

GENERATION Z: LIFE AFTER COVID

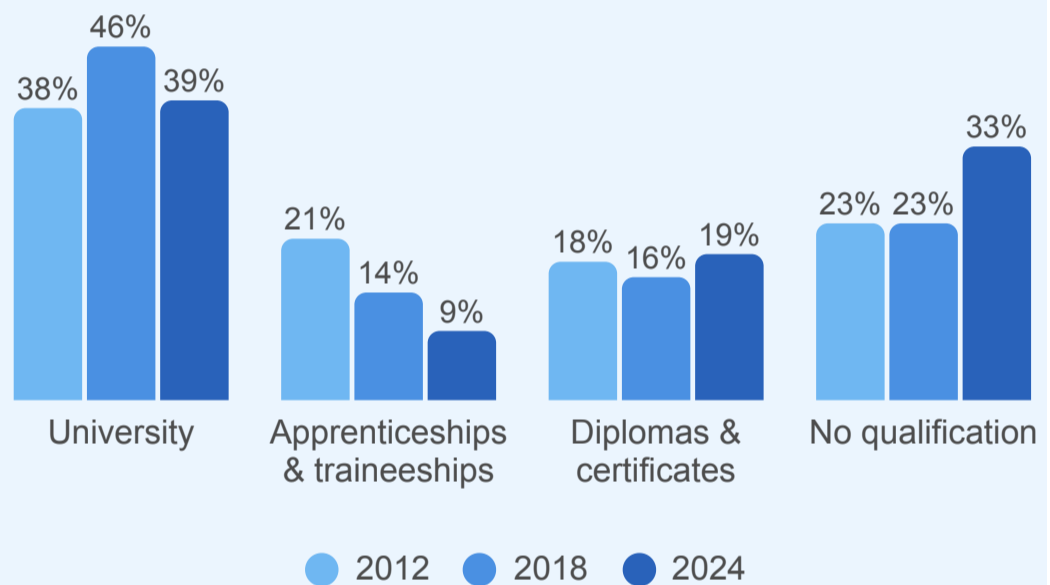
The Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) follow young Australians from the age of 15 up until they are 25, exploring young people's experiences as they leave school, begin post-school study, and enter the workforce. *Generation Z: life after COVID* compares the experiences of young Australians surveyed at age 24 in 2012, 2018 and 2024. Together, these results show how the lives of young Australians have changed over the past decade.

AGE 24 IN 2024

WORK & STUDY

HIGHEST POST-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION

Compared with earlier cohorts, fewer young people hold post-school qualifications. This decline reflects falling apprenticeship completions and a recent drop in university completions – likely linked to the impacts of COVID-19 lockdowns and delayed study pathways. The 2018 spike in university completions may reflect changes to the expansion of the university system earlier in the decade.



