

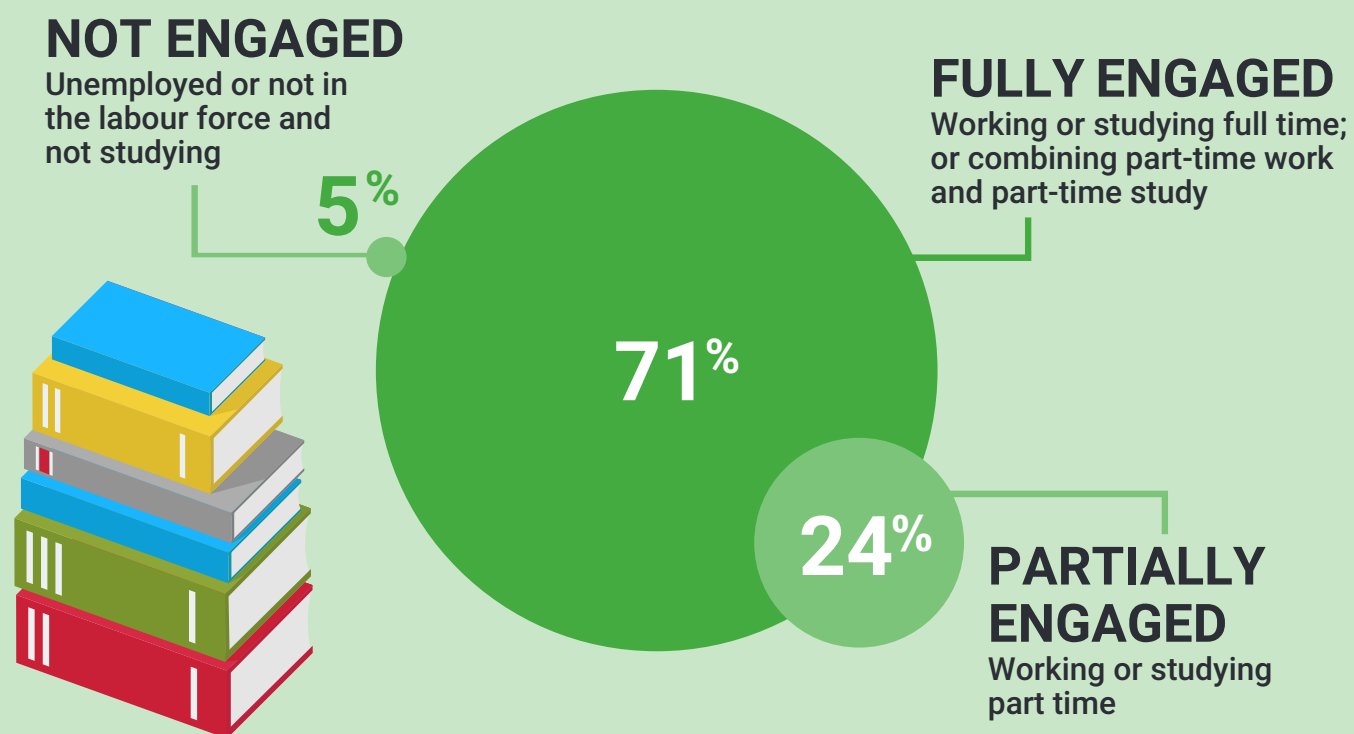
# GENERATION Z: LIFE AT 21

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.

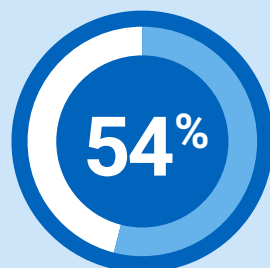
*Generation Z: life at 21* brings together information from LSAY participants who commenced the program when they were 15 years old in 2015. Using findings from their interviews in 2021, we look at their engagement with study and work and how this has changed over time. We also explore their levels of financial stress, mental health, and satisfaction with life.

