

# Coronavirus & The Class Of 2020

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How a pandemic upended Year 12 and their futures

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**YEAR13** YouthSense





**YEAR13 IS AN EDTECH THAT EMPOWERS YOUNG PEOPLE TO MAKE MORE INFORMED DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR FUTURE AND ENCOURAGES THEM TO LEAD HAPPIER AND MORE FULFILLING LIVES.**

We are a trusted advisor to 1.5 million young Australians each year, helping them to navigate their post-school transition and ultimately find more meaningful employment. The Year13 marketplace hosts our end-to-end career and life advice platform, which supports youth in the development of their optimal pathway across education, employment and experiences.

Powered by Year13, YouthSense is a youth insights platform focused on educating employers, brands, government, teachers, career advisors and parents on best practices when aiding youth through their post-school transition, with particular focus on understanding, communicating and working with young people. This is achieved through the provision of quantitative and qualitative data collated from youth surveys conducted by Year13 and YouthSense.

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# Year13 Methodology

## CORONAVIRUS AND THE CLASS OF 2020 SURVEY

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Two national surveys of Australian youth, conducted by Year13 and YouthSense between September and October 2020.

Total responses = 2,270

These surveys formed the basis of this research paper and were designed to gather comprehensive information about youth in their final year of high school this year. These surveys were conducted online and respondents were sourced via social media and through Year13's eDM (electronic direct mail) database. Youth quotes featured throughout this report were sourced from extended response questions included in each survey.

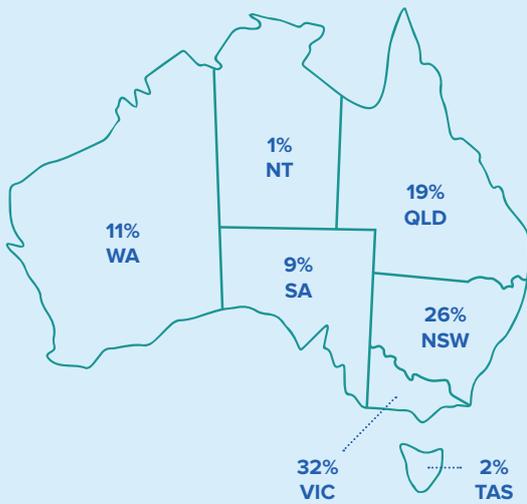
For ease of reading, we will not reference data collated from these surveys. It can be assumed that data in this report, unless otherwise referenced, was derived from this research.

**See right for combined demographics of these surveys.**

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LOCATION BREAKDOWN



Metropolitan (capital cities)



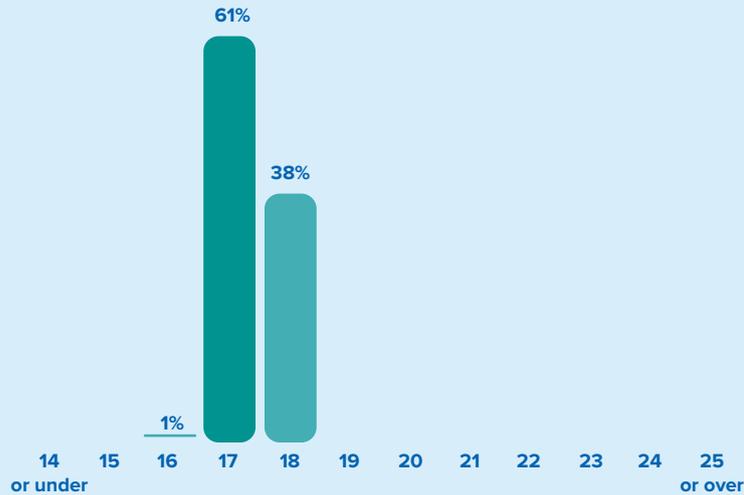
Regional (small cities & towns)



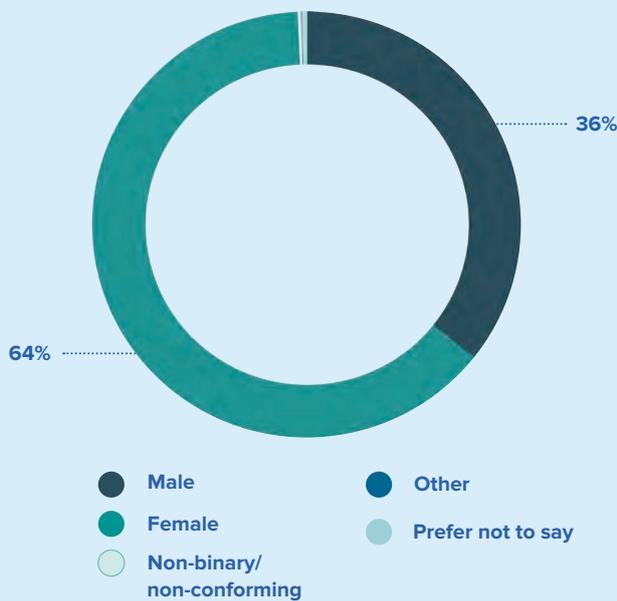
Rural



AGE BREAKDOWN



GENDER IDENTIFICATION



OUR RESPONDENTS

15% identify as LGBTQIA

15% are from a low SES background

4% are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

21% are from a CALD background

7% consider themselves to have a disability

100% are in their final year of high school

# Key Takeaways

BECAUSE OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC...

**96%**

of Year 12 students had to do remote learning.

**67%**

said it had worsened their school performance.

**79%**

said their mental health had been negatively impacted.

**70%**

said their post-school plans had changed.

**26%**

said they will study a different degree.

**80%**

said they are worried it will be harder to find a job.







**Being the first year 12 year to experience fire, floods and a world pandemic has caused so much mess and disruption to year 12 and has taken the joys of year 12 and being a teenager away. I cried for a while scared of how dangerous it really all is.**

**Female, 17, NSW, regional**

# Introduction

Memes have a knack of lightening up even the worst of situations. Between struggles with the WIFI and trying to find some peace and quiet while studying in a full house during lockdown, they've no doubt helped brighten up the difficult days of year 12s during the coronavirus pandemic this year.

One of the most popular memes shared on social media is about expectation versus reality. With two photos side-by-side showing an obvious difference between what's anticipated and what unfolds, they sum up how life just doesn't always work out the way we hope it will.

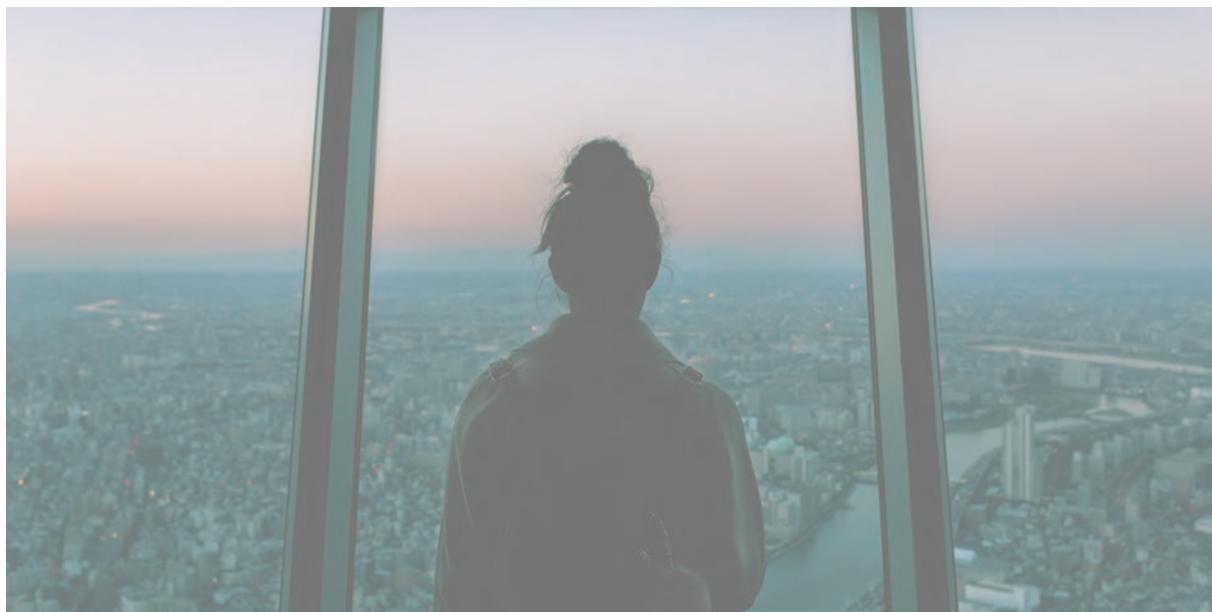
This reality that things don't always work in our favour tends to kick in sometime after school is over. We get out into the world and become subject to its random forces. But those 13 years of school are often a time where with our parents and teachers help we stay in a bubble of relative stability, shielded from the events of the world.

But not in 2020.

The 'Expectation vs. Reality' meme has been particularly apt for year 12 students finishing school during the coronavirus pandemic. Where many of them dreamed of having the best year of their lives, in its place has come its most difficult. Where they imagined the camaraderie of group study sessions and the carefree times of 18th birthday parties, instead has come the headache of online learning and the struggles of social isolation. Where they dreamed of an overseas gap year, now comes the uncertainty of what to do at home next year.

These are just some of the examples of how coronavirus has upended the lives of the class of 2020, told to us by over 2000 year 12 students we surveyed from across the country as the clock ticks down to their HSC. What stood out from their responses was how much reality has not lived up to expectation. Nothing it seems for the majority of year 12 students this year has worked out as they'd hoped. And in such an important and already stressful time of a teenager's life, the ramifications of this can be hard to fathom.

We've heard over 2000 stories from young people which are at once widely varied while also being bound by common themes of loss, struggle, change, resilience and gratitude. Through a mix of data and first-hand accounts, here we will show you what it's been like to finish high school during the coronavirus pandemic and how it's affected their futures.



“My final year hasn’t been what I thought it’d be. I’ve always dreamt of this classic Australian beach, party, festival fuelled year 12 experience. In reality it’s been a mix of anxiety, major work stress, not learning content, a very cancelled Splendour and having to teach myself the syllabus content.”

Female, 17, NSW, metropolitan

“For once I was actually keen for a school year because I knew I’d be able to experience things that only happen during year 12, like my school formal, my last school camp, my last school footy match, and finally being able to go on schoolies. But coronavirus has completely taken that away. Rather than being able to be at school with my mates, learning face to face and actually being able to leave my house for more than an hour a day, I’m struggling alone at home.”

Male, 18, VIC, metropolitan

“I think coronavirus has provided a lot of Year 12s with a bit of a reality check because a lot of us are so caught up in our own little world of formals and prefects and assessments that we forget what’s going on in the world around us. If anything it’s made me very grateful for my family and for the support that I get from my friends.”

Female, 17, QLD, metropolitan





## CHAPTER 1

# How The Coronavirus Pandemic Upended Year 12

# Learning in lockdown

## TIME YEAR 12S SPENT LEARNING REMOTELY



**70%**

said they haven't enjoyed remote learning.

