



REPORT CARD

The wellbeing of young Australians

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Acknowledgements

The *Report Card: The wellbeing of young Australians* has been developed through the collective effort and expert guidance of many people. ARACY greatly appreciates the advice of *The Nest* Expert Reference Group and *The Nest* Steering Committee, and Professor Fiona Stanley AC, who kindly wrote the summary in this report card.

ARACY would like to acknowledge the providers of data, including the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER), the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) of the University of NSW, Mission Australia, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Having access to sound data is critical if we are to improve child and youth wellbeing. Continued support for existing data from the above institutions, and data sets such as the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) and the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, is crucial to tracking our long-term progress.

The *Report Card* was made possible by funding provided by the Estate of the Late James Simpson Love, managed by Perpetual. ARACY also greatly appreciates the Bupa Health Foundation's ongoing support as principal partner of *The Nest*.



Funding provided by the Estate of the Late James Simpson Love, managed by Perpetual



Principal partner, *The Nest*



Foreword

The context

The health and wellbeing of all children and youth in Australia requires continued efforts across the community. Many organisations and individuals hold significant influence over how our young people fare as they head into what, for many, is an uncertain future. A number of policies and programs, strategies and actions exist, and significant investment continues to be made in the future of our children and youth.

Yet, despite many positive steps being taken, there is evidence to suggest Australian children and youth are not faring as well as they could. In an international context, Australia can best be described as 'middle of the road'. Comparative indicators across OECD countries show that while we are doing well in some areas, others, such as child poverty, infant mortality, and youth participation in education or employment, are of concern.

The Nest framework

Partly in response to these trends, ARACY brought together researchers, policymakers, service providers, business, and community organisations with the aim of developing a National Action Plan for child and youth health and wellbeing. Known as *The Nest*, this ongoing initiative seeks to galvanise collaboration across sectors to advance evidence-based strategies, investments and practices to enhance child and youth wellbeing.

Crucially, *The Nest* as well as this report card, were shaped around the voices of children and youth, engaged through a national consultation of over 3700 people to hear their hopes, needs and desires. This consultation, along with the views of those working in the child and youth sectors, established a framework for measuring wellbeing among children and youth, known as Key Result Areas (KRAs). These KRAs are listed below.

Supportive systems and environments

Loved and safe

Material basics

Healthy

Learning

Participating

The Report Card

This report card provides a set of baseline indicators for each KRA – indicators that are strongly guided by the realities of ‘what wellbeing looks like’ for children and youth. The indicators provide a point-in-time snapshot of child and youth wellbeing in Australia, including how Aboriginal (Indigenous or Torres Strait Islander) young people are faring.

By looking at where we are now, using a set of consistent indicators, it is envisaged that unified approaches can be taken to ‘turn the curve’ to improve child and youth wellbeing. Subsequently, these indicators can be used to track and measure the progress of our actions over time. A common framework, with common measures and indicators, is one step for all levels of the community to work cohesively and with a common purpose to continue to improve the health and wellbeing of all children and youth.

The first *Report Card: The wellbeing of young Australians*, produced by ARACY in 2008, compared indicators of wellbeing for children and youth (aged 0–24 years) for the total Australian population, the Indigenous Australian population and international comparators.

The second *Report Card* builds on the first, in that it not only includes these parameters, but most importantly, reflects what young people and families say is important to them in improving child and youth wellbeing. It focuses on the outcomes we want from each of the KRAs, and is based on evidence gained from *The Nest* expert consultations and *The Nest Summit* (Phase 1), together with the views of young people and families themselves.



Indicator development, data sources and limitations

The *Report Card* presents a framework for understanding the health and wellbeing of young Australians. There are limitations, however, in the current available data. Providing a holistic picture at a point-in-time across such an array of measures creates challenges. For example, we do not have comprehensive data sets on critical areas, such as social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people, comparative data for children with disability, an agreed poverty measure or index, and agreed measures of family functioning or participation.

Comparative data in this report is constructed by using data from the most recent reputable source for the most appropriate age cohort. International, Indigenous and non-Indigenous comparisons may be measured on different timescales and for different age groups and, in some cases, for slightly different concepts. As a result, the *Report Card* contains a variety of reference periods and age groupings. The accompanying technical report contains full details on all data sources.

Further, while the *Report Card* aims to create a positive frame, some of the available indicators are ‘negative’ or ‘deficit’ measures. The need to have measures for important concepts such as positive family functioning, positive mental health, and social and emotional development is balanced by the realities of the available data, therefore negative measures such as family conflict, suicide rates, psychological distress and violence need to be used in this report. In some cases, there is no data for important indicators, and the *Report Card* highlights this.

The frame of the KRAs gives us an outcomes or ‘end-point’ focus. Where outcome indicators are not available, however, process indicators are used. The lines between process and outcomes can sometimes be blurred. However, process is an important input to achieving outcomes, so focus on indicators such as preschool attendance, for example, is important as are the indicators of the learning outcomes themselves, such as achievement in reading and maths.

