



# BodyKind

## YOUTH SURVEY

Your Body Image, Your Voice.

2024 REPORT

# Table of Contents

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## Acknowledgment of Country

Butterfly acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples across Australia.

## Acknowledgment of Lived Experience

Butterfly recognises and values the knowledge and wisdom of people with lived experience, and their supporters.

## Acknowledgment of Supporters

Butterfly would like to thank the nib foundation for their generous support of the BodyKind Youth Survey and acknowledge all those who contributed to the development, collection and analysis of the survey and data.

## Butterfly's Prevention Services

- Helen Bird (*Project Lead & Head of Prevention*)
- Danni Rowlands (*Director, Education Initiatives*)
- Dr Stephanie Damiano (*Report Consultant & Manager, Butterfly Body Bright*)

## Orygen

- Dr Kathleen de Boer (*Research Fellow in Eating Disorders, VIC*)
- Inge Gnatt (*Research Assistant in Eating Disorders, VIC*)
- Dr Stephanie Miles (*Research Fellow in Eating Disorders, VIC*)
- Associate Professor Andrea Phillipou (*Principal Research Fellow in Eating Disorders, VIC*)

## Working Group 2022

- Emeritus Professor Susan Paxton (*La Trobe University, VIC*)
- Helen Bird (*Education Services Manager, Butterfly Foundation, NSW*)
- Dr Stephanie Damiano (*Butterfly Body Bright Manager, Butterfly Foundation, VIC*)
- Gillian Vogl (*Director, Vogl and Blake Research Consultants, NSW*)
- Dr Laura Vogl (*Researcher, Vogl and Blake Research Consultants, NSW*)
- Jade Byrne (*Member, Butterfly Lived Experience Community Insights Group, NSW*)
- Jade Preedy (*Wellbeing Hub Coordinator, Kardinia International College, VIC*)
- Julie Pittle (*Community Services Trainer, Chisholm Institute, VIC*)
- Lucy Dahill (*Student Support Officer, Killara High School, NSW*)
- Sheridan Georgiou (*PDHPE Teacher and Transition Adviser, Macquarie Fields High School, NSW*)

Message from our CEO	6
Message from our Head of Prevention	7
About the Survey	8
Background .....	8
Aims .....	9
Survey Design .....	9
Procedure .....	10
Ethics Approval	
Data Collection	
Data Analysis	
Reporting	
Executive Summary	12
Demographics	14
Key Findings	18
How satisfied are young people with how their body looks? .....	18
Age differences	
Gender differences	
Sexuality differences	
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people	
State and territory differences	
Socioeconomic status differences	
How do young people perceive others' body satisfaction? .....	24
To what extent do young people appreciate their bodies? .....	24
How are young people being Body Kind? .....	28



<b>How concerned are young people about their body image? .....</b>	<b>30</b>
Age differences	
Gender differences	
Sexuality differences	
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people	
State and territory differences	
Socioeconomic status differences	
<b>How do young people perceive others' concerns about body image? .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>What are the body ideals of young people? .....</b>	<b>36</b>
Desire for thinness/leanness	
Desire for muscularity	
Desire for height	
<b>Who are young people comparing their bodies to? .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>How does body image impact young people? .....</b>	<b>42</b>
Has body image ever stopped young people from doing certain activities?	
<b>How much do young people value appearance? .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Young peoples social media use .....</b>	<b>44</b>
What platforms are young people using?	
What do young people think about their social media use?	
How satisfied does social media make young people feel about how their body looks?	
How often do young people see their body, shape or size represented on social media?	
What age should people be allowed to access social media?	
Do young people think social media platforms need to do more to help them have a more positive body image?	
What about advertisers?	
<b>How are young people being Body <i>Kind</i> online? .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>What is young people's experience of appearance-related teasing? .....</b>	<b>54</b>
Where is it happening?	
Who is it happening most to?	
What about teasing of others?	
<b>What do young people think about schools and body image? .....</b>	<b>55</b>
Should schools do more to support positive body image?	
Have young people ever been given strategies for positive body image?	
How would young people like to learn ways to improve their body image from school?	
<b>What ways do young people want to receive information about body image? .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>If young people had a magic wand, what would they do to help .....</b>	<b>58</b>
young people feel good in their bodies?	
<b>How did completing the survey make young people feel? .....</b>	<b>60</b>
<hr/> <b>Conclusions</b>	<b>61</b>
<hr/> <b>References</b>	<b>62</b>
<hr/>	



## Message from our CEO

For three years, Butterfly's BodyKind Youth Survey (BKYS) has amplified the voices of young people in Australia. This year's report, supported by the nib foundation, reinforces what we cannot ignore: body dissatisfaction impacts young lives in ways that are harmful.

Body dissatisfaction is a national public health issue, not just for young people but for us all. Butterfly's latest groundbreaking report, Cost of Appearance Ideals (the economic and social impact of body dissatisfaction and weight-based discrimination), estimates that in Australia, more than 4.1 million people over the age of 15 are significantly impacted by body dissatisfaction. This isn't just about feeling unhappy with appearance - it is driving serious mental health issues and increasing the risk for eating disorders. Weight-based discrimination and appearance-related bias are compounding these challenges, leading to social isolation, healthcare avoidance, and diminished quality of life. More than 3.1 million people in Australia had experienced appearance-based discrimination (including weight-based discrimination) in the previous year. As with eating disorders, the economic burden of body dissatisfaction and appearance-based discrimination is enormous - costing our economy \$36.6 billion a year.

We now have an undeniable case for shifting our approach to prevention. If we identify issues and intervene early, before body dissatisfaction leads to lifelong struggles, we can make a difference. That's why prevention is front and centre of Butterfly's strategic ambition of reducing the number of people impacted by body dissatisfaction and eating disorders. Of course, this is not the sole responsibility of any one organisation, but a societal and systemic one. Schools, workplaces, media outlets, social media platforms, healthcare providers and government must all move beyond conversation



and into tangible action if we are to challenge the appearance ideals and appearance biases that impact the mental and physical health of our young people, limiting their potential and quality of life.

As a national organisation dedicated to supporting those affected by eating disorders and body image issues we are committed to being part of the change. I am immensely proud of our work in schools and communities across Australia - nearly 900 schools have registered for our Butterfly Body Bright program for primary schools, and through our BodyKind initiative supporting schools, families and sporting organisations we have reached more than 2.3 million children and young people. These programs foster positive body image, build protective factors, and create environments that encourage everyone to be kind to their own body and to others.

To the thousands of young people who shared their experiences through this year's survey and previously, we thank you. What you tell us shapes our work and informs the conversations we have with government, social media platforms and other stakeholders, ensuring that your voices contribute to meaningful change. By continuing to listen, learn, and act together we can create a future where every young person in Australia can be kind to their own body and to all bodies and body dissatisfaction no longer dictates lives.

*Jim Hungerford*

CEO  
Butterfly Foundation

## Message from our Head of Prevention

At Butterfly, we have long championed awareness, education and early intervention as the key to making a real difference to the prevalence of body dissatisfaction and eating disorders. We have worked with schools and communities across Australia since 2007. Our Butterfly Body Bright program for primary schools lays the foundations for positive body image early in life and our BodyKind initiative equips adolescents and those who work with them with strategies and resources to support a positive relationship with the body, eating and exercise.

The findings of the third BodyKind Youth Survey serve as a powerful reminder that we must continue to act, proactively and strategically, to help children and young people live more positively in their body and build resilience in an ever-changing world.

One of the most significant changes has been Australia's firm stance on social media, with legislation due to restrict access to some social media platforms for under-16s. Social media has been an undeniable force and influence on body image. However, body image is a complex issue and restricting young people's use alone will not solve the problem. It needs a multifaceted approach. Harmful messaging, inappropriate content and imagery will continue to exist and evolve both online and offline, posing ongoing risk to our young people. Strengthening social media literacy and critical thinking skills must be part of the solution. Butterfly's new e-learning program BodyKind Online Education takes a strength-based approach to help secondary school students navigate social media and online environments in a safe and positive way. The program helps them to spot and challenge harmful and unhelpful health, body and beauty ideals, and build skills and strategies to be kind to their own body and to others. Launching in secondary schools in Australia in Term 2, this evidence-based digital program has been shown to enhance media literacy skills and foster self-compassion in young people in an independent evaluation.

If we are serious about tackling body image concerns in young people, prevention efforts must be inclusive and target those most at risk. Over the last three years, the BodyKind Youth Survey has consistently reported higher rates of body dissatisfaction in LGB+ young people. The reasons are both complex and deeply intertwined with broader experiences of identity, belonging, acceptance and safety. Understanding these unique pressures is essential to creating a safe and supportive environment to foster positive body image. This year we have worked with folks at Minus18, an organisation supporting LGBTQIA+ youth, to create resources that acknowledge these unique challenges. True prevention work means ensuring that no young person feels invisible in the conversation about body image.



Prevention is much more than just education; it's about shifting attitudes and cultures - at school, at home, online, and in the spaces where young people engage every day.

Beyond the classroom, a key area of focus for Butterfly Prevention this year is creating sporting environments that support body image. There are many incredible benefits for a young person to participate in sport, but we know adolescents involved in competitive and pathway sports are identified as being at higher risks of disordered eating and eating disorders. Concerns about body image also contribute to declining participation rates, with 34.5% of young people in this year's survey reporting that their feelings about their body frequently stopped them from taking part. Through our BodyKind Sports initiative, we are working with sporting organisations, coaches, and athletes to create supportive and inclusive, BodyKind environments where all young people, regardless of body shape, size, or ability, can thrive.

Prevention work is not just about reducing harm it's about building a better future for our young people. One which is free from the pressures of unrealistic appearance ideals and where they feel confident in their worth and empowered to participate fully in life—whether online, at home, at school, or on the field, track or gym. We are committed to making this vision a reality. By continuing to listen, learn, and evolve, we can shape a culture where being kind to our own and all bodies is not an exception, but the norm - a BodyKind Australia.

*Helen Bird*

Head of Prevention  
Butterfly Foundation



# About the Survey

The survey forms part of the BodyKind initiative.

Being BodyKind is about how we nourish, nurture and move our bodies.

It's about the language we use, out loud, online and in our heads. It is about finding ways to like, accept, and feel positive about our body and take actions to challenge the impact of unhelpful influences.

## The BodyKind Youth Survey is an activity of Butterfly Foundation's Prevention Services. It is the first large-scale survey of body image among young people living in Australia, launched in 2022 and now in its third year.

### Background

Body dissatisfaction occurs when an individual experiences a discrepancy between what they actually look like, and what they want to look like, with consequent negative feelings about their body (Vinkers et al., 2012). Body dissatisfaction is an important risk factor for negative physical, mental and social outcomes, including poor self-esteem, anxiety, and engaging in risky health behaviours, such as tobacco smoking (e.g., Howe et al., 2017; Paxton, et al., 2006; Rohde et al., 2015). It has been found that young people with clinically significant levels of body dissatisfaction are 24 times more likely to report depressive episodes (McLean et al., 2021). A recent study showed that greater body dissatisfaction at age 11 correlated with higher depressive symptoms at age 14 (Blundell et al., 2024). Butterfly's new report, Cost of Appearance Ideals highlights that body dissatisfaction costs Australia \$36.6 billion a year, of which \$11.1 billion is the economic cost.

Individuals with body dissatisfaction are also at increased risk of engaging in disordered eating behaviours (e.g., Loth et al., 2014), such as unhealthy dietary, weight loss or muscle building behaviours, and excessive exercise to alter their body and appearance. Recent global data has indicated that 1 in 5 children and adolescents (aged 6-18 years) are engaging in disordered eating (Lopez-Gil et al. 2023).

Body dissatisfaction is also a leading modifiable risk factor for the development of eating disorders (Prnjak et al., 2021; Rohde et al., 2015). Eating disorders are in the top 10 leading causes of non-fatal disease burden for adolescent and

adult women (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018). Butterfly's recent report, Paying the Price, Second Edition highlights that an estimated 1.1 million Australians were living with an eating disorder in 2023, of which 27% are individuals aged 19 years and younger (an increase of 13% in this age group since 2012) (Deloitte Access Economics, 2024). The economic and social cost of eating disorders in 2023 was estimated at \$66.9 billion, which is a 36% increase from 2012. These findings highlight the increasing need for prevention efforts, as recognised as a key priority in the National Eating Disorders Strategy (NEDC, 2023).

Adolescence is a crucial time in the development of a young person's identity, thoughts and feelings about their body, and in health-related attitudes and behaviours. Negative attitudes and health-compromising behaviours formed during adolescence can have long-term ramifications on health and wellbeing. A 15-year longitudinal study following 1,455 Canadian adolescents into adulthood revealed that 95% of individuals experienced relatively stable body dissatisfaction from mid-adolescence through adulthood (Wang et al., 2019). A recent Swedish study showed that body dissatisfaction in early adolescence predicted new incidence of disordered eating 10 years later (Foster et al., 2024).

Previous research provides some insight into the prevalence of body dissatisfaction in young people. However, these studies are either based on international samples, or on specific geographical locations in Australia. A recent study has shown that approximately 40% of 11-to-15-year-old boys

and girls, from Melbourne, Victoria, have reported moderate to severe levels of body dissatisfaction (McLean et al., 2021). In this study, body dissatisfaction was highest among girls and young people aged 13-14.

The 2023 BodyKind Youth Survey heard from 2,942 young people living in Australia, of which more than half reported some level of body dissatisfaction and over a third reported a high level of body dissatisfaction (Butterfly Foundation, 2023). The survey revealed the significant impact that body image is having on how young people engage in their world every day. (For more on the 2022 and 2023 findings, visit [www.butterfly.org.au/youthsurveyfindings](http://www.butterfly.org.au/youthsurveyfindings))

With the significant costs associated with body dissatisfaction in Australia and the impact on the daily lives of young people, identifying and implementing ways to reduce body dissatisfaction has never been more critical. Thus, the BodyKind Youth Survey continues for a third year so that we can learn more about how young people think and feel about their bodies, to ensure suitable investment, advocacy, and resources in prevention and early intervention.

### Aims

The BodyKind Youth Survey was designed to explore, and better understand, the body image experiences of young people living in Australia, aged 12 to 18 years. It is Butterfly Foundation's nationwide survey to explore the levels of body satisfaction in a large sample of young people. Of particular focus was the impact of some of the known key influences on young peoples' body image, how feelings about their bodies impact their everyday lives, and the ways in which young people are being kind to their bodies to support a positive body image. The survey also explored young peoples' levels of concern about their body image, their preferred sources to obtain information and education on body image, and what they feel needs to change to create a more BodyKind Australia. Now in its third year, the BodyKind Youth Survey provides a snapshot of the body image experiences of 12-to-18-year-olds in 2024.

Body image is the thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs a person has about their body and how they look, including their shape, size, weight and the way their body functions for them.

### Survey Design

The BodyKind Youth Survey was an anonymous online survey developed under the guidance of a Working Group in 2022, which included leading body image researchers, professionals working in the body image and eating disorder sector, educators, and a young person with lived experience of an eating disorder. For consistency, the questions of the 2022 BodyKind Youth Survey remained the same, with only small additions made in 2024, including an item to capture sex at birth, what 'being healthy' means to young people, and at what age people should be allowed to access social media.

The survey's development in 2022 was informed by an extensive review of the scientific literature and available assessment tools to measure body image and its determinants. The survey was also informed by lived experience, including members of the Butterfly Collective – Butterfly's online community of Australians with a lived/living experience of disordered eating, eating disorders or body dissatisfaction. Twenty members of the Butterfly Collective provided information on the influences on, and changing nature of, their body image, the support they believed may have changed their body dissatisfaction, and questions they believed should and should not be included in the survey.

**A key priority during development was to ensure the survey was informed by a 'do no harm' approach, in which questions were worded positively wherever possible.**

Following a review of the available standardised measures for body image and its determinants, validated, reliable and age-appropriate measures were included in the survey. When such measures did not exist, past Butterfly surveys were explored for options and decisions were made amongst research members of the Working Group.

Standardised measures used in the study included the Body Appreciation Scale-2 for Children (Halliwell et al., 2017), with the addition of a 'not sure' option and some wording simplified for comprehension, and the Body Image Life Disengagement Questionnaire (Atkinson & Diedrichs, 2021), with wording modified on two items to make them more appropriate for an Australian audience and one activity item added. A question about concern about their body image was used from Mission Australia's Annual Youth Survey (Leung et al., 2022). For the purpose of this survey, a series of multiple choice and open-ended questions were created to ask young people about appearance comparisons, importance of appearance, social media use, experience of appearance-related teasing, body image education, and what can be done to help young people feel better about their bodies.

Prior to commencement of data collection in 2022, the survey was piloted with a small group of young people aged 12 to 18 to ensure readability and comprehension.



# About the Survey

## Procedure

### Ethics Approval

The 2024 survey received Human Research Ethics Committee approval from The University of Melbourne.

### Data Collection

Data collection was conducted between September and November 2024. Recruitment of 12- to 18-year-olds, living in Australia was through a number of avenues. A social media campaign (organic and paid) was run by Butterfly Foundation, which targeted young people, and their parents, from diverse groups and geographical locations. A social media influencer, who aligns with the work of Butterfly, promoted the survey on their channels. Schools, families and sporting clubs registered for Butterfly's *BodyKind* initiatives in 2024 were also encouraged to share the survey with young people they work with and support. Organisations and individuals working with young people and families were also invited to share the survey through their networks. Participants were offered the opportunity to enter a draw to win one of 20 \$50 gift cards in recognition of their time and effort.

