

Commissioner
for Children and
Young People,
South Australia
2019

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Leave No One Behind

What children and
young people have said
about living in poverty

PROJECT REPORT NO. 8 | OCTOBER 2019



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2019. Connolly, H. Commissioner for Children and Young People,
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Commissioner's Foreword

As South Australia's Commissioner for Children and Young People my mandate is to promote the rights, best interests and wellbeing of all children and young people living in our State.



I advocate for the views, aspirations and rights of children and young people to be affirmed, promoted and protected, working to give children and young people a 'voice' across our society.

I seek to influence and identify the responsibilities and roles that public, civic and commercial sectors of our communities have in relation to children and young people's needs, advocating for them to be positioned 'front and centre' in policy, practice and service delivery.

This includes advocating for the involvement of children and young people in co-designing services relevant to them, wherever this is feasible. Children and young people are the experts in their own lives and want to have their opinions heard, taken seriously and acted upon; in fact it is their right.

Since commencing in the role, I have heard firsthand how many children and young people in South Australia lead happy active lives and feel respected by adults. They value their family relationships, including those they have with family pets. They also value their friendships, school education and learning, their culture including ethnicity, and the opportunities they have to participate in their communities in different ways.

I have also heard that children and young people in South Australia are very concerned for those they see as being less included, less mentally well, less financially secure and less well-prepared for their future. They have told me the areas in which they would like to see changes made to make life better for all children and young people in South Australia, particularly those they see who are 'doing it tough'.

In 2017, when I asked South Australian children and young people to tell me the 'one thing' they wanted their Commissioner to do for them right now, I received over 1,000 written responses and countless verbal ones. While being listened to was the leading issue named, tackling poverty was the second most repeated area of concern, identifying it as something that clearly sits in the forefront of children and young peoples' minds.

This concern with how to tackle poverty has been reinforced through my one-on-one conversations in which children and young people have told me that poverty and a lack of resources touches many people across their communities; either themselves, their close and extended family, or their friends.



This report aims to provide deep insight into how children and young people understand poverty. It captures responses made by children and young people to questions they were asked about what they think poverty means, what it's like (for some of them) to live in poverty, and what they suggest could or should be done about addressing it.

Those children and young people who participated in this project had a strong sense of justice for the ways in which society groups certain people; children, people living with a disability, people from a refugee and migrant background, and young adults. They see that many individuals in these groups are already in disadvantaged positions, making them especially vulnerable to poverty.

Throughout the project young people made it very clear to me that they want to be a part of decision-making that impacts positively

on children and young people. They want the voices of children and young people who live in poverty to be heard, and they want to see an approach applied 'across the community' that allows 'big decisions' to be made to support those who are most vulnerable to avoid poverty, with the needs of children and young people positioned at the core of solutions devised. They firmly believe that it is possible to eradicate poverty in South Australia and they want to be involved in helping this be achieved by 2030 as per the United Nations Agenda.

This report does not place all recommended actions with government. It also looks to local schools and the broader community to identify issues around poverty that exist in our neighbourhoods. I hope it will motivate us to work more closely together to come up with solutions that can support children and young people we know who are currently living with issues of poverty on a daily basis and help

to alleviate if not eradicate then as soon as possible. This approach is the only decent one to take to the problem of poverty across our State. It also requires a mindset shift and the destigmatising of poverty at every level of our society.

In this report I have purposefully embraced a child centred approach; one that recognises the impact of poverty on a child's development. I have committed to listening to children and young people and to taking their views around poverty into account. I have tried to do this in meaningful ways, for which we are prepared to be accountable over the long term. I have set about challenging ourselves and the system to bring about real and lasting change and we invite you to join us in this effort.

Child poverty is real, and in a country of relative abundance and enduring economic growth, should not, and must not be tolerated. We must work together to eliminate poverty in our own backyards once and for all. We can do this while also contributing to the national effort to end extreme poverty around the world; a key target among 17 ambitious global sustainable development goals that the world's nations agreed to work together to achieve by 2030 (within eleven years) at the United Nations assembly held in 2015.

Helen Connolly
Commissioner for Children and Young People

Background

A State that prides itself on the national values of a fair go and justice for all, must act to ensure children and young people in South Australia have adequate nutritious food, their own bed, suitable shoes and clothing, opportunities to go on school trips, and to enjoy an occasional family outing. We must create opportunities for those 'less fortunate' to play regular sport, or participate in an activity of interest to them, such as learning to play a musical instrument or develop an artistic talent.

*'Poverty is not a choice,
it is a societal failing.'*

(Female, 18)

By not addressing these foundational needs we miss the earliest and best possible period to intervene and prevent poverty taking hold in a child's life. Addressing any inadequacies early, during a time when investment will have the greatest and most lasting return, ensures children and young people can enjoy a future that has positive health, social, educational and lifestyle outcomes.

Children and young people who are currently living in poverty in South Australia have a fundamental right to a positive future, which must not be compromised. It is our responsibility as the adults in their lives to recognise when they are particularly vulnerable to poverty, and to take steps to avoid them becoming 'victims' of it.

Since commencing in the role of Commissioner for Children and Young People, I have been committed to consulting with children and young people to find out from them what they wish me, as their Commissioner, to do on their behalf. I have engaged in one-on-one and small group conversations, facilitated large scale forums and workshops with thousands of children and young people throughout regional and metropolitan South Australia over the last two years.

These interactions have been undertaken in diverse spaces and places, with groups of children and young people representing all ages, backgrounds, abilities, cultures, ethnicities, and genders. They have included South Australian children and young people who live with challenging life circumstances, and others who have family backgrounds of varying abilities, health levels, dispositions and aspirations.

My conversations and consultations have been broad, covering an analysis of what is important to children and young people, as well as what is not working for them, and what they would change if they could.

I have had general conversations about their hopes and dreams, their aspirations and their futures. I have had targeted conversations on specific subjects ranging from bullying and digital access, to digital safety, gaming and esports. We've talked about kindness, compassion and trust, as well as what it's like living with a disability, or managing a mental health issue over the short or long term. I've explored specific subjects and issues including skate parks, what it's like visiting a parent or sibling in prison, or dealing with the law, and how best to create youth friendly, welcoming spaces, places and communities.

As a result of these firsthand interactions, I feel I can confidently represent the views of South Australian children and young people, and convey their ideas and concerns to leaders, decision-makers and service providers with whom it is my role to advocate for change at the systemic level.

Through these conversations with children and young people I have been able to draw out critical themes that underpin their points of view. These themes go to the heart of what matters to children and young people, revealing what they believe should be the foundation of what it means to have a good life; one that can be well lived, within a supportive and well connected local community, which takes into account everyone's situation, needs and desires.

Children and young people have told me that they want a 'system' that is kind, inclusive and participatory. They want services that embrace these values and therefore are trustworthy, respectful and accountable to them.

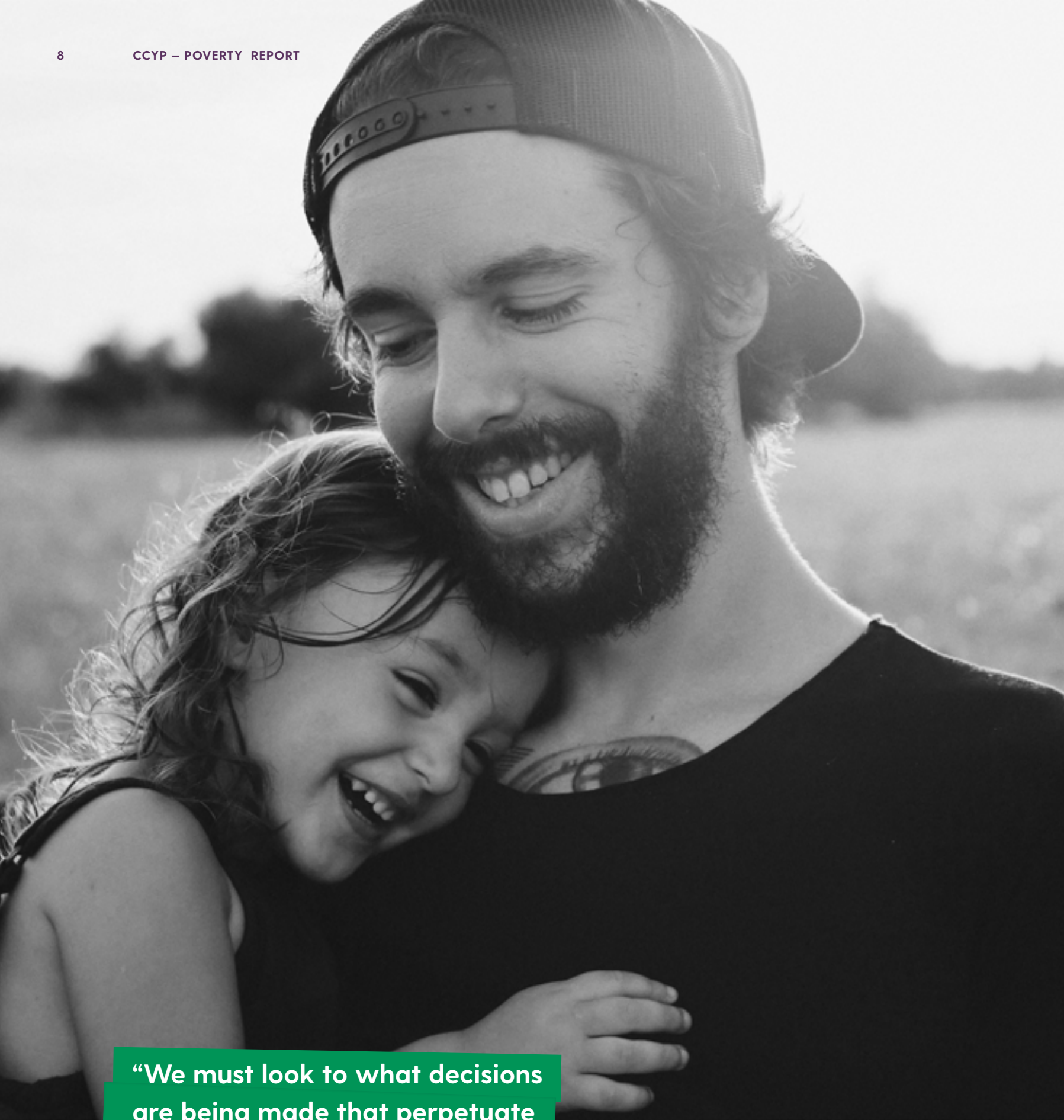
When children and young people asked me to find solutions to the issues they face, it is these values they told me must underpin the solutions devised. If the future they envisage for themselves and others is to be achieved these values must be foremost in our minds when designing solutions, ideally in consultation with them.

These shared values were expressed universally, whether or not the children and young people saw themselves as someone doing well, struggling, or doing it tough; ie someone just trying their best to survive day-to-day.

Children and young people shared their concerns that children living in poverty really do struggle to have their gifts and talents developed. They know that education levels that enable a person to live a 'comfortable' life are much harder to achieve for those who live in poverty.

Importantly they also recognise that we all live in a community that must take into account how well others are doing. Not only because they understand that this is the fairest approach to take, but because they know that opportunities for success for those less fortunate ultimately benefits all of us, and vice versa.

Children appear to instinctively understand that a more equal system is good for everyone, and that the more children and young people feel connected and feel that they belong, the more the whole community will thrive and develop to its fullest potential. They remind us that we have a responsibility to make sure all children and young people have the same opportunities in life, no matter who they are, or where they have come from.



“We must look to what decisions are being made that perpetuate the poverty trap.”

(Male, 17)

Recommendations

The recommendations below have been informed by children and young people who participated in the CCYP Poverty Project:

- 1 To demonstrate commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) the South Australian government establish a Child Poverty Expert Group to measure and report annually on a range of income and non-income related poverty indicators and measures that are particularly relevant to children.
- 2 The Department of Human Services, Department for Education and South Australian Council of Social Service work collaboratively to develop and implement an audit tool quantifying the cumulative costs of public education at an individual school level and this data be published annually.
- 3 Social welfare agencies in receipt of emergency relief funding, financial counsellors and respective peak bodies, advocate to telecommunication providers to expand their hardship programs to systematically offer families with children, home internet vouchers.
- 4 Department of Planning Transport and Infrastructure provide free Wi-Fi on all SA public transport and increase the number and quality of internet hot spots in public places to support children with no home internet to meet their educational needs.
- 5 Government, Feminine Hygiene Industry, and community partners expand the current piecemeal provisions of sanitary product support and develop a free, accessible and non-stigmatising supply and distribution scheme for a range of hygiene and sanitary products.
- 6 South Australian Public Transport Authority provide children whose families are in receipt of a school card access to free public transport to enable them to fully participate in school and community activities.

Project Context

We know that poverty is a global issue affecting millions of people of all ages and nationalities. Often viewed as a problem that is only relevant to the ‘developing’ world, it is also prevalent in many well ‘developed’ countries, including Australia.

Most international researchers and organisations use an income based definition of poverty. In this way poverty is defined by those whose income is below half the median household income of the total population.¹

Based on this definition, which is also used by global entities such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) more than 1 in 8 people in Australia are currently living in poverty, including more than 1 in 6 children.² The latest figures for South Australia are reflective of these national numbers.³

Poverty’s roots in inequality give rise to a concerning trend in Australia that is seeing a divide growing between the wealthiest and the poorest Australians. Current household wealth is a clear indicator of the scale of this divide with the top 20% of households owning 62% of private wealth, and the lowest 20% owning just 1%.⁴

Since the late 1980s inequality has been on the rise in Australia, and around the world.⁵ Despite significant worldwide economic growth, young people today are facing greater levels of inequality than the generation before them.

