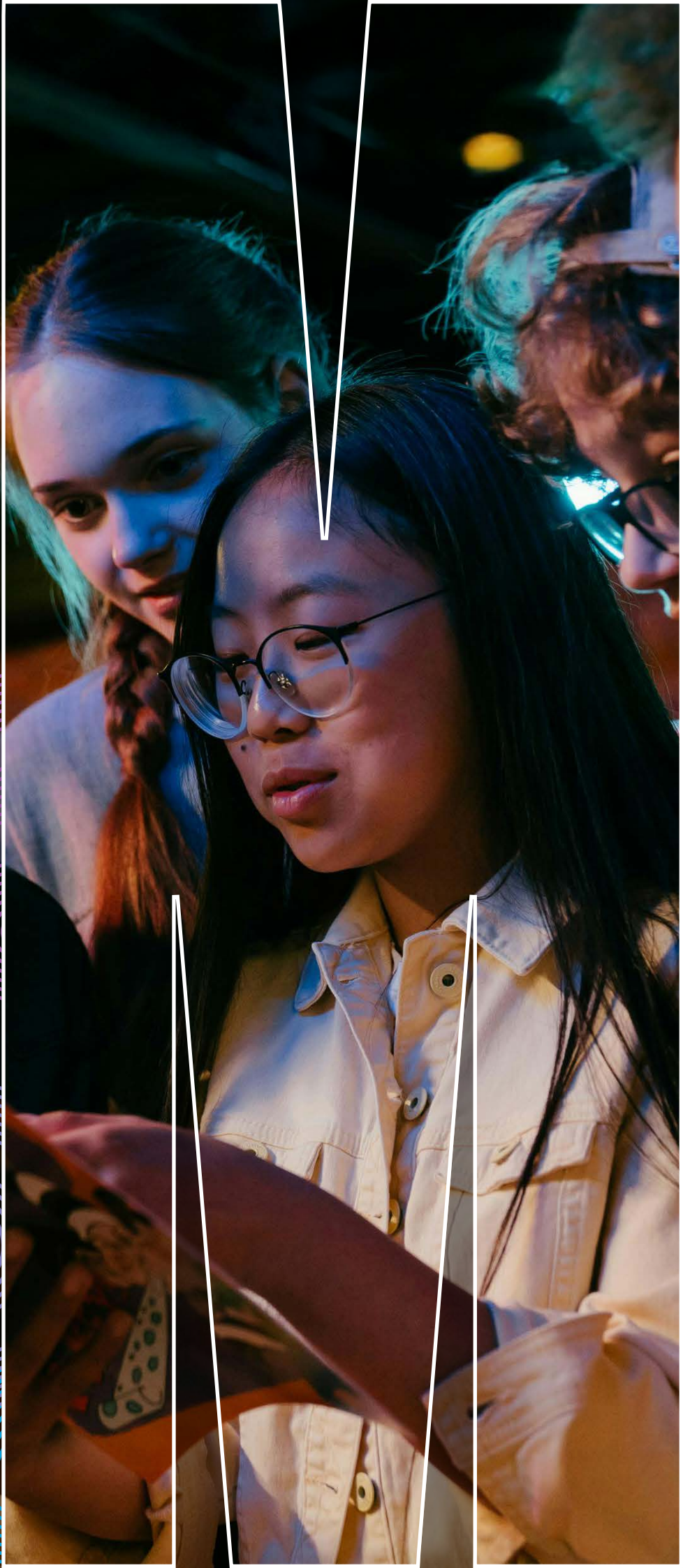




**MONASH**  
University

**2024**  
**ANNUAL**  
**REPORT**  
**YEAR FOUR**

MONASH  
YOUTH POLICY  
AND EDUCATION  
PRACTICE



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Monash Centre for Youth Policy and Education Practice would like to thank Monash Education staff in the research, marketing, finance, and external relations teams for their outstanding professional support.

The Monash Centre for Youth Policy and Education Practice would also like to acknowledge the members of our Management Committee, Advisory Board, and Youth Reference Group for their continued guidance, advice and insights.

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# A MESSAGE FROM OUR ADVISORY BOARD

Dr Katrina Reynen-Woodward OAM  
Chair, CYPEP Advisory Board



I am delighted to have chaired CYPEP's Advisory Board in its fourth year. I am proud of the achievements of CYPEP's team and its Youth Reference Group in shaping discussions about young people in Australia today. The work of the team has continued to grow, reflected in its many reports and scholarly outputs, and in new and evolving alliances with key actors in the youth sector.

