

Hearing the views of WA's children and young people on their safety & wellbeing

May 2021



Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia





Our vision

That all children and young people are heard, are healthy and safe, reach their potential and are welcomed as valued members of the community and in doing so we build a brighter future for the whole community





UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 3: The best interests of children must be taken into account in all decisions that affect them.

Article 12: Children have the right to have their opinions heard, and should be supported to give their views in a way that is best for them.



Poverty line



Up to

17%

of children and young people are living below the poverty line in WA

Approximately
610,000

children and young people live in WA and make up **23 per cent** of the state's population



In the last 10 years there has been a **19 per cent** increase in the number of children aged 6 to 11 years living in WA

Aboriginal children and young people

There are about **40,000** Aboriginal children and young people aged under 18 years living in WA. Children and young people aged under 18 years make up **39.6 per cent** of the total WA Aboriginal population



33,754

births were registered in WA during 2019

Around
152,000
or **25 per cent**,
of children and young people in WA live in regional and remote areas



The number of WA children and young people is projected to increase by **63 per cent**, to over

1 million
by 2066



COVID-19 impacts

Mental health

Education

Connection to friends

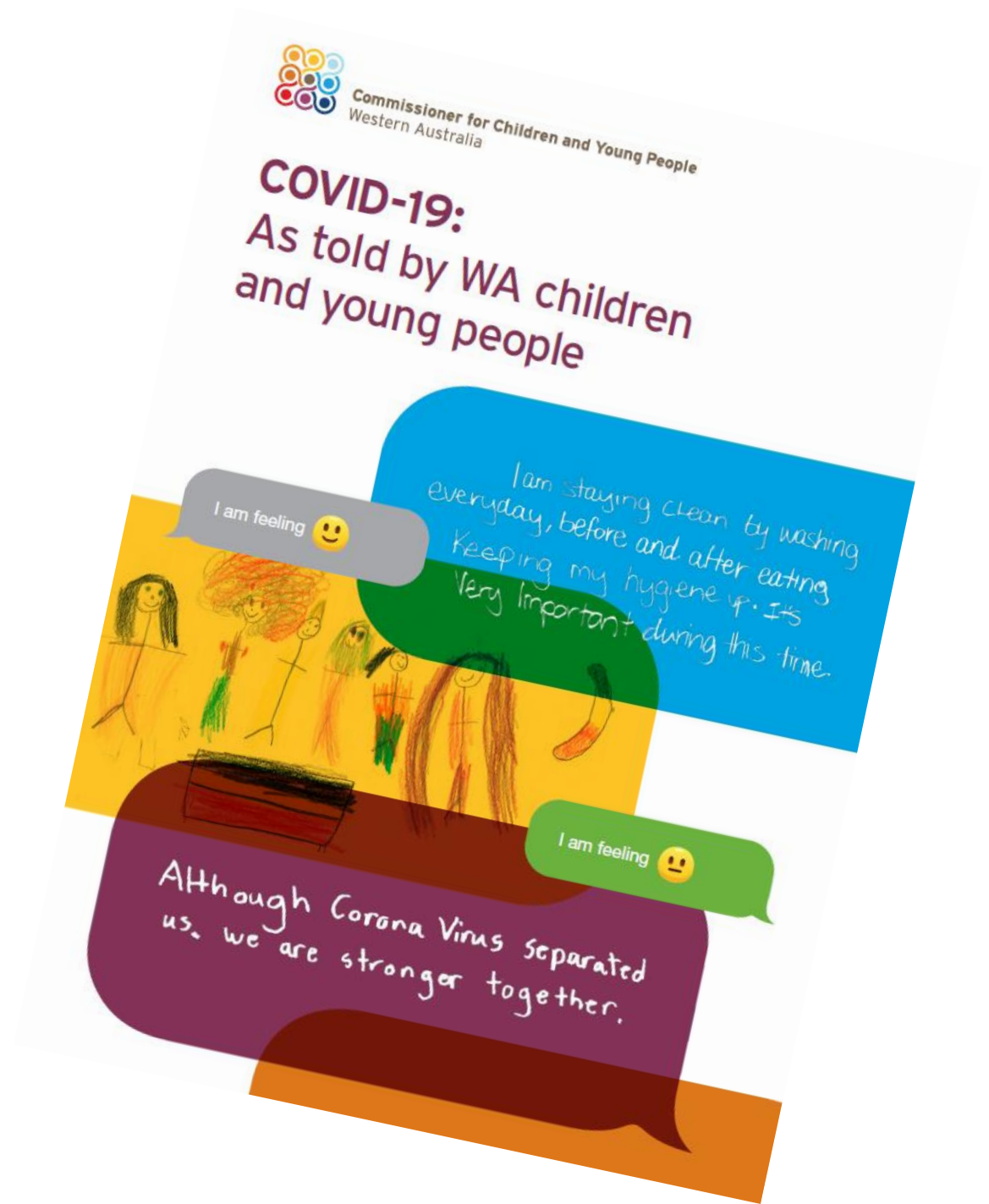
Family relationships

Recreation

Material basics

Information about coronavirus

Future impacts



How do children themselves see their wellbeing?

Students in Years 4-12, from public and private schools across the State were surveyed.

Questions covered:

- Health
- Safety
- Family
- School life
- Sense of belonging

The 2021 Speaking Out Survey is currently underway



**Speaking
Out
Survey
2019 &
2021**



Children and young people report generally positive outcomes

Most students report they are

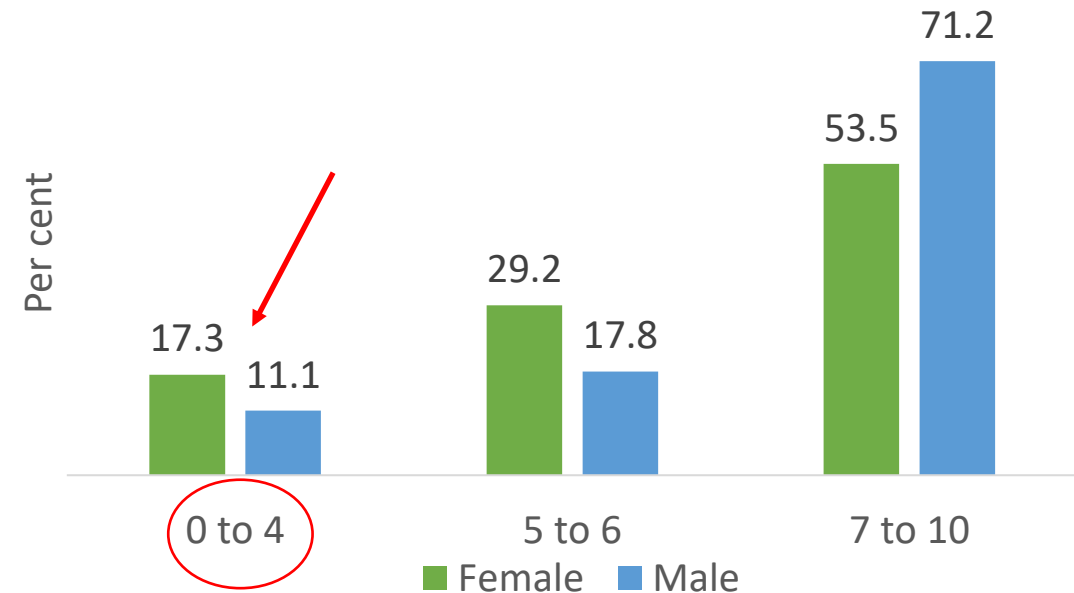
- physically and mentally healthy,
- basic material needs are met,
- they like school,
- relationships with family, friends and teachers are positive,
- feel loved and supported
- connected to their community.



Mental health is a critical issue for many

- A substantial number of Year 7 to 12 students reported poor life satisfaction, low self-esteem, high levels of stress and the feeling they can't cope with life's challenges.

Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students rating their life satisfaction on a scale of '0' to '10' where '0' is the worst possible life and '10' the best possible life, grouped responses by gender

