



## **Missing: Young People in Australian News Media**

**Examining the representation of young people by Australian news media in the first six months of COVID-19.**

**The Foundation for Young Australians, 2020**

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## Acknowledgement

FYA acknowledges the custodians of the land throughout Australia on whose unceded countries we conduct our business. We pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people continue to live in spiritual and sacred relationships with this country.



# About us, copyright & disclaimer

## **The Foundation for Young Australians (FYA)**

[FYA](#) is a not-for-profit that believes young people have the power to beat injustice and transform the future. We back young people with the trust, resources, skills, and connections to make change. For more information on FYA and this report, contact Isabelle Tolhurst, Youth Media Centre Lead on [izzy.tolhurst@fya.org.au](mailto:izzy.tolhurst@fya.org.au)

## **Disclaimer**

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# Summary of findings

## Findings

- **Young people make up only a fraction of coverage** in Australian news media. Between February 1 – July 31, 2020, young people featured in less than 3.3% of articles.
- **Articles about young people decreased 14% from 2019.** Young people have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19, yet media coverage does not reflect this.
- **Young people are rarely quoted** in news articles about them. In analysing the news coverage of six major news outlets, 59% of headline mentions about young people were not supported by quotes or case studies in the body copy.
- **Young people are reported on differently compared to other generations.** On some issues, such as economic wellbeing, 71% of articles that mention Gen Z were negative in sentiment, featuring unsubstantiated claims or an absence of quotes or case studies from members of Gen Z.
- **Many media outlets use stereotypes in their coverage of young people.** In analysing articles from six mainstream online news publications, this report found that all used one of five stereotypes in their coverage of young people. The Australian used stereotypes in 75% of their coverage, and the Herald Sun used stereotypes in 61% of their coverage.

## Limitations

- **Six months of news coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic was analysed for this report.** It would be ideal to repeat this analysis in future years to build a more complete picture of how young people are represented by the news media.
- **Only online news media was analysed for this report.** Whilst there is a large overlap between online news media and print news media, this report does not directly review print or broadcast news media. Expanding the scope of analysis to include all news media in future years would allow for more comprehensive analysis.
- **This is the first time FYA conducted a media analysis of this type.** As such, it is possible that the issues with youth representation in the media identified in this report extend to other generations.
- Finally, as this report highlights, **young people are not a homogenous group.** This analysis does not consider how intersecting issues of class, race, culture, gender or socio-economic status impact representation in the media. In future years, we hope to assess how young people are represented as a whole in the news media, how different cohorts of young people are represented, and how to make the media more equitable for all.

# Objective

FYA commissioned *Missing: Young People in Australian News Media* to analyse how young people were portrayed by the news media in Australia during the outbreak and early months of COVID-19.

The date range for this report is February 1 to July 31, 2020, to cover the approximate time when the first COVID-19 case in Australia was confirmed (January 25) and the six months thereafter. Young people have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, and we wanted to know how this had been reflected in Australian news media.

This report builds on [The Inclusion and Representation of Young People in The Australian News Media](#) report (Western Sydney University, Queensland University of Technology) published in 2019, that found that “young people’s voices were almost completely absent from the news. Their needs, experiences and views were more likely to be relayed by adult mediators.”

Additionally, this report found that only 1% of news stories on any given day quoted a young person. Other influential research for *Missing: Young People in Australian News Media* was [News and Young Australians 2020](#) (Western Sydney University, Queensland University of Technology), which found that 66% of young Australians believed that news media organisations have no idea what the lives of young people their age are like, and only 45% think that news media covers issues that matter to them.

*Missing: Young People in Australian News Media* is an inaugural undertaking for FYA, a learning project, and an initial test of methodology. We hope it can contribute to the establishment of a baseline for future research and a way to map progress towards a more engaged and participatory news media.

Our report also seeks to contribute to the discourse on media literacy in Australia, and support young people’s understanding of bias, agenda, credibility, and power in our media structures.

Media literacy enables people to critique news and identify misinformation. Improving media representation of young people - being seen, heard and accurately included in news coverage – builds trust and interest in media, which provides a strong base from which to increase young people’s media literacy.

*Missing: Young People in Australian News Media* intends to further national discussion about representative and equitable media in Australia, and the role it plays in influencing public discourse and policy making in Australia.

Australian online news coverage about young people was identified through searches created on a media intelligence platform to find relevant content based on keyword hits. Content was examined further to produce three key analyses:

## 1. Overview:

Across Australian news media outlets, all articles between February 1 and July 31 featuring keywords about young people in Australia were analysed using a variety of metrics such as breakdown by month, headline mentions, top publications and coverage. This creates an overview for our deeper analysis. See the appendix for the full list of keywords.

## 2. Issues analysis:

This section reviews 518 articles to see where mentions of each generation (Baby Boomers, Gen X, Gen Y/Millennials, Gen Z) intersect with five key issue areas: economic wellbeing, climate change, housing, education and First Nations affairs. FYA selected these five key issue areas as they relate critically to the wellbeing of young people and influence their ability to have agency over their lives. They were also topical issues during the time period analysed.

This analysis did not investigate the generation above the Baby Boomers (74+ years), nor the generation under Gen Z (under 11 years).

The issues analysis considers the overall share of voice each generation has in news media coverage of these issues, then goes further to manually analyse the sentiment - positive, neutral or negative - of coverage.

The methodology used to examine sentiment is summarised at length on the pages that follow.

## 3. Youth voice representation in news media:

Coverage by six mainstream news media publications were analysed to see how much voice each outlet provided to young people through quotes and case studies. This section goes further to analyse the frequency and ways publications use stereotypes about young people in their news coverage.

The six publications analysed include: **ABC, SBS, The Age (plus syndications), Herald Sun (plus syndications), The Australian** and the **Australian Financial Review (AFR)**. This selection was based on two considerations:

- 1) To include the most widely accessed online news sources in Australia, based on search volume.
- 2) To provide a more accurate depiction of the Australian news media landscape by including public news services (ABC, SBS) as well as publications under the two largest news media groups in Australia, 9News (The Age, AFR) and NewsCorp (Herald Sun, The Australian).

# Methodology continued

## Sentiment methodology

Up to 50 articles for each generation were analysed - Baby Boomers, Gen Y, Gen X/Millennials and Gen Z - across five key issue areas - economic wellbeing, climate change, housing, education and First Nations affairs - assigning each article with one of the following three sentiment tags.

- **Positive** - Articles were favourable towards the generation and featured substantiated claims as well as quotes or statements from members of the generation.
- **Neutral** - Articles were more balanced and featured substantiated evidence and, in some cases, included quotes or statements from members of the generation or age group.
- **Negative** - Articles were critical towards the generation through use of unsubstantiated claims and did not include quotes or statements from members of the generation.

Where less than 50 articles existed for a particular generation and issue, all those available were analysed. **This led to analysis of a total of 518 articles.**

Sentiment was analysed to try and determine how readers would interpret content. Sentiment was analysed by:

- **Assessing language** - Looking for adjectives and terminology that is subjective or sensational, for example: [Grand Theft Auto: Youth crime crisis amid pandemic](#) OR [Outrage as millennials' have shocking new term for coronavirus](#)
- **Quotes** - The presence or absence of quotes were a key determinant for sentiment. Quotes from the generation in question usually supported a positive sentiment tag, while the absence of quotes from the generation in question usually led to a negative tag.
- **Conducting two waves of analysis** - Firstly, to assess messaging broadly, then secondly, to apply the sentiment tags based on this methodology.

## Considerations

- Where images appeared, they were analysed to see how they supported or undermined the sentiment of an article overall, but they were not a key determinant of sentiment.
- One person conducted all sentiment analysis to remain consistent to methodology.
- Occasionally, neutral articles included articles of lower relevance to a generation or issue, but were categorised by sentiment nonetheless.

# Definition of terms



## Online news coverage

Australian online news articles were searched for the following terms using Boolean logic. Boolean logic is a form of algebra which is centered around three simple words known as Boolean Operators: “Or,” “And,” and “Not”:

Youth, young generation, young people, young man/men, young woman/women, young, young adult(s), Australian(s), young Aussie, young graduate, young worker, young parent, apprentice, trainee, uni(versity) graduate, school leaver(s), millennial(s), Zoomer(s), Gen Z, Gen Y.  
+ additional coverage including the keywords kids, teenager(s), student(s) or graduate(s) in combination with any of the above-mentioned terms.

## Headline mentions

Articles which feature keywords related to young people in the headline.

## Top publications

Publications with the most articles mentioning young people in Australia.

## Coverage

Articles and content related to young people.

## Keywords

Specific keywords and phrases that have been the most widely used within the coverage.

## Age groups & generation definitions

**Data sources:** [McCrindle\\*](#) & [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)

### Baby Boomers:

Born 1946-1964 (56-74 years old)

### Generation X:

Born 1965-1979 (41-55 years old)

### Millennials/Gen Y:

Born 1980-1994 (26-40 years old)

### Gen Z:

Born 1995-2009 (11-25 years old)

This analysis did not investigate the generation above the Baby Boomers (74+ years), nor the generation under Gen Z (under 11 years).

*\*There is some debate over the years of birth for each generation. McCrindle’s definition has been used for the purpose of this report.*



# Definition of terms

## Stereotypes

The report analysed six mainstream online news publications for the presence of five stereotypes about young people:

- 1. Young people lack resilience / are lazy**
- 2. Young people are criminal / dangerous**
- 3. Young people are entitled**
- 4. Young people are a homogenous group**
- 5. Young people can't make the right decisions**

To undertake this analysis, keywords that defined or were synonymous with each stereotype were searched for when appearing alongside keywords used to define young people. This analysis also used existing articles containing these stereotypes as a reference. Whether or not a young person was quoted, where they were quoted, and if data was cited to substantiate a claim were considered. More detail on this in the appendix.

## Share of voice

Measurement of the amount of media mentions a generation received relative to others. This could be in the headline, body copy or both.

## Quoted

Quotes and statements from young people in Australia within the article(s).