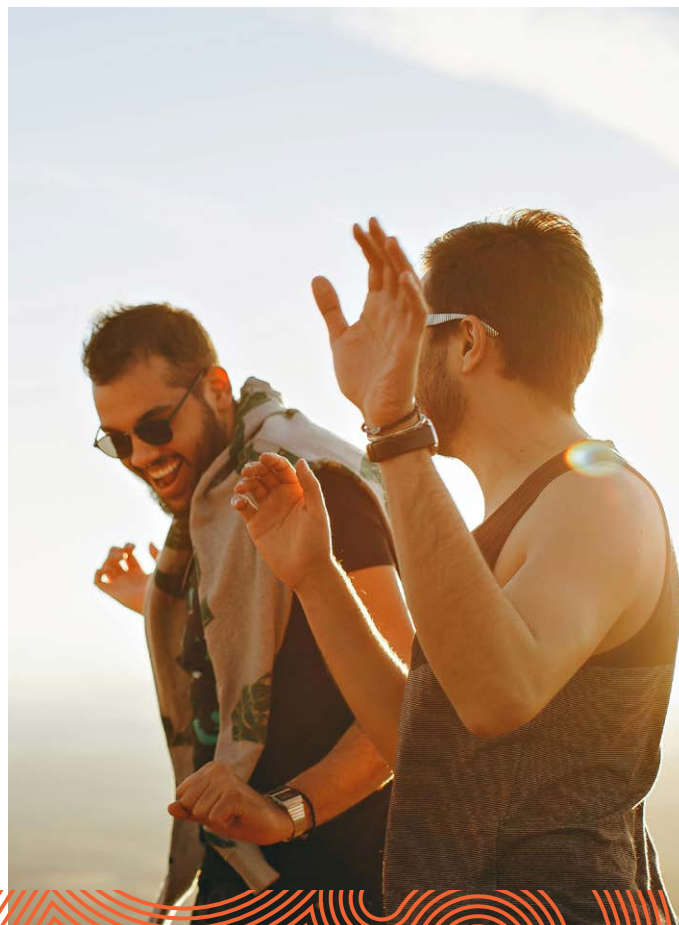
This past year, many Australians experienced the pressures of rising costs of living and rapid disruption of lives across the globe. Young people are experiencing food insecurity, lack of access to housing and poor mental health at alarming rates. And yet the work of the centre shows how resilient and engaged young people are.

Valuable new alliances have been formed. CYPEP has partnered with The Y (formally the YMCA) on a long term project to inform The Y's youth strategy and also to build a wider alliance to ensure that young people's concerns are front and centre in the 2025 Australian federal election.

Having established a strong national profile over the previous three years, in 2024 the centre focused on producing high quality scholarly outputs in highly esteemed academic journals such as the *Journal of Youth Studies*.

That said, the centre has maintained its prolific output of reports charting the longer term effects of the pandemic on young Australians in certain parts of Australia, such as Victoria and New South Wales. CYPEP's reports continue to receive significant national media attention, ensuring that the messages from young people are received by a national audience.

This year, the 2024 Australian Youth Barometer received further national attention, as did the report on why young people feel like they're missing out on being young, led by CYPEP's Youth Reference Group. Recognition of the centre's credibility, profile and influence is demonstrated by invitations to participate as a member of the Australian Financial Security Authority Consumer Consultative Panel,



National Climate Risk Assessment Expert Advisory Committee, Bureau of Meteorology and the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition Board.

CYPEP has also briefed members of parliament and participated in seminars organised by The Smith Family and the Australian Parliamentary Group for Future Generations.

Closer to home, CYPEP has participated in addressing food insecurity at Monash University and has been the public face of the university in discussions on the national housing crisis.

I was delighted to see CYPEP's continued partnership with the prestigious Academy of Social Sciences in Australia and the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC) to coauthor a proposal on ways to address the challenges young Australians face.

CYPEP's director, Lucas Walsh, again demonstrated outstanding leadership, personal commitment and compassion for the work of the centre throughout 2024. I acknowledge and congratulate Lucas for his dedication and passion for this work to support young people and his tireless effort in bringing their voices to a wider public audience.

CYPEP's success in 2024 could not have been achieved without the hard work of the amazing CYPEP team: Lorene Wilks, Blake Cutler, Dr Zihong Deng, Dr Thuc Bao Huynh, Anna Bui, and Lucas Walsh. I would also like to acknowledge other scholars who have contributed to the work of the centre – Dr Nathan Manning, Dr Djordje Stefanovic, Professor Vivienne Moore, Professor Andrew Peterson, Dr Sue Kleve and Dr Tammie Choi – and the generous support of Monash

University, including its superb media and communications teams.

Finally, key to the success of the centre is the involvement of CYPEP's Youth Reference Group, Management Committee and Advisory Board.

Young people remain firmly at the centre of all of the work that CYPEP does. I'm proud and privileged to be a part of the centre's ongoing successes, and congratulate the team on its upward trajectory.

[Dr Katrina Reynen-Woodward OAM](#)  
Chair, CYPEP Advisory Board

# ABOUT CYPEP

The Monash Centre for Youth Policy and Education Practice (CYPEP) is a multi-disciplinary research centre based in the Faculty of Education at Monash University. We undertake research into the social, political and economic factors, forces and trends that affect young people's lives. We believe education is a means to effect lasting change.

By focusing on issues that affect young people, and on developing policy and educational interventions to address youth disadvantage, CYPEP aims to identify the challenges to, and opportunities for, improved life outcomes for young people today and throughout their lives.

**OUR VISION** is for education that creates lifelong and life-wide opportunities for young people and enables them to thrive.

**OUR MISSION** is to connect youth research to policy and practice. We do this by working with policy-makers, educators and youth-focused organisations on research that addresses emerging needs, and that respects and includes young people. Working at the nexus of young people and policy, we raise awareness of the challenges faced by young people today and explore how education can harness the capacity of young people to contribute to thriving communities.

## OUR APPROACH



**We build knowledge by undertaking innovative, interdisciplinary research on the political, social and economic factors that affect young people's lives.**



**We translate and amplify our research findings into recommendations for policy-makers and tools for educators so that data is easily accessible and supports good decision-making. We communicate the implications and impact of our work widely to increase understanding of what being young in Australia right now can tell us about wider society and about the future.**



**We seek surprising alliances between researchers, policy-makers, educators, training providers, employers and youth service organisations to ensure our research has broad practical applications and impact.**



**CYPEP's activities involve the meaningful participation of young people to ensure our work is informed by the identified needs of young people.**



## OUR AREAS OF FOCUS

Our current work is structured around the following pillars.

### 1. YOUNG PEOPLE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

- How can we nurture and amplify youth issues, participation and voice to ensure young people are better represented in political decision-making?
- How can we better understand young people's participation in other ways, such as volunteering?