### Data Analysis

Analysis was undertaken on a total of 1,648 responses. Where missing data were identified for different items, only the available data were analysed. Descriptive statistics were used to characterise the data (i.e., group percentages, and means and standard deviations). Statistical analyses to explore group differences (e.g., gender) involved analyses of variance, and Pearson correlations to explore relationships between variables (statistical significance of  $\alpha < 0.01$ ). Responses to open-ended questions were summarised by identifying themes and using frequency analyses. Analyses of variance and chi-square tests were conducted to compare 2023 and 2024 data for key variables (statistical significance of  $\alpha < .001$ ).

### Reporting

This report contains a summary of findings from the *BodyKind* Youth Survey 2024. The findings of key questions are first presented for the whole sample, followed by comparisons between age, gender identity, sexual identity and Aboriginal and/

or Torres Strait Islander young people. For the key body image variables and level of concern about their body image, comparisons were also highlighted between state and territory, and socioeconomic status.

Due to the relevance to body image, snapshot reports for young people who have received an eating disorder diagnosis and autistic young people will be available on the survey findings website, alongside snapshot reports for demographic groups.

Comparisons to 2023 data were made for key variables and reported for the whole sample in this full report. Differences within demographic groups between 2023 and 2024 results are presented in each snapshot report.

Care should be taken in the interpretation of state and territory level comparisons and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander data, due to the small sample sizes.

Note, the acronym LGB+ will be used throughout the report to capture data provided by lesbian, gay and bisexual young people and those who use a different term.

Throughout this report, the gender of respondents is based on the two-step matrix used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Such that: cis man (male) = male sex at birth, and male or man gender; cis woman (female) = female sex at birth, and woman or female gender; transgender = sex at birth differing from their reported gender (i.e., female sex at birth and man or male gender, or reporting transgender in open-ended response); non-binary = reported non-binary as their gender; and prefer a different term = selected this option in the survey and did not report transgender in their open response.

The collective term trans and gender diverse will be used throughout this report to include transgender, non-binary, and young people who prefer a different term. Although further specific analyses of the body image experiences of trans, non-binary and gender diverse participants is beyond the scope of this report, this data are available for further analyses, and we welcome future collaborations with other researchers.





# Executive Summary

Body dissatisfaction continues to be a relevant experience for young people in Australia and affects how young people engage in their everyday lives. Now in its third year, Butterfly Foundation's *BodyKind* Youth Survey provides a nationwide glimpse of body image in a large sample of Australian young people. In the 2024 survey, responses were analysed from 1,648 young people, aged 12-18 years, living in states and territories across Australia. Most respondents were aged 15-18 years (77.5%) and while respondents were diverse in their gender and sexual identity, most identified as female (79.2%) and heterosexual (68.7%). Findings were largely similar to the 2023 survey (with few significant differences); however, participant numbers were less this year, with evidently fewer female participants. The reasons for this are unknown, however, with an overall increasing focus on mental health and wellbeing young people are being asked to share their views more frequently on a number of issues. Thus, young people may be experiencing survey fatigue, as even the Mission Australia National Youth Survey saw a decrease in participant numbers from 2023 to 2024.

Overall, the findings from the *BodyKind* Youth Survey 2024 suggest that body dissatisfaction continues to affect a significant proportion of young people in Australia, and the impact on their lives is evident. More than half of young people reported being dissatisfied with how their body looks. While young people in all demographic groups are experiencing body dissatisfaction, females, trans and gender diverse and LGB+ young people are still reporting the highest levels. Of the total sample, more than 7 in 10 wished they were thinner/leaner, two thirds wished they were more muscular, and around half wished they were taller.

When asking about body appreciation, on average, respondents reported feeling *rarely* or *sometimes* positive about their bodies. Poorer body appreciation was related to greater body dissatisfaction, life disengagement, social media making them feel dissatisfied with their body, and desire for thinness/leanness, and not surprisingly also a greater concern about their body image. Nearly half reported *never* or *rarely* feeling comfortable with their body.

Of concern, more than 7 in 10 young people reported *never* or *rarely* speaking to someone if they were not feeling good about their body or appearance, suggesting improvements in help-seeking are necessary. Encouragingly, more than 7 in 10 frequently surround themselves with people who like them for who they are over appearance. The majority reported engaging in *BodyKind* actions towards others, such as valuing people for their personality over appearance and avoiding saying unkind things about other people's body or appearance.

Despite being overall statistically lower than 2023, an overwhelming majority of respondents (90.9%) reported some level of concern about their body image, with 2 in 5 reporting being *very* or *extremely* concerned about their body image. This highlights that, irrespective of their level of body satisfaction, body image is a highly relevant consideration for young people. Males were least concerned about their body image and also reported less frequent body dissatisfaction.

Interestingly, 17- and 18-year-old respondents in 2024 reported the most body image-related issues compared with younger ages. They reported the highest levels of body dissatisfaction (whereas 13- to 14-year-olds reported the highest dissatisfaction in 2023), greatest desire for thinness/leanness and muscularity, and concern about their body image. Although unclear, we speculate whether these findings may be associated with increased stress and preparation for big transitions at the time of the survey, which this particular cohort may not have felt equip to manage. Nonetheless, these findings highlight the need for ongoing support and education for positive body image throughout the adolescent years.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people who shared their body image experiences made up 3.7% of respondents. Overall, more differences were evident between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous young people this year, with slightly more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people reporting greater body dissatisfaction, concern about their body image, and desire for

height. Notably, the sample of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people is small, however, is proportionate to Australian population data.

For the first time, this year's *BodyKind* Youth Survey was able to report on the experience of transgender young people. The sample included 101 (6.3%) trans and gender diverse young people, of which 66.0% reported some level of body dissatisfaction, compared with 58.1% of females and 22.3% of males.

A high proportion of young people very frequently compared their body to other teenagers (73.4%) and their friends (66.6%). Almost half very frequently compared their body to celebrities, social media influencers, and their younger self.

Young people were asked about the frequency in which their body image stopped them from engaging in a range of activities. Like 2023, going to the beach, clothes shopping, doing physical activity/sport, and giving an opinion or standing up for themselves were frequently affected. Notably, body image frequently impacted over a quarter of young people's ability to focus on schoolwork and willingness to raise their hand in the classroom. Further, body image frequently affected a fifth of young people's school attendance.

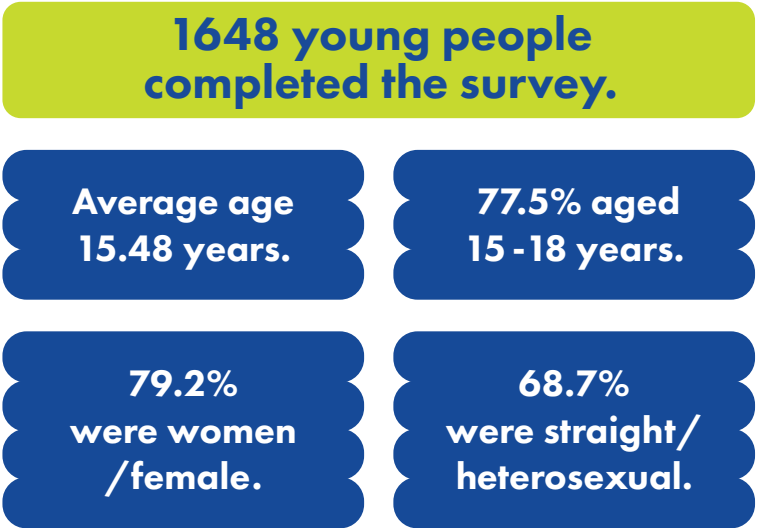
When exploring some of the known risk factors for body dissatisfaction, results from all three years of the survey highlight the high prevalence of appearance-related teasing. In the 2024 survey it was found that the majority (78.5%) of young people have experienced negative comments about their appearance or appearance-related teasing. Teasing most frequently occurred at school, at home, and on social media. Teasing via text/group chat made the top four locations for the first time this year, compared with family events in previous years. Trans and gender diverse young people were more likely to report appearance-related teasing compared to all other genders. LGB+ young people were most likely to take action against appearance-related teasing and bullying online.

Young people were also asked about their social media use, of which over 76.9% are using. 7 in 10 said they are spending more time on social media than they would like to. More than half reported that social media made them feel dissatisfied with their body, which was related to greater body dissatisfaction, concern about their body image and life disengagement. Young people continue to report wanting social media platforms to take more responsibility for helping young people have a more positive body image. Given the interest in 2024 on the appropriate age for young people to have access to social media, we wanted to hear directly from young people when they think they should be allowed to access social media. More than half thought that age 13-14 should be when young people are allowed access to social media. Unsurprisingly, younger respondents tended to report earlier age of access than older respondents.

Across the three years of the survey, young people have consistently called for more body image support at school, at both primary and secondary levels. Young people reported wanting more resources to improve their body image, including content delivered by a person who has overcome body dissatisfaction, and having body image content as part of their classroom curriculum. Nearly 40% want to receive strategies for positive body image through social media. It is unsurprising, given their experiences, that 87.0% of young people want schools to do more to stop appearance-related teasing and bullying from happening. Interestingly, nearly 9 in 10 reported that anyone working with young people in schools should be trained in how to support positive body image.

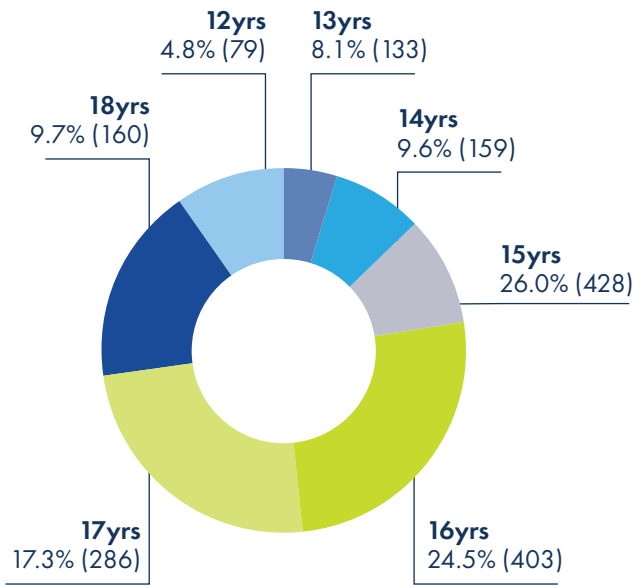
The *BodyKind* Youth Survey findings shed light on the important body image experiences and related issues for young people living in Australia, which are critical to inform the further development of resources, support services, and advocacy to support young people's relationship with their body. These findings continue to drive our important work to make Australia more *BodyKind* for our young people and communities.

# Demographics



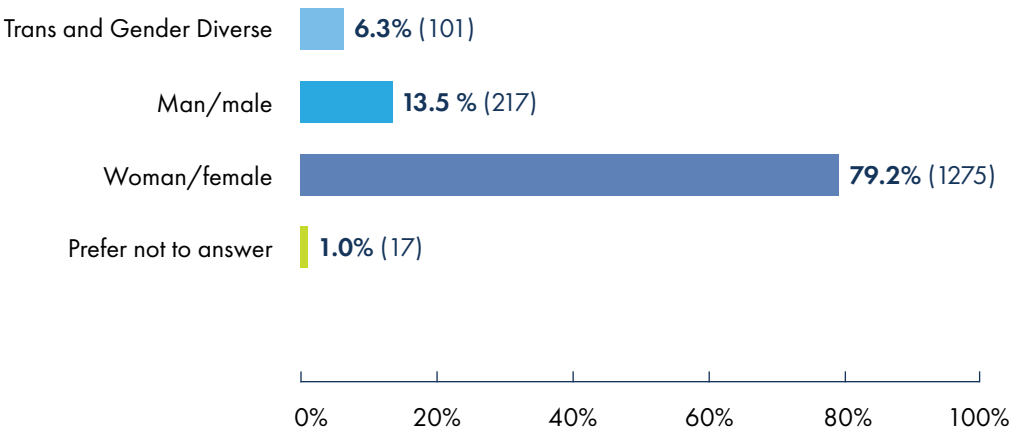
The majority of respondents were aged between 15 and 18 (77.5%; n = 1,277).

Figure 1. Age of respondents (N = 1648)



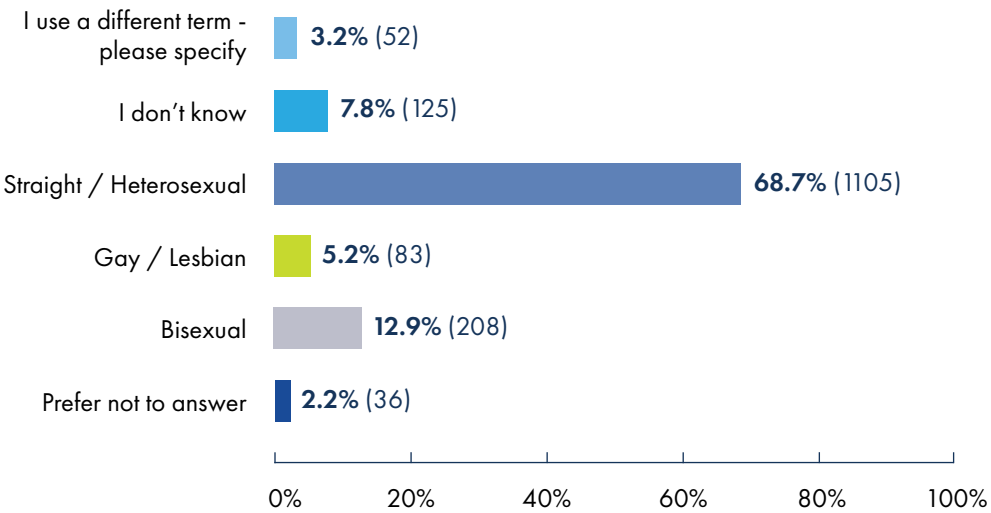
Of the 1610 young people who responded to the question about gender, the majority of the sample were woman/ female (79.2%), followed by man/male (13.5%). Notably, significantly fewer females participated in this year’s survey (n = 1284), compared with 2023 (n = 2445), however, the sample was overall smaller this year.

Figure 2. Gender of respondents (n = 1610))



Of the 1609 young people who responded to the question about sexuality, more than half of young people identified as straight/heterosexual (68.7%). There were similar proportions of sexuality groups this year and in 2023.

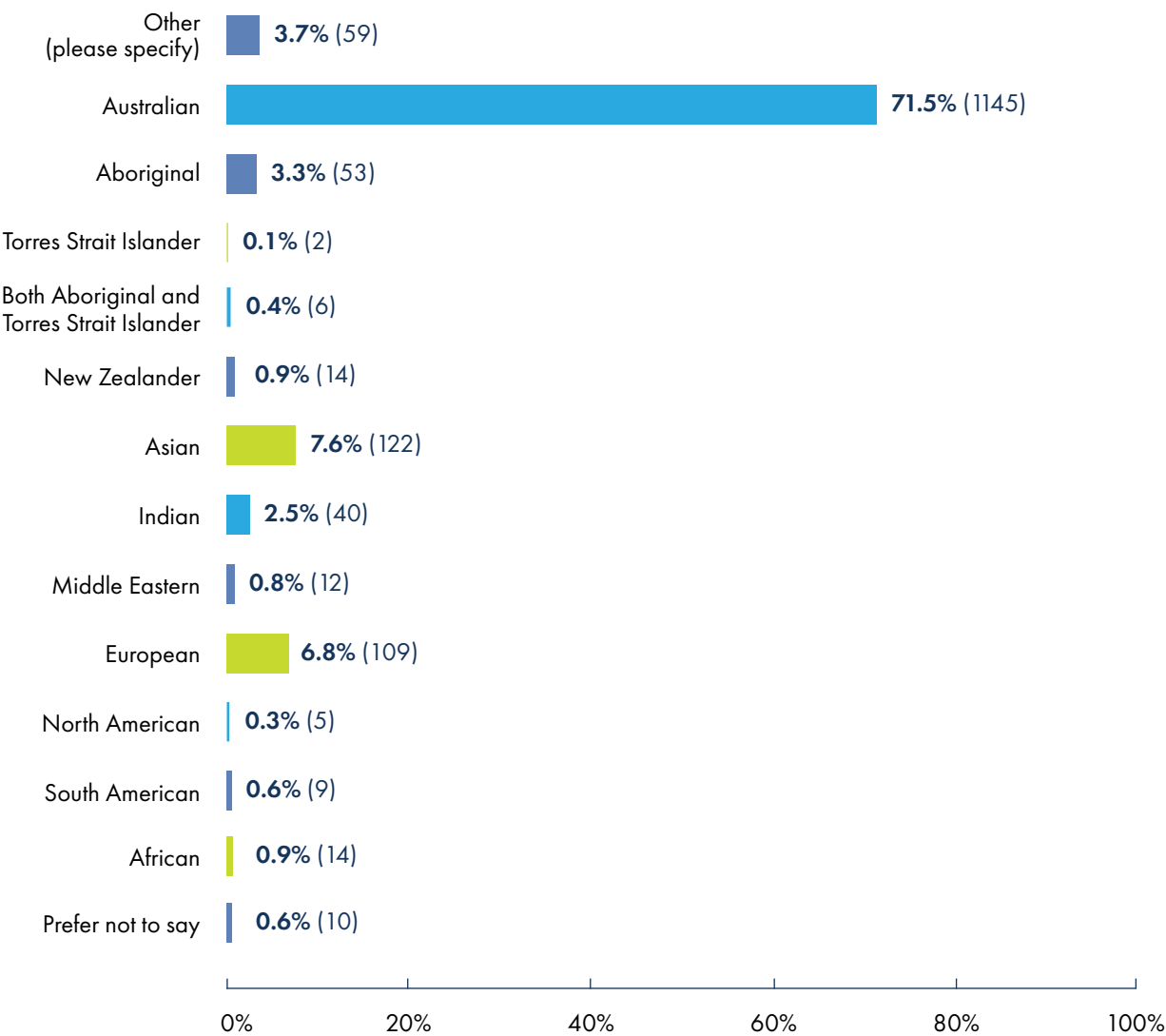
Figure 3. Sexual identity of respondents (n = 1609)





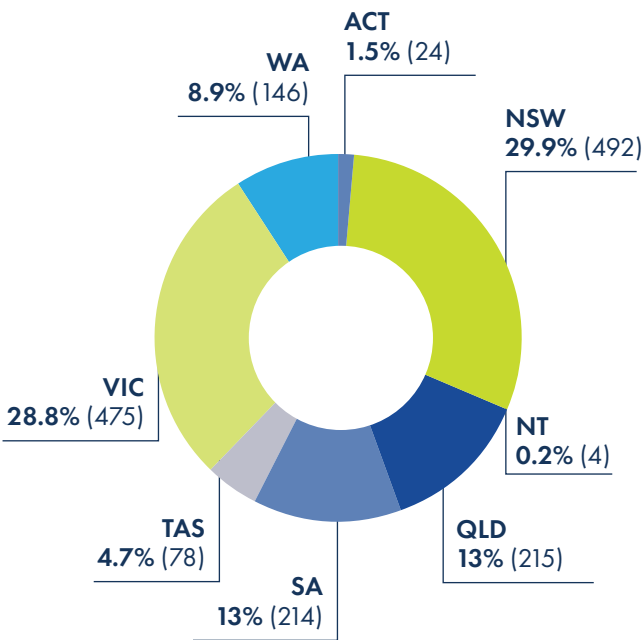
There was diversity in the cultural background of respondents. 71.5% identified as Australian and 3.8% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, which is fairly consistent with the national population (3.3%; ABS, 2021). Other most frequently reported cultural backgrounds were Asian (7.6%), European (6.8%), Indian (2.5%) and New Zealander (0.9%).