Finally, in recent years, considerable progress has been made in developing measures that can be used to assess the wellbeing of children and youth. A total of 19 Headline Indicators for children’s health, development and wellbeing have been developed by AIHW and endorsed by Ministerial Councils for health, community and disability services, and education. In addition, the ABS has produced a selection of statistical evidence called *Measuring Australians Progress* (MAP), developed to answer the question “Is life in Australia getting better?” The indicators within this report card, which are also Headline or MAP Indicators, are marked with an ‘*’.

The international picture

Australia is one of 34 member countries of the OECD. The OECD includes most of Europe, North America, and advanced Asian, Latin American and Oceanic economies.

The OECD collates data from these countries in relation to a number of economic, social, and environmental measures, providing a comparative and time-series body of evidence.

While there are 34 member countries of the OECD, data for measures used in this report is often unavailable for all 34 countries. Australia is ranked against those countries for which there is data and the denominator in the ranking varies for this reason.

Other internationally comparable data is also incorporated where appropriate. There is a general lack of comparative OECD data for Australia, because we currently do not participate in some international child and youth wellbeing surveys (for example, the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey).

Overall, Australia performs moderately in relation to child and youth health and wellbeing indicators compared with other OECD countries.

Australia is ranked in the top third of OECD countries for around one-quarter of the indicators (12 out of 46 indicators).

Australia leads the world in areas such as low youth smoking rates, some educational and employment outcomes, and environmental conditions at home.

Australia is ranked in the middle third of OECD countries for almost one-half of indicators (20 out of 46 indicators).

Many health indicators are in the middle third, as well as aspects of love and safety and some measures of material basics.

Australia is ranked in the bottom third of OECD countries for around one-quarter of the indicators (14 out of 46 indicators).

Areas of concern include jobless families, infant mortality, incidence of diabetes and asthma, young people in education, 3-5 year olds in preschool and carbon dioxide emissions.

Top Third	OECD Rank	Middle Third	OECD Rank	Bottom Third	OECD Rank
Being loved and safe					
Living with both parents	8/29	Community safety	13/25	Child abuse deaths	21/29
Having material basics					
20 – 24 years of age employed or in education	9/32	Overcrowded homes	9/26	15 – 19 years of age employed or in education	21/31
Youth unemployed	9/34	Educational resource deprivation	21/34	Jobless families	22/25
		Internet access	12/31	Income inequality	26/34
		Child poverty	16/29		
Being healthy					
Body dissatisfaction (young women)	2/10	Low birthweight	13/34	Infant mortality	22/31
Youth smoking	4/28	Dental decay	12/31	Incidence of diabetes	14/16
		Overweight boys	13/28	Incidence of asthma	14/16
		Overweight girls	17/28	Vaccination Pertussis	32/34
		Vaccination Measles	22/34	Vaccination Hep B	19/23
		Youth suicide rates	20/33		
		Deaths (all causes)	19/29		
		Teenage pregnancy	22/34		
		Injury deaths	22/34		
		Use of cannabis	14/26		
Learning (Reading Maths Science)					
Parental literacy activities at preschool	2/22	Parental numeracy activities at preschool	6/15	3 – 5 years of age in early learning or preschool	30/34
Tertiary qualifications	3/25	Maths performance (Year 4)	12/25	15 – 19 years of age in education	25/31
Reading performance (15 years)	6/34	Maths performance (Year 8)	8/15	Reading performance (Year 4)	19/24
		Science performance (Year 8)	8/15	Science performance (Year 4)	18/25
Participation (membership of group)					
Group membership	5/20				
Member of charitable / humanitarian group	4/20				
Member of sport or cultural association	5/20				
Supportive systems and environment					
Environmental conditions at home	1/24	Child costs	16/27	Carbon dioxide emissions	29/31

Identifying and measuring wellbeing

Drawing on *The Nest* consultation of over 3700 young people and families, as well as *The Nest Summit* (Phase 1), a number of themes emerged within each KRA that were important to children, youth and families.

These themes were used as the basis for identifying indicators for the international data comparisons as well as the Australian indicators.

When asked "what is important for children and young people to have a good life?", responses in *The Nest* consultation broadly encompassed five main areas ...

Aspects of love, security and safety were most prominent, encompassing family and friends, stability, and connections with others.

Related to this were the provision of material basics, such as food and shelter, and money.

Health was noted as important and involved physical health and nutrition as well as mental health and self esteem.