ENGAGEMENT BY HIGHEST QUALIFICATION

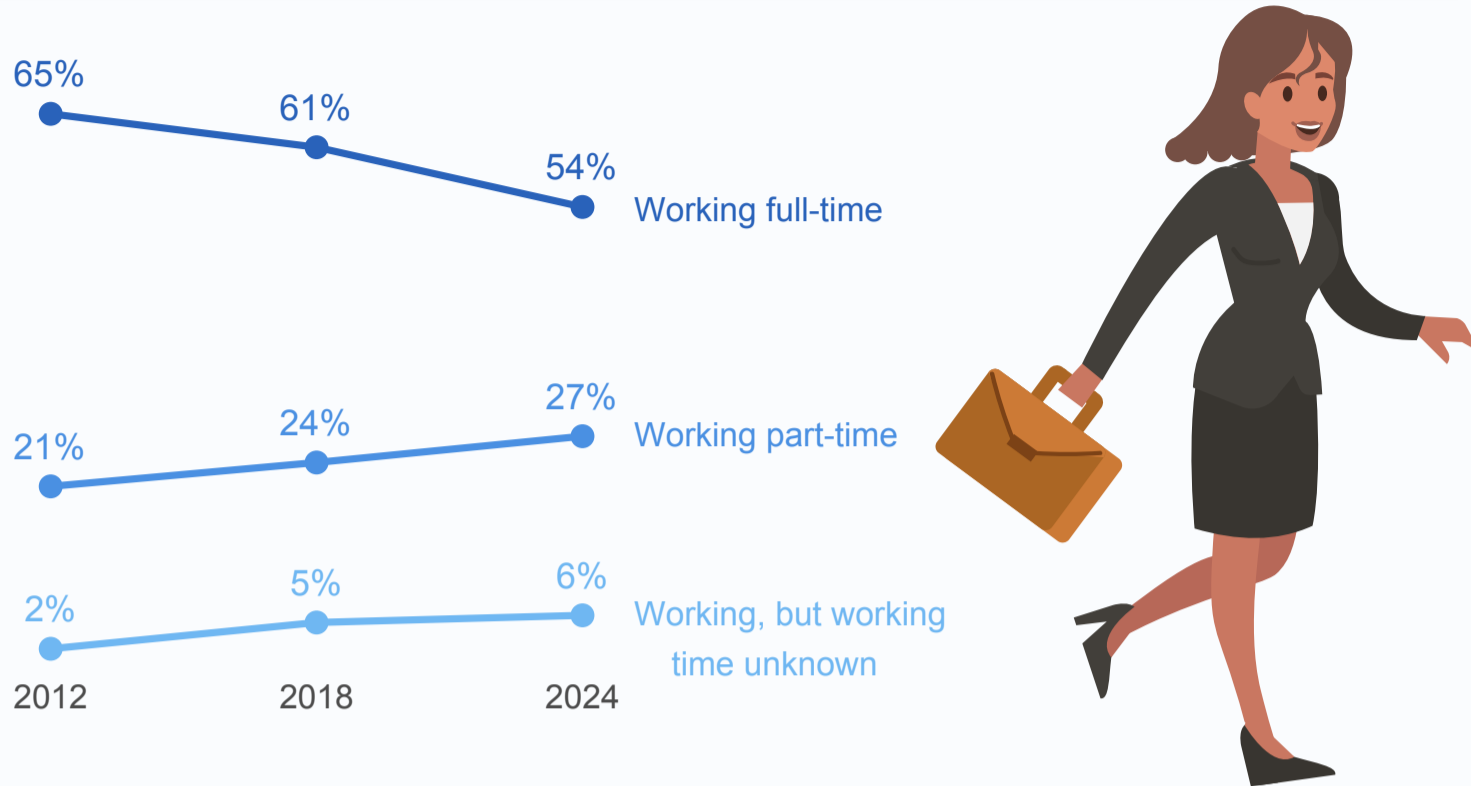


Apprenticeships and bachelor degrees lead to the strongest employment rates, while diploma holders and those without a qualification are more likely to combine work and study at age 24 than their peers.

	University	Apprenticeships & traineeships	Diplomas	Certificates	No qualification
Working	79%	82%	58%	61%	57%
Working & studying	12%	11%	30%	18%	27%
Studying	3%	1%	7%	6%	5%
Not working or studying	6%	6%	5%	15%	12%

WORK

Full-time work among young people is down, with more in part-time roles. This may reflect fewer apprenticeships and higher skill requirements, as well as broader changes in the types of work available. The growing share uncertain about their hours may highlight shifts in the nature of work.



TOP BARRIERS TO FINDING WORK FOR THE UNEMPLOYED



Lack of experience is the biggest hurdle for young jobseekers, ahead of confidence and training gaps.

