RESILIENCE YOUTH SURVEY REPORT 2023

Primary School Overview

ABSTRACT

In 2023, Hume City Council worked in partnership with Resilient Youth Australia and 25 local schools to survey 7,010 students in Grades 3 to 12. This is the largest youth data set we have ever had! We look forward to strengthening community resources, staff development areas and evidence-based student interventions with the outcomes of this survey.

Hume Youth, Engagement and Pathways Unit.

Hume Resilience Youth Survey 2023

In 2023, we worked in partnership with [Resilient Youth Australia](#) and 25 local schools to survey 7,010 students in Years 3 to 12 to deliver the following results.

The following primary schools participated in the survey:

- Broadmeadows Primary School
- Campbellfield Heights Primary School
- Gilgail Plains Primary School
- Jacana School for Autism
- Kismet Park Primary School
- Sunbury West Primary School
- Sunbury Heights Primary School
- Sunbury Primary School
- Westmeadows Primary School
- Hume Anglican Grammar P-12 (Mt Ridley Campus)
- Hume Anglican Grammar P-12 (Donnybrook Campus)
- Hume Anglican Grammar P-12 (Kalkallo Campus)
- Mount Ridley P-12 College

There were 2556 students who completed the survey in 2023. Of these:

- 1221 identified as female.
- 1263 identified as male.
- 72 preferred not to say; and
- 0 identified as other.

The following table outlines the number of students surveyed in each primary school year level:

3	4	5	6
600	611	677	668

What is Resilience?
Resilience is the ability to draw upon the strengths within yourself and from around you to flexibly respond to life while remaining true to yourself and creating positive relationships with others.

What are the Resilience Surveys?
The Resilience Survey is an online survey which collects, analyses and reports the resilience of young people at different age stages and captures their strengths, life satisfaction, hopefulness, anxiety and depression, coping style, risk and protective behaviours.

Specifically, the survey measures the resilience and wellbeing of young people across 9 key domains: Understanding Self, Social Skills, Positive Relationships, Safety, Healthy Body and Healthy Mind, Learning, Positive Attitude, Positive Values, Positive Identity.

Snapshot Findings by grades 3-6 Level

This data reports on 3 areas of wellbeing for young people known as the 'CPR of Wellbeing':

1. Connected – to be connected to self and others
2. Protected – to protect yourself and be protected by others
3. Respected – to respect yourself and be respected by others.

It provides at a glance an overview of the strengths and challenges of students at different year levels.

Primary School Grade 3 to 6 Summary

There were 2556 students surveyed in grade 3 to 6 year levels. The data below outlines the key strengths and challenges for this cohort.

Key Strengths
- 89% have love and support from family
- 90% have at least one good friend at school
- 90% are not bullied online
- 89% feel safe at home
- 87% try hard a school
- 84% think they are doing pretty well
- 80% have a parent/carer who listens to them
- 79% trust their friends and they trust them
- 76% feel good about themselves

Key Challenges
- 57% can't talk about the things that upset them
- 50% do not read for enjoyment
- 43% are using a device between 10pm/midnight and 6 am
- 42% do not feel they are given useful jobs at school
- 35% do not get at least 8 hours sleep per night
- 26% do not feel safe at school
- 26% do not have fun at school
- 23% have trouble concentrating at school
- 20% do not have a teacher who cares

Comparison to Australian Norm:

Areas that rated more than the norm

The following areas that rated higher (between 5%-15%+) than the Australian Norm (AN) included:

- Adults who set a good example (Hume- 85%; AN-47%)
- Good at keeping friends (Hume- 80%; AN-47%)
- Not having trouble sleeping or sleeping too much (Hume-62%; AN-33%)
- No trouble concentrating (Hume-77%; AN-42%)
- Enjoy learning new things at school (Hume-70%; AN-45%)
- Involved in at least one extra-curricular (Hume-76%; AN-45%)
- Adults who set a good example (Hume 85%; AN-47%)
- Good at keeping friends (Hume 80%; AN-47%)

Areas that rated less than the norm

There were a number of areas that rated less (5%-15%) than the Australian Norm (AN) these included:

