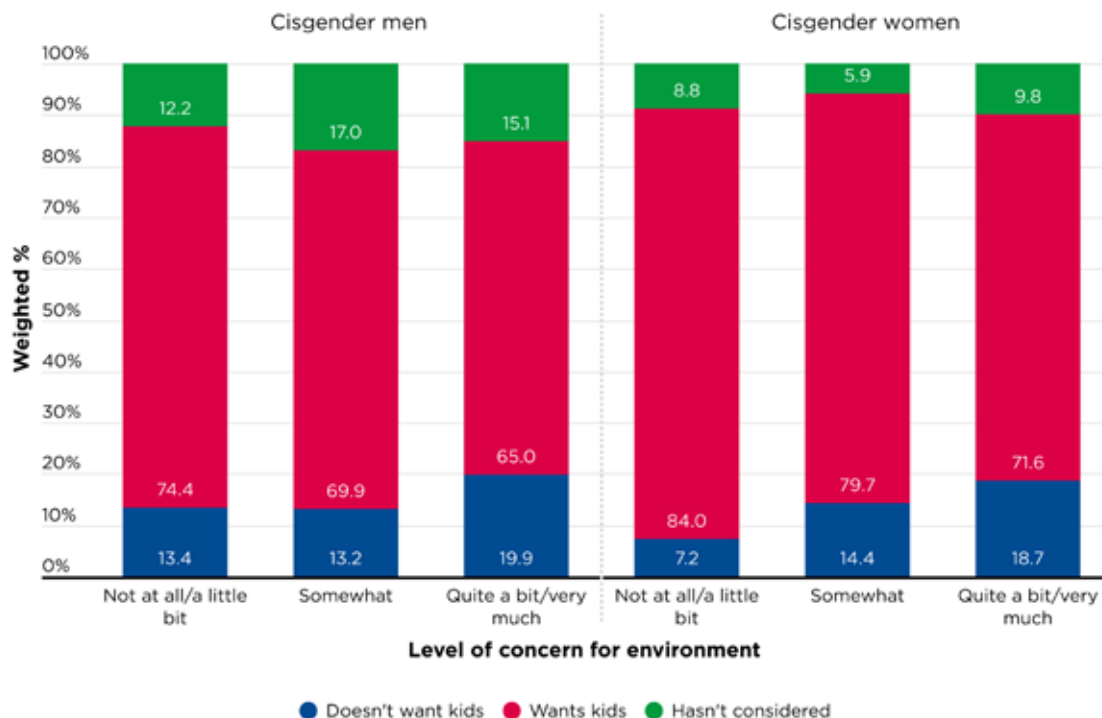
Are different types of concern associated with young people’s family formation goals?

Previous research has suggested that people who are more concerned about the environment may be less likely to have children for 2 main reasons. First, those with a greater amount of concern about the environment may prefer to remain childless rather than introduce children into a future of increasing climate disaster and instability. Second, and relatedly, people who are more concerned about the environment may view each additional child as a future consumer of resources who may potentially worsen the effects of climate change (Schneider-Mayerson & Leong, 2020).

Young people who were more concerned about the environment were less likely to hope to have children (see supplementary Tables S2a and S2b). Among those with the greatest amount of concern, 20% said they did not want to have children, compared to 11% of those with the least concern (Table S2b). Among young cisgender men and women, 20% of the men and 19% of the women with the greatest amount of concern said they did not hope to have children, compared to 13% of the men and 7% of the women with the least concern (Figure 9, and supplementary Tables S3a, S3b, S4a and S4b). Despite this, most young people with the greatest amount of environmental concern still hoped to have children (65% of young cisgender men and 72% of young cisgender women) (Figure 11, and supplementary Tables S3a, S3b, S4a and S4b).

Each of the individual environmental issues was also associated with family formation goals. Specifically, young people with higher levels of concern about climate change, extreme weather events and other environmental issues were more likely to say they did not hope to have children (supplementary Tables S5a and S5b).

