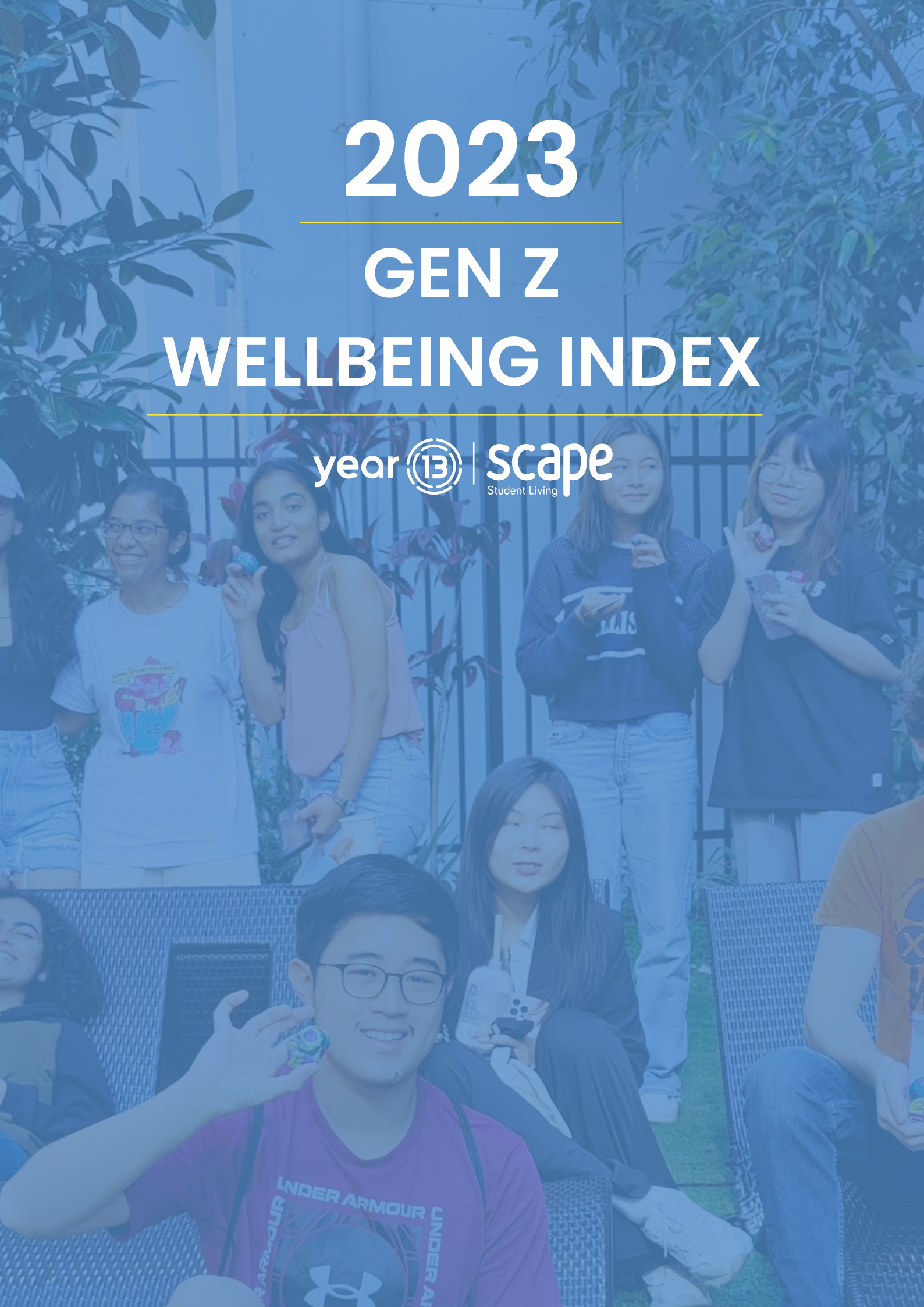


2023

GEN Z

WELLBEING INDEX

year  | **scape**
Student Living





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Methodology

One national survey of Australian youth & Scape residents conducted by Year13 and Scape in May 2023.

Total responses = 1916
Australian youth = 1011
Scape residents = 905

This survey formed the basis of this research paper and was designed to gather comprehensive information about the wellbeing of youth in Australia. One national sample of youth was surveyed as well as a national sample of Scape residents to compare their state of wellbeing. All respondents for this survey were aged 18–24 and have finished high school. This survey was conducted online and respondents were sourced via social media. Youth quotes featured throughout this report were sourced from extended response questions included in the survey, some of which have been edited for clarity and brevity.

See the next page for combined demographics of these surveys.

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Reference as: Walker, I, (2023). '2023 Gen Z Wellbeing Index', Year13 & Scape, Australia.

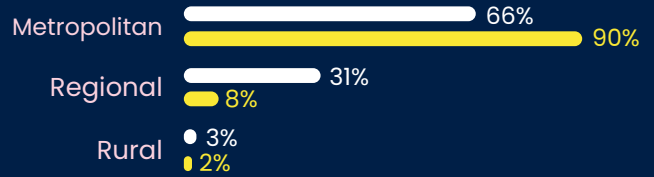
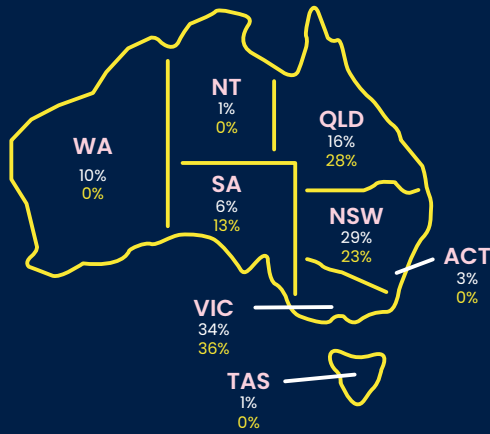


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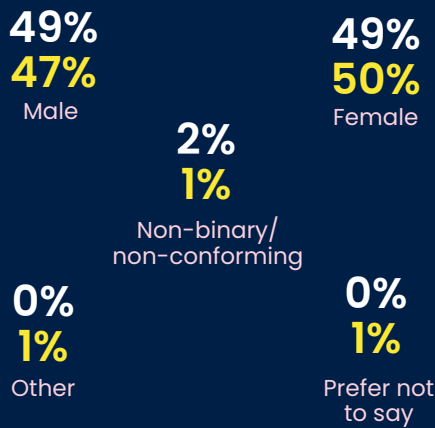
● National ● Scape

Demographic Breakdown

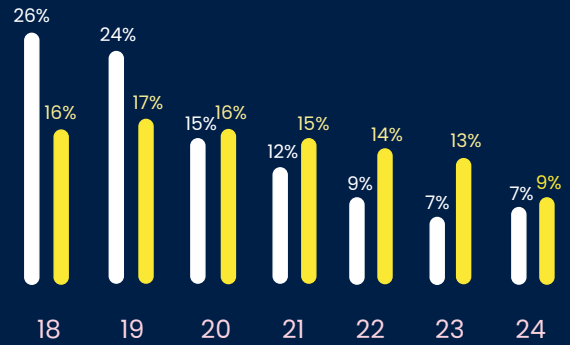
LOCATION BREAKDOWN



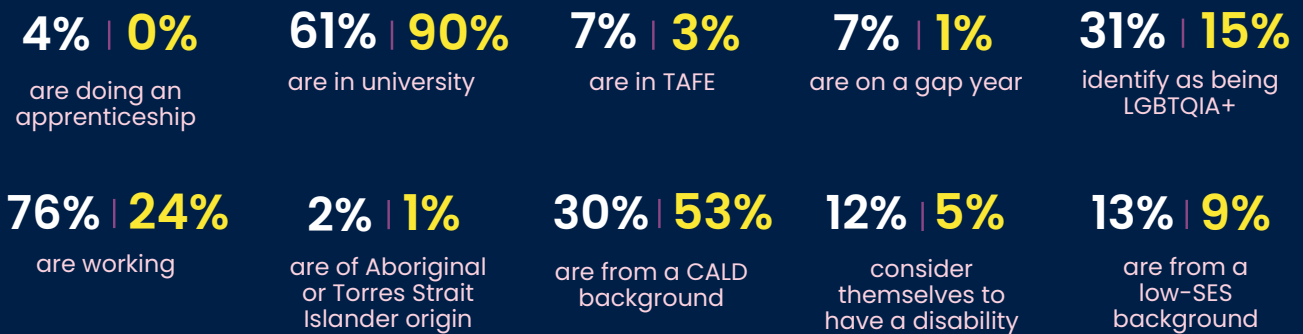
GENDER BREAKDOWN



AGE BREAKDOWN



OUR RESPONDENTS



Introduction

Feeling well is something all young people deserve. Wellbeing though can be complicated, it's linked to our relationships, our sleep, our hobbies and passions, our work, our diet, our home, our local community, our world and pretty much everything in-between. With so many things which can impact wellbeing the truth is it's not all that easy for any young person to be optimising all these areas in their life at any one time.

This is because when it comes to improving wellbeing there are some things which are largely out of any young person's control, like inflation and cost of living which are currently a major source of stress for many people. What is in their control, however, are their wellness habits. These habits include the healthy food you eat (or don't), the exercise you do (or don't), the restful sleep you get (or don't) and the social connections you keep (or don't).

But if you're hearing wellbeing and wellness and wondering what's the difference between the two, it's easiest to see wellbeing as a state and wellness as a process. Wellbeing therefore is your feeling of happiness and healthiness, the state of which is impacted by your wellness habits of sleep, diet, exercise and relationships. It is possible to have wellness without wellbeing, like someone who is ultra healthy but who is unhappy in their job. It's also possible to have wellbeing without wellness, like someone who is unhealthy but ultimately content in life. For most people most of the time however, wellness and wellbeing are intimately linked.

To understand how all these factors are interacting in young people's lives today Year13 and student accommodation provider, Scape, have created the 2023 Gen Z Wellbeing Index.

In it we explore the wellbeing of over 1000 young Australians and over 900 young people staying with Scape, all of whom are aged 18 to 24, have finished school and are undertaking the complex and often stressful period of life transitioning from school to work. We have surveyed them about their lives in the key wellbeing areas of mental health, exercise, sleep and diet to see what's going well in their lives and what isn't.