Research on poverty highlights the difficulties governments and society faces in tackling inequality. Much of the research overlooks children and young people, or where it concerns them, is often centred on causation and affect.⁶

The overall wellbeing of children and young people is about much more than just living in poverty. Without putting in place measures designed to directly address poverty, a child or young person’s wellbeing is at risk.

Children and young people are rarely considered to have any agency over their situation. Because of this there is little research that directly asks them how they see poverty, what it means to them, or how they could or would suggest it be addressed.

Their views are important in creating solutions. Their experiences provide insight into the consequences of poverty, and show us where we need to work hardest to minimise its impact most, including developing the right kinds of community support to create the type of Australia they want to inherit.

‘Living in poverty in South Australia is not an inevitability. Neither is it an easy, or quick fix.’

*Commissioner for Children and Young People,
Helen Connolly*

For some children their experience of poverty is brief. For others it is intermittent, while for others, it is a persistent and recurring condition they are forced to face throughout their lives. The factors surrounding each experience of poverty are extremely varied.

Whilst low family income is one of the most common denominators, the reason for low family income vary. Inadequate social security payments or low paid insecure work may be a cause, while living with disability, chronic illness, high housing costs, or being part of a family that has complex needs, may all be contributing factors.

Poverty is a serious problem in South Australia with research indicating children who grow up in poverty often experience developmental delays, reduced academic success, and impaired lifelong physical and mental health outcomes.

The South Australian government commenced a review of the State’s Housing and Homelessness Strategy passing a motion in the Legislative Council to establish a ‘Select Committee on Poverty in South Australia.’ The select committee established on 30 May 2018, is reviewing the extent and nature of poverty across the State, including what it means in relation to access to services and opportunities.

These efforts have coincided with a national push to raise the level of some social welfare payments in Australia, particularly Newstart allowance; one of the nation’s main social welfare safety nets. Despite Newstart payments sitting below Australia’s income poverty line, the current Australian government considers these levels to be adequate. They have decided to take alternative approaches that centre on providing tax relief and on creating increased employment opportunities.

Poverty is often considered too sensitive a topic to discuss with children and young people. When it is discussed it is usually in the context of what is being experienced in developing countries – not what is being experienced in our own backyards, or amongst our own local regional and metropolitan communities.

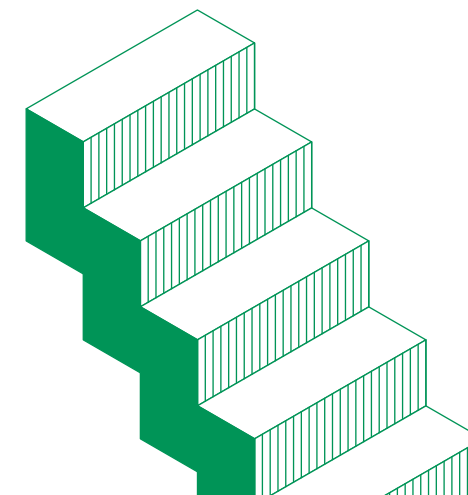
The way in which poverty impacts on children can be especially difficult to understand. Children are often only considered in the context of being part of a family, rather than as an individual whose everyday life is affected in myriad ways.

What is understood, is that the experience of poverty isn’t just about financial or housing stress. It is also about being socially included and connected. It is about physical and emotional wellbeing, as much as it is as about having opportunities to experience fulfilment of individual potential.

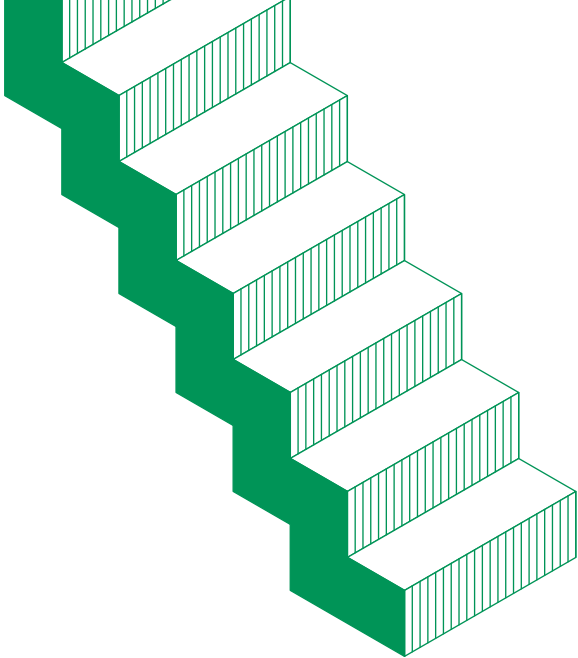
What has been lacking from the research undertaken to date is the primary evidence that can be supplied by listening to the ‘voices’ of children and young people who are experiencing poverty as a reality of their day-to-day lives.

Projects like this one are therefore vital in helping to build community understanding and consensus around what should and could be done to tackle inequality across our community at the systemic level. It assists in identifying root causes, while simultaneously raising the voices of the children and young people who poverty most affects.

By placing the needs of these ‘poor’ children and young people across our State front and centre, learning from what they have told us through their lived experience, we can work together to design solutions that prevent poverty ‘taking hold’ in their lives and elevating those currently living in poverty out of it, as soon as possible.



Overview of Project Engagement Methodology



Children and young people were asked about systemic poverty and how it could be addressed, as well as what they knew about the impact of poverty and what they would suggest could be done to help those in South Australia who they know are ‘doing it tough’.

A series of project engagement activities were undertaken throughout the duration of the project, which ran from December 2018 through to June 2019. These activities included a survey, series of workshops and focus groups with children and young people who have lived experience of poverty, and a poverty summit attended by more than 200 South Australian school children from Years 10-12 who shared their observations of poverty.

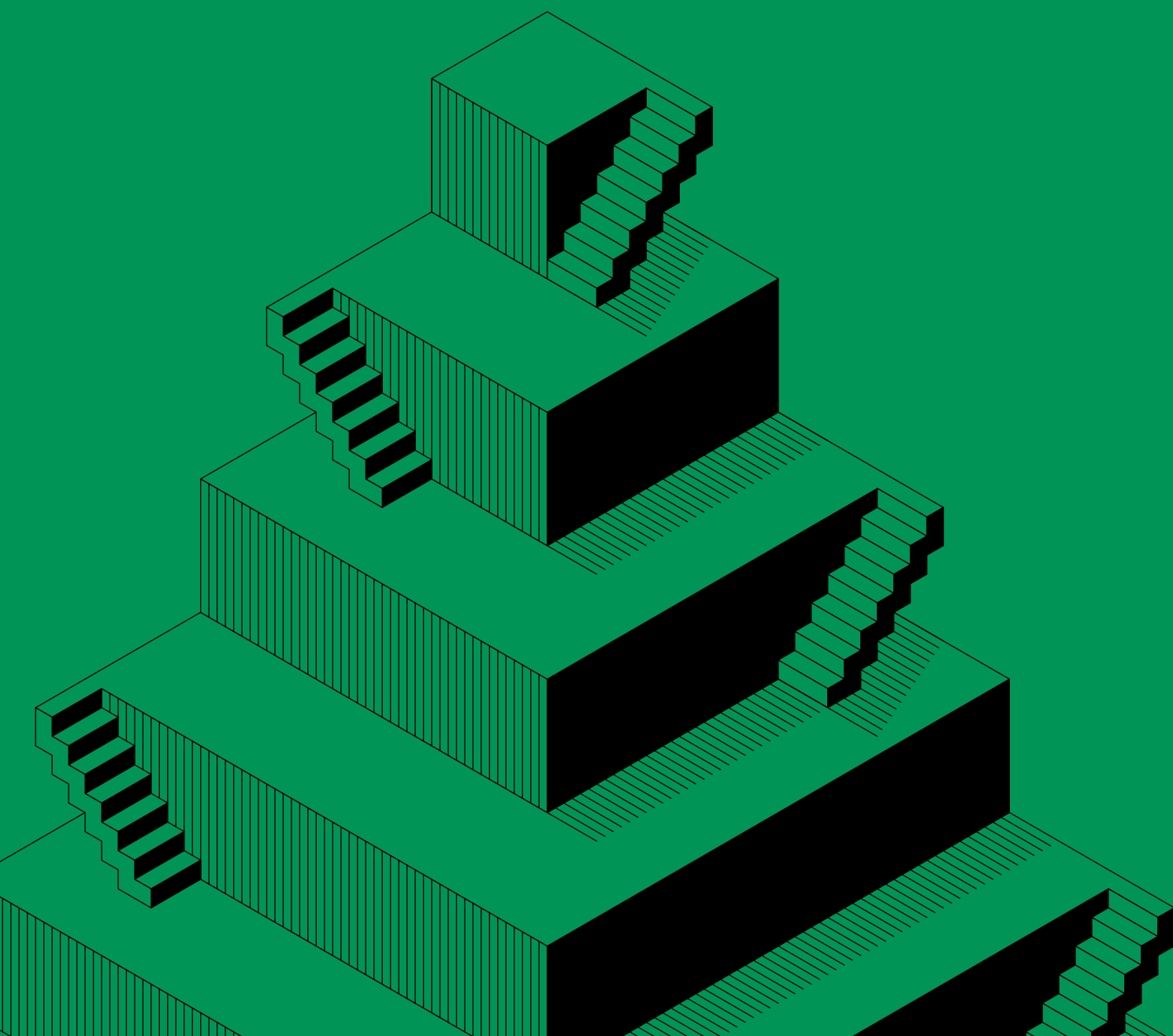
More than 2000 South Australian children and young people have, through these various engagement activities contributed to the findings in this report via their participation in this project. They told us in their own words:

- what they think poverty looks like
- what they think the impact of poverty is
- what factors they think are contributing to recurring poverty
- what they think current responses to addressing poverty are
- what more they think should or could be done and by whom, to address poverty; and
- what South Australia would look like if no child or young person lived in poverty.

Engagement Method	Participants Involved	Activity and Outputs
Project Workshops Dec 2018 – Feb 2019	20 SA children and young people aged 12 – 20 years	Participants workshopped their general understanding of poverty plus completed project scoring
Poverty Survey Jan – July 2019	1145 SA children and young people aged 14 – 22 years	Participants completed 12 questions relating to the causes, impacts and responses to poverty. (Refer to the Technical Report on pp 34 for the full analysis.) The data was also used to inform the Poverty Summit.
Focus Groups Mar – May 2019	47 SA children and young people aged 12 – 21 years	Participants from diverse backgrounds participated in 4 focus groups to identify the impact of their personal experiences of poverty.
Poverty Summit 28 June 2019	200 young people including approx. 190 students from Years 10 – 12 representing 29 Adelaide metro and regional SA schools, including a delegation from Kangaroo Island, a panel of 6 speakers aged 18-21, and a team of UN Youth facilitators.	Undertaken in collaboration with UN Youth SA, participants explored the impact of poverty on children and young people from a rights perspective, what the current responses to addressing poverty are and what more should or could be done to achieve the first of the UN Sustainable Development Goals to achieve no poverty by 2030.

(For full details of the Poverty Project Methodology turn to Appendix 1 on pp 30)

Children and Young People's Lived Experience of Poverty in SA



The following chapter documents unique and insightful data supplied by children and young people who rarely have a voice or any agency in their situations. These children and young people who have direct experience of poverty were supported to explore how they make sense of it and its impact on them at a personal level.

Children and young people know about the stress their parents and/or guardians face. They see it, hear it and experience it on a daily basis.

Young people living independently talk about the stress they experience living day-to-day on low incomes, and how unprepared they feel to live in the adult world. They are worried about the cost of living, and were asking for support to help those who cannot afford necessities. They talk repeatedly about the need for payments to single parents, the unemployed, and students to be increased.

- “ Centrelink assessment based on young person's circumstances rather than parent's income so people in abusive homes who need money don't fall through the cracks. (Male, 16)
- “ The cost of living is too high even with social supports. (Female, 14)
- “ One thing I would like to change is the centre link money so my mum can be able to take better health care for me. (Male, 17)

They talk about the high cost of education (including uniforms and books), utilities and other household bills, about food, health and medical bills and about the high cost of housing, which can require them to relocate at regular intervals, with all that a major disruption of this kind entails

- “ A lot of young people can't even afford the things they need (health food, clean water, school uniforms, school supplies). (Male, 16)
- “ Lower Bills so most people can live better lives (Lives) and don't have to worry about bills. (Female, 14)
- “ Food should be cheaper and shops should not throw away food away to minimise on the Australians sleeping on an empty stomach. (Male, 17)

A number of children who don't identify as experiencing poverty identified that 'not making good decisions' and 'making poor choices about money' has a role in the lack of resources and opportunities across generations.

Others identified 'being stuck in low income jobs' or having 'debt because of living costs, loans, etc.' with 'unemployment' a symptom of this 'poverty trap'. Others included 'not holding down a job' or 'not knowing how to manage their resources' as causes of poverty.