### 2. THE PURPOSE OF MASS EDUCATION

- How can we improve young people's belonging and participation in higher education institutions?

### 3. FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING

- By listening to young people, how can we better understand why many feel like they're missing out on being young?
- How can we encourage the strengths of young people to imagine and build thriving communities?

# OUR TEAM

## RESEARCHERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

**CENTRE DIRECTOR:** Professor Lucas Walsh

**RESEARCH FELLOWS:**

Dr Zihong Deng

Dr Thuc Bao Huynh

**RESEARCHER:** Mr Blake Cutler

**CENTRE MANAGER:** Ms Lorene Wilks

**ADMINISTRATION COORDINATOR:** Ms Anna Bui

## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**CHAIR: Professor Mark Rickinson** (*Education*)

Professor Paula Gerber (*Law*)

Professor Asad Islam (*Business and Economics*)

Professor Lucas Walsh (*CYPEP*)

Assoc. Professor Kate Fitz-Gibbon (*Arts*)

Ms Lorene Wilks (*CYPEP*)

## ADVISORY BOARD

**CHAIR: Dr Katrina Reynen-Woodward OAM**

(*University of Melbourne*)

Professor Neil Selwyn (*Deputy Dean, Research, Monash Education*)

Professor Alan France (*University of Auckland; international expert on youth research*)

Mr Stephen Fraser (*Deputy Secretary, Victorian Department of Education*)

Professor Michael Mintrom (*Monash University, Better Governance and Policy lead*)

Ms Sarah Ramantanis (*Chair, Australian Youth Affairs Coalition*)

Ms Yuqi Lin (*CYPEP Youth Reference Group*)

## YOUTH REFERENCE GROUP

**STEPHEN BAHN**

**ZARIN FARIHA**

**ANDREW LEAP**

**ISOBEL THOMAS**

**REBECCA WALTERS**

**MARK YIN**

**CANDICE CHUNING ZHENG**

If we want to change the conversation about young people's futures, young people need to be part of that conversation. At CYPEP, we are committed to genuine and authentic engagement with young people and our Youth Reference Group (YRG) is involved in all aspects of our operations.

In 2024, the YRG co-authored a discussion paper with CYPEP researchers on missing out on being young. Members of the YRG also wrote the introduction to the 2024 Australian Youth Barometer.

Several original YRG members have made exciting career progressions. Andrew Leap has graduated from Monash University and will be leaving the YRG to work for the Australian government. He has been a central, inspiring, intelligent and highly engaged member of CYPEP's YRG, and we wish him well. Rebecca Walters, who has also generously provided so much insight, has joined the public service. Mark Yin, a leading voice of the YRG, has commenced his PhD, and the dedicated Yuqi Lin has joined Monash University.

Congratulations and best wishes to all.





**Above (Top–Bottom L–R):** Professor Lucas Walsh, Mr Blake Cutler, Ms Anna Bui, Dr Bao Huynh, Dr Zihong Deng, Professor Mark Rickinson, Professor Paula Gerber, Professor Asad Islam, Mr Stephen Fraser, Professor Michael Mintrom, Ms Sarah Ramantanis, Ms Yuqi Lin, Professor Alan France, Assoc. Professor Kate Fitz-Gibbon, Professor Neil Selwyn, Mr Stephen Bahn, Ms Zarin Fariha, Ms Rebecca Walters, Mr Andrew Leap, Mr Mark Yin, Dr Katrina Reynen-Woodward OAM and Ms Candice Chuning Zheng.

# 2024 AT A GLANCE

## JANUARY

Theorising and preparing students for precarity: How can leaders and educators better prepare students to enter an increasingly insecure workforce? in *Educational Leadership and Policy in a Time of Precarity*, Routledge.

## MARCH

Unseen and darkly optimistic: Young people's civic and political engagement from under the radar, Political Studies Association international conference, Glasgow.

About them, without them? Figures of youth in Australian policy 2014–2021, *Journal of Youth Studies*.

Public narratives of disadvantage across multiple groups in Australia: a research map and practice reflections, *Australian Journal of Social Issues*.

Towards a causal link between food insecurity and buy-now-pay-later use by young Australians, *Young Consumers*.

## JUNE

Shaping the Future: A new approach to policy that works for young people, policy roundtable summary report.

## FEBRUARY

Workshop for policymakers on how to improve understanding and prevent anti-diversity sentiment among university students.

## APRIL



## MAY

**CYPEP Report: The pandemic years and their impact on young people in New South Wales and Victoria: Insights from the Australian Youth Barometer.**

Submission to the Australian Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters Inquiry into Civics Education, Engagement and Participation in Australia.



**AUGUST**

**CYPEP REPORT: The 2024 Australian Youth Barometer: Understanding young people in Australia today.**

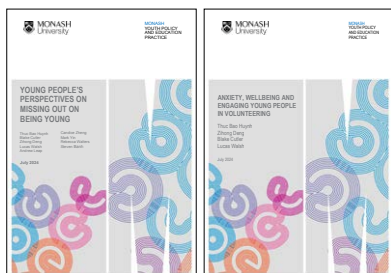
**CYPEP REPORT: At a glance: A summary of key findings from the 2024 Australian Youth Barometer.**

Launch of the 2024 Australian Youth Barometer

**CYPEP REPORT: Young Australians' experiences of food insecurity: A spotlight on Victoria.**

**NOVEMBER**

July's submission to the Inquiry into Food Security in Victoria was cited extensively in the final report from the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee tabled in the Victorian Parliament.