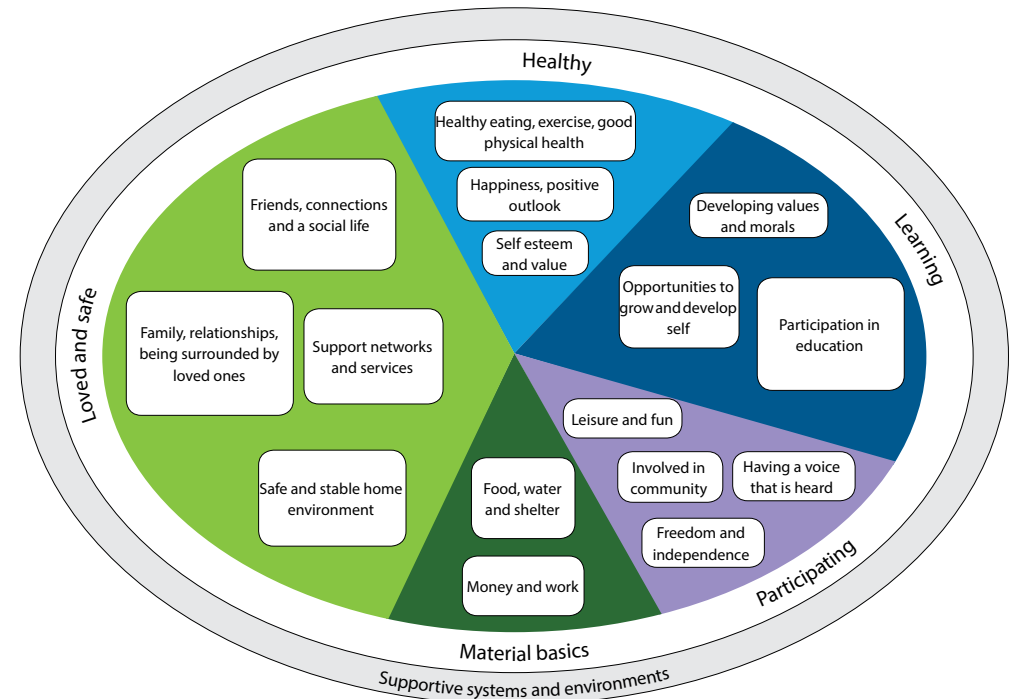
Elements of learning were considered important in terms of academic participation and achievement; however, beyond this was a broader belief in the value of self-development for wellbeing.

This included having opportunities to participate, to have a voice and be involved in the community.

Sitting across these areas, and noted by the child and youth sectors, was the presence of supportive systems and environments for child and youth wellbeing, such as using joined up services, cohesive strategies and a secure economic and environmental context.

Detailed findings from *The Nest* consultation are published in the consultation report, available at: thenestproject.org.au/the-consultation

Areas and themes contributing to 'a good life'



The five Key Result Areas (KRAs) were identified by children, youth and families. The themes associated with each KRA form a basis for the indicators included in this report card.

What does being loved and safe mean?

Being loved and safe embraces positive family relationships and connections with others, along with personal and community safety.

Children and youth who are loved and safe are confident, have a strong sense of self-identity, and have high self-esteem. They form secure attachments, have pro-social peer connections, and positive adult role models or mentors are present in their life.

Children and youth who are loved and safe are resilient: they can withstand life challenges, and respond constructively to setbacks and unanticipated events.

Conflict with family members is a strong concern for nearly one-quarter of young people. There is a general lack of data on positive family functioning.

More than one in 10 parents use harsh parenting practices at least half the time when dealing with their 4-5 year olds.

Typically, most young people appear to have essential connections and links with others. The majority of young people reported they have somewhere to turn for advice or support.

Community safety perceptions are fairly low, though Australia ranks in the middle third of OECD countries for this.

The number of children in care is rising and the rate is significantly higher for Indigenous children.

Indigenous young people are also highly represented in the juvenile justice system.

Family conflict and hostility

Harsh parenting behaviour

Positive peer relationships

Trusted communications with parents and peers

Parental perceptions of neighbourhood characteristics

Out-of-home care

Detention of children and youth

KEY

Indigenous data:

Data directly comparable with overall population

Data not directly comparable with overall population

OECD rankings:

Australia ranks in top third of OECD countries

Australia ranks in middle third of OECD countries

Australia ranks in bottom third of OECD countries

Latest measure

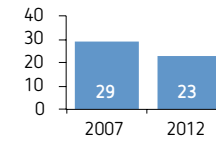
Trend

Indigenous data

AUS ranking for OECD equivalent indicator

% 11-24 yrs extremely or very concerned about family conflict

23%



% 11-24 yrs extremely or very concerned about family conflict (2011)

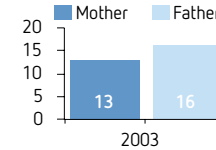
28%

n/a

% of parents of 4-5 yr old using harsh parenting practices half the time or more

Mother 13%

Father 16%

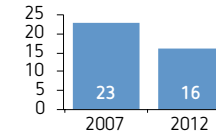


n/a

n/a

% 11-24 yrs concerned with bullying or emotional abuse

16%



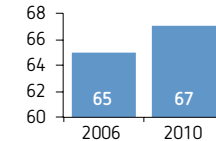
% 11-24 yrs concerned with bullying or emotional abuse (2011)

23%

n/a

% 18-24 yrs with 3 or more friends they can confide in

67%



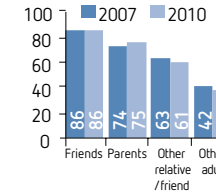
n/a

n/a

% 11-24 yrs turning to others for advice and support

Turn to friends 86%

Turn to parents 75%



% 11-24 yrs turning to friends (2010)