# Overview of news coverage

**February 1 - July 31, 2020**

Across Australian online news media, all articles between February 1 and July 31 featuring keywords about young people were analysed using a variety of metrics such as breakdown by month, headline mentions, top publications and coverage. This creates the foundation for examining how young people are talked about by the news media, what role their voice has, and understanding the power of headlines.

# Overview of news coverage



February 1 - July 31, 2020

This overview sets a baseline for understanding how often young people were talked about by Australian online news media.

By understanding how often young people are talked about, deeper analysis can occur, determining when mentions were backed up by an interview or quote from a young person. This analysis reveals the problems that emerge when young people's voices are not included.

These overview statistics show us that young people made up only a fraction of online news media coverage during the first six months of COVID-19 in Australia.

Across the six-month time period analysed, mentions of young people made up **less than 3.3% of all news coverage.**

## Total articles about young people

**338,017**

Out of 10M+ articles published between Feb 1 - July 31

## Average no. of articles about young people per day

**1,857 / day**

## No. of articles about young people where they were mentioned in the headline

**20,569**

6.1% of all articles about young people featured young people in the headline.

## Average no. of articles mentioning young people in the headline per day

**113 / day**



# Overview continued

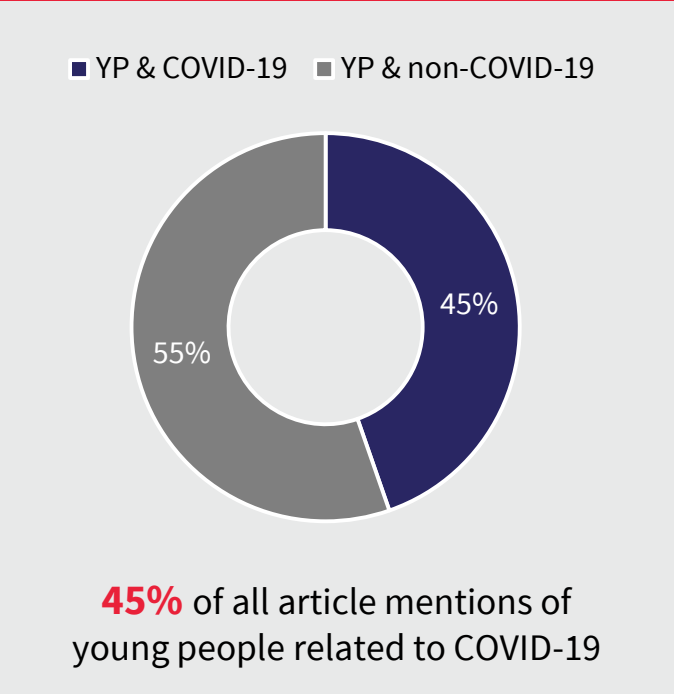
February 1 - July 31, 2020

Overall mentions of young people (YP) in the Australian news media between February 1 - July 31, 2020.

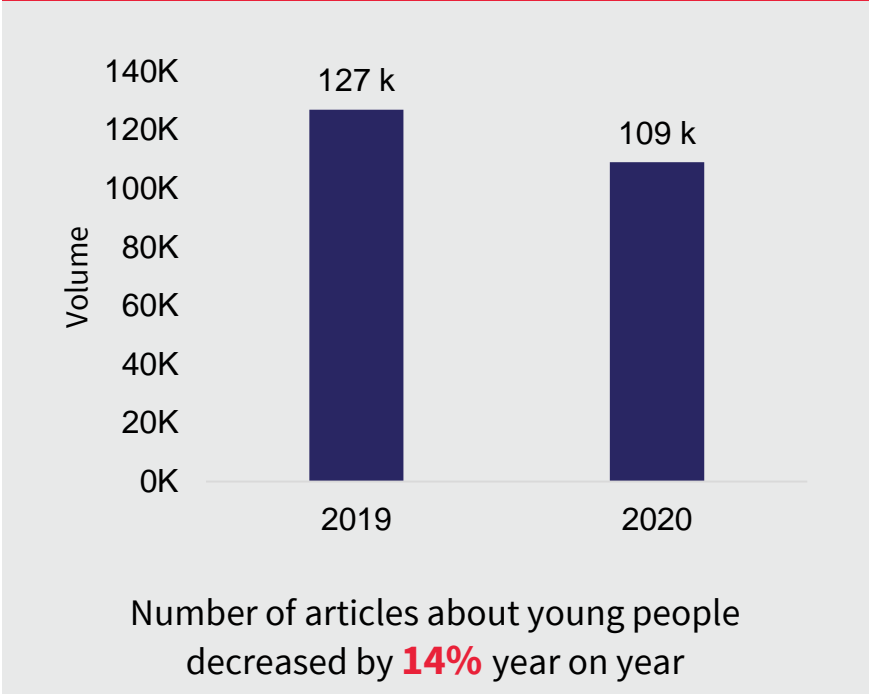
Despite [being disproportionately affected by the pandemic](#), **only 45% of all articles** about young people between February 1 and July 31 related to COVID-19.

Additionally, **overall coverage of young people decreased by 14% when compared to the same period in 2019.**

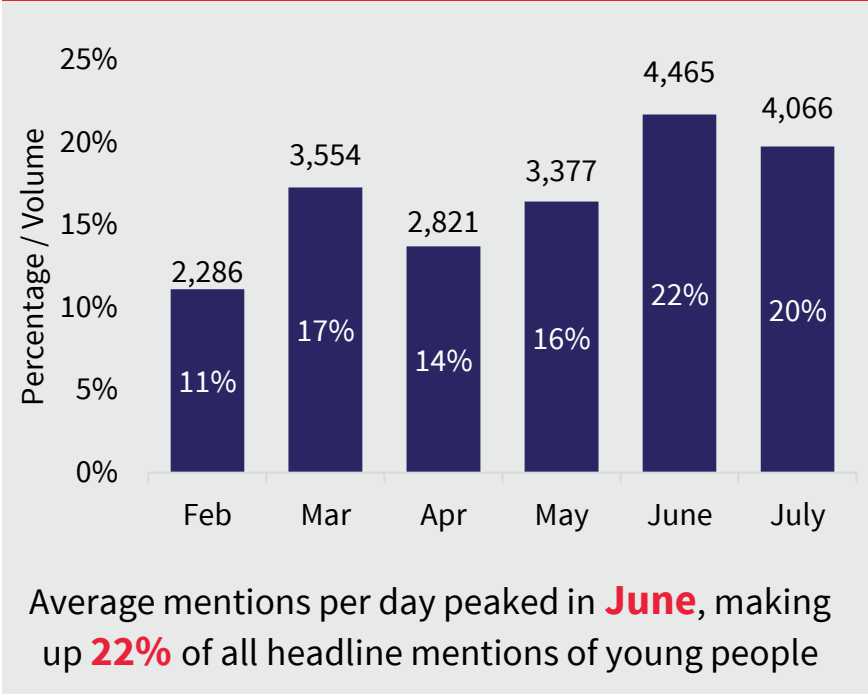
% of articles about YP that related to COVID-19



Total volume of articles about YP year-on-year comparison  
Feb 1 – July 31, 2019 vs. Feb 1 – July 31, 2020  
(excluding paywalled content)



Monthly breakdown:  
No. of articles about YP where YP are mentioned in headline





# Where are young people mentioned in online news?

Social media is an extension of the news; a place where headlines and articles are often shared by news networks and news consumers. This slide highlights articles with young people mentioned in the headline that received the most shares across social media.

Headline mentions matter because [they influence what people think](#), and have [been found to affect readers' processing of factual news articles](#). Additionally, a study by Columbia University and France's Microsoft Research and Inria Joint Centre suggests that **59% of news links shared on social media have never been clicked.**

The power of a headline is increased when shared and distributed on social media, due to the rapid way in which information is published and consumed.



Articles with young people mentioned in the headline that received the most shares on social media

Social media platforms considered: Twitter, Facebook, Reddit.

**ABC**

**Intensive care nurse's blunt warning over coronavirus risk to younger adults**

47.2K Shares

**The Sydney Morning Herald**

**Buttrose says Millennial workers lack resilience and 'need hugging'**

17,8K Shares

**7News**

**Millennials' shocking new term for coronavirus - 'Boomer Remover'**

6.7K Shares

**The Conversation**

**Naming and shaming two young women shows the only 'enemies of the state' are the media**

8.0K Shares

**StartsAt60**

**Dirty habits! Most young Aussies don't wash their hands after using the toilet**

5.1K Shares

# Headline acts

This slide shows how often **14 mainstream Australian news media outlets published a headline about a young person.**

These publications were selected to cover a range of prominent state-based and national news outlets.