**JULY**

**CYPEP REPORT: Young people's perspectives on missing out on being young.**

**CYPEP REPORT: Anxiety, wellbeing and engaging young people in volunteering.**

Submission to the Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Food Security in Victoria.

**SEPTEMBER**

**OCTOBER**

**DECEMBER**

# FEATURED RESEARCH



## ANXIETY, WELLBEING AND ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE IN VOLUNTEERING

Australia currently faces a shortage of volunteers. Only around one-quarter of Australians volunteered in 2022 and 83% of volunteering organisations say that they need more volunteers and find it difficult to attract young people.

Yet, in 2023, 73% of young Australians aged 18–24 reported that they volunteered in organised activities at least once in the previous 12 months.

One possible reason for this discrepancy is that young people understand volunteering differently. Responses to our Australian Youth Barometer suggest that, for young people, volunteering is not only viewed as a regular, formal commitment of unpaid time to an organisation, but is seen as one aspect of broader social participation. This participation includes many types of unpaid community, social, or political engagement in a variety of forms and media.

*It helped me more feel like I'd rather be present in the moment rather than worrying about the stuff in your head.* **Woman, 21, QLD**

*I volunteer sometimes at events, and it just gets such, like, a good feeling. It just makes you feel like you belong there.*

*Like, you're doing a good thing.* **Woman, 21, QLD**



Our research offers a positive perspective. It suggests that young people want to give back to society, are seeking meaningful ways to make a difference, and that volunteering is occurring across formal and informal settings. Consequently, there is a need to recognise how young people understand and participate in volunteering in order to connect young people who want to volunteer with the organisations that need them.

Young people we interviewed discussed a range of activities that do not readily fit within the formal definitions of volunteering, but which seemed to occupy the same role in their lives. Many activities revolved around various types of community and political participation. Some participants spoke about activism and other forms of political action as activities that young people participate in with the aim of making a difference in their communities. Many young people preferred to engage in forms of activism where they could directly communicate with others: some used social media to become more connected and engaged in social and political events, while others used digital media to create and share content about issues that were important to them.

*I would say get involved in, like, elections, local and state, federal, and, you know, be an activist for the things you care about. Get[ting] involved on social media is definitely a way you can make your voice heard.*

**Man, 24, VIC**

Young people's reasons for volunteering vary. Many young people seek volunteering opportunities such as internships to build their resumes and gain experience for future employability. Others closely identified with an organisation they volunteered for and felt a shared sense of purpose.

At the same time, young people are working and studying, or raising a family. Some seek flexibility in their lives and cannot commit to fixed hours. Eighty-six per cent of the young people we surveyed felt that there were barriers to becoming involved in organised activities on issues that were important to them. The barriers included high costs, lack of time, lack of interest, being unsure of what could be done, and difficulty of access. This presents a challenge for volunteering organisations seeking structured commitments of time and ways of working.

Our research also showed previously unexamined links between anxiety, volunteering and wellbeing. Young people who had higher self-reported levels of political anxiety were more likely to volunteer. Young people who volunteered most often reported more positive mental health. There was also a weak but significant correlation between young people's participation in volunteering and their self-reported life satisfaction. Although our data cannot confirm causal links between anxiety, volunteering and wellbeing, the correlations are striking and suggest that anxiety may be a factor in understanding why young Australians participate in volunteering.

These findings can help volunteering organisations, educators and policy makers engage young people in volunteering in ways that are most appealing and appropriate to them.

► [Download the report \*Anxiety, wellbeing and engaging young people in volunteering\*](#)

# THE AUSTRALIAN YOUTH BAROMETER

The fourth edition of the Australian Youth Barometer was launched on 1 August 2024 at an event hosted by the RAISE Foundation.

The 2024 Youth Barometer again surveyed over 500 young Australians, aged 18 to 24 on a variety of topics covering education, employment, health and wellbeing, housing, money, civic participation, and the ongoing impacts of COVID-19. A further 30 young people participated in in-depth interviews

CYPEP's Youth Reference Group contributed a brilliant introduction for the report, demonstrating the value of including youth voices in our work. Their introduction provides a unique perspective on the data, and places it in the context of the very real impacts being felt by young people today. Please read it – it will surprise you!

This year, the Commonwealth government's Office for Youth released a new youth strategy, [Engage! A strategy to include young people in the decisions we make](#), following a decade-long vacuum in government funding and policy directed at young people. The new strategy places young people at the centre of its engagement approach to decision-making and accounts for the diversity of young people's experiences and circumstances. The strategy is framed in positive terms rather than the deficit approaches often used to describe young people. At the same time, it acknowledges the challenges young people face: challenges that are highlighted in the Australian Youth Barometer.

## Some important stats about young Australians from the 2024 Australian Youth Barometer:

# 86%

EXPERIENCED FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES IN THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS.

# 21%

RATED THEIR MENTAL HEALTH AS POOR OR VERY POOR; 46% RATED IT AS GOOD OR EXCELLENT.

# 62%

THOUGHT THEY WILL BE WORSE OFF FINANCIALLY THAN THEIR PARENTS.

# 39%

THOUGHT THERE WAS NOT ENOUGH GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR HOUSING.

# 70%

VOLUNTEERED IN ORGANISED ACTIVITIES AT LEAST ONCE IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

Data collected for the Australian Youth Barometer forms the foundation of CYPEP's research program. In 2024, we drew on data collected over four years for our submissions to government inquiries, and for our deep dives into young people's experiences of food insecurity and the links between volunteering and wellbeing (see our feature on [page 9](#)). We have also analysed the data to compare the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people in Victoria and New South Wales.