80%

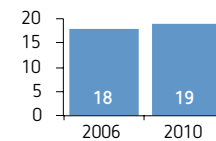
n/a

% 11-24 yrs turning to parents (2010)

66%

% adults feeling unsafe/very unsafe in their local area at night

19%



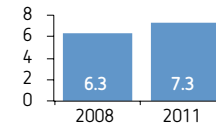
% adults feeling unsafe/ very unsafe in local area at night (2008)

26%

13/25

No of children in out-of-home care (per 1000)

7.3



Children in-out-of-home care (per 1000) (2011)

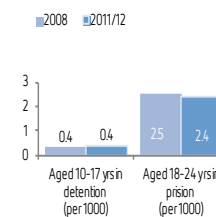
51.7

n/a

In detention / in prison on an averageday (per 1000)

10-17 in detention 0.4

18-24 in prison 2.4



No. of 10-17 yrs in detention (per 1000) (2011)

4

n/a

No. of 18-24 yrs in prison (per 1000) (2009)

26.1

What does having material basics mean?

Children and youth who have material basics have access to the things they need to live a 'normal life'. They live in adequate and stable housing, with adequate clothing, healthy food, and clean water, and the materials they need to participate in education and training pathways.

The absence of material basics can also be understood as living in poverty. Having material basics is important, because children who experience poverty early in life are at risk of ongoing disadvantage.

KEY

Indigenous data:

- Data directly comparable with overall population
- Data not directly comparable with overall population

OECD rankings:

- Australia ranks in top third of OECD countries
- Australia ranks in middle third of OECD countries
- Australia ranks in bottom third of OECD countries

There is a significant minority of Australian families and children who are living in poverty without access to the material basics that are vital to support a healthy and safe life.

Over one in six children lived at or below the poverty line in 2010. Rates of deprivation have slightly improved although not for the most disadvantaged groups. Sole parents have the highest rates of deprivation at twice the national average.

Inequality has increased in Australia and we compare very poorly to other OECD countries.

The percentage of young children in jobless families is increasing, and is high when compared to other OECD countries.

The unemployment rate for young Australians is increasing at more than double the overall rate. The rate is even higher for young Indigenous Australians.

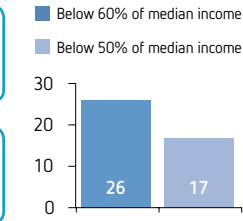
A significant proportion of young people are not involved in education or employment.

Poverty

% 0-15 yrs in relative poverty (less than 50% national median income and less than 60% national median income)

Less than 50% of median income
17%

Less than 60% of median income
26%



% 4-14 yrs in households that ran out of money for basic living expenses (2008)

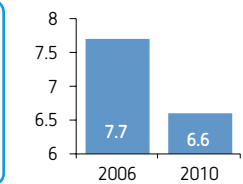
31%

16/29

Deprivation

Mean deprivation rate for households with children aged less than 18 yrs

6.6



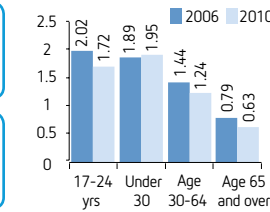
n/a

n/a

Absolute deprivation score

Age 17-24 yrs
1.72

Sole parents
2.94



Absolute deprivation score (2010)

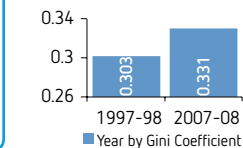
2.90

n/a

Income inequality

Gap between low-income households and households in the middle income distribution (Gini coefficient)

0.331



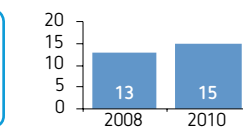
n/a

26/34

Parental employment

% 0-14 yrs in jobless families *

15%



% 0-14 yrs in jobless families (2009)

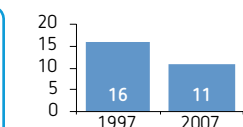
45%

22/25

Youth unemployment

% 12-24 yrs in jobless families *

11%



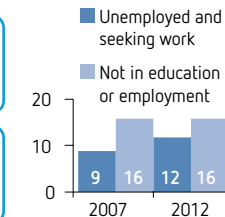
% 12-24 yrs in jobless families (2007)

35%

% 15-24 yrs unemployed / inactive

Unemployed
12%

Inactive
16%



% 15-24 yrs unemployed (2011)

24%

9/34

% 18-24 yrs inactive (2011)

40%

15-19 yrs 21/31

20-24 yrs 9/32

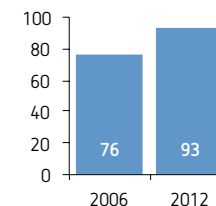
For young people, access to material basics supports them to make effective transitions to adulthood: they are able to secure housing and live independently, and receive an income that enables them to provide for themselves.

The majority of children have access to the internet at home. This is an increasingly important indicator of material basics and social inclusion.

