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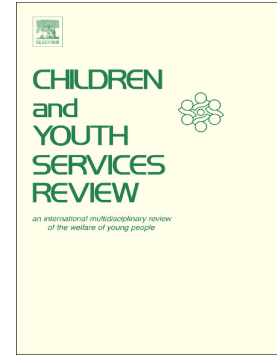
Material Deprivation and Capability Deprivation in the Midst of Affluence: The Case of Young People in Australia

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Abstract

This paper presents Australian young people's perspectives on deprivation that they experience in the space of food and clothing. Amartya Sen's Capability Approach is used to characterise this as absolute capability deprivation. Lack of adequate food and clothing denies young people the capability to avoid shame and severely inhibits the intrinsically important capabilities of social participation and engagement in education.

We use data obtained from groupwork and in-depth interviews with 193 young people to explore young Australians' experience of severe deprivation in food and clothing. Their stories are integrated with data on severe deprivation collected in a nationally representative survey of 9-14 year olds (N=5,440). The survey data show that food and clothing deprivation is notable among young people who are marginalised in other respects, for example, young people with disability, young carers and Indigenous young people. The analysis shows that the experience of severe deprivation in the space of food and clothing is associated with feelings of shame, exclusion from participation, and low levels of engagement with education. We consider how neoliberal constructions of poverty exacerbate young people's experience of deprivation, while at the same time undermining the contemporary political agenda of maximising human capital development.

Material Deprivation and Capability Deprivation in the Midst of Affluence: The Case of Young People in Australia

1. Introduction

It is now accepted that the experience of poverty in childhood can severely impact on a wide range of physical, learning, social and emotional outcomes for children (Duncan and Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Duncan, Yeung, Brooks-Gunn *et al.*, 1998; Redmond, 2009). While the Great Recession of recent years has forced child poverty onto policy agendas in a number of rich countries (Dowler and O'Connor, 2012), policymakers in Australia have not treated it as a priority issue (Redmond, Patulny and Whiteford, 2013). This is in spite of considerable research and advocacy highlighting the persistence of both relative poverty and of severe deprivation among children and young people in Australia (Anglicare Australia, 2012b; Australian Council of Social Service, 2014; Redmond, Skattebol, Saunders *et al.*, 2016; Skattebol, Saunders, Redmond *et al.*, 2012). On the other hand, Australian policymakers have accepted fairly uncritically the link between early childhood education and human capital development (Heckman, 2006; Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000), and have sought to expand early childhood health, welfare and education services. This policy attention on early childhood education fits with a broader neoliberal agenda of fostering self-reliance as the preferred route to reducing material disadvantage (Engels, 2006) – promoting education for children while simultaneously freeing their parents to engage in paid employment. However, it leaves the more immediate issue of childhood deprivation untreated.

In this paper, we propose to add to evidence on the effects of severe deprivation experienced by young Australians on their human capital development through examination of two intrinsically important aspects of poverty – going hungry, and not having the right clothes for social participation. We use data from a school based survey to provide estimates of the proportions of young Australians in their middle years (aged 9-14 years) who report going to bed or school hungry and who report not having the right clothes to fit in with their peers, and the association between these deprivations and indicators related to engagement at school. We also draw on data from in-depth interviews with young people to identify processes through which food and clothing deprivation arise, and how these deprivations impact on school engagement.