### HOW DOES LEARNING REMOTELY COMPARE TO LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM?



**Much worse**  
40%



**Slightly worse**  
37%



**The same**  
6%



**Slightly better**  
12%



**Much better**  
5%

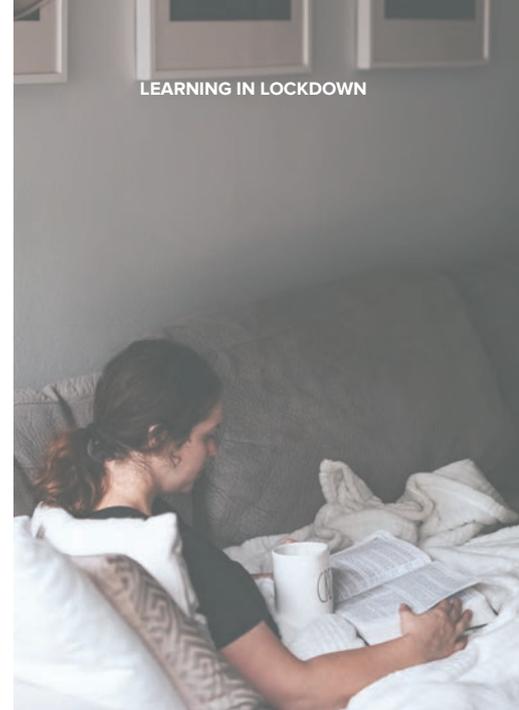


# 87%

said they missed the face-to-face interaction of in-class learning.

**“We were told to stay home, which we did... for two months. 57 days exactly. This saw many Zoom meetings, Google classroom tasks, and awkward phone calls from random teachers. I spent a few days actually trying to learn which was effective, but after those few days getting out of bed was hard and I was finding myself slipping into a hole and never really coming out.”**

**Female, 17, NSW, regional**



**“I can’t participate in school at home. I need to be at school, I can’t concentrate and I can’t learn. This adds to the already mountain of stress. I have to figure out how to study for things that I haven’t been able to learn while at home. I really don’t know how this will affect my exam results and my ATAR, and I guess along with that I also don’t know how my life will turn out after school.”**

**Male, 18, VIC, metropolitan**

**“Other than practical I’ve done three certificates I’ve completed at TAFE and they’ve all been done over Zoom calls. Yes I’ve got the certificate but I don’t feel like I’ve deserved it, I didn’t learn anything at all. Next year when I’m able to go work in the industry at bars, restaurants and gaming areas I’ve got the certificates but I didn’t practically learn a thing because learning online isn’t a practical way of learning.”**

**Female, 17, NSW, regional**



# 37%

said they didn't have access to everything they needed at home to learn remotely.

## WHAT WERE THESE STUDENTS LACKING?



**SPACE**  
46%



**ADEQUATE INTERNET**  
39%



**ADEQUATE TECHNOLOGY**  
33%



**A DESK**  
22%



**BOOKS**  
16%



**A CHAIR**  
15%



**STATIONERY**  
15%

**“This year I changed my attitude towards school and was enthusiastic about finishing and doing all my work. But when COVID-19 hit I didn’t have the right equipment to do my schoolwork at home. It threw my routines and mindset towards school out of whack and it started to take a toll after just the first week. I started to get angry over nothing and really stressed about being able to achieve my TCE.”**

**Male, 17, TAS, regional**

**“I did not have internet at home and I would have to hotspot myself and buy credit almost every week to do all the school work and attend all virtual class calls on iSee. It was a lot harder with 29 students not knowing who would talk without seeing a hand up around you. We would talk over each other and it wouldn’t be helpful towards our teacher who would stress about trying to get everyone together and answering all questions.”**

**Female, 17, QLD, rural**

**“How am I supposed to do school work efficiently when downloading a document takes 10-15 minutes. Or trying to participate in an online WebEx when I can’t connect because the connection is too slow. You fall behind and it gets quite hard to keep up when what you are working with seems to be on its last legs.”**

**Male, 17, WA, regional**

## HOW HAS YOUR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE BEEN AFFECTED BY THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC?



**Much worse**  
23%



**Slightly worse**  
44%



**The same**  
19%



**Slightly better**  
10%



**Much better**  
4%



**“I had the coronavirus and I was terrified of all my mates knowing and other students finding out during our online school stage. It was difficult because a lot of the time I was unable to complete online school work that I needed to submit because I would be constantly contacted by nurses checking up on my symptoms. All of this made me very unmotivated to do schoolwork from one - having the virus, and two - being easily distracted at home.”**

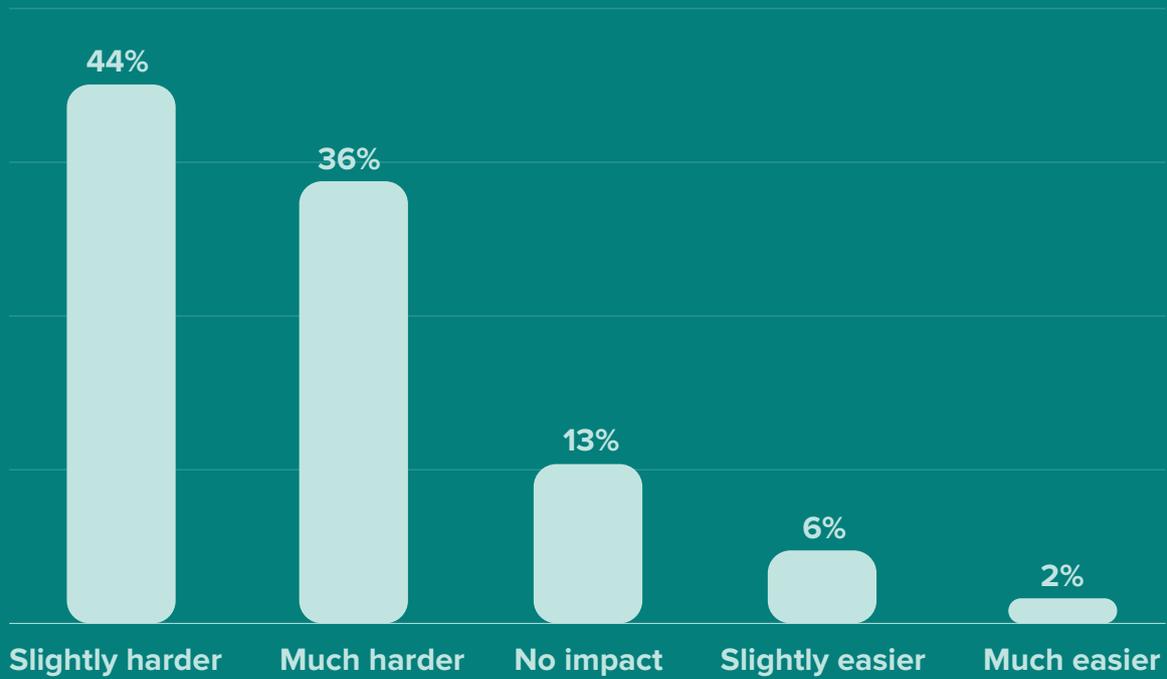
**Male, 18, NSW, metropolitan**



**“Most of my experience had been positive in the first wave of coronavirus for Victoria, I was keeping up with work, learning at my own pace, completing more work than I would in the classroom and all that. But once the second wave hit everything went down hill. I just gave up, I fell majorly behind, I was no longer allowed my main role in our school production which hit me hard, I started realising I can slack off during class, all motivation was lost and my scores are coming back not so great.”**

**Female, 17, VIC, regional**

### HOW HAS THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC MADE YOUR EXPERIENCE OF STUDYING FOR YOUR FINAL EXAMS?



### HAS YOUR SCHOOL CHANGED THEIR APPROACH TO FINAL EXAMS DUE TO CORONAVIRUS?



“My final year has been filled with things being cancelled which absolutely sucks. The workload never really decreased from our school and they still expect us to sit these extremely hard exams which we are going to be so under prepared for. The pressure on us now is huge and it is having a large mental health problem in our society.”

Male, 18, VIC, metropolitan

“During the time period when coronavirus was at its peak was during my term three exams and it really negatively impacted me. The fear and stress of exams being cancelled or not affected my studying - I couldn't focus and also being stuck at home felt suffocating. I missed the social interactions with friends and teachers.”

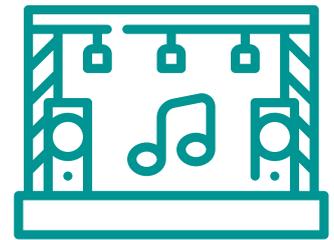
Female, 17, NSW, regional



“A year which I have been dreaming about and looking forward to for my entire school career has been stripped of the positives and I am left only with the stress of exams and usual teenage difficulties. When in a usual year 12 the stress of studying and working is broken up by partying, formals and graduation dinners, there is nothing to break up the time and my and my friends mental health has struggled significantly.”

Female, 17, VIC, metropolitan

# Missed Events



# 94%

said they've missed out on school events like carnivals, graduation ceremonies, sport and performances.



## HOW HAS MISSING THESE EVENTS AFFECTED YOUR SCHOOLWORK?



**Negatively**  
66%



**No impact**  
31%



**Positively**  
3%

“With all big school events being cancelled, changed or postponed it has made the year very difficult as we don’t have anything to look forward to or to strive for. I know this has put a strain on people, myself included, because I feel like we have really lucked out. I am less motivated with my studies which worries me about next year, and therefore my entire future.”

**Female, 18, SA, metropolitan**

“What also was stressful was the cancellation of the Catholic Performing Arts. I have been a part of that for seven years, and my best friend and I have always played together. Not being able to perform in our final year was devastating. We also missed a lot of other opportunities with music which had a huge impact on me, and as I am studying music at uni next year, this is causing a problem.”

**Female, 17, WA, metropolitan**



## HOW HAS MISSING THESE EVENTS AFFECTED YOUR MENTAL HEALTH?



**Negatively**  
78%



**No impact**  
19%



**Positively**  
3%

**“All school events I have spent the past six years looking forward to have been cancelled including sport and recreational carnivals and formal festivities. In retrospect the joy of year 12 has been made redundant and it seems as if many adults that are unaffected also remain unaware of the emotional impact of these events’ absence. Despite this inherent negativity I have bonded with my close peers on a deeper level due to our collective anguish and frustration at the circumstances.”**

**Male, 18, NSW, regional**



**“This year was a real bummer. For a year that’s supposed to be the best year of your life so far it has sucked. Everything that was meant to be special has gone. Athletics day, teacher vs. year 12 sport matches, formal, year 12 brekkie, probably muck up day. It feels like all this stress and we don’t even get the positives or fun things that are meant to come along with this year. It all feels worthless.”**

**Female, 18, VIC, metropolitan**

# Mental health

HOW HAS YOUR MENTAL HEALTH BEEN IMPACTED DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC?



Negatively  
79%



No impact  
15%



Positively  
6%

# 28%

have sought support from a mental health professional or school counsellor for coronavirus-related stress.

# 50%

said mental health support at their school had not been adequate.