## AGE 21 IN 2021

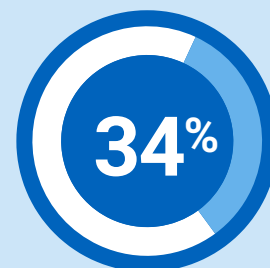
### ENGAGEMENT IN STUDY AND WORK



### STUDY



were studying for a qualification



had completed a qualification

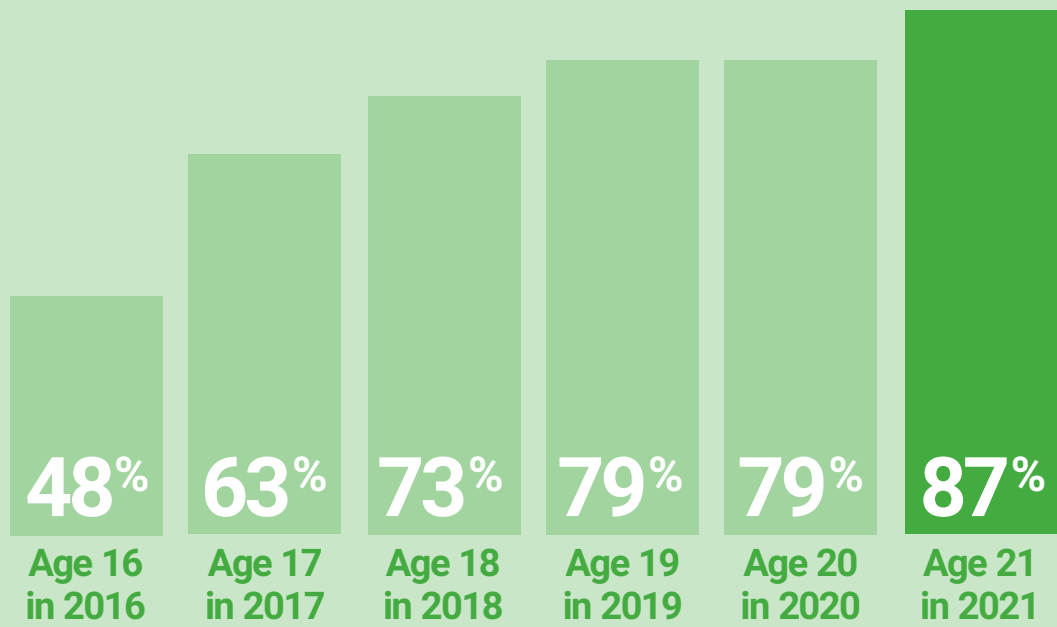
#### QUALIFICATIONS COMPLETED

-  12% Bachelor degree or above
-  6% Advanced diploma/diploma
-  12% Certificate III-IV
-  3% Certificate I-II

# WORK



## EMPLOYED



## OF THOSE EMPLOYED



**34%**  
are working full-time



**56%**  
are working part-time

### TOP FULL-TIME JOBS



General clerks



Electricians



Motor mechanics



Other labourers



Child carers



### TOP PART-TIME JOBS



Sales assistants



Bar attendants and baristas



Waiters



Sports coaches, instructors and officials



Private tutors and teachers

## WHAT IS GIG WORK?

'Gig work' is a type of job where workers don't have set hours and they get paid per task or assignment rather than receiving an hourly or weekly wage.



