



## **Wellbeing Insights**

H.O.P.E. – Helping Other Possibilities Emerge

I suspect we all appreciate how powerful the feeling of hope can be to individuals, families, and communities. Within the field of wellbeing research Hope is viewed as a combination of a belief that it is possible to work toward desired goals (often referred to as ‘agency’) and an ability to imagine different practical ways to achieve these goals (often referred to as ‘pathways’). The difference between hope and hopelessness is often only a sliver, but what a crucial sliver it is. If we can kindle flames of hope in ourselves, or contribute to fostering hope in others, it can make a tremendous difference to one’s outlook and trajectory.

When supporting people to create their personal manifestos, many report increased feelings of hope. It is often evident that as individuals work through the clear 7-Step process they gain a boost in their ability to enact change, and they reveal new pathways they can intrinsically choose to navigate. We are thrilled that this is so often the case.

Unfortunately, the third annual State of the Nation Report on the wellbeing and resilience of young Australians (published last week) shows a trend of increasing levels of hopelessness and decreasing levels of hopefulness in our youth. The report, authored by Dr. Mark Kohler and colleagues from The University of Adelaide drew on the Resilience Survey results (designed and administered by [Resilient Youth Australia](#)) of almost 140,000 young Australians aged 7 to 18, with representation across all states and territories. For Primary school students 21% of males, 26% of females, and 39% of gender diverse children reported low levels of hopefulness – each of these scores between 2% - 5% higher than in 2021. For Secondary school students the picture is worse, with 25% of males, 37% of females, and 55% of gender diverse children reporting low levels of hopefulness.

It is my pleasure to work closely with the team at Resilient Youth Australia, and with many dedicated educators in schools around the country to explore ways of enabling and promoting hope within individuals and school communities.

Is there anything we can learn from fostering hope in adults through the creation of a personal manifesto that can be transferred to help youth build self-belief and visualise possible pathways? We are considering ways that the questions and activities within the 7-Steps (The Energising Step, The Courageous Step, The Mattering Step, The Visualising Step, The Releasing Step, The Connection Step and The Contribution Step) can be tailored to the context of a young person.

We truly H.O.P.E. that we can Help Other Possibilities Emerge for people young and old who are experiencing a sense of hopelessness. We include a copy of the 2023 State of the Nation Report on the wellbeing and resilience of young Australians for anyone interested in taking a deeper dive into the findings.