THE REAL

# YOUTH SURVIVAL REPORT

2019

# About this report

We are a group of young unemployed people who have been working on a Backswing project as part of Anti-Poverty week 2019. We're looking to get a better idea of how young people manage their Youth or Newstart payments.

We gathered once a week for a few hours over a period of 8 weeks. After a research phase and many discussions we started to develop an idea of how to present this report at Anti-Poverty week 2019. We developed a survey that as been published on Facebook and distributed to participants at Colony 47's Transition to Work program.

Within four weeks we received 66 responses from young people across Tasmania between 15-24 years of age.

Through this report, we hope to gain a better understanding of the challenges facing unemployed young people today.

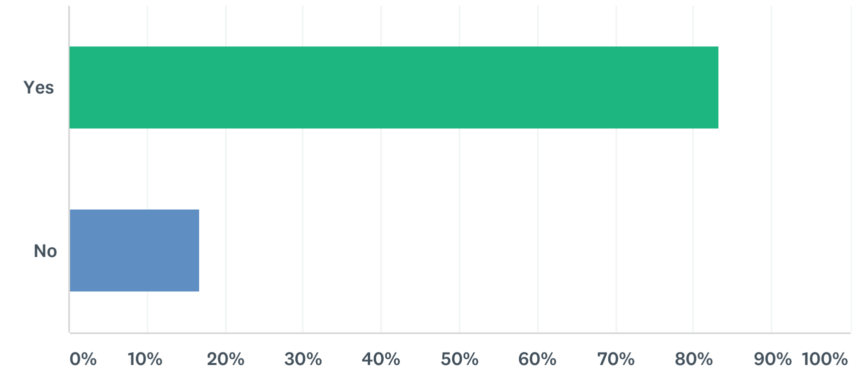
# Content

# The survey outcomes

The anonymous survey asked young people 15 questions. Alongside the basic demographic questions, the survey sought to understand more about the consequences of young people running out of money. We had 66 responses to the survey. Participants had the option to add a comment after completing the survey. 14 participants shared a comment, all of them are published in this report.

## Q1 Are you on Youth or Newstart Allowance

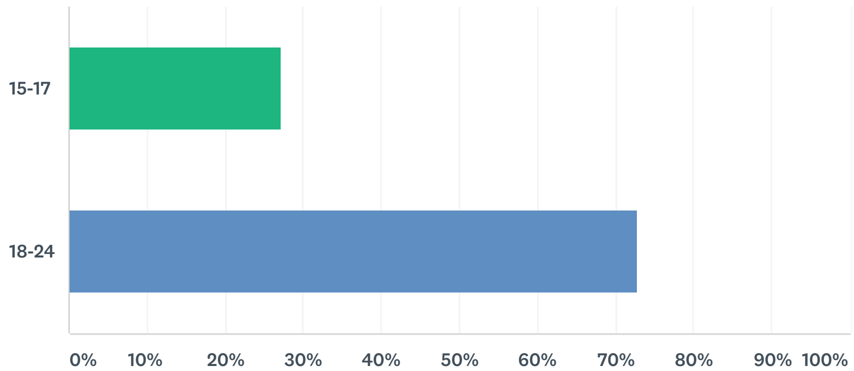
Answered: 66 Skipped: 0




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 83.33% | 55 |
| No | 16.67% | 11 |
| TOTAL | | 66 |

## Q2 How old are you

Answered: 66 Skipped: 0




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| 15-17 | 27.27% | 18 |
| 18-24 | 72.73% | 48 |
| TOTAL | | 66 |