Figure 4. Cultural background of respondents (n = 1635)



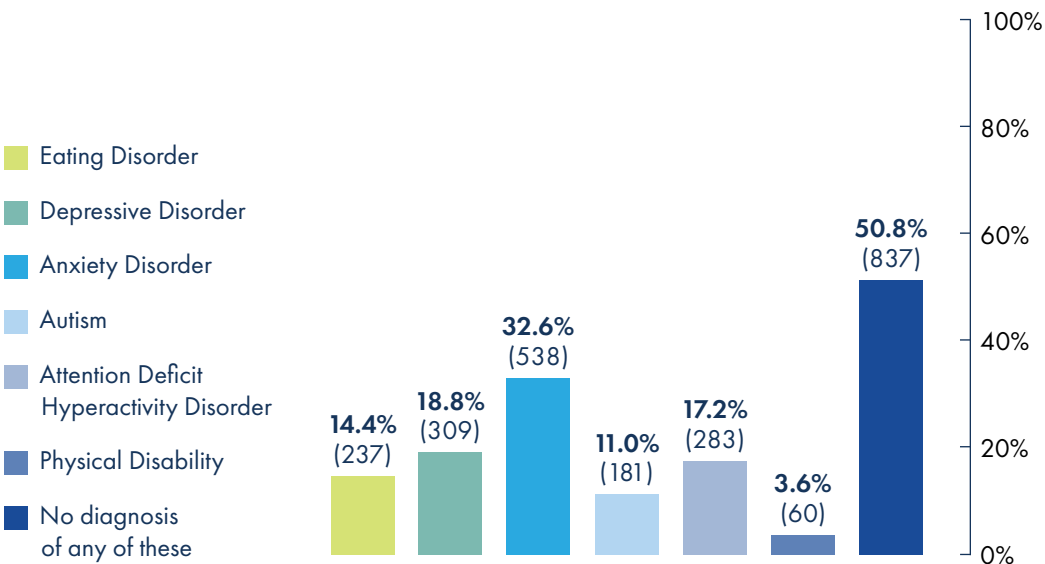
Respondents from each state and territory of Australia were represented in the data, the majority of whom resided in NSW (29.9%), VIC (28.8%), QLD and SA (both 13%). Across Australia, over two thirds (69.5%) of young people resided in metropolitan areas and 30.5% in regional/rural areas. Postcode data were used to identify the socioeconomic status of respondents, which identified that 19.8% of young people were living in more disadvantaged areas, while 44.2% were living in more advantaged areas (ABS, 2016).

Figure 5. Location of respondents (N = 1648)



Respondents were asked to report whether they had received a diagnosis of a mental health and/or other conditions, with the option to select more than one condition. Half (50.8%) reported that they had not been diagnosed with any of the specified conditions/disorders, 32.6% reported a diagnosis of anxiety, 18.8% depression, 14.4% an eating disorder, 17.2% attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and 11% Autism.

Figure 6. Health history of respondents (N = 1648)



# Key Findings

## How satisfied are young people with how their body looks?

More than half of young people reported being dissatisfied with how their body looks.

More than 1 in 3 young people reported being *mostly* or *completely* dissatisfied with how their body looks.

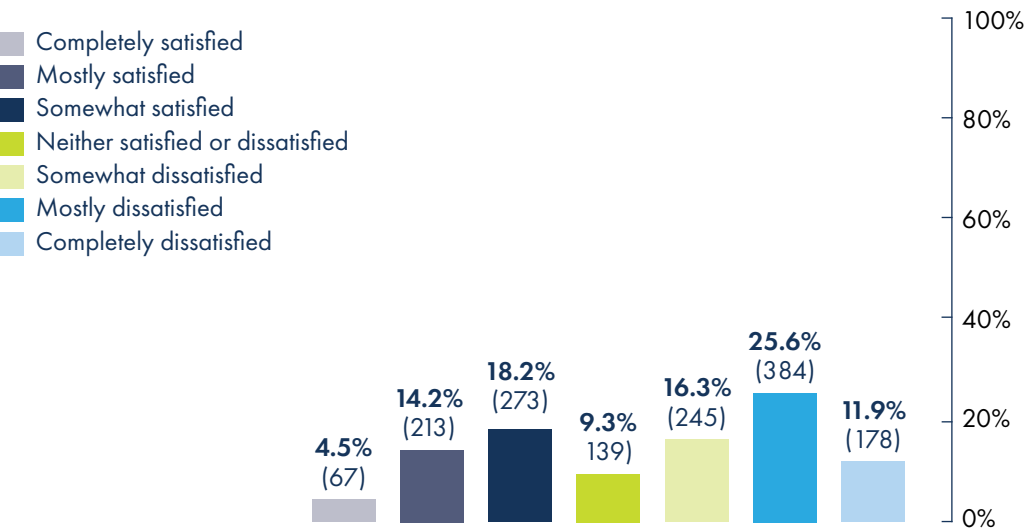
To measure their body image, young people were asked to rate how satisfied they were with how their body looks using a 7-point scale, ranging from *completely satisfied* to *completely dissatisfied*. Some level of body dissatisfaction was defined as the cumulative proportion of *somewhat*, *mostly* and *completely dissatisfied* responses. A high level of body dissatisfaction was defined as those who self-reported being *mostly* or *completely dissatisfied* with how their body looks.

Of the 1,499 young people who responded to this question, 36.9% reported some level of **body**

**satisfaction**, while 53.8% reported some level of **body dissatisfaction**. More than 1 in 3 (37.5%) self-reported a high level of **body dissatisfaction**. Overall, the mean score was 4.43 (SD = 1.80), indicating that the sample on average reported feeling 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' to 'somewhat dissatisfied' about how their bodies look.

Whilst the 2023 sample (M = 4.53, SD = 1.75) was slightly more dissatisfied than the 2024 sample (M = 4.43, SD = 1.80), this difference was not statistically significant, nor did proportions of body satisfaction vary much from 2023.

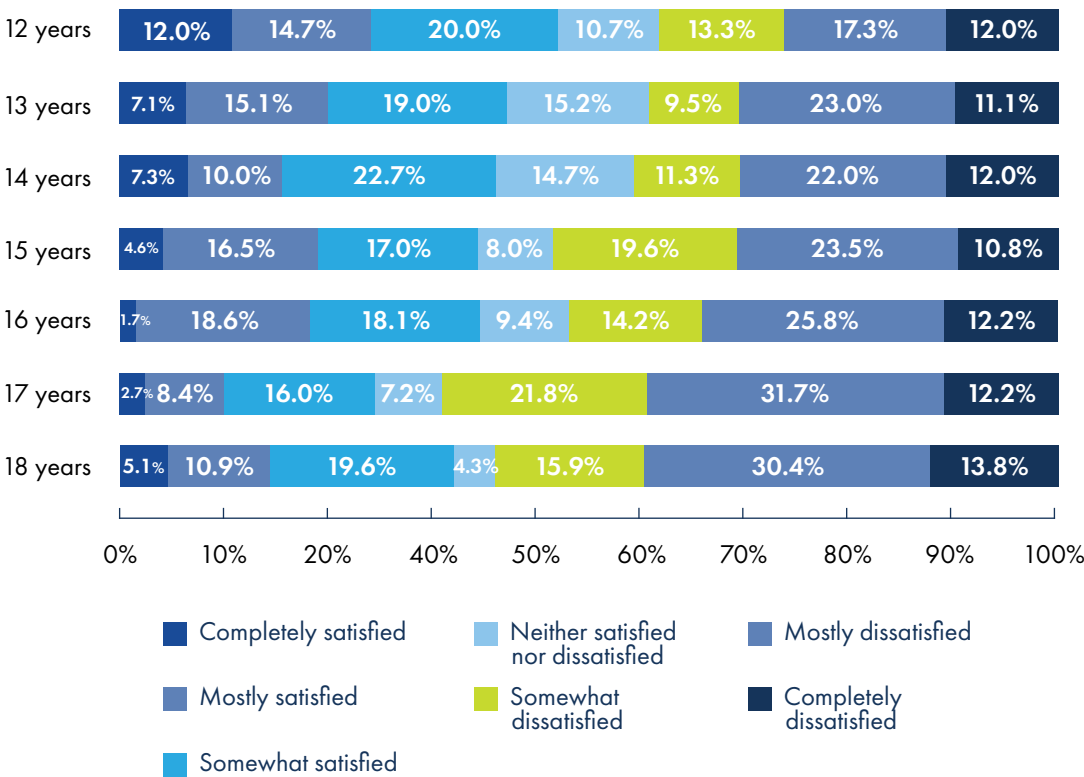
Figure 7. Level of body satisfaction– all respondents (n = 1499)



## Age differences

**Body dissatisfaction** appeared to be highest for 17- and 18-year-olds, with 65.7% and 60.1% respectively reporting some level of **body dissatisfaction**. Similar rates of **body dissatisfaction** were found across the other ages (with between 42.6-53.9%) reporting some level of **body dissatisfaction**.

Figure 8. Level of body satisfaction (%) by age





Gender differences

Over two thirds of males (67.3%) reported some level of **body satisfaction** compared with 32.8% of females and 24.8% of trans and gender diverse young people.

Some level of **body dissatisfaction** was reported by 58.1% of females, 22.3% of males, 66.0% of trans and gender diverse respondents, and 60.0% of those who preferred not to answer.

Almost half of trans and gender diverse young people (48.5%) reported a high level of **body dissatisfaction**, followed by 46.7% of young people who preferred not to answer, 40.5% of females and 13.9% of males.

Figure 9. Level of body satisfaction (%) by gender

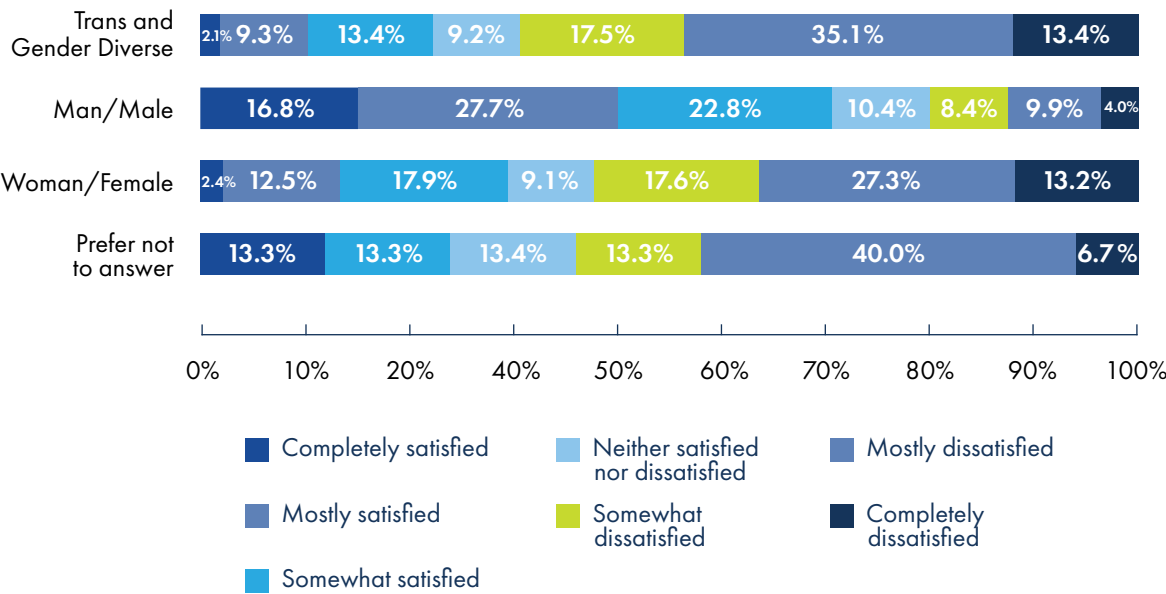
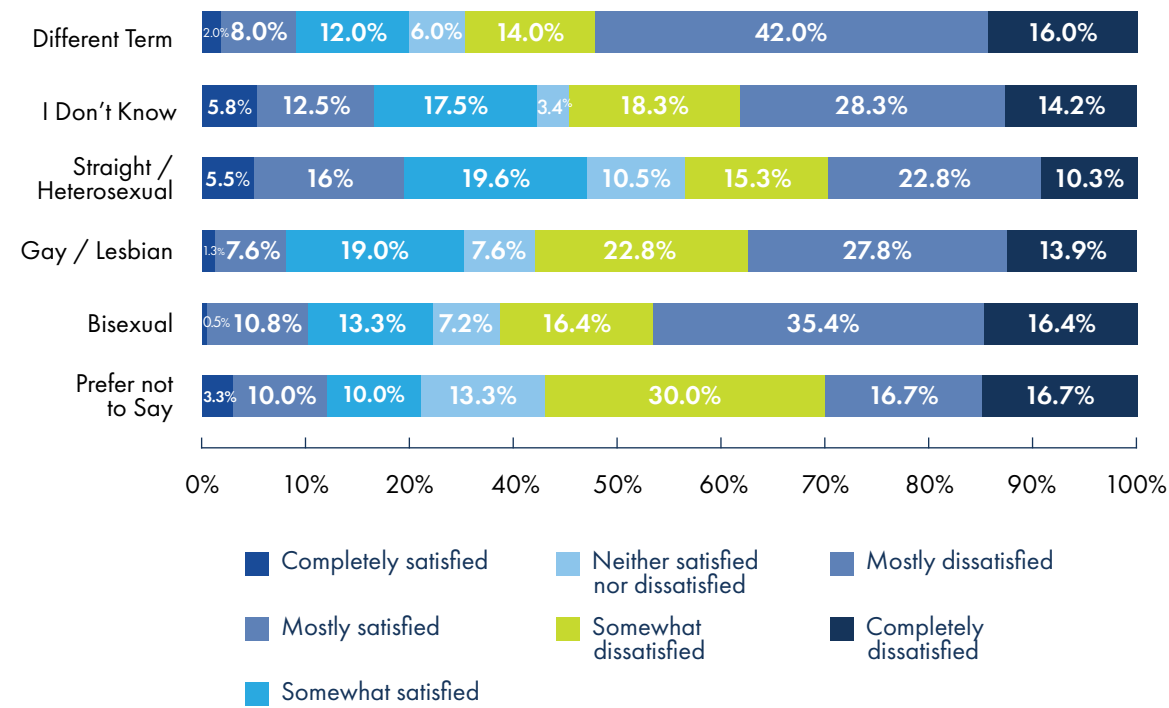


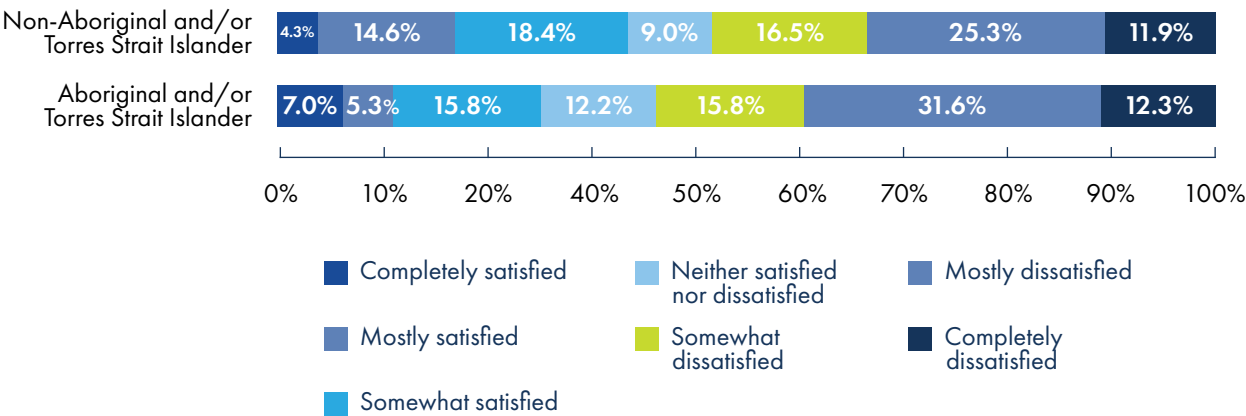
Figure 10. Level of body satisfaction (%) by sexuality



Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people

Overall, body image was slightly more negative for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth and non-Indigenous youth. Slightly less Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth reported some level of **body satisfaction** compared with non-Indigenous respondents (28.1% and 37.3%, respectively). Slightly more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth reported some level of **body dissatisfaction** (59.7% and 53.7%, respectively), and high **body dissatisfaction** (43.9% and 37.2%, respectively). Notably, the sample of respondents who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander was very small.