Building on the work of Amartya Sen (1983, 1999), we characterise deprivation in the space of food and clothing as capability deprivation. Going hungry can be categorised as absolute poverty, in the sense that adequate food is a basic need, and hunger is not a relative condition (Doyal and Gough, 1991; Streeten, Burki, ul Haq *et al.*, 1981). Not having the right clothes to fit in is often seen as an indicator of relative deprivation (Gordon, Mack, Lansley *et al.*, 2013; Levitas, Pantazis, Fahmy *et al.*, 2007; Pradhan and Ravallion, 2000; Saunders, Naidoo and Griffiths, 2007). However, the shame that often accompanies deprivation in the space of clothes can contribute to self-exclusion where people adapt their preferences to fit with constrained economic and social possibilities (Nussbaum, 2001). Hunger, shame and failure to be educated can be seen as absolute

deprivations in the space of capabilities because they limit people's capability to lead lives they have reason to value (Sen, 1983, 1999). In this paper, we use Sen's Capability Approach to frame our examination of young people's perspectives on the relationship between deprivation in the space of food and clothing, and engagement in education. Throughout, we use methods that privilege young people as competent experts in their own lives (Ridge, 2002; Ridge, 2007).

Our paper is organised as follows: Section 2 discusses literature on poverty in the space of food and clothing, and its relationship to capability deprivation. Literature on young people's perspectives on deprivation in the space of food and clothing is reviewed in Section 3. Data and methods of analysis are considered in more detail in Section 4. Results are presented in two sections. Section 5 presents survey evidence and young people's own voices on food and clothing poverty, while Section 6 examines associations between these two indicators of poverty and indicators of school engagement. Section 7 discusses the implications of the findings, and Section 8 concludes.

2. Food and clothing poverty, and capability deprivation

In affluent societies such as Australia, neoliberal discourse characterises people who are dependent on welfare as either intellectually inferior, unfortunate, or unmotivated, and undeserving (Engels, 2006). Lister (2004) describes how poor people are 'othered' – seen by the non-poor as different, and objects of pity, encouragement or coercion. Walker (2014: 65) argues that poverty is closely associated with shame in that people are made to feel that they have failed to live up to society's expectations. The objectification of poor people as responsible for their own situation (or the objectification of parents as responsible for their children's situation) reinforces the 'naturalness' of their exclusion by the non-poor from participation in many practices that are considered customary. In this context, the policy problem of food and clothing poverty is transformed from a problem of access to resources to one of policing the behaviour of the 'underclass' (Levitas, 1998; Lister, 2004), and shaming people by labelling them as incompetent or inadequate (Walker, 2014).

It is in this sense that food and clothing poverty can be characterised as absolute capability deprivation (Sen, 1999, 2009). Sen (2000: 5) argues that social exclusion can be seen as "*constitutively a part* of capability deprivation as well as *instrumentally a cause* of diverse capability failures." The Capability Approach focuses on intrinsically valuable achievements – people's choices, opportunities and freedoms. Resources are instruments to support achievement of capabilities. In 18th Century England, leather shoes afforded Adam Smith's labourer the achievement of avoiding shame in public and being able to participate in customary social activities (2005[1776]). Although Sen has never produced a definitive list of intrinsically important capabilities, he has given some examples, such as 'the ability to be well nourished, to avoid escapable morbidity or mortality, to read and write and communicate, to take part in the life of the community, to appear in public without shame' (Sen, 1990: 126). In this context, we will argue that adequate food and clothing are not only intrinsically important for young people; they are also

instrumentally important in that deprivation in the space of hunger and clothing comprises a barrier to their participation in the intrinsically valuable process of education.

In this paper, food and clothing are mostly characterised as enablers of social participation (although they also have absolute functions of preventing people from starving, and keeping them warm). Dowler and O'Connor (2012: 44) define food poverty as 'the inability to acquire or eat quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways.' This definition highlights the central role of food in social participation, much as Adam Smith highlighted the importance of leather shoes for social participation in 18th Century England. Surveys used to calculate minimum adequate budgets, material deprivation and social exclusion include food and clothing as necessary items, and tend to incorporate in them ideas about participation, dignity and avoidance of shame, for example by including indicators on people's ability to have a Sunday roast and have friends to dinner, or the ability to buy new, not second-hand, clothes (Gordon *et al.*, 2013; Levitas *et al.*, 2007; Pradhan and Ravallion, 2000; Saunders *et al.*, 2007).

