

COVID-19 and Young People

The COVID-19 crisis will change the lives of young people in Victoria. YACVic asked young people to tell us about the impact of the pandemic on their lives and what they want to share with decision-makers.

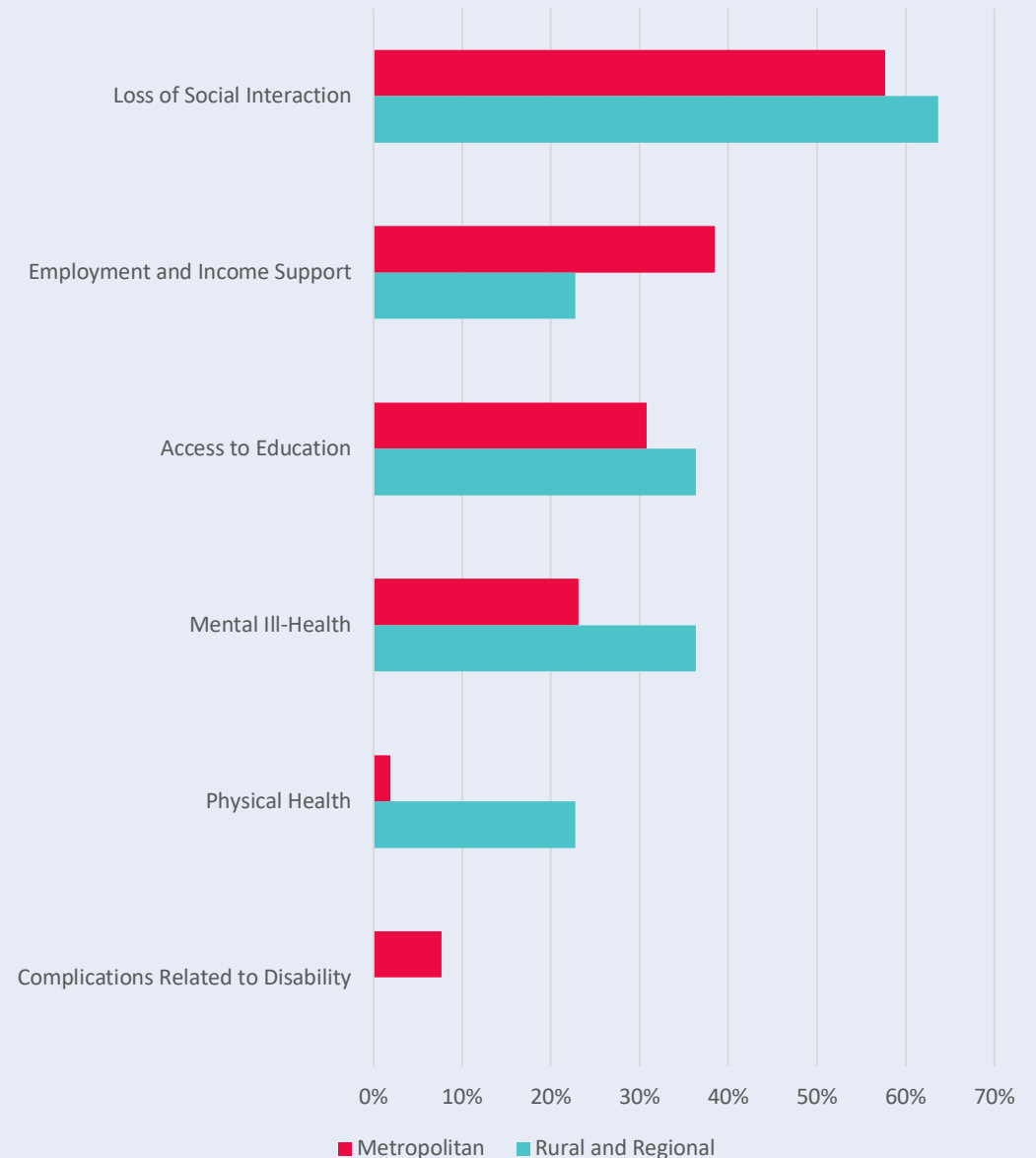
Young People Impacted by the Loss of Social Interaction

The loss of social interaction is a primary concern for a majority of young people. Young people identified a likely increase in mental ill-health as a result of social isolation and reduced access to employment, education and services.

'I am concerned about my mental health because I can no longer see people in my support network. Having a phone call is not the same as seeing people face to face.'

Young people from rural and regional areas were more likely to list their mental health and physical health as a concern. This is particularly alarming given the already poor access to health services for young people from rural and regional areas.