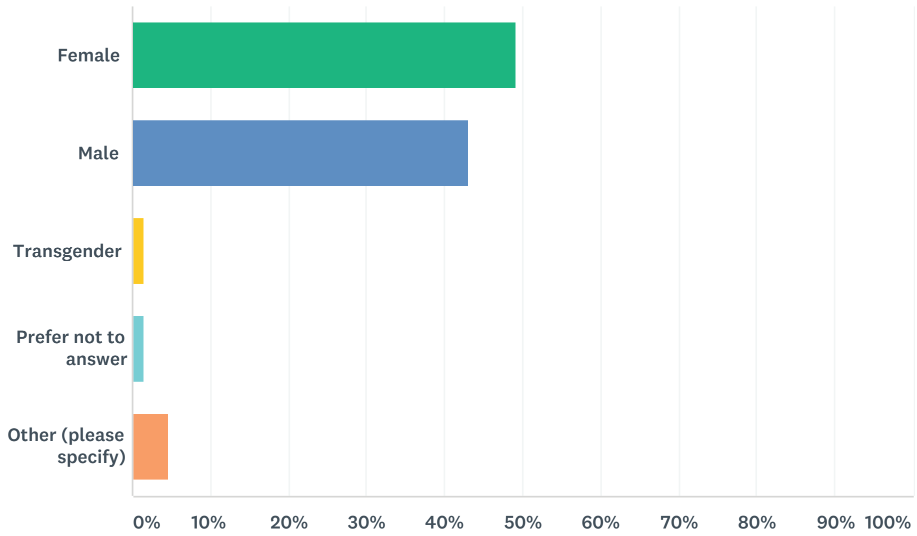
# Q3 Your Postcode

Answered: 63    Skipped: 3

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 Response from Postcode | 7190 |
| 1 Response from Postcode | 7216 |
| 1 Response from Postcode | 7176 |
| 1 Response from Postcode | 7112 |
| 1 Response from Postcode | 7303 |
| 1 Response from Postcode | 7008 |
| 1 Response from Postcode | 7316 |
| 1 Response from Postcode | 7304 |
| 1 Response from Postcode | 7163 |
| 1 Response from Postcode | 7184 |
| 1 Response from Postcode | 7310 |
| 1 Response from Postcode | 7016 |
| 1 Response from Postcode | 7140 |
| 1 Response from Postcode | 7315 |
| 1 Response from Postcode | 5042 |
| 2 Response from Postcode | 7054 |
| 2 Response from Postcode | 7019 |
| 2 Response from Postcode | 7004 |
| 2 Response from Postcode | 7018 |
| 3 Response from Postcode | 7173 |
| 3 Response from Postcode | 7050 |
| 3 Response from Postcode | 7250 |
| 4 Response from Postcode | 7009 |
| 5 Response from Postcode | 7000 |
| 5 Response from Postcode | 7030 |
| 7 Response from Postcode | 7011 |
| 8 Response from Postcode | 7010 |

# Q4 To which gender identity do you most identify?

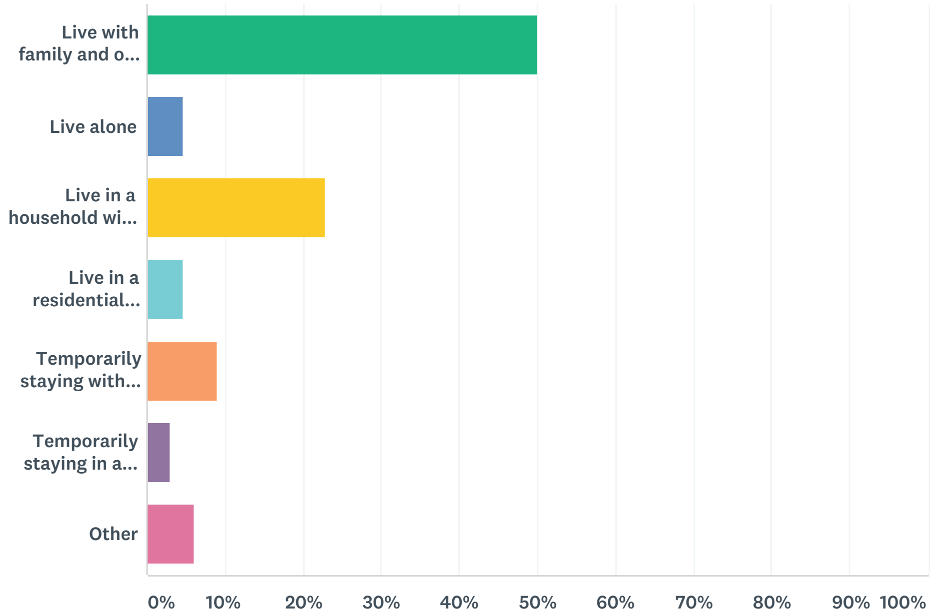
Answered: 65    Skipped: 1




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Female | 49.23% | 32 |
| Male | 43.08% | 28 |
| Transgender | 1.54% | 1 |
| Prefer not to answer | 1.54% | 1 |
| Other (please specify) | 4.62% | 3 |
| TOTAL | | 65 |