Figure 11: Marginal probabilities of family formation goals by level of concern for the environment



Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

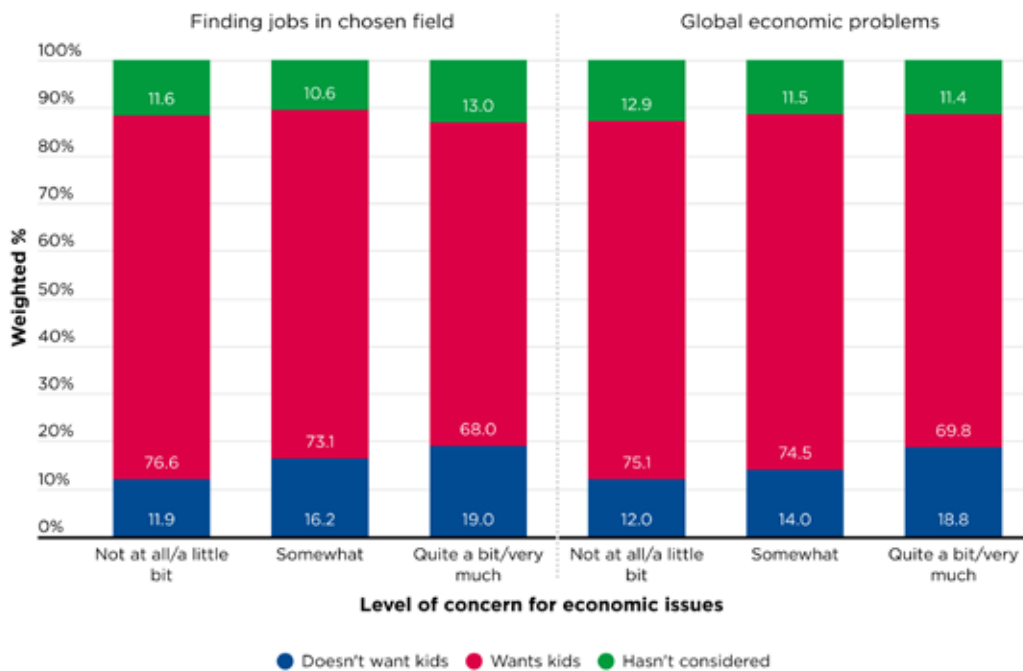
Previous research has also established strong links between economic conditions and family formation. Australian research has found that people cite the cost of raising children as the most important factor in deciding to have a child (Laß et al., 2025), highlighting the importance of economic factors in decisions about family formation. In times of economic instability, such as during a recession, people tend to postpone family formation until the situation improves (Sobotka et al., 2011), and the perception of future economic instability may also influence people’s family formation plans and behaviours (Golovina & Jokela, 2024; Lappegård et al., 2022).

There was a lack of evidence of an association between the overall level of concern about the economy and family formation goals for the total population, or for either young cisgender men or women (see supplementary Tables S2a, S2b, S3a, S3b, S4a and S4b). However, 2 of the individual economic issues – concerns about finding jobs in their chosen field and about global economic problems – were associated with family formation goals (see supplementary Tables S6a & S6b).

Young people who were more concerned about finding jobs in their chosen field and about global economic problems were less likely to hope to have children. Among those with the greatest amount of concern about jobs, 19% said they did not want to have children, compared to 12% of those with the least concern. For concern about global economic problems, the results were similar (19% of those most concerned did not hope to have children compared to 12% of those least concerned).

As with environmental concerns, most young people with the greatest amount of concern still hoped to have children (68% of those most concerned about jobs and 70% of those most concerned about global economic problems) (Figure 12, and supplementary Tables S6a and S6b).

Figure 12: Marginal probabilities of family formation goals by levels of concern for economic issues



Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

Young cisgender women who were most concerned about finding jobs and about global economic problems were less likely to hope to have children. Among cisgender women, 19% of those most concerned about jobs and 18% of those most concerned about global economic problems did not hope to have children, compared to around 10% of those least concerned for both measures (supplementary Tables S7a and S7b).