*Rather than just being the object of policymaking, we as young people are keen to play a role ... We have the lived experience and, as the findings in this report attest, we are actively involved in our communities. This is not just about taking control of our own personal development or making change in our immediate settings; it is about working towards a collective future that looks after the planet and its future generations.*

*In any case, we move. Or rather, we choose to move, we forge on, make the most of what we can, and this too is evident in the Australian Youth Barometer's findings ...*

*But these choices will always be within the confines of broader systemic pressures, so it's important to acknowledge that these conditions will continue to be challenging over the long term unless something changes.*

**Andrew Leap, Mark Yin, Steven Banh and Candice Chuning Zheng, CYPEP Youth Reference Group**



### WHAT MAKES THE AUSTRALIAN YOUTH BAROMETER UNIQUE?

- The combination of an exhaustive review of existing research data with a new survey of over 500 young Australians aged 18 to 24 from all states and territories ensures an accurate snapshot of how young people are faring today, which can be compared and contrasted with previous years.
- Additional in-depth interviews conducted by CYPEP researchers enable us to identify what really matters to young people and to report with greater nuance on the issues that affect them.
- The Australian Youth Barometer is informed by CYPEP's Youth Reference Group, a diverse group of young Australians who ensure that CYPEP's work includes the voices of young people.
- The Australian Youth Barometer is produced by Monash University researchers, whose expertise in research design and analysis, and comprehensive knowledge of youth research, offer deep insights into young people today and into future trends.
- This data on being young in Australia right now can tell us about wider society and about our future.
- The Australian Youth Barometer has received widespread national exposure. To date, the four editions have been viewed approximately 53,000 times and been downloaded 6,070 times. News reports on the 2024 Australian Youth Barometer reached over 94 million people.
- The Australian Youth Barometer is an annual report with new cohorts surveyed each year, and will provide a picture of how issues of importance to young people shift across time.

► [Download the 2024 Australian Youth Barometer](#)

# OUR RESEARCH

In 2024, we produced the fourth edition of our annual flagship report, The Australian Youth Barometer. The four years of data collected provides a rich seam from which we can draw insights and identify themes and trends.

As is our practice, we have delved deep into that data and this year produced reports on issues we thought deserved more attention. These are detailed below. Except where stated, all can be downloaded from our site on Monash's research repository, [Bridges](#).



## PUBLISHED REPORTS

### **THE PANDEMIC YEARS AND THEIR IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE IN NEW SOUTH WALES AND VICTORIA: INSIGHTS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN YOUTH BAROMETER**

This report draws on three years of data from the Australian Youth Barometer to highlight the experiences of young people in New South Wales and Victoria. It covers issues of young people's mental health, relationships, finances, housing, work and education. The report has been downloaded more than 210 times.

### **YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVES ON MISSING OUT ON BEING YOUNG**

Being young is an important stage in life. It is a time of development, exploration, experimentation, trial and misstep, as well as success and opportunity. Yet a key finding from previous editions of the Australian Youth Barometer was that more than almost half of young people felt like they were missing out on being young. In this report, members of CYPEP's youth reference group provide a unique perspective on what it means to be young and to miss out on being young. The report has been downloaded more than 420 times.

### **ANXIETY, WELLBEING AND ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE IN VOLUNTEERING**

This paper examines the different ways young people understand volunteering and how their understandings and activities differ from mainstream definitions of volunteering. Volunteering organisations have noted that it can be difficult to engage young people in volunteering. Our research suggests that young people want to give back to society and are seeking meaningful ways to make a difference, but face barriers that prevent them from participating as much as they would like. The report has been downloaded approximately 250 times.

### **THE 2024 AUSTRALIAN YOUTH BAROMETER: UNDERSTANDING YOUNG PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA TODAY**

For the fourth annual Australian Youth Barometer, we surveyed more than 620 young Australians aged 18–24, and interviewed 30 more, about their experiences with the economy, work, education, health and wellbeing, relationships and participation in civic life. Among these topics, themes emerge: the impact of technology and the role of social media, feelings of belonging and exclusion, financial security (including housing and food insecurity) and the need for governments to offer more support. The 2024 Barometer has been downloaded more than 1,000 times.



### **AT A GLANCE: A SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM THE 2024 AUSTRALIAN YOUTH BAROMETER**

Don't have time to read all the background? This year, we produced a brief summary of the key findings to accompany the 2024 Australian Youth Barometer, with the headline statistics from each chapter.

### **YOUNG AUSTRALIANS' EXPERIENCES OF FOOD INSECURITY: A SPOTLIGHT ON VICTORIA**

Food insecurity occurs when people lack regular and reliable social, economic and physical access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences, preventing them from leading a healthy and active life. This paper discusses the prevalence of food insecurity among young people in Victoria, the factors that drive food insecurity, and its effect on different groups. The paper has been downloaded more than 90 times.

### **SHAPING THE FUTURE: A NEW APPROACH TO POLICY THAT WORKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

Following the policy roundtable delivered by the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA) with CYPEP and the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC) at Old Parliament House in Canberra in November 2023, a summary of the presentations and discussions was released as a report by ASSA. The event and the report are organised into themes of security, wellbeing and belonging. The report is available from the [ASSA's website](#).



## **FUNDED PROJECTS**

### **THE Y YOUTH ENGAGEMENT HEALTH CHECK TOOL**

The Y engaged CYPEP to develop a tool that would allow their teams to assess the extent and effectiveness of their engagement with young people when designing youth engagement and leadership programs. The tool ensures that young people are involved in ways appropriate to their specific contexts and needs. The project involved a series of presentations and co-design workshops with The Y's executives.