- Teacher at school who cares (Hume -80%; AN - 85%)
- Feel safe at school (Hume – 74%; N – 81%)
- School gives students clear rules (Hume -81%; AN - 86%)
- School enforces rules fairly (Hume – 74%; AN – 80%)
- Not using a device between 10pm/midnight and 6am (Hume – 57%; AN – 67%)
- Eat healthy food (Hume – 71%; AN – 79%)
- Care about school (Hume 80%; AN – 86%)
- Forgive others who are mean to them (Hume -53%; AN – 61%)

Summary

In summary, the data shows that for primary school students in Hume the following areas are of concern, and may warrant further attention:

1. <u>Safety</u>- 26% of students indicated that they do not feel safe at school and (43%) of students reported that they are using a device between 10pm/midnight and 6am.

2. <u>Health</u>- 29% of students reported that they do not eat healthy food and over a third of students (38%) are having trouble sleeping or sleeping too much.

3. <u>Connection</u> - 20% of students reported that they do not believe they have a teacher at school who cares for them, this could well have a direct correlation to the fact that 20% reported that they do not care about

school. Just under half of the students (47%) reported that they are unable to forgive others that are mean to them.

Mental Health

Students were also surveyed in relation to their mental health. The six measures of mental health include:
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Hope
- Life Satisfaction
- Coping
- Connection to Nature.

Primary School Grade 3 to 6 Summary.

2,556 students from Grade 3 to Year 6 were surveyed in relation to their mental health. The following table provides an overview of the findings that were identified for each of the six areas by gender:

Overall Life Satisfaction

Students were asked to measure their overall life satisfaction using the Cantril Self Anchoring Scale. Scale 1= pertained to the worst possible life and scale 8= the best possible life.

Scale	Female	Male	Prefer not to say
1 (worst)	1%	2%	13%
2	1%	1%	1%
3	3%	3%	8%
4	10%	6%	15%
5	19%	17%	18%
6	21%	23%	10%
7	19%	20%	17%
8 (best)	25%	28%	18%
Total (N=)	1221	1263	72

In summary:
- Male students reported having the highest life satisfaction (88%-levels 5-8) with females closely behind on 84%. Students that preferred not to identify their gender had a much lower life satisfaction (63%)

- Analysis of the data based on year level indicated that for female students, life satisfaction decreased at they got older, for example 88% reported having a good/best life in grade 3, which dropped to 82% in grade 6. With males, overall life satisfaction in grades 3-6 were all high and increased as they got older. For example: 87% in grade 3 reported having a good/best life and 90% in grade 6.

- In relation to the students who preferred not to identify their gender, only 54% reported a good/best life in grade 3, this then increases in grade 4 and 5 (69%, 77%) and then drops again to 60% in grade 6.

Hope

These findings show varying degrees of hope reported by primary school students.

Areas	Female	Male	Prefer Not to Say
None	2%	2%	10%
Little	11%	6%	13%
Some	30%	21%	32%
Lots	29%	33%	26%
Most	21%	26%	13%
All	8%	12%	7%
Total (N=)	1221	1263	72

In summary:
- Boys reported being more hopeful (72%) than girls (58%)
- Over half of the students who preferred not to identify their gender (55%) reported being less hopeful. This was higher than students who identified their gender.

Anxiety

These findings show percentage of primary school students who reported symptoms of anxiety.

Areas	Female	Male	Prefer Not to Say
Anxious	38%	31%	60%
Not Anxious	62%	69%	40%
Total (N=)	1221	1263	72

In summary:

- Over one-third of girls reported feeling anxious (38%), compared to 31% of boys.
- This was higher for students who preferred not to identify their gender – with 60% reporting they were anxious.

Depression

These findings show percentage of primary school students who reported symptoms of depression.

Areas	Female	Male	Prefer Not to Say
Depressed	36%	30%	56%
Not Depressed	64%	70%	44%
Total (N=)	1221	1263	72

In summary:
- Girls reported being depressed (36%) more than boys (30%)
- Over half of the students who did not identify their gender reported symptoms of depression (56%)

Disengaged Coping Strategies

These findings show percentage of primary school students who are disengaged from problem-solving.