3. Young people's experience of food and clothing poverty

The Global Financial Crisis and the recession that followed in many affluent countries (but less so in Australia) has focused research attention on severe deprivation, including food and clothing deprivation, among children in rich countries (Dowler and O'Connor, 2012; Gordon *et al.*, 2013; Nord and Parker, 2010). Main and Bradshaw (2014) use social exclusion survey data to show that 4% of children in the UK report not having, and wanting new, not second-hand, clothes. Cook and Frank (2008) emphasise the negative associations between food insecurity and child development, especially for girls. Using internationally comparable survey data for young people aged 11-15 years in 35 European countries, Molcho, Gabhainn, Kelly *et al.* (2007) show that on average, 14.6% report going to school or bed hungry at least sometimes, and find this to be significantly associated with other subjective health and wellbeing indicators.

Since the late 1990s, the perspectives of children and young people themselves have increasingly been used in the literature in order to explain how poverty impacts on their lives (Redmond, 2009). Young people's own perspectives have brought to the fore the 'moments' of exclusion and other factors associated with deprivation – how they happen, and how the young people themselves are affected. Ridge (2002), through extensive qualitative work with materially disadvantaged young people, documented the impact of poverty on their daily lives, for example, how 'poor' clothing marked them out as 'different', and often left them vulnerable to bullying and exclusion.

Research indicates that young people connect their capacity to consume and display 'brands' (from food brands to clothing brands) to their capacity to initiate and maintain desired social relationships (Pugh, 2009). The symbolic meaning of products and brands can become more important as children use possessions to symbolically communicate and affirm their desired identities and make inferences about peers based on their consumption choices (Elliott and Leonard, 2004; Lundby,

2012; Pugh, 2009; Roper and La Niece, 2009). Elliott and Leonard (2004), who carried out qualitiative research with 8-12 year olds in the UK, argue that young people in their middle years are emotionally invested in clothing brands because they are perceived as communicating value, with flow-on impacts on social relationships. Many young people in their study believed that if trainers are obviously branded and expensive then the owner is well off, and conversely, if trainers are old or cheap then the owner is poor. Young people indicated that they would be more interested in interacting with someone wearing branded trainers. Indeed, Elliott and Leonard found that young people felt under considerable pressure to wear the trainers that their friends wear, in order to fit in and to avoid the teasing that young people often reported experiencing if they were carrying visible signs of being poor. Keeping up with the latest consumption trends can be difficult for young people with restricted consumption opportunities and this can render them susceptible to exclusion (Isaksen and Roper, 2008). Young people often exercise agency in curtailing their interactions with peers in order to avoid the perceived shame of being poor (Hooper, 2007; Skattebol *et al.*, 2012). That is, they can also exclude themselves (Micklewright, 2002).

The studies cited above suggest that poverty in the space of food and clothing is a significant issue in rich countries. However, research that integrates quantitative analysis of associations between food and clothing poverty and other outcomes (such as engagement at school) with qualitative analysis of young people's descriptions of the routes through which these associations are made real has been limited to date. The purpose of this paper is to show that food and clothing poverty is a significant problem in Australia that warrants policy attention because it is intrinsically important, and because it is associated with low levels of engagement in education. In-depth interview data are used in conjunction with the survey analysis to highlight some of the processes and 'moments' through which these associations are enacted (Lareau, 2003).

4. Data and method

In this article, we use data from two studies to explore food and clothing poverty, and its relationship to engagement in education in the Australian context. Both studies are child centred, in that they seek to privilege the voices of young people themselves. The *Making a Difference* Project was designed to explore the perceptions of young people (aged between 11 and 17 years) who experienced economic adversity in order to understand what it meant to them, how they experienced exclusion in the family, at school, and in the communities where they lived (Skattebol *et al.*, 2012). The project adopted a rights perspective which emphasises the importance of listening to young people, especially in matters concerning them. Therefore, young people's views were also sought on what policy or system changes they thought could make a difference in their lives. A total of 96 young people were interviewed in either groups or singly (or both).