**“I wasn’t able to talk to my therapist face to face in her office and was forced to attend my sessions online within my own house, which provided little privacy which I desperately needed for my conversations with her. My therapist would say that I was dealing with the COVID-19 situation pretty well, but I felt horrible, although I was so grateful that I was at home and safe with my family.”**

**Female, 17, WA, metropolitan**

**“My mental health prior to this year was also quite poor yet was improving by the day, however the added stress from lockdown has taken a toll once again on my mental health, with my school not really putting things in place such as counsellors for support not helping my situation.”**

**Male, 17, VIC, regional**

**“The effects of coronavirus and what it means is a big thing in my family as my mum works as a nurse. It was a scary time knowing that she was potentially exposed and had the possibility of getting coronavirus. This would mean the only income for my family would stop and my two siblings and I couldn’t go to school.”**

**Female, 18, QLD, regional**

## HOW MUCH HAVE YOU SOCIALISED WITH YOUR FRIENDS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC?



Less  
61%



The same  
23%



More  
16%

“At the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak my very close uncle passed away due to the virus which caused enormous strain on my mental health and due to the circumstances we weren’t able to go to his funeral or be with my family at the time. In a normal world I would enjoy being able to leave the house to see friends but I’ve been stuck in the house under these bad circumstances which has made it rough.”

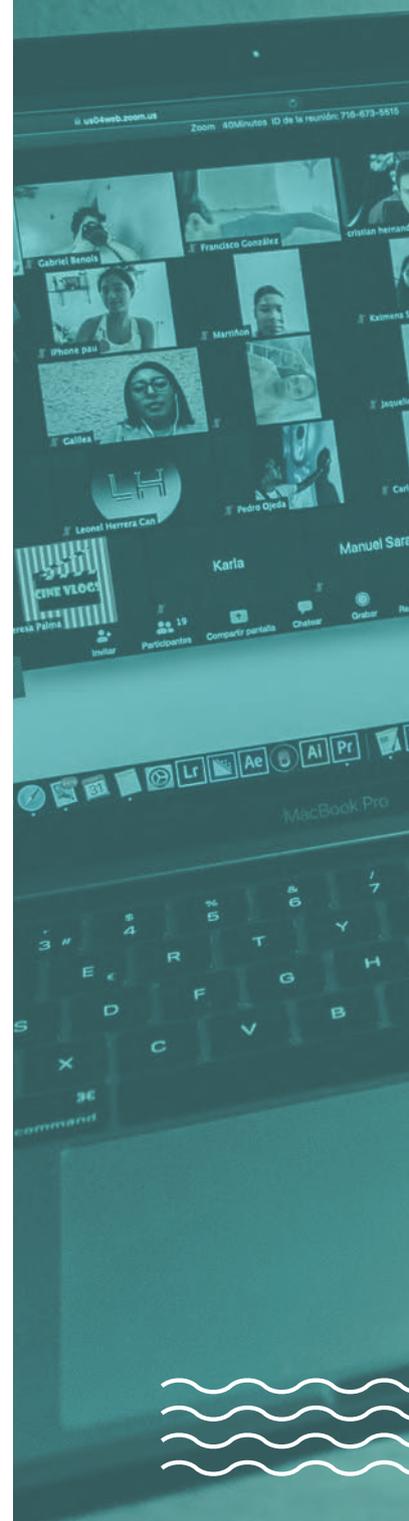
Male, 17, VIC, metropolitan

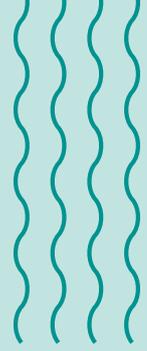
**“During isolation my mental health plummeted and as I was socially isolated from my friends my coping methods were decimated. Corona led to an increase in stress, sleep problems and anxiety - one unfortunate night I ended up in the hospital presenting with self harm and an eating disorder. With COVID restrictions lifting I’ve been able to talk to my friends and open up about my struggles. This experience has made me more aware of how precious relationships are.”**

**Female, 17, SA, metropolitan**

**“My 18th birthday fell on Good Friday in the midst of NSW’s heaviest restrictions. This meant my capability to celebrate was restricted to a party over Zoom, I had a DJ and everything. While for some this may seem like an utter let down of an 18th, it’s a memory I cherish for its uniqueness. As friends we now rely on each other more and have learned to be independent from our families not just financially and physically but also mentally and emotionally.”**

**Male, 18, NSW, regional**





## CHAPTER 2

# How the coronavirus pandemic upended their futures



# Post-school plans

70% SAID THEIR PLANS FOR AFTER SCHOOL HAVE CHANGED BECAUSE OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC. THIS INCLUDES:



CANCELLED TRAVEL



CANCELLED GAP YEARS



CHANGED COURSES



CHANGED SUBJECTS



DEFERRED EDUCATION



CHANGED CAREERS



CHANGED EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS



MOVING OR NOT MOVING



HOW HAVE YOUR POST-SCHOOL PLANS BEEN IMPACTED?



Negatively  
64%



No impact  
29%



Positively  
7%

“In 2019 a career in aviation was one of the safest jobs - pilot shortage, more travellers expected for 2020 - and I thought ‘wow, I may actually be able to achieve my dreams’. However, now this dream of mine has been turned right upside down. I am more likely to now pursue a different degree in teaching or IT.”

Male, 17, QLD, regional



“I have always wanted to go straight into a job in the events industry after school and unfortunately that industry is at a complete halt in Melbourne which has affected what I’ll do next year. Coronavirus has made me think more carefully about uni options and made me conscious of keeping my options a lot more open for the next few years.”

Female, 18, VIC, metropolitan

“Prospects of success in creative industries have become very limited and somewhat discouraged by officials as COVID has encouraged solely STEM careers. This leads me to fear whether this pursuit is actually worth it and question what the future of creative careers holds after the lasting impacts of coronavirus.”

Female, 18, WA, regional





“I’m a professional snowboard athlete and due to coronavirus my career is put on pause as I cannot travel to compete in my competitions or even train. This has been a massive problem as I have known what I wanted to do after school since year 6 but due to COVID all my plans are up in the air.”

Female, 17, VIC, metropolitan

“Before COVID I was more interested in uni but now I think I’m more interested in an apprenticeship or taking a gap year because I would rather not have a HECS debt and have to possibly do uni online just like school this year. It’s made me wonder what I really want in life and basically told me not to make rash decisions because not everybody figures it out straight away.”

Male, 17, VIC, metropolitan

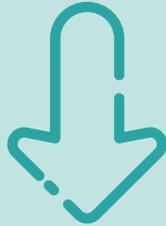


“Coronavirus has negatively impacted my mental health and motivation. As a result, I didn’t put as much effort into studying the UCAT as I should have and hence have changed my course preferences for next year. At the beginning of this year I was aiming for an ATAR above 95 but now am just hoping to finish year 12 and don’t care about my score.”

Female, 18, VIC, metropolitan



### HOW HAS THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AFFECTED YOUR LIKELIHOOD OF GOING INTO POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION NEXT YEAR?



Less likely  
25%

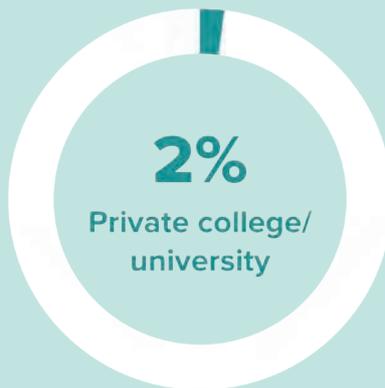
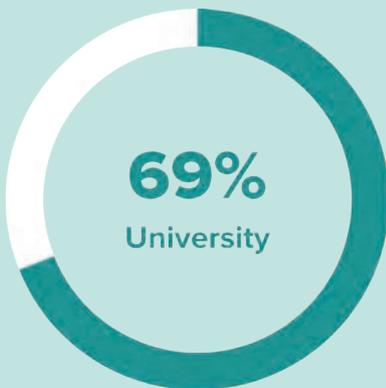


No impact  
50%



More likely  
25%

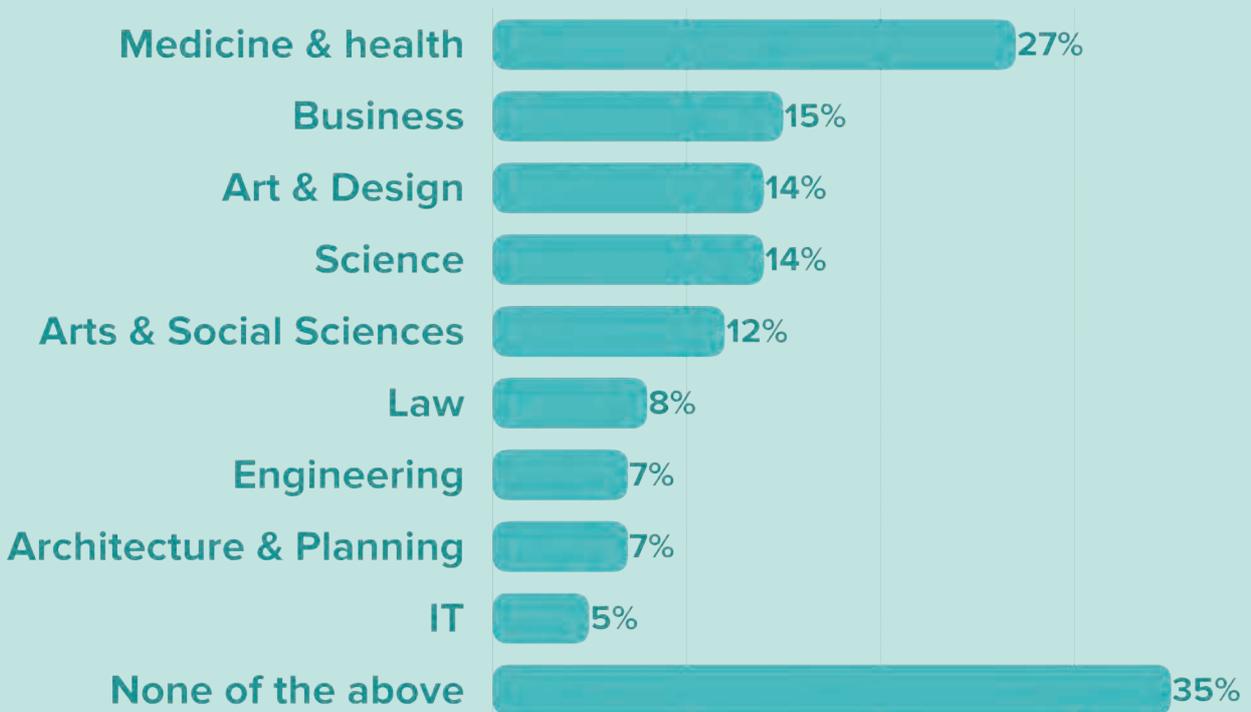
### WHAT POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION PATHWAY ARE YOU MOST LIKELY TO TAKE NEXT YEAR?



# 22%

want to pursue a different career due to the coronavirus pandemic.

### HAS THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC INSPIRED YOU TO PURSUE ANY OF THESE AREAS OF STUDY AFTER YOU FINISH SCHOOL?



# 40%

found a new passion or hobby during the coronavirus pandemic.