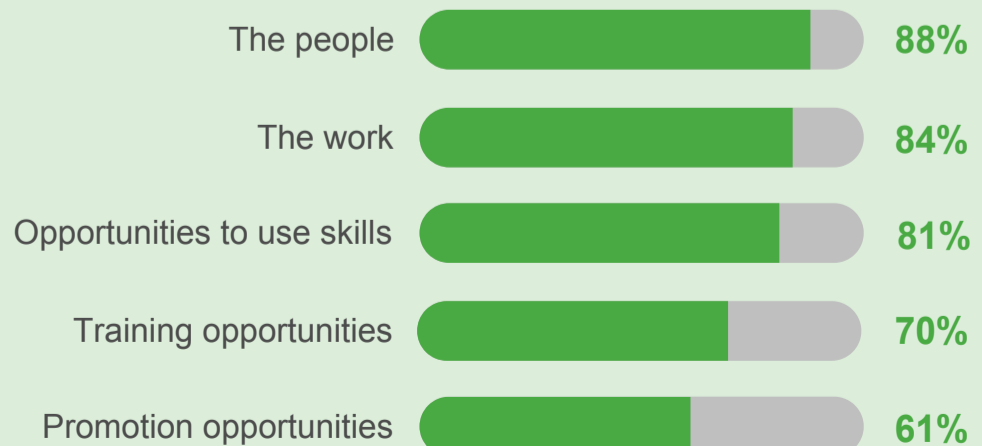
EXPERIENCE AT WORK

JOB SATISFACTION

Young workers report high satisfaction with colleagues, their work, and opportunities to use their skills.



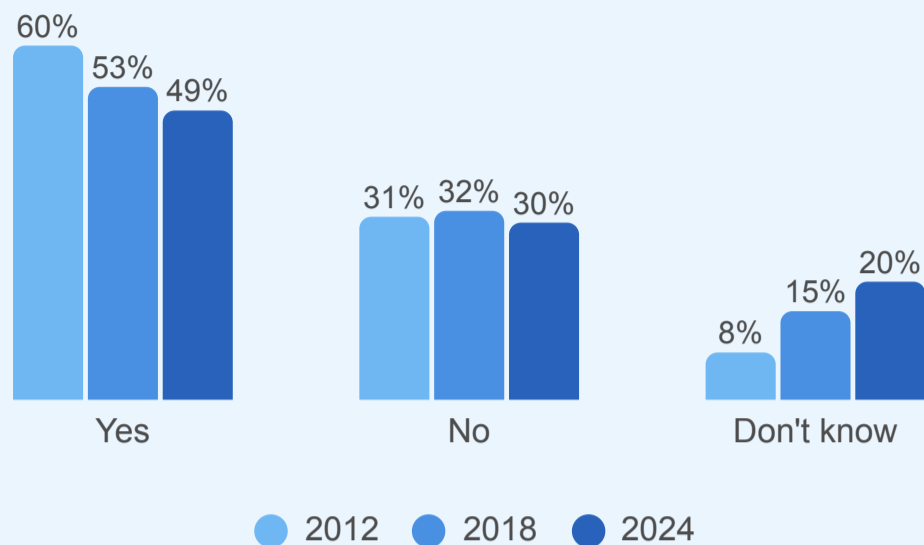
However, satisfaction drops when it comes to training and promotion opportunities.



YOUNG PEOPLE IN THEIR CHOSEN CAREER

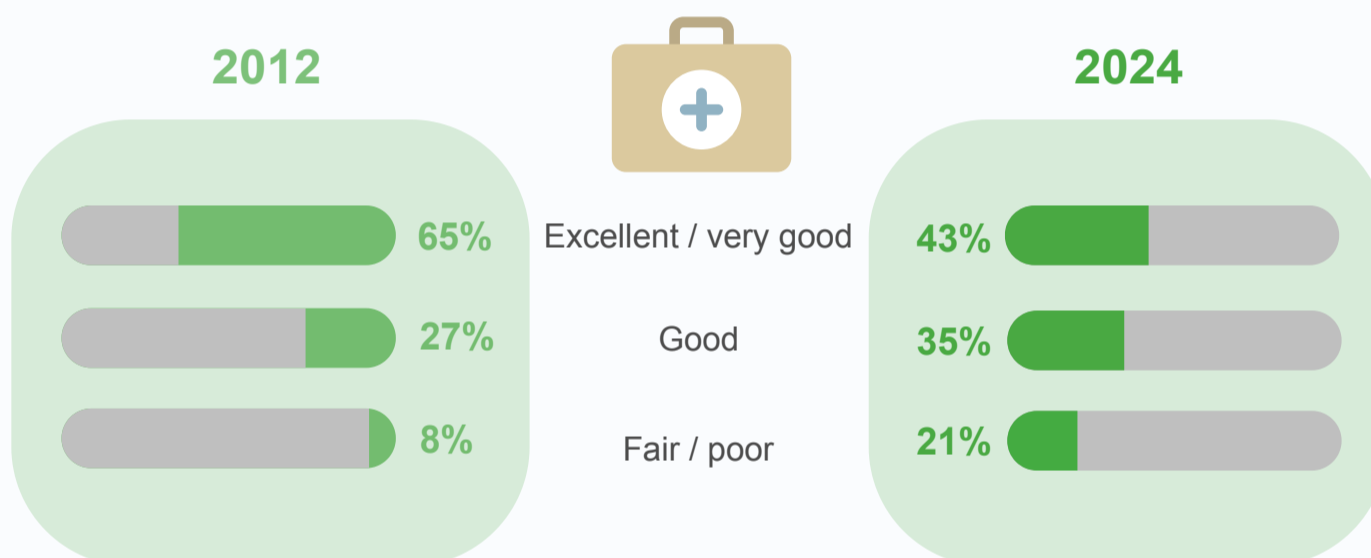
At age 24, fewer young people view their job as a career, while uncertainty has more than doubled — reflecting more precarious and flexible work, delayed career entry, economic uncertainty and industry changes.