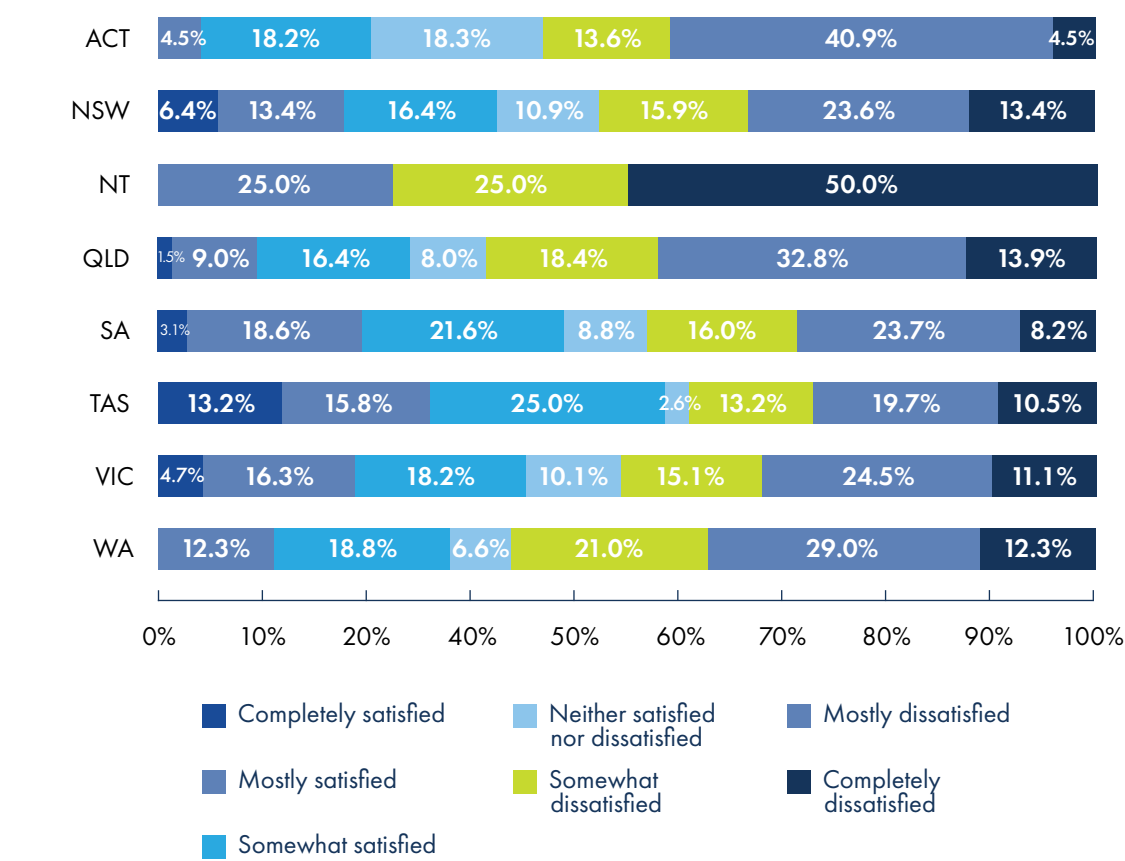
Figure 11. Level of body satisfaction (%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people



### State and territory differences

Across most states, approximately 20-45% of respondents reported some level of **body satisfaction**, except for TAS whereby around 54% reported body satisfaction (NOTE: the sample of TAS youth was small, n = 78). Young people from WA, QLD and NT reported the highest levels of **body dissatisfaction** with over 60% reporting some level of **body dissatisfaction** and over 40% reporting a high level of **body dissatisfaction** (NOTE: the sample from the NT youth was very small, n = 4).

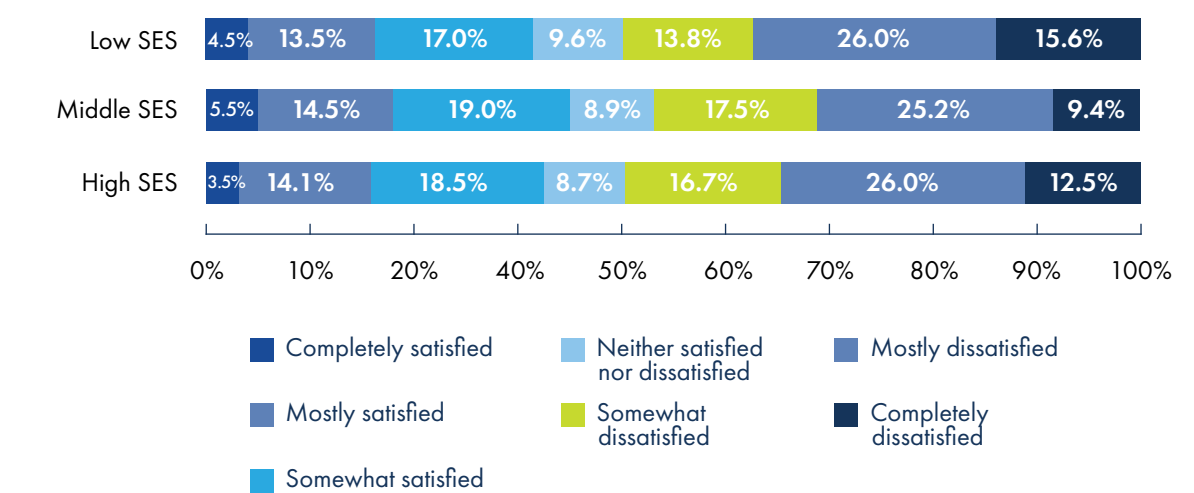
Figure 12. Level of body satisfaction (%) by state and territory



### Socioeconomic status differences

When examining the reporting of any level of **body dissatisfaction**, it was similar among High (55.2%), Middle (52.1%) and Low (55.4%) socioeconomic status (SES) respondents. Similarly, high levels of **body dissatisfaction** were similar across High (38.5%), Middle (34.6%) and Low (41.6%) SES.

Figure 13. Level of body satisfaction (%) by socioeconomic status





## How do young people perceive others' body satisfaction?

When young people were asked how satisfied they thought other young people are with how their body looks, half (50.2%) thought that others experienced some level of **body dissatisfaction**, which is slightly less than the actual proportion of young people in the survey who reported some level of **body dissatisfaction** (i.e., 59.4%). Similarly, 20.2% of respondents thought that other young people experienced high levels of **body dissatisfaction**, which is less than the proportion of young people in the survey who reported high levels of **body dissatisfaction** (i.e., 37.5%). A third (33.0%) thought that others experienced some level of **body satisfaction**, which is less than the actual proportion of young people who reported some level of **body satisfaction** (i.e., 36.9%). Indicating that young people underestimated body satisfaction and dissatisfaction in others.

## To what extent do young people appreciate their bodies?

Body appreciation was measured using the 10-item Body Appreciation Scale-2 for Children (BAS-2C; Halliwell et al., 2017). Young people were asked to indicate how frequently each statement was true for them, using a 5-point scale ranging from *never* (1) to *always* (5). Respondents were also given the option to respond *not sure*. Scores are averaged across responses (scores range from 1-5), with higher scores indicating higher levels of body appreciation (i.e., more positive body image).

For the 1,206 young people who responded to this scale, the mean score was 2.98 ( $SD = 1.01$ ), indicating that the sample on average reported feeling *rarely* to *sometimes* positive about their bodies. Whilst the 2024 sample was slightly more appreciative of their body than the 2023 sample ( $M = 2.89$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ), this difference was not statistically significant.

## Poorer body appreciation was associated with:

### Greater body dissatisfaction

( $r = -0.81$ ,  $p < .001$ )

### Greater life disengagement

( $r = -.70$ ,  $p < .001$ )

### Greater concern about their body image

( $r = -0.69$ ,  $p < .001$ )

### Social media making young people feel more dissatisfied about their body

( $r = 0.61$ ,  $p < .001$ )

### Wishing to be thinner/leaner

( $r = 0.61$ ,  $p < .001$ )

### Wishing to be musclier

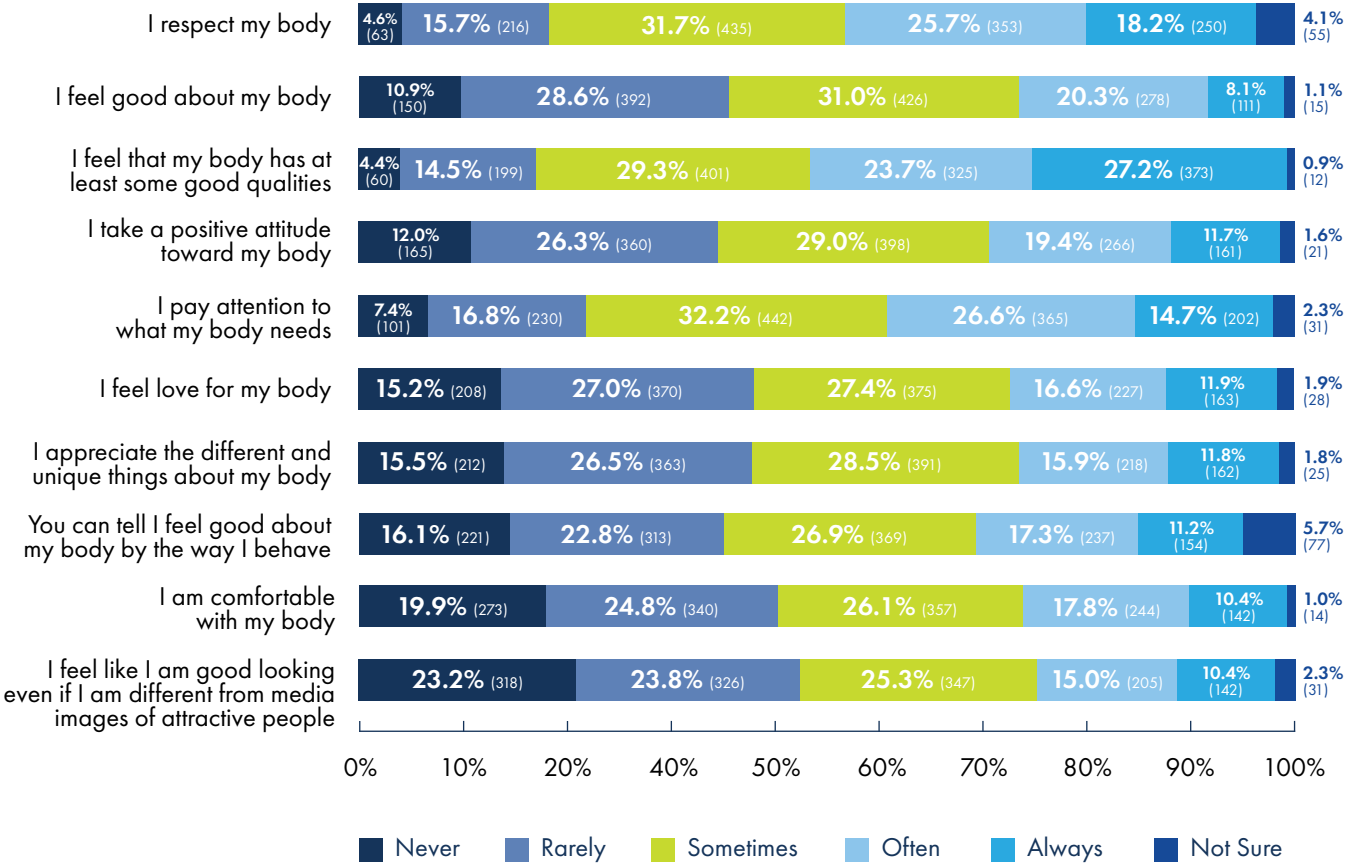
(note: a weak correlation,  $r = 0.11$ ,  $p < .001$ )

1 in 5 young people  
never or rarely respect  
their body.

2 in 5 young people  
never or rarely feel good  
about their body.

Nearly half of young people  
never or rarely are comfortable with their body.

Figure 14. Level of body appreciation of young people



Group comparisons showed that males reported significantly greater body appreciation than females and trans and gender diverse young people. Those who identified as heterosexual reported significantly greater body appreciation compared to individuals who identified as bi-sexual. Significant differences were found between young people in Queensland and Tasmania and South Australia. In both instances individuals from Queensland reported significantly less body appreciation than young people in Tasmania or South Australia. No significant differences were found between different ages, nor between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous young people. A summary of group statistics is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Body Appreciation Scale scores by demographic groups

Gender	n	Mean	Std Dev
Man/Male	153	3.76	0.08
Woman/Female	970	2.86	0.03
Trans and gender diverse	74	2.86	0.10
Prefer not to answer	9	2.68	0.25

Age	n	Mean	Std Dev
12	59	3.11	0.15
13	101	3.15	0.12
14	120	2.97	0.09
15	311	3.02	0.06
16	295	3.00	0.06
17	210	2.84	0.06
18	109	2.82	0.09

Sexuality	n	Mean	Std Dev
Straight / Heterosexual	822	3.07	0.04
Gay/Lesbian	67	2.85	0.11
Bisexual	164	2.68	0.07
Different term	36	2.70	0.13
I don't know	91	2.86	0.11
Prefer not to answer	25	2.87	0.17

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people	n	Mean	Std Dev
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	44	2.86	0.16
Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	1158	2.89	0.03

State and Territories	n	Mean	Std Dev
ACT	16	2.66	0.25
NSW	336	2.94	0.58
NT	3	2.63	0.27
QLD	158	2.71	0.07
SA	162	3.14	0.07
TAS	67	3.32	0.13
VIC	348	3.05	0.6
WA	115	2.83	0.09



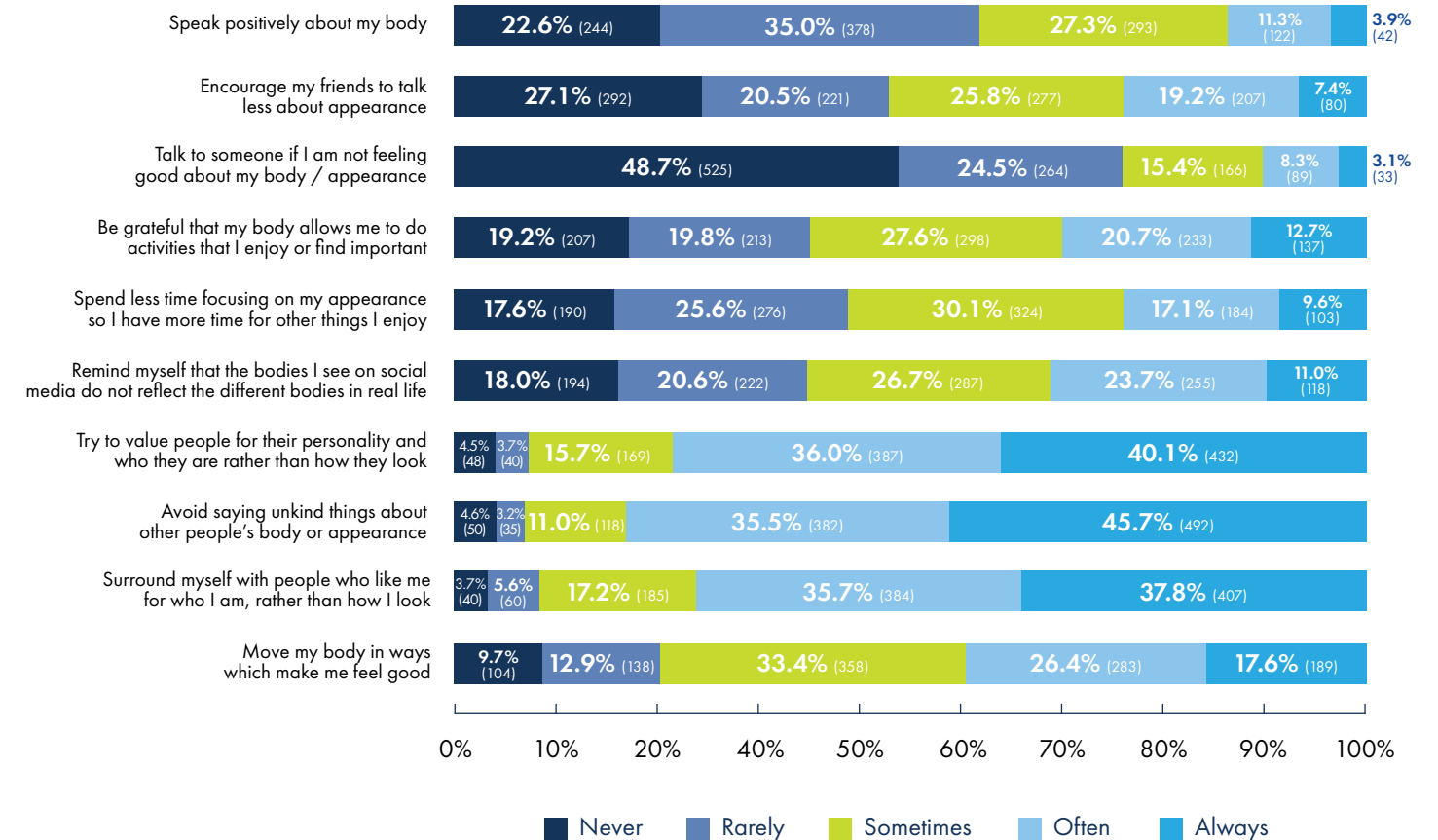
## How are young people being BodyKind?