### **EXPERIENCES OF CHINESE INTERNATIONAL POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS AND WHY THEY WITHDRAW FROM THEIR STUDIES**

Chinese international postgraduate students are increasingly sharing experiences of withdrawing from their studies on social media. This project, led by Dr Zihong Deng, examines the perceptions and experiences of Chinese international students who have withdrawn or seriously considered withdrawal from their postgraduate programs within the last five years. Through thematic analysis of interviews conducted with 10 young people from China, we have identified the major factors associated with their withdrawal and the challenges they faced during the withdrawal process. This research will help promote student wellbeing and improve international students' relationships with their supervisors, faculties and universities. The research was funded through a grant from the School of Education, Culture and Society. Findings will be published in 2025.

## WORK IN PROGRESS

### PROJECTS UNDERWAY AND PUBLICATIONS IN PREPARATION FOR 2025:

#### Youth Issues in the 2025 Federal Election

CYPEP is partnering with the Y and Redbridge Group on an election-focused report on the issues that matter to young people in the 2025 federal election.

#### Political anxiety and wellbeing of young Australians: the role of volunteering

This research continues our examination of the direct and indirect associations between political anxiety, volunteering and subjective wellbeing (see Featured Research, [page 9](#)). For young Australians, higher political anxiety is positively associated with volunteering, and volunteering is positively associated with subjective wellbeing.

#### Handbook on youth social activism

This project examines how young Australians engage with activism and construct their political identities and communities within and beyond the constraints of neoliberalism. Drawing on findings from the Australian Youth Barometer and a study of young people's online discourse around the School Strike 4 Climate movement in Australia between 2018 and 2021, the project explores how young people are choosing to engage in ways that both resist and reinforce neoliberal influences.

#### Missing out on being young: voices of the pandemic generation

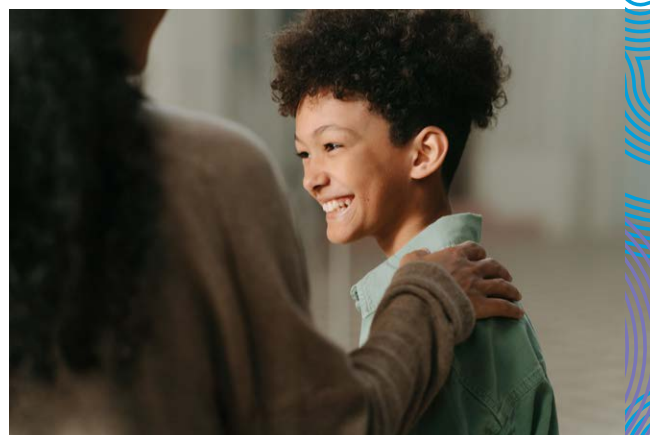
This book will explore four years of data on young Australians aged 18 to 24 collected for the Australian Youth Barometer series. The book will draw on the latest youth studies scholarship that understands young people as being part of a social generation that is subject to, and interacts with, complex forces and forms of precarity. One of the key findings of the data: many young people feel as though they are missing out on being young. The book will be published by Routledge in 2026.

#### A longitudinal study of drivers of youth prejudice and radicalisation

This longitudinal study, which commenced in 2023 in collaboration with the University of Adelaide, is identifying risk factors and protective factors for youth prejudice and radicalisation, along with strategies to overcome family conflicts caused by political polarisation. Researchers include Dr Nathan McMillan, Dr Djordje Stefanovic, Professor Vivienne Moore (University of Adelaide) and Professor Lucas Walsh.

#### Homo promptus, teachers and young people: Navigating precarity in the teaching profession

With schools struggling to attract and keep teachers, what can we learn from young people's employment motivations and the youth labour market? Teacher workforce insecurity in schools echoes the wider casualisation of labour markets, which is particularly pronounced amongst young people. Work identities and employment arrangements are changing, most visibly in insecure forms of work, driven by a valorisation of individualised employer/employee arrangements, entrepreneurialism and work flexibility. This research examines data drawn from the Australian Youth Barometer and from a 2022 survey of 5,500 Australian teachers about their experiences of teaching work and feelings about the profession. The research team includes Lucas Walsh, Fiona Longmuir and Thuc Bao Huynh, Faculty of Education, Monash University.



## SCHOLARSHIP

CYPEP team members continue to publish their research into youth and education issues in scholarly outlets and present their work at international academic conferences and symposia. Here is a selection of relevant work.

### PUBLICATIONS

Bragge, P., Angus, S.D., Fischer, A., Lennox, A., Piquero, A.R., Reddel, T., Smith, L., **Walsh, L.**, Wickes, R., Wild, A. & Faulkner, N. (2024) Public narratives of disadvantage across multiple groups in Australia: A research map and practice reflections. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 59(4), 979–994. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajs4.322>

Gallo Cordoba, B., Waite, C. & **Walsh, L.** (2024) Towards a causal link between food insecurity and buy-now-pay-later use by young Australians. *Young Consumers*, 25(6), 725–747. <https://doi.org/10.1108/YC-11-2023-1912>

Tham, M., & **Walsh, L.** (2024) Playing the game of selectivity: The normalisation of merit and invisibilisation of advantage in students' admission into competitive schools. *Power and Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17577438241297236>

Waite, C., **Walsh, L.** & Black, R. (2024) Negotiating senses of belonging and identity across education spaces. *Aust. Educ. Res.* 51, 1161–1176. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-023-00633-9>

Waite, C., **Walsh, L.**, Gallo Cordoba, B., **Cutler, B.**, & **Bao Huynh, T.** (2024) About them, without them? Figures of youth in Australian policy 2014–2021. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2024.2325447>

**Walsh, L.**, & Gleeson, J. (2024). Theorising and preparing students for precarity: How can leaders and educators better prepare students to enter an increasingly insecure workforce? In Heffernan, A. & Wilkinson, J. (eds.), *Educational Leadership and Policy in a Time of Precarity*, Routledge, pp. 7–19

### PRESENTATIONS

**Walsh, L. & Cutler, B.** (2024) Unseen and darkly optimistic: young people's civic and political engagement from under the radar. Presentation at Political Studies Association Annual International Conference 2024, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom 25–27 March 2024.