In this report you will see the national wellbeing survey results compared side by side with the results of young people staying with Scape who took the same survey. Being responsible for housing tens of thousands of young Australian and international students means Scape places wellbeing at the centre of what they do. By being able to see how the wellbeing of their residents compares to the national average, Scape are able to use this data to see where they can help make a positive change with their residents, as well as see the areas where they are currently doing well.

While many similarities were found between the national and Scape survey groups proving there are some universal truths to being young, like both being majority night owls for example, a number of key differences did emerge. The data revealed young people living in Scape purpose-built student accommodation are on average in better physical and mental health, sleep better, have a healthier diet, are more likely to cook for themselves, and are less likely to suffer from loneliness and have issues making friends than the average young Australian.

When it comes to the average young Australian it's been found over a third aren't in good mental health, a third aren't in good physical health, two thirds are having issues sleeping, and three quarters don't have a very healthy diet, all of which will be explored more in depth in the pages ahead. The findings in this report will highlight where wellbeing intervention most needs to be targeted as supporting young people's wellbeing is vital to improving outcomes across all aspects of their lives.

CHAPTER

01



MENTAL HEALTH

In 2023 a third of young people say they aren't in good mental health. Impacting on this is how more than one in three young people say they currently experience anxiety, low self esteem, poor body image, social anxiety, depression or loneliness. The top issues negatively impacting youth wellbeing are figuring out their future, fatigue, burnout and cost of living. Positively however half of young people say they have seen a therapist to help with their mental health.

Key wellbeing indicators

● National ● Scape



I drink enough water
 59%
 58%



I connect enough with friends
 52%
 57%



I connect enough with family
 52%
 58%



I have a hobby I'm committed to
 45%
 37%



I have a passion I'm committed to
 41%
 36%



I eat enough healthy food
 37%
 40%



I am physically active enough
 37%
 36%



I have a purpose
 35%
 38%



I get enough sleep
 34%
 41%



I keep up with the news
 34%
 24%



I spend enough time outdoors
 32%
 31%



I do volunteer/charity work
 13%
 10%

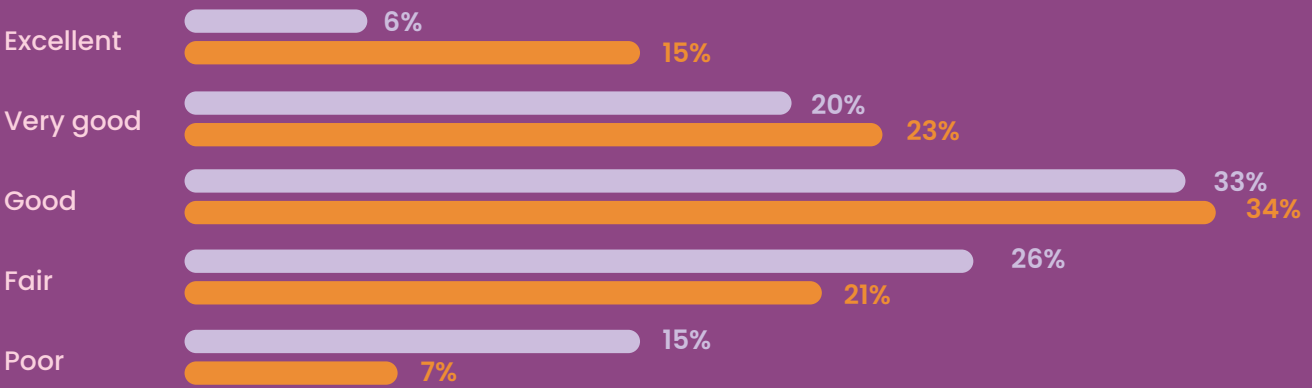


None of the above
 5%
 5%

Scape residents are more likely to get enough sleep and to connect enough with family and friends compared to the national average.

How is your mental health?

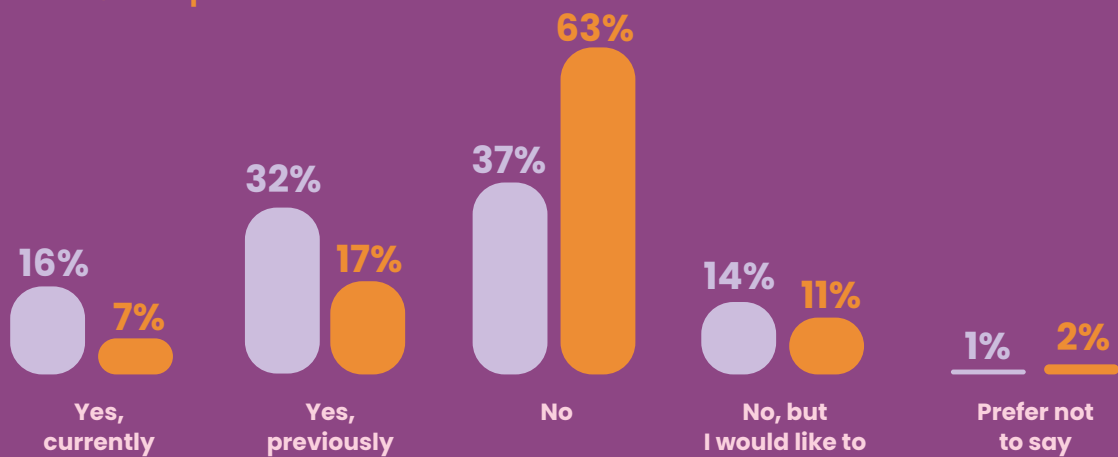
● National ● Scape



Scape residents are more likely to be in excellent mental health and less likely to be in fair or poor mental health compared to the national average

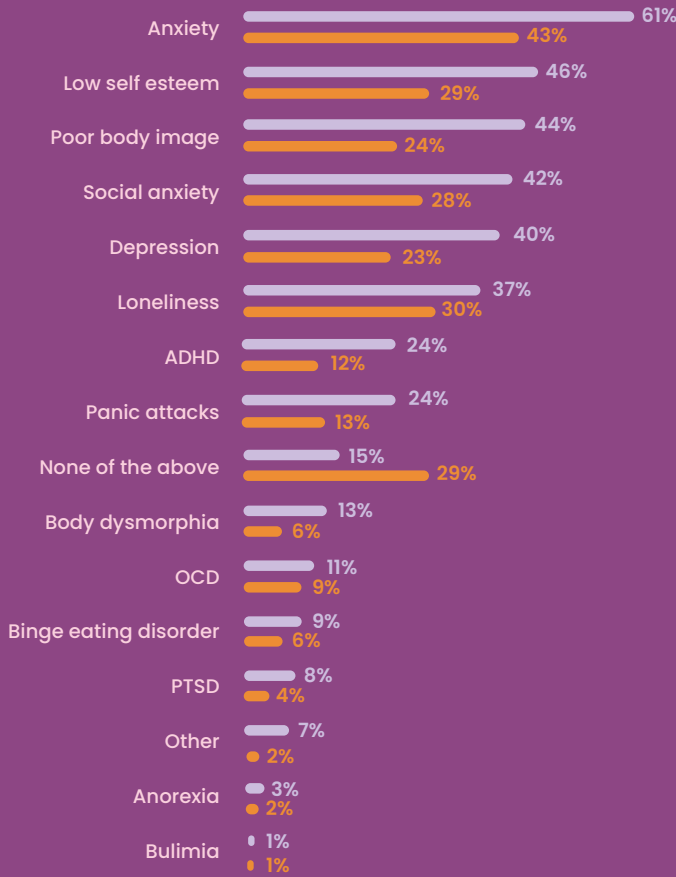
Have you had mental health therapy?

● National ● Scape



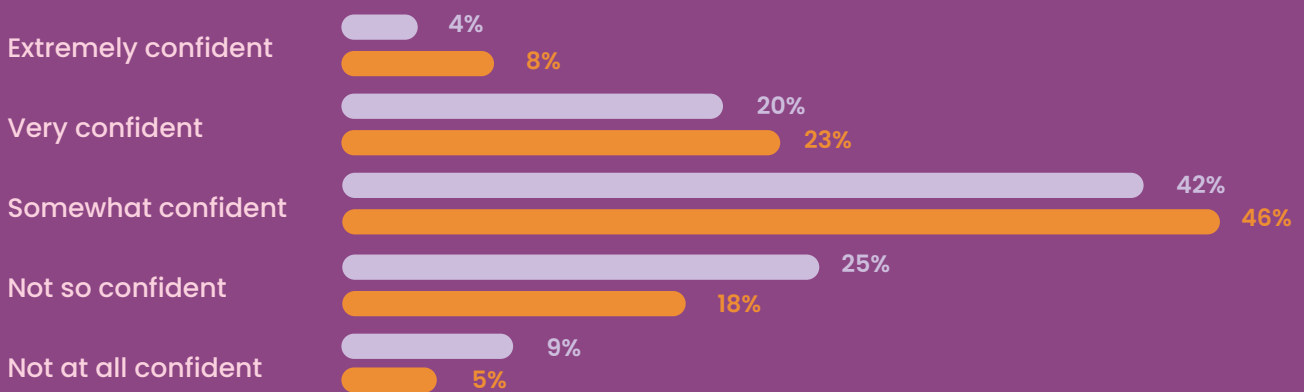
Which of the following do you experience currently?