## Q5 What's your current living situation?

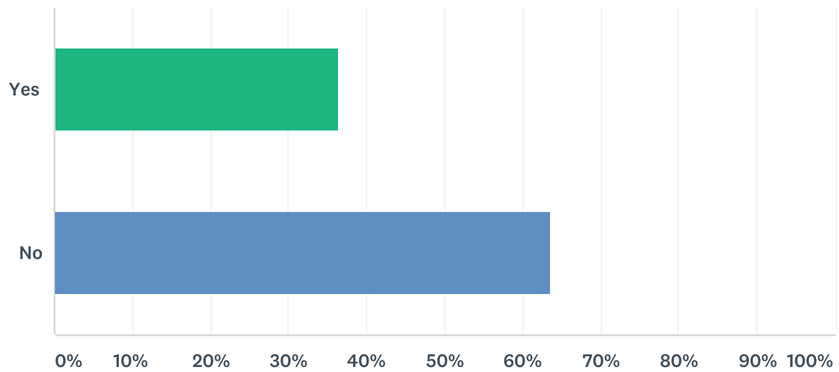
Answered: 66    Skipped: 0




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Live with family and or relatives | 50.00% | 33 |
| Live alone | 4.55% | 3 |
| Live in a household with other people | 22.73% | 15 |
| Live in a residential facility | 4.55% | 3 |
| Temporarily staying with a relative or friend | 9.09% | 6 |
| Temporarily staying in a shelter or homeless | 3.03% | 2 |
| Other | 6.06% | 4 |
| TOTAL | | 66 |

## Q6 Have you ever stolen because you were hungry?

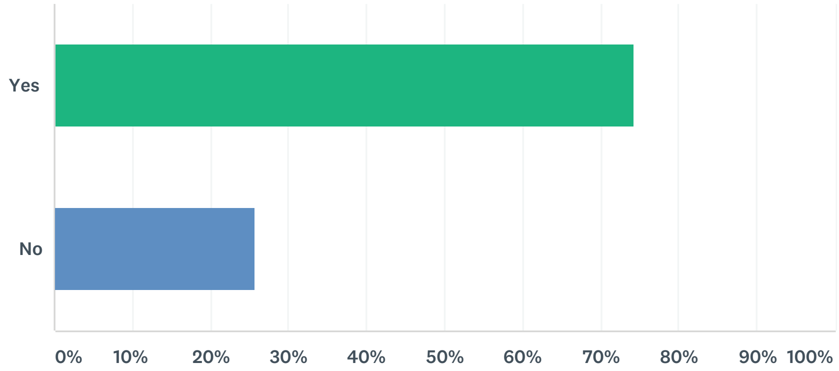
Answered: 66    Skipped: 0




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 36.36% | 24 |
| No | 63.64% | 42 |
| TOTAL | | 66 |

## Q7 Have you ever been forced to skip a meal because you were out of money?

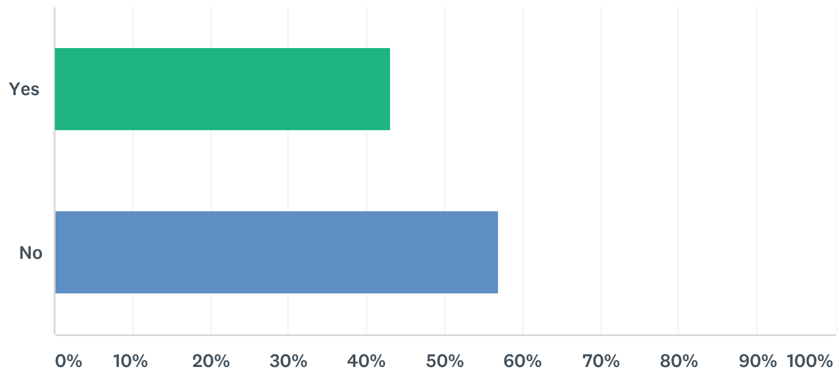
Answered: 66    Skipped: 0




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 74.24% | 49 |
| No | 25.76% | 17 |
| TOTAL | | 66 |