Young people appeared to be kinder to others than themselves.

8 in 10 young people often or always avoided saying unkind things about other people's body or appearance.

More than 7 in 10 young people reported never or rarely talking to someone if they were not feeling good about their body/appearance.

Figure 15. Ways in which young people practice being BodyKind



Young people were asked a series of questions about the frequency in which they were practicing being BodyKind (i.e., engaging in actions to support their body image), on a 5-point scale ranging from never (1) to always (5).

Of the approximate 1,077 young people who responded to these questions, the majority reported often or always:

- Valuing people for their personality over appearance (76.1%).
- Avoiding saying unkind things about other people's body or appearance (81.2%).
- Surrounding themselves with people who like them for who they are over appearance (73.5%).

Despite 44.0% reporting that they often or always move their body in ways that make them feel good, nearly a quarter (22.6%) reported never or rarely doing this.

Of concern, a substantial proportion of young people reported never or rarely:

- Speaking positively about their body (57.6%).
- Encouraging friends to talk less about appearance (47.6%).
- Spending less time focusing on their appearance so they have more time for other things they enjoy (43.2%).

Compared to other age groups, 12-year-olds reported often or always (44.2%) spending less time focusing on their appearance, so they have more time for other things they enjoy. There were no other obvious age differences.

Some differences were apparent across gender groups. Males were more likely to be grateful that their body allows them to do activities that they enjoy or find important and spend less time focusing on their appearance. Compared to males (71.4%) and females (75.8%), trans and gender diverse young people were more likely to often or always (88.3%) try to value people for their personality and who they are rather than how they look. Over half of males (68.6%) and those who preferred not to report their gender (62.5%) often or always avoided saying unkind things about other people's body or appearance, compared to over 80% of females and trans and gender diverse young people. Trans and gender diverse respondents (83.6%) and females (74.2%) reported that they often or always surround

themselves with people who like them for who they are, rather than how they look, compared with 64.4% of males and 62.5% of young people who preferred not to report their gender. Those who identified as heterosexual or preferred not to report their sexuality were more likely to be grateful their body allows them to do activities they enjoy, or think are important. No other sexuality differences were evident.

Compared with 60.0% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth, 73.9% of non-Indigenous young people reported that they often or always surround themselves with people who like them for who they are, rather than how they look. Compared with 40.0% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth, 26.4% of non-Indigenous young people reported that they encourage their friends to talk less about their appearance.

## How concerned are young people about their body image?

**90% of young people reported some level of concern about their body image.**

**2 in 5 reported being very or extremely concerned about their body image.**

**29.6% reported being *slightly* or *not at all* concerned about their body image.**

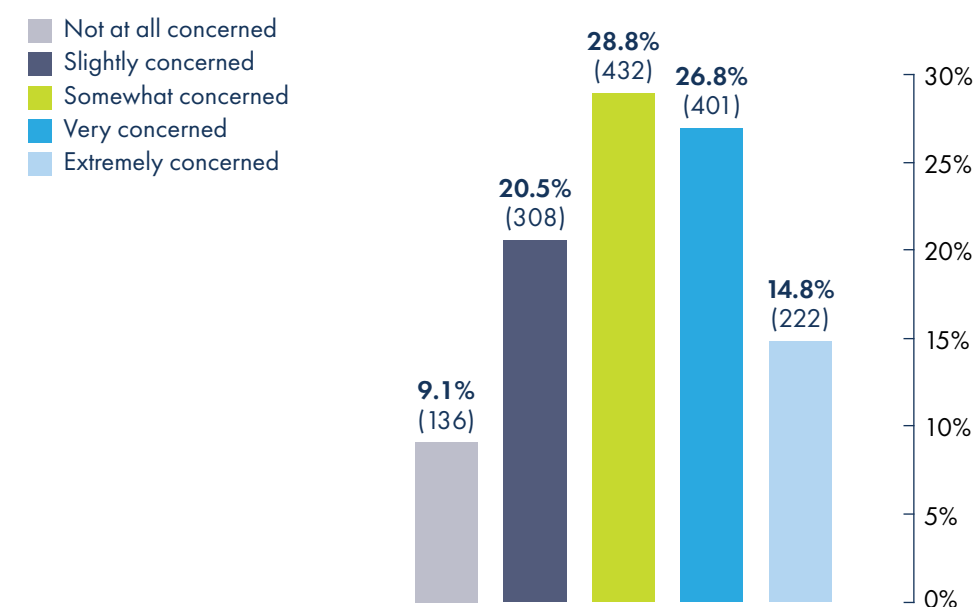
Young people were asked to rate how concerned they were about their body image using a 5-point scale, ranging from *not at all concerned* to *extremely concerned*. Some level of concern was defined by the cumulative proportion of all responses other than *not at all concerned*. A high level of concern about body image was defined as those who reported being *very* or *extremely concerned*.

Of the 1,499 who responded to this question, 90.9% reported **some level of concern** about their body image, leaving only 9.1% who were *not at all concerned*. Two in five young people (41.6%) reported a **high level of concern** about their body image, which is slightly lower than last year's BodyKind Youth Survey findings (46.4%) and higher than Mission Australia Youth Survey 2024 findings (25.3%; McHale et al., 2024).

Whilst the 2023 sample ( $M = 3.34$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ) was statistically more concerned about their body image than the 2024 sample ( $M = 3.18$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ), the effect size was small ( $p < .01$ ,  $d = 0.14$ ), suggesting that the comparison between years is not very meaningful.



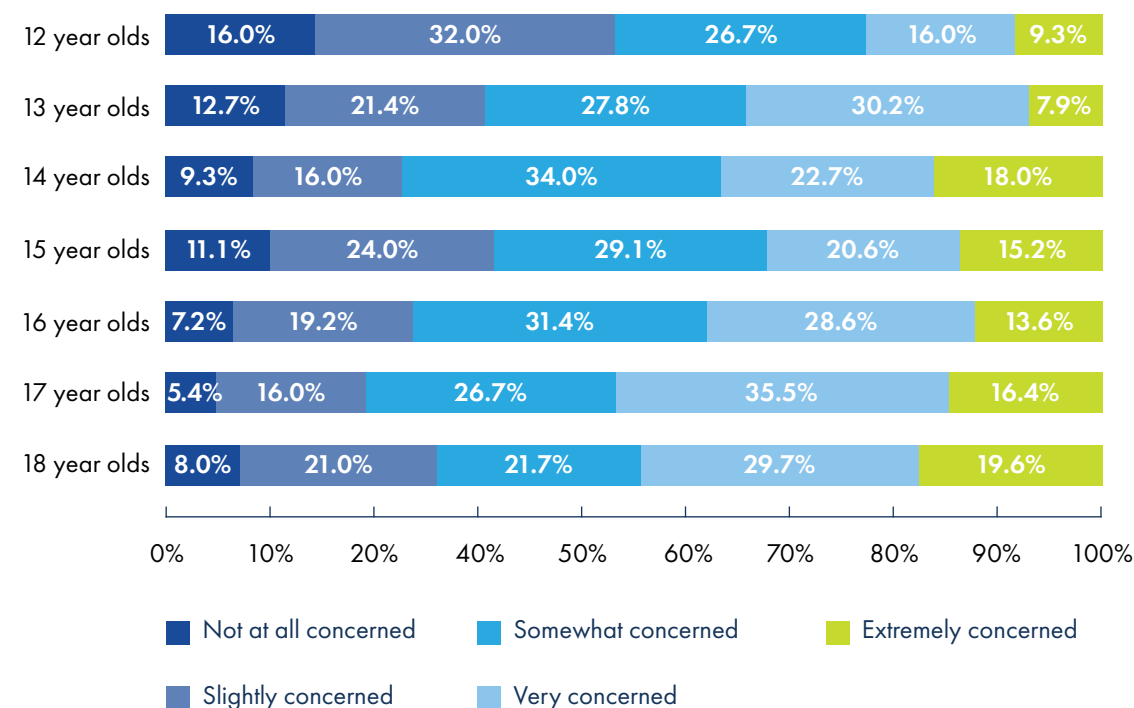
Figure 16. Level of concern about body image – all respondents ( $n = 1499$ )



## Age differences

When exploring age differences, it appears that 12-year-olds were **the least concerned** about their body image (48.0% *slightly* or *not at all concerned*), while 17- and 18-year-olds were the **most concerned** (with 51.9% and 49.3%, respectively, reporting that they were *very* or *extremely concerned*).

Figure 17. Level of concern about body image (%) by age

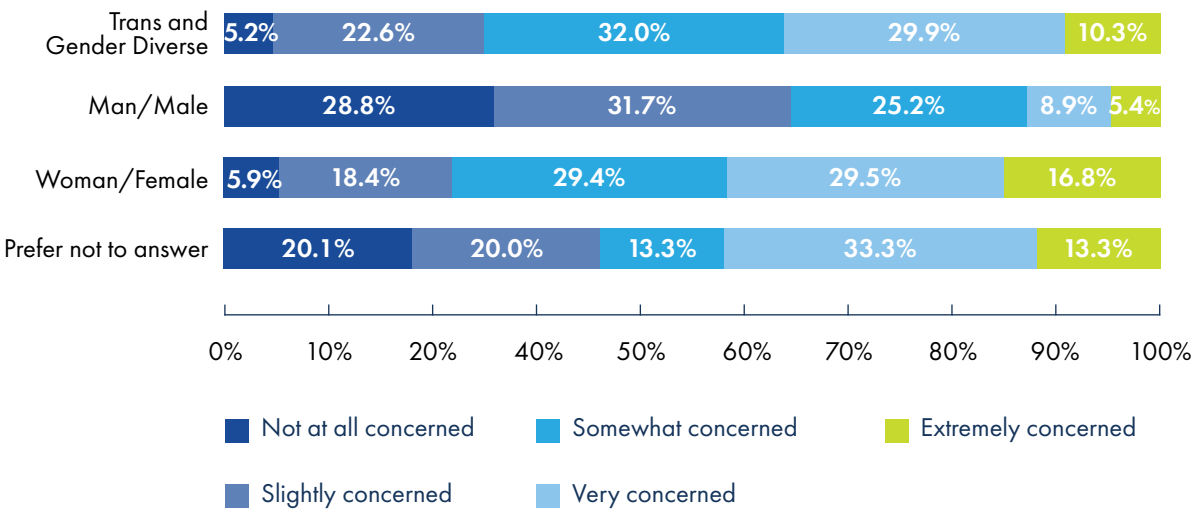




Gender differences

When exploring gender differences, males reported the highest frequency of **no concern** about their body image (28.8%) compared with around 5% of females and trans and gender diverse youth. Young people who preferred not to say (46.6%), females (46.3%) and trans and gender diverse young people (40.2%) reported a **high level of concern** about their body image.

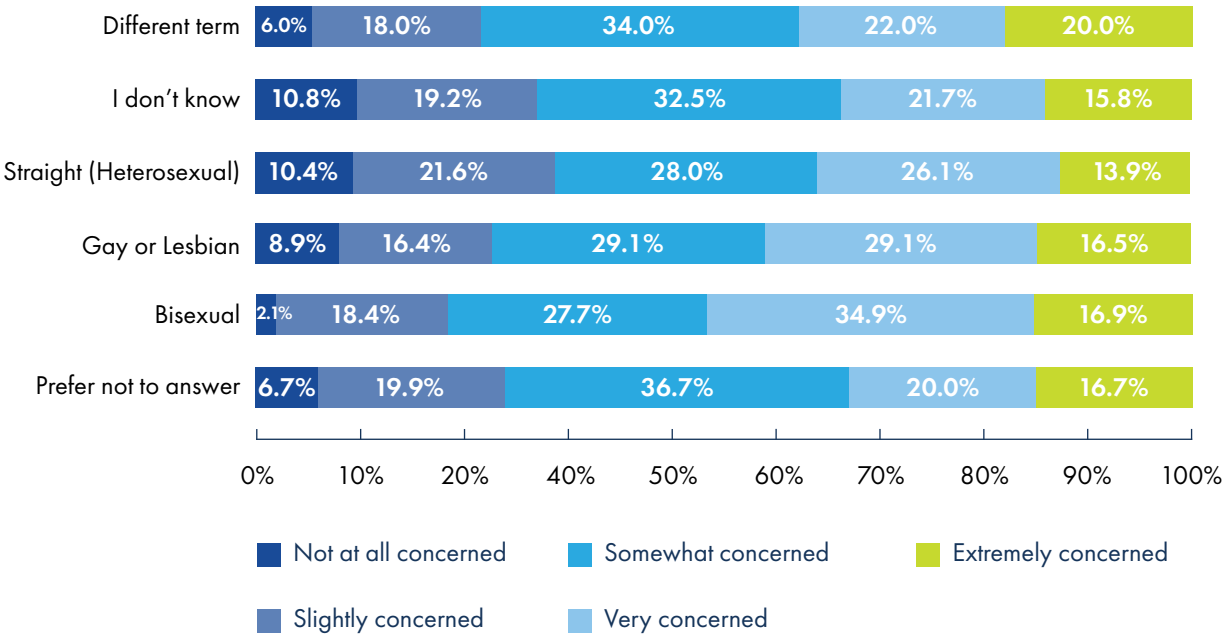
Figure 18. Level of concern about body image (%) by gender.



Sexuality differences

Across sexual identity groups, young people who didn't know their sexuality and those who identified as heterosexual reported the highest frequency of **no concern** about their body image (10.8% and 10.4%, respectively) compared with other sexual identities. A similar proportion of young people who identified as gay/lesbian and bisexual, reported a **high level of concern** about their body image (>45.0% very or extremely concerned).

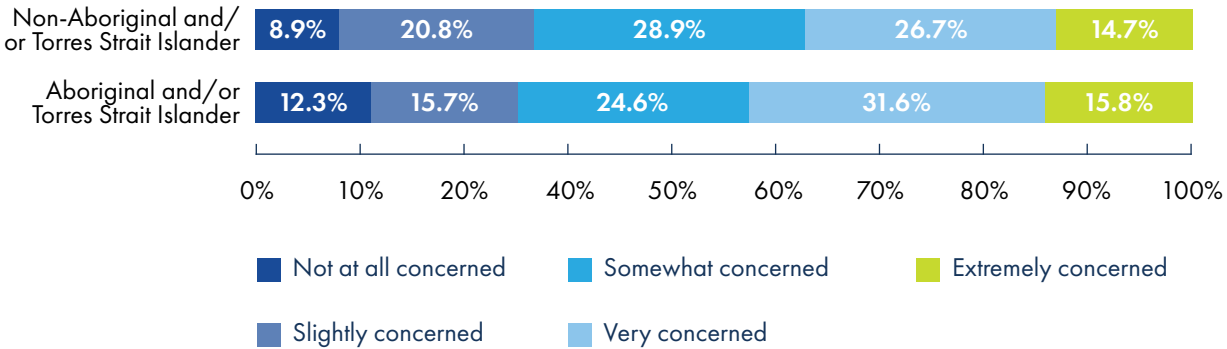
Figure 19. Level of concern about body image (%) by sexuality



Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people

Compared with nearly half of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents (47.4%), 41.1% of non-Indigenous respondents reported a **high level of concern** about their body image.

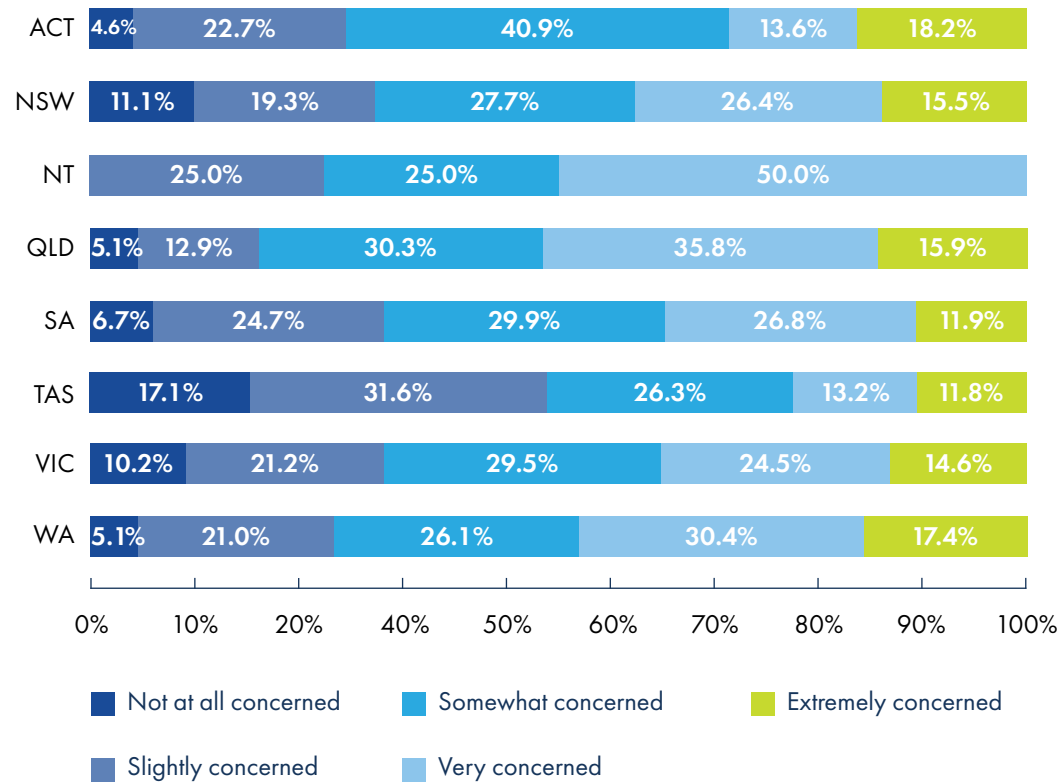
Figure 20. Level of concern about body image (%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people



### State and territory differences

A **high level of concern** about body image was reported by approximately 2 in 5 young people in NSW, SA, and VIC, and by around half of young people in QLD, WA, and NT.