● National ● Scape



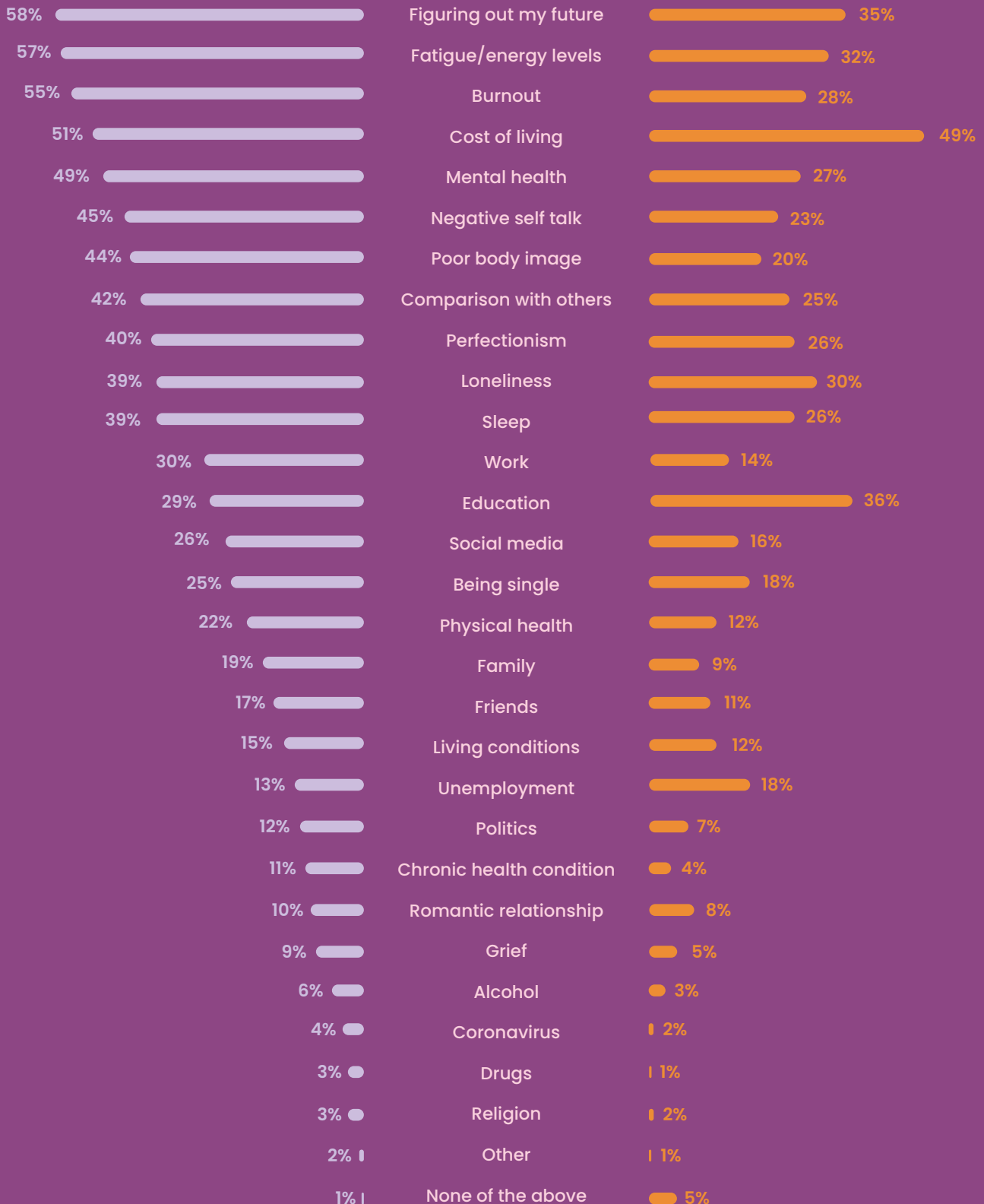
How confident are you in your physical appearance?

● National ● Scape



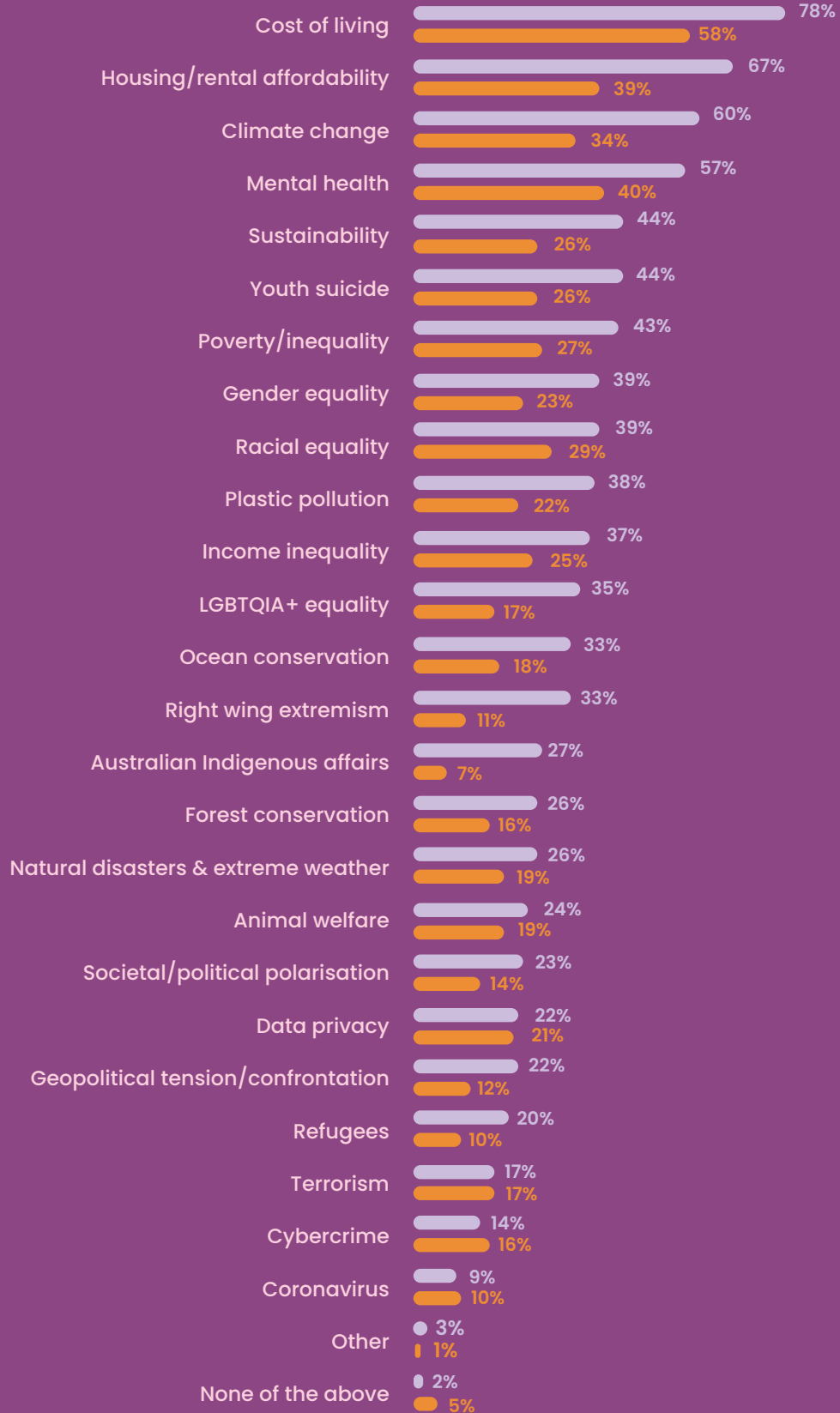
What is negatively impacting your wellbeing?

● National ● Scape



Which of these issues worry you the most?

● National ● Scape



What helps you destress and relax?

● National ● Scape

Listening to music	71%	61%	Playing an instrument	19%	10%
Movies/shows/videos	70%	56%	Healthy food	17%	18%
Bath/shower	51%	40%	Dancing	17%	12%
Outdoors/nature/ beach	44%	32%	Watching sport	16%	10%
Exercise	41%	36%	Handicraft	15%	6%
Gaming	35%	34%	Beauty regime	14%	10%
Social media	31%	29%	Journaling	13%	10%
Books	30%	23%	Writing	13%	10%
Memes	28%	21%	Mindfulness	13%	11%
Junk food	26%	21%	Therapy	13%	6%
Shopping	25%	31%	Drugs	10%	1%
Cooking	25%	32%	Meditation	9%	8%
Art	24%	18%	Medication	8%	4%
Playing sport	24%	23%	Yoga	7%	5%
Cleaning	23%	22%	Religion	6%	7%
Alcohol	19%	11%	Other	5%	2%

How is your social health?

* Social health is the state of someone's friendships and social connections

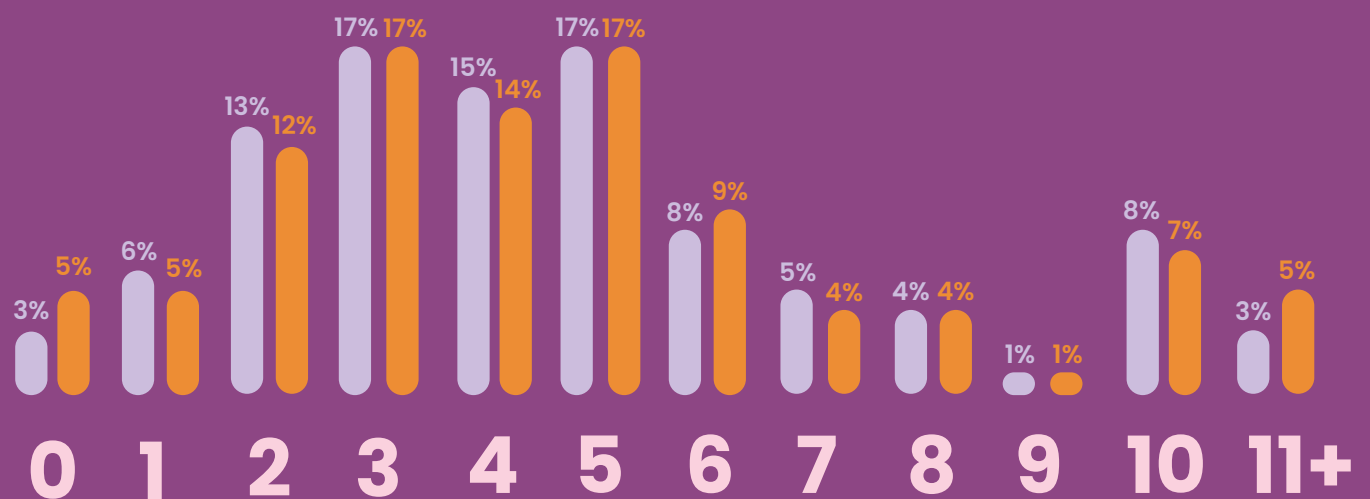
● National ● Scape



41% of young people say they are struggling to make friends compared to 33% of Scape residents.