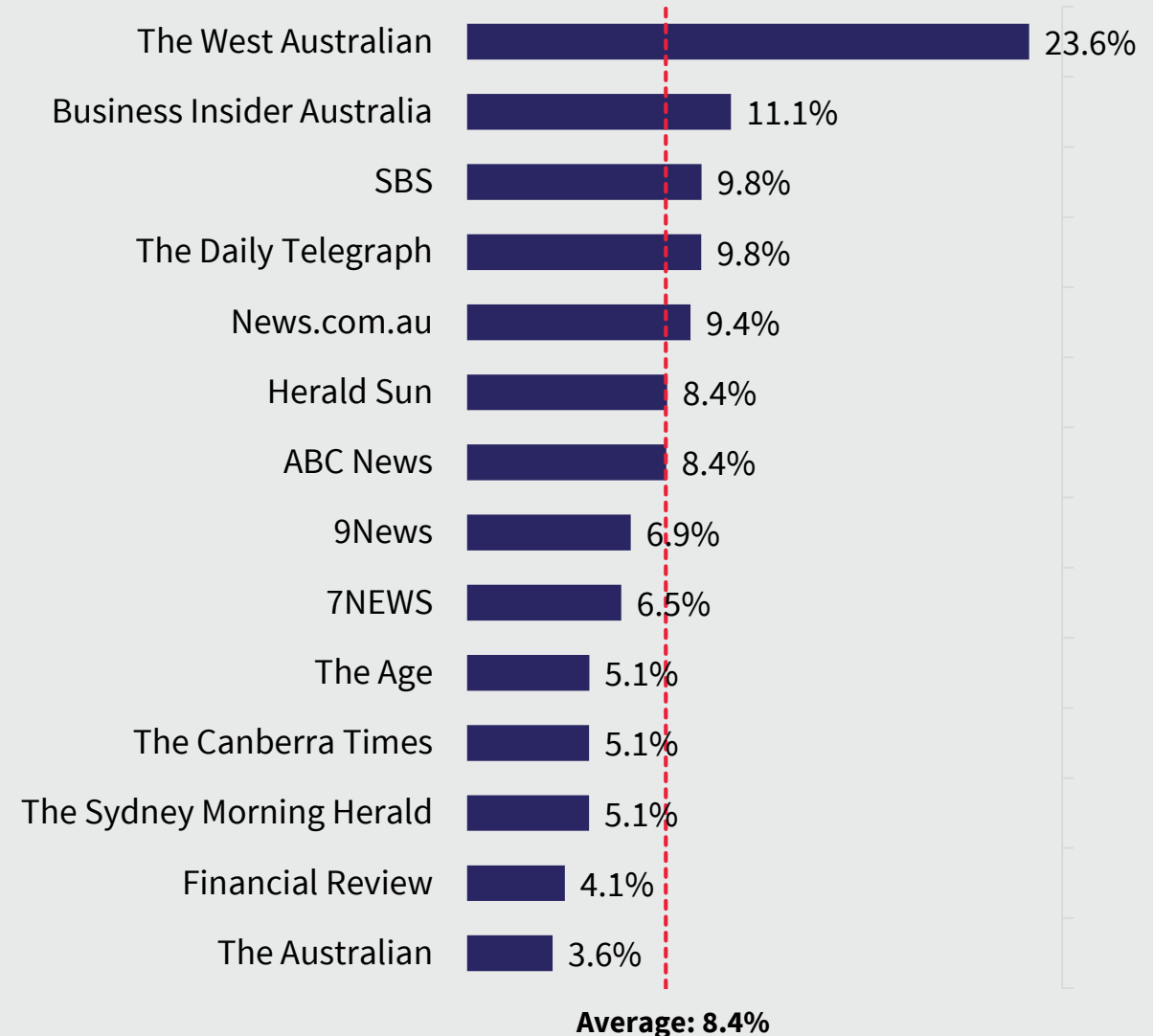
This graph shows many publications do mention young people in their headlines.

However, in analysing six major Australian news publications, our report found that **59% of headline mentions of young people are not supported** by quotes or case studies. This will be examined in more detail later.

Representation without voice can be more detrimental than no representation at all, and unsubstantiated reporting can contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes. This will be examined further later in the report.

## % of headline mentions

Headline mentions as a share of each publication's total coverage of young people between February 1 – July 31, 2020



# Headline acts continued

Here are five examples of headlines about young people from the 14 publications analysed in the previous slide.

Despite enormous diversity within age groups that generational tags hide, they provide a useful starting point for exploring how young people are represented by the Australian news media.

How generations fare in coverage of key social, economic and environmental issues will be examined in more detail later in the report.

## Examples of headline mentions

from February 1 to July 31, 2020

### **The Daily Telegraph**

**Older generation tell Millennials to calm down and not panic**

### **SBS**

**On Country program will see culture combat youth crime**

### **Business Insider Australian**

**'It's Gen Z you want': Millennials are defending themselves from accusations that they're out partying and ignoring warnings amid the coronavirus pandemic**

### **The West Australian**

**Millennials sacrifice lifestyle spending to lead property charge**

### **The Sydney Morning Herald**

***Thanks for noticing us Gen Z, but we need to talk about 'Karen'***

# Top themes

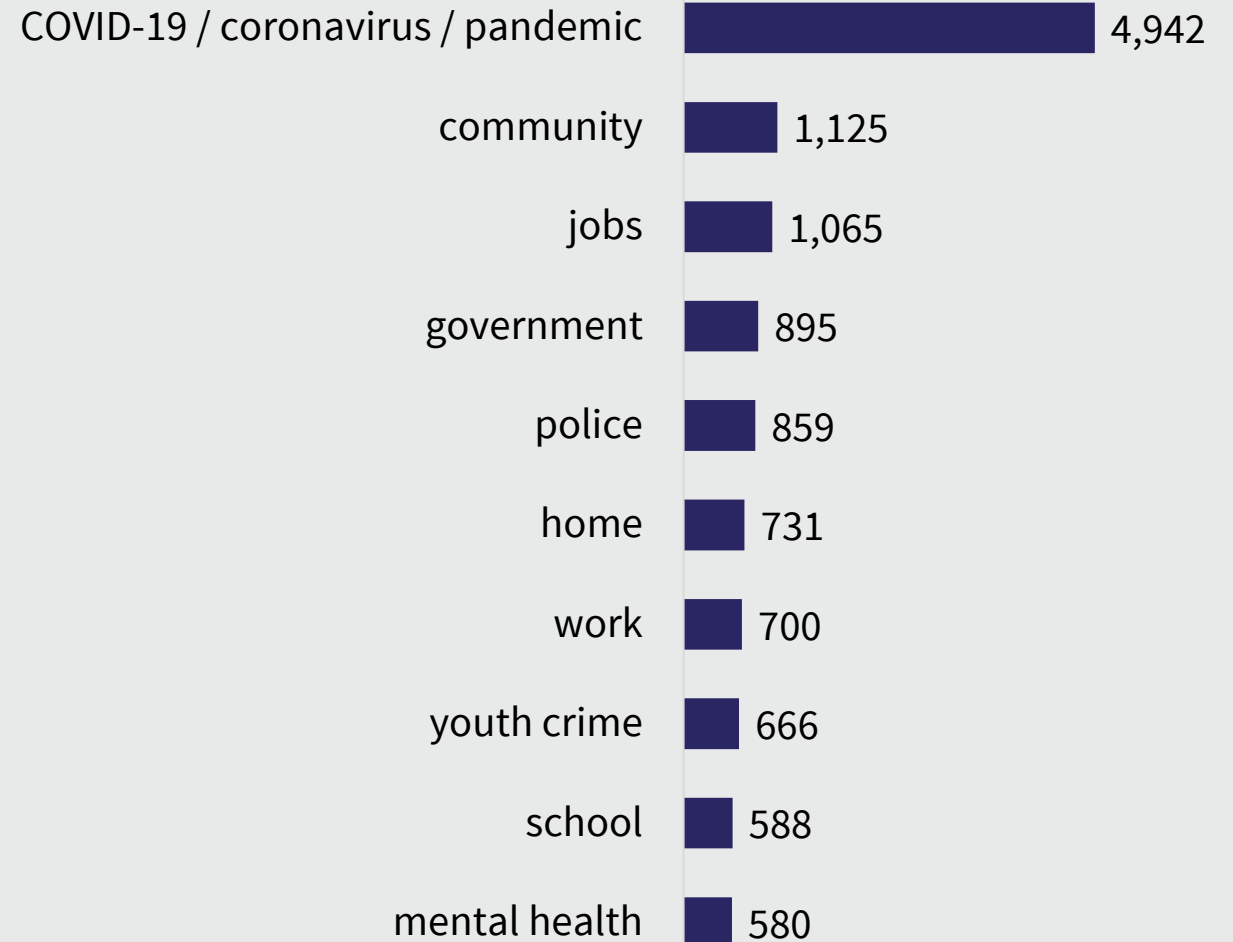
These are the top 10 themes that appeared in our analysis of articles (headline mentions and body copy mentions) about young people between February 1 and July 31, 2020.

While themes like COVID-19 / coronavirus / pandemic are unsurprising during this time, recurring themes like 'police' and 'youth crime' suggest a disconnect between the actual lived experiences of most young people, and the news stories published about them.

According to [Mission Australia's 2019 Youth Survey](#), which had more than 25,000 young participants, mental health, the environment and equity and discrimination were the three most important issues for young people in Australia. These issues are underrepresented in the key themes uncovered by our analysis.

Additionally, the themes largely fail to reflect the positive social contributions young people make to society. These top themes begin to show how narrow coverage of young people is.

## Top 10 keywords used in content about young people





# Top themes continued

These are examples of the most viewed articles for each of the top themes related to coverage of young people.

Articles for the 'Police' and 'Youth Crime' themes have been shown together as there was considerable overlap in the articles that featured these themes.

## Examples of articles within the top themes

### COVID-19 / Coronavirus / Pandemic

- [Intensive care nurse's blunt warning over coronavirus risk to younger adults](#)
- [Young people 'are so keen to raise climate change but are deaf to the COVID-19 danger'](#)
- [Coronavirus can and does kill young people - and many have one thing in common](#)

### Community

- ['Enough is enough' as residents rally against youth crime](#)
- [New measures to tackle NT youth crime](#)
- [Brooke Blurton and Blakbusiness show Indigenous youth turning to social media to influence and educate](#)

### Jobs

- [Number of apprentices and trainees declined by 33 per cent since 2013](#)
- [Jobkeeper has failed, and it's hitting women and young people the hardest | Greg Jericho](#)
- [Millennials need more than a hug, starting with job security and wage justice](#)

### Police / Youth crime

- [Youth crime in Townsville creating tension among business, residents and police](#)
- [On Country program will see culture combat youth crime](#)
- [Cairns Regulators: Citizens vigilante group formed over youth crime outrage](#)

### Mental health

- [Spike in youth mental health intervention](#)
- [Coronavirus will likely lead to more mental health issues in young adults, Patrick McGorry warns](#)
- [Young Australians told to be resilient as COVID-19 wipes out jobs and housing hopes](#)



# Issues analysis

Our analysis found that broadly, the media treats people differently based on your age.