## Q8 Has your Centrelink payment ever been suspended?

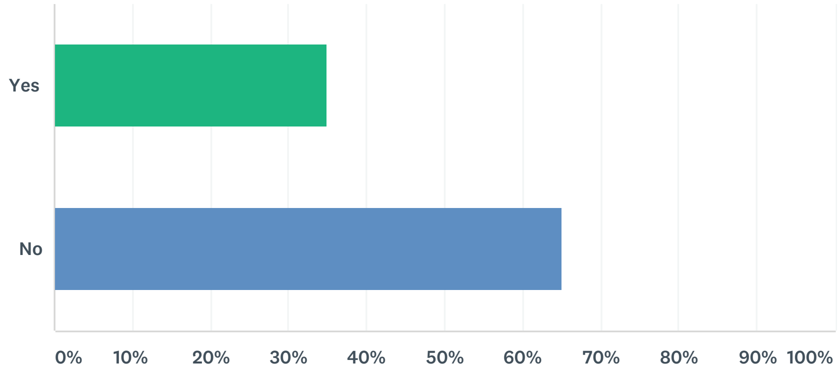
Answered: 65    Skipped: 1




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 43.08% | 28 |
| No | 56.92% | 37 |
| TOTAL | | 65 |

## Q9 Are you able to save money?

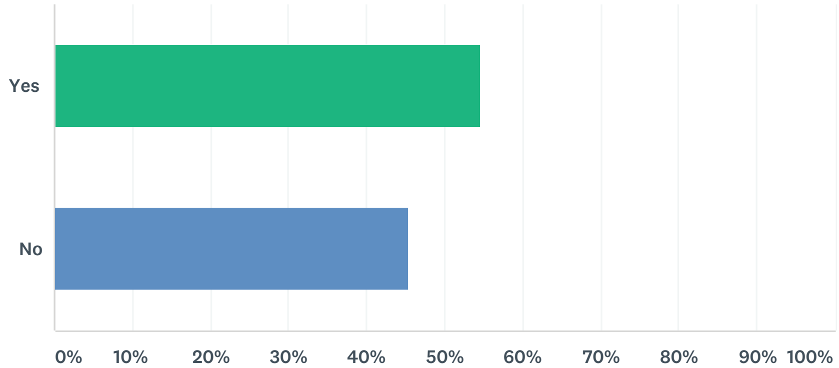
Answered: 66 Skipped: 0




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 34.85% | 23 |
| No | 65.15% | 43 |
| TOTAL | | 66 |

## Q10 Do you need to pay off the money you owe to someone?

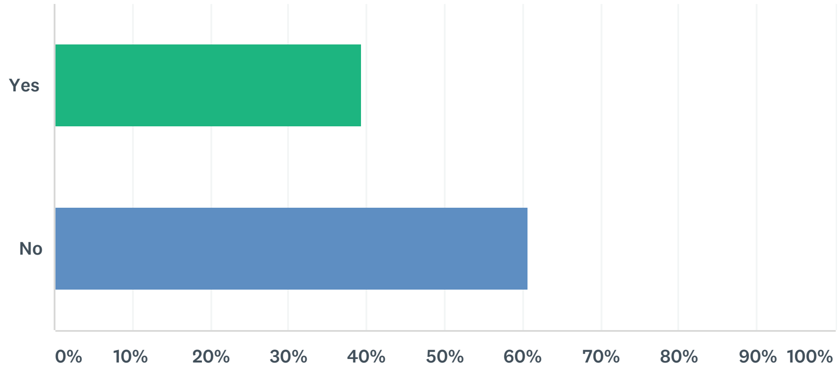
Answered: 66 Skipped: 0




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 54.55% | 36 |
| No | 45.45% | 30 |
| TOTAL | | 66 |

## Q11 Have you ever received a Centrelink loan?

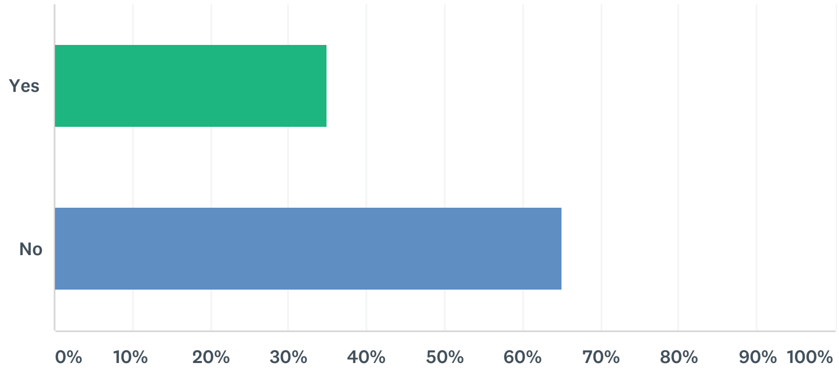
Answered: 66 Skipped: 0




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 39.39% | 26 |
| No | 60.61% | 40 |
| TOTAL | | 66 |