Internet access

% 0-14 yrs with access to internet at home *

93%



n/a

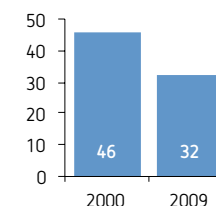
12/31

More than a million Australians on low incomes are experiencing housing stress. Housing affordability is one of the biggest social issues facing Australia and is a major factor in the number of families and children who are homeless or living in poverty.

Educational deprivation

No. of 15yr olds with less than 4 educational possessions (per 1000)

32



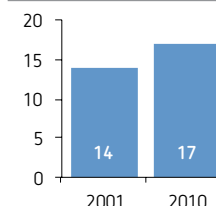
n/a

21/34

Stable housing

% households spending more than 30% of gross income on housing

17%



n/a

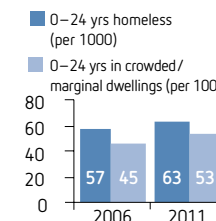
n/a

Children and youth who are homeless experience significant negative social and health consequences including disrupted schooling, high rates of mental health problems, and engagement in risk-taking behaviours. They also have a significantly increased risk of long-term homelessness.

Housing amenity

No. of 0-24 yrs homeless or in marginal dwellings (per 10,000)

Homeless
63



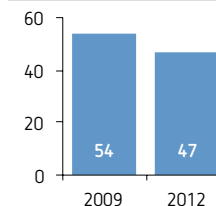
n/a

n/a

Marginal
53

% of those accessing Specialist Homelessness Services aged 0-24 yrs

47%



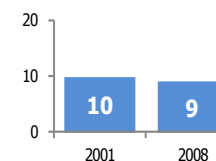
57%

n/a

% accessing services aged 0-24 yrs (2012)

% 15-24 yrs in overcrowded housing

9%



27%

9/26

% 15-24 yrs in overcrowded housing (2006)

KEY

Indigenous data:

Data directly comparable with overall population

Data not directly comparable with overall population

OECD rankings:

Australia ranks in top third of OECD countries

Australia ranks in middle third of OECD countries

Australia ranks in bottom third of OECD countries

What does being healthy mean?

Healthy children and youth have their physical, developmental, psychosocial and mental health needs met. They achieve their optimal developmental trajectories. They have access to services which support their optimum growth and development, and have access to preventative measures to redress any emerging health or developmental concerns.

Low birthweight rates for Indigenous Australian infants are significantly higher than non-Indigenous Australians.

It is critical infants are protected against preventable disease early in life. Most children are being vaccinated against major preventable childhood disease, however, not all.

A significant proportion of young people are overweight or obese. Many young people are inactive and do not eat recommended levels of fruit and vegetables.

One in 10 children do not meet the physical health developmental milestones on entry to school.

The rate of vulnerability for Indigenous children is more than double that of the general population.

Poor oral health is an indicator of future health problems. Around two-thirds of 12 year olds are free from dental decay.

KEY

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Low birthweight

Immunisation

Physical health

Dental health

Latest measure

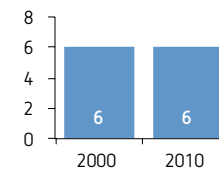
Trend

Indigenous data

AUS ranking for OECD equivalent indicator

% live born babies with low birthweight *

6%



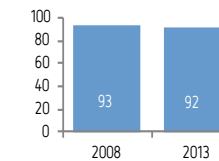
Live born babies with low birthweight (2010)

12%

13/34

% children at 2 yrs fully immunised *

92%



% children at 2 yrs fully immunised (2011)

93%

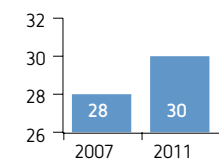
Hep B 19/23

Measles 22/34

Pertussis 29/33

% 5-24 yrs overweight or obese *

30%



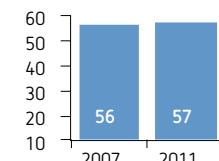
% 15-24 yrs overweight or obese (2008)

37%

13-17/28

% 15-24 yrs with sedentary or low levels of activity

57%



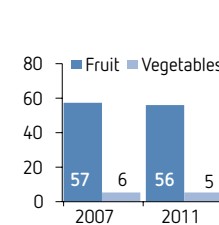
% 15-24 yrs meet physical activity guidelines (2004)

14%

n/a

% 5-24 yrs meeting recommended daily fruit and vegetable intake

Fruit 54%



% 1-14 yrs ate at least one serve fruit daily (2008)

59%

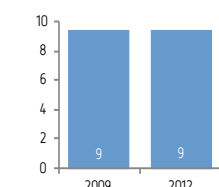
% 1-14 yrs ate at least one serve veg daily (2008)

53%

n/a

% children in first year of school with developmental vulnerability (physical health)*

9%



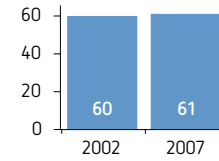
% in first yr with developmental vulnerability (physical health)

22%

n/a

% 12 yr olds free from dental decay *

61%



% 12 yr olds free from dental decay (2002)

48%

12/31

Mental health is a key aspect of what it means to be healthy. Having good mental health is important for all age groups, including in infancy.