This section looks at where mentions of each generation (Baby Boomers, Gen X, Gen Y/Millennials, Gen Z) intersect with five key issue areas - economic wellbeing, climate change, housing, education and First Nations affairs. These five key issue areas were chosen as they relate critically to the wellbeing of young people and influence their ability to have agency over their lives. They were also topical issues during the time period analysed.

Coverage of each generation on these issues was manually analysed to determine the sentiment - positive, neutral or negative - of coverage. Sentiment was analysed to try and determine how readers would interpret content, noting that neutrality – reporting on issues objectively, impartially and by using quotes and case studies to back up claims – is the goal for news coverage. What this analysis shows is that neutrality is not always achieved. As such, coverage that is classified as neutral should be seen as a good thing, and ideally, all news media coverage across issues and generations is neutral.

This analysis did not consider how intersecting issues of class, race, culture, gender or socio-economic status impact representation in Australian news media. Using recognised generational labels in this analysis shows us that people can be misrepresented or underrepresented no matter what your age.

Additionally, this analysis did not investigate the generation above the Baby Boomers (74+ years), nor the generation under Gen Z (under 11 years).



# Sentiment methodology in brief

## **Sentiment\***

Up to 50 articles were analysed for each generation across each of the five key issue areas. Where less than 50 articles existed for a particular generation and issue, all those available were analysed.

**This led to analysis of a total of 518 articles.**

**Positive:** Articles were favourable towards the generation and featured substantiated claims as well as quotes or statements from members of the generation.

**Neutral:** Articles were more balanced and featured substantiated evidence and, in some cases, included quotes or statements from members of the generation.

**Negative:** Articles were critical towards the generation through use of unsubstantiated claims and did not include quotes or statements from members of the generation.

*\*This report is not advocating for uncritical coverage of any generation, though it is noticeable that in each of the issue areas analysed there were significant differences in the sentiment of articles, indicating that people are treated differently by the media based on their age.*

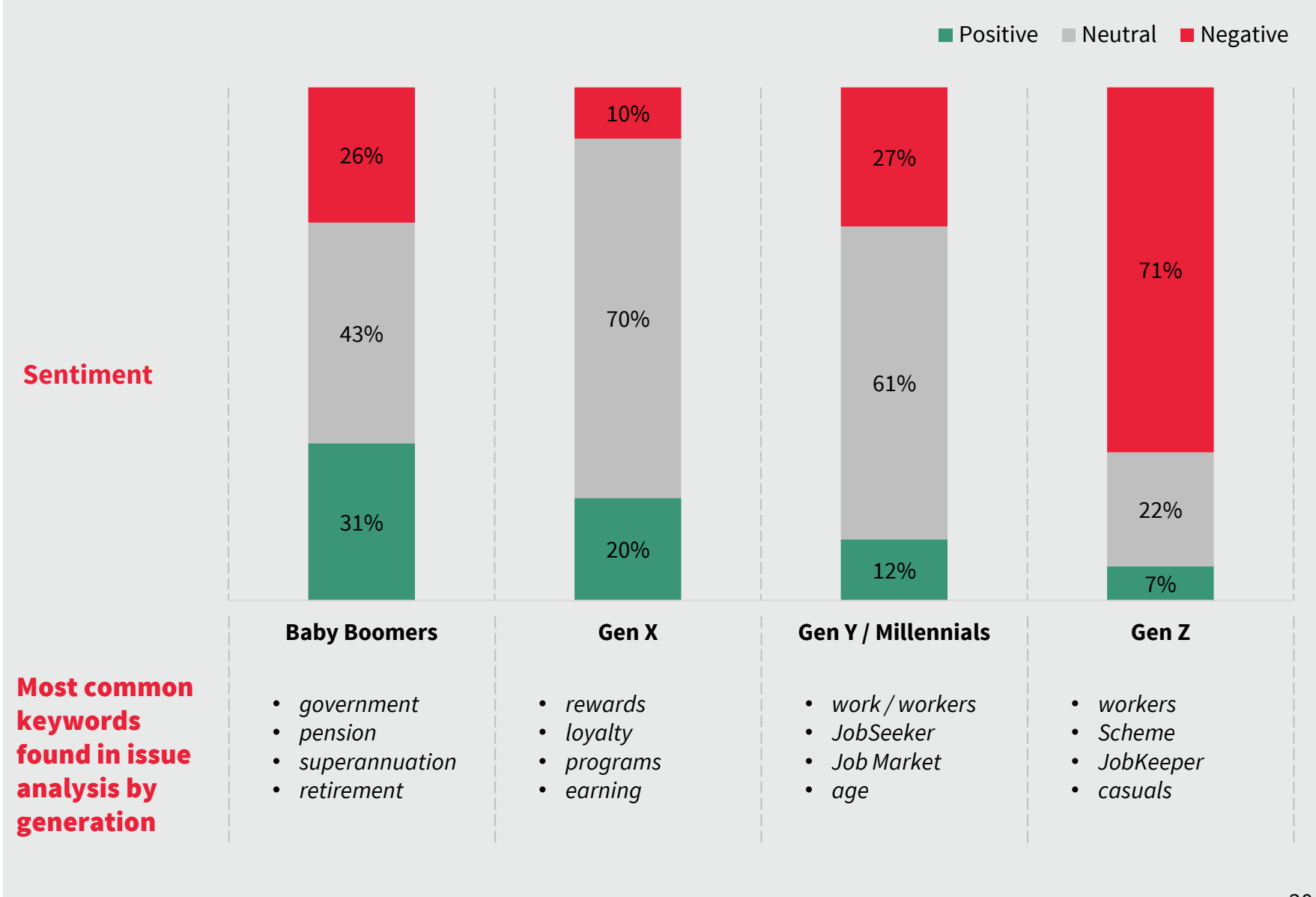
# 1. Economic wellbeing

**Total articles analysed:** 148

In analysing articles about economic wellbeing by generation, the report found that 71% covered Gen Z negatively compared with only 26% negative coverage for Baby Boomers.

Baby Boomers also received the most positive coverage (31%) across stories about economic wellbeing.

The common keywords also indicate popular narratives about each generation on the topic of economic wellbeing. These words are not problematic on their own, but if the stories are without quotes or case studies, it is easy to see how stereotypes emerge.





# 1. Economic wellbeing

**Total articles analysed: 148**

As these examples demonstrate, headlines classified as positive do not necessarily correlate with a good news story about young people. Instead, they indicate that young people's voices and experiences were included in the story through the inclusion of quotes or case studies.

The following Gen Y/Millennials article demonstrates this: [Millennials came limping out of the Great Recession with massive student debt and crippled finances. Here's what the generation is up against if the coronavirus triggers another recession.](#)

As per the criteria for a positive sentiment this article was classified as such due to a young person being interviewed and their lived experience being included in the story. An image of the young person was also included. The journalist also references speaking "with dozens of people between the ages of 24 and 39...who shared stories of their struggles finding work and building long-term wealth."

## Baby Boomers

### Positive

- [Scott Morrison's crusade on super is the biggest attack on working Australians since WorkChoices](#)
- [Yes, Boomers are OK!](#)

### Negative

- [Coronavirus risks widening intergenerational wealth divide](#)
- [How Boomer property parasites drain the pension](#)

## Gen X

### Positive

- [Coronavirus: Millennials may struggle but Gen Z will reap the benefits](#)
- [Why more retirees are still paying off mortgages](#)

### Negative

- [Opportunity Lost: how successive government policies disadvantaged young Australians](#)

## Gen Y / Millennials

### Positive

- [Millennials came limping out of the Great Recession with massive student debt and crippled finances. Here's what the generation is up against if the coronavirus triggers another recession.](#)
- [Australian millennials open-minded about AI-based recruitment](#)

### Negative

- [Five things millennials look for in their next role](#)
- ['It's time today's women recognised how far equality has come'](#)

## Gen Z

### Positive

- [Generation Z: Architects of our New World Order](#)
- [Housing crisis impacting the mental health & safety of young women in regional Australia](#)

### Negative

- [Coronavirus Australia: Pay rise for under-20s during COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Teenagers seeing HUGE pay rises during the coronavirus pandemic](#)

## 2. Climate change

**Total articles analysed:** 155

In analysing news media about climate change by generation, there was no content with positive sentiment for Gen X on this issue.

The voices of Gen Z, who leading actors in the global climate action movement, are also often missing from news media coverage of the issue of climate change.



## 2. Climate change

**Total articles analysed:** 155

An example of an article that was classified as positive for Gen Y/Millennials is [Employees want their employers to take action on social issues, cost of living and the environment](#). This article shows how a range of quotes and case studies are used to support the headline and examine an issue by including a range of perspectives and angles.

Noting the power of headlines and our rapid consumption of news, it also matters *where* someone is quoted in an article. Quotes or case studies higher up in the article are more likely to be read than those down the bottom.