## Q12 Do you make money through a side income?

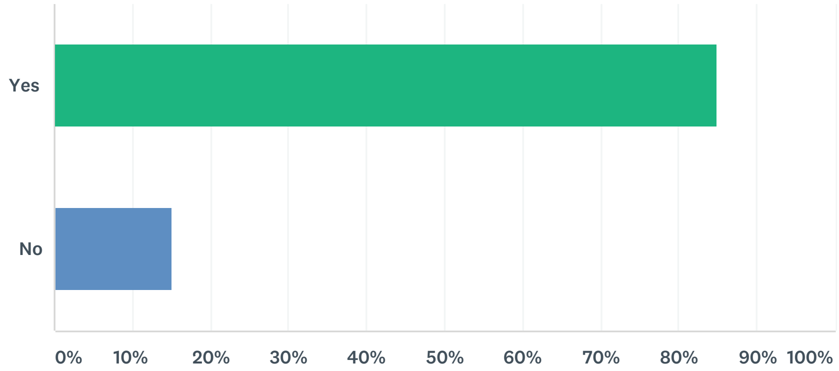
Answered: 66 Skipped: 0




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 34.85% | 23 |
| No | 65.15% | 43 |
| TOTAL | | 66 |

## Q13 Have you ever experienced financial stress?

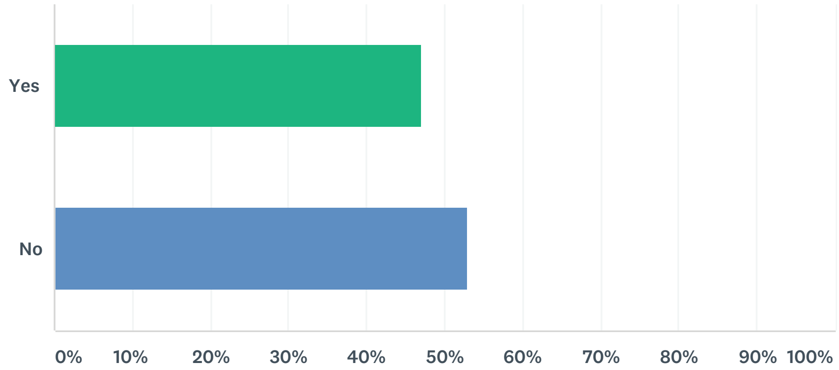
Answered: 66    Skipped: 0




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 84.85% | 56 |
| No | 15.15% | 10 |
| TOTAL | | 66 |

## Q14 Does your financial situation put you at risk of homelessness?

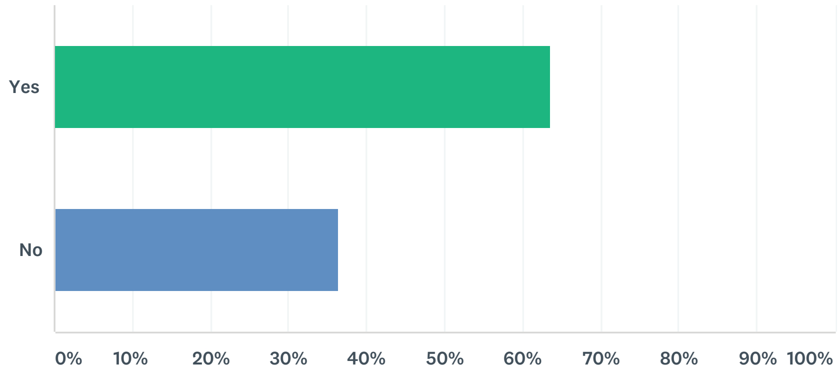
Answered: 66    Skipped: 0




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 46.97% | 31 |
| No | 53.03% | 35 |
| TOTAL | | 66 |

# Q15 Do you face barriers in finding work because of your financial situation?

Answered: 66    Skipped: 0




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 63.64% | 42 |
| No | 36.36% | 24 |
| TOTAL | | 66 |

# Comments

## Q16 Do you want to share a story about your circumstances?

"I get $265 a fortnight and spend $168 for rent. I am living with 4 other housemates. I'm one of the lucky ones. I spend $50 for two weeks food and need $34 for 8 days a fortnight to buy for the bus to be able to do the work for the dole activity. $11 a fortnight is my saving opportunity. Raise Newstart, please, but while you're at it, Youth allowance is too low also. How am I supposed to live? What if I had a car? $11 leaves not much breathing room."