Similarly, young cisgender men who were most concerned about finding jobs and about global economic problems were less likely to hope to have children, though this relationship was not as strong. For young cisgender men, the confidence intervals overlapped for those most and least concerned, indicating a weaker association compared to young cisgender women (supplementary Tables S8a and S8b).

Concern about housing affordability was widespread, with 85% of young people reporting feeling at least somewhat concerned. Because this concern was common among young people regardless of whether or not they hoped to have children, there was no clear link between housing affordability concerns and family formation goals in the overall sample or among either young cisgender men or women (supplementary Tables S6a, S6b, S7a, S7b, S8a and S8b).

Are institutional and social trust associated with young people’s family formation goals?

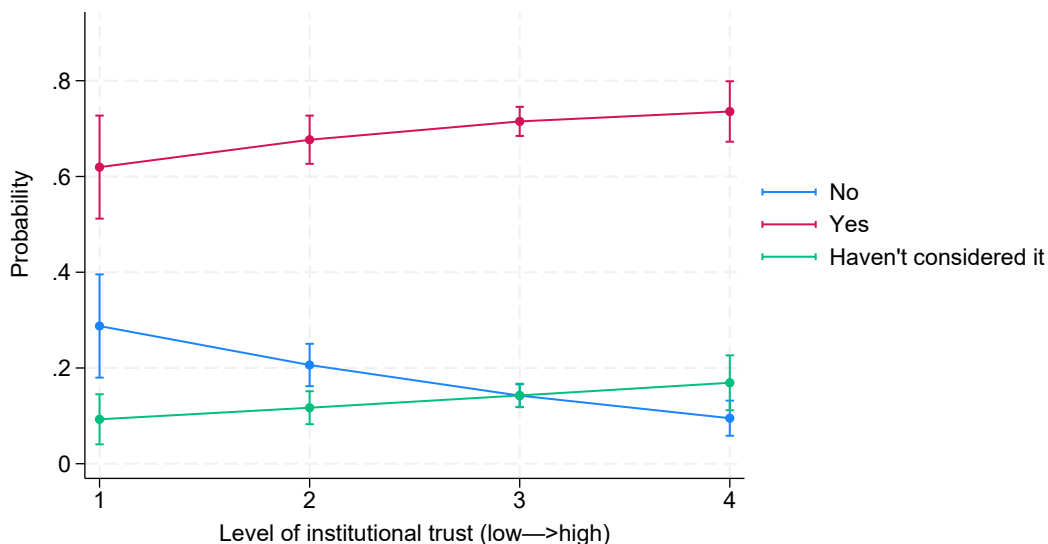
Societal trust, which includes trust in public institutions and trust in people outside of our immediate social circle, has been described as the glue that holds a society together (Schilke et al., 2021). Recent research has suggested that levels of societal trust may be related to family formation goals and behaviours. Levels of institutional trust may be related to family formation because people who are having and raising children will generally have increased engagement with some public institutions (e.g. the health care system and the social welfare system) (Gortfelder et al., 2024). In societies with higher levels of female labour market participation, such as Australia, higher levels of social trust may ensure that parents are able to trust the care of their children to non-family childcare providers (Aassve et al., 2016).

Young people who had more trust in Australian institutions were more likely to hope to have children (79% of those with the most trust compared to 59% of those with the least trust) (supplementary Table S9). Among young cisgender men, 75% of those with the most trust hoped to have children, compared to 67% of those with the least trust (Figures 11a and 11b, and supplementary Tables S10 and S11). The pattern was similar for young cisgender women,

with 81% of those with the most trust and 74% of those with the least trust hoping to have children (Figures 10a and 10b, and supplementary Tables S10 and S11).