Areas	Female	Male	Prefer Not to Say
Disengaged	39%	36%	54%
Engaged	61%	64%	46%
Total (N=)	1221	1263	72

In summary:
- Over a third of girls (39%) and boys (36%) reported being disengaged
- Over half (54%) of students who did not identify their gender reported being disengaged.

Resilience Score

This data combines Hope and Life Satisfaction scores to identify the resilience of young people. For example: students with high life satisfaction and high level of hope are categorised as 'resilient'. In contrast those with low levels of hope and life satisfaction are categorised as 'low resilience'.

Overall, 58% of students were identified as resilient. However, students that 'preferred not to say' their gender, only a third (33%) were analysed as being resilient.

Healthy Mind

This data combines anxiety and depression indicators, or the absence of these symptoms to suggest a healthy mind. In summary:

- 53% of female and male students have a healthy mind
- 21% of students are reported to be experiencing anxiety and depression.
- Only 33% of students that 'preferred not to say' their gender have a healthy mind, and 49% of these students reported to be experiencing anxiety and depression
- Overall, boys were faring better in terms of a healthy mind with 65% overall having a healthy mind compared to 50% of girls.

Ready to Learn

This data combines reported symptoms of either anxiety, disengagement from problem-solving, or both anxiety and disengagement for problem-solving, or absence of these symptoms to determine a readiness to learn.

Data highlighted that only 45% of male and female students were ready to learn; with 17% of students feeling anxious and disengaged. Concerningly, only 26% of students who did not identify their gender were ready to learn, and over a third of this cohort (40%) identified as anxious and disengaged.

Connection to Nature

These findings show the percentage of primary school students who reported being connected to nature.

Areas	Female	Male	Prefer Not to Say
Little Connection	18%	18%	15%
Moderate Connection	23%	26%	29%
Strong Connection	59%	57%	56%
Total (N=)	1221	1263	72

In summary:

- Over half of girls (59%), boys (57%) and those that did not identify their gender (56%) reported having a strong connection to nature.

Mental Health Data Summary

The following are areas in which overall students in grades 3 to 6 are not faring well in relation to their mental health and wellbeing:

- <u>Anxiety and Depression</u>

- o Generalised anxiety amongst female students and students who preferred not to identify their gender is an area of concern. More than a third (38%) of female students reported experiencing anxiety whilst more than half of students (60%) who preferred not to identify their gender reported experiencing anxiety.
  - o Alarmingly, it was in grade 3 that rates of depression were the highest for all groups, females 39%, males 40%, and preferred not to say 62%. The unpacking of the causal reasons behind these figures and ways forward serves as an important early intervention area.
  - o Overall, 20% of students reported symptoms of anxiety and depression; and only just over half 53% had an absence of symptoms, suggesting a healthy mind.
  - o For students who did not identify their gender, this figure more than doubles with 49% of these students reporting being anxious and depressed; and only 33% being of healthy mind.

- Resilience
  - o Just over half of all grade 3 to 6 students (58%) were identified as being resilient.
  - o Female students were less resilient (52%) than boys (65%).
  - o Students who did not identify their gender were significantly less resilience than other students (33%). In addition, 25% of these students indicated they did not feel hopeful or satisfied with their life.

- Ready to Learn
  - o Data shows that the impact of reported symptoms of either anxiety or disengagement has a significant impact on a student's ability to learn. Less than half of the students (45%) were identified as ready to learn; and this was worse for those that preferred not to identify their gender (26%) and female students (43%). Nearly two thirds of male students were analysed as being ready to learn (65%).

Future Recommendations for Primary School Students

Based on the data outlined above, the following recommendations for future interventions have been suggested. These suggestions are general in nature and may not apply to specific schools or geographical locations in the municipality.

1. Safety and risk behaviours:
   - o Data indicates that a majority of students feel safe at home and feel safe in the area that they live, but do not feel safe at school (26%).