### Baby Boomers

#### Positive

- ['#Boomerremover': Millennials shocking new coronavirus hashtag](#)
- ['Creating Our Legacies': The Elders Fighting For Climate Justice](#)

#### Negative

- [Australia a 'standout loser' for damaging economy without COVID-19 immunity, Nobel prize-winner says](#)
- [OPINION: Its time for baby boomers to make a pact of solidarity with young millennials to fight the crisis of their time](#)

### Gen X

#### Negative

- [Australia has a problem with climate change denial. The message just isn't getting through](#)
- [OK Gen X \(and where the bloody hell are you?\)](#)

### Gen Y / Millennials

#### Positive

- [Employees want their employers to take action on social issues, cost of living and the environment](#)
- [Millennials are driven to a hard generational bargain](#)

#### Negative

- [Can Millennials defend liberty?](#)
- [Millennials' shocking new term for coronavirus - 'Boomer Remover'](#)

### Gen Z

#### Positive

- [Coming of age during COVID-19; the challenges facing the class of 2020](#)
- [8 fashion trends that Gen Z loves and Baby Boomers will never understand](#)

#### Negative

- [Quaranteens: will the 'Boomer Remover' instead melt the snowflakes of Generation Z](#)
- [Generation Z employees pose dilemma for some employers, and technology is key for retaining younger staff](#)

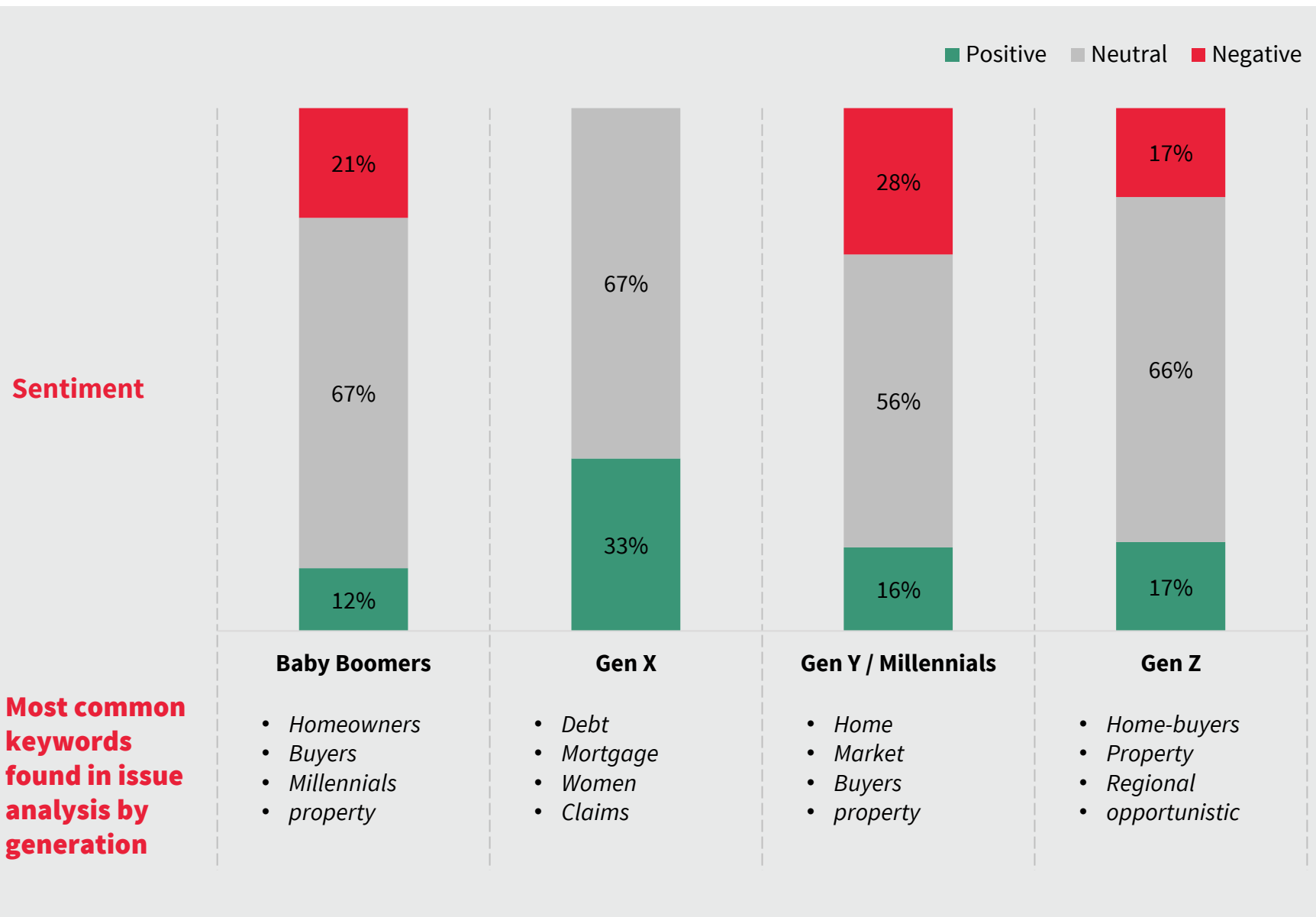
# 3. Housing / living situation

## Total articles analysed: 93

In analysing news media coverage of housing / living situation, there is broadly neutral coverage for all generations. This indicates that generations have been covered more objectively, and often, had their voices included in stories to verify claims and add experience to issues presented in news coverage.

Common keywords paint a picture of how generations get trapped in particular narratives in the news media. Keywords also show the limitations of using generational tags, failing to recognise the diversity of experience within them. For example, homelessness does not appear in any of the common keywords, despite being an issue that affects the wellbeing of many Australians.

Additionally, Gen Z made up only 6% of the 93 articles analysed, but [comprise 24% of the Australian population aged 11-74](#), meaning they are underrepresented in coverage of housing/living situation by Australian news media.





# 3. Housing / living situation

**Total articles analysed: 93**

Headlines here often show younger generations at odds with older generations on the issue of housing / living situation, inspiring more sensational headlines, such as ['I'm fed up with Baby Boomers being blamed for modern society's woes'](#).

Where quotes and case studies have been included, as in [Home comforts: how The Sims let millennials live out a distant dream](#), two young case studies were used to substantiate the headline and detail the broader context in which young people find themselves, that is, with a significant proportion of them likely to be renters, not home owners, for their whole lives.

## Baby Boomers

### Positive

- [Ever-shifting guidelines are hard for us to follow](#)
- ['I'm fed up with Baby Boomers being blamed for modern society's woes'](#)

### Negative

- ["Do your duty": It's time for Baby Boomers to help younger Australians own a home?](#)
- [Boomers spending kids' inheritance](#)

## Gen X

### Positive

- [Why more retirees are still paying off mortgages](#)

### Neutral

- [Boomers spending kids' inheritance](#)

## Gen Y / Millennials

### Positive

- [100 hours of talking to millennials about money showed most of them want one of 2 things: financial freedom or homeownership](#)
- [Home comforts: how The Sims let millennials live out a distant dream](#)

### Negative

- [Toyota C-HR Kona Hybrid review: The ultimate Millennial ride](#)
- [The 15 best US cities for millennials, where jobs are plenty and life is affordable](#)

## Gen Z

### Positive

- [New York is so expensive that millennials and Gen Zers are paying more than \\$900 a month to share small bedrooms, but residents say they get more out of co-living than just a place to sleep](#)

### Negative

- [24 photos Generation Z will never understand](#)

# 4. Education

**Total articles analysed: 78**

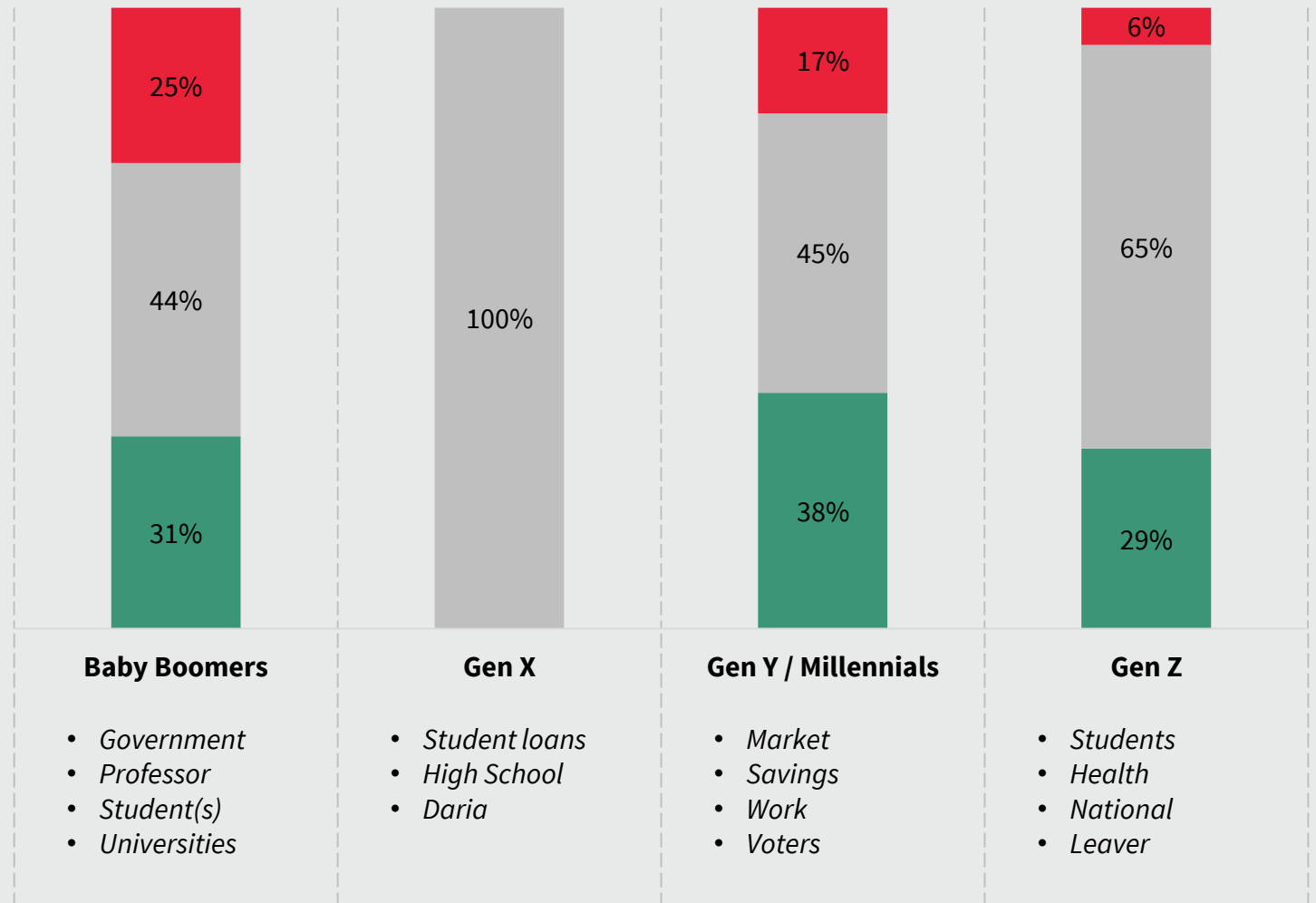
Examples of news media coverage on education content by generation shows considerable neutral and positive content, indicating that members of each generation are often engaged to provide quotes or be case studies for articles about education.