"At the moment I am living at my residence in Trinity Hill, but I am required to vacate before the 11/10/19 … and the notice to vacate was served on me on the 25/09/19 and at this point in time I don't know what to do … I do understand a bit of why I am getting kicked out, but it's okay … And I have a lot of court to deal with at the moment. I am missing my daughter so much, and still got a lot to pay off to Vodafone … I am sorry I don't know how to explain my current situation it's all a mess I live down in Tasmania on my own and now things are getting hard, and I do feel like giving up sometimes, but I guess this is life."

"My family moved from Queensland down to Tassie when I was 12. We went from being financially stable to living in a small caravan park for 3 months. Over the past five years (we moved down in 2013) we have come to know the term 'bread and milk money' very well and are accustomed to being left in the cents after necessity shopping some weeks. We are on Medicare, which is amazing because I have health problems and without the card we would be in so much debt."

"Money is quite tight for university students who have parents who are only just over the threshold for youth allowance. I think young people need better access to government loans because it can be incredibly difficult and stressful to become an adult and fit into adult society. I can't imagine how impossible it must be to grow up in Australia without parental support."

"Living like this isn't living. It makes me want to die. I can't afford to see a doctor or dentist. I can barely afford to eat after paying all my bills. I can't afford to run a car, which holds me back from getting a job. These are supposed to be the best years of my life, but I've never felt worse."

"I am finding it hard to survive at the moment because I am living off $200 and I am finding it hard to find a job because I don't have the clothes to suit the job."

“My grandmother raised me and when she passed away I was left to fend for myself, now I’m living in a caravan struggling to make ends meet.”

“Nobody in my family is employed, and because of this lack of confidence I don’t even want to do school anymore, let alone trying to get a job.”

“My mums an abusive alcoholic, and my dad never wanted me so he left me before I was born, I moved out at 13 and had to couch surf and live in shelters until I was old enough to get youth allowance. It makes school really difficult because I’m so tired from everything all the time and I can’t go into Centrelink without missing school. I can barely afford food after paying rent and buying credit and paying people back after running out of money two days after pay day. It’s really hard. But I know one day, if I try hard enough, I’ll succeed as a director and make money and hopefully be able to give back.”

“It sucks, how are we supposed to get anywhere? They are making it so we can’t get off it.”

“I had to go on youth allowance as I injured my knee and wasn’t allowed to work. But I found out I’m only entitled to $50 a week because I live with my parents. Somehow I’m expected to live off that while my parents, who aren’t overly well off and are trying to pay off their own home loan, have to carry my burden and look after my 15 year old brother.”

“I moved out of my step mums house because of emotional, verbal and sometimes physical abuse. When I was living there, we were homeless and living in a caravan for around nine months. Since moving in with my biological mother, I have been receiving $15 a fortnight from my grandma.”

“I am in foster care and so far I am well but once out of home (18 when plan expires) I will be worried about financial problems.”

“We can’t afford to be poor.”

# Conclusion

The majority of young people on Youth or Newstart payment would clearly benefit from an increase in their payments. It seems evident that many young people feel trapped and start to take a loan or lend money from others only to put themselves further behind. There is an indication that young people who live at home or with relatives are little better off than those living independently.

Shockingly 36% stated that they have stolen at least once to feed themselves. 75% had to skip a meal because they were out of money. 85% experienced financial stress. More then 60% stated that they face barriers in finding work because of your financial situation. And alarmingly almost 50% see themselves at risk of becoming homeless.

# Recommendation

Our recommendation is unanimous. Based on our own experiences, observing others in our community and with the findings of this report we truly believe Youth or Newstart payment needs to be raised. It will make a difference and support young unemployed people in getting a step closer to finding work and becoming independent.