Figure 21. Level of concern about body image (%) by state and territory

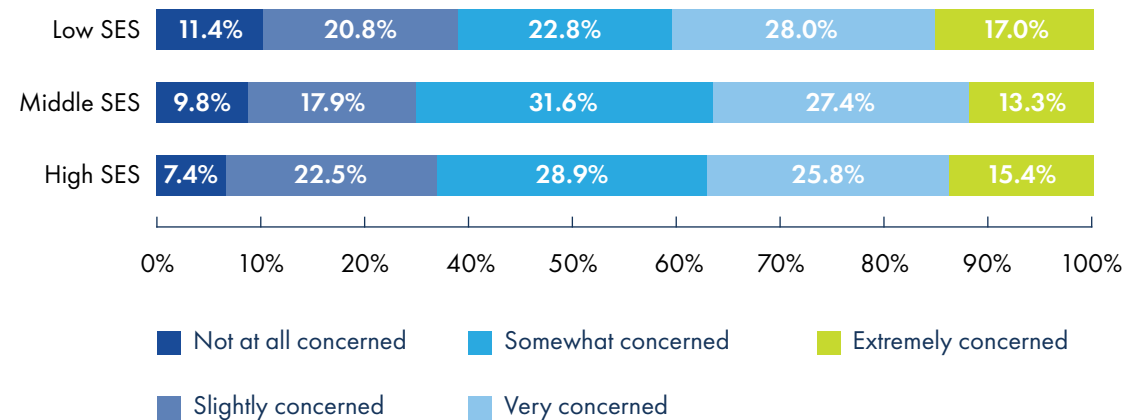


### Socioeconomic status differences

Across all socioeconomic groups, only a small portion of young people reported **no concern** about their body image (7.4-11.4%).

A slightly greater proportion of young people from Low SES areas reported a **high level of concern** about their body image (45.0% very or extremely concerned) compared with Middle (40.7%) and High (41.2%) SES areas.

Figure 22. Level of concern about body image (%) by socioeconomic status



### How do young people perceive others' concern about body image?

When young people were asked how concerned they thought other young people are with their body image, 95.3% reported **some level of concern**, leaving a mere 4.7% that thought other young people would have **no concern** about their body image. Interestingly, 30% of respondents thought that other young people have a **high level of concern** about their body image, while the proportion of young people reporting a **high level of concern** about their body image was 41.6% in the current report.





## What are the body ideals of young people?

**75.5% of young people wished they were thinner/leaner.**

**66.6% of young people wished they were more muscular.**

**49.6% of young people wished they were taller.**

Young people were asked to indicate on a scale from 0 – 100 if they wished they were thinner/leaner (0) or larger/heavier (100); less muscly (0) or more muscly (100); and shorter (0) or taller (100). The data were split to indicate thinner/leaner, less muscly or shorter as <40 and larger/heavier, more muscly and taller as >60, and 'just as I am' in between.

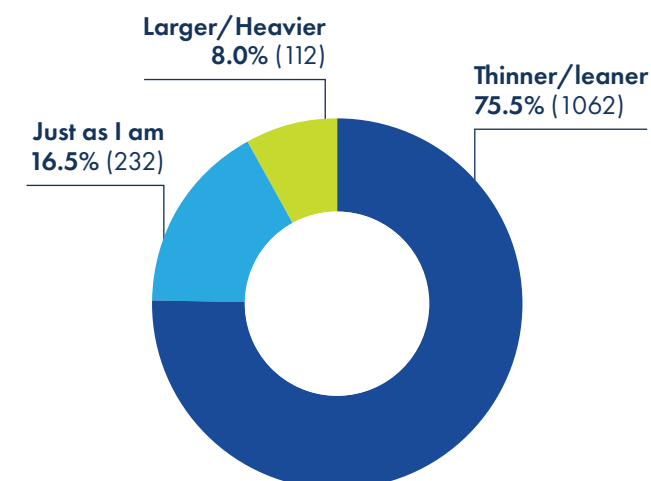


## Desire for thinness/leanness

Of the 1,406 young people who indicated their ideal weight, the majority wished they were **thinner/leaner** (75.5%) compared to only 8.0% who wished they were **larger/heavier**. 16.5% of young people were satisfied with their weight.

There was no statistical difference between the 2023 sample ( $M = 23.05$ ,  $SD = 23.19$ ) and the 2024 sample ( $M = 23.25$ ,  $SD = 23.11$ ), regarding their desire to be thinner/leaner ( $p = .79$ ).

Figure 23. Ideal weight – all respondents (n = 1406)



Desire for thinness/leanness appeared to peak at age 17, with 86.1% of 17-year-olds wanting to be **thinner/leaner** than they are, however, desire for thinness/leanness was high for other ages 13-18 (reported by 71.9%-81.9%). There was a significant negative relationship between age and desire for thinness ( $r = -0.10$ ,  $p < .001$ ), demonstrating that older respondents tended to have a stronger desire to be thinner; notably this association was very small.

Across gender groups, females (82.2%), trans and gender diverse (82.8%), and those who preferred not to report their gender (76.9%) reported a greater desire for thinness compared with males. About a third of males (32.4%) desired to be **thinner/leaner**, while 31.4% desired to be **larger/heavier**.

Over 83% of young people in the LGBTQ+ community reported a desire to be **thinner/leaner**, compared with 71.0% of heterosexual young people.

Desire for thinness/leanness was reported by a somewhat similar proportion of non-Indigenous young people (75.4%) and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth (79.6%).

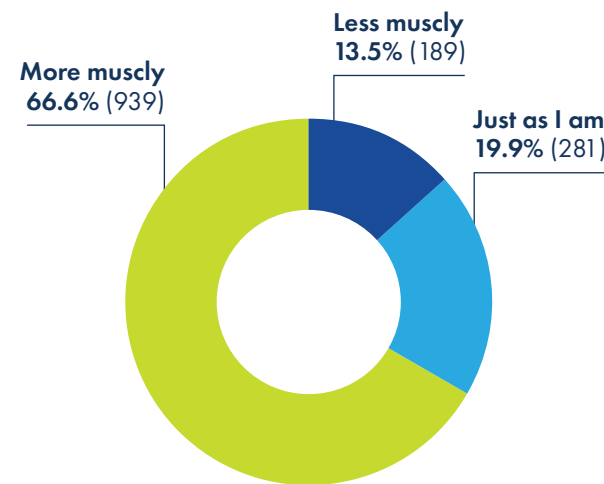
**Wishing to be thinner/leaner was associated with poorer body appreciation ( $r = 0.53$ ,  $p < .001$ )**

**and social media making them feel more dissatisfied about their body ( $r = 0.43$ ,  $p < .001$ )**

Desire for muscularity

Of the 1,409 young people who indicated their ideal muscularity, the majority wished they were **more muscly** (66.6%) compared to only 13.5% who wished they were **less muscly**. Only 19.9% of young people were satisfied with their muscularity. No significant differences were found between the 2024 sample ( $M = 64.77$ ,  $SD = 25.11$ ) and the 2023 sample ( $M = 66.74$ ,  $SD = 24.40$ ) ( $p = .006$ ).

Figure 24. Ideal muscularity – all respondents (n = 1409)



Across the age groups, 18-year-olds (79.4%) tended to report the greatest desire for muscularity compared to all other age groups (<70%). Desire for muscularity was high among all gender groups, but males (83.6%) and trans and gender diverse young people (70.2%) reported the greatest desire to be **more muscular**.

Young people who identified as gay/lesbian (81.1%) reported the greatest desire for muscularity compared to all other sexualities (<75%). There were no notable differences between non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people.

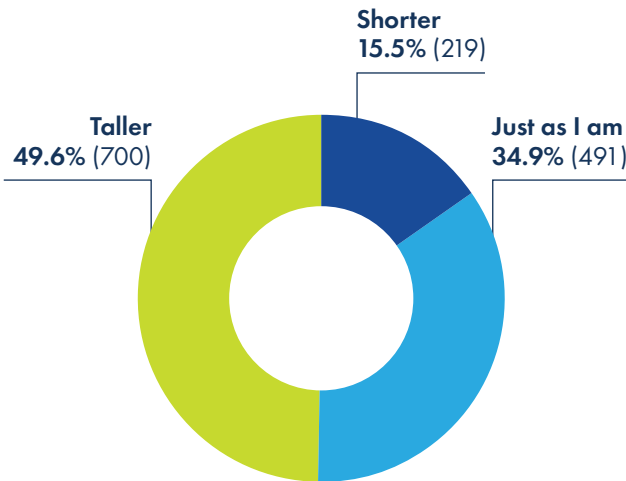
Wishing to be more muscular was associated with wishing to be thinner ( $r = .11$ ,  $p < .001$ ), but this was a very weak correlation.



Desire for height

Of the 1,410 young people who indicated their height ideal, approximately half (49.6%) wished they were **taller**, compared to only 15.5% who wished they were **shorter**. Just over a third of young people (34.9%) were satisfied with their height. There was no statistically significant difference in the desire to be taller between the 2024 sample ( $M = 60.40$ ,  $SD = 25.32$ ) and the 2023 sample ( $M = 59.79$ ,  $SD = 24.97$ ;  $p = .46$ ).

Figure 25. Ideal height – all respondents (n = 1410)



More 12-year-olds expressed a desire to be **taller** (60.0%) compared to other age groups (which ranged from 44.0-55.0%).

Across gender groups, more young people who preferred not to report their gender (23.1%) than young people of other genders (<18%) wanted to be **shorter**, with as few as 3.2% of males wanting to be shorter. More trans and gender diverse young people (66.0%) had a desire to be **taller**, followed closely by males (64.0%) and those who preferred not to report their gender (61.5%), with 45.7% of females desiring to be **taller**.

No differences for desire to be **taller** were apparent across sexuality groups. Around 45.0-65.0% of all sexual identities reported a desire to be **taller**.

Slightly more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people (55.6%) desired to be **taller**, compared with non-Indigenous young people (49.3%).





## Who are young people comparing their bodies to?

Young people were asked how frequently they compared their body or appearance to a varied list of people (see Figure 26). Responses were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from *never* (0) to *always* (5). Some level of comparison was defined as the cumulative proportion of *sometimes*, *often* and *always* responses. A very frequent comparison was defined as *often* or *always* responses.

**Young people very frequently compared their body and appearance to their friends (73.4%) and their friends (66.6%).**

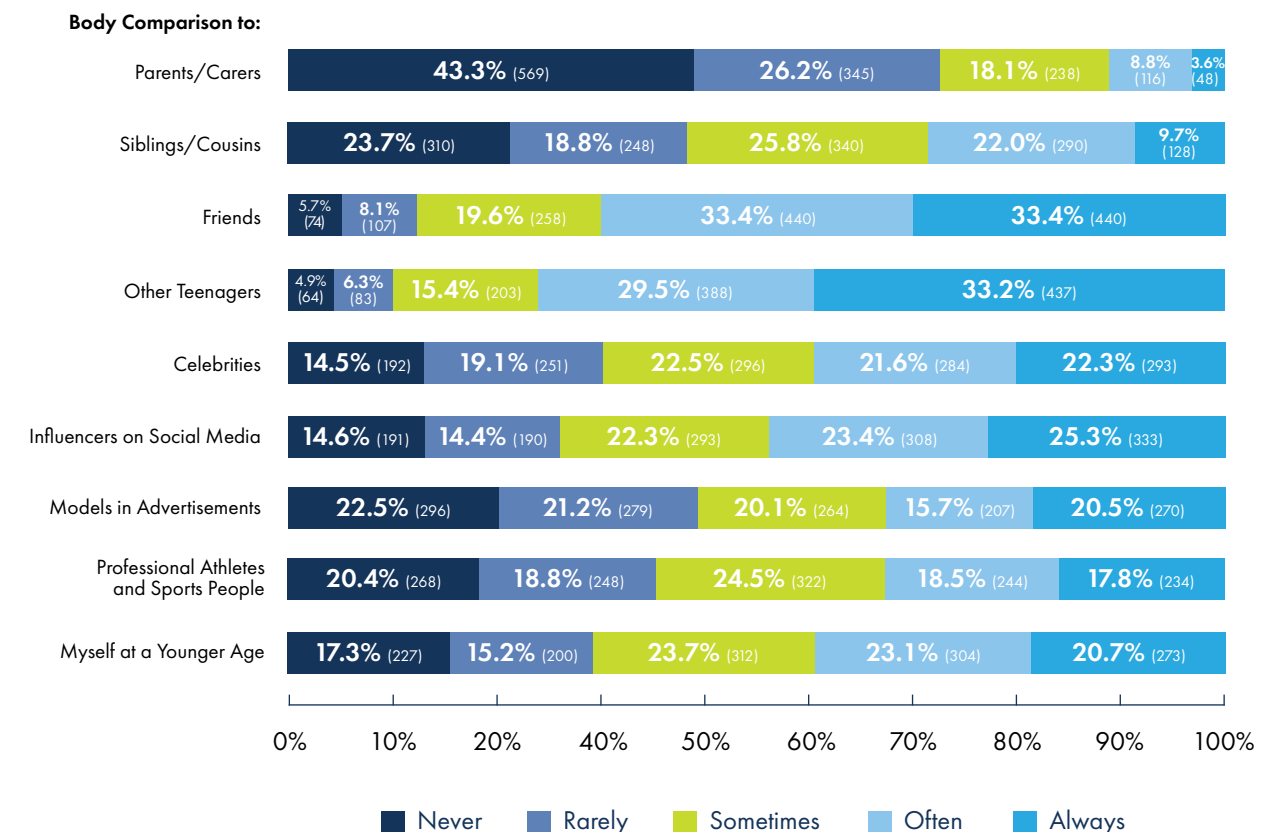
**Almost half of young people very frequently compared their body and appearance to celebrities, social media influencers and their younger self.**

**More than one third of young people very frequently compared their body and appearance to professional athletes/sports people and models in advertisements.**

Very high proportions of young people compared their body and appearance at least *some of the time* to other teenagers (88.8%) and their friends (86.2%), while over two thirds compared their body and appearance at least *some of the time* to influencers on social media (71.0%), their younger self (67.5%) and celebrities (66.4%).



Figure 26. Frequency of body comparisons – all respondents (n = 1316)



When exploring demographic group differences, 12- and 13-year-olds appeared to differ from other age groups the most. For example, a larger proportion of 12-year-olds (26.6%) *never* or *rarely* compared their appearance to other teenagers, compared with 4.6-14.4% of other ages who *never* or *rarely* did. Approximately half of young people across all age groups very frequently (i.e., *often* or *always*) compared their appearance to themselves at a younger age, with the exception of 12- and 13-year-olds (28.1% and 36.8% respectively). While a substantial proportion of both 12-year-olds (57.4%), and 13-year-olds (61.4%), very frequently compared themselves to other teenagers this proportion was lower compared to the other age groups (70.4- 81.7%). Overall, appearance comparisons with parents/guardians were uncommon.

Female and trans and gender diverse young people were more likely to very frequently compare their appearance to their friends, other teenagers, celebrities, and models. Further, females were most likely to very frequently compare their appearance to influencers on social media (56.0%). 35.2% of females compared their appearance to their siblings/cousins, which was similar to trans and gender diverse young people (27.2%), but more than double the proportion of males (15.5%). Males (28.2%) and females (40.0%) compared their appearance to professional athletes and sports people more frequently than trans and gender diverse young people (15.2%) and those who preferred not to report their gender (9.1%). Appearance comparisons with parents/guardians, and oneself at a younger age occurred at similar frequencies across different genders.

Comparison to other teenagers was highest for bisexual young people, however, this was relatively high across sexual identities (70.9-78.1%) except those who preferred not to answer (60.7%). Young people who identified as straight/heterosexual (38.9%) were more likely than other sexualities to compare their appearance to professional athletes and sports people. Appearance comparisons with parents/guardians, siblings/cousins, friends, oneself at a younger age, models, and influencers on social media occurred at similar frequencies across different sexualities.

There were no obvious differences between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people and non-Indigenous young people in how frequently they compare their body and appearance to others.

## How does body image impact young people?

### Has body image ever stopped young people from doing certain activities?

Young people completed a modified Body Image Life Disengagement Questionnaire (BILD; Atkinsons & Diedrichs, 2021). Respondents were asked the degree to which their feelings about how their body looks has ever stopped them from doing 10 different life activities using a 4-point scale ranging from *hasn't stopped me* (1) to *stopped me all the time* (4). Respondents were also given the option to respond *not sure*. Scores were averaged across responses (scores range 1-4), with higher scores indicating greater life disengagement. A high level of disengagement was defined by the proportion of *quite a bit* and *all the time* responses.