In addition to mental health, other risk factors and behaviours help define the picture of the health and wellbeing of children and youth. Preventing ill health and intervening early when illness emerges is important. There is a need to progress more evidence-informed preventative programs, policies and practices for young people.

Suicide rates are low and have been decreasing, however, suicide remains a leading cause of death for young people, second only to motor vehicle accidents.

Indigenous rates of psychological distress and suicide are close to three times the general population.

Injury is a leading cause of death among Australian children and youth and most injuries are preventable. Australia compares relatively poorly to other OECD countries in preventing injuries.

Australia fares well when compared to other OECD nations on rates of youth smoking but less favourably for use of illicit drugs.

No directly comparable data is available for OECD countries, however, youth violence in Australia appears to be at the higher end of comparisons relative to measures reported for other countries.

We have a limited understanding of how young people are faring with regard to mental health and social and emotional wellbeing due to a lack of data.

Psychological distress

Suicide

Injury deaths

Teen fertility

Substance use

Youth violence

Social and emotional wellbeing

KEY

Indigenous data:

- Data directly comparable with overall population
- Data not directly comparable with overall population

OECD rankings:

- Australia ranks in top third of OECD countries
- Australia ranks in middle third of OECD countries
- Australia ranks in bottom third of OECD countries

Latest measure

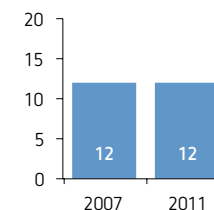
Trend

Indigenous data

AUS ranking for OECD equivalent indicator

% 18-24 yrs with high / very high levels of psychological distress

12%



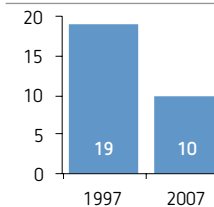
% 16-24 yrs with high / very high levels of psychological distress (2008)

31%

n/a

15-24 yrs suicide rate (deaths per 100,000)

10



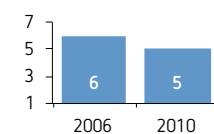
15-24 yrs suicide rate (deaths per 100,000) (2007)

33

20/33

0-14 yrs injury deaths* (deaths per 100,000)

5



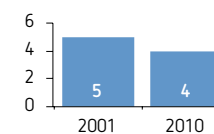
0-14 yrs injury deaths (deaths per 100,000) (2010)

15

22/34

% teenage women who gave birth*

4%



% teenage women who gave birth (2010)

4%

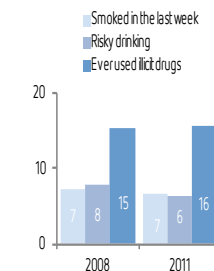
22/34

% 12-17 yrs engaged in substance use

Smoked recently
7%

Risky drinking
6%

Used illicit drugs
16%



% 15-24 yrs smoke daily (2008)

40%

4/28

% 18-24 yrs drink at risky levels (2008)

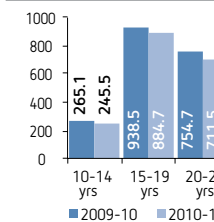
16%

14/26

* No suitable Indigenous data for drug use

Rate of offence of acts intended to cause injury per 100,000 population

15-19 yrs
887.4



n/a

n/a

Social and emotional wellbeing at 8-12 yrs (the way a person thinks and feels about themselves and others)

No measure available in Australia

What does learning mean?

Early engagement and participation in learning and education is important for the development of children and youth.

Learning is a continuous process throughout life. Children and youth learn through a variety of formal and informal experiences within the classroom and more broadly in their home and in the community.

Effective learning and educational attainment is fundamental to future opportunities, both financially and socially.

The majority of Australian children attend an early childhood education and care program in the year before they begin primary school, however, rates are lower than those of other OECD countries.

There is a significant gap in levels of language and cognition developmental vulnerability between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children.

Parental engagement in children's learning and the home environment are among the most important influences on a child's learning and development. These measures provide some indication of parental engagement, in the absence of a national parental engagement data set.

Australian students are not performing well for Year 4 reading, writing and numeracy when compared to other OECD countries.

Early childhood education participation

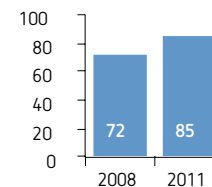
Early childhood developmental vulnerability

Parental engagement in children's learning

Child performance in reading, maths and science

% attending preschool or preschool program before starting school*

85%

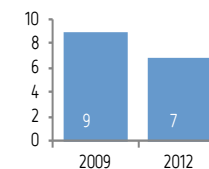


n/a

30/34

% children at first year of school with developmental vulnerability (language and cognition)*

7%



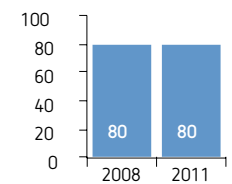
% children with developmental vulnerability (language and cognition) (2012)

22%

n/a

% parents read from book to child 0-2 yrs in past week

80%



% parents of 4-14 yrs read, told story or listened to child read in past week (2008)