How many close friends do you have roughly?

● National ● Scape



Where do you have strong social connections and support networks?

● National ● Scape



71% of young people say they feel a general sense of inclusion and belonging in their everyday life compared to 74% of Scape residents.

85% of young people say they feel like diversity is embraced and respected in their everyday life compared to 89% of Scape residents.

Perhaps the thing that negatively affects my wellbeing the most at the moment is university. It is not terrible but as I am in my first year of university I am trying to get used to new studying methods to succeed in my studying. There is much more work in uni than in high school. What is positively impacting my wellbeing is that I have new friends at uni and get to talk to them. Also, I love going to the gym and playing 8 ball pool at Scape with my friend. Those two activities improve my wellbeing a lot.

Male, 19, VIC, metropolitan

Moving away from home to a new place where nobody knows you is really difficult and I knew I had to be prepared for feelings of loneliness. Some things positively impacting my wellbeing would be my physical surroundings, there are so many parks and interesting buildings, shops and other places to explore, I try to get out of my room once a day to go see some cool places and it really picks up my mood. I also think social groups and events, whether organised by Scape, or my university, are super cool and make it a lot easier to find new friends and connect with people you normally wouldn't. It can be hard to step out of your comfort zone with this so I suggest not over committing to it, and praising and rewarding yourself for going out and giving it a go.

Female, 20, NSW, metropolitan

Juggling my uni work while trying to socialise and make friends as I struggle with social anxiety is difficult for me. Also, trying to find a part time job as the cost of living increases rapidly is also kind of taking a toll on me. Positively, everyone I have met or talked to, be it at uni or Scape, has been generally very nice which helps me more as I try to put myself out there.

Female, 22, VIC, metropolitan

CHAPTER

02

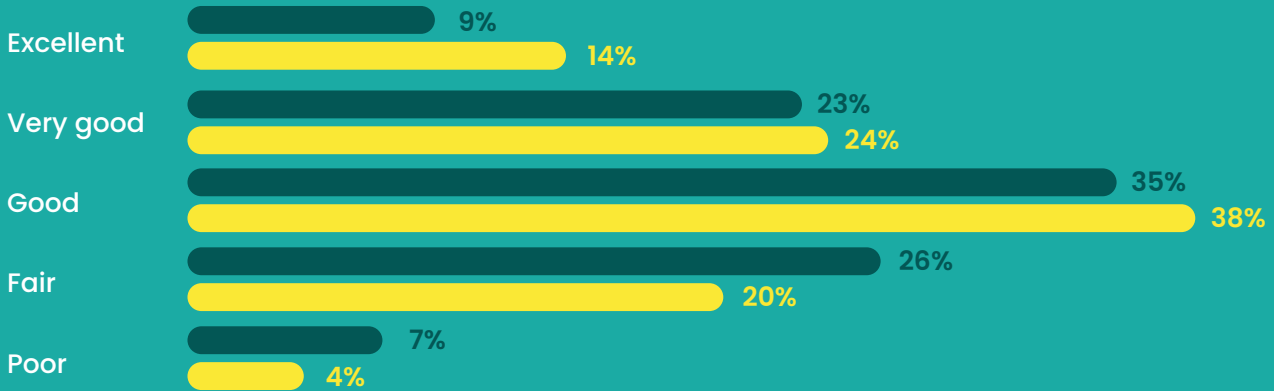


EXERCISE

In 2023 a third of young people say they aren't in good physical health. Despite this, most young people are active with over three quarters exercising or playing sport on a weekly basis with mental health outpacing fitness as the top reason for why they engage in physical activity. Individual pursuits like walking, weights, running, stretching, swimming, cycling and dancing are most popular with young people while basketball is the most played team sport.

How is your physical health?

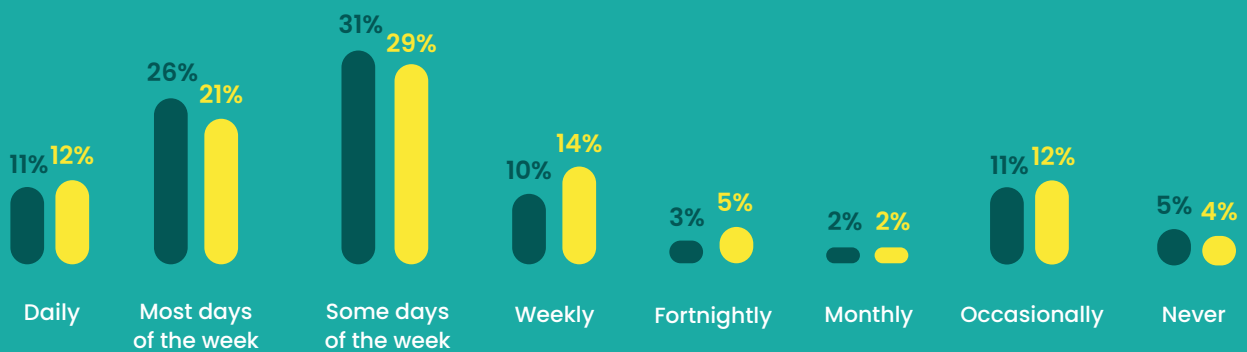
● National ● Scape



Scape residents are more likely to be in excellent physical health and less likely to be in fair or poor physical health compared to the national average.

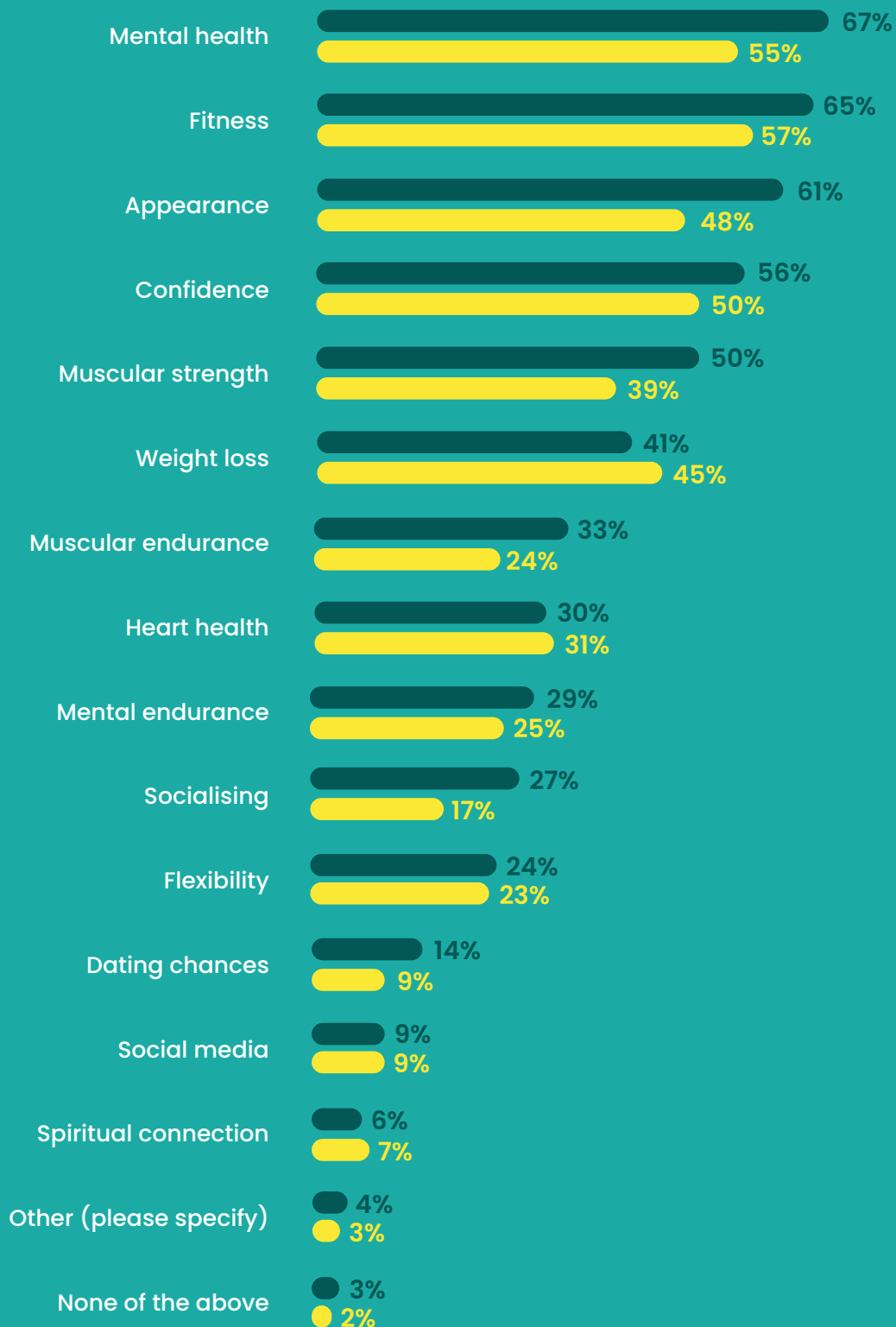
How often do you exercise/play sport on average?