**Walsh, L., Huyn, T.B. & Deng, Z.** (2024). *Young People's Priorities: The Australian Youth Barometer*. Invited presentation to The Y, Essendon Fields, 30 May 2024.

# COMMUNITY AND PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

The centre was involved in a number of outreach activities in 2024. These ranged from submissions to parliamentary inquiries, presentations to peak bodies, and participation in committees for the Monash community and at a national level.

CYPEP director, Lucas Walsh, was invited to participate as a member of the Australian Financial Security Authority Consumer Consultative Panel, National Climate Risk Assessment Expert Advisory Committee, Bureau of Meteorology and the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition Board.

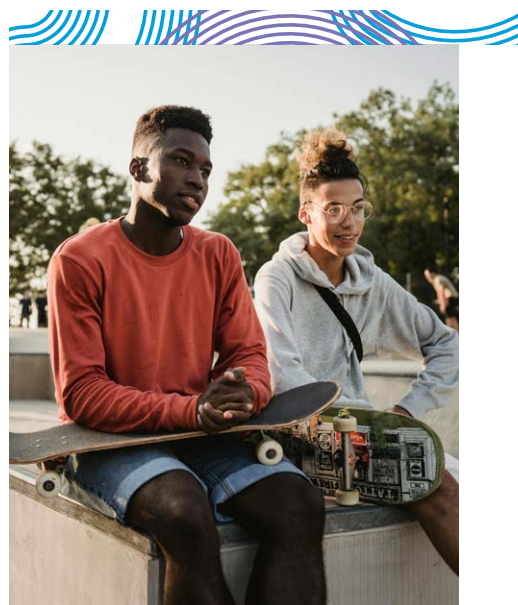
## **SUBMISSION TO THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT'S JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS INQUIRY INTO CIVICS EDUCATION, ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN AUSTRALIA: 30 MAY**

In our response to the Inquiry, we draw on data from the Australian Youth Barometer to demonstrate that young people are neither disengaged nor uninterested in participating in Australia's democracy and political life. However, their participation may manifest in non-traditional ways that reflect their interests and experiences.

Young people are often seen as being disengaged from civic and political participation. However, it is possible that young people are not disengaging with civic and political participation, but with the traditional forms that don't represent their interests or reflect their lived experiences of Australian society. Civics education must, therefore, consider how young people approach and understand politics as it relates to them. Young Australians can feel left out of formal politics, often believing that this is because they are seen as young and hence uninterested or apathetic. In order to involve young people, these prejudices must be overcome.

## **SUBMISSION TO THE VICTORIAN PARLIAMENT'S LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO FOOD SECURITY IN VICTORIA: 26 JULY**

Monash University's submission to this inquiry was extensively quoted in the final report tabled in Parliament on 14 November. The inquiry examined the drivers and impacts of food insecurity in Victoria, focusing on food security at the household and community levels. Ours was a joint submission led by colleagues in Monash's Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food, with whom CYPEP has a longstanding research collaboration looking at food insecurity among young people, particularly university students.



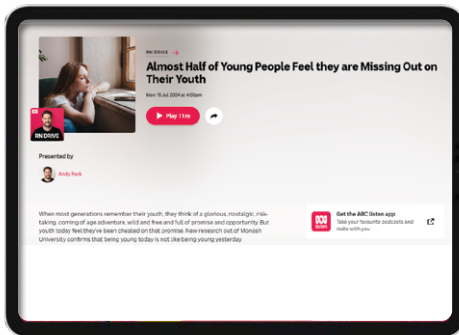
## SUPPORTING OUR MONASH COMMUNITY

In addition to external engagement, we participate in university events and activities to support our Monash colleagues.

- CYPEP Director Lucas Walsh featured in an episode of A Different Lens, '[Homing in on Australia's housing crisis](#)' (29 November), where he shared his expertise on how the current housing crisis affects young people.
- Lucas Walsh was appointed to Monash University's Food Security Working Group.



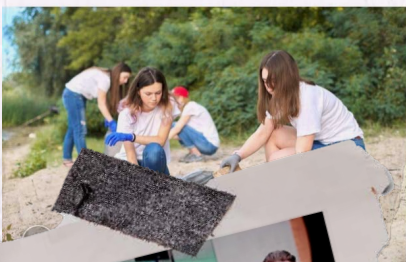
# IN THE NEWS



## Giving back: young people's perception of volunteering is evolving

By EducationHQ News Team  
Published August 15, 2024

As Australia faces a concerning shortage of volunteers, and volunteering organisations find it difficult to attract and engage young people, a new discussion paper from the Monash Centre for Youth Policy and Education Practice (CYPEP) has explored positive opportunities to engage young people in volunteering.



CYPEP's work regularly appeared in various media throughout 2024. An important goal for CYPEP is to engage with stakeholders, partners and the general public and translate our scholarly work into articles and reports that will reach a wide audience.

Significant outlets that reported on our research in the past 12 months include: Channel 7 television news; print outlets including The Herald-Sun and The Canberra Times; online publications such as the Conversation; local and national radio including ABC's News Radio, Triple J and Drive with Tom Elliott on 3AW; and professional publications such as EducationHQ and The Educator Australia. This range of outlets ensures our research continues to reach a wide audience of educators, policymakers, service providers and the general public.