The *Australian Child Wellbeing Project* (ACWP) explored the perspectives of young people on wellbeing, or 'the good life', what it meant to them, and the challenges they faced in achieving it, with a particular focus on groups of young people who are known to experience marginalisation

in the Australian context (Redmond *et al.*, 2016). The ACWP used an integrated mixed method approach to understanding young people's perceptions of wellbeing. The project utilised an 'exploratory sequential design' (Fetters, Curry and Creswell, 2013), comprising of several interrelated qualitative and quantitative phases of activity which worked in sequence and informed each other (Redmond *et al.*, 2016). As Bryman (2007: 8) observes, a key strength of the integrated mixed methods approach is that synthesised analysis and interpretation of data obtained in multiple phases using diverse methods allows findings from each phase to be 'mutually illuminating.' An initial qualitative phase involved focus groups and individual interviews with 78 young people in mostly marginalised groups (for example, young people with disability, materially disadvantaged young people, and Indigenous young people) as well as with 19 people who were not in any marginalised group. In this phase young people discussed what they thought was important in their lives, and the challenges they faced in having a 'good life'. Analysis of the qualitative data enabled researchers to construct a survey instrument designed to resonate with respondents by opening with items which encouraged them to construct themselves in relation to their specific family network and living arrangements (Redmond *et al.*, 2016: 86). Wherever possible survey questions that could be used to conduct comparative analysis were used. The survey instrument was rolled out to a national probability sample of 5,440 students in school Years 4 and 6 (primary, aged 9-10 and 11-12, respectively) and Year 8 (secondary; aged 13-14) in 180 schools in every Australian state and territory. This was followed by a further phase of qualitative research where marginalised young people supported interpretation of survey results. Importantly for this paper, the survey included several items on family and personal possessions, including hunger and clothing, as well as items on family, school, health and relationships with peers.

In both projects, food and hunger, and clothing, were frequently mentioned by the young people without any prompting from the researchers. However, references to hunger and clothing deprivation were often fragmented, as young people knew these to be sensitive issues for their families. Analysis of qualitative data from both projects was thematically coded in NVivo using a situated analysis grounded theory approach. Once young people's responses were coded and views on specific issues could be easily located, their perspectives were analysed holistically in terms of both the interview context and deeper global understandings of respondents' lifeworlds. These expanded situational understandings of hunger and poverty were particularly important in the Australian context where public discourse is particularly silent and silencing with respect to young Australians who experience food insecurity (Anglicare, 2012a).

The survey sample (reweighted to account for non-response and enhance representativeness) comprised approximately 51% boys and 49% girls. About three quarters went to school in metropolitan areas. Young people who reported they were with disability comprised about 11% of the total weighted sample (unweighted N=569). About 13% of the weighted sample (N=505) reported low levels of four types of family possessions – cars, computers, holidays and own bedroom. Validated methods were used to define these as materially disadvantaged (Currie, Molcho, Boyce *et al.*, 2008; Redmond *et al.*, 2016). Young people who reported caring for a family

member who was ill or with disability comprised 9% of the sample (N=484). Young people who stated that they were Indigenous comprised 7% (N=245). There was a considerable degree of overlap between these groups, which in aggregate comprised three tenths of the weighted sample. The weighted proportions in these groups are mostly similar to those estimated from other sources. For example, estimates derived from Australian Bureau of Statistics data suggest that about 9.5% of young people aged 10-14 were with disability in 2012, and OECD estimates suggest that 12.8% of Australian Children were living in poverty (defined as less than half median household income) in 2012 (OECD, 2015; Redmond *et al.*, 2016). However, the share of Indigenous young people is slightly higher than that found in the most recent Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013).

