



MEDIA RELEASE: Equity, equality and fairness most important to young people

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21 August 2018: A new report released today by Youth Action – the NSW peak body for young people – shows the depth and gravity of young people’s concerns about rising inequality in NSW and across Australia.

The report – *Inequality in Australia: A Young Person’s Perspective* – analyses the open-ended responses of 500 young people to questions focusing on three issue areas that disproportionately affect young people – education, housing and employment.

‘Young people are often talked ‘about’ but their voices are not heard on the issues that affect them the most, so we’ve tried to create something that gives direct insight into what young people are thinking, in their own words,’ said Katie Acheson, CEO of Youth Action.

‘What came through strongly is just how altruistic young people are when offering solutions to issues, how far they look into the future and just how concerned they are with outcomes that promote equity, equality and fairness.

‘They saw education as a fundamental right and the building blocks of a prosperous society, employment as critical to leading a happy, fulfilled life, and housing affordability and security as a key driver of widening inequality gaps,’ she said.

As part of their responses to the issues, young people pointed to the actions governments were currently taking and offered potential solutions.

‘Young people are overwhelmingly disappointed by government responses and actions. They see politicians who they perceive as inauthentic, lacking vision, not listening to young people and not acting in their best interests or the interests of future generations,’ said Ms Acheson.

‘Their responses reveal just how politically and socially engaged young people are and how passionate they are about creating a better future for themselves despite seeing a lack of attention and action on critical issues,’ she said.

The report showcases more than 50 quotes from young people aged 12–25 across varying gender, age, employment and education demographics.

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Quote highlights from the report

Education:

I see education as a human right not a profit-making machine reserved only for the wealthy.

- Female, 20–25, University student, Unemployed

I suggest a serious review (which does not involve the members of parliament rather a third-party review) into the system which aims to address the significant gap in funding from public to private schools. Also, a closer look at other countries such as Finland that has no private schools therefore they are all funded the same.

- Female, 17–19, University student, Unemployed

Allocate efficient amounts of funding to education (tertiary), this is what shapes the future of the nation, and the next generation of leaders.

- Female, 20–25, University student, Employed part-time

Housing:

Everyone should have a safe place to call home. Access to affordable housing is unobtainable for most young people. We will have an entire generation of renters or homeless people.

- Female, 20–25, Unemployed, Lived experience of disability

Housing in Australia is broken, there needs to be more supply released into the market, there needs to be more programs that support young people into accessing rental and owners' markets. Negative gear and tax concessions for rich property owners needs to be stopped.

- Young person 12–16, University student, Employed part-time

Employment:

I've experienced difficulty finding a job, so have people I know, and there is very little help offered to those financially struggling. It's too easy to fall through the cracks.

- Female, 20–25, University student, Employed full-time

Wages do not always reflect the hard work that people are putting into Australia – people are being undervalued – especially women, Indigenous people, and young people. We need to re-evaluate what we value in society, rather than assess our value on money.

- Female, 20–25, University student, Employed part-time

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