It is worth noting that of the 79 articles analysed, 60 of them related to Gen Y / Millennials (25) and Gen Z (35).

## Sentiment

## Most common keywords found in issue analysis by generation

■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative



# 4. Education

**Total articles analysed: 78**

Examples of news media coverage on education show how a range of quotes, sources and case studies are used to support headlines and present a balanced argument.

[\*Coronavirus pushes millennials to re-skill or face years of wage inequality\*](#) quotes two young workers, a university vice chancellor, and cites research from the Grattan Institute data and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

[\*Teens are tolerant but uneducated about religion, study finds\*](#) quotes a school student, principal, religious education director and university academic.

This article [\*Why Gen Z sacrifice their health for work\*](#) quotes a university study and four young interviewees from the study.

## Baby Boomers

### Positive

- [In praise of old white men](#)
- [‘I’m fed up with Baby Boomers being blamed for modern society’s woes’](#)

### Negative

- [A professor said ‘OK boomer’ was like calling someone the n-word. He’s now apologizing for his ‘hurtful’ comparison.](#)

## Gen X

### Neutral

- [The coronavirus pandemic could completely derail the careers of Gen Z — and they might end up a lot like older millennials](#)

## Gen Y / Millennials

### Positive

- [Coronavirus pushes millennials to re-skill or face years of wage inequality](#)
- [Millennials came limping out of the Great Recession with massive student debt and crippled finances. Here's what the generation is up against if the coronavirus triggers another recession.](#)

### Negative

- [Coronavirus: Radio host's passionate plea: "I need you to be a good human right now"](#)
- [5 ways to get your budget back under control during coronavirus](#)

## Gen Z

### Positive

- [Why Gen Z sacrifice their health for work](#)
- [The class of 2020 on what it's like to face down crumbling colleges, a frozen job market, and COVID-19 disrupting your entry into adulthood](#)

### Negative

- [Generation Z employees pose dilemma for some employers, and technology is key for retaining younger staff](#)

# 5. First Nations affairs

## Total articles analysed: 44

There was considerably fewer articles about First Nations affairs overall than other issue areas examined. This is likely due to underrepresentation of First Nations people in Australian news media (excluding NITV).

However, of the articles analysed, those that mentioned Gen Z were exclusively positive. On the other extreme, 80% of the content analysed featuring Baby Boomers was determined to have a negative sentiment.

An article could be considered as positive if *any* young person was quoted or used as a case study. The analysis has not considered whether that young person identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Agency over voice, and its role in First Nations self-determination is critical. However, this study only considered youth voice and representation broadly.

There was no content about Gen X in relation to First Nations affairs identified for analysis. The report has not examined why this is the case, but this could be explored in more detail in future research.



# 5. First Nations affairs

**Total articles analysed: 44**

In considering the headlines that appeared about First Nations affairs against each of the four generations, it is important to remember that articles have not been categorised as positive, neutral or negative based on their approach to First Nations affairs in a political or social sense.

For example, the article [\*Victoria is leading the nation in negotiating a treaty\*](#), has been classified as negative because it does not contain quotes or case studies from Baby Boomers, despite referencing them.

## Baby Boomers

### Positive

- [FIVE ACTS. ONE ADELAIDE CONNECTION.](#)

### Negative

- [Black Lives Don't Matter To Australia's Wealthy White Boomers](#)
- [Black lives marchers were not selfish, but courageous](#)

## Gen X

- There was no relevant coverage.

## Gen Y / Millennials

### Positive

- ['There are no more excuses': six industry insiders on Australian TV's problem with race](#)
- ['Looking the other way is racist': Millennial Australians reveal why they are risking coronavirus to attend Black Lives Matter protest](#)

### Negative

- [Is Black Lives Matter a religion for woke white people?](#)
- [Can Millennials defend liberty?](#)

## Gen Z

### Positive

- [The creative methods Gen Z are using to promote anti-racism and support Black Lives Matter](#)
- [Coming of age during COVID-19; the challenges facing the class of 2020](#)





# Youth voice in the media

Coverage by six mainstream online news publications were analysed to see how much voice each outlet provided to young people through quotes and case studies. Giving voice to young people provides them with agency over their stories, adds detail that helps readers discern accurate representations of young people, and avoids representing young people as a homogenous group. This section goes further to analyse the frequency and ways specific publications use stereotypes about young people in their news coverage.

When young people don't see themselves represented in the media, their distrust of this institution grows. It feels distant and unrepresentative. A 2017 survey, [\*News and Australian Children: How Young People Access, Perceive and are Affected by the News\*](#) (Crinkling News, Western Sydney University and Queensland University of Technology) found that only 23% of young people aged 8-16 years had a high level of trust in media organisations, and suggested that young people's lack of trust was closely linked to their lack of representation.

This analysis examines how young people are omitted from coverage by specific publications, and the detrimental impact stereotyping has on the relationship between young people and the media.



# Methodology

The six publications analysed include: **ABC, SBS, The Age (plus syndications), The Herald Sun (plus syndications), The Australian and The Australian Financial Review**. This selection was based on two considerations:

1. To include the most widely accessed online news sources in Australia.
2. To provide a more accurate depiction of the Australian news media landscape by including public news services (ABC, SBS) as well as publications under the two largest news media groups in Australia, 9News (The Age, AFR) and NewsCorp (Herald Sun, The Australian).

# Stereotypes

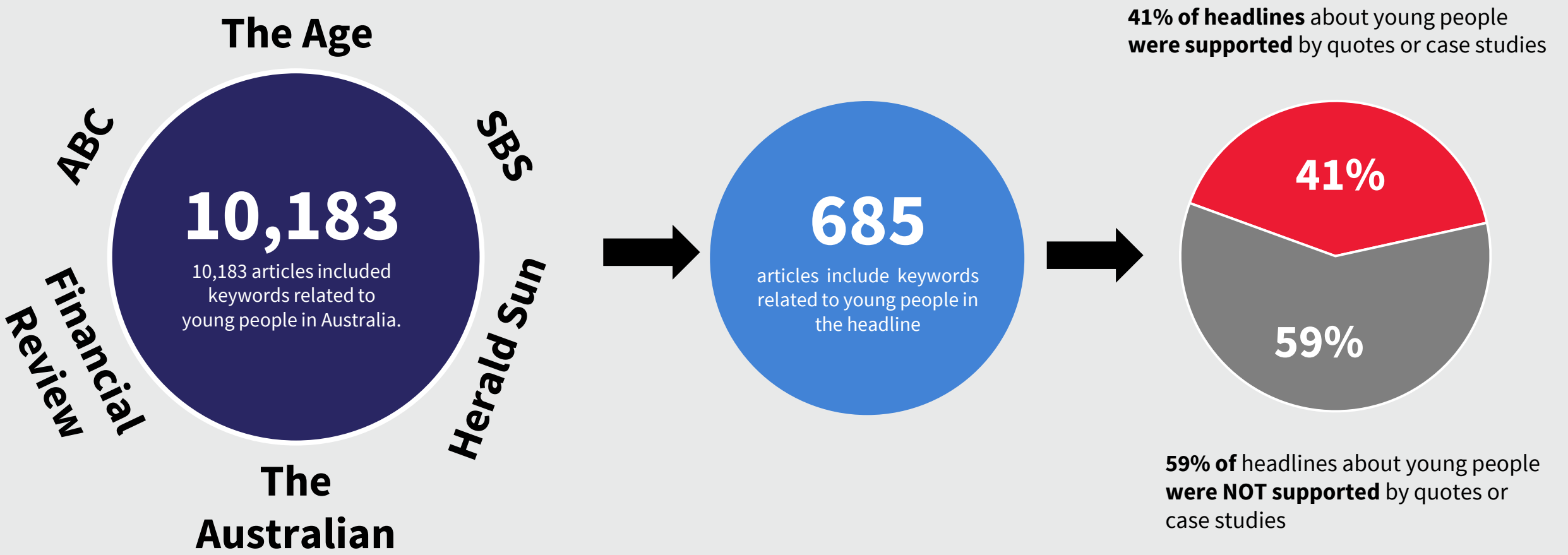
The report analysed the six mainstream online news publications for the presence of five stereotypes about young people:

1. **Young people lack resilience / are lazy**
2. **Young people are criminal / dangerous**
3. **Young people are entitled**
4. **Young people are a homogenous group**
5. **Young people can't make the right decisions**

A range of keywords that defined or were synonymous with each stereotype were searched for when appearing alongside keywords used to define young people. This analysis also used existing articles containing these stereotypes as a reference. Whether or not a young person was quoted, where they were quoted, and if data was cited to substantiate a claim were considered. More detail on this in the appendix.

# Overview

Six online news publications were selected for analysis to see how many articles mentioned young people, how many featured young people in the headline, and how much of this coverage included youth voice through quotes or case studies.