● National ● Scape



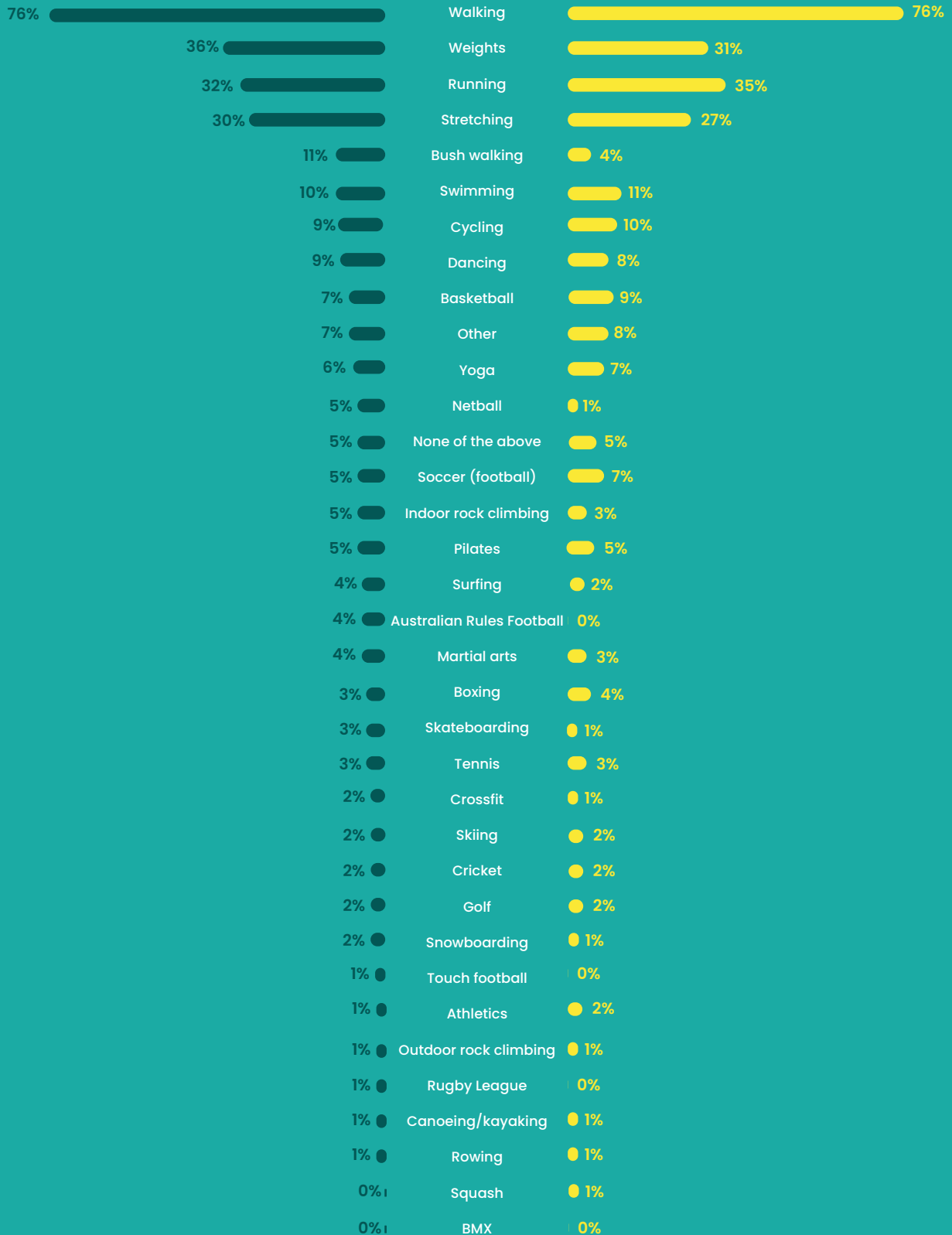
What motivates you most to exercise/play sport?

● National ● Scape



Which of the following exercises/sports do you do?

● National ● Scape



Where do you prefer to exercise?

● National ● Scape



Gym

42%

51%



Home

28%

25%



Outdoors

25%

21%



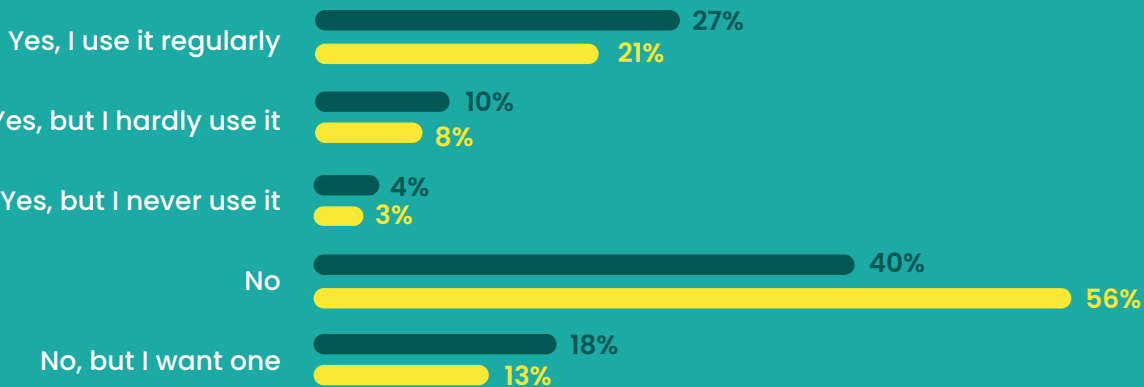
None of the above

5%

3%

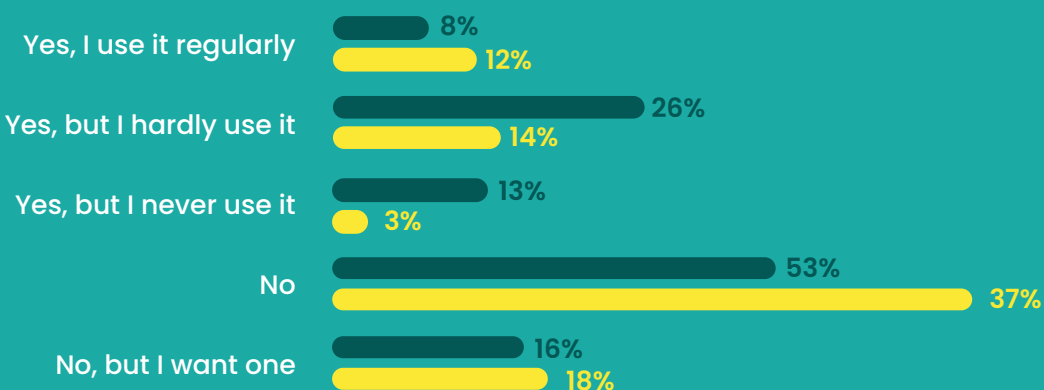
Do you have a gym membership?

● National ● Scape



Do you have home exercise equipment?

● National ● Scape



Do you use a fitness tracker?

● National ● Scape



70% of young people who use fitness trackers say they motivate them to exercise more **compared to 76% of Scape residents who use fitness trackers.**

23% of young people use fitness trackers say they compete with others over their results **compared to 28% of Scape residents who use fitness trackers.**



Improving mental health naturally comes with improving physical health. Have a goal in mind and stick to it to maintain discipline. If you have a diet regime or exercise regime of 3 days a week, do exercise 3 days a week, no matter what your brain tells you. I told myself that each exercise session helped me grow away from the person I used to be. When I started exercising my goal was to lose weight and get to 70kg. When I got there, I had maintained 3 days a week of exercise and a diet for 4 months, and I figured why stop there? So I started going running - first at the treadmill, and when I was confident enough, I went outside. It feels so good just to be able to put on running shoes, shirt, pants, and go wherever with you and your breathing.

Gender not disclosed, 20, VIC, metropolitan

One of the most important things I've discovered is the power of physical activity. Regular exercise has been shown to have a variety of physical and mental health benefits, including reducing the risk of chronic diseases, improving cardiovascular health, and reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety. For me, going for a run or hitting the gym is not only a way to stay physically fit, but also a way to clear my mind and boost my mood. I try to make time for physical activity as often as possible, whether it's going for a morning jog, taking a yoga class, or lifting weights at the gym.

Male, 21, SA, metropolitan

Physical health - to exercise more frequently join sports clubs from your university. Mental health - for boosting your confidence level appreciate yourself and say something nice about yourself in front of the mirror every morning. Social health - to make new friends try to study in the common area of Scape, people will say 'hi' to you and it is easier to meet new people.

Female, 19, SA, metropolitan

CHAPTER

03



SLEEP

In 2023 two thirds of young people say they have problems getting a good night's sleep. The result is that nearly half of young people say they usually wake up feeling tired and lethargic. While phone usage is one of the top factors preventing young people from getting a good night's sleep, three quarters of young people also say using their phone is part of their regular bedtime routine showing how when it comes to their mobiles young people can't sleep with them or without them.

Are you an early bird or a night owl?

● National ● Scape



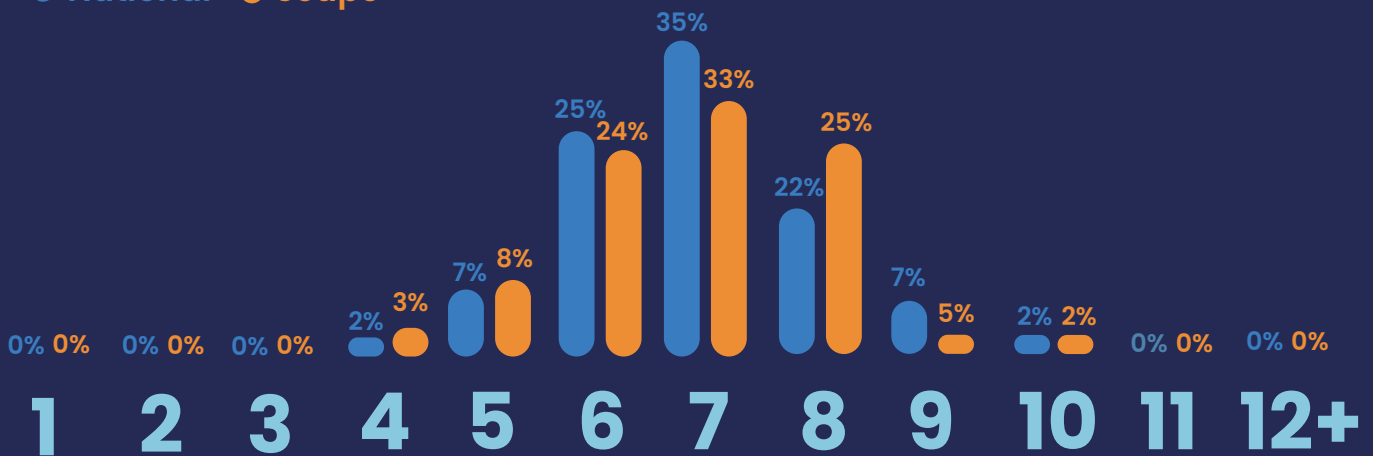
Early Bird 23%
Early bird 25%



Night owl 77%
Night owl 75%

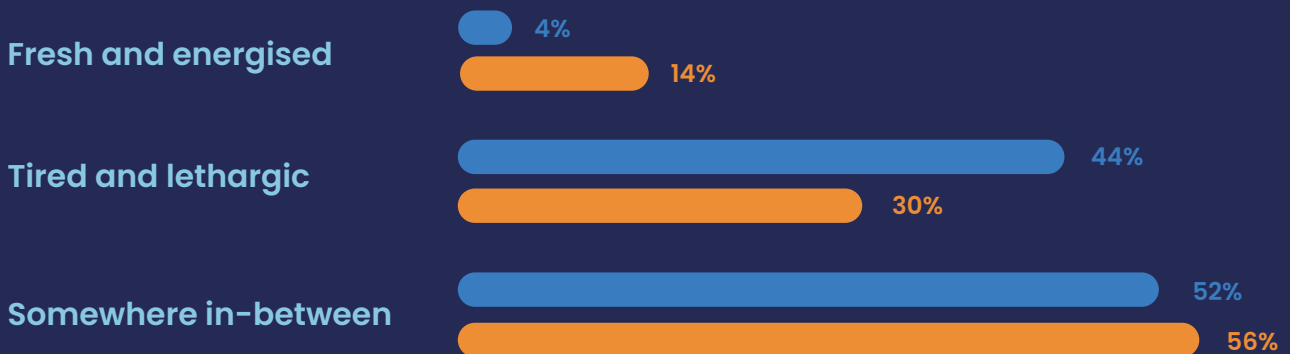
How many hours of sleep do you get per night on average?