- “ Poverty in itself is not a choice. It is important to talk about this and normalise it. (Female, 14)
- “ Some people prioritise their money badly causing them to be in poverty. However, some people simply do not make enough money to get by, no matter how hard they try. (Male, 16)
- “ Nobody can choose the life they are born into, or whether they will be presented with opportunities, although there are some people who don't make the effort to work hard and remain unemployed. (Male, 17)

The Impact of Poverty on Home Life

Focus group participants said that the impact of being poor on a child's life at home isn't just about material possessions, or the type and location of the houses they live in.

Their comments focussed much more on the emotional, relational and social aspects of what they were experiencing rather than on the house or home itself, and its lack of contents.

Participants talked about the impact 'poverty stress' places on a family – that everyone in the household feels tense because of the circumstances they face. Some suggested this can lead to 'arguing a lot', or in more serious situations, to becoming an 'abusive family' that eventually results in 'welfare (getting) involved'.

We heard that the pressure of having 'no food' or 'no water', or 'no electricity or gas' can lead to 'less connection with their family due to parents being stressed (and) having to work constantly.' (Female, 16)

Participants talked about how the focus within the home becomes entirely on obtaining 'the necessities' – and that 'you don't get to do fun stuff with your family' or buy the 'things you like'. Everyone in 'poor households' is constantly 'angry and upset', 'worried about eviction' and sometimes even 'fighting over food'.

One participant talked about not being able to have people over – that although she knew this was a normal thing that most other people did – because their house was run down and small, she was uncomfortable and embarrassed for others to see it.

We heard about typical 'things' like the shortage of money, electronics and clothes, including what the lack of access to these 'things' means in everyday life. For example, one participant explained that she just wanted to have 'appropriate clothing for occasions' (Female, 13) whilst another talked about having 'equipment' like 'bikes (and) scooters' because to 'have other things that other kids do is important'.

Participants talked about wanting a 'haircut' and 'shower stuff'. They spoke about the importance of being 'able to take good care of yourself', that 'your hygiene and your health is affected when you don't have access to soap and toothpaste'.

They said that having 'healthy food was just as important as having food at all', and that sometimes the choice to be healthy isn't available to poor families, impacting significantly on children's health and wellbeing over the long term.

Health care and support

Participants frequently raised issues around the affordability of health care, including the cost of treatment, travel to appointments, and how letting small issues escalate into major ones was often unavoidable because of the costs involved.

We heard that for many families living in poverty health is a big issue, and that for young people in particular, free health care is virtually non-existent and highly inaccessible. They talked about waiting lists that were often 'months and months' long, and about their perception that there is a poorer quality of health care is only available to them.

Participants talked about the physical and social impact poverty has on children, such as having 'bad teeth' or being 'more likely to get sick' and when they do get sick being 'in poor health' for longer.

We heard that children experiencing poverty are often 'predisposed to anxiety/depression' but cannot afford treatment for these conditions. One participant told us 'the mental health system for poor people is virtually inaccessible, even when they can be the most needing of that support' (Female, 16).

Many of the participants talked about wanting, as well as needing, to go to the doctor or dentist, but that all their 'health shit' is something they simply cannot afford to do.

Hygiene

Participants told us about the impact not being able to afford hygiene products such as deodorant, toothpaste and soap has on young men and women. They commented on how being poor impacts 'whether or not you bathe well and get the right amount of care for your body' (Female, 17).

For young women 'period poverty' was a real issue raised in a number of groups. Girls told us

about missing school because they couldn't afford sanitary products. A number of girls spoke about the products being available at school, but that the process of accessing them was embarrassing and required quite a lot of self-disclosure which many were not comfortable to provide.

“ *Whether or not you'll be able to support themselves when their period comes around. (Female, 16)*

“ *For a lot of females in poverty, menstrual products are inaccessible. (Female, 16)*

A young person also talked about how hygiene needed to be 'role modelled', explaining that if you are not taught how to take proper care of yourself then it is difficult to know what to do, or what and how to ask for help. We learnt that for some families because good hygiene is not achievable, it is therefore not taught.

Missing out

We also heard about missing out on a birthday, Easter and/or Christmas present or presents, and what this means to those who are poor. Some participants told us that being poor on these 'special days' was about much more than not getting a present. They reminded children that their life is different to others, and that their family 'can't afford to buy the same things' others can or to have special meal that day.

Participants also talked about children wanting stability and a safe environment. They told us that missing out was about much more than not having physical 'things'.

“ *Sometimes when you live in poverty people treat you badly, take advantage, steal from you, abuse you. (Male, 15)*

They also talked about the stigma of being poor, and how this label was embarrassing and limited their opportunities amongst family, friends and school peers to be perceived in any other way.

The Impact of Poverty on School Life

We heard that 'being poor at school is experienced as a social issue'. This is largely because impacts such as hygiene, health and not being able to afford to go out, affects on your ability to relate to your peers' (Male, 21). Being poor also has a personalised and individual impact on how young people see themselves as they mature; now and into the future.

One participant explained that as a young adult 'you can see plans you had when you were younger failing'; the impact of 'struggling to find work stops being a smaller annoyance and starts being an existential threat', and 'you feel like you are using up peoples' good will to survive, but not improve.' (Male, 21)



“Living in poverty can make a young person want to give up because they don’t think that they belong.”

(Male, 14)

Learning

Participants spoke about how being poor has a huge impact on a child's life at school. It affects their ability to learn, to feel comfortable to attend, and how they are treated by their peers, their peers' parents and their teachers.

Not having 'enough lunch' or 'no clean clothes' were common issues faced by children living in poverty. Participants talked about being 'hungry' and 'smelly' and wearing 'shit shoes', explaining that these are the things poor kids sometimes get bullied over.

Participants talked about the difficulties they face in getting to school and school sport. They described it as being much 'harder' for children whose families are struggling. We heard that families can't afford for their children to go on school excursions, or to participate in extra-curricular activities. Some families can't afford to have annual school photos taken.

All of these things were described as impacting on a child's connection with the school, on their ability to develop friendships, and on their sense of self-worth. Participants talked about feeling 'embarrassed' and 'ashamed'. It wasn't just about missing out on the activity itself – it encompassed so much more.

“ *Children living in poverty have a lot more worries. (Female, 16)*

We also heard a lot about their inability to afford equipment and materials such as a laptop or paying for printing. Lacking these basic requirements, considered essential to enabling students to do their best work, achieve results and participate in education, meant those who went without were much more likely to struggle with school work or achieve good results.

'It feels like schools punish you for being poor.' Having to stay in class during school breaks so you can use the schools technology to get your work done, feels like a punishment rather than a support. Schools simply don't understand that spending breaks with your peers is an important part of childhood. 'It's important to help you be just like the other kids.'

Digital technology divide

Participants talked extensively about how a child's life at school is affected by poverty, especially when their education is significantly impaired because they lack access to digital technology.

We heard that not having laptops, iPads, smart phones or even the Internet at home can be a huge problem for children living in poverty. We heard that 'school projects are difficult, especially ones that require technology'. Participants talked about the attempts their schools make to provide them with access, but that this was still limited and did not bridge the gap to the extent required.

Participants explained that the impact is varied. That being poor affects the ability to not only do the work required, but find the time to spend on doing the work rather than solving issues of access. Stigma and embarrassment also come into play when you don't have the same technological tools and knowledge of how to use them, as result of your limited or lack of access.

Other impacts young people expressed in relation to lacking access to digital technology included how this plays out in helping you get out of your situation. For example, applying for jobs and the importance of being able to keep up to date with technology to enhance the chances of employment in a highly competitive jobs environment.

The Impact of Poverty on Social Life

Participants talked about the impact being poor has on making friends. We heard that issues such as a lack of hygiene, and old or unwashed clothes can impact on your self-esteem

“ *Hard to develop friendships because of the fear of the judgement (Female, 16)*

Participants talked about being isolated and bullied, or simply avoided. They said that sometimes when they see the differences between themselves and their friends, ‘what they have and what you don’t, makes you feel ashamed’.

We also heard that added responsibilities can be placed on young people whose families are struggling and that this also impacts on their social life. One young person told us that the ‘need to get a job to help the family’ (Female, 21) was depriving her of the time she might have otherwise spent with her friends.

Others talked about having to ‘lie to friends’ and ‘make excuses’ about not being allowed to go to the movies, or do other activities with them, because it was too embarrassing to tell them they couldn’t afford to go.

“ *Living in poverty can make a young person want to give up because they don’t think that they belong. (Male, 14)*

Participants talked about how not being able to afford transport to places impacts on your ability to develop and maintain friendships. The simplest of activities, like ‘going to a friend’s house, is not an option if you cannot afford the bus fare, have no car, or your parents have no money for petrol’. It is these things that set children apart from each other, make them stand out and highlight that their circumstances are different.

Participants talked about having ‘less opportunities’ (Female, 16) and how it ‘costs money to buy uniforms (and) equipment and play sports’ and how this ‘can prevent you from participating in the things you want to do outside of school’ (Female, 15). They recognise that for many families, sports and other structured activities were not possible as they simply could not be prioritised.

Many of the things participants talked about not being able to do were everyday activities, which most children and young people in South Australia are able to enjoy. We heard how some children were not able to go to a footy game, play music or go to the Adelaide Show. One participant just wanted to go camping, whilst another had always wanted to attend the Spirit Festival.

‘Children living in poverty can’t follow their dreams.’

(Male, 15)

Some young people just wanted to be able to ‘hang out with friends’ or go ‘shopping’. One young person really wanted to learn how to dance, while another just wanted to experience Go-Karting for the first time. We also heard that having fun and being independent were important to all young people, but that access to these things can be significantly affected by poverty.

We heard that the implications of not being able to ‘do’ or ‘participate’ in activities, meant kids were missing out on forming or fostering friendships, risked developing low self-esteem and limited the optimism they felt about their lives now and into the future. These long term implications also included a high risk of developing mental illness conditions, such as anxiety and depression.

Barriers to seeking help

Participants talked about the support that is ‘out there’, what is available to them now, and how accessible or inaccessible that support is. We heard that there can be quite complex barriers to reaching out for support, including a lot of mixed messaging.

We heard that young people hear they should be resilient and independent. This is often a deterrent to seeking help because ‘it makes you feel as though to do so would show others that you are not coping well, or that you are in some way weak’.

We heard about the impact of ‘poverty stigma’ – that young people often feel judged and embarrassed, particularly when people make assumptions about why a family is poor and impose those assumptions on the young person concerned. The participants reported not wanting others to assume there are drugs and alcohol issues involved, either in relation to themselves or other members of their family.

Participants talked about the systems and services set up to help describe that they ‘feel judged and blamed, rather than supported’. Others spoke about the system being too complex for vulnerable people, and how they believe they are actually designed to discourage them from asking for help’. (Male, 21)

Furthermore, when these systems get it wrong, or service providers make mistakes, participants said that they are often harsh and unkind to ‘poor’ people and that this adds to the person’s feeling of failure. The impact on young people facing these barriers means they often avoid reaching out for help until they find themselves at crisis stage.

There were many things participants said they wanted to achieve with their lives. Some of them didn’t know if they would ever be able to because of the poverty they live with now. They talked about how ‘growing up poor’ and how this changes your outlook on life; how it affects the way you see the future and what you think is possible for you.

We heard that for some young people all they want is to ‘have a good life’, ‘be healthy’, or ‘get friends’. Others just wanted to get their ‘drivers licence’, achieve ‘a good education’ or ‘travel’. Others just wanted to be able to keep ‘up to date with everyday life.’

Participants wanted people in power to understand that solutions to poverty must be found now, so that it can be eliminated now.

“ *You cannot live poor. You can survive, but that’s not living. (Female, 21)*

“ *Poverty is solvable – every person who is forced to live in poverty is due to a failure in society. (Male, 20)*

“In school we talk about homelessness and poor adults, we don’t talk about homelessness and poor kids.”

(Female, 17)



Children and Young People’s Observed Experience of Poverty in SA

The following chapter documents data supplied by children and young people who have observed the impact of poverty on family, friends and members of the wider community. They were asked to explore this from a rights perspective considering current responses and what they think could or should be done by whom to eradicate poverty in South Australia altogether.

The majority of children and young people who were asked to share their observations of poverty and its impact expressed a belief that poverty happens because of structural inequality. They know that social and economic disadvantage can occur as a result of living with a disability, having a mental illness, or being discriminated against on the basis of race or gender and that these are significant factors that make individuals and families vulnerable to poverty. Many children and young people spoke about ‘the poverty trap’, ‘the cycle of poverty’ and ‘generational poverty’ and how difficult it is for people born into poverty to get out of it.



Children and young people said their experience of poverty is different to that of adults.

Although Australia as a whole is becoming more unequal, public commentary has increasingly shifted blame away from societal structures and onto individuals. We are told more and more often that it is an individual's circumstances that have manifested their 'poor' situation. For example, recipients of social welfare are often described as 'job snobs' or 'dole bludgers'.⁷

Divisive by nature, this kind of commentary does little to create an environment that focuses on addressing poverty, least of all its impact on children and young people who live within 'poor' households. Or worse still, outside them as a result of the impact poverty is having on the adults in their lives.

Overwhelmingly, young people do not see poverty as a simple matter of choice. Rather they believe family and child poverty is due to factors that are outside the individual's control.

'Because most of the time people try their best, yet still end up in poverty because of things that affect their lives that they cannot control.'