The survey included the following item (also used by Molcho *et al.*, 2007, discussed above):

> *Some young people go to school or bed hungry because there is not enough food at home. How often does this happen to you?*

Across all school years, 173 respondents answered 'always' or 'often' to this question, while 795 responded "sometimes". Respondents were also given a list of items "that some young people of your age have" (Main, 2014), and were asked if they had it, and if not whether they wanted it. One item was:

> *The right kind of clothes to fit in with other people your age*

A total of 331 respondents reported not having and wanting the right kind of clothes. Analysis of the survey data in this article focuses on responses by young people about their experience of these two forms of poverty, its concentration among marginalised groups, and its associations with seven indicators relating to their engagement at school: a school satisfaction scale (derived from six separate items); a teacher support scale (derived from three items); a bullying scale (derived from six items); and single item indicators for school performance, perception of pressure from schoolwork, absence from school, and educational aspirations. A summary index (range = 0-7) was also constructed using these seven items, with approximately the 'best performing' 85% of young people on any indicator given a score of 1, and the 'worst performing' 15% given a score of 0 (each indicator weighted equally). This is analogous to indexes sometimes used in the analysis of deprivation (Cappellari and Jenkins, 2006; Popp and Schels, 2008). The school engagement indicators and the index are more fully discussed in the Appendix (see also Redmond *et al.*, 2016). Because some of these items were only asked of Year 6 and Year 8 respondents, Year 4 respondents were excluded from this part of the analysis.

Qualitative data from the in-depth research with young people was then used to deepen and nuance the survey findings. We present data drawn from emblematic stories of young people we talked with to highlight some ways in which young people's experience of poverty can exacerbate the difficulties they face in engaging at school. Both studies were approved by the appropriate Human

Research Ethics Committees. All data collected from young people were anonymised. All young people's names used in this paper are pseudonyms.

5. Results

Prevalence of hunger and not the right clothes

Table 1 shows that 3.8% of respondents to the ACWP survey in Years 4 & 6, and 2.8% of respondents in Year 8, reported going to bed or school hungry 'often' or 'always' because there was not enough food at home (95% CI 2.3–5.2% and 1.9–3.7%, respectively); 21.2% and 13.9% of the younger and older students reported going to bed or school hungry at least sometimes (95% CI 17.8–24.5% and 11.9–15.8%, respectively). The proportion who reported not having the right clothes to fit in was 6.6% of Year 4 & 6s (CI 4.9–8.2%), and 5.9% of Year 8s (CI 4.8–7.1%). Relatively few reported both going to school or bed hungry at least sometimes and not having the right clothes to fit in (2.5% of Years 4 & 6, CI 1.6–3.4%; and 1.8% of Year 8, 1.2–2.5%).

Table 1: Overall prevalence of hunger and 'not the right clothes' among young Australians (per cent)

	Always or often goes hungry to bed or to school		Goes to bed or to school hungry at least sometimes		Does not have (and wants) the right kind of clothes to fit in with other people their age		Goes to school/bed hungry at least sometimes and does not have the right clothes to fit in	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
Years 4 & 6	3.8	2.3 – 5.2	21.2	17.8 – 24.5	6.6	4.9 – 8.2	2.5	1.6 – 3.4
Year 8	2.8	1.9 – 3.7	13.9	11.9 – 15.8	5.9	4.8 – 7.1	1.8	1.2 – 2.5
All	3.4	2.4 – 4.5	18.8	16.2 – 21.4	6.4	5.2 – 7.5	2.3	1.7 – 2.9
Unweight-ed N	173		795		331		108	