● National ● Scape



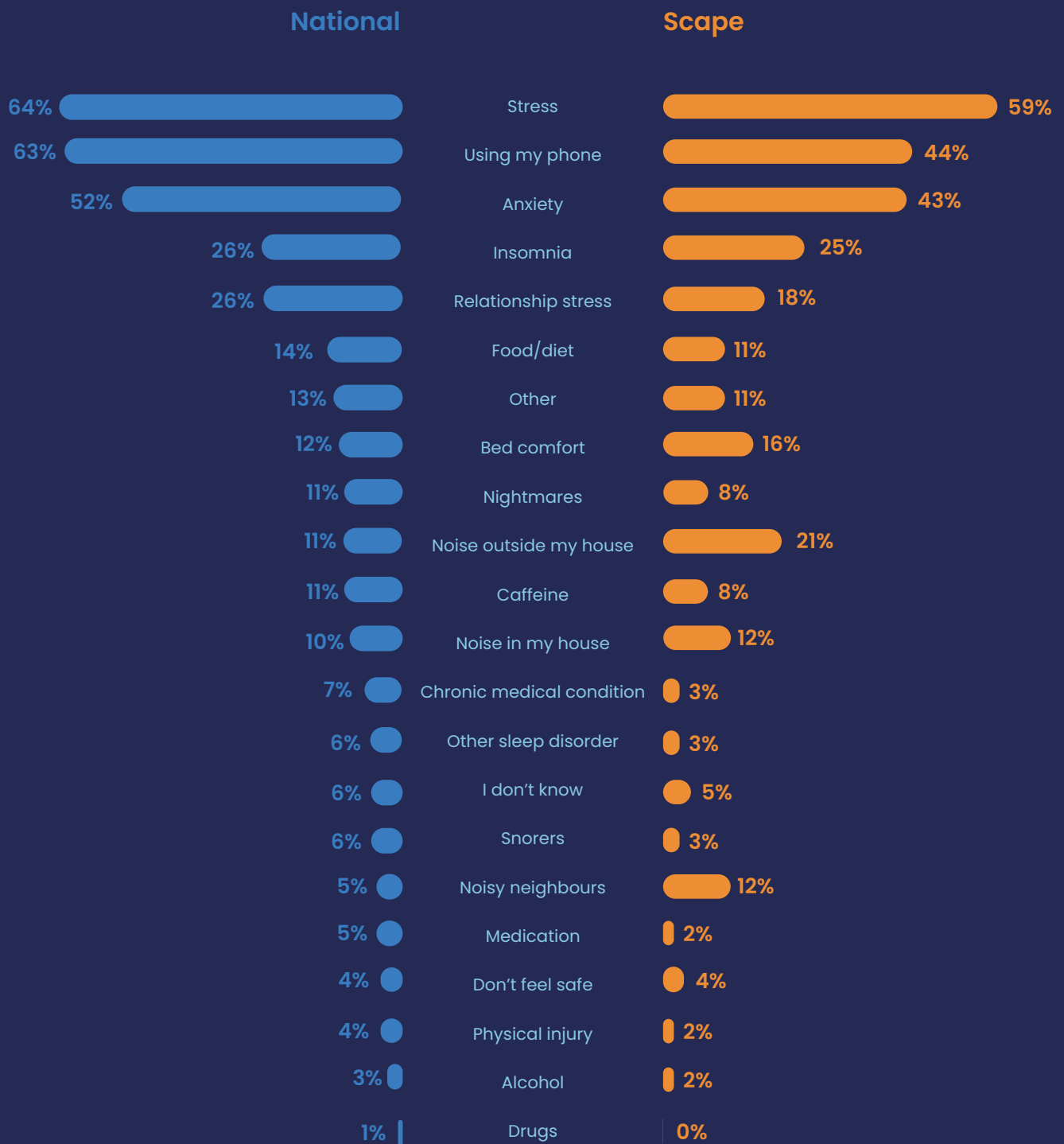
How do you usually feel when you wake up?

● National ● Scape



64% of young people have problems getting a good night's sleep compared to 52% of Scape residents.

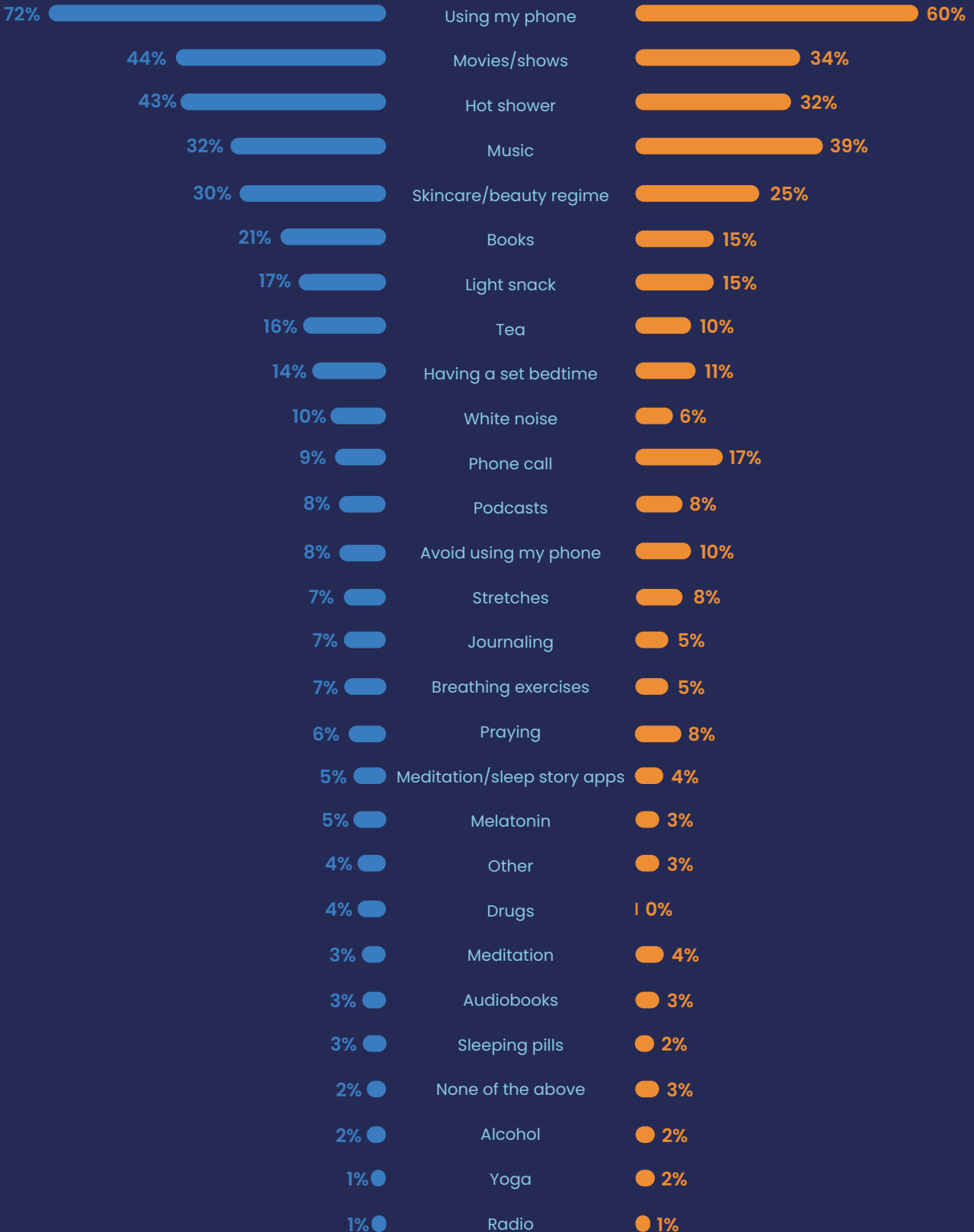
What is preventing you from getting a good night's sleep currently?*



* This question was only answered by respondents who said they have problems getting a good night's sleep.

What is part of your nightly bedtime routine?

● National ● Scape



Being a night owl and having a messed up sleeping pattern is affecting me negatively as I wake up at midday and then I am not as productive. I always wake up feeling tired and exhausted and have no energy to get on with my day because I oversleep. Implementing a better sleeping schedule that I follow everyday will help me to be more productive and feel better physically as well as mentally.

Male, 23, QLD, metropolitan

I read a lot of motivational books which I believe helps adjust my mindset! Giving yourself some alone time before bed and adjusting your mood with some positive self-talk, even if you aren't feeling it, goes a long way with helping mentally. Definitely make an effort to sleep early too, instead of being a super night owl, and try your best to put in exercise as part of your daily routine as sweating it out does help with the emotions!