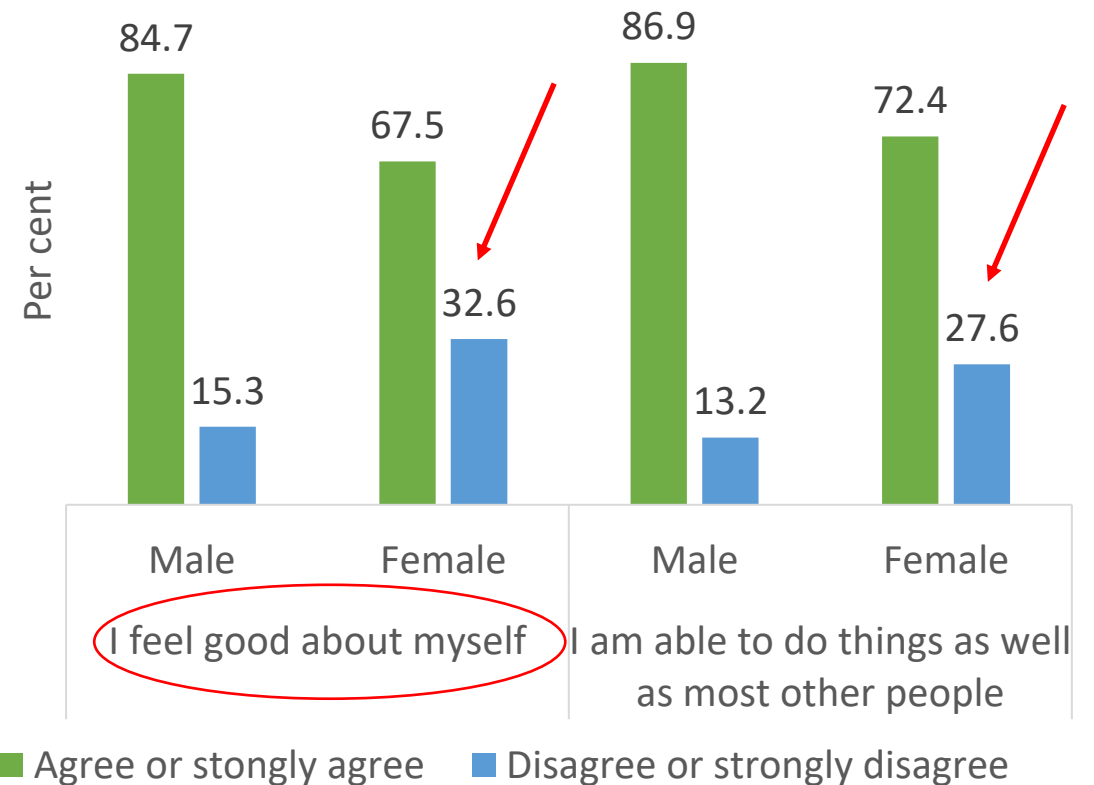




Female students rate their wellbeing less favourably than male students

- particularly in areas relating to mental health, self-perception, conflict, relationships, personal safety and independence.

Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students agreeing or disagreeing with statements about their identity, by gender