### THE TOP GIGS WERE:



BABYSITTING



MUSICIAN/  
SINGER



SURVEYS



TUTORING



FOOD  
DELIVERY

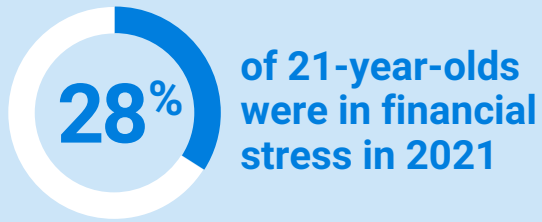
## TOP 3 REASONS FOR TAKING ON GIG WORK

**42%** Fill in gaps or fluctuations in other sources of income

**50%** Work experience for future job opportunities

**59%** For fun or to do something with your spare time

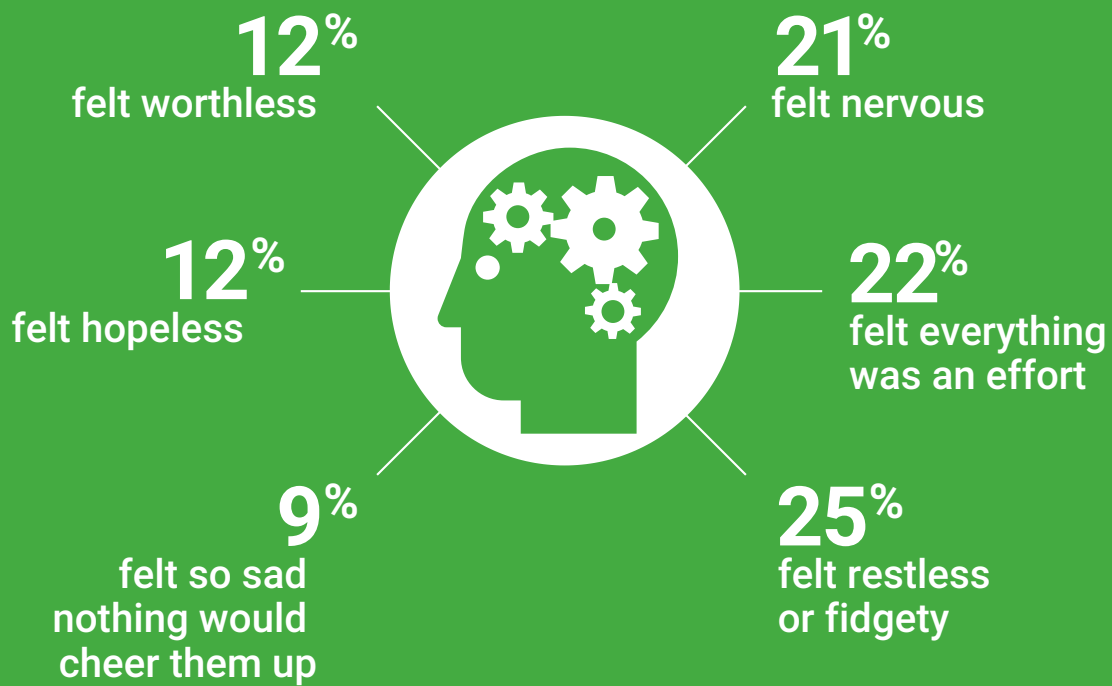
# FINANCIAL STRESS



## Shortage of money events over the past year

- 29%** had to ask family or friends for money
- 15%** couldn't pay utility bills on time
- 14%** didn't get medicines or go to a doctor
- 12%** went without meals
- 12%** couldn't pay mortgage/rent on time
- 11%** couldn't afford to heat their home

# HEALTH AND COMMUNITY



**47%** reported having excellent or very good health



down from 52% when they were 20 years old in 2020

**13%** reported having a disability or health problem



compared with 8% of 21-year-olds in 2015

**27%** volunteered



about half helped out at least once a week

# LIFE SATISFACTION

AGE 21 IN 2015

AGE 21 IN 2021

## HAPPINESS WITH YOUR STANDARD OF LIVING

93%



87%



## YOUR FUTURE

88%



79%



## YOUR CAREER PROSPECTS

84%



76%

## YOUR SOCIAL LIFE

84%



69%

## THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY

61%



46%

# PAVING FUTURE PATHWAYS

As the world experiences unprecedented challenges in the face of COVID-19, understanding the effects of the pandemic on young people is critical for developing appropriate youth policies and initiatives to ensure they have the best supports in place.

For more than 25 years, LSAY participants have shared important information about their life experiences as they transition from school into adulthood, providing an enormous evidence base to explore in detail the key events in the lives of young Australians.