**“I focussed my whole schooling life on pursuing law but these circumstances have broadened my horizons to try take on a discipline within medicine. My own health concerns have contributed to this change of heart but I doubt I would have done so if the pandemic didn’t give me time to genuinely consider the benefits.”**

**Female, 18, VIC, metropolitan**



**“I had always wanted to do a business degree after school as that is where my interests lay. After seeing jobs stopped I spoke with my parents and decided that a nursing degree would benefit me more as it would see more secure jobs and I would be able to give back. A lot of my friends have decided on similar courses as a result as well.”**

**Female, 17, NSW, metropolitan**

**“I have always wanted to pursue a career in primary education and this year has reinforced my decision. I have relied so heavily on my teachers this year and they have supported me the whole way through. I want to do that for children in the future, during a pandemic or not.”**

**Male, 18, NSW, metropolitan**

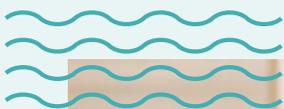


“During lockdown restrictions I have taken a keen interest in walking in my local forest. I have always lived here but only recently I have started to appreciate the environment. This triggered some thought of potential to study and possibly work with the environment and I have begun to research uni courses and change my preferences for UAC and VTAC.”

Male, 18, VIC, rural

“In terms of post-school goals initially before the epidemic I wanted to study paramedicine at university with hopes of a career as a paramedic. After observing the repercussions of the pandemic however I now understand the integral role of social workers in maintaining the vitality of those in need in such unforeseen and unfortunate circumstances.”

Male, 18, NSW, regional



“The at-home learning experience has tested the mental challenges but I’ve found my peace in the kitchen and am now interested in a career in dietetics so one day I can start my own business. Seeing how the virus has resulted in so many people losing their jobs has been a driving force for me wanting to be my own boss and doing a job that helps other people.”

Female, 18, VIC, regional

# University

Because of the coronavirus pandemic...

**26%** want to study a different degree than they were planning on before.

**25%** want to study different subjects than they were planning on before.

**27%** will go to a different university than they were planning on before.

“COVID affects us all, so while my experience may have been bad, I’m not alone. We’re all in this together. I originally was going to focus on IT in university for my career but now I’m aiming to study psychology so I can help kids just like myself, like my brother, like my friends. We all need a little help sometimes.”

Female, 18, VIC, metropolitan



“Prior to coronavirus I was dedicated to doing history as my major at university as I absolutely love it. Though, I have had to change my major into a STEM project due to humanities HECS increasing, and a STEM degree will guarantee I don’t lose my future career if something like corona occurs again.”

Female, 17, WA, metropolitan

“Post-COVID not only am I planning on attending a university closer to home so that I can possibly avoid public transport, I am also considering universities that have lower ATAR requirements, because there is no way I’m getting the ATAR I had originally planned for.”

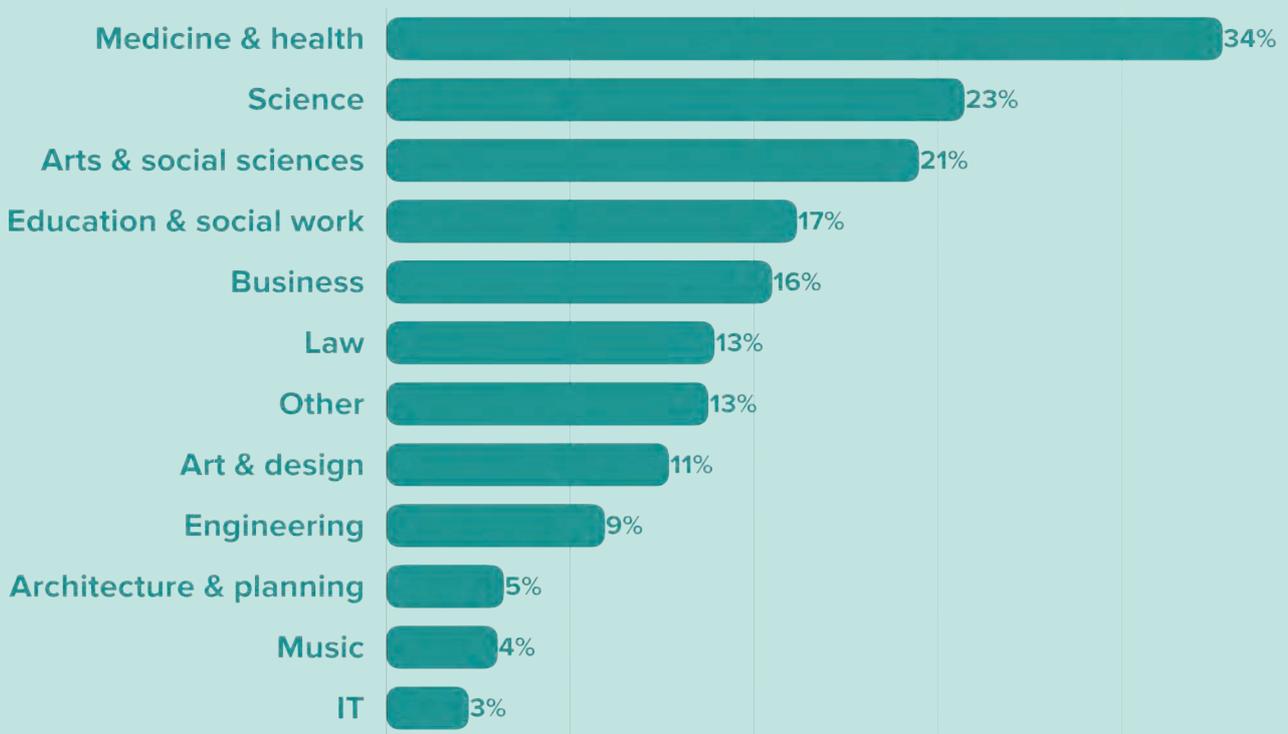
Female, 17, VIC, regional

### HAS THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC STOPPED YOU FROM MOVING TO GO TO UNIVERSITY?



- I wasn't going to move for university
- Yes, it's stopped me from moving to a different state
- No, I will still move to a different state
- No, I will still move to a different town/city in my state
- Yes, it's stopped me from moving to a different town/city in my state

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO STUDY AT UNIVERSITY?



WHICH LEVEL OF DEGREE DO YOU WANT TO ATTAIN?

56%

Bachelor degree

19%

Bachelor honours,  
Graduate diploma,  
Graduate certificate

16%

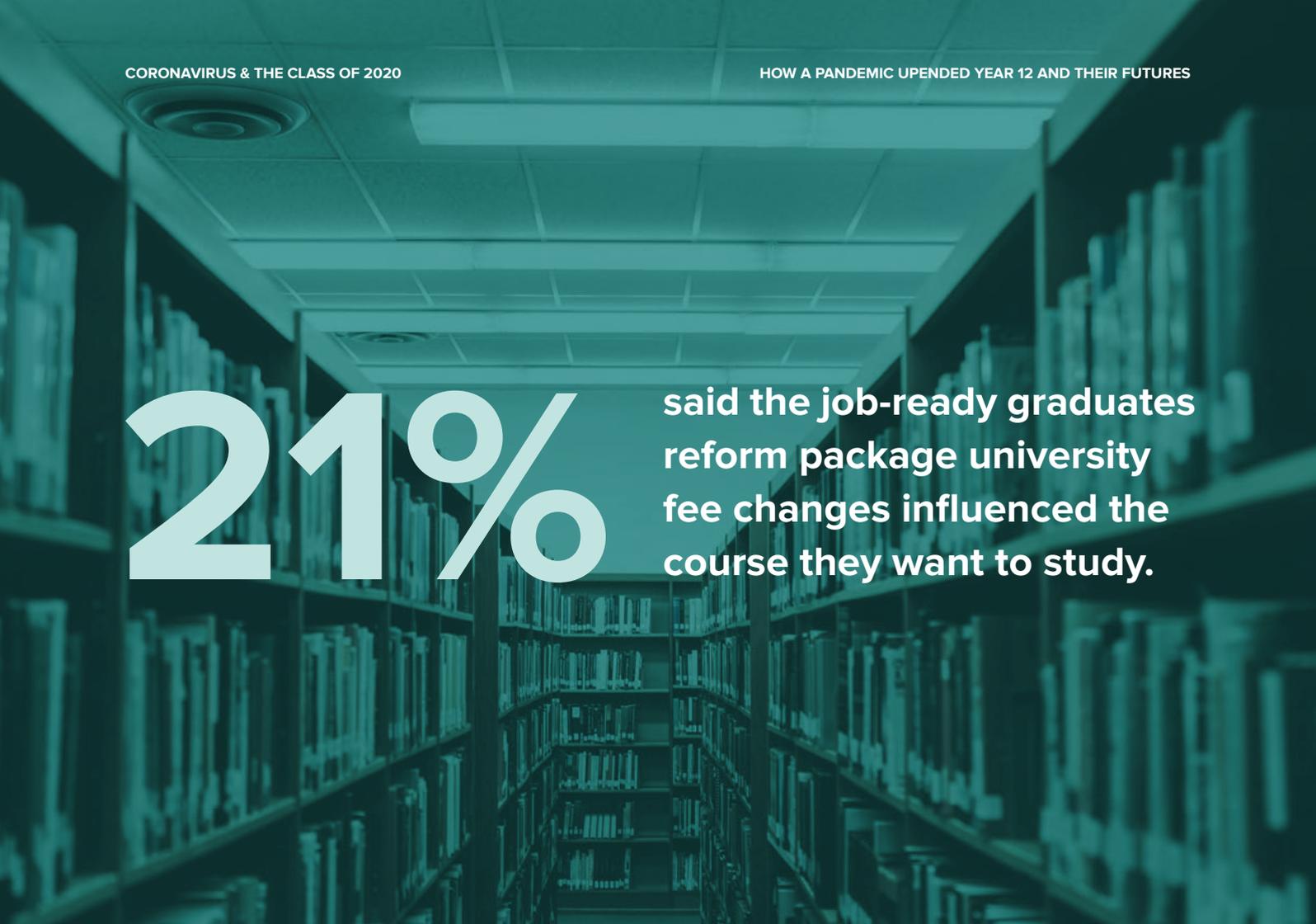
Master's degree

6%

Doctoral degree

6%

Diploma (Pathway)



**21%**

said the job-ready graduates reform package university fee changes influenced the course they want to study.

HOW DID IT AFFECT YOUR CHOICE?

**60%** **40%**

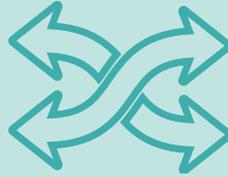
are now planning on doing a different course because of fees increasing.

are now planning on doing a course because of fees reducing.

### WOULD YOU PREFER TO DO YOUR UNIVERSITY STUDY ONLINE OR ON CAMPUS?



**On campus**  
65%



**A mix of both**  
34%



**Online**  
1%



### HOW IMPORTANT IS AN ON-CAMPUS EXPERIENCE TO YOUR UNIVERSITY STUDIES?



**Very important**  
71%



**Somewhat important**  
27%



**Not important**  
2%

### HOW WOULD YOU PREFER TO ACCESS UNIVERSITY STUDENT COUNSELLING AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES?