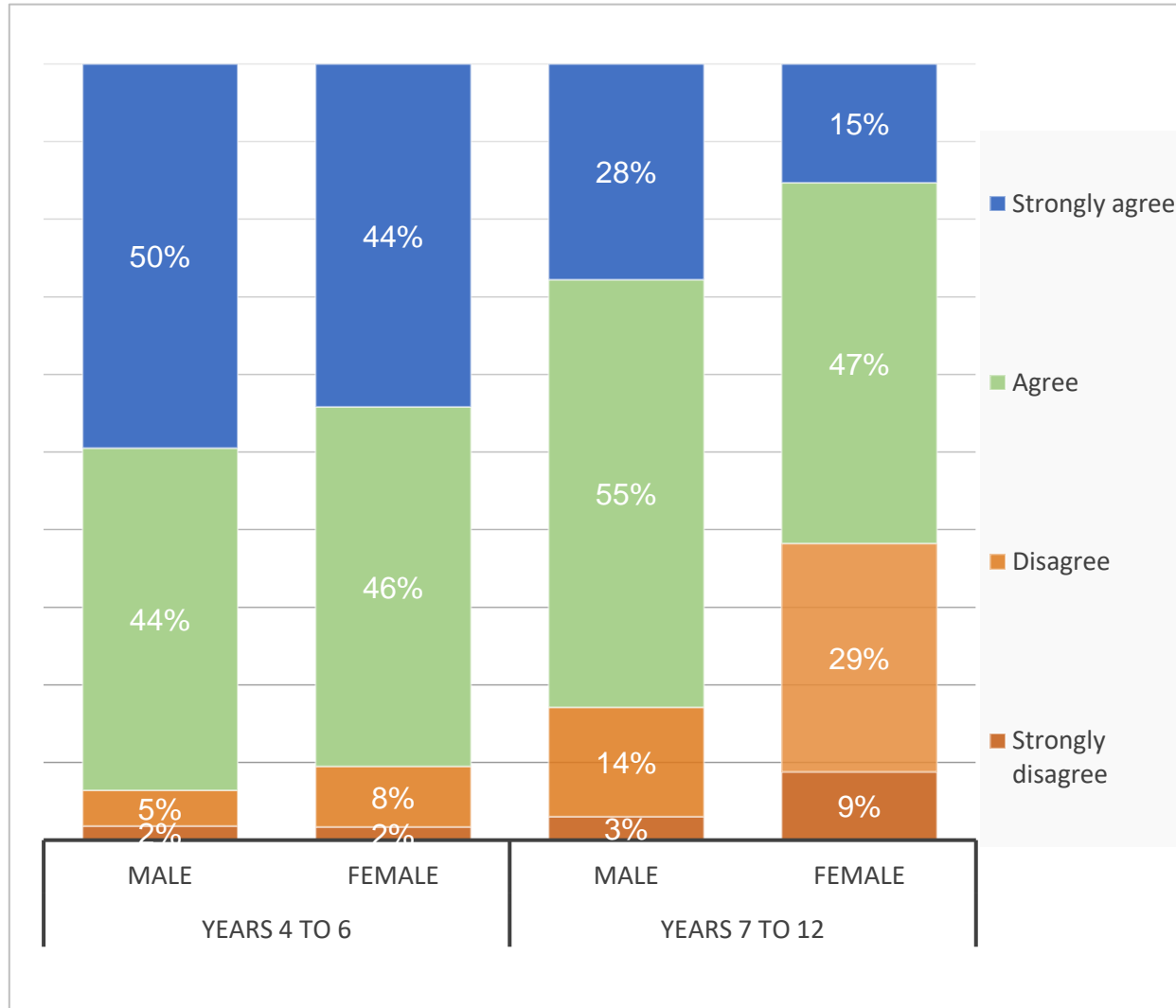




Female students – happiness with self

Female students were twice as likely to report not feeling happy with themselves (38% vs 17%), not able to achieve their goals (14% vs 7%) or deal with things that happen in their life (12% vs 5%).

Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students agreeing or disagreeing with the statement I feel happy with myself, by gender

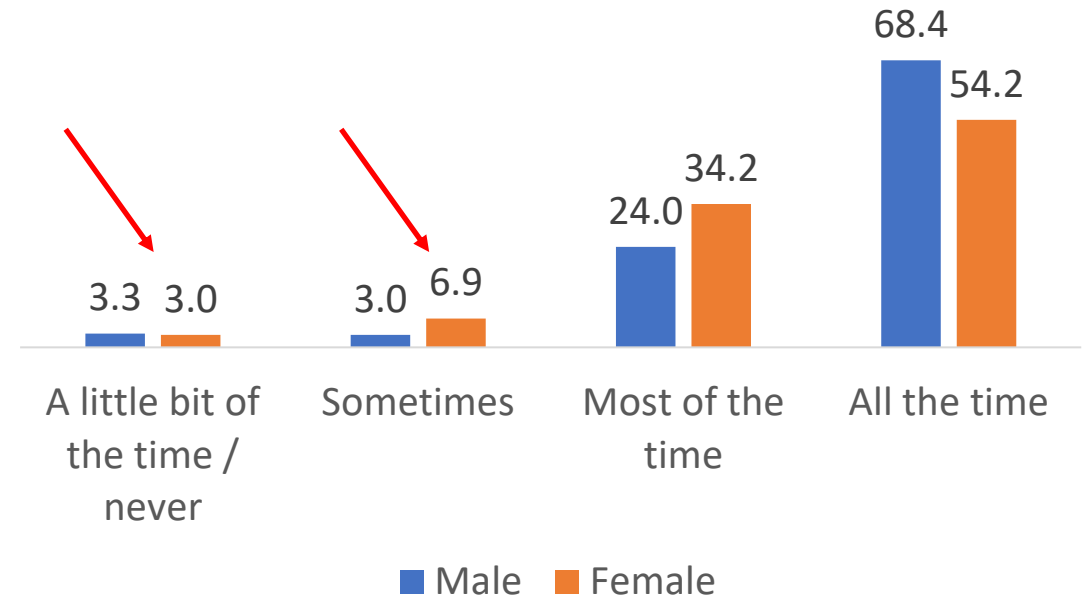




Perceptions of safety

- 3% of students feel safe at home only a little bit of the time or never.
- More than one-half of Year 7-12 students worry that someone in their family will be fighting with 1-in-10 worrying a lot about this.
- For female students, 1-in-3 reported feeling safe in their local area and on public transport only sometimes or less.

Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students saying they feel safe at home all the time, most of the time, sometimes or a little bit of the time / never, by gender

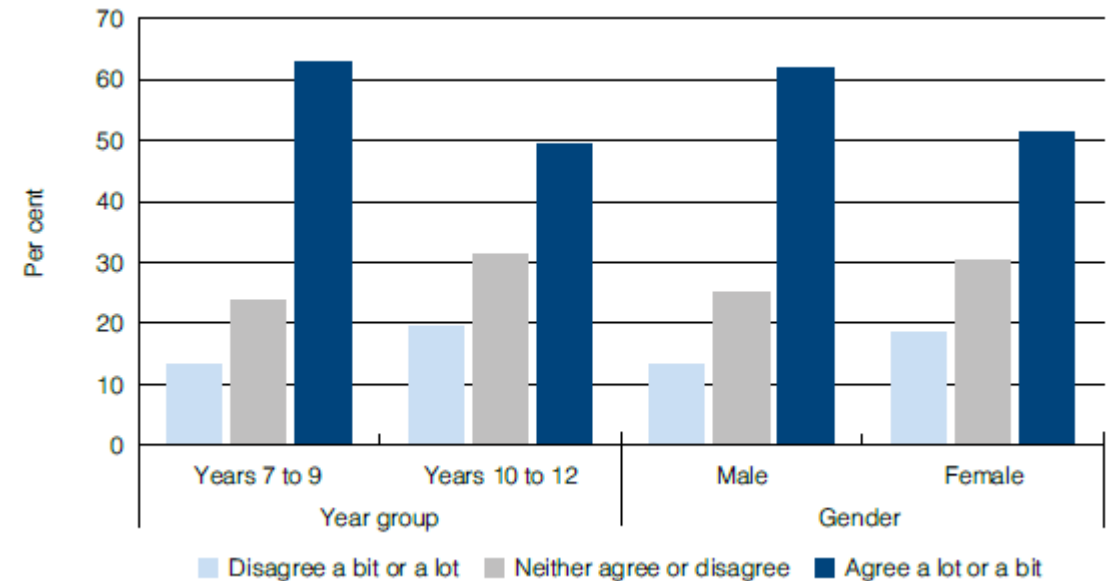




Local area perceptions

- Students were asked about having friends in their community, friendly neighbours and whether there were fun things to do within their local community.
- One half of female students either disagreed or were undecided if they belong in their local community, with one-in-three saying there was nothing for them to do in their local community.

Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreeing or disagreeing with the statement 'I feel like I belong in my community' by gender