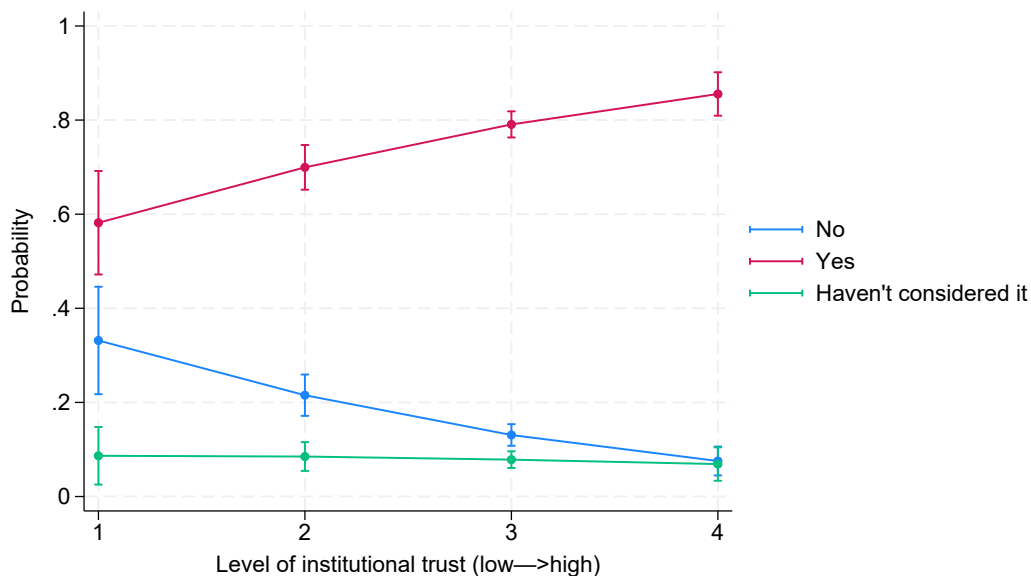
LSAC asked young people about their level of trust in hospitals, the police, educational institutions, legal systems and social welfare system and found each of these was also associated with family formation goals. Young people with the most trust in each of these 5 institutions were more likely to hope to have children (see supplementary Table S12).

Figure 13a: Marginal probabilities of family formation goals by level of institutional trust for young cisgender men



Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

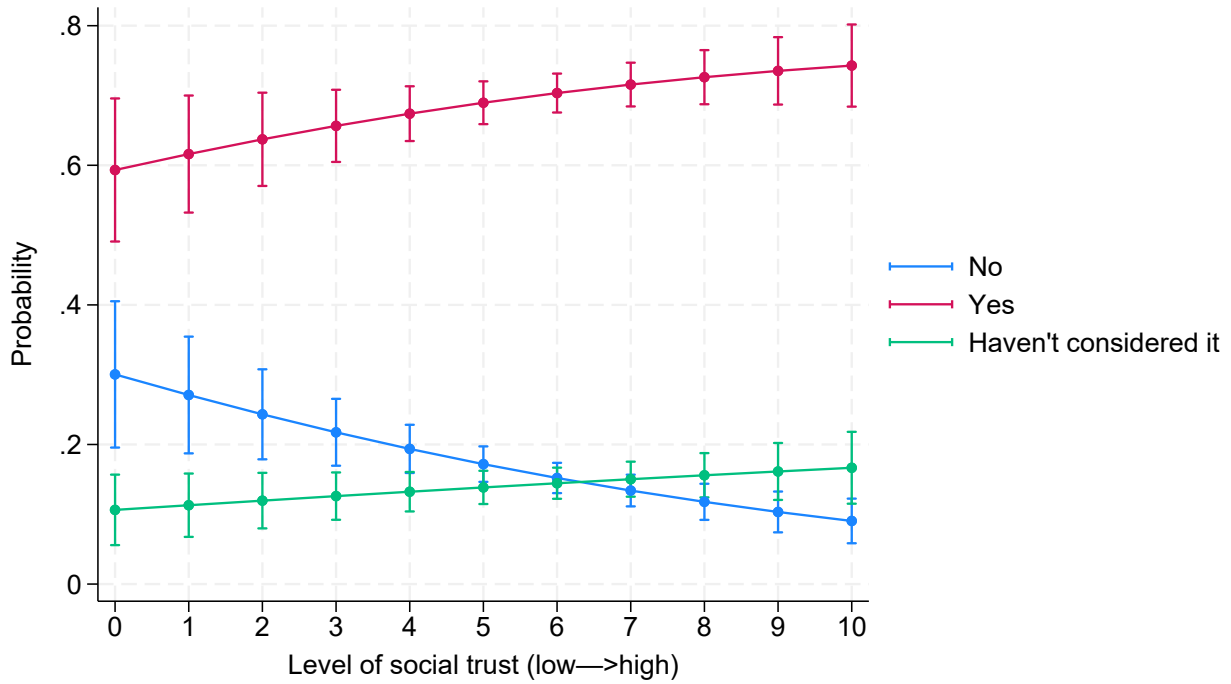
Figure 13b: Marginal probabilities of family formation goals by level of institutional trust for young cisgender women



Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

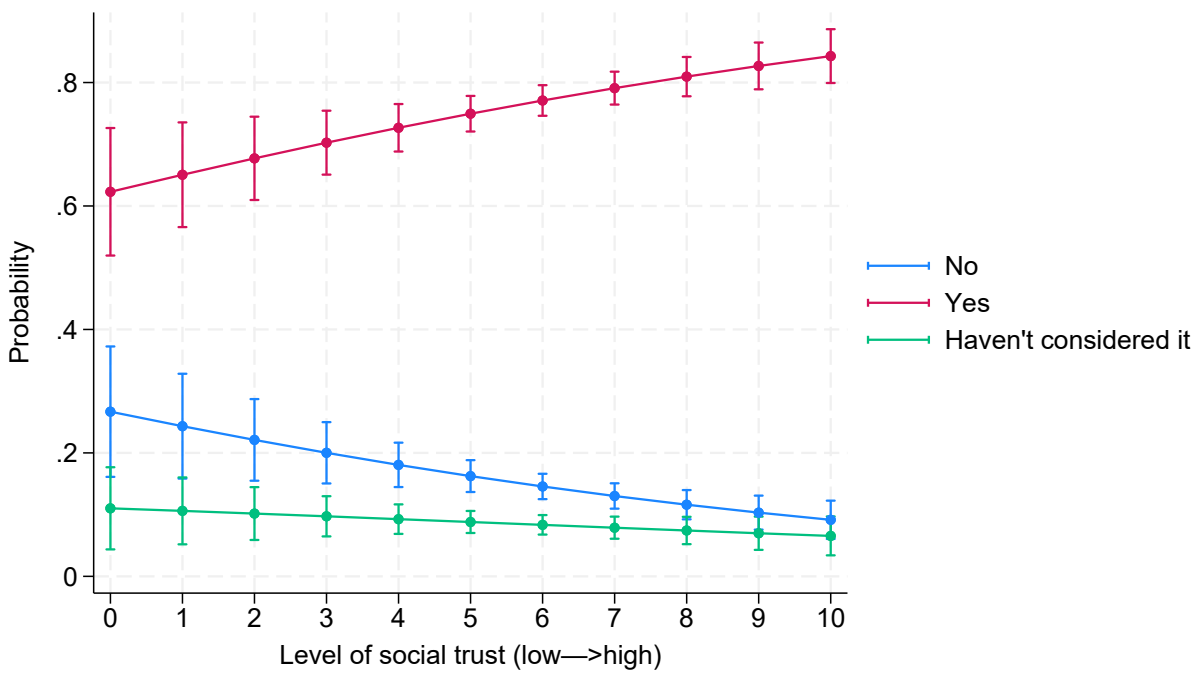
Social trust was also associated with the family formation goals of young people. Among young people with the most trust in other people, 78% hoped to have children, compared to 59% of those with the least trust (see supplementary Table S3). This pattern was similar among young cisgender men and women (Figures 11a and 11b, supplementary Tables S5 and S7).

Figure 14a: Marginal probabilities of family formation goals by level of social trust for young cisgender men



Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

Figure 14b: Marginal probabilities of family formation goals by level of social trust for young cisgender women



Source: LSAC B and K cohorts, Wave 10

Relevance for policy and practice

This study found that young people's concerns for the environment, getting jobs in their chosen field, the global economy and their levels of social and institutional trust are related to their family formation goals. These findings add further evidence that thoughts and decisions about having children are associated with broader social factors as well as individual-level concerns.