(Male, 16)

Nearly all children and young people consulted, were concerned that a lack of money, deprivation and lack of opportunities in local communities are not openly discussed or considered. In the school environment poverty is nearly always described in a global rather than a local context, while in the South Australian context they said poverty is nearly always commented upon in reference to homelessness and 'adults sleeping rough'.

“ *In school we talk about homelessness and poor adults, we don't talk about homelessness and poor kids. (Female, 17)*

Children and young people are surprised at the estimated numbers of children living below the poverty line in South Australia. In response they believe there needs to be increased awareness through greater public discussion on the experiences of those living in poverty.

They felt that we need to move beyond the stereotype of 'ragged/torn clothes', 'shoes falling apart', 'faded or second hand school uniforms' to a more contemporary understanding of issues around poverty. These include cost, quality and equality of education, access to medicine and medical treatments, and participation in activities and entertainment.

Climate change and the cycle of poverty were seen to be particularly problematic. Especially its capacity to escalate poverty as the impact of climate change is felt most by those who are most vulnerable.

“ *Poverty is, in some ways, the invisible ink in our society. We may not always see it, but that doesn't mean that it isn't there. (Female, 15)*

“ *Poverty is often stigmatised in our society so it is imperative that it is humanised to tell stories behind the statistics. (Female, 15)*

Some children and young people emphasised that living in poverty might cause 'unhealthy relationships, stress and mental health issues'. For some this might be as a result of children hiding things from their parents and from their peers. Mainly because these 'kids feel like a burden' or that they might add to their 'parent's stresses'. Others spoke about hiding being poor from their peers because they'd be worried 'other kids wouldn't like them'.

Young people explained that by hiding experiences of poverty from peers, they would carry a burden and feel shame. They went on to suggest that constant social comparison has an ongoing negative impact on a young person's relationships and that their ability to connect with other people is limited. This can lead to a 'lack of trust' and a 'lack of connection' within their communities, amplifying a feeling that as a result of poverty they don't belong.

Children also spoke about the impact that poverty has on families as an issue in itself. They explained that poverty may lead to 'a bad home environment' that includes a chronic 'lack of support'.

Others highlighted the negative impact of poverty on society as a result of 'bullying', 'stigma', 'homelessness', 'discrimination', 'lack of social change' and 'unsafe communities,' all identified as the broader impact of poverty at the community level.

Children and young people believe that poverty and a lack of resources reduces a child or young person's ability to participate and to contribute. It limits their ability to have fun with their peers and to make connections in their community in the same way others kids who are 'not poor' can. Young people identified this impact of poverty as a form of social isolation, which in turn affects a child or young person's mental health and wellbeing.

This social isolation, maintains 'a poverty trap' which combines not being able to support yourself, with a lack of confidence. Over time this affects an individual's self-worth and their motivation to seek help.

Children and young people said that those who are living with a disability or come from a refugee or migrant background already come from a disadvantaged position, making them especially vulnerable to poverty. Children and young people said they are likely to 'have higher living costs' and 'might not have access to proper facilities', which creates a significant disadvantage from the outset. They also understand that a lack of support for individuals in our community means a lack of participation in society. They said that these vulnerable groups should be at the core of our thinking and positioned front and centre when developing our responses and solutions to poverty.

Children and young people recognise the social stigmatisation of people living in poverty. They said that a South Australia without poverty would have 'less discrimination and more employment', 'high earning jobs and happier people' because 'no one would feel privileged'. They also said 'where there's more equality in a society, there's more trust and a greater sense of community'.

“ *Poverty can be the result of, or can lead to discrimination. So figuring out what societal values are causing it will be important in ending it. I think having a conversation is the best way to start breaking down this issue, and not treat it as taboo. (Female, 15)*

“ *I think poverty can be solved through equality. One main solution is to pay all middle class earners on an equal 'base wage' so all people can afford to rent a house and pay the bills. (Gender unknown, 13)*



**“Poverty in itself is not a choice.
It is important to talk about this
and normalise it.”**

(Female, 14)

Young People’s Suggestions to Address Poverty in South Australia

Children and young people believe ‘if you help people contribute positively – no one loses and everyone wins’.

Children and young people are excited at the thought of there being zero poverty in South Australia by 2030, but they are also somewhat sceptical of the possibility that this could become a reality. They do believe that South Australians care deeply about people who are doing it tough, but they they also don’t know what to do to help.

“ We all have the capacity to care but we don’t know how to help’ and there’s a lack of education on how this issue can be addressed.
(Male, 18)

They also added that children and young people are uniquely placed to address societal issues as they are ‘not as desensitised as adults – ‘it’s a normal part of life when you’re older’. They said that ‘you got time to worry when you are a kid, which is not the case in adulthood’ (Male, 15). One participant concluded that young people need to be included in solutions to address poverty in SA.

‘Young people believe in change and that they can make a difference.’

(Female, 18)

Young people said that to solve an issue like poverty, all of society needs to work together to ensure that ‘no one is left behind’.

In their recommendations, young people emphasised the role they can play in addressing poverty in South Australia, taking a bottom up approach and involving those affected by poverty in devising the solutions.

They emphasised that services offering support for children and young people who are poor should ensure they avoid causing additional stress for themselves and their families and offer services that take into account how a child or young person feels about seeking help.

Programs or policies aimed at reducing child poverty should be child centred and address the specific consequences children who are living in poverty face. Using social media to report on initiatives and campaigns that raise awareness of the impact of poverty could effectively change the public discourse and help to reduce stigma.

The social and emotional aspects of poverty they named included ‘stress, depression, sadness, and anger, stigmatisation and social exclusion, humiliation, embarrassment, isolation, and feeling left out’. It is no surprise to children and young people that poverty impacts self-image, self-confidence and a person’s individual identity and were explicit in their view that it is vital to address this impact in any community or school based wellbeing strategy developed.

Children and young people understand how barriers to achieving real change include an inability on the part of some, to empathise with others. Not being able to relate to people who live in poverty across our communities, makes it harder for us to prioritise it as an issue. But eradication is about prioritising.

We can no longer speak about poverty in the context of it only applying to developing nations. Neither can we listen to those who struggle with the notion of poverty being an issue in South Australia.

When young people viewed poverty with more relativity and thought about what people need, they considered poverty to be a growing issue amongst children and young people that does not look likely to abate any time soon.

They saw that ‘fixed mindsets’ and a ‘lack of attention to those less fortunate’ is creating barriers to change.

“ If people already have opinions on poverty in South Australia and don’t receive any information challenging their opinions, how can anything change? (Male, 16)

We can’t afford our young people to believe that those who hold power in our society aren’t serious about eradicating poverty across our communities.

Young people want to see their opinions and experiences represented and heard in the democratic society in which they live. If they don’t they become disengaged and are forced to operate outside the systems we have put in place.

As participants said, ‘poverty is not a choice. It is a societal failing’. One which ‘we must all work together to solve’. Young people want to be a part of the design to the solutions to poverty across our community.

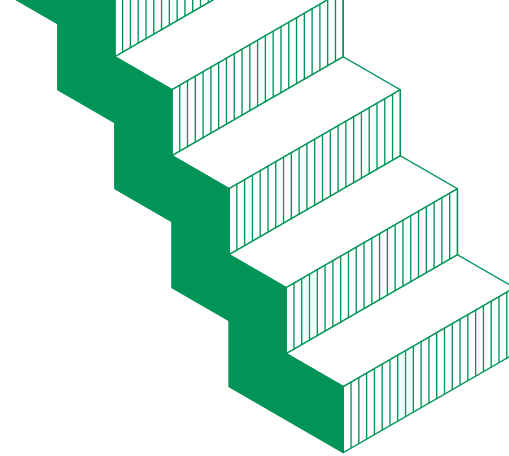
They want to be able to trust adults to do the right thing. They want the voices of children and young people with lived experience of poverty to be heard in the decision-making process, and they want to see ‘an across the community approach’ taken to making ‘big decisions’ that impact on those in our communities we know are the most vulnerable.

The unprecedented civic, social, technological, environmental and political change that is continually occurring this century is leading children and young people to have different relationships with government, business and the broader community. As a consequence they also have different expectations of life.

For young people values matter, human relationships matter, diversity and inclusion matter, trust matters, personalised experiences matter, and increasingly, emotions matter.

Young people have said they want kind, empathetic and respectful interpersonal relationships with adults and service providers, as it is through these experiences as consumers and customers that they develop their long term attitudes to and relationships with government and the broader community including those they have with police, justice and social service providers. They are driving a demand for different ways of being and for actions that we take to make a fairer world which fosters deeper connections between all ages and each other.

This brings a sense of optimism for the future, and the hope that young people will demand policies and programs to help those missing out because it is the right and just thing to do. We can’t wait for this next generation to come to power, neither should we be asking this of them.



Next Steps

The situation facing many children and young people in South Australia who we know are living in poverty must be addressed now, by us, as a matter of urgency, and in ways that have been fully informed by their ‘voices’.

I encourage you to work with me to bring about the recommendations that this report contains. They have been made in close consultation with children and young people who have generously shared their lived experience of poverty or provided their observations of how it impacts on members of their community, providing suggestions for how it can be addressed.

The recommendations proposed are entirely achievable if we set our minds and our will to implementing them. In this way we can be part of a generation that ensured long term change would occur. Change that will once and for all eliminate poverty permanently amongst children and young people across our State, and on into their adult lives.

It is my strong belief that if we work together, South Australia can eradicate poverty by 2030.

Appendix 1: Project Methodology

To obtain the views of children and young people on the sensitive topic of poverty, it was essential to undertake consultative work in safe and meaningful ways. Various factors were considered, including how young people’s voices were going to be heard, and in what context.

It was imperative that the project was accountable to the children and young people who participated, particularly those with lived experience of poverty who shared their personal experiences, ideas and insights. The focus was to identify systemic improvements that would benefit other children and young people like them. The project also had to provide achievable recommendations for action.

Determining the approach

A mixed method approach was developed and applied. This involved exploring various ‘parts’ of the poverty problem identified as follows:

- 1 definition
- 2 causes
- 3 solutions
- 4 impact

The rationale behind utilising these four distinctly different approaches to engaging children and young people in the discussions around poverty was multifaceted and included:

- maximising inclusion
- increasing opportunities for participation
- providing different approaches to suit different groups
- allowing for in-depth exploration through mixed methodologies
- ensuring respectful participation opportunities for all groups
- supporting young people in regional areas to contribute.

Project underpinnings

All of the approaches were underpinned by the following:

- UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child: Article 12 (Children and Young People have the right to be listened to and to be taken seriously.)
- child safe environment principles
- a risk and needs assessment
- respect for anonymity
- an ‘opt out at any time’ option; and
- hosts and partners to support participants.

An iterative process was undertaken with information from conversations between the Commissioner and the children and young people participating informing the focus groups, which in turn informed the survey. Together these all informed the content and structure of the Poverty Summit. This process acknowledged the different contributions made by different participant groups at each stage.

Workshops

Given the paucity of information available on what children and young people think about poverty in South Australia, the Commissioner held a number of workshops with young people to scope the project, determine the problem framing, and develop an understanding of the most appropriate terminology to use in the project.

The starting point for this key question was exploring this in conversation with small groups of young people known to be actively committed to addressing social justice issues.

These conversations assisted the Commissioner to properly ‘name’ the project to ensure it would correctly resonate with the different sets of South Australian children and young people who it was hoped would participate in consultations undertaken throughout various phases of the project; namely the Survey, Fourms, Focus Groups and Poverty Summit.

Workshop participants were asked two key questions about poverty and its impact:

- 1 Is poverty a concept they believe young people understand?
- 2 Can young people confidently contribute to discussions on possible solutions to poverty?

A survey to better understand what young people think about poverty

The Poverty Survey was a project tool developed to enable a diverse cross-section of young people living throughout South Australia (SA) to contribute their views on poverty to the project. Adapted from a similar survey developed by the Scottish Youth Parliament, and with their permission, it asked children and young people questions relating to why families experience poverty, what some of the associated feelings of living in poverty are, and if there are particular groups they believe are more at risk.

The survey was promoted online and distributed through stakeholder groups from January through to mid July 2019. To help ensure surveys reached young people who are without easy access to the internet, service providers that support young people became a major focus of the distribution strategy. A total of 1145 SA children and young people aged 14-22 years completed the survey.

The survey provided considerable insight into what young people believe to be the causes of poverty, including what factors they perceive as contributing to an individual's risk of suffering from poverty. It also provided insight into the values and beliefs our young people hold around choice and opportunity.

Focus groups to understand the impact of poverty

CCYP recognised that to truly understand the impact of poverty on children and young people, we needed those who have had direct experience of poverty to be part of the discussion. We knew that children and young people who experienced 'being poor' or who themselves were 'living in poverty' were best placed to explain exactly how this feels, sharing their insight into the true affect poverty can have, both over the short and long term.

To ensure young people who have a lived experience of poverty could be involved with the project in a safe and meaningful way, a series of focus groups were facilitated. Small groups of young people, along with representatives from their supporting agency, were invited to meet with the Commissioner and participate in these focus groups. Sessions were carefully designed and were tailored to address specific needs of those attending, with content delivered in ways that were safe and respectful of an individual participant's personal experiences and vulnerability.