**In person**  
**82%**



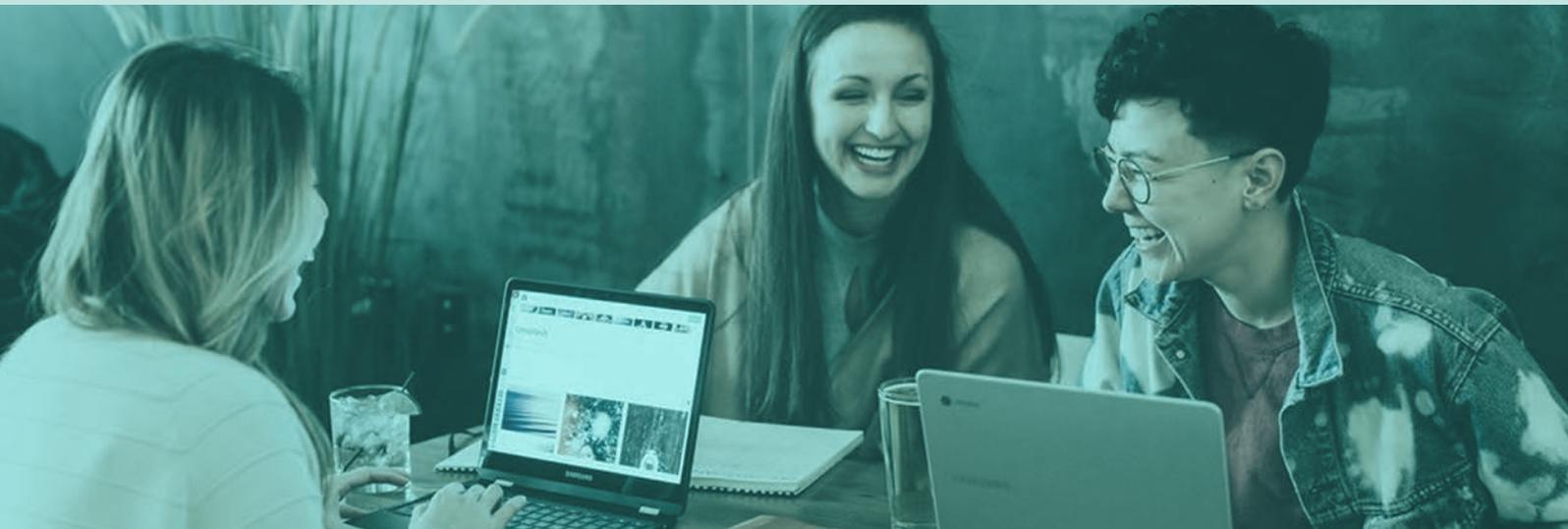
**SMS/Messages**  
**9%**



**Phone call**  
**6%**



**Video call**  
**3%**



### WHICH COSTS WOULD YOU PREFER A UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP TO COVER?



**Course fees**  
**63%**



**Textbooks, equipment, accommodation and living costs**  
**37%**



**27%**

said job losses in adults they know had affected their post-school choices.

**78%**

want a career which is perceived to be safe in income potential and long-term employability.

**WHICH TYPE OF CAREER WOULD YOU LIKE TO FOLLOW?**



**Established (e.g. law, medicine, teaching)**  
**68%**



**New age (e.g. digital marketing, AI, sustainability)**  
**32%**



**39%**

would like to develop a start-up business during university.

**64%**

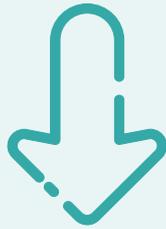
would do an internship online during university.

**87%**

want sustainability to be incorporated into university course content.

# Moving away

HOW HAS THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AFFECTED YOUR LIKELIHOOD OF MOVING AWAY FROM HOME NEXT YEAR AFTER SCHOOL FINISHES?



Less likely  
38%



Wasn't planning to move  
34%

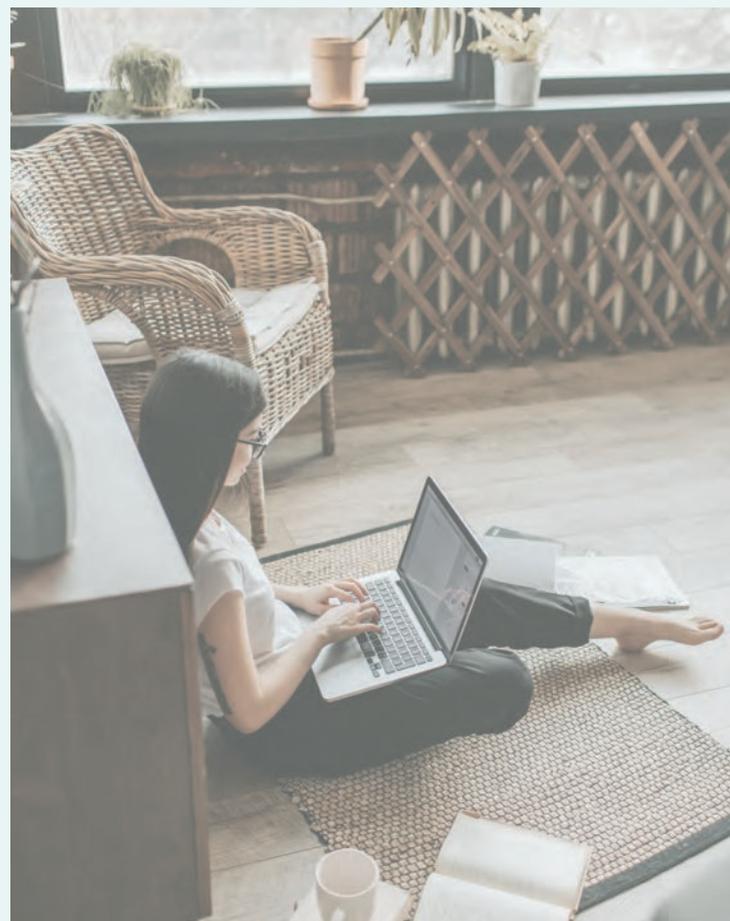


More likely  
28%



“Due to coronavirus I plan to stay at home for uni where I plan to study accounting. I decided to stay home as moving away to Melbourne would pose major difficulties as it would possibly be hard for me to find a job or even accommodation especially post-COVID.”

Female, 18, NSW, regional



“Lockdown has been positive for me as it has made me think of what is important to me and that being moving to the country to build and be a carpenter. It has made me realise that city living isn’t something I want to do and get back to a simpler lifestyle focusing on important things in life.”

Male, 18, VIC, metropolitan

“Before coronavirus I had plans of starting uni immediately after school, but as a result of the lack of jobs now and the seldom security of existing jobs it’s going to be extremely financially straining to move straight away, so deferring is the only viable option. I really don’t like my hometown but financially I have to stay.”

Male, 17, WA, regional

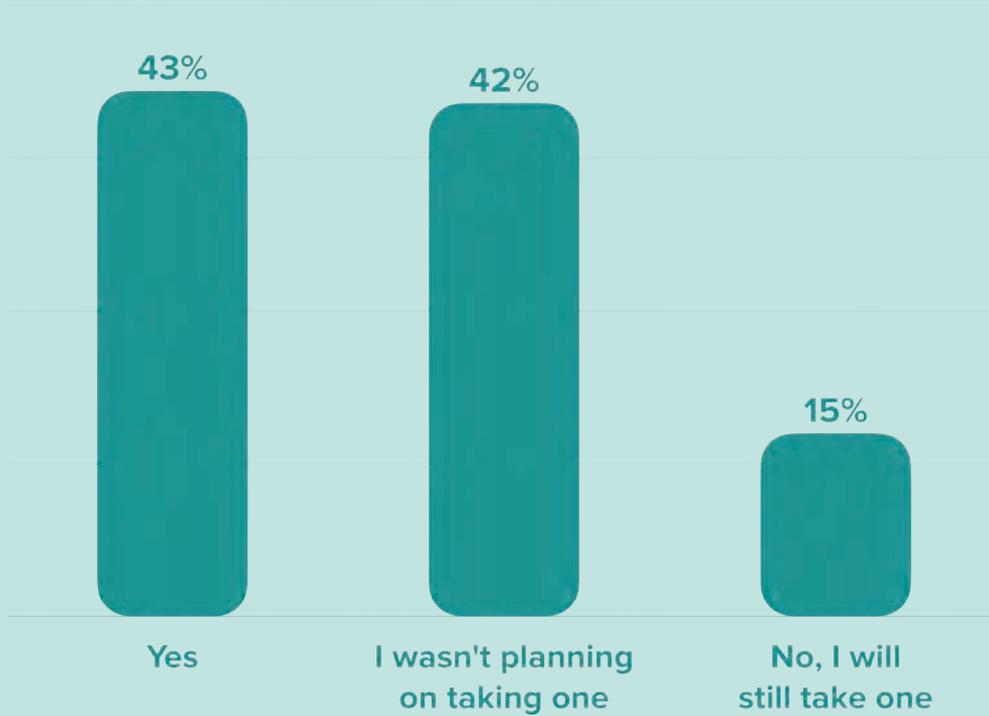
“The COVID pandemic has changed my plans for next year in regards to whether or not I want to move out next year. Having everyone working from home at my house has made me more eager to get some freedom and independence.”

Female, 18, NSW, metropolitan



# Gap years

HAS THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC STOPPED YOU FROM TAKING A GAP YEAR NEXT YEAR?



WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE A GAP YEAR IF THERE WERE NO CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS?



“I learnt how difficult it is to remain engaged in learning and absorb information when doing online learning. Initially I planned to go to university starting 2021, however in light of many universities being online currently I will likely take a gap year in order to ensure my university experience is physical and does not involve online learning.”

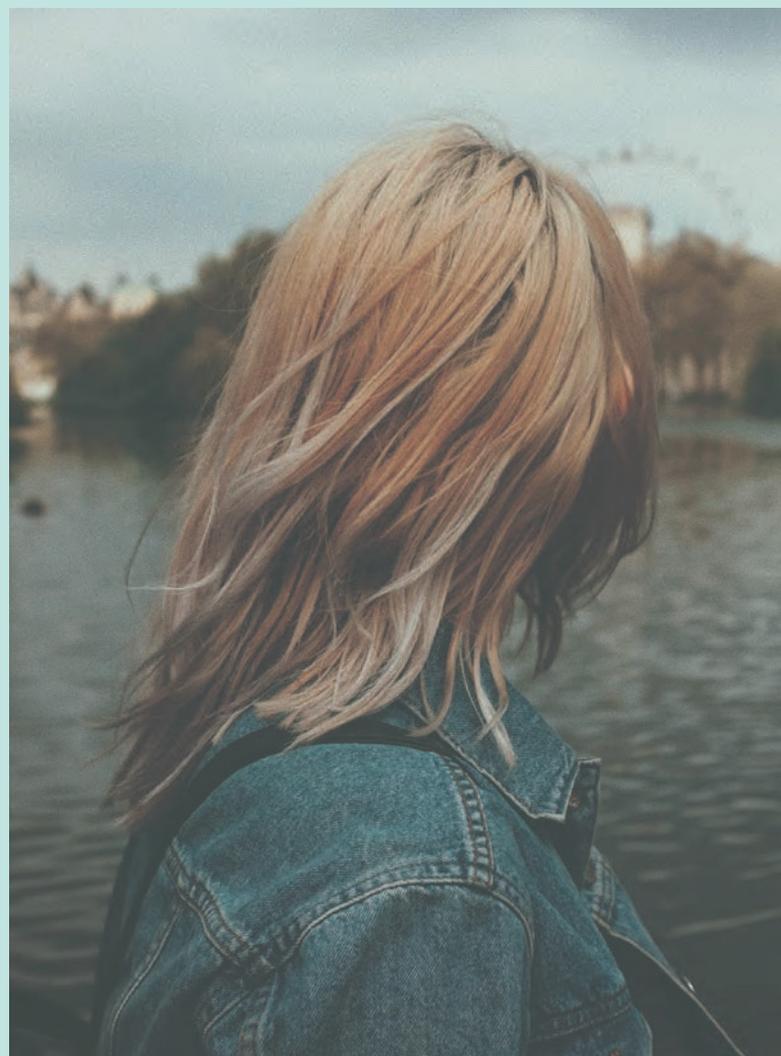
Male, 17, NSW, metropolitan

“I don’t just want a gap year, I need a gap year. I’m not sure what degree I would do if I went to uni, but I know I want to do some sort of tertiary education. However, my problem is that I don’t want to rush into it, and now I feel forced to. If I take a gap year, will there be work for me? Will I be able to travel anywhere? Will it be worth it?”