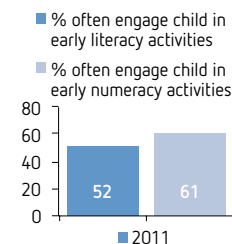
67%

n/a

% parents often engaging pre-school children in literacy and numeracy

Literacy
52%

Numeracy
61%



n/a

2/22

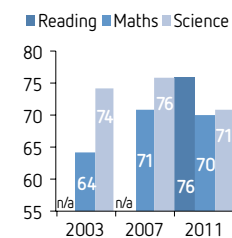
6/15

% above the TIMSS and PIRLS low benchmark performance in reading, maths and science (Year 4)

Reading
76%

Maths
70%

Science
71%



52%

Reading

19/24

45%

Maths

12/25

47%

Science

18/25

KEY

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Children and youth who are learning participate in and experience education that enables them to reach their full potential, and maximise their life opportunities.

When compared to other OECD countries, most Australian 15-year-old students are performing above the OECD averages for reading. Results are slightly lower for maths and science.

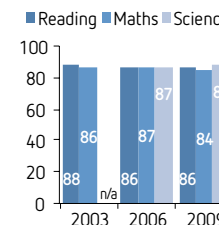
Youth performance in reading, maths and science

% at level 2 and above performance in reading, maths and science for 15 year olds

Reading
87%

Maths
84%

Science
88%



61%

Reading

6/34

60%

Maths

8/15

65%

Science

8/15

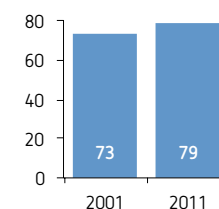
The majority of Australian youth are participating in education, however, rates of participation are very low for Indigenous youth.

Australian rates of youth participation in education are below those of many other OECD countries.

Retention, completion, and participation in education

Apparent retention rate Year 7/8 to Year 12 (%) *

79%



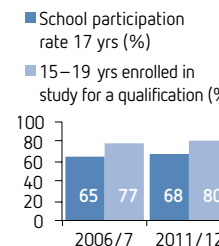
Apparent retention rate Year 7/8 to Year 12 (2011)

49%

n/a

Youth participation in education

School at 17
68%



% 15-24 yrs currently studying (2008)

41%

% 15-19 yrs enrolled in study for a qualification (2008)

60%

25/31

KEY

Indigenous data:

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Data not directly comparable with overall population

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Australia ranks in middle third of OECD countries

Australia ranks in bottom third of OECD countries

What does participating mean?

Participating includes involvement with peers and the community, being able to have a voice and say on matters, and, increasingly, access to technology for social connections.

In practice, participating means children and youth are listened to, are supported in expressing their views, their views are taken into account and they are involved in decision-making processes that affect them.

It is noted there is a general lack of data on children's participation with available data mainly focused on the 18-25 age range. Much more work is needed to identify indicators and data sources that adequately reflect this KRA.

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Many young people don't feel they are able to have their say within the community all of the time.

Not all eligible young people are enrolled to vote.

Young people's registration to vote is the only available measure of civic participation. Engagement in voting is an important mechanism available to young people to express their opinion and influence decision making.

Young people are involved in sporting activities at higher rates than their involvement in cultural activities.

Australia fares well on involvement rates in comparison to other OECD countries.

Feeling able to have a say

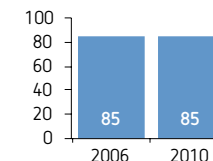
Voting enrolment

Engagement through technology

Involvement in sporting, cultural and social activities and groups

% 18-24 yrs feel able to have a say among family and friends on important issues all or most of the time

85%

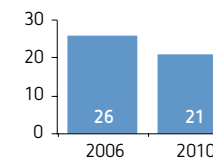


n/a

n/a

% 18-24 yrs feel able to have a say within community on important issues all or most of the time

21%



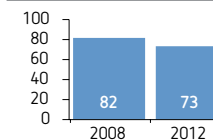
% 15-24 yrs feel able to have say in community most or all of time (2008)

17%

n/a

% 18-25 yrs enrolled to vote

73%

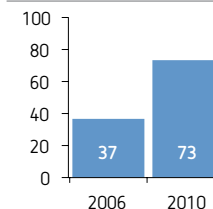


n/a

n/a

% 18-24 yrs spent time in Internet social activity in past 3 months

73%

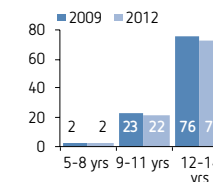


n/a

n/a

% 5-14 yrs having a mobile phone

29%

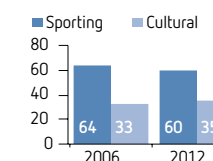


n/a

n/a

% 5-14 yrs involved in organised sporting / cultural activity in past year

60%



% 4-14 yrs involved in sporting, social or community activities in past year (2008)

94%

5/20

% 18-24 yrs participated in groups in past year

63%



% 15-24 yrs involved in sporting, social or community activities in past year (2008)

93%

5/20

Supportive systems and environments

A supportive service system for children and youth focuses on achievement of outcomes based on a common agenda, use of best available evidence in achieving these outcomes, using a shared measurement system to measure impact, collaboration through mutually reinforcing activities, and a focus on prevention, as well as ensuring ready access to treatment.