The data for all six LSAY cohorts, which now spans multiple generations, is freely available to researchers, policymakers and those with an interest in youth issues. Visit [www.lsay.edu.au](http://www.lsay.edu.au) to find out more.



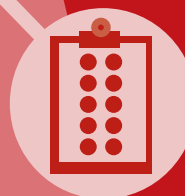
**60,000+**

young people surveyed since LSAY commenced in 1995



**6 cohorts**

have been surveyed since 1995



**11 survey waves**

available for each cohort

## ABOUT THE DATA

The LSAY 2015 sample is designed to be representative of 15-year-old Australian school students in 2015. Survey responses are weighted to the 15-year-old student population to account for the survey being undertaken as a sample rather than the entire target population. Due to population shifts over time and survey non-response, care must be taken when comparing LSAY results against other samples which have been drawn from different populations; and the results reported here may not represent national benchmarks. Further information is available from the LSAY 2015 cohort user guide.

## ENGAGEMENT IN STUDY AND WORK

'Partially engaged' includes those who were studying or working but did not provide enough information to determine if they were fully or partially engaged.

## STUDY

For those who have completed more than one qualification, the higher-level qualification is reported.

Certificates I-II include those whose certificate level is unknown

## WORK

Employed figures in 2016 and 2020 exclude those whose labour force status is unknown.

'Other labourers' includes jobs such as bicycle mechanics, car park attendants, trolley collectors and newspaper deliverers. It includes jobs that cannot be classified using the main 'Labourers' groups. For example, 'Other labourers' does not include cleaners, construction and mining labourers, or farm and garden workers.

The proportion working full-time and part-time does not add to 100% because those whose hours are unknown are excluded.

## FINANCIAL STRESS

'In financial stress' includes those who responded 'Yes' to two or more of the following shortage of money events: You sold something because you needed money; You went without meals; You had to ask family or friends for money; You had to borrow money just to live on; Didn't get medicines or go to a doctor; You couldn't buy text books or other study materials; You couldn't buy other things you needed; You couldn't pay electricity, gas or telephone bills on time\*; You couldn't pay mortgage/rent on time\*; You couldn't afford to heat your home\*.

Only a selection of financial stress measures has been presented. The full series includes 10 measures as listed above.

'You couldn't pay utility bills on time' includes electricity, gas or telephone bills.

\*Only asked of those who were no longer living with their parents, partner's parents, family members or guardian.

## HEALTH AND COMMUNITY

The six psychological distress items presented in this section ask respondents how often they felt nervous, hopeless etc. The following response options are provided: All of the time; Most of the time; Some of the time; A little of the time; and None of the time. Those who answer 'All of the time' or 'Most of the time' are included in the figures presented.

'Likely to have a serious mental health illness' is derived using responses to the six Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6) question items. Figures exclude those who didn't answer one or more of the six psychological distress questions. For each question, a 5-point Likert scale is used with scores (which take the values 1 to 5) indicating the frequency of the symptom. The total possible values across the six items range from 6-30 and are categorised as:

- Likely to have a serious mental illness (total score = 6-17)
- Not likely to have a serious mental illness (total score = 18-30).

These categories have been adapted from Kessler et al (2010). See ABS 2012, 'Use of the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale in ABS Health Surveys, Australia, 2007-08', <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookup/4817.0.55.001chapter92007-08>

'Disability or health problem' includes those who reported having a disability or health problem that lasted six months or more which limits the amount or type of work or study they can do.

## LIFE SATISFACTION

Only a selection of life satisfaction measures has been presented. The full series includes 14 measures, including satisfaction with: Your standard of living; How you get on with people in general; Your life at home; Where you live; Your life as a whole; Your independence - being able to do what you want; Your future; Your career prospects; The work you do, at study, at home or in a job; What you do in your spare time; Your social life; The money you get each week; The state of the economy; The way the country is run.

## SOURCES

National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) 2022, Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth, 2015 cohort (version 6.0). —2020, Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth, 2009 cohort (version 9.0).


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