The number of students who feel safe at school decreased as students progressed from grades 3 to 6. Grade 6 students in Hume scored lower than the Australian norm for all groups.

- o Girls were particular low compared to the Australian norm with 35% reporting not feeling safe at school (AN 18%). 25% of grade 6 male students also reported that they do not feel safe at school (AN 17%). For those that preferred not to identify their gender, alarmingly 59% did not feel safe at school compared to the AN being 37%.

- o Safety pertains to our physical, emotional, cultural, mental and spiritual safety. Consultations with students to understand why they do not feel safe at school is warranted. The results of these consultations should then inform the type of interventions schools implement to address this vital issue.

- o Grade 6 students reported higher rates of bullying than other year levels and this was similar for male, female and those that preferred not to say. Hume female students are experiencing 'social exclusion' at higher rates than the Australian norm. Those that preferred not to identify their gender are experiencing both bulling at the school and bullying online at significant higher rates than the Australian norm. Further research into types of bullying specific to the school would inform the development of targeted prevention and early intervention programs. In addition, interventions that focus on respectful relationships in a cultural context would be beneficial.

2. Health and wellbeing:
   - o Sleep and rest- data on sleep hygiene revealed that just over a third of students (35%) are not getting at least 8 hours of sleep per night. This correlates with 34% of students reporting that they often feel tired or low in energy.

   - o Inappropriate use of devices-worryingly, 43% of Hume students are using a device between 10pm/midnight and 6am (compared to the AN, 33%). This statistic warrants attention both from a health perspective and an online safety perspective. As research shows, sleep deprivation not only negatively impacts general and mental health but affects young people's ability to learn. Interventions to develop foundational skills for healthier and life-long sleep habits would be beneficial.

3. Mental health
    o   Data indicates that experiences of anxiety and depression are relatively common for primary school students. Overall, female students were more anxious than male students; and 60% of students who did not identify their gender reported feeling anxious.

    o   Interventions that focus on mental health literacy, strategies to reduce anxiety; mental health wellness techniques; and regulating emotions; building resilience; and developing social, emotional and positive relationship skills would be beneficial.

    o   Programs such as Cool Kids at School which was developed by the Centre for Emotional Health, Macquarie University aims to further train wellbeing school staff with the skills to aid young people to better manage their mental health.

4. Learning
    o   Read for fun– only half of students read for the pure enjoyment of it.

    o   Data revealed that female students in grades 4, 5 and 6 all scored lower than the Australian norm when it came to the following categories: care about their school, enjoy learning new things at school, have fun at school. Male students were pretty much on par with the Australian norm. Whilst those that preferred not to identify their gender scored significantly lower than the Australian norms in those categories when they entered grade 6.

    o   Interventions focused on social and emotional learning; interest-led literacy programs, and creative and fun ways of learning new knowledge would be advantageous.

5. Social connection and engagement:
    o   Data revealed that 42% of Hume students felt that they were not given useful jobs at school, this was lower than the Australian norm. Programs that increase student voice; are student led would be valuable, creation of opportunities for student leadership would also be beneficial to increase sense of self.

    o   Students who did not identify their gender were also faring poorly on a number of indicators including life satisfaction, hope, anxiety,

depression and resilience. Although it is unclear why students did not identify their gender, interventions targeted at the health and wellbeing of gender diverse students would be beneficial.

- o Positive relationships – students highlighted that they had love and support from family (89%) and (80%) felt that did have a teacher who cared.

Victorian Government Mental Health Menu

The Victorian government has invested $217.8 million over four years to support student mental health and wellbeing, including $200 million over four years and $87 million ongoing to create a Schools Mental Health Fund. Underpinning the Fund is the evidence-based menu.

The Menu provides schools with opportunities to purchase evidence-based programs and initiatives across the three tiers of intervention. This includes initiatives that:
- Tier 1: Positive mental health promotion
- Tier 2: Early intervention and cohort specific support
- Tier 3: Targeted support and more individualised support for students who need it.

Information regarding the Mental Health Menu can be found at:
https://www.schools.vic.gov.au/schools-mental-health-menu