The focus groups provided CCYP with invaluable awareness of the emotional and social impact poverty has on children and young people. Through these groups we better understood how 'being poor' affects 'a kid's life' every-day, in many different ways; that living in poverty affects a child's view of the world, society and life in general in myriad ways which are not positive.

Forty seven children and young people aged between 12 and 21 years, participated in four focus groups. The focus groups consisted of young people who have experienced 'being poor' or who were themselves currently 'living in poverty'. They had diverse socio-economic backgrounds and included Young Carers and young people living in care. They were also culturally diverse, with approximately 20% identifying as Aboriginal, and with many coming from regional South Australia. Participants had varying abilities, communication needs and styles. Sessions were engaging and safe with creative respectful activities used to facilitate discussions.

Focus Group participants were introduced to a fictional character named 'Poor'. They were asked to tell the group how 'Poor feels' and what 'Poor worries about'. Participants could choose from a selection of 'feelings' cards or write down their own responses on blank cards provided. Participants could also use the fictional character 'Poor' to reflect on what a child living in poverty feels and worries about, responding to the following series of questions:

What does it feel like to be 'poor'?

Participants selected 'words' from a set of 'feeling cards' with the most prevalent being:

- Ashamed

– Sad

– Embarrassed

– Isolated
- Helpless

– Scared

– Depressed

– Lonely

Participants were then invited to add their own feelings to this list, with additional feelings including the following:

- Left out

– Annoyed

– Empty

– Overwhelmed
- Different/Abnormal

– Untrusting

– Resentful

– Misunderstood

What worries 'poor'?

Participants were then asked to write down words that described what they felt 'Poor' worries about most.

The most common responses were:

- Homelessness

– Food

– Family

– Future

– Appearance

– Money

– Wellbeing

– Judgement
- Stability

– Safety

– Hygiene

– School

– Opportunities

– Alcoholism

– Survival

Following the externalising exercise, participants were asked to comment on the impact of being 'Poor' on three key areas: Home Life, School Life, and Social Life with their responses contained in the body of this report (See pages 14-21)

Developing suggestions for solutions to poverty through a summit

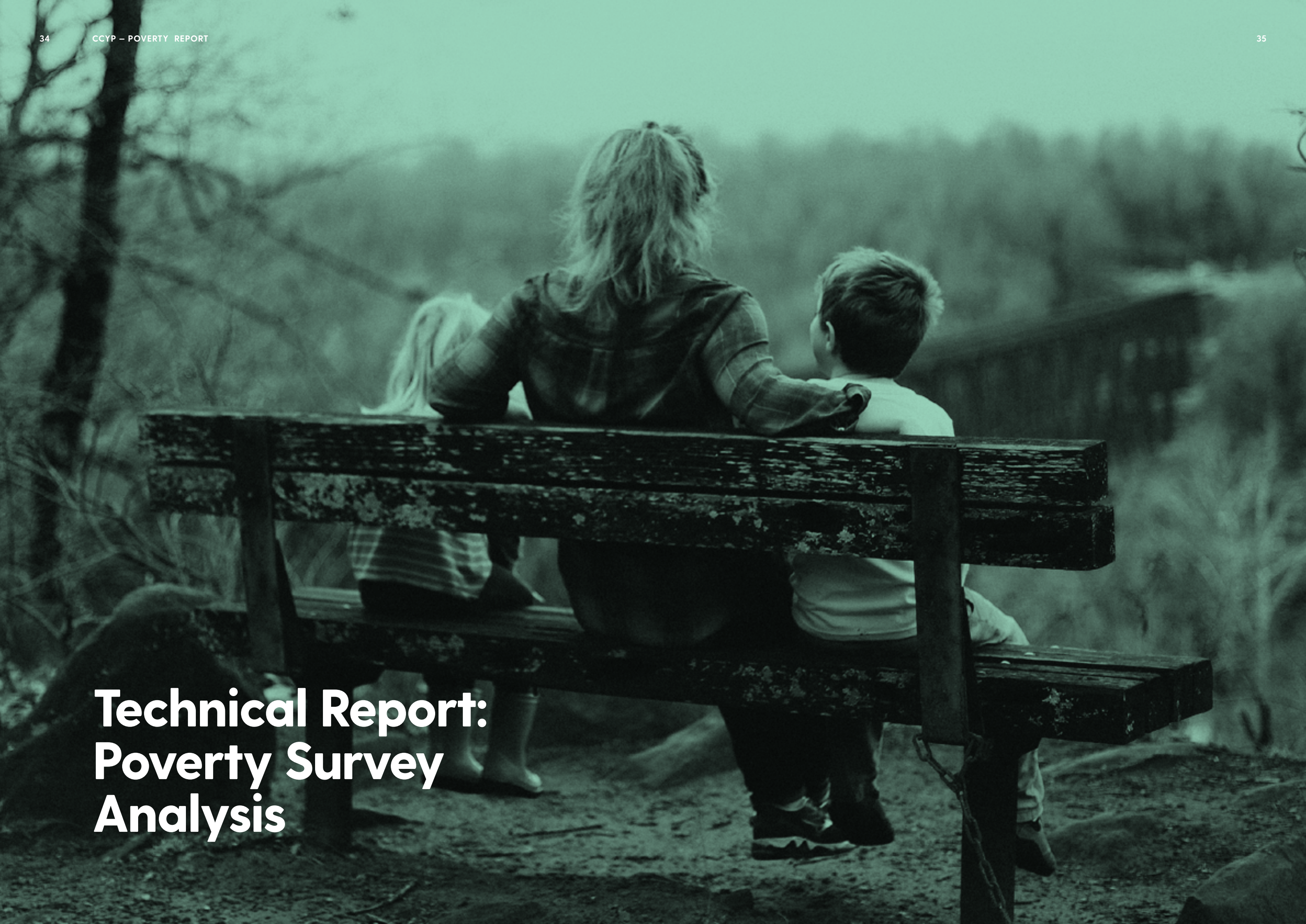
Following the survey and focus groups, young people were given an opportunity to make recommendations to decision makers around what they believe could be done to address the problem of children living in poverty in South Australia.

The 2019 Poverty Summit was organised in partnership with UN Youth SA. It brought together 196 young people to explore the question: 'How can South Australia eradicate poverty by 2030?' The summit was open to South Australian students in Years 10-12, positioning young South Australians as global leaders in developing real-world solutions to poverty.

Students from 29 South Australian schools attended. Of the schools represented, 65% were public schools and the remainder were private and independent. Of the public schools, 42% were located in some of the most disadvantaged areas of South Australia.

Young people developed recommendations on issues they identified as being of greatest concern to South Australian children and young people.

The CCYP learnt that young people in South Australia are not only passionate about addressing poverty locally, as well as around the world, but that they believe there are some reasonably straight forward remedies that can be applied now to help alleviate various aspects of this complex problem.

A photograph of a woman and two children sitting on a wooden bench in a park. The woman is in the center, with her back to the camera, wearing a plaid shirt. To her left is a young girl with blonde hair, also with her back to the camera. To her right is a young boy, seen from the side, looking towards the right. They are all sitting on a weathered wooden bench. The background is a blurred park setting with trees and grass. The overall tone is somber and contemplative.

Technical Report: Poverty Survey Analysis

Technical Report: Poverty Survey Analysis

The Poverty Survey was conducted online and offline between January and July 2019. In total, 1,145 South Australian children and young people participated in the survey.

The survey aimed to understand perceptions of poverty. It utilised the format of a poverty survey conducted by the Scottish Youth Parliament, applying a South Australian lens.

It consisted of nine questions on causation, impact and response, as well as three self-identifying demographic questions. The responses tell us about how children and young people see poverty in their communities and how this changes according to their age and background.

The analysis of this survey uses a mixed method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. Simple responses and categorical data were analysed using statistical software, while open ended text questions were analysed through qualitative research software.

The qualitative analysis consisted of a digital coding process. Codes were assigned to individual responses representing substantive themes or subjects. A code was applied to each individual response where a particular theme or subject was present. This enabled an accurate comparison of the different themes between each of the respondents.

The codes were developed through grounded theory. This consisted of an initial data immersion process to gain an understanding of the naturally occurring themes and subjects discussed by the respondents. The codes were then further developed through multiple cycles of coding, and were refined, expanded, reviewed and reapplied across all responses.

Coding development and application was workshopped continuously throughout the process, with several reviews undertaken by an independent party. This ensured the coding remained representative and without any application bias. This qualitative analysis was later factored into the quantitative analyses undertaken using a statistical software package.

Participants' responses to three demographic questions focused on the respondent's age, diversity and family financial background. Age and family background were primarily used to understand the cluster of views.

Survey limitations

The survey had some limitations. Although it aimed to achieve a completely random sample, the distribution of the survey through social media platforms and project partners, meant that only cohorts that had access to these groups and the internet, were able to complete the survey. Whilst specific attention was given to account for this, the findings should be interpreted with this in mind.

The impact of this distribution strategy appears to primarily have had some influence on the age groups that therefore completed the survey. The largest cohorts clustered around 12-14 years of age and 15-17 years of age. At approximately 5% of the sample size respectively, the limited number of respondents who were in the 7-11 years of age and 22-25 years of age groupings, limits the generalisability of findings.

Who were the respondents?

In total, 1,145 respondents participated in the poverty survey. A vast majority of these respondents (968) completed the survey online through the web based survey platform 'Survey Monkey' while a smaller number (177) completed the survey in hard copy.

The survey exhibited a good level of variance across age, background and diversity. Whilst respondents self-identified responses to these questions, no flags across the data were identified that indicated duplicate or deliberately misleading responses. Additionally, data provided by social media platforms and identified during the distribution of hard copy surveys, confirmed the survey was reached and accessed by the intended audience (children and young people aged 7 to 25).

Most respondents that completed the survey were between the ages of 12 and 21 years, accounting for 90% of the sample, whilst a smaller group of respondents, aged 7-11 and 22-25 respectively accounted for the remainder of the sample.

Less than half of the respondents identified some level of diversity. The smallest diversity group was Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people accounting for 2.5% of the sample. All other diversity groups were above 5% of the sample. Overall a little under 60% of respondents did not identify with any of the listed diversity groups.

Nearly three quarters of the sample described their family background as 'Comfortably off' and a further 17% described their family background as 'Wealthy'. Overall just under 9% of the sample identified their family background as 'Poor'. This question provided some of the most important contextualisation of the survey findings with a significant variance in responses across these groups.

The self-identification aspect of these demographic questions was important to the overall purpose of the survey. This enabled respondent self-perceptions to align with their view of poverty whilst ensuring that the broadest range of participants were engaged, even where they did not know the specifics about their family background.

What Causes Poverty?

Respondents to the poverty survey were asked two questions on the causes of family and child poverty. The first question asked the respondents to select whether families with children in poverty were so because of the choices they had made, factors that were out of their control or a combination of both of these things. A majority of respondents went on to explain why they had selected their answer. The second question asked respondents whether or not a series of factors could cause family and child poverty, with a simple yes or no response asked for, as well as the option to indicate that they did not know.

Poverty: beyond control or a matter of choice

Overwhelmingly respondents answered that they do not see poverty as a simple matter of choice, rather they believe family and child poverty is due to factors that are out of the individual's control (27.7%) or due to a combination of both choice and factors out of the individual's control (58.7%). Only a very small minority (5.4%) believed that poverty was caused by choice. The reasons for why respondents answered this way are diverse, however they highlight the significant extent to which children and young people are able to appreciate the complexity of poverty as a subject.

“ Because most of the time people try their best yet still end up in poverty because of things that effect their lives that they cannot control. (Male, 16)

Interestingly responses were divided more by the respondent's family's financial background than by their age. The influence of age appeared only to cause some slight polarisation.

No respondent that had identified their family's background as 'Poor', answered that families were in poverty due to their choices alone. This is in contrast to other respondents, in particular those that had identified their background as 'Wealthy' – who were nearly twice as likely to say that family poverty was caused by the choices they make (9.8%) than those identifying as 'Comfortably off' (5.1%).

This suggests that there is a clear difference in the way poverty is viewed by young people who come from financially stable families when compared to those coming from families that are more likely to experience financial difficulty.

In explaining why respondents answered the way that they did, a range of personal beliefs and experiences were relied on to explain their answers. The most common explanations were simple, simply that both were possible (23.1 %), that there is no one cause for poverty (11.4 %) or rather that financial factors led to this situation (9.5 %).

“ Some people prioritise their money badly causing them to be in poverty however some people simply do not make enough money to get by no matter how hard they try. (Female, 15-17)

“ Because it could be for any reason – some people make bad choices but it doesn't make them bad people. (Male, 15-17)

Explanations emphasised that when poverty was considered in more detail there was a tendency to use a variety of 'causes' to justify or frame the respondent's initial answer. This resulted in respondents often considering or raising multiple themes. There was significant variety in this, with some respondents raising the same theme, but framing it to suit their initial answer.

For example, respondents who used 'Education' as a justification for 'choice' as a cause, often framed this as the choice not to complete school or a particular qualification. Contrastingly those who used 'Education' as a justification for their answer for things they can't control, framed this around a lack of influence over the quality of schooling, engagement or preparedness for life.

Those that answered both tended to consider multiple possibilities. They might have considered not completing a qualification as a choice but regarded it also as something out of a person's control due to a particular reason for that choice, such as child rearing responsibilities.