Our combined media activity in 2024 had a potential reach of 182 million Australians, and an estimated advertising value equivalency of over \$1.69 million.

**Below is a selection of news articles, authored opinions and other commentary on a wide variety of topics that featured CYPEP research.**

- 'Budget's axe falls on young,' *The Herald Sun*, 11 May 2024
- Breakfast with Craig Reucastle, ABC Radio Sydney, 20 June 2024
- 'Life's out of balance for young Aussies', *The Herald Sun*, 19 July 2024



Targeted media campaigns corresponding with our published reports ensured they received significant exposure.

**THE PANDEMIC YEARS AND THEIR IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE IN NEW SOUTH WALES AND VICTORIA: INSIGHTS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN YOUTH BAROMETER**

- Kids reeling as bullying, screentime, take a heavy toll.' *The Canberra Times*, 13 May 2024
- News reports across regional Victorian and NSW radio, Triple M, 14–16 May 2024
- ABC News Radio, 15 May 2024

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVES ON MISSING OUT ON BEING YOUNG**

- 'Young Australians feeling robbed of their youth, report finds.' *The Wire*, 8 July 2024
- 'Almost half of young people feel they are missing out on their youth.' ABC RN Drive, 15 July 2024
- 'Young Australians feel they are "missing out" on being young: new research.' *The Conversation*, 15 July 2024

**ANXIETY, WELLBEING AND ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE IN VOLUNTEERING**

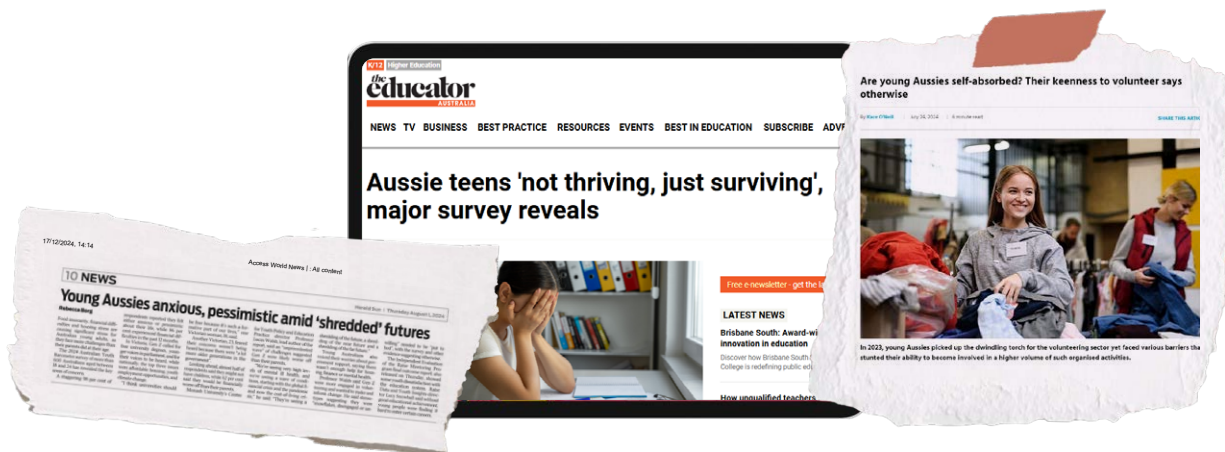
- 'How to engage more young people in volunteering.' *The Canberra Times*, 20 July 2024
- 'Are young Aussies self-absorbed? Their keenness to volunteer says otherwise.' *HR Leader*, 24 July 2024
- 'Giving back: young people's perception of volunteering is evolving.' *EducationHQ*, 15 August 2024

**THE 2024 AUSTRALIAN YOUTH BAROMETER: UNDERSTANDING YOUNG PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA TODAY**

- 'Australia's "harrowing" young homelessness reality.' *Daily Mail*, 1 August 2024
- *The Conversation Hour*, ABC Radio Melbourne, 1 August 2024
- *The Morning Show*, Channel 7, 1 August 2024
- 'Aussie teens "not thriving, just surviving", major survey reveals.' *The Educator Australia*, 5 August 2024

**YOUNG AUSTRALIANS' EXPERIENCES OF FOOD INSECURITY: A SPOTLIGHT ON VICTORIA**

- 'Food insecurity amongst young Victorians: report.' 2SER FM, 16 August 2024
- 'Cost of living crisis pricing young Vics out of healthy diets.' *The Herald Sun*, 22 August 2024



# PROGRESS AGAINST OUR GOALS

The following table summarises the centre’s achievements against its key performance indicators set for 2024.

KPI	MEASURE	2024 TARGET	2024 ACTUAL
Research Income	Submit application for external grant as lead	1	1
	Secure external funds from govt, business or philanthropic sources	✓	✓
Research Outputs	Discussion Paper	1	1
	Youth Barometer	1	1
	Submission of article to quality journal	2	3
Community Engagement	Translation in non-scholarly outlets		>60





# 2025 AND BEYOND



We expect that 2025 will be a year to reflect and to consider how the centre and its alliances will continue to have a positive impact.

CYPEP will release the fifth and final Australian Youth Barometer, prepare scholarly publications (including a book to be published by Routledge) and continue to collaborate on research projects with partners at Adelaide University, The Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition and The Y. In the second half of the year, we will be submitting a report to Monash University on CYPEP's activities and achievements over four and a half years. We have a lot to report on and are immensely proud of what we have achieved.

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YOUTH POLICY  
AND EDUCATION  
PRACTICE