Self-Reported Impact of COVID-19 for Young People



Young People Most At Risk of Unemployment

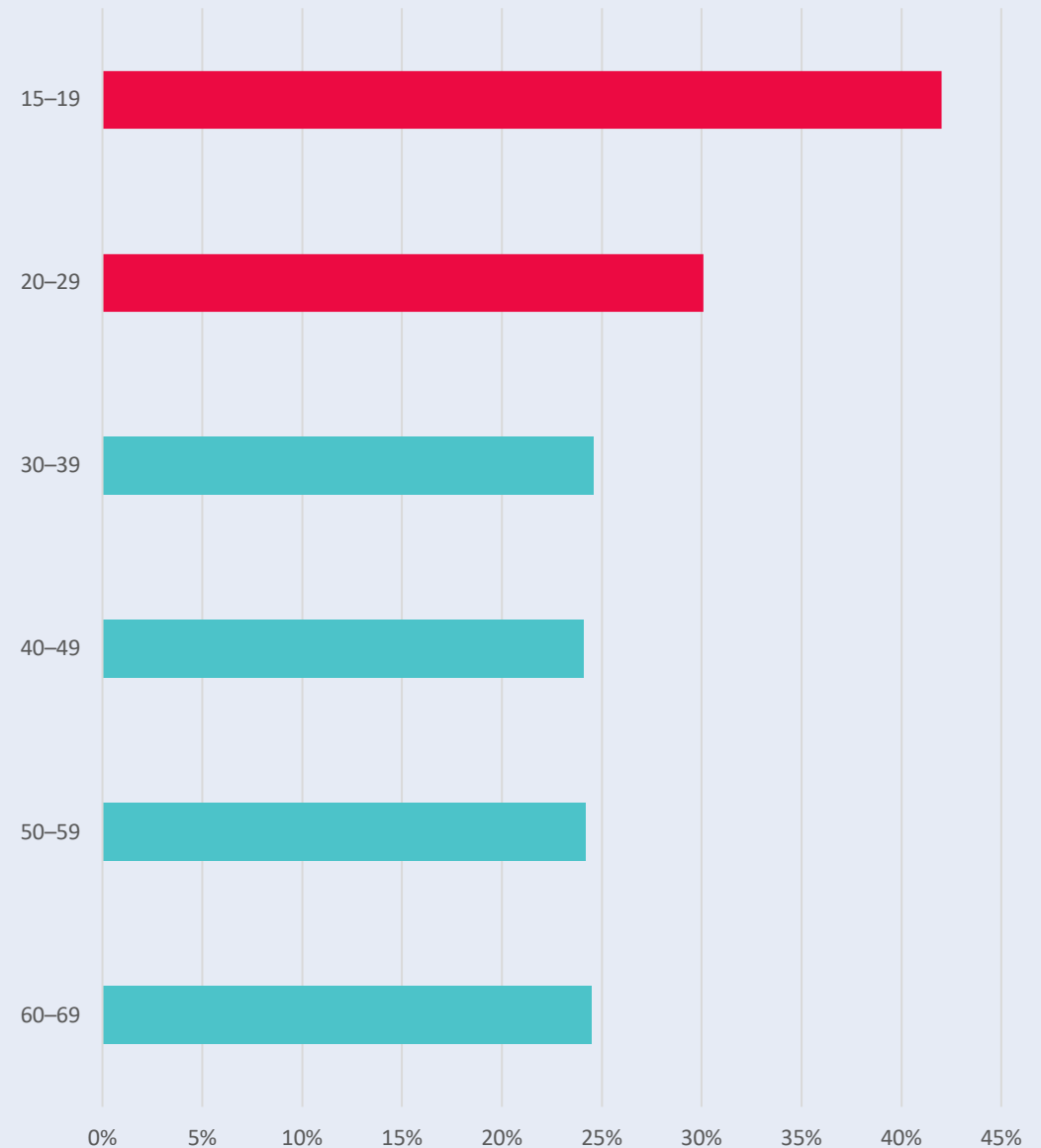
Employment and income support are major concerns for young people. Young people who are unemployed or at risk of losing work are worried that they will not be eligible for income support payments. There is concern that limited access to payments will place them at risk of long-term unemployment and homelessness.

'I no longer have an income ... it looks like I will be out of work for a while. I am worried because I don't know how long I will be without an income, particularly as I don't know if I am eligible to receive government support.'

These concerns are validated by the Grattan Institute's analysis that shows young people are the most likely to lose work as a result of the pandemic. The Grattan Institute estimates that 42% of those aged 15-19 who are already employed will lose work. This will have a serious and long-term impact on the youth unemployment rate in Victoria.

'Many of us who rely on casual work are no longer able to support ourselves and may not be eligible for government support. For many of us, our futures suddenly feel unreadable. It feels like opportunities have vanished and our plans have been forcibly scrapped, leaving us vulnerable and afraid.'

Estimated Proportion of Workers Who Will Lose Work by Age



Employment and Access to Education are Major Concerns

Employment and income support are the primary concerns for young people aged 18–25. A significant number of respondents are now unemployed as a direct result of the pandemic. There is also concern about the long-term effects of unemployment, loss of volunteer opportunities and changes to education.