Is this the job you'd like to have as a career?



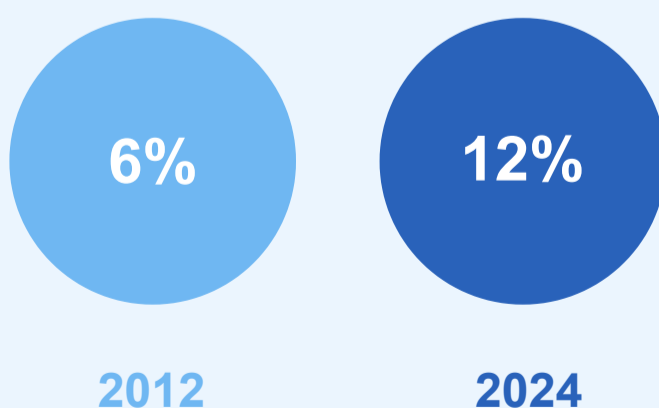
HEALTH & WELLBEING

SELF-REPORTED HEALTH



Self-reported health among 24 year-olds has declined over the past decade. Fewer rate their health as 'excellent' or 'very good', and more young people now describe their health as 'good', 'fair' or 'poor', pointing to a gradual decline in perceived wellbeing.

SELF-REPORTED HEALTH CONDITION OR DISABILITY

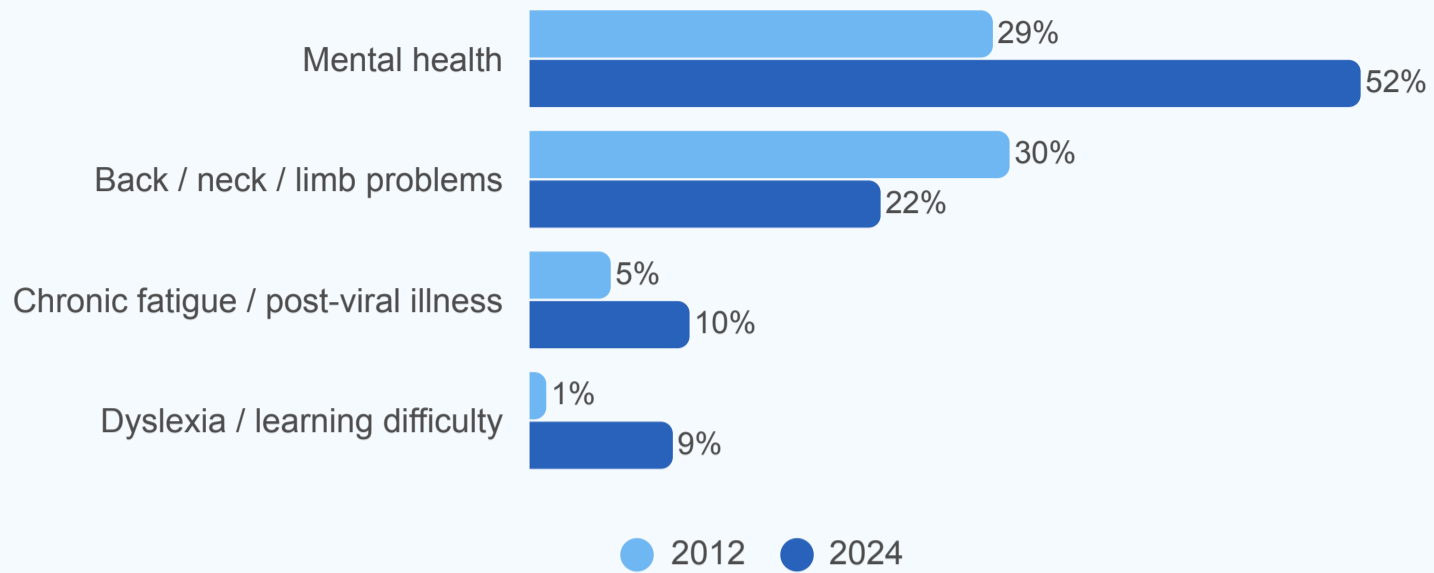


The share of young people reporting a health condition or disability that limits work or study has doubled over the past decade. This increase is largely due to more young people reporting a mental health condition — around half of those with a disability in 2024 identified this as their main condition.



TOP CONDITIONS LIMITING WORK OR STUDY

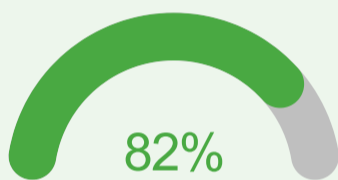
OF THOSE WITH A HEALTH CONDITION OR DISABILITY



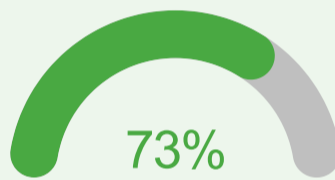
LIFE SATISFACTION



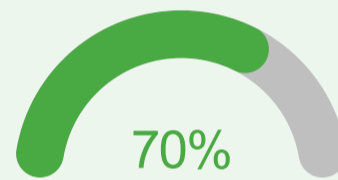
Life as a whole



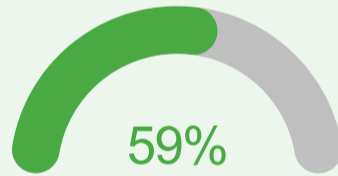
Career prospects



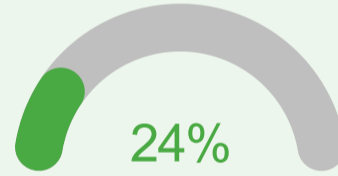
Social life



Money



The economy



At age 24, young people report high satisfaction with their social lives, career prospects and life overall. However, satisfaction drops sharply when it comes to the money they get each week and the state of the economy, reflecting broader financial and economic challenges.

PAVING FUTURE PATHWAYS

For 30 years, LSAY participants have shared important information about their life experiences as they transition from school into adulthood. The data for all six LSAY cohorts is freely available to researchers, policymakers and those with an interest in youth transitions.

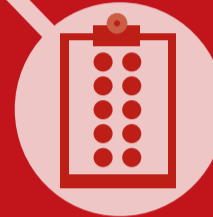
Visit www.lsay.edu.au to find out more.



60,000+
young people surveyed
since LSAY commenced
in 1995



6 cohorts
have been surveyed
since 1995



11 survey waves
available for each
cohort

NOTES ON THE DATA

The LSAY sample is designed to be representative of Australian school students at age 15. Survey responses are weighted to the 15-year-old student population to account for the survey being undertaken as a sample rather than a census. While weights are updated across survey waves to account for non-response, they remain anchored to the initial sampling population and are not adjusted to reflect changes in the broader population as the cohort ages.

Study and work

"Studying" only includes study for a recognised qualification.

Engagement by highest qualification

For respondents who completed more than one post-school qualification, the highest qualification level is recorded. In addition, apprenticeship and traineeship completions take precedence over certificates and diplomas, and certificates include certificates I-IV as well as those with an unknown certificate level.

Self-reported health

Figures for 2024 do not add to 100 per cent because those who responded 'Can't say' or 'Don't know' are not shown.

Self-reported health condition or disability

These figures reflect participants who responded at age 24 and may not represent all 24-year-olds as the LSAY data cannot be weighted to account for those with a disability.

SOURCES

National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) 2025, Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth, 2015 cohort (version 9.0).

—2020, Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth, 2009 cohort (version 9.0).

—2020, Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth, 2003 cohort (version 7.1).

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