Female, 18, NSW, regional

“I had planned to go live with my family in England for six months and then travel Australia with my best friend. So then I thought to turn my 2022 plans into my 2021 plans, which were to study two CERT III’s. However I don’t want to leave education only to go into more education. As well if I can’t get my license I have no way of getting to TAFE. I also don’t want to go into any online schooling again. So I’ve gone from having my next three years planned out to being really stuck and unsure.”

Female, 17, VIC, regional



# Schoolies

WITH SCHOOLIES CANCELLED THIS YEAR WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO INSTEAD?



Hiring a rental/Airbnb  
39%



Road trip  
33%



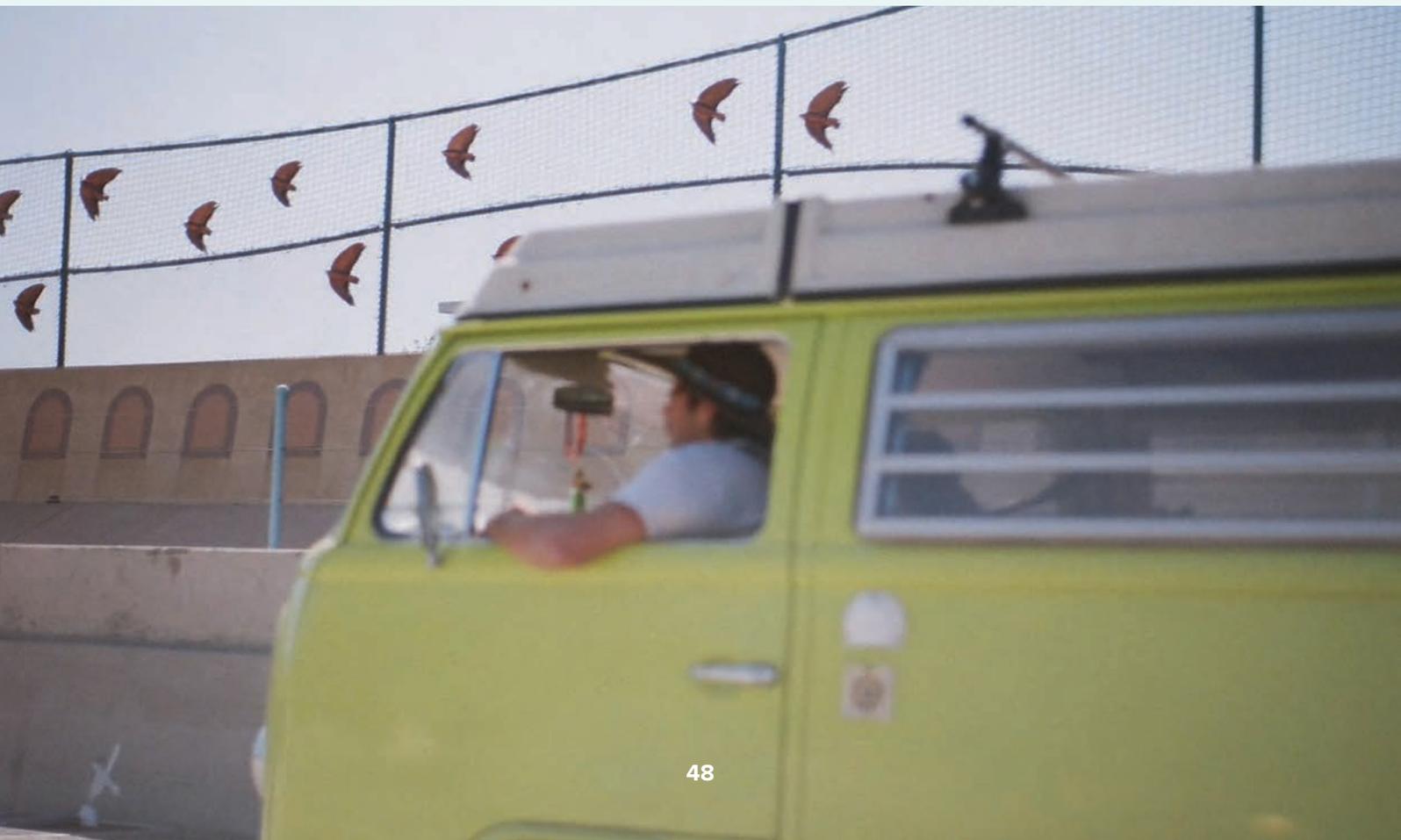
Camping  
28%



House party at home  
20%



Nothing  
24%



“I planned on going to schoolies in Bali at the end of the year but that has unfortunately been cancelled. My friends and I are now talking about doing an Australian road trip camping or renting an AirBnB up the coast somewhere. It might even be better than schoolies, I guess we’ll never know.”

Female, 17, NSW, regional

“I was planning on going to Borneo to volunteer during schoolies. I spent ages saving up the money for it and made multiple payments but the company has gone bankrupt due to COVID-19, this has resulted in so many problems trying to get the money I paid back. I really wanted to travel after year 12 but now that seems impossible. I’m hoping I can go camping with a group of my friends as a celebration instead.”

Female, 17, SA, regional



“I was looking forward to things like schoolies in Fiji with my friends but since that was cancelled as well as grad celebrations I had not much to look forward to as motivation. One good positive is that we made alternative plans for schoolies to hire an AirBnB which is arguably better as it’s low-key and chill.”

Female, 17, NSW, regional

# Employment

HOW ARE YOU FEELING ABOUT LIFE AFTER SCHOOL NEXT YEAR?



Negative  
36%



Neutral  
35%

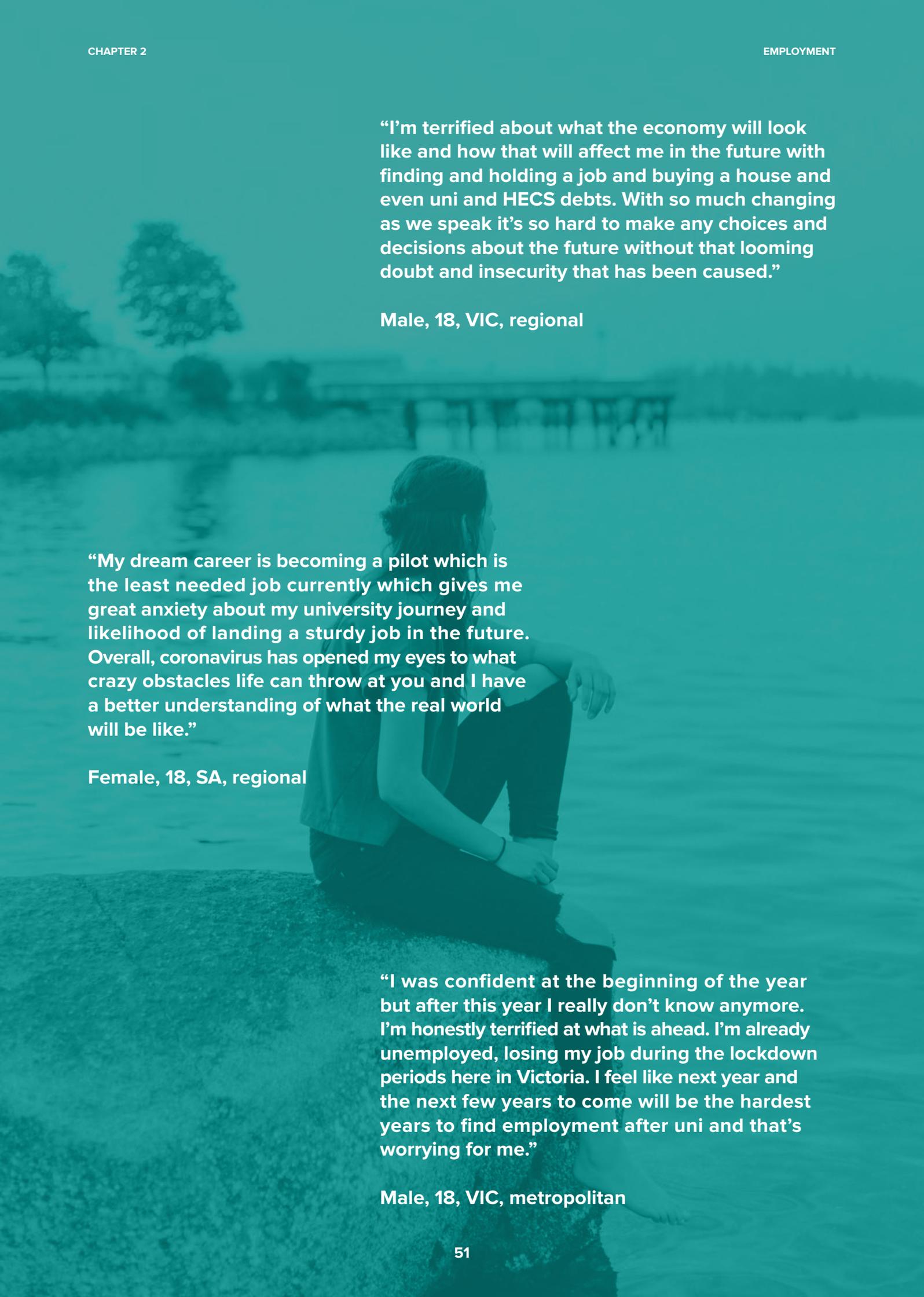


Positive  
29%



# 80%

are worried it will be harder to find or maintain a job after they finish school due to the coronavirus pandemic.

A person with long hair, seen from behind, is sitting on a large, dark rock by the edge of a body of water. They are looking out towards a wooden pier or bridge structure in the distance. The scene is captured in a monochromatic teal color. The person is wearing a dark top and pants. The water is calm, and the sky is overcast.

