

# **Gig economy, cost of living crisis, housing hostility: Young Australians are feeling worse off than their parents**

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Researchers from Monash University are looking at the link between insecure work and how young Australians are navigating post-school pathways such as employment, income and housing.

The COVID-19 pandemic amplified conditions of uncertainty and disruption in [young people](#)'s lives, particularly in relation to insecure work.

Drawing on a new analysis of published and unpublished data collected for the [2022 Australian Youth Barometer](#), researchers from the Monash Center for Youth Policy and Education Practice (CYPEP) have found that young people are experiencing difficulties as a result of these disruptions when navigating many post-school pathways in life.

Anxiety and pessimism arise from a perfect storm of conditions that make it difficult for young people to navigate key steps along post-school pathways that are often seen as conventional markers of adulthood, such as gaining secure housing.

Key findings from the 2022 Australian Youth Barometer found that:

- More than half (53%) of the young Australians surveyed believe that they will be financially worse off than their parents
- An even higher number (56%) reported earning an income from gig work in the last year and gig work was more common among Australians with a disability (41%)
- 85% of young Australians experience feelings of worry and anxiety and pessimism
- Nearly all the respondents experienced [financial difficulties](#) at some point during the last 12 months, with nearly one-quarter experiencing food insecurity.

This report unpacks these findings in relation to other aspects of young

people's lives, alongside wider national and international trends.

CYPEP Director Professor Lucas Walsh says the research findings suggest that a growing participation in insecure work such as the gig economy is connected to education, finance, and young people's perspectives about the future.

"The connections between a young person's participation in insecure work, such as the gig economy, and other aspects of their lives, are infused with a combination of skepticism and deep concern about the present moment, with a tempered optimism about their ability to navigate these struggles into the future," said lead author Professor Walsh.

"Current government efforts to enforce minimum pay and protections to employee-like workers on [digital platforms](#) are a good step, but a deeper change is taking place in which stepping stones to work and [financial security](#) available to previous generations are eroding, shaping young people's attitudes to the future."

"I'm looking for a different job, I think it's just going to be a one-time thing for a few years. I don't feel too motivated at all, I'm kind of just floating or directionless. And I think that's the issue, but at least I have a job. I think that says something, there's no real, like, vision for the future or any goal," said a 21 year old male from regional Victoria.

The CYPEP research shows that the main aspiration for [young workers](#) is to secure more stable employment, or at least a sense of control over their lives and their future, neither of which are available within the current conditions of the gig economy.

"The [gig economy](#) is the tip of the iceberg that identifies the pressures experienced by young people and the broader loss of control that young

people are currently facing in society, in a labor market that increasingly works against young people and puts them at a disadvantage," said Professor Walsh.

"The critical and connected understanding of young people's experiences of work in this research highlights the need for an interconnected response as opposed to siloed approaches to housing, income and labor market policy."

**More information:** Young people navigating working life in and beyond the gig economy. [www.monash.edu/education/cypep ... yond-the-gig-economy](http://www.monash.edu/education/cypep...yond-the-gig-economy)

Provided by Monash University

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