As a result, there was generally little statistical distinction between themes in the context of the respondent's initial answer. There were, however, some exceptions to this. Those who had answered that poverty was caused by factors out of a person's control were least likely to explain that they had answered this way because poverty is caused by 'multiple factors'. This might also be due, however, to there being a perception that there was a stronger focus on a particular factor being beyond control, more so than other respondents.

“ Well...if their choice is not to get a job or go to university most of the time they end up poor and living on the streets. (Gender unknown, 7-11)

“ No one chooses deliberately to be in poverty. It could be unfortunate life events, lack of education, poor health, etc. but none of these things are really 'chosen'. (Male, 22-25)

Respondents that felt poverty was caused by individual decisions, were most likely to discuss a 'lack of effort' as their justification at three times the rate of other respondents, while simultaneously being the least likely to discuss a 'lack of help'.

Additionally those who described their family's situation as 'Poor', most often discussed 'individual decisions and choices' (14.2%) despite not answering that choice was the only cause.

This is in contrast to those who described their background as 'Wealthy'. These respondents were comparatively more likely to discuss the impact of 'Intergenerational Poverty' (8.3%) despite a less significant focus on factors outside of individual control.

“ Nobody can choose the life they are born into, or whether they will be presented with opportunities, although there are some people who don't make the effort to work hard and remain unemployed. (Gender unknown 15-17)

“ There are just so many situations that could end up this way. (Gender unknown 15-17)

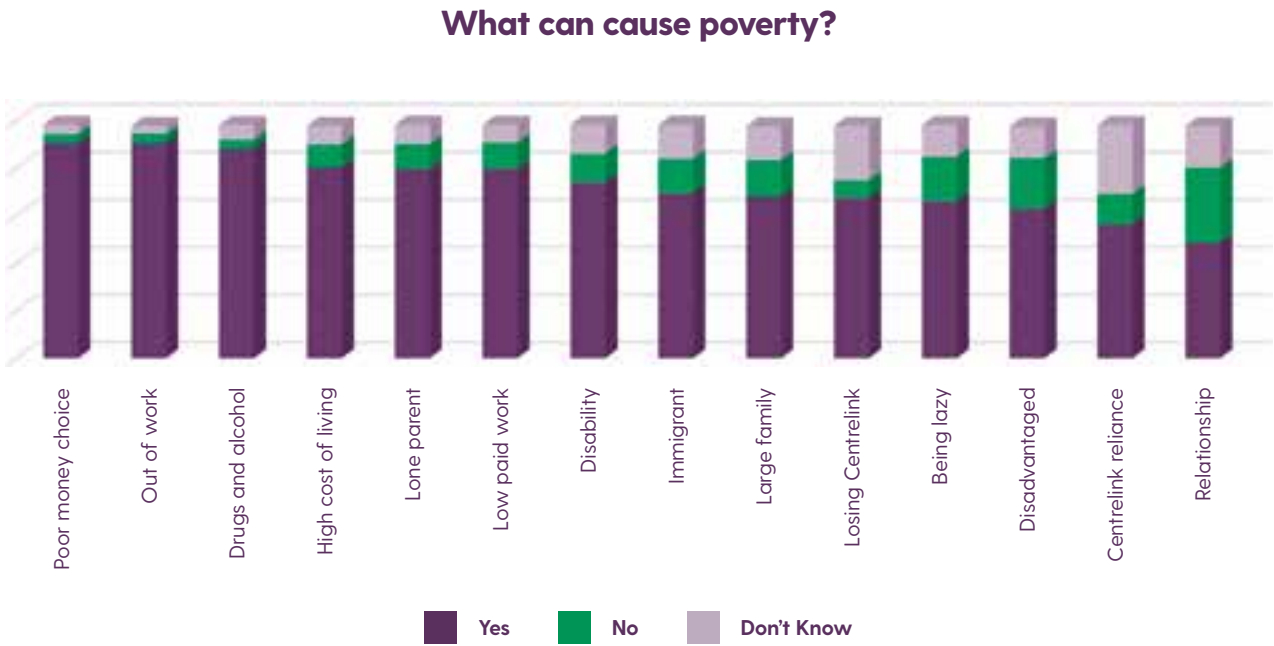
The age of the respondent had little effect on the theme/s that they raised, however, more detailed answers were generally provided by older respondents.

The results tell us that the causes of poverty can be viewed from a range of different perspectives, and even when the same issue is considered it can be used to justify opposite positions. In some cases it was evident that prompting the respondent to consider why they had answered the way they did, actually led them to describe a more neutral position in their explanation showing they had an appreciation for both individual decisions and factors beyond the control of an individual.

What factors lead to poverty?

The second question on the causes of poverty listed a series of situations and experiences and asked the respondent to consider if they caused family or child poverty. Themes that had emerged in the respondent's answer to the first question became clearer here, as did age relevant knowledge. Interestingly, despite the very low number of respondents that had answered

that individual decisions can lead to poverty, 'Poor choices about money' alongside 'Being out of work' were the most common situations that respondents felt caused poverty (90.3%). In the context of respondents' initial answers this is most likely to have been perceived as a contributing factor in a wider sense.



'Having a relationship breakdown' (48.5%) and 'Relying too much on Centrelink' (56.3%) were seen as the least likely causes of poverty in the list of options provided. Given respondents' explanations this is likely due to be the fact that respondents felt that in these situations, there were other more relevant factors, such as a limited amount of money coming in to the household. This of course was also dependent upon the respondent's broader perception of the causes of poverty.

“ No one chooses poverty. No one desires a life living pay cheque to pay cheque. Relying on Centrelink doesn't 'cause' poverty. It's a part that comes with it. Of course poorer people rely on Centrelink. They can't afford the things they need to get out of the cycle. It's not causation for poverty. (Female, 22)

Age was a more relevant factor as to how respondents answered this question. In particular a clear pattern emerged in answers to 'Losing Centrelink unexpectedly' and 'A high cost of living'. The older the respondent, the more likely they were to answer yes to both these questions. This is likely due to the fact that older respondents have a better understanding of finances, and are generally more aware of expenses and the budgets required to meet them. Respondents' answers to 'Having a long term illness or disability' also followed this pattern, suggesting that older respondents were more likely to have developed a sense of the possible financial impact that can arise from these or similar situations.

The respondents' demographic background also had some influence over the way in which they answered. Those who identified their families situation as 'Poor' were the most likely to say that 'Relying too much on Centrelink' and 'Being lazy' were not causes of poverty, and were significantly less likely to respond with 'I don't know' to both these situations than respondents

who had described their families situation as 'Comfortably-off' or 'Wealthy'. A similarly high rate of 'Don't know' responses was recorded for those from 'Comfortably-off' (23.3%) and 'Wealthy' (27%) backgrounds for responses to 'Losing Centrelink unexpectedly'.

Generally respondents from a 'Poor' background were less likely to answer 'don't know' than respondents from 'Wealthy' and 'Comfortably-off' backgrounds. Part of this may be attributed to a higher probability of 'lived experience' amongst these respondents, where as other respondents may be more reliant on less direct or observed experience.

Respondents from a 'Wealthy' background were less likely than those from a 'Comfortably-off' or 'Poor' background to answer that 'Being lazy' was a cause of poverty. Instead they were most likely to answer 'Don't know'. This may displace some assumptions on the views of those from wealthier backgrounds and suggests that perceptions on work ethic are not associated with financial background.

“ You could be in poverty because you are alone and do not know how to get help. (Male, 16)

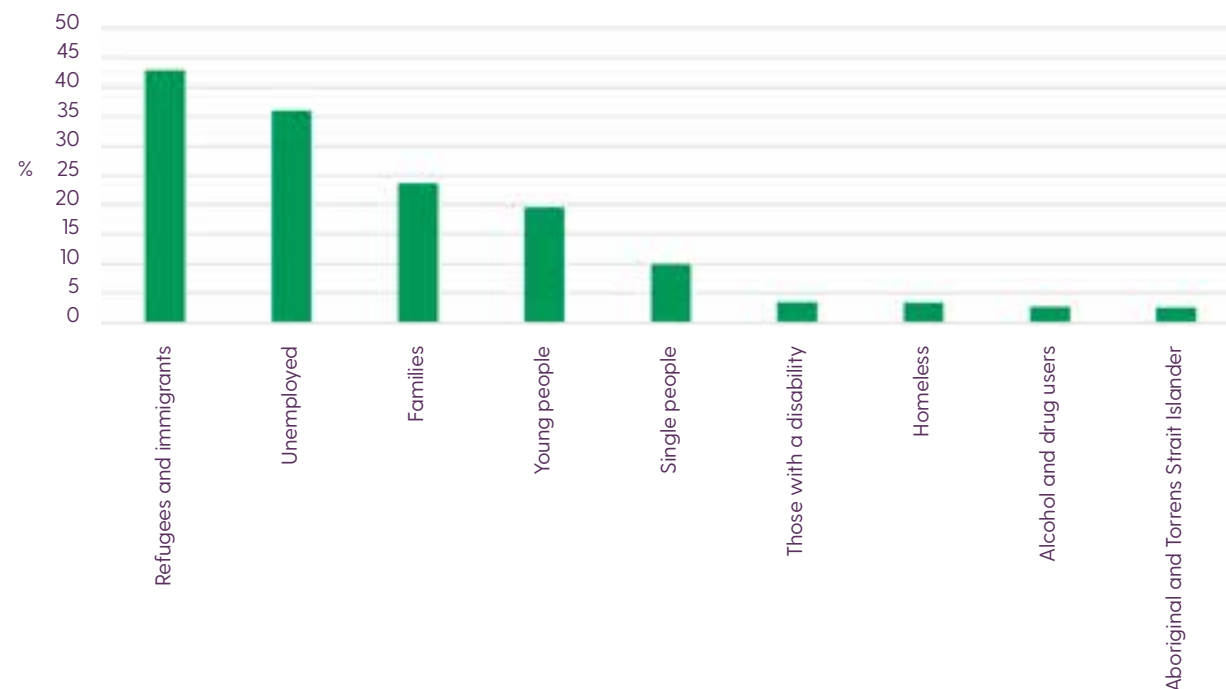
This is in contrast to questions which were financially related. The better off the respondent's family financial background, the less likely they were to say that 'High Cost of Living', 'Being out of work' or 'Being in low paid work' were causes of poverty. Consequently the more secure a respondent felt about their own family's financial situation, the less likely they felt that financial situations would impact others.

Who Does Poverty Affect?

Respondents were asked in one question, who they feel poverty affects the most. A series of prompts were given in the questions that aimed to trigger a broad appreciation of the possible answers. This included families, people without work, refugees, single people and young people. Respondents were free to give any answer, including an answer that was not listed. Generally respondents chose from this list and in some cases provided a range of other groups.

Of the possible answers, respondents listed Refugees and Immigrants as the group most impacted by poverty by far. Refugees were listed by the highest proportion of respondents (42%) followed by a combined count of those unemployed or without work (36%). Families and Young people were the next two most commonly answered groups. Those that are disabled (3.4%) and homeless (3.3%) were the two most commonly reported groups that were not listed within the question.

Who does poverty affect the most?



The perceived impacts of poverty

Respondents were asked three questions relating to the perceived impacts of poverty. The first question asked respondents to list the feelings they think are linked to living in poverty. The second question asked respondents to rate how difficult it would be to afford selected categories of common expenses, and the third question asked if those living in poverty were comparatively more or less likely to experience selected negative experiences.

Respondents were given space to write the feelings they believe are associated with living in poverty. Generally respondents provided a list of feelings, with very few respondents opting to be more descriptive in their answers. Responses largely focused on strong negative emotional states, with sadness (39.56%) and depression (31.7%) dominating the responses. These were twice as significant as the next most commonly listed feeling of Anger (14.76%) and were a feature of a majority of responses. Anxiety (12.93%), loneliness (11.18%), hopelessness (9.61%) and shame (8.47%) were also common responses.

This suggests that children and young people view living in poverty as a deeply disheartening experience, likely to trigger some of the strongest and darkest emotions.

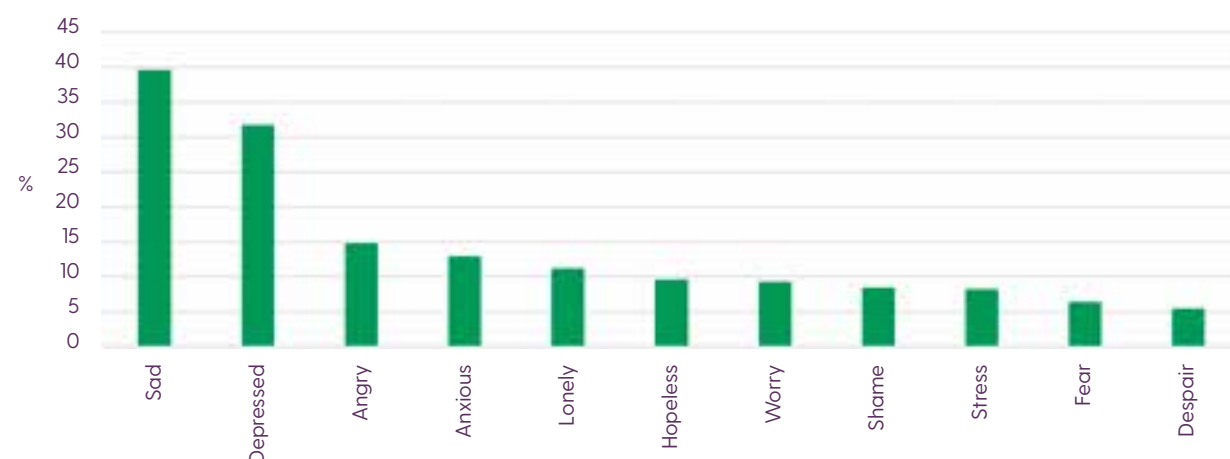
Most responses focused on emotional states and it was less common for respondents to list the feelings linked to a physical state, such as hunger (3.67%) and feeling cold (0.70%). Some respondents raised feelings of gratitude, happiness and being blessed, which were mostly contextualised as feelings following small acts of kindness or assistance and were themselves comparatively small in frequency.