Female, 20, VIC, metropolitan

I find it difficult to maintain good sleeping habits, and due to these poor sleeping habits my eating habits are impacted. I believe that to help improve wellbeing, structure and routine is very important, even working on one factor such as sleep can help other things fall into place. For example, waking up at a reasonable time in the morning allows for time to have a good breakfast to kickstart the day and make you feel energised. I find that when I wake up early and start my day like this I have a really enjoyable and productive day.

Female, 19, QLD, metropolitan



CHAPTER

04



DIET

In 2023 over three quarters of young people say they don't have a very healthy diet. A lack of willpower and motivation is the top negative influence on young people's diet, followed by their belief that healthy food takes too long and costs too much to make – both of which with guidance can be resolved. Besides food the majority of young people drink coffee weekly while the majority don't drink alcohol on a weekly basis, with most young people also never vaping or smoking cigarettes.

How would you describe your diet on average?

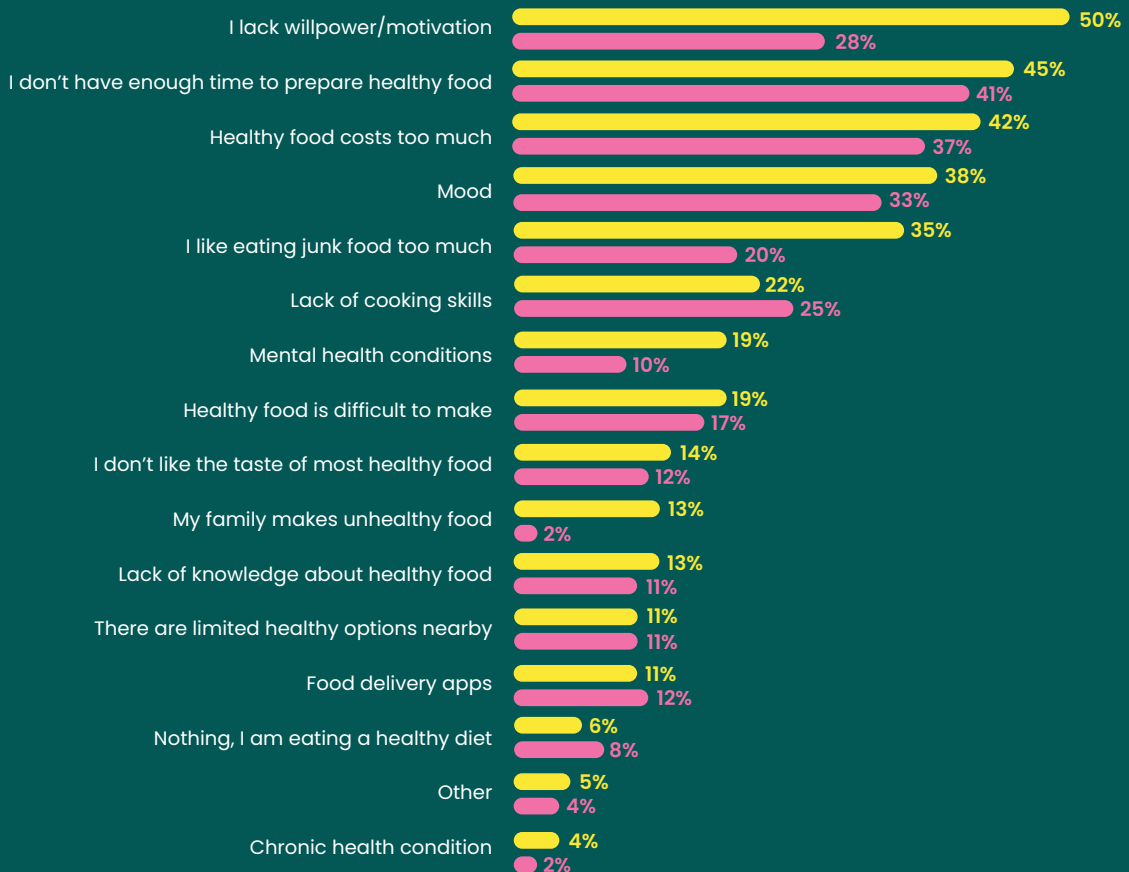
● National ● Scape



Scape residents are more likely to have a healthy diet compared to the national average.

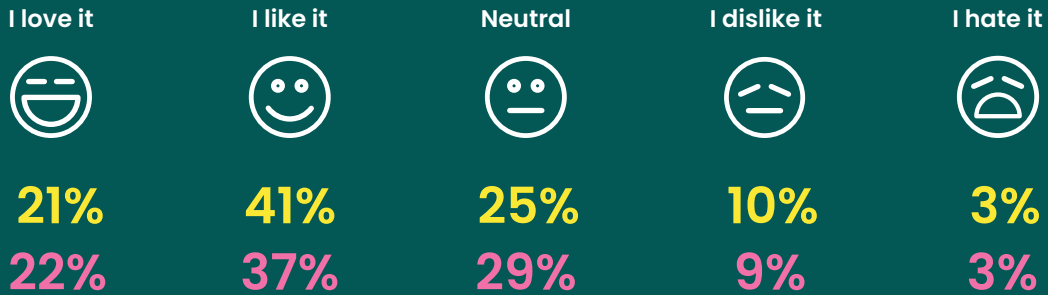
What's negatively impacting your diet?

● National ● Scape



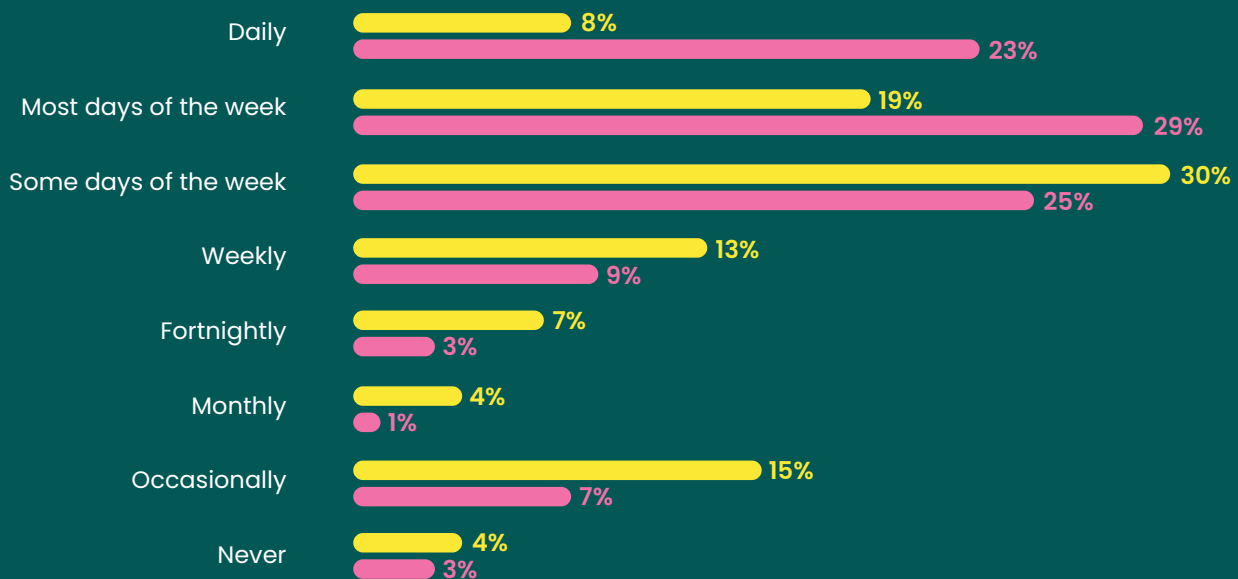
How much do you like to cook?

● National ● Scape



How often do you cook on average?

● National ● Scape



Scape residents are more likely to cook daily and most days of the week compared to the national average.



34% of young people eat the recommended 2 serves of fruit per day compared to 36% of Scape residents.



38% of young people eat the recommended 5/6 serves* of vegetables per day compared to 34% of Scape residents.

* Males - 6 serves, females - 5 serves



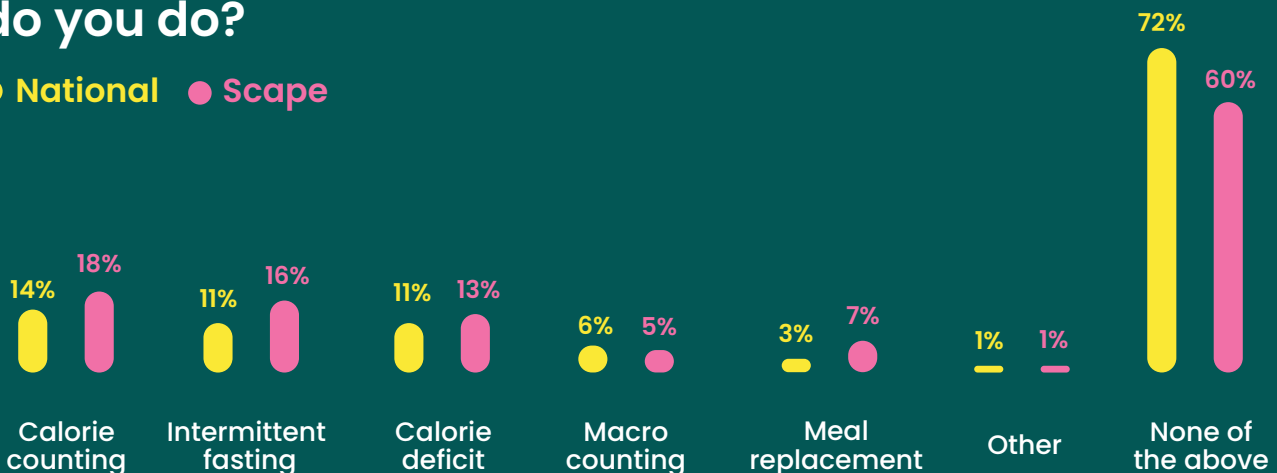
Do you follow any special diets?

● National ● Scape

Lactose free	8%	4%	Other	2%	2%
Vegetarian	5%	6%	Reducetarian	1%	1%
Dairy free	5%	3%	No sugar	1%	6%
Flexitarian	4%	4%	Low FODMAP	1%	0%
Gluten free	3%	2%	Low fructose	1%	1%
Vegan	3%	3%	Keto	0%	1%
Carnitarian	2%	2%	Kosher	0%	0%
Pescatarian	2%	1%	Paleo	0%	0%
Pollo Pescatarian	2%	2%	None of the above	68%	66%
Halal	2%	5%			

Which of the following do you do?