For the 1,113 young people who responded to this scale, the mean score was 2.03 ( $SD = 0.77$ ), indicating that the sample on average reported their body image stopping them engaging in life activities only 'a little bit', which was statistically similar to the 2023 sample ( $M = 2.04$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ,  $p = .78$ ).

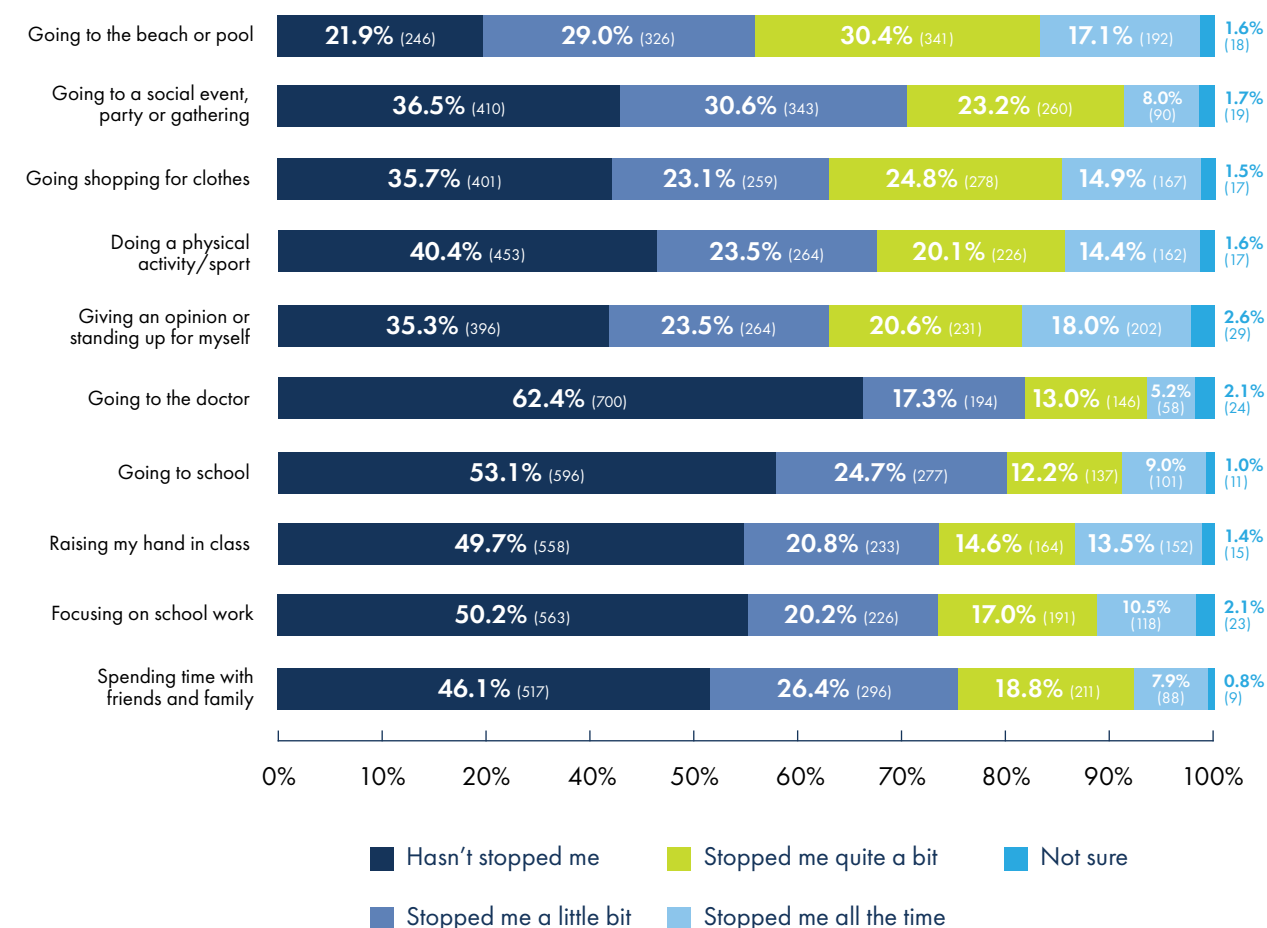
However, when exploring the activities independently, feelings about their bodies frequently stopped young people from engaging in a number of activities.

- 47.5% of young people reported a high level of disengagement from going to the beach.
- 39.7% of young people reported a high level of disengagement from going clothes shopping.
- 34.5% of young people reported a high level of disengagement from doing a physical activity/sport.
- 38.6% of young people reported a high level of disengagement from giving an opinion or standing up for themselves.

**Impact on school was also notable, with over a quarter of young people reporting their body image impacted their ability to focus on schoolwork and willingness to raise their hand in the classroom, quite a bit or all the time, and 1 in 5 reporting it stopped them from going to school quite a bit or all the time.** Almost half of young people reported their body image stopped them from going to school, raising their hand in the classroom and focusing on schoolwork, at least *some of the time*.



Figure 27. Level of disengagement from life activities



Life disengagement was similar across age and sexuality groups. Life disengagement was greater for young people reporting their gender as anything other than male. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people reported slightly greater life disengagement compared to non-Indigenous young people.

## How much do young people value appearance?

Young people were asked to order what is most important to them from a list of being healthy, sporty, good looking, smart and kind.

On average, respondents placed higher importance on being kind over being good looking, smart and sporty. Only 14.4% of young people ranked being good looking as most important to them.

There were no notable differences in the importance of appearance between sexuality groups, nor between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous young people. However, being good looking was ranked as important by more than a quarter of 12-year-olds, which tended to decrease with age, and more females (16.1%) than other genders.



## Young people's social media use

**76.9% of respondents reported using social media.**

**7 out of 10 said that they spend more time on social media than they would like to.**

**Most frequently used platforms:**  
**Instagram (78.9%), TikTok (72.9%), Snapchat (70.0%).**

**More than half of respondents (57.2%) reported social media made them feel dissatisfied about their body.**

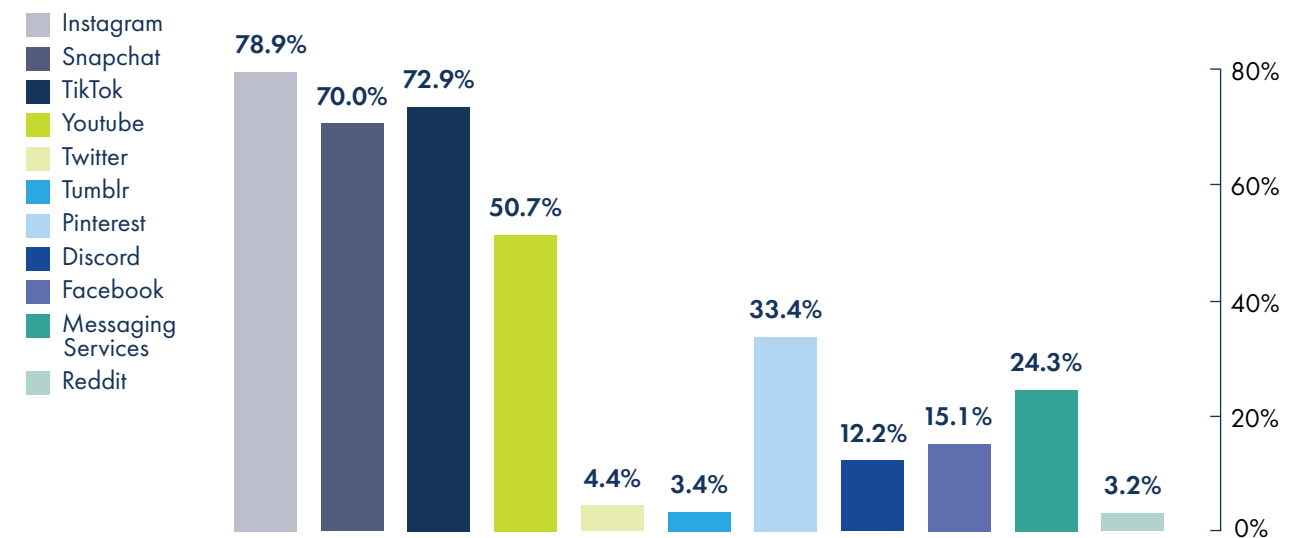
**7 in 10 respondents thought that media and social media platforms need to do more to help young people have a more positive body image.**



## What platforms are young people using?

Of the 1,268 young people using social media, over 70% of young people are using Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat.

**Figure 28. Proportion of young people using social media platforms (%) – all respondents (n = 1266))**



Instagram was most popular with 15- and 16-year-olds. Only 2% of Instagram users were 12-year-olds, compared with around half being 15-to-16-year-olds. This general trend was seen across Snapchat, TikTok, and YouTube as well.

## What do young people think about their social media use?

Overall, 69.3% of young people reported spending more time on social media than they would like. Young people aged 16 (75.2%) and 17 years (77.9%) reported the highest frequency of spending more time than they would like on social media, followed closely by 14-year-olds (71.2%), compared with approximately 58-67% of other age groups. Compared to other genders, males were least likely to report that they spend too much time on social media. Further, young people who identified as bisexual or preferred not to report their sexuality most frequently reported that they spend too much time on social media. Slightly more non-Indigenous respondents (70.6%) reported spending too much time on social media than Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth (65.9%).

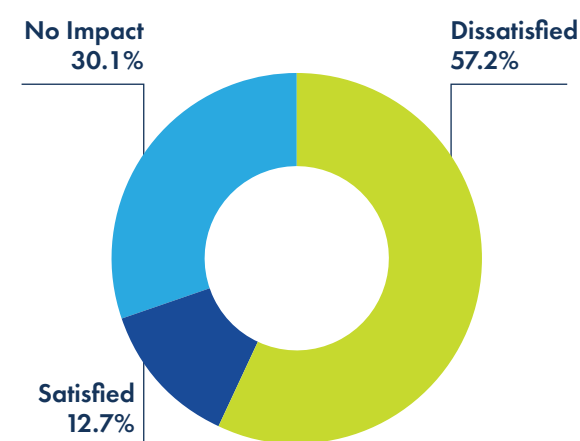
## How satisfied does social media make young people feel about how their body looks?

Young people were asked to rate how satisfied social media made them feel about how their body looks on a scale from *completely dissatisfied* (0) to *completely satisfied* (100). The data were split to indicate *dissatisfied* as <40 and *satisfied* as >60, and 'no impact' in between.

Over half (57.2%) of young people reported that social media made them feel **dissatisfied** with their bodies ( $M = 36.21$ ,  $SD = 21.87$ ).

There was no statistical difference between the 2023 sample ( $M = 34.39$   $SD = 21.06$ ) and the 2024 sample ( $M = 36.28$ ,  $SD = 21.8$ ), regarding their social media-related body dissatisfaction ( $p = .014$ ). Overall, these results suggest that social media is having a negative impact on young people's body image.

**Figure 29. The impact of social media on how young people feel about how their body looks – all respondents (n = 1244)**



There was a significant association between young people reporting that social media made them feel more **dissatisfied** about their bodies and greater body dissatisfaction ( $r = -0.55$ ,  $p < .001$ ), greater concern about their body image ( $r = -0.51$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and greater life disengagement ( $r = -.41$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### Group Differences

When exploring demographic group differences, a higher proportion of 17- and 18-year-olds reported that social media made them feel **dissatisfied** with their body, compared with young age groups. Almost a quarter of males (22.8%) reported that social media made them feel **dissatisfied** with their body, compared with over 45% of respondents of other genders.

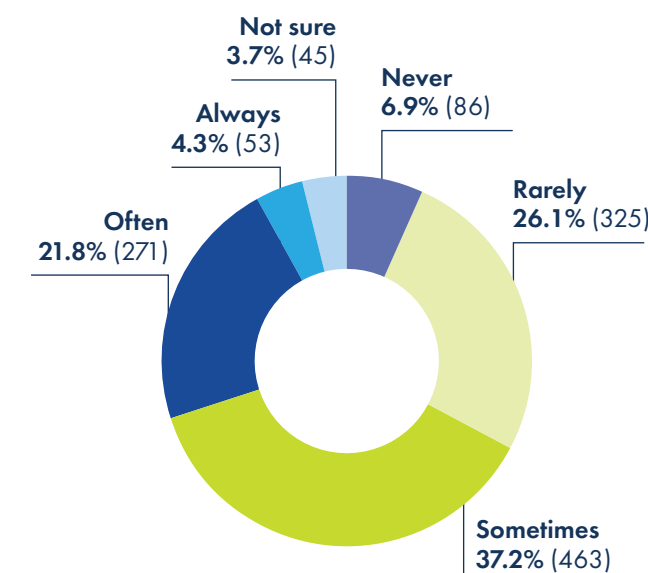
Over half of all respondents, regardless of sexuality, reported that social media made them feel **dissatisfied** about their bodies. However, a slightly higher proportion of individuals who preferred not to report their sexuality (22.2%) reported social media made them feel **satisfied** with their body, compared with less than 14% across other sexual identities.

There were no notable differences between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous respondents.

## How often do young people see their body, shape or size represented on social media?

33.0% of young people reported *never* or *rarely* seeing their bodies represented on social media.

**Figure 30. Frequency with which young people see their body presented on social media – all respondents (n = 1243)**



Across age groups, more 12-year-olds (45.6%) reported *never* or *rarely* seeing their body presented on social media than any other age group. The proportion of young people who reported *never* or *rarely* seeing their body presented on social media ranged between 25-36% across all other age groups. Across gender groups, young people who preferred not to report their gender (45.5%) most frequently reported not seeing their body presented on social media, followed by trans and gender diverse respondents (38.9%). Young people who use a different term to describe their sexuality, tended to *never* or *rarely* see their body presented on social media (51.1%), while no apparent differences across other sexual identities. More non-Indigenous respondents (26.9%) reported *often* or *always* seeing their body presented on social media compared with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents (12.2%).

## What age should people be allowed to access social media?

From the 1,184 young people who responded to this question, more than half of young people thought that age 13-14 should be when young people are allowed access to social media. Specifically, 6.8% reported age 12, 32.9% age 13, 24.9% age 14, 18.9% age 15, 12.9% age 16, 1.1% age 17, and 2.5% age 18. Not surprisingly, younger respondents tended to report earlier age of access than older respondents.

## Do young people think social media platforms need to do more to help them have a more positive body image?

7 in 10 agreed that social media platforms need to do more to help young people have a more positive body image.



## What can social media platforms do?

### Greater diversity in body sizes and shapes

"Use real, everyday people with everyday bodies. There's more than just large or small. Younger people are always shown as thin and sporty or chubby with bad attitudes."

"They can advertise more on body positivity and show more body types across the platforms and also by avoiding FaceTune or editing people's bodies to fit some sort of society standard."

"Ensure algorithms promote content that represents diverse body types and cultures."

"Show more types of bodies without calling them "different". Personally I don't like it when influencers say things like "let's normalize this" because although the intentions are good, it tells people that it wasn't already normal thus creating new insecurities."



### Provide more positive messaging

"When scrolling through TikTok, Facebook, Instagram etc, a very short positive message about one's body could be displayed."

"Promote positive body image and work harder to remove negative lifestyles content that may influence people like myself to go into unhealthy habits to look better."

"More embracing less emphasising. You don't have to say "get ready with me as a person who has acne!" You can just say "get ready with me" normalising is better then doing the extravagant stuff."



### Realistic unedited/filtered images

Stop pushing fake filters making people look skinnier or their skin more smooth and then not showing that there is a filter there. It makes you think that the influencer just looks like that and it makes you think that you can't compare to them even though they are literally fake.

Also get rid of automatic filters so that there's no "oh it's already there might as well keep it" - because when you look at the photo, you look better then you would in real life and you feel more inclined to post it/save it. And stop making it so hard to find and get rid of- make it obvious (but keep the silly and fun ones).

### Better controls and content management

"When there is a younger user, show them more body positive influencers on their feed to ingrain the messages into their mind from a young age."

"Place more restrictions on pro ED content. I am a recovering anorexic and I still get pro ana content despite blocking multiple accounts."

"I think some influencers are say inaccurate and demeaning things, and apps should do a better job to regulate content."

"Monitor comments more carefully. Every time I open up the comment section of a slimmer person every single comment says "I wish I was her." or "I wish I had that body." They are not moderated at all. Similarly, every time I see a video with a person who is not "skinny", the comments are awful. TikTok is especially bad, how are they not managing those awful comments? They will call them names and say awful things about them if they are eating food or doing anything except exercising. They need to start moderating videos properly."

"Report or limit the frequency of videos about restrictive eating, dieting, size, shape, surgical modifications, and negative self talk or talk about others."

"Make it easier to report and stop posts depicting unhealthy behaviours, make it easier to customise feed so people aren't exposed to things they don't want to see."

### Reduce focus on body image related content

"They should promote less things about beauty and more about fun, and exciting adventures."

"Just letting bodies be bodies, recognising that they are there to protect you and provide you with life."



## What about advertisers?

**7 in 10 agreed that advertisers need to do more to help young people have a more positive body image.**

### Here's how...

**"Just showing that everyone can have different body types but still be healthy."**

**"Talking about how their body changed over time and that they still like themselves even if their body is different."**

**"Less dieting ads because they really push that all people need to constantly be losing weight."**

**"Stop photoshoping the models and use everyday, average people for better representation."**

**"They need to have a range of people of all skin colours, ages, disabilities and sizes."**

**"More inclusive - differently shaped and sized people in ALL ads - not just some."**

**"Show the real aspects of people; stretch marks, hip dips, acne etc."**





## How are young people being BodyKind online?

Young people were asked a series of questions on the frequency of actions they had taken in the last 12 months in relation to their social media use and feelings about their bodies, as shown in Figure 31. Responses were rated on a 5-point from *never* (1) to *always* (5). Young people were also given the opportunity to say, 'not sure'.