The wider social, cultural, and physical environment in which children and youth develop is a major determinant for their current and future wellbeing. However, more work needs to be undertaken to adequately measure the impact of these influences.

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While most young people are able to receive support when they really need it, access to services remains an issue for a significant proportion of young people.

The importance of investment in child development in the early years is well documented. While parents are the key influence, early learning centres also benefit children and families. Systemic barriers such as availability and cost of childcare may prevent greater access to services.

The quality of the physical environment is a critical determinant of the wellbeing of current and future generations, and is one of the important issues of concern to young people.

Australia's carbon dioxide emissions have risen in the last decade, and are ranked almost last compared to OECD countries on this measure.

Service systems driven by common goals and sound evidence of 'what works' will better meet the needs of young people and make better use of available funds.

Development of these indicators will drive common efforts, assist agencies to measure their impact against common goals and ultimately lead to improved outcomes.

Service access

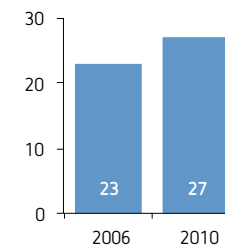
Childcare system

Environmental issues

Quality service systems

% 18-24 yrs had difficulty accessing support services

27%



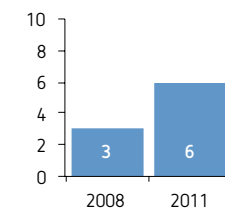
% 15-24 yrs able to get support in time of crisis outside the household (2008)

88%

n/a

% parents of 0-12 yrs currently requiring additional preschool or formal care

6%

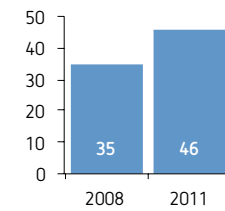


n/a

n/a

Median usual weekly cost of childcare (\$)

46

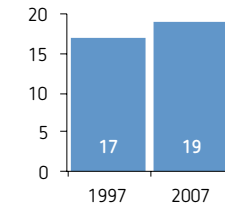


n/a

16/27

CO₂ emissions per capita (tonnes / person)

19

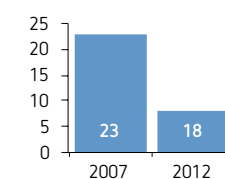


n/a

29/31

% 11-24 yrs rating the environment as one of the most important issues facing Australia

18%



% 11-24 yrs rating environment as one of most important issues facing Australia (2011)

14%

n/a

Number of child / youth / family services using a common framework to measure impact

No data collected in Australia

Number of agencies using best available evidence to guide practice, programs and policy

No data collected in Australia

Report Card summary: Professor Fiona Stanley, AC

I have built my working life on the principle that if we want to change – to improve – we need to measure and report on the things we believe are most important for a successful Australian society. Few would disagree that one of the most important of these are the environments we can influence to help parents and others ensure our children have the opportunity to be healthy and to develop well.

Following on from the influential first *Report Card*, produced by ARACY in 2008, the second *Report Card* brings together up-to-date data, comparing us to the best in the world, and highlighting areas that need our urgent attention. This report card also includes valuable input from young people themselves, compiled through *The Nest* project, which underlines the health and wellbeing issues they want to be acknowledged, and addressed.

Are we getting better? The second *Report Card* tells us we have improved in some parameters. It is great to see fewer youth in Australia smoking and more employed. However, in only 26% of the indicators was Australia in the top third of the OECD countries. This means for more than 74% of them, we were in the middle or below. The 30% of indicators where we are in the bottom third, compared with other countries, are ones that are of considerable concern, as they have lifelong impacts.

I am alarmed that, in spite of opportunities, we are in the lowest third for whooping cough vaccination! Do we need an epidemic to frighten parents into vaccinating? Teenage pregnancy is falling but falling faster in other countries. The data under the Learning KRA shows we must really take a serious look at early childhood education and our science and maths outcomes in school. Why are fewer Australian youth, particularly young Aboriginal people, completing school compared with other jurisdictions?

Looking behind the data, are the rising rates of inequalities across Australian society driving the negatives and dulling the positives? Where is our fair go?

This is a wake-up call for us as a nation, to stop being complacent. We must work together to resolve these issues. The needs of our children and youth are well beyond the capacity of any one government to address. Federal, state and local governments, along with business, schools, health systems, non-government agencies, parents, the general community, as well as young people, will make a difference if we work together toward a shared agenda. This collective action, enabled through an evidence-based national plan, is essential if we are to turn the curve on child and youth wellbeing in Australia.

Thank you ARACY for delivering another important report card grounded in measurable data. We celebrate our children doing well and delight in that. But we want more for our kids – and the second *Report Card* is a great way to start influencing positive change.



For more information on how you can be involved with the
Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth
Visit: aracy.org.au Phone: (02) 6248 2400 Email: enquires@aracy.org.au

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ISBN: 978-1-921352-92-8

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