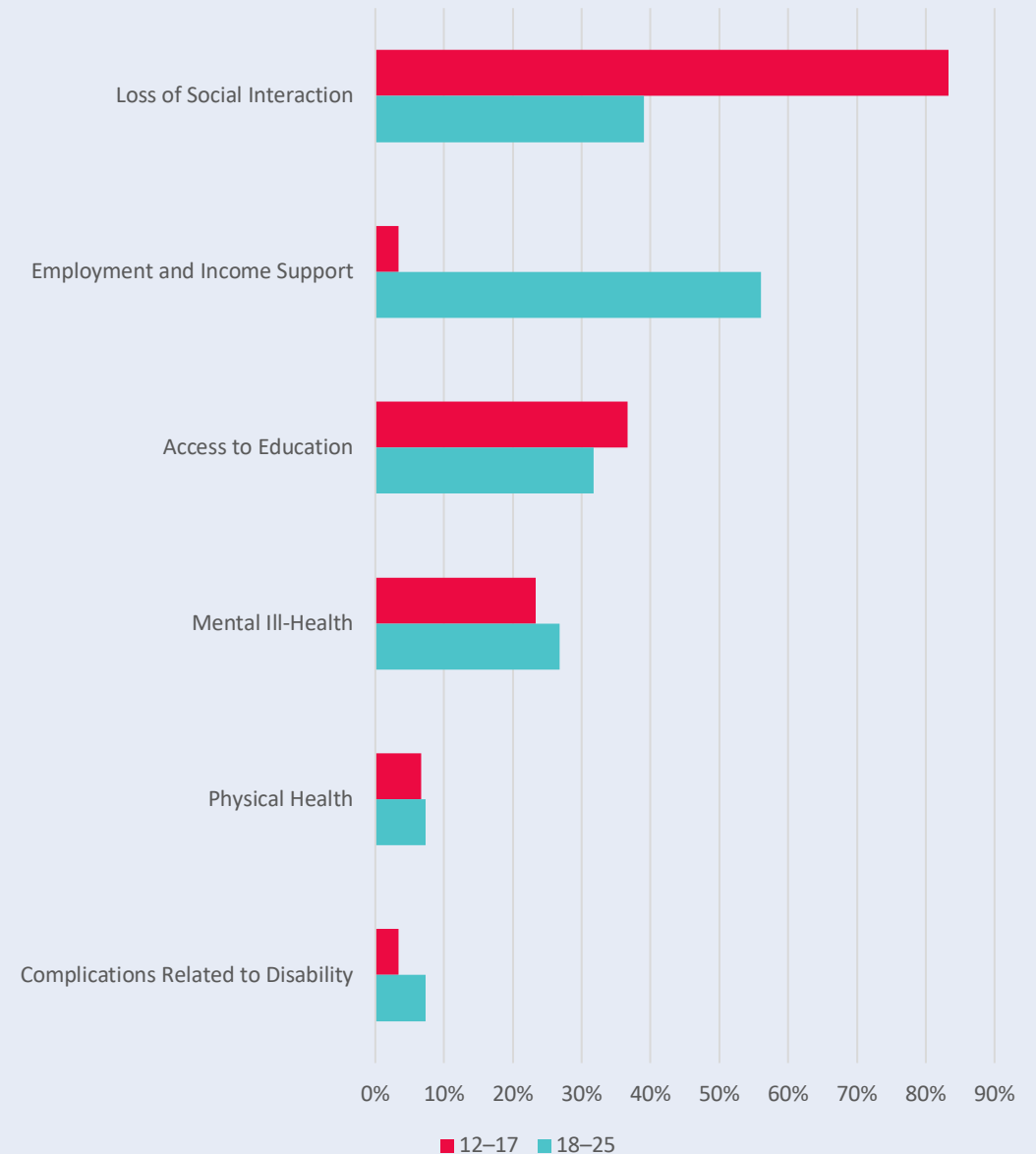
'I have gone from working part-time and attending TAFE to being stood down from my job and having to study from home. I have lost a lot of volunteer and extra work that I do as well.'

Young people aged 12–17 are most concerned about the loss of social interaction and access to education. Young people from rural and regional areas are also concerned about internet and technology access and how this will impact their education.

'There is uncertainty about learning, exams and when I'm going to see my friends again.'

'University being online means a different level of support for students [is needed] and there are fewer social opportunities.'

Impact of COVID-19 for Young People by Age



Disabled Young People Are Experiencing Unique Challenges

A majority of disabled young people are concerned about complications caused by the pandemic. This includes concerns that disabled young people will be unable to access healthcare and medication while isolated and that support services will be unavailable for the duration of the shutdown. Some disabled young people reported that reduced access to support services is completely preventing them from leaving their home.

Disabled young people identified that they feel they are more likely to be impacted by the pandemic than non-disabled young people. There is particular concern among disabled young people that they will not be able to access education during the shutdown as a result of inaccessible technology and insufficient consideration of their access requirements.

Further Information

Survey responses collected from 19 March 2020. Data analysis completed on 17 April 2020. These survey results are not necessarily representative of the population.

Visit yacvic.org.au for more information.

Impact of COVID-19 for Disabled Young People