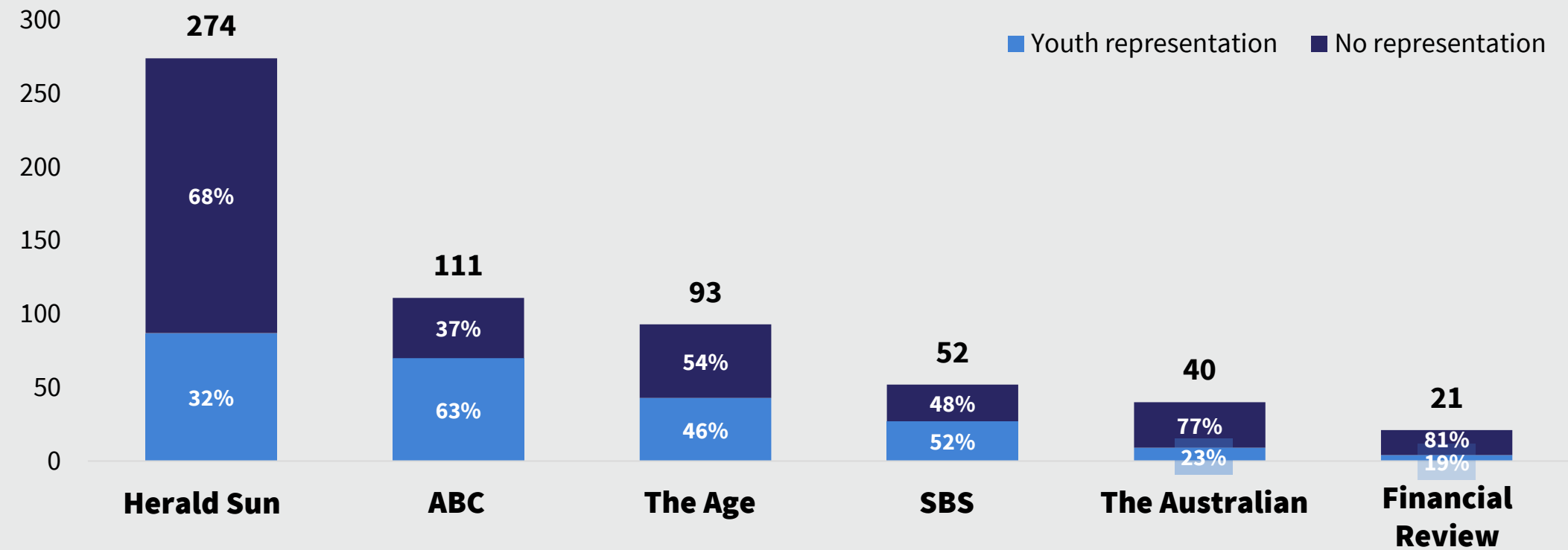


# Publication breakdown

This slide shows how often young people are mentioned by each of the six mainstream online news publications. There is an inconsistency between headline mentions and use of quotes or case studies in the body copy, meaning claims are often published unsupported and unverified by news media.

## Youth representation by publication

This graph shows how many of the articles with young people mentioned in the headline also featured quotes or case studies from young people





# Examples of stories with youth voice

Excerpts from articles talking about youth that feature quotes or case studies of young people. Articles reproduced with permission.

## ABC

### Stood-down apprentices facing uncertain future in post-coronavirus world



A love of cars drove Charlotte Graham towards a career as a mechanic. But nearly three years into her apprenticeship, the coronavirus pandemic has put her life on hold.

"I was stood down at the start of last month and everything just changed, as soon as that happened my life just imploded upon itself," she said.

**No. of young people quoted: 2**

## SBS

### With Australia in recession, there are grave fears for the mental health of young people



#### Not the year they expected

Matthew King, 19, saw 2020 as a fresh start after battling with mental health issues last year. [...]

Over the past few months, Mr King has had to dip into his savings as he was unemployed and struggled to find a job during the pandemic.

"Companies are trying to keep their own employees employed which is obviously very fair enough but it's very hard to set a future direction and knowing if you're actually able to pursue your career," he said.

"I haven't been able to find a job to keep me financially independent, during COVID and since."

**No. of young people quoted: 2**

## The Age

### Adult life, interrupted: Young people stuck in limbo



Emily Watts, also 19, was two months into the first semester of her education degree at the University of Sydney when her student housing at International House closed.

"In a short time it had become my family," she said. "I'd been becoming friends with people from everywhere, and learning about other cultures." It had been a small taste of freedom: "I could leave to go shopping, text my friends, see what they wanted to do."

She couldn't afford to live anywhere else so she returned home to the Blue Mountains.

**No. of young people quoted: 3**

(c) Nine Publishing 2020



# Examples of stories without youth voice

Excerpts from articles talking about youth without including quotes or case studies of young people. Articles reproduced with permission.

## Herald Sun

### Why young people are key to stopping COVID-19 cases in Queensland



When two COVID-19 positive teenagers have been on the loose in South East Queensland for eight days, that makes for a huge challenge for contact tracers, a former Queensland Health tracer warns.

“Older people have got the social distancing message and are generally doing the right thing. Young people are the ones that are out socialising and with restrictions eased have had a taste of freedom and complacency has set in.”

**No. of young people quoted: 0**

(c) News Corp Australia 2020

## The Australian

### Millennials, you can't 'unfollow' a pandemic



To some in modern society, COVID-19 must be unfathomable. I don't mean it defies an understanding of impact or consequence. Those are very clear.

Yet for Millennials, those born after 1980, the fact such a threat exists outside of Netflix science fiction must be mind-boggling. This generation, concierged by adults desperate to be more friend than parent, have been courted with policies to protect them from a reality with all its risks, hardships and failures. Boundaries have been few. Everything, from deadlines to rules to gender, has been fluid.

**No. of young people quoted: 0**

(c) News Corp Australia 2020

## Financial Review

### Why young people have the highest infection rate

Human behaviour experts say it is simplistic to assume young people have the highest coronavirus infection rates because they're selfish and do not care about preventing the virus spreading to older people.

"We often assume young people have egotistical beliefs or behaviours that they perceive risk as lower, so they are willing to take more risks," said Dr Juliette Tobias-Webb, a behavioural scientist from Science & Technology Australia.

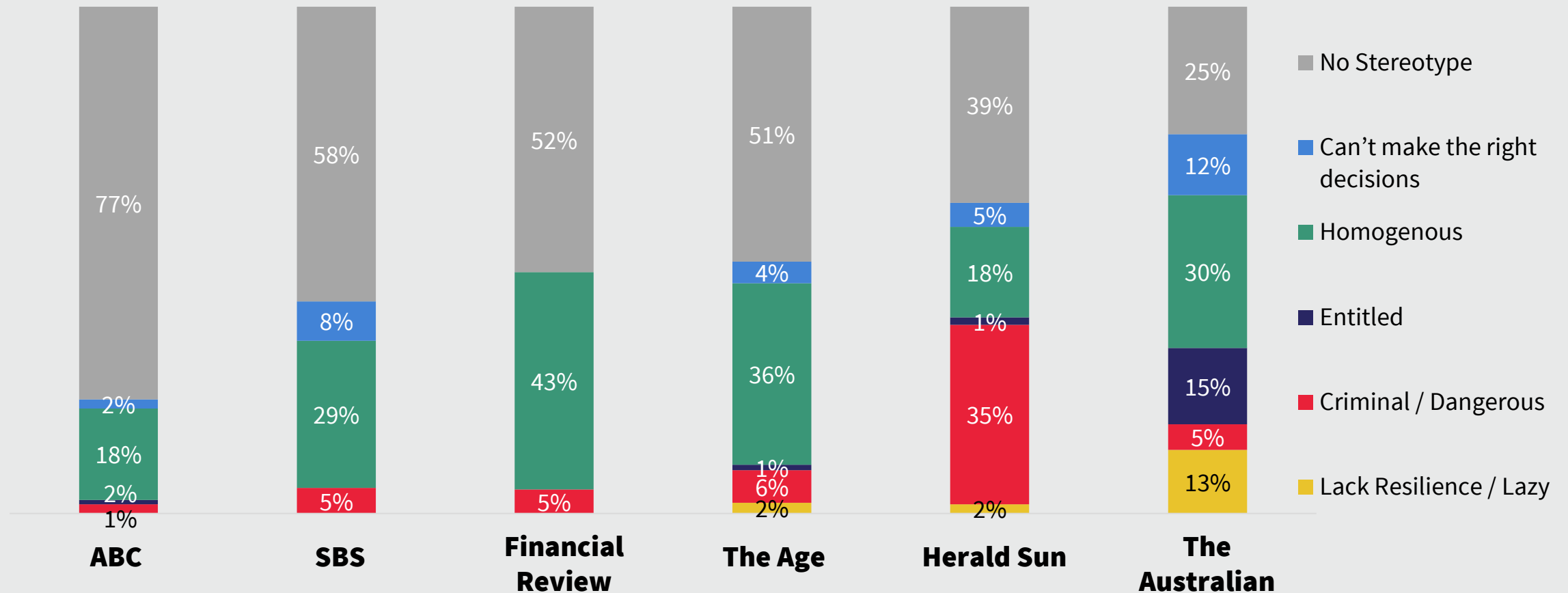
But fear of unemployment, a need for social connection and copying what their friends are doing are also driving the trend of high infection rates.

**No. of young people quoted: 0**

(c) Nine Publishing 2020

# Stereotypes

To undertake this analysis, keywords that defined or were synonymous with each stereotype were examined, whether or not a young person was quoted was considered, and the use of data and sources to substantiate claims reviewed. **Across the six mainstream online news publications, 685 articles were analysed.** For more information on methodology, see the appendix.



# Why stereotypes matter

When stereotypes are purported by the news media, they influence how the public perceive young people. They influence the policies that are made (or not made) for young people, and importantly, they influence young people's perception of themselves.

Our findings about the use of stereotypes support findings in [News and Young Australians 2020](#) (Western Sydney University and Queensland University of Technology), which found that 66% of young Australians believe that news media organisations have no idea what the lives of young people their age are like. The survey also indicated that only 45% of young people think that news media covers issues that matter to them.

When young people don't see themselves represented in the media, they turn away from it as a trusted news source. Additionally, [young people's trust in media is declining](#), and they increasingly rely on their family for understanding the news. Their ability to understand the Australian news landscape and critique it diminishes, and in turn, so does their media literacy.

Stereotypes are a form of bias – conscious or unconscious – that can impact the thinking and behaviour of people. They also inhibit the agency of young people and undermine their diversity. FYA believes it is possible to change this.