Young people's family formation goals are related to how secure and optimistic they feel about current and future conditions

There is growing recognition among fertility and family formation researchers that feeling secure is vital for people to achieve their family formation goals (Aassve et al., 2021; Comolli, 2023). While individual financial security is one aspect of feeling secure, the results from this study suggest a broader set of influences are also important, including trust in institutions and people, as well as concerns about the environment, the global economy and prospects for employment in a chosen field.

Policy frameworks to support young people's family formation plans should therefore take a more holistic view of security – one that retains economic supports but also addresses climate and economic concerns, trust in institutions and the broader conditions shaping how young people view their future.

Building trust in institutions is important

This study found that trust in public institutions was strongly associated with a greater likelihood of young people hoping to have children. Young people with higher levels of institutional trust were substantially more likely to hope to have children than those with lower trust. At the same time, trust was not uniform across institutions, with young people reporting higher trust in hospitals and lower trust in systems such as education and social welfare.

From a policy perspective, these findings highlight that public institutions do more than deliver services – they influence how secure and confident young people feel about their futures. Building this confidence requires ongoing stewardship of public trust through both the quality of everyday interactions with services and the broader reputation of institutions over time. This includes ensuring that families experience systems as reliable, fair and inclusive, and that they demonstrate consistency across the changing life-course needs of family members.

Building confidence in the system's ability to withstand shocks is equally important

Young people's hopes for having children were linked with concerns about the environment and global economic problems, both macro-level issues beyond individual control. These findings also point to the role of institutions in mediating broader uncertainty. Young people need to have confidence not only in the availability of services but in their resilience – particularly in the face of economic instability and climate-related risks.

The social welfare system is central to this role, providing support during periods of instability. However, this study found that trust in the social welfare system was relatively low among young people. Strengthening confidence in this and other universal systems may be important for supporting young people to feel that they can rely on support during periods of change and that risks beyond their control can be managed within the system.

Young people need clear and credible pathways to secure employment and affordable housing

Young people's concern about finding jobs in their chosen field may reflect not only individual capability but also broader features of the labour market including a perception of limited alignment between education, early-career opportunities and employer demand. For some young people, perceptions of job security may shape how achievable

and sustainable family plans appear. From a policy perspective, this highlights the role of education, skills and employment systems in supporting confidence at this critical life stage.

Because many young people worry about increasingly precarious employment, marked by low pay, less security and irregular hours (Chesters & Cuervo, 2022; Crofts et al., 2015), strengthening pathways to secure employment, supporting early-career stability and providing clearer signals about how young people can navigate labour market change may help reduce this form of uncertainty.

Concerns about housing affordability were very widespread among young people. Although these concerns were not clearly linked to plans for family formation, the high prevalence of concern highlights the importance of improving access to affordable and secure housing as part of a wider approach to support young people's confidence about the future. Measures that increase housing stability, reduce financial strain and improve pathways into secure housing may help create the conditions in which young people feel better able to plan their adult lives, whether or not they plan to have children.

Trans and gender diverse young people may need additional support to feel secure

This study found that young trans and gender diverse people were less likely than their cisgender peers to have plans to have children. In addition, young trans and gender diverse people had lower trust in institutions, potentially related to experiences of identity-based discrimination and exclusion (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2015) and higher levels of concern than their cisgender peers. Further research with a larger sample of young trans and gender diverse people is needed to better understand the reasons for these lower levels of trust and higher levels of concern, and whether these concerns are related to their goals for family formation.

In the meantime, ensuring that young trans and gender diverse people who want to have children have access to inclusive pathways to parenthood and that family formation and support services are designed to be inclusive and affirming of all people may help reduce structural barriers to achieving family formation goals.

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Further details

See [Supplementary Materials](#) for technical details of this research, including description of measures, detailed results and bibliography.

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