- “ I think poverty particularly affects refugees due to being a marginalised group in society. (Gender unknown, 15 -17)
- “ People out of work who have no income. Refugees who come to the country looking for work or education and are rejected and have no income or education. Families who have been raised in poverty and do not know any better. (Gender unknown, 12-14)

Again the respondent's self-identified family background had a significant impact on who the respondents perceived as being most impacted by poverty. While all groups listed Refugees as their number one group impacted by poverty, the emphasis placed on groups differed. Those from a wealthy background listed young people at half the rate of those with a 'Comfortably-off' or 'Poor' background and were nearly three times as likely to list those with a 'Drug or Alcohol addiction'. Those with a 'Poor' background were twice as likely to list 'People with a Disability' as a group most affected by poverty. While those with a 'Comfortably-off' background were 30% more likely to mention 'Unemployed people' or 'People without work'

This suggests that whilst respondents tended to agree on the core groups most affected by poverty, there is a difference in the perception of some of the less common groups. This may have some minor consequences for the perceived impacts and causes of poverty, however, it was considered too statistically insignificant to explore in this analysis.

What feelings are linked to poverty?



The respondent's family background had a limited impact on the type of feelings that were raised. Generally those from a 'Comfortably-off' and 'Poor' background had the greatest variance in the feelings that they described. Additionally those from a 'Poor' background were almost twice as likely to mention feelings of hopelessness and stress when compared to other respondents.

“Sadness, people staring, some people start to do bad things once they're on the streets. (Gender unknown, 7 -11)

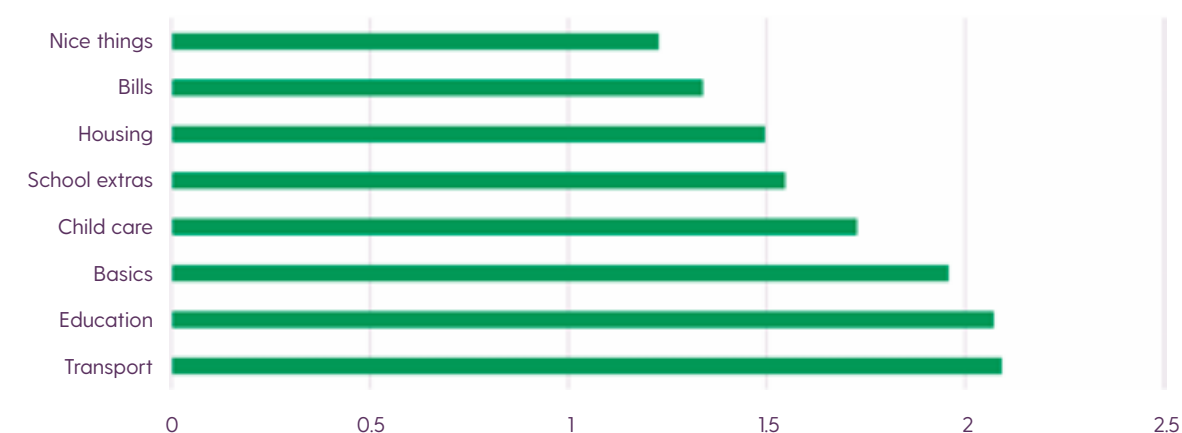
“Depressed, worthless, sad, worried. (Gender unknown, 18-21)

Age had a more substantial impact on the feelings that were mentioned by the respondent, and this was most apparent in the language that respondents used. Although some emotions such as depression were common across all respondents, younger respondents tended to convey simpler emotions, while older respondents explained more complex feelings. For example in the 07-11 and 12-14 age groups, responses tended to cluster around three feelings; Anger (35.29%), Sadness (66.67%) and Depression (31.37%). In contrast, respondents in the older age groups were more likely to convey a larger range of feelings such as Anxiety, Hopelessness, Fear, Shame and Despair. This was also true for the frequency with which other feelings were raised. The older the respondent was, the less likely they were to mention Anger or Sadness and other feelings associated with a physical state.

What families can't afford

Respondents were given a series of possible expenses and asked to rank on a four point scale how difficult they thought it would be for a family in poverty to afford them. This included the ability to opt for a 'don't know' response. 'Very difficult' was assigned a value of 1 while 'Not difficult at all' was assigned a value of 4. Generally respondents answered that the most difficult thing for families living in poverty to afford are 'Nice things' (1.23) followed by 'Bills' (1.34) and 'Good Housing' (1.5). Respondents felt that the least difficult thing for families in poverty to afford is the cost of 'Further Education' (2.09). This was the only category in which none of the respondents had selected that it would be 'Very difficult' and it also had the highest level of agreement.

How might families afford the following?



Generally the more financially secure the family background identified by the respondent was, the less difficult they perceived all of the costs to be. This held true across all categories, with the exception of transport, where those identifying as 'Comfortably off' were more likely to rate the difficulty lower than those from a 'Wealthy' background.

When compared to respondents that had identified their family background as 'Poor', the difference across all categories for those 'Comfortably off' was on average equal to a shift of .12 points from the mean importance, and .16 points for those in the 'Wealthy' category. In other words, respondents that had described their family background as 'Wealthy' or 'Comfortably off' were consistently and substantially more likely to rank the difficulty of any cost lower than those from a 'Poor' background.

“Living in poverty puts you at a disadvantage to most aspects of life. In some cases you would need to decide what’s more important having food or paying the power bill, it wouldn’t be easy knowing most people take it for granted. (Gender unknown, 15-17)

Respondents across ages generally agreed on the difficulty associated with affording ‘School extras’ ‘Further education’ and ‘Nice things’. One exception was that the older the respondent, the more likely it was that they would increase the difficulty associated with covering the cost of ‘Basics’, ‘Child-care’ and ‘Transport’ and the more likely they would be to decrease the difficulty associated with meeting payment of ‘Bills’. This again may be attributed to the financial awareness of the respondent, as was evident with older respondents in previous questions.

What those living in poverty might experience

Respondents were asked how likely they thought it would be that those living in poverty would experience a series of possible feelings and situations. Respondents who rated the experiences listed as ‘more likely’ were assigned a value of 3 with situations that were ‘less likely’ assigned a value of 1. Those that were rated ‘as likely’ were assigned a value of 2. Of the feelings and situations listed, ‘Feeling Anxious’ (2.51) was perceived to be the most likely listed feeling families living in poverty would experience, followed by ‘Feeling Isolated’ (2.49) and ‘Being Bullied’ (2.44). There was a consistent level of variance amongst respondents with the exception of ‘Not having fun things to do’ which had a greater level of variance, likely attributed to divergent opinions.

“Being poor is just one more thing to add to a mountain of things for people to worry about. (Gender unknown, 18-21)

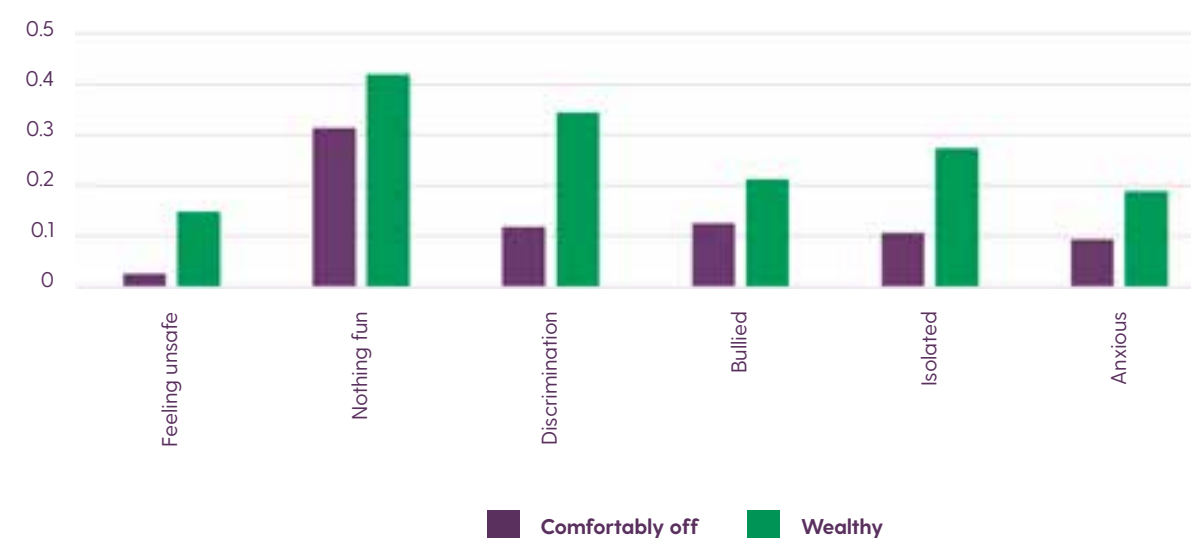
“You might feel like you don’t have many friends but it would be good to have friends. (Gender unknown, 12-14)

The difference was most pronounced between the youngest and oldest respondents, as well as those from a ‘Wealthy’ background and those from a ‘Poor’ background.

The self-identified family financial background of the respondent again demonstrated a degree of difference between respondents. In all cases the more financially secure the respondent’s family background was as self-identified, the less likely they were to see any of the feelings or situations as ‘more likely’. On average this difference was equal to a shift of 0.13 points from the mean likelihood for those from a ‘Comfortably-off’ background and 0.26 points for those from a ‘Wealthy’ background. This difference was most notable with the respondents’ ranking of ‘Nothing fun to do’, with those from a ‘Wealthy’ background most likely to say that this experience was ‘as likely’ (2.05), while those from a ‘Comfortably-off’ background showed a slightly higher probability of selecting ‘more likely’ (2.16). Those from a ‘Poor’ background had a substantially higher probability of saying it was ‘more likely’ (2.47).

Age had a significant impact on how respondents answered this survey question. Generally the older the respondent was the greater the chance they would respond that a particular feeling was ‘more likely’. Younger respondents tended to answer that the given feeling or situation was ‘as likely’ more often. For responses to ‘Nothing fun to do’, ‘Feeling discriminated’ and ‘Being bullied’ the age of the respondent had a clear impact. This may be due to the types of recreational activities younger and older respondents engage in, with younger respondents tending to be more creative in their play. This is supported in part by responses to ‘feeling isolated’ where respondents upwards of 15 years of age had a much more significant probability of answering that this experience was ‘more likely’.

How likely are families with children to experience the following?



Responding to Poverty

Respondents that participated in the survey generally felt that governments do not spend enough money tackling poverty (57%). A significant proportion of respondents were unsure if they spend enough (32.5%) while only a small number (10%) felt that governments do spend enough money. Respondents provided a variety of explanations for their response with the most common indicating they had answered in the way they did due to current 'government policy direction or priorities' (16.9%). Some described their response as a matter of choice, while others provided more detail. Overall explanations tended to be straightforward, with the most common reflecting a focus on 'insufficient assistance' (15%) or due to the 'number of people in poverty' (9.3%).

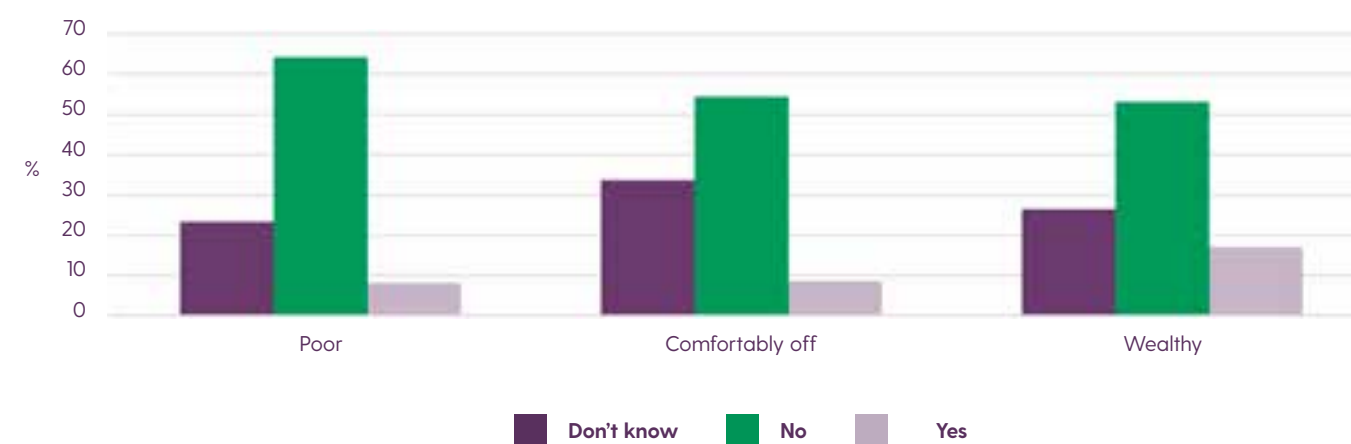
The background of the respondent had a significant impact on whether they felt government spends enough on poverty. Those with a 'Poor' background were significantly more likely to feel that governments do not spend enough money tackling poverty (64%) while those with a 'Wealthy' background were nearly twice as likely to say that governments do spend enough tackling poverty (17%).