**“I’m terrified about what the economy will look like and how that will affect me in the future with finding and holding a job and buying a house and even uni and HECS debts. With so much changing as we speak it’s so hard to make any choices and decisions about the future without that looming doubt and insecurity that has been caused.”**

**Male, 18, VIC, regional**

**“My dream career is becoming a pilot which is the least needed job currently which gives me great anxiety about my university journey and likelihood of landing a sturdy job in the future. Overall, coronavirus has opened my eyes to what crazy obstacles life can throw at you and I have a better understanding of what the real world will be like.”**

**Female, 18, SA, regional**

**“I was confident at the beginning of the year but after this year I really don’t know anymore. I’m honestly terrified at what is ahead. I’m already unemployed, losing my job during the lockdown periods here in Victoria. I feel like next year and the next few years to come will be the hardest years to find employment after uni and that’s worrying for me.”**

**Male, 18, VIC, metropolitan**

# Resilience

**Despite everything the class of 2020 has dealt with, they are coming out the other side stronger for it.**

“This debilitating landscape of inactivity caused us to travel into the tornado of procrastination. We played DS games and it felt like an inescapable cycle. However, despite this opportunity to have unlimited leisure time, there’s only so much that procrastination can do for our meaning in life and recognition. Thus erupts an unlikely side effect of isolation: by uncovering our temporarily lost motivation, we tried working towards the meaning that we had lost. Isolation presented us with the thing that it had taken away. Motivation.”

Female, 17, NSW, rural



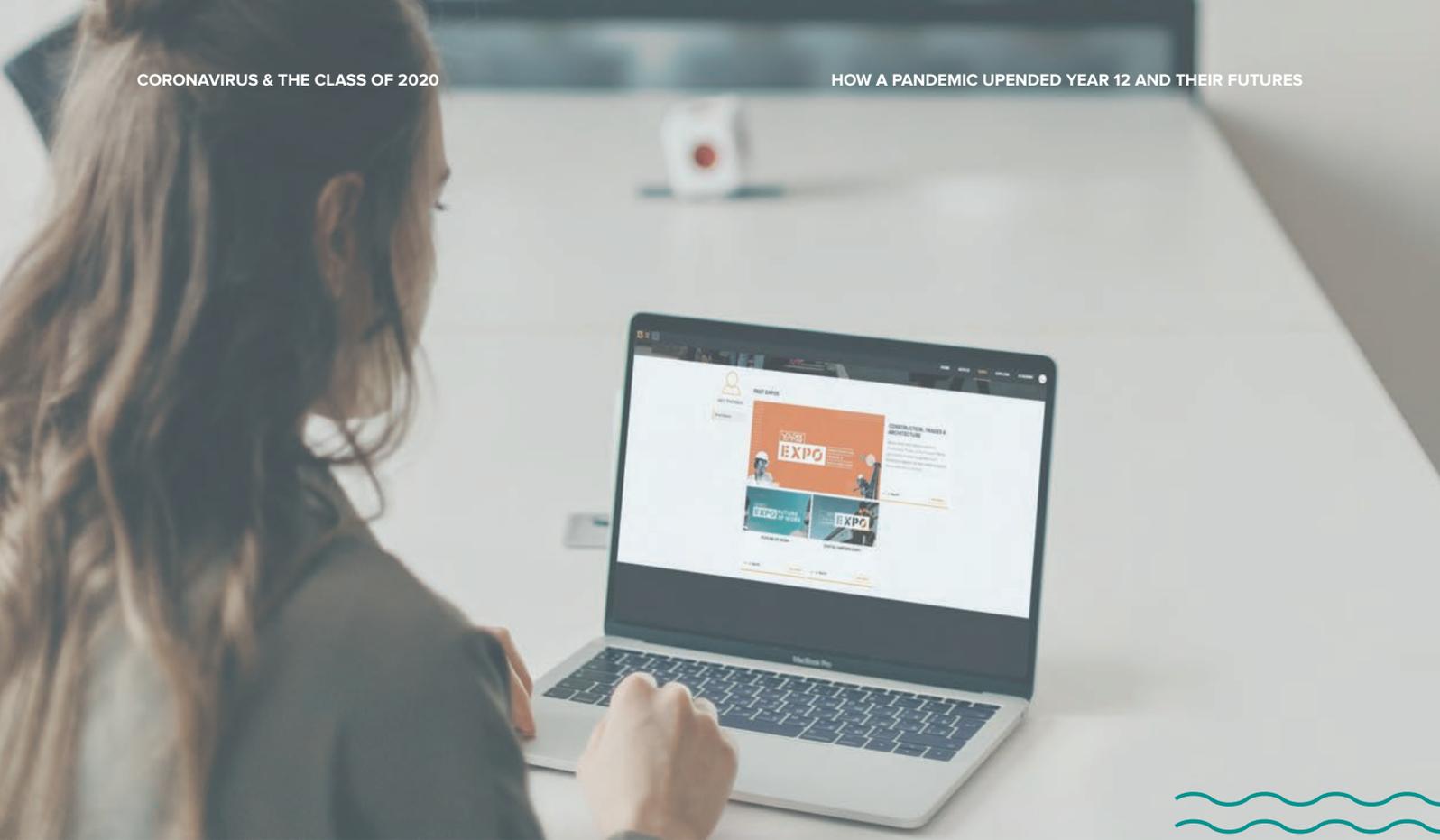
“In a lot of ways it has brought my whole cohort closer together. All the school leaders have been working hard to make sure all the students feel like we’re in this together. I’m grateful for the support from all my peers and the school, it’s made our grade of almost 550 students feel like a close knit family. We’ve made it through a pandemic so I’m excited for what next year brings us.”

Female, 17, QLD, metropolitan

“We have grabbed every opportunity with both hands and squeezed it dry until nothing was left to gain from the minimal experiences we could have. We have left our legacy, not as the sad grade that missed out, but as the cohort of 2020 that tackled the year with ambition and an unparalleled attitude. I can confidently say that we have come out of those situations as greater people. Future years are going to miss us and remember us individually as the leaders who could think and overcome.”

Male, 18, QLD, regional





## CHAPTER 3

# How Educators Can Help Young People Work Out Their Futures

In a post-COVID world students are looking for new ways of doing things. A combination of physical and digital engagement is now needed to support the post-school decision making process. By leveraging the best of both worlds young people now have an even greater ability to make, what until that point, is the most important decision of their lives.

While the coronavirus pandemic has been disruptive, it's brought forth evolutions which will stay the course long after those ripples have subsided. The uptake of digital engagement in the post-school journey was accelerated by the pandemic. While it's been a phase of rapid discovery, best practices have emerged in the digital careers space and we are driven to help educators remain at the forefront of this.

# How youth are making their decisions

WHAT HAS HAD THE GREATEST IMPACT ON YOUR POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION DECISIONS THIS YEAR?

**65%**  
Education institution websites

**53%**  
Online expos

**49%**  
Teachers

**45%**  
Career advisors

**44%**  
Friends

**39%**  
Parents

HOW HAVE YOU FOUND EDUCATION INSTITUTION ONLINE OPEN DAYS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC?



Very bad  
3%



Bad  
12%



Okay  
36%



Good  
39%



Very good  
10%

# 92%

want to go to a physical expo.

# But...

# 74%

want online expos to continue after coronavirus restrictions are lifted.

### AT AN ONLINE EXPO WHO WOULD YOU PREFER TO HEAR FROM ABOUT AN INDUSTRY?

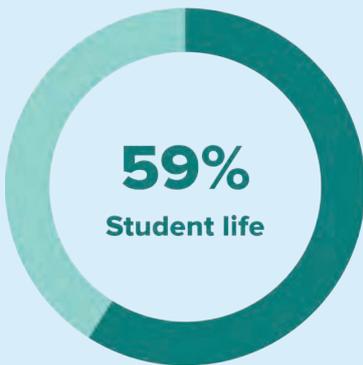
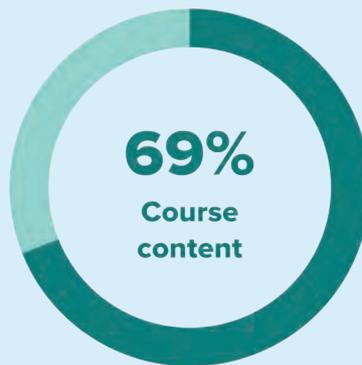


Young people  
68%

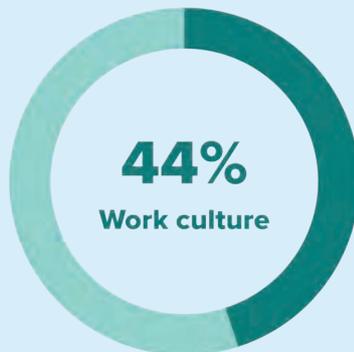
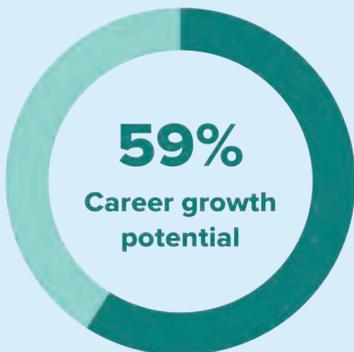


Senior experts  
32%

### AT AN ONLINE EXPO WHEN RESEARCHING EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS WHAT INFORMATION MATTERS MOST?