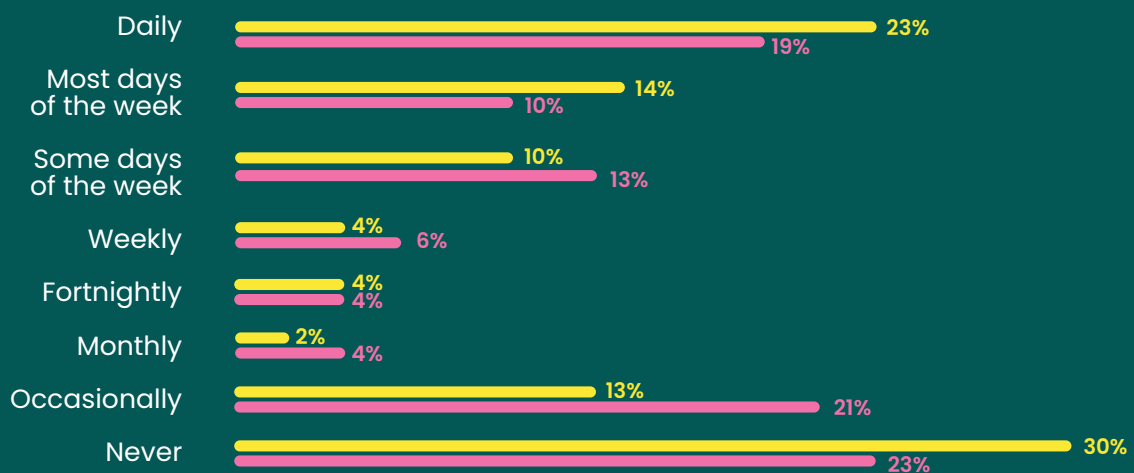
● National ● Scape



How often do you have the following?

● National ● Scape

Coffee



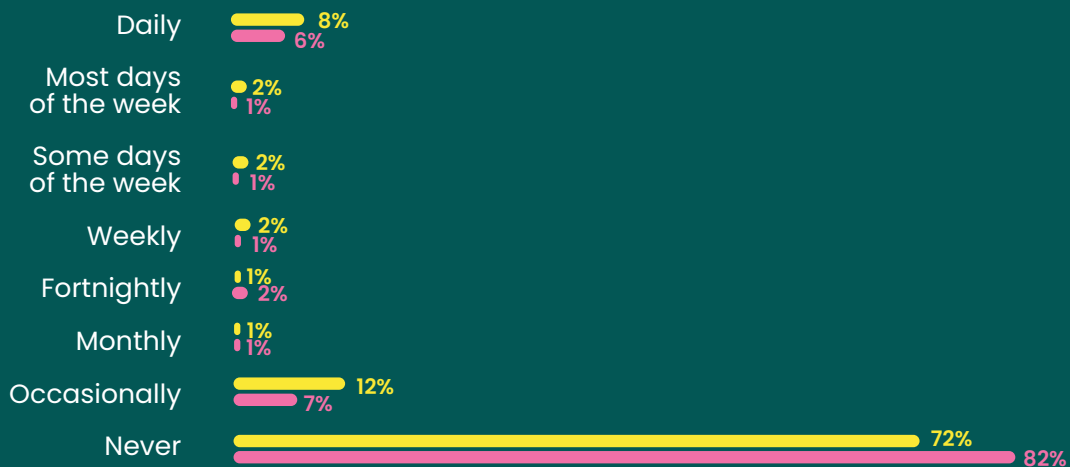
Alcohol



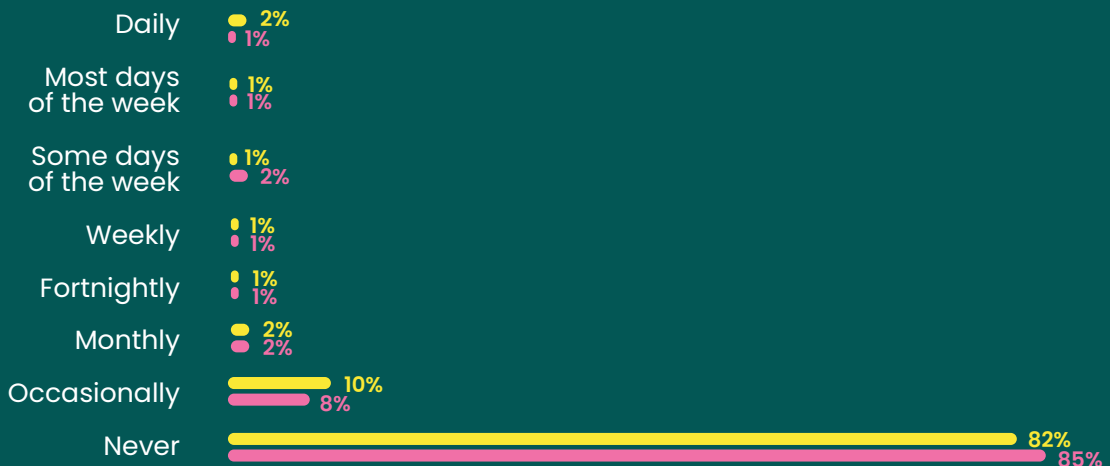
How often do you have the following?

● National ● Scape

Vaping



Cigarettes



The biggest positive impact on my well-being are the three square meals I eat a day at Scape. This is an improvement from home when I'd often skip meals. I want to improve on making well rounded meals when I return home.

Male, 21, NSW, metropolitan

If you are starting your gym journey don't be afraid to make mistakes as everyone starts somewhere. Gymrats are always happy to help if needed. If you are calorie/macro counting, do not try to force yourself to eat 100% clean as this is not sustainable in the long run. I was too hard on myself when I started my gym journey and accidentally gave myself an eating disorder. Food was no longer enjoyable and simply were numbers. To avoid this outcome simply eat whatever you want to eat, but everything in moderation. This way you can still enjoy your cravings while still working towards your goal.

Female, 19, VIC, metropolitan

I believe diet is one part of human health that has an impact on all other parts. If you eat good food, more variety of plant based foods which are high in fibre, your gut microbiome is happy, i.e. good bacteria multiplies, it in turn produces healthy fatty chain acids that keep you healthy and make you happy. The high fibre in plants keeps you full longer thus leading to less calorie intake and even helps you stay away from all types of lifestyle diseases. It helps with the sleep hormone, serotonin, that helps you sleep better. For me, diet was the main factor that changed my mental as well as my physical wellbeing. I would recommend youngsters to eat more and more fruits and veggies especially in the raw form and eat a variety.

Male, 23, SA, metropolitan





Final Thoughts

There's nothing better for wellbeing than the simple act of talking about it. The more people who talk about it, the more people who hopefully are inspired to put better wellness habits into practice themselves, whether it's waking up earlier, cutting down on junk food or hitting the gym a few days a week. The 2023 Gen Z Wellbeing Index was made by Year13 and Scape with these intentions, to keep the conversation around youth wellbeing flowing so more young people can be helped to live happier and healthier lives.

Putting wellbeing into words is best exemplified today by how Gen Zs are breaking down the stigma attached to mental health. With half of young people saying they've had mental health therapy it shows their greater acceptance of talking with others about their problems as a way to help resolve them. Far removed from the Hollywood stereotypes of someone shamefully lying on a shrink's couch, young people see talking about their mental health as a sign of strength and not weakness.

But this should not diminish the seriousness of what brings them to seek therapy in the first place. When asked about which mental health issues they are currently experiencing it was found anxiety, low self esteem, poor body image, social anxiety, depression and loneliness are each troubling more than a third of young people. Just 15% of young people say they aren't experiencing any mental health issues, meaning 85% of youth have at least one mental health issue they're dealing with. They're most certainly not alone.

What young people also aren't alone in today is feeling the pain of the rising cost of living with half saying it is negatively impacting their wellbeing at the moment. Cost of living is also the top public issue young people are worried about in 2023 as many increasingly see a financial future for their generation like their parents had as being unattainable. Between the high amount of young people it is impacting first hand as well as the high level of general concern held about it, cost of living has become the defining wellbeing issue for young people this year as the coronavirus pandemic has become a distant memory



Above cost of living though, the top factor found to be negatively impacting young people's wellbeing is figuring out their future. In the period of life from 18 to 24 years old young people are in the midst of their school to work transition which takes them from the structure of school to the uncertainty of trying to work out what comes next in life. It can be a source of great stress when young people don't know what career they want to go into or when they think the career path they're on isn't truly right for them. Helping young people find their passion and plan their future is therefore one of the most powerful wellbeing measures there is today.

With such a strong focus on mental health amongst young people today it's fitting that mental health, appearance and fitness for why Gen Zs exercise. Being active is as much of a solution for how they feel on the inside as it is for how they look on the outside. And while tech is often blamed for making young people lazy, fitness trackers are now getting young people active to close their progress rings or to beat others with the quickest run or longest ride, showing the innovative ways wellbeing is being promoted amongst young people today.

What tech can be blamed for though is keeping many young people awake at night. With two thirds struggling to get a good night's sleep it has emerged, unsurprisingly, that phone usage is one of the top reasons behind their trouble falling asleep. At the same time though three quarters of young people say they use their phone as part of their regular bedtime routine, showing the nightly conflict between phone and sleep which exists for many young people today.

When it comes to what they're eating, the majority of Gen Zs concede their diets aren't the healthiest they could be. Time, cost and willpower are all factors they say are getting in the way of eating a healthier diet. Positively though most young people enjoy cooking and can leverage this enjoyment to create healthier meals in the kitchen and learn that healthy food doesn't have to be expensive or time consuming to make.

By combining these findings about young people's mental health, exercise, sleep and diet as we've done in this report we are able to get a clear picture of the state of Gen Z student wellbeing in Australia in 2023. By breaking young people's lives down into these four categories we can develop a more structured understanding of how the world and their own wellness habits are impacting on their day to day feelings of health and happiness. With these insights, we at Year13 and Scape hope to help improve the lives of all young people as they find their place in the world.