**74.2% reported *never* or *rarely* taking a break from social media because it was affecting how they felt about their bodies.**

**44% said they *never* or *rarely* posted unfiltered or unedited photos of themselves.**

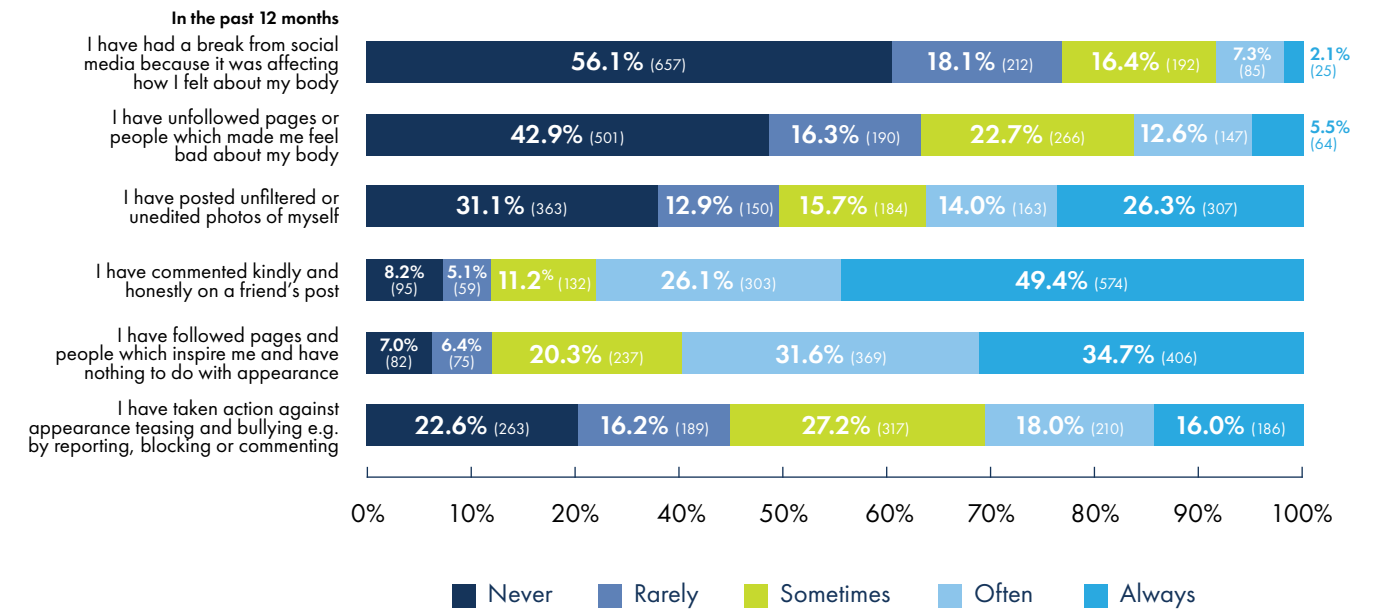
**On the other hand,**

**74.8% reported *often* or *always* commenting kindly and honestly on friends' posts.**

**33.8% young people reported *often* or *always* following pages and people that inspire them (and have nothing to do with appearance).**

**Whist more than 1 in 3 *never* or *rarely* take action against appearance-related teasing and bullying online, a third (34.0%) said they did *often* or *always*.**

Figure 31. Use of social media literacy strategies – all respondents (n = 1171)



## Who is engaging in social media literacy strategies?

Older participants tended to more frequently post unedited or unfiltered photos of themselves (43.5% of 18-year-olds compared with 28.6% of 12-year-olds).

Only 7.8% of males frequently unfollowed pages or people that made them feel bad about their body, compared with over 18% of other genders. Almost a third of males (29.2%) and young people who preferred not to report their gender (30.0%) reported *often* or *always* posting unedited or unfiltered photos of themselves, compared with close to half of females (42.2%) and trans and gender diverse young people (42.7%). Young people who preferred not to report their gender (40.0%) less frequently followed pages and people that inspired them and had nothing to do with appearance, compared to young people of all other genders (59.0%-80.0%).

Young people who identified as gay or lesbian (46.9%) and those who preferred a different gender term (44.7%) more frequently took action against appearance-related teasing and bullying than other genders (<40%). Compared to young people who identified as heterosexual (62.38%), young people identifying with all other sexualities more frequently reported *often* or *always* following people who inspired them and had nothing to do with their appearance (>71%).

Compared to non-Indigenous respondents, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people more frequently took action against appearance-related teasing and bullying online (50.0%) and took breaks from social media because it was affecting how they felt about their body (25.6%).

## What is young people's experience of appearance-related teasing?

**78.5% of young people have received negative comments, or been teased, about their appearance\***

Of those who have experienced teasing:

**42.4% in the last month.**  
**32.7% in the last 6 months.**  
**29.1% in the last 12 months.**  
**25.9% more than a year ago.**

*\*Of the 1,181 young people who responded to this question*

There was no significant difference in the proportion of young people who reported experiencing negative comments or appearance teasing compared to the 2023 sample (77.7%).

### Where is it happening?

Those who have experienced teasing report the top four locations where this most frequently occurred as being at school (78.2%), at home (37.4%) on social media (31.7%), and via text/group chats (26.8%).

### Who is it happening most to?

Appearance-related teasing was:

- frequent across all ages, with 75.0-88.1% of young people reporting ever having been teased.
- frequent across all genders but was more frequently reported by trans and gender diverse young people (92.2%), and less so by males (65.0%).
- frequent across all sexualities, with 74.5-95.8% of young people reporting ever having been teased.
- slightly more frequent for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (84.6%) than non-Indigenous (78.5%) young people.

### What about teasing of others?

Over a quarter of young people (29.3%) admit to commenting negatively or teasing someone else about their appearance\*, most commonly whilst at school (65.1%).

*\*Of the 1,175 young people who responded to this question.*

## What do young people think about schools and body image?

### Should schools do more to support positive body image?

Young people were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed with a series of statements about school support for body image, as shown in Figure 32. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

**8 in 10 agreed that primary schools should do more.**

**9 in 10 agreed that high/secondary schools should do more.**

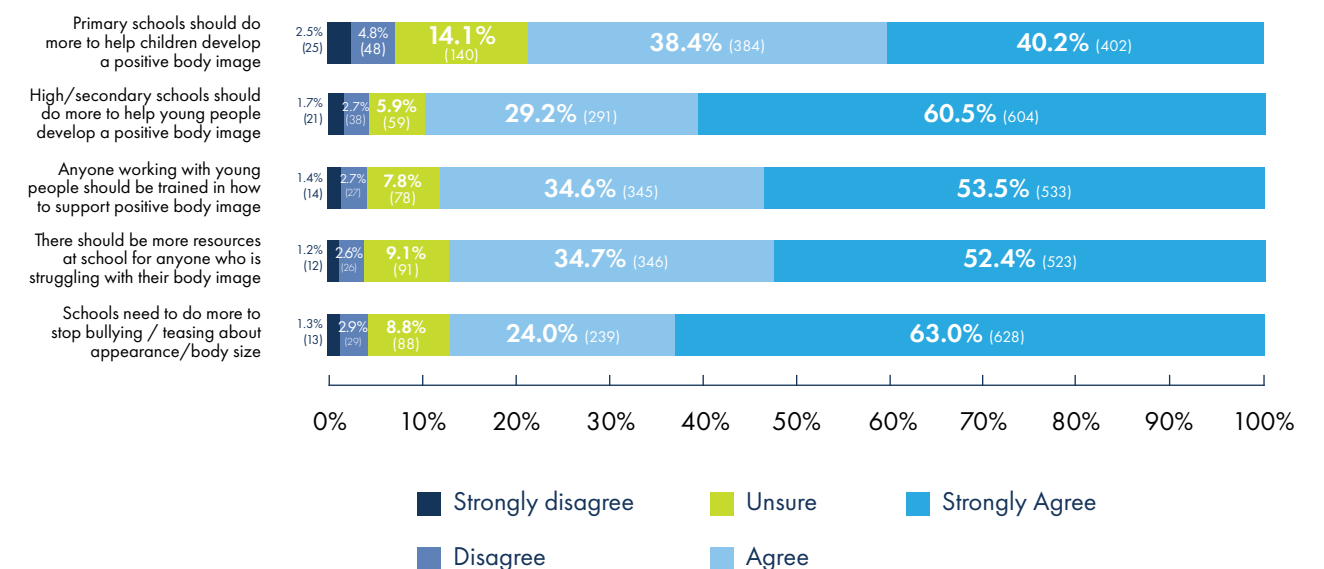
Nearly 9 out of 10 agreed that:

**Those working in schools should be trained in how to support body image (88.1%).**

**More resources should be provided at school for anyone struggling with body image (87.1%).**

**Schools need to do more to stop bullying and teasing around appearance (87%).**

**Figure 32. Young people's views on body image education and support in schools – all respondents (n = 999)**





Have young people ever been given strategies for positive body image?

Around 1 in 10 said they had received body image strategies at primary school (11.0%).

Nearly half said they had received body image strategies at high/secondary school (45.0%).

Over a third of young people (36.8%) said they had received body image strategies from their parents.

How would young people like to learn ways to improve their body image from school?

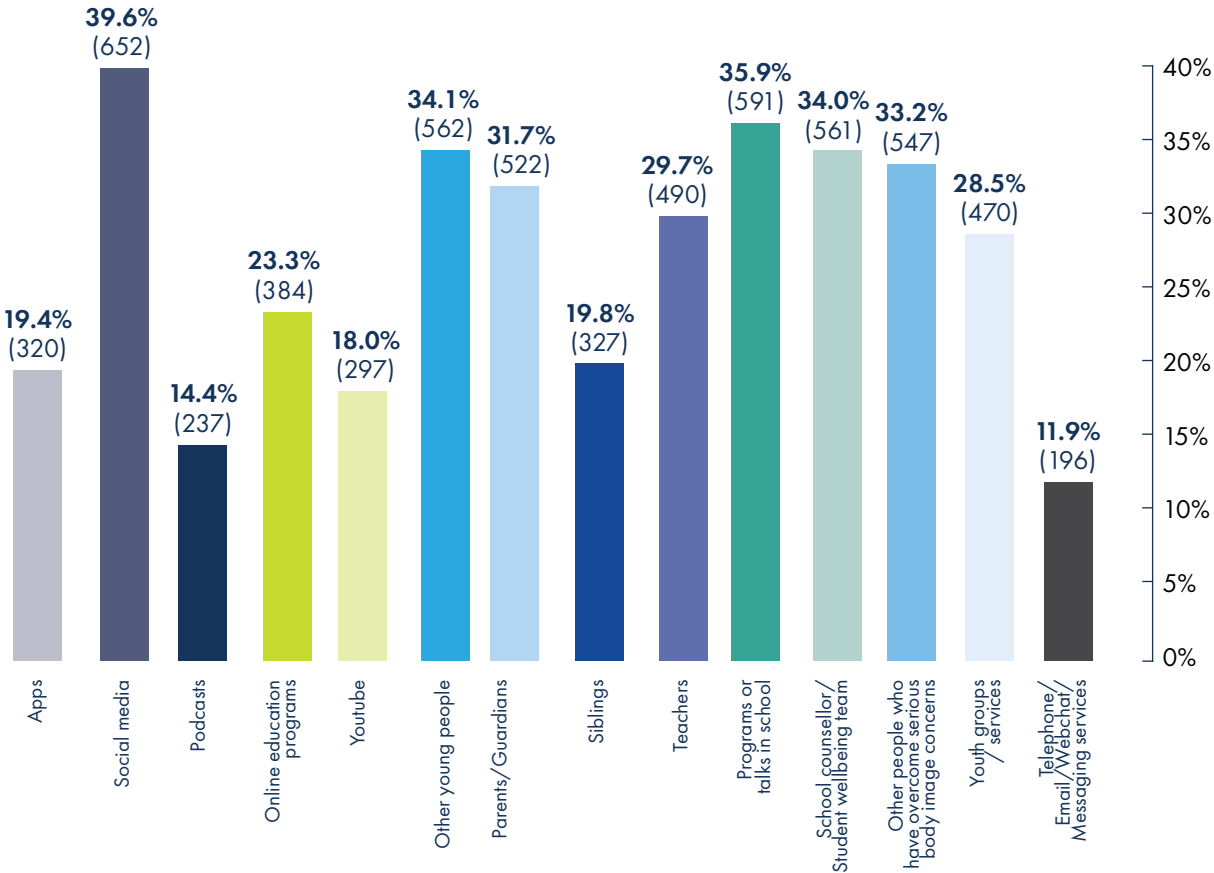
- Young people’s top four preferences for delivery of school-based body image education were:
- Delivered by a person who had overcome their own body dissatisfaction (38.0%).
  - Included in normal school lessons as part of the curriculum (32.2%).
  - Delivered by young people who are trained to deliver the skills (31.3%).
  - An online, self-paced program (28.2%).

What ways do young people want to receive information about body image?

Young people were asked to indicate, from a list, the best ways for young people to get information about body image. They were able to tick more than one response.

Social media was most frequently indicated (39.6%), followed by programs or talks in schools (35.9%) and school counsellor or student wellbeing team (34.0%). The least preferred methods were through telephone/email/webchat services (11.9%), podcasts (14.4%) and YouTube (18%).

Figure 33. Preferred sources of information about body image – all respondents





## If young people had a magic wand, what would they do to help young people feel good in their bodies?

Anonymous quotes provided by young people generally tackled the issues of diversity in the media, and addressing beauty standards and diet culture.

"Every field—sports, entertainment, art, and more—would have body-positive role models who openly embrace and celebrate their unique looks. Young people would be surrounded by people they could look up to who value health, confidence, and kindness over just looks."



"Allow everyone to see themselves from the point of view of someone who loves them."

"Change their mindsets that they aren't good enough and that everyone is judging them."

"Create a world in which social media had more to do with empowering young people about their bodies and not giving them false hope by sharing unrealistic body types and images that can be harmful to a young person and their body developing."

"Creating a world where all media and education promote body positivity, self-love, and acceptance from a young age."

"Cut body based bullying."

"Get rid of diet ads. Have students learn about the value of their bodies and the diversity we have, and that unless it is a medical concern, there is no need to look a certain way to conform."



"I would eliminate body shaming from the world."

"With a magic wand, I'd create a world where young people effortlessly love and accept their unique bodies, eradicating body shaming, promoting diverse representation, and fostering self-acceptance education, resources, and inclusive communities."

"I would help other people realise that they are not alone and help give them the courage to get help."

"Healthcare services directed towards young people that have specialist trained in all forms of health and wellbeing along with body image."

"If I had a magic wand, I would create a world where media, schools, and communities universally celebrate body diversity. Everyone would be taught to appreciate their unique qualities, and comparison-based pressures would be replaced with self-compassion and acceptance from an early age."



## How did completing the survey make young people feel?

Of the 980 young people who responded, most felt OK (45.2%), while 14.8% felt empowered, 13.8% sad, 13.8% bored, 8.5% happy, and 4.0% embarrassed.



## Conclusions

The purpose of this survey was to better understand the body image experiences and related issues among young people living in Australia in 2024.

The findings of this survey suggest that body dissatisfaction is affecting a significant proportion of young people in Australia, with a similar proportion of young people reporting body dissatisfaction across 2023 and 2024 and 90% reporting some level of concern about their body image. More than half of young people were dissatisfied with how their body looks, and their body dissatisfaction continues to impact the way they engage in everyday life and activities, including attendance and engagement at school. Body dissatisfaction was experienced across all demographic groups but females and young people in the LGB+ community continue to appear most at risk. Respondents aged 17 and 18 seemed to report the highest levels of dissatisfaction, strongest appearance ideals and concern about their body image, demonstrating that body image education and support should be ongoing throughout the adolescent years.

Poorer body appreciation was related to greater body dissatisfaction, life disengagement, social media making them feel dissatisfied with their body and desire for thinness/leanness, and not surprisingly also a greater concern about their body image.

In relation to their social media experience, more than half of young people reported that social media made them feel dissatisfied about their bodies. Thus, it was not surprising that 7 in 10 young people want social media companies to do more to support young people's body image. Despite most young people reporting they are spending more time on social media than they would like to and social media impacting their body image,

over half of respondents said age 13-14 should be when they are allowed to access social media.

Young people indicated that more should be done to help them develop a positive body image through programs at primary and secondary schools. An overwhelming proportion of young people have experienced appearance-related teasing, and they want schools to do more to stop it from happening, given the high frequency in which it is occurring at school.

It was also evident that young people may be more *BodyKind* towards others but rarely spoke positively about their own bodies or sought help if they were not feeling good about their bodies.

The *BodyKind* Youth Survey has now been conducted over three years, which has allowed for the collection and enhanced understanding of the body image experiences of a diverse cohort of young people living in Australia. The *BodyKind* Youth Survey 2023 findings informed the development of digital resources for parents on responding to body dissatisfaction and appearance-based teasing and supporting positive body image whilst online. This survey has highlighted the prevalence and impact of body dissatisfaction among young people and will continue to inform actions for Butterfly's prevention programs and resources, be at the forefront of advocacy for stronger public investment in body image, and provide new insights for researchers, policy makers, and education, youth, and mental health service providers.

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