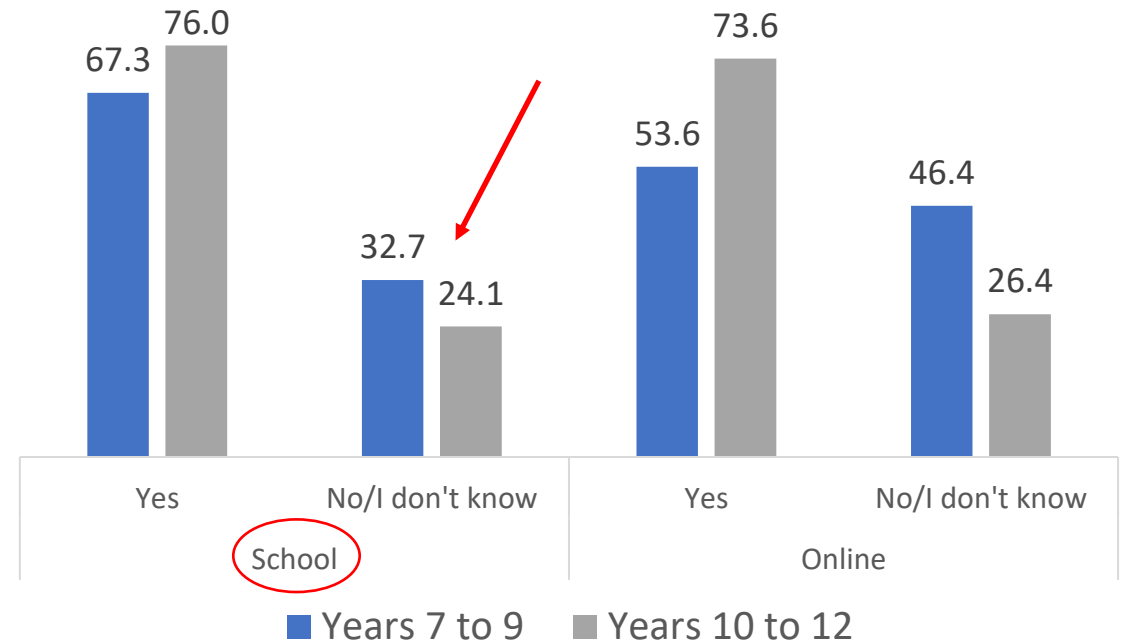




Help and support

- Almost 30% of Year 7 to 12 students said they **did not know where to get mental health support in their school** and 50% did not know where to get such help in their local area.
- 41% of female and 29% of male students reported they had sought help for mental health worries in the last 12 months.

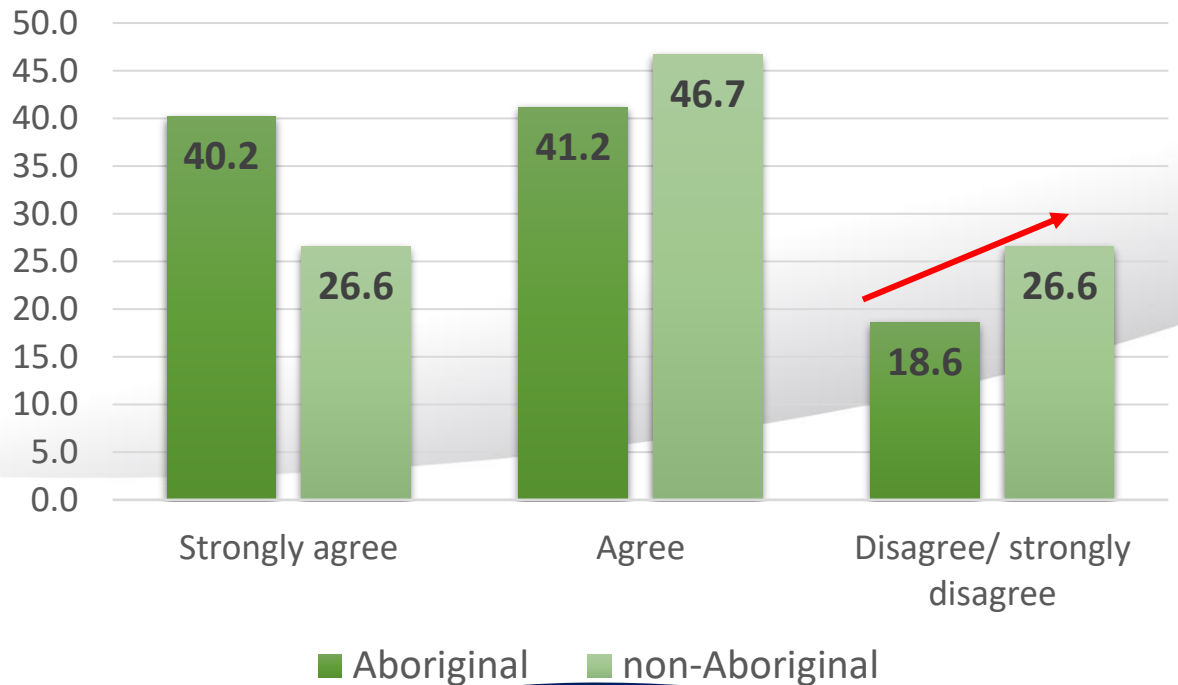
Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students knowing where to get mental health support at school and in their local area, by year group



Aboriginal students

- Aboriginal students fared less well in terms of their dental health, material basics, family stability, or expectations for further education.
- In other respects, Aboriginal students were more positive in terms of their self-perception, self-esteem and sense of belonging.

Proportion of female Year 7 to Year 12 students agreeing or disagreeing with the statement 'I am happy with myself', by Aboriginal status



What children and young people say is important

- Family relationships
- Friends
- School
- Connection to culture and community





Please keep in touch . . .

@CCYPWA





Western Australia has almost 600,000 children