### AT AN ONLINE EXPO WHEN RESEARCHING CAREERS WHAT INFORMATION MATTERS MOST?



### HOW WOULD YOU PREFER TO GET INFORMATION ABOUT CAREERS YOU'RE INTERESTED IN?



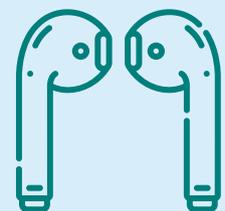
Live webinars  
with Q&A  
67%



Informative  
videos  
65%

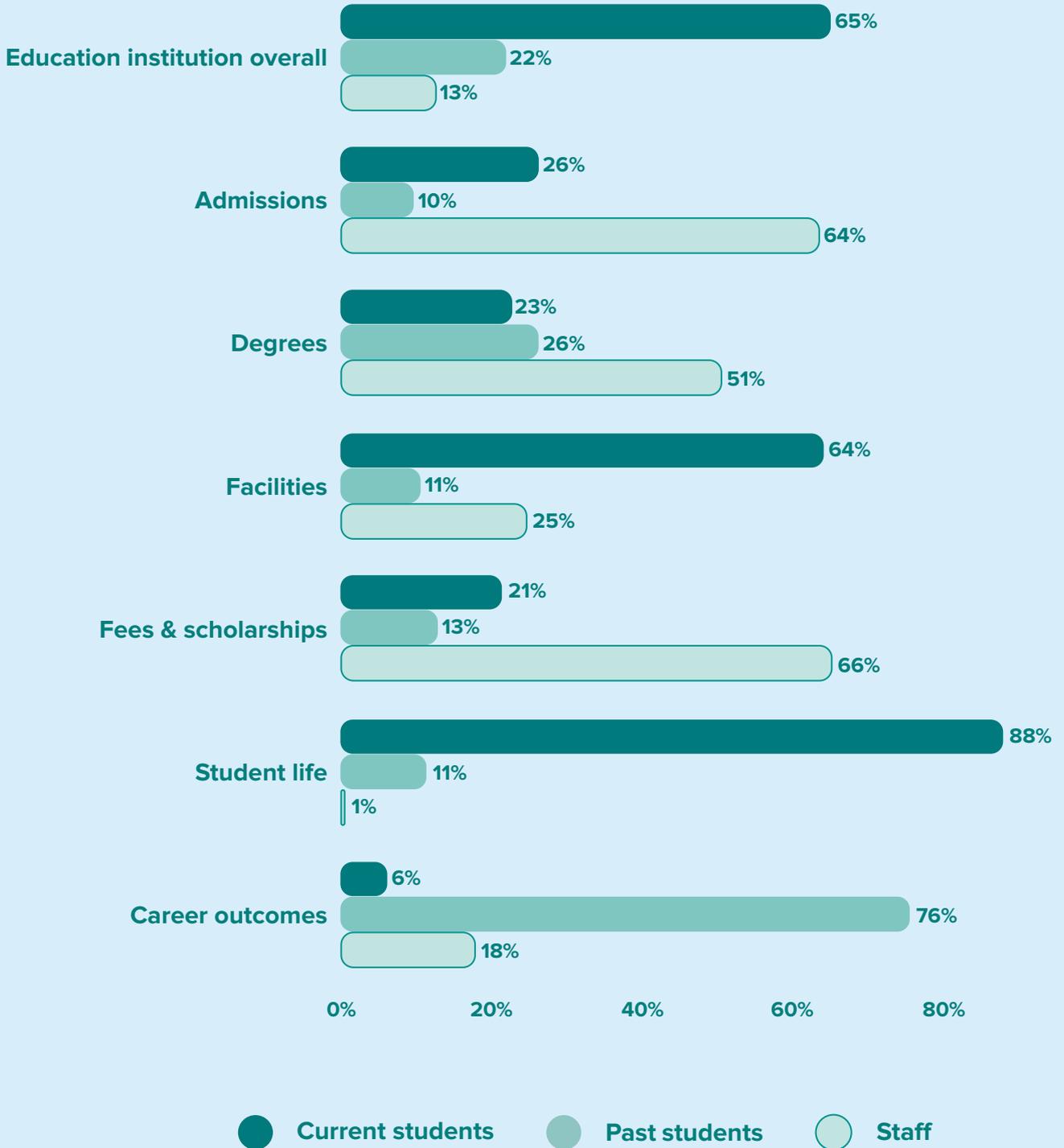


Written  
articles  
45%



Podcasts  
30%

### AT AN OPEN DAY/EXPO WHO WOULD YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE INFORMATION FROM ABOUT THE FOLLOWING?



### AT AN ONLINE EXPO WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SESSIONS WOULD YOU PREFER?

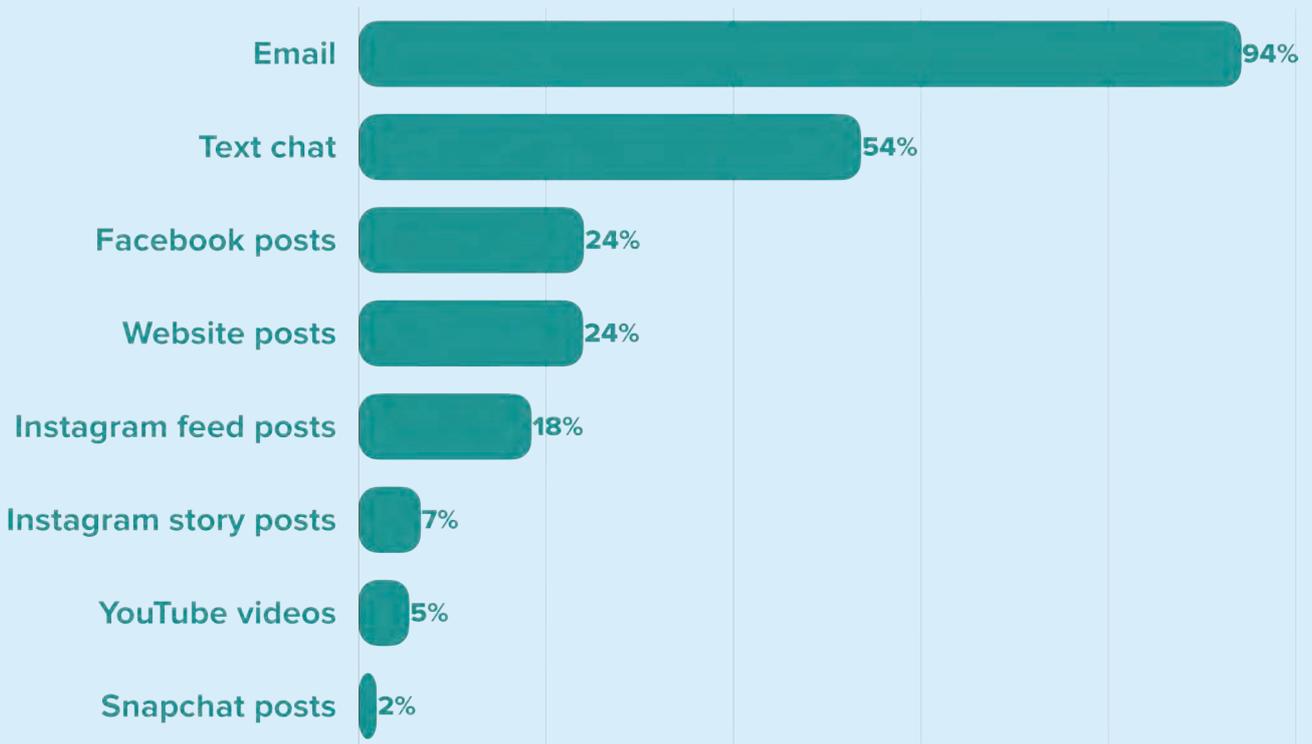


Live webinars  
57%

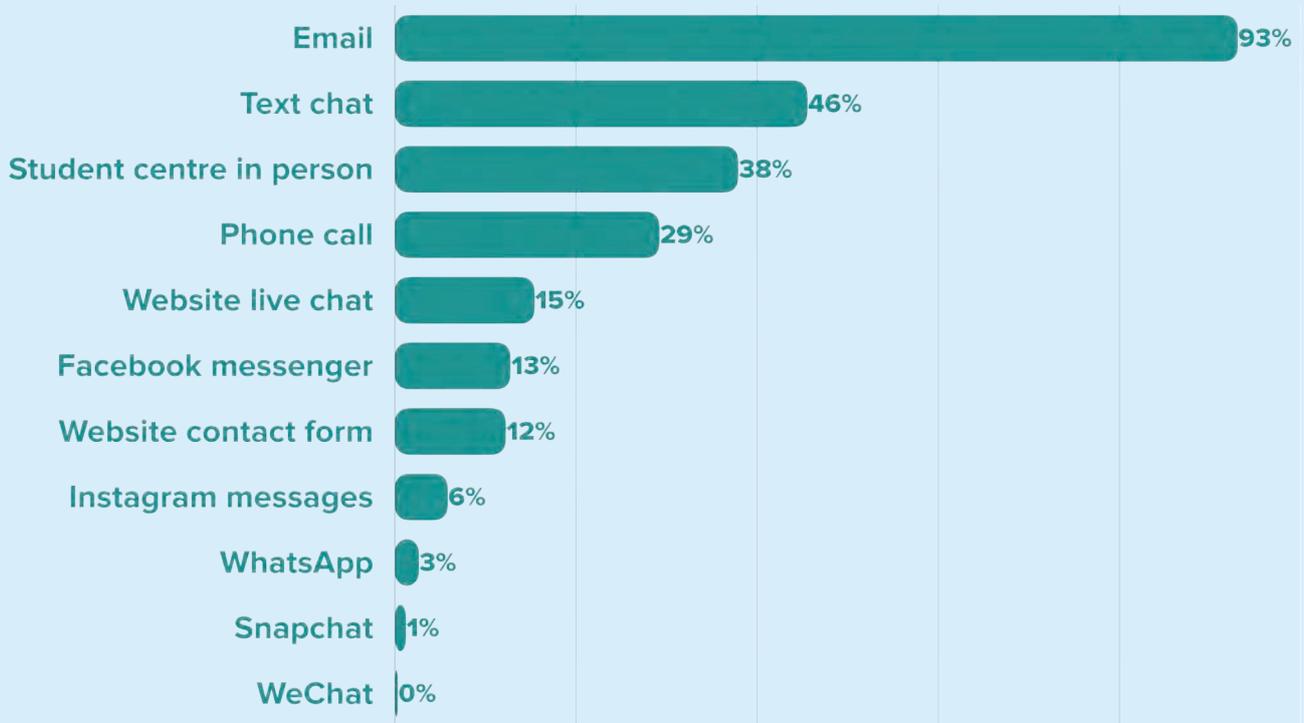


Small online meetings  
43%

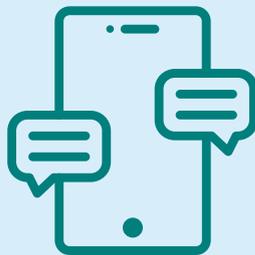
### HOW WOULD YOU PREFER AN EDUCATION INSTITUTION TO COMMUNICATE UPDATES WITH YOU?



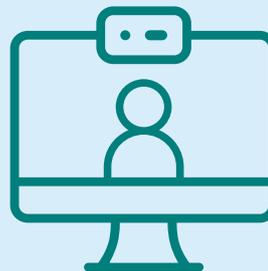
**HOW WOULD YOU PREFER TO COMMUNICATE WITH AN EDUCATION INSTITUTION WHEN YOU HAVE A QUESTION?**



**DURING A LIVE WEBINAR AT AN ONLINE EXPO WHICH WAY WOULD YOU PREFER TO ASK QUESTIONS DURING A Q&A?**



**Text chat**  
84%



**Video chat**  
16%



# Final thoughts

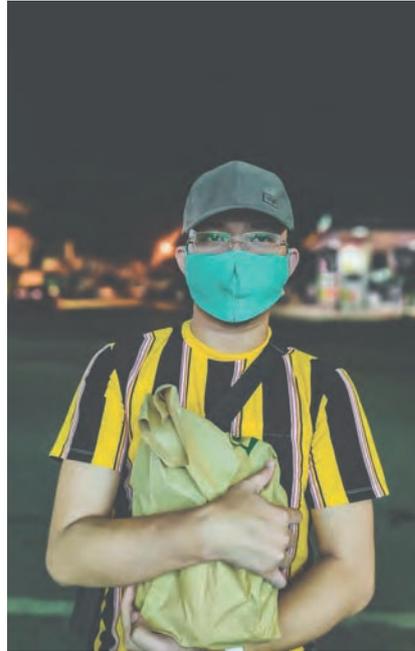
Despite the angst the class of 2020 are feeling about their futures, green shoots are already emerging. With 40% of young people saying they found a new passion or hobby during the pandemic, many will harness these into newfound opportunities for their futures. The rapid uptake of new technologies during the pandemic will also breed more innovation and new ways of doing things which will define their generation.

As the global economy rebuilds post pandemic the influence of modern technology usurping traditional ways of doing things across all industries will accelerate the fourth industrial revolution and see the rise of the new-collar worker. Rather than being defined as white or blue, the new-collar worker will be defined by their adaptability in the face of change and how they use their personal and enterprise skills to overcome these obstacles and the ever-changing employment landscape.

As the class of 2020 now intimately knows, nothing in this world is certain. Nothing lasts forever. But being forged in the fire of the coronavirus pandemic will make them more agile and adaptive because they simply had no other choice than to be. By learning how to use their innate skills and passions to traverse this increasingly uncertain world of work before them, the class of 2020 are now more ready than anyone to meet these challenges head on. Even if they don't know it yet.







## YEAR13 YouthSense

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Reference as: Walker, I, (2020). 'Coronavirus & The Class Of 2020: How a pandemic upended Year 12 and their futures', Year13, Australia.



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