- “ If we spent enough money tackling poverty, it wouldn't be a problem anymore. (Gender unknown, 15-17)
- “ Because as a person living in poverty I feel as though governments don't care. (Gender unknown, 15-17)
- “ There are always concerns that we would become a welfare state if we assisted those in poverty, but that sounds more like an excuse to keep poor people poor. (Gender unknown, 18-21)
- “ Yes and no... They spend a large amount of money already on poor people and spending more would take money from other important things. But the government can also waste money that could have gone to better things such as helping the poor. (Gender unknown, 12-14)

When explaining why they had answered the way that they had, respondents provided a variety of explanations constructed from their perspective. Generally these only included one or two principle themes, such as their sense of inequality or reliance on a fact, or an expressed personal belief. Those reporting a 'Wealthy' background were comparatively most likely to say they had answered that way because they believe there was 'sufficient assistance and spending'. Although a high percentage of all respondents attributed their answer to 'government policy direction or priorities' those with a 'Poor' backgrounds were the most likely to answer in this way (21%).

Age also had a significant impact on how the respondent answered. Younger respondents were most likely to answer that they did not know, and tended to highlight the 'number of people in poverty' or cite 'a lack of relative change' to those in poverty. Older respondents on the other hand were more likely to raise the theme of inequality and talk about government spending in and of itself, commenting on the policies and priorities around this. This highlighted a subtle yet small difference; the older the respondent the more likely they were to apply a theoretical lens to their argument, whereas the younger the respondent the more direct they tended to be.

Do governments spend enough on poverty?



Children and young people’s rights and the government

Overwhelmingly respondents said that they believe the government has a responsibility to protect the rights of children and young people (90.4%), with only 26 respondents out of 1,102 saying that they do not (2.4%) believe they have a responsibility. Similarly a small number said that they themselves didn’t know (7.8%). In explaining why they had chosen this answer, respondents were most likely to state that the ‘government had a responsibility’ (29%). Alternatively they would discuss relevant rights frameworks (13%), the importance of rights for an ‘ethical society’ (12%) or the importance of these rights for their future (10%).

- “ Because these young people might not have anyone else to rely on. Government assistance allows for a stable society. (Gender unknown, 18-21)
- “ Because the government isn’t supposed to rule the country with an iron fist and not care about its people. (Gender unknown, 15-17)
- “ What’s the purpose of a government if not to protect its citizens. (Gender unknown, 15-17)
- “ Our government has a responsibility to look after the world’s future, which is us. (Gender unknown, 12-14)

The age of the respondent had some impact on how they answered. Again younger respondents, compared to the rest of the sample, were the most likely to answer that they ‘didn’t know’. However respondents across all age groups were more likely to say they ‘didn’t know’ rather than respond that the government did not have a responsibility to protect the rights of children and young people.

The importance of protecting rights for ‘Fairness’ was most often discussed by the youngest respondents aged 7-11 (12%). This reflected a prevalent feeling amongst respondents in this age group that children and young people are a vulnerable cohort (14%) and that rights help protect this vulnerability.

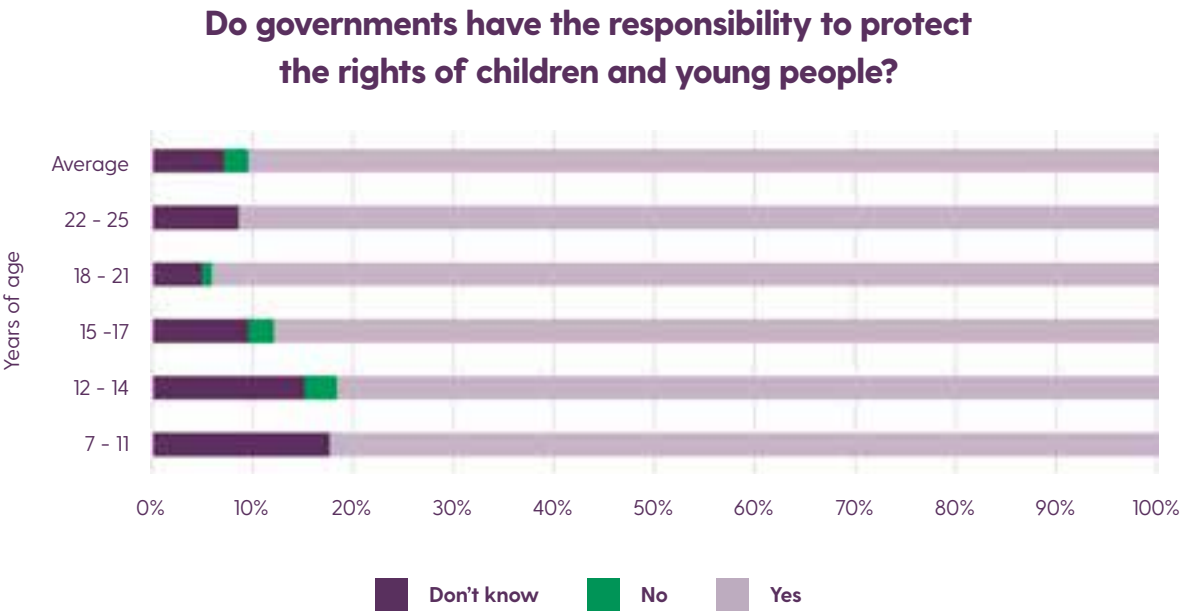
Younger respondents tended to have a stronger focus on rights in general, whilst older respondents were more likely to talk about rights in the sense of a rights framework such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

- “ Because it meets the obligations of the declaration of human rights and that’s as good of a moral guide as anything. (Gender unknown, 15-17)

Respondents’ backgrounds had a slightly measurable impact, with those from a ‘Wealthy’ family background marginally more likely to respond that governments didn’t have a responsibility or that they ‘didn’t know’ when compared to other groups.

Once again all respondents in these groups were more likely to state that they ‘didn’t know’ than that ‘the government didn’t have a responsibility’. In their explanation for why they had answered the way they did, some interesting trends could be seen. For example those with a ‘Poor’ background were twice as likely as those with a ‘Wealthy’ background to raise the purpose of ‘being safe’.

Those from a ‘Comfortably-off’ background, and to a greater extent those from a ‘Wealthy’ background were more likely to talk about rights, whether in the context of a rights framework, compared to those from a ‘Poor’ background who did not. Interestingly those that identified themselves as coming from a ‘Comfortably-off’ background were those most likely to talk about ‘fairness’ while those from a ‘Poor’ and ‘Wealthy’ background were more likely to talk about rights as being in the ‘interest of society’.



Young People's views are important

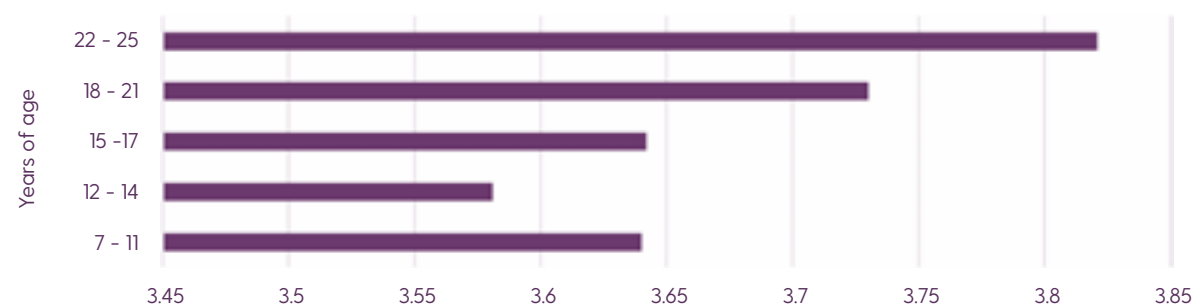
Respondents were asked how important it is that governments listen to views of children and young people when tackling poverty. They had the option to answer on a four point scale from 'Not important at all' to 'very important'. Overall 95% of respondents felt that it was important that governments listen to the views of children and young people, with a vast majority stating it was very important (71%). Respondents rated the importance highly with an overall score of (3.64) and less than 15 respondents stating that it was 'not important'.

Of concern, was a response from over a third of those who completed the survey (36%) who felt that it was 'not important at all'. They had answered due to 'personal experience' and provided some description of this. A similar proportion of respondents felt that due to a limitation on what their views and those of other young people could contribute they were not important. Despite this, a significant portion of respondents felt that children and young people do have quality views to contribute (7%).

Most often respondents felt it was important to listen to children and young people as they are integral to 'the future' (18%) and along with others have 'views and perspectives' (13%) and 'a right to be heard' (10%). A significant number of respondents also noted that children and young people who experience poverty and have a 'lived experience' (11%) of it are worthy of being heard.

Age had a slight influence on how important respondents felt that it was for governments to listen to the views of children and young people. Generally as the respondents became older (with the exception of 7-11 year olds) the more important they felt it was for governments to listen. This was associated with approximately a .1 increase in the mean score of importance per age group (3.58 for 12-14 year olds to 3.82 for 22-25 year olds). This higher level of importance for older respondents may in part be due to the benefit of hindsight and/or consideration of this question in relation to themselves or their peers.

Mean importance by age



Primary school aged respondents were also the most likely to say that it was not important for governments to listen to the views of children and young people, with nearly two thirds of those between the ages of 7 and 14 years responded that it wasn't important. This was reflected in the explanations, with young respondents comparatively more likely to have answered because they felt 'children and young people don't know enough'.

On the other hand older respondents were more likely to believe children and young people had views that could contribute something, as well as a right to make this contribution and have it heard.

- “ Children and young people are often excluded from conversations about tackling poverty despite the fact that they suffer just as much and even more than other members. (Gender unknown, 15-17)
- “ The future is young people, so we need to listen to their opinions. Young people are more aware to social issues than you think they are. (Gender unknown, 15-17)

The respondents' background also had some impact on the way in which they answered. Respondents who had identified as coming from a 'Poor' family background were more likely to say that it was important that governments listened to the views of children and young people. Those with a 'Comfortably-off' background and a 'Wealthy' background were more likely to say it wasn't. Generally, the less financially secure the family background, the more importance the respondent placed on governments in listening to the views of children and young people. Over the sample this was associated with a .1 shift in the mean importance per group from 3.53 for those with a 'Wealthy' background to 3.75 for those from a 'Poor' background'.

This shift was reflected in the explanations respondents gave, with those from a 'Wealthy' and 'Comfortably-off' background, 8 and 9 times more likely to have answered the way they did, than those from a 'Poor' background. This was possibly due to a view they held that children and young people had a 'limited ability to understand' poverty. Conversely those from a 'Poor' background were twice as likely as those from 'Wealthy' and 'Comfortably-off' backgrounds to state that children and young people had 'quality views'.



Endnotes

1 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2018), 'OECD Data: Poverty Rate'. Available: <https://data.oecd.org/inequality/poverty-rate.htm>

2 See: Davidson, P., Saunders, P., Bradbury, B. and Wong, M. (2018), Poverty in Australia, 2018. ACOSS/UNSW Poverty and Inequality Partnership Report No. 2, Sydney: ACOSS., Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2019), 'OECD.Stat: Social Protection and Well-being'. Available: <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=IDD>, Wilkins, R. (2016), 'The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey: Selected Findings from Waves 1 to 14', Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research. Available: https://melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/2155507/hilda-statreport-2016.pdf

3 South Australian Council of Social Service. (2018), 'Poverty rate twice as high in regional SA', Available: <https://www.sacoss.org.au/poverty-rate-twice-high-regional-sa>

4 McCrindle Research. (2019), 'Australia's household income and wealth distribution'. Available: <https://mccrindle.com.au/insights/blog/australias-household-income-wealth-distribution/>

5 Productivity Commission. (2018), 'Rising inequality? A stocktake of the evidence'. Available: <https://www.pc.gov.au/research/completed/rising-inequality/rising-inequality-highlights.pdf>

6 For Example: Boyden, J., Dawes, A., Dornan, P., & Tredoux, C. (2019). Tracing the Consequences of Child Poverty: Evidence from the Young Lives study in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. Bristol, UK; Chicago, IL, USA: Bristol University Press. Engle, P., & Black. (2008) The effect of poverty on child and child development and educational outcomes, Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences. Vol: 1136 (1), pp. 243-256.

7 See for example: Peterie, M et al. (2019) 'Does Australia have a 'job snob' problem?'. Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Available: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-08-06/does-australia-have-a-job-snob-problem/11387270>

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Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders People

The SA Commissioner for Children and Young People acknowledges the unique contribution of Aboriginal people's culture and heritage to South Australian society. Although participant details were not recorded specifically in relation to cultural identity or background, a significant number of children and young people who took part in this project identified as Aboriginal.

For the purposes of this report the term 'Aboriginal' encompasses South Australia's diverse language groups and also recognises those of Torres Strait Islander descent. The use of the term 'Aboriginal' in this way is not intended to imply equivalence between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, recognising the similarities that do exist.



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