# **Summary & Recommendations**

# Summary & Recommendations



Everyone has a role to play in increasing representation and raising the voices of young people in Australian news media. But it must start now to support young people as they face some of the greatest social, economic and environmental challenges in history. It must start now if the media is to accurately reflect our society, and serve our democracy for all. For the media there are gains to be made from greater youth representation and voice too, including audience retention and growth, and increased trust of consumers.

The findings in *Missing: Young People in Australian News Media* reflect many challenges facing news media outlets across the country, including scarce resources, decreasing cadetships and internships, and difficulties accessing networks of young people, all of which COVID-19 has exacerbated.

We hope this report can establish a baseline for future research and offer a way to map progress towards a more engaged and participatory media. This report also aids the development of more robust ways of evaluating FYA's Youth Media Centre impact, ensuring that it is always meeting the needs of young people and helping to foster strong relationships with the Australian news media. Future iterations of this report should be collaborative, and examine some of the ideas and conversations raised in this report more deeply.

In closing, FYA makes five key recommendations to all media outlets:

## **Recommendation 1**

- Collect data on youth voice and representation in your newsroom

## **Recommendation 2**

- Include quotes from young people in your news coverage and stories, particularly if young people are mentioned in the headline.

## **Recommendation 3**

- Make use of intermediary organisations, who can provide fast and reliable access to a diverse range of young people for inclusion in stories. These include: [FYA's Youth Media Centre](#), the YMCA, and youth councils in every state and territory.

## **Recommendation 4**

- Employ young people in newsrooms to provide greater youth representation. Reimagine cadetships and paid internship opportunities for young people in a post-COVID-19 world.

## **Recommendation 5**

- Start a conversation with us about making the media more representative, and continuing this research.





# **Appendix & References**

# Search terms - Overview

Search name	Search terms
Young people general + headline mentions	<p>("young* generation*" OR "young* men" OR "young* women" OR "young* man" OR "young* woman" OR youth OR "young* people" OR "millennial*" OR "Zoomer*" OR "Gen Z" OR "Gen Y" OR "young* Australian*" OR "young* Aussie*" OR "young* graduate*" OR "young* worker*" OR apprentice* OR trainee* OR "young* parent*" OR "uni* graduate*" OR "school leaver*" OR "young* adult*")</p> <p>OR</p> <p>((("young* generation*" OR "young* men" OR "young* women" OR "young* man" OR "young* woman" OR youth OR "young* people" OR "millennial*" OR "Zoomer*" OR "Gen Z" OR "Gen Y" OR "young* Australian*" OR "young* Aussie*" OR "young* graduate*" OR "young* worker*" OR apprentice* OR trainee* OR "young* parent*" OR "uni* graduate*" OR "school leaver*" OR "young* adult*") near/10 (kids OR teen* OR student* OR graduate*))</p>
Young people & COVID-19	<p>((("young* generation*" OR "young* men" OR "young* women" OR "young* man" OR "young* woman" OR youth OR "young* people" OR "millennial*" OR "Zoomer*" OR "Gen Z" OR "Gen Y" OR "young* Australian*" OR "young* Aussie*" OR "young* graduate*" OR "young* worker*" OR apprentice* OR trainee* OR "young* parent*" OR "uni* graduate*" OR "school leaver*" OR "young* adult*")</p> <p>OR</p> <p>((("young* generation*" OR "young* men" OR "young* women" OR "young* man" OR "young* woman" OR youth OR "young* people" OR "millennial*" OR "Zoomer*" OR "Gen Z" OR "Gen Y" OR "young* Australian*" OR "young* Aussie*" OR "young* graduate*" OR "young* worker*" OR apprentice* OR trainee* OR "young* parent*" OR "uni* graduate*" OR "school leaver*" OR "young* adult*") near/10 (kids OR teen* OR student* OR graduate*))</p> <p>AND</p> <p>("Coronavirus" OR "COVID-19" OR "COVID 19" OR "COVID19" OR "SARS-CoV-2" OR COVID)</p>

# Search terms - Issues analysis

Search name	Search terms
Issues: Economic wellbeing	("boomer*" OR ("gen x" OR "generation x") OR ("gen y" OR "generation y" OR millennial*) OR ("gen z" OR "generation z" OR zoomer*)) near/20 (tax OR taxation OR superannuation OR "early access to super" OR "jobseeker" OR "jobkeeper" OR "jobtrainer" OR "jobmaker" OR "youth allowance" OR "jobkeeper 2.0" OR "youth unemployment" OR "debt income support" OR "centrelink" OR "job market" OR "regional jobs")
Issues: Housing/ Living	("boomer*" OR ("gen x" OR "generation x") OR ("gen y" OR "generation y" OR millennial*) OR ("gen z" OR "generation z" OR zoomer*)) near/20 ("living at home" OR "live at home" OR "rent" OR "renter" OR "renting" OR "first home*" OR "first house" OR "first apartment" OR "moratorium" OR "tenant rights" OR "mortgage" OR "home ownership")
Issues: Education	("boomer*" OR ("gen x" OR "generation x") OR ("gen y" OR "generation y" OR millennial*) OR ("gen z" OR "generation z" OR zoomer*)) near/20 ("high school" OR "university" OR "tafe" OR "apprenticeship" OR vet OR vce OR atar OR hecs OR "help loan" OR "student debt" OR "university fees" OR "education policy" OR "dan tehan" OR "rick persse" OR "yvette berry" OR "sarah mitchell" OR "james merlino" OR "grace grace" OR "tony cook" OR "selena uibo" OR "jeremy rockliff" OR "sue ellery" OR "education minister*")
Issues: Climate Change	("boomer*" OR ("gen x" OR "generation x") OR ("gen y" OR "generation y" OR millennial*) OR ("gen z" OR "generation z" OR zoomer*)) near/20 ((climate near/10 (rallies OR rally OR protest* OR activis* OR movement* OR strike* OR crisis OR action OR emergency OR disaster)) OR "climate change" OR "global warming" OR "climate activis*" OR "renewable energy" OR "environmental" OR (jobs near/5 (renewable OR "coal industry" OR "fossil fuel*" OR "emission*")) OR "school strike 4 climate*" OR "ss4c" OR "fridays for future" OR "gene hinchcliffe" OR "thunberg")
Issues: First Nations affairs	("boomer*" OR ("gen x" OR "generation x") OR ("gen y" OR "generation y" OR millennial*) OR ("gen z" OR "generation z" OR zoomer*)) near/20 ("aboriginal*" OR "torres strait islander*" OR "indigenous" OR "black lives matter" OR "native" OR "first nations")

# Search terms - Youth voice in the media

Search name	Search terms
Youth voice in the media  Source base limited to ABC, SBS, The Age (plus syndications), Australian Financial Review, Herald Sun (plus syndications), The Australian.	("young* generation*" OR "young* men" OR "young* women" OR "young* man" OR "young* woman" OR youth OR "young* people" OR "millennial*" OR "Zoomer*" OR "Gen Z" OR "Gen Y" OR "young* Australian*" OR "young* Aussie*" OR "young* graduate*" OR "young* worker*" OR apprentice* OR trainee* OR "young* parent*" OR "uni* graduate*" OR "school leaver*" OR "young* adult*") OR (("young* generation*" OR "young* men" OR "young* women" OR "young* man" OR "young* woman" OR youth OR "young* people" OR "millennial*" OR "Zoomer*" OR "Gen Z" OR "Gen Y" OR "young* Australian*" OR "young* Aussie*" OR "young* graduate*" OR "young* worker*" OR apprentice* OR trainee* OR "young* parent*" OR "uni* graduate*" OR "school leaver*" OR "young* adult*") near/10 (kids OR teen* OR student* OR graduate*))

# Search terms - Stereotypes

Stereotype	Definition	Keyword sample Searched in concert with young people keywords	Reference article
<b>Young people lack resilience / are lazy</b>	When young people are painted as having no ability to survive or endure hardship. This often emerges as comparisons to other generations.	need support, need a hug, no backbone, need to stand up for themselves, can't survive, no resilience, can't handle challenge, can't handle hardship, struggle	<a href="https://www.smh.com.au/national/buttrorse-says-millennial-workers-lack-resilience-and-need-hugging-20200722">https://www.smh.com.au/national/buttrorse-says-millennial-workers-lack-resilience-and-need-hugging-20200722</a>
<b>Young people are a homogenous group</b>	Search for examples where young people are referred to as 'kids', 'millennials', 'zoomers' etc. Not allowing space for diversity of thought, lived experience, opinion etc.	kids, millennials, zoomers, Gen Y, Gen X, students, tradies, trainees, apprentices.	<a href="https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/life-and-relationships/plot-twist-millennials-are-getting-the-ok-boomer-treatment-from-gen-z-20200623-p555dj.html">https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/life-and-relationships/plot-twist-millennials-are-getting-the-ok-boomer-treatment-from-gen-z-20200623-p555dj.html</a>



# Search terms - Stereotypes continued

Stereotype	Definition	Keyword sample Searched in concert with young people keywords	Reference article
<b>Young people are entitled</b>	Where young people's success is claimed to be only because of what other generations have done or given them	entitled, ungrateful, ungracious, expect too much, inherited wealth, avocado toast,	<a href="https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8539327/Young-Labor-activist-19-whinges-applying-retail-jobs-17-wanted-musician.html">https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8539327/Young-Labor-activist-19-whinges-applying-retail-jobs-17-wanted-musician.html</a>
<b>Young people are criminal / dangerous</b>	When young people are portrayed as being criminal / dangerous without evidence or entire age groups are classed this way.	criminal, cause trouble, juvenile, gang fights, African gangs	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/jan/03/peter-dutton-says-victorians-scared-to-go-out-because-of-african-gang-violence">https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/jan/03/peter-dutton-says-victorians-scared-to-go-out-because-of-african-gang-violence</a>
<b>Young people can't make decisions for themselves / lack independence</b>	Young people are are not doing as well as previous generations because they make bad choices	smashed avo, complain, choices, latte, hipster cafes, brunch, property market	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/may/15/australian-millionaire-millennials-avocado-toast-house">https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/may/15/australian-millionaire-millennials-avocado-toast-house</a>

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