Note: weighted percentages

Table 2 shows prevalence of hunger and not having the right clothes to fit in among marginalised survey participants in Years 4, 6 and 8 combined: young people with disability, young carers, materially disadvantaged young people, and Indigenous young people; and participants who are not marginalised – that is, those not in any marginalised group. Among all four groups, the percentages experiencing hunger and not having the right clothes are higher than among the non-marginalised group. In most cases, the differences in percentages between marginalised and non-marginalised groups experiencing these deprivations are appreciable. Overall, 28.2% of young people in one or more of the marginalised groups report going to bed or school hungry at least sometimes, compared with 13.8% of young people who are not in any marginalised group (t(180)=7.25; p<0.001); with respect to clothing the comparable figures are 11.1% and 3.8% (t(180)=3.84; p<0.001); and for hunger and clothing combined – 4.3% vs. 1.3% (t(180)=3.49; p<0.01). In other words, going hungry and not having the right clothes – a manifestation of severe

poverty among young Australians – is more concentrated among groups who are also marginalised in other respects than among those who are not in any marginalised group.

Table 2: Prevalence of hunger and 'not the right clothes' among marginalised groups (per cent)

	Always or often goes hungry to bed or to school		Goes to bed or to school hungry at least sometimes		Does not have (and wants) the right kind of clothes to fit in with other people their age		Goes to school/bed hungry at least sometimes and does not have the right clothes to fit in	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
With disability	4.8	2.3 – 7.3	36.2**	18.7 – 33.8	12.4*	5.6 – 19.3	4.3*	1.8 – 6.8
Young carers	7.8**	4.3 – 11.3	35.8***	26.7 – 44.9	17.3***	10.9 – 23.7	6.7**	2.9 – 10.4
Materially disadvant-aged	8.4*	3.4 – 13.4	31.1***	25.4 – 36.9	9.3**	5.6 – 12.9	4.5*	1.8 – 7.2
Indigenous	4.2	1.2 – 7.2	30.0**	17.9 – 42.0	8.5	3.3 – 13.7	2.6	09.3 – 4.8
In any marginal-ised group	5.6**	3.5 – 7.8	28.2***	24.7 – 31.6	11.1***	7.7 – 14.5	4.3**	2.6 – 5.9
Not in any marginal-ised group	2.1	1.6 – 3.0	13.8	11.1 – 16.4	3.8	2.8 – 4.8	1.3	0.8 – 1.8

Note: weighted percentages; asterisks denote significant difference from 'Not in any marginalised group': *** p<0.001; ** p<0.01; *p<0.05.

Young people's stories on hunger and not the right clothes

Running short of money to buy food was often a vicious cycle in families who young people described as lurching from one payday to the next. Taylah (aged 14) lived with her mum who was working and got paid fortnightly, but often ran short running up to payday.

> *Mum always runs out of money and she has to borrow it and then she has to pay it back and then we don't have enough money to get food and stuff.*

Taylah's mum would borrow the money from her dad, who Taylah described as an alcoholic who only lived with her and her mum intermittently. When money ran low therefore, she indicated that she and her mother had a network they could draw on for emergency support. A number of young people we spoke with appeared to have similar support networks. However, many young people were wary about letting outsiders know about food and financial shortfalls and coping strategies that their families used. Jeffery (aged 13) similarly noted that *'we are always borrowing'* but when asked who they borrowed from, he stated *'I can't tell you that'.* Jeffery's overt statement about the rules of engagement for discussing economic and food shortages and how they were managed was a common, often underlying, theme in interviews. We have discussed elsewhere the difficulties of talking to Australian children about food shortages (Skattebol *et al.*, 2012) and we often only

understood these shortages by piecing together interview fragments and asides using the expanded analysis method outlined above.

The shape of interdependent family networks varied in the way they delivered or depleted financial resources. Britney (aged 11) recounted:

My mum and my step-dad, there's six of us who live in our house, and it is two houses made into a big house. And because there's six that live there regularly, on some weekends there's my step-brother and sister come over. That makes eight kids, ten people living in one house, and the electricity bill is huge. And the weeks when we don't have my step-brother and sister come over, that's when my mum and my step-dad get paid, but last week when they came over my mum and my step-dad didn't get paid, it means they couldn't do shopping and we were low on food supplies.

Experiencing food shortages was often more extreme when there was a confluence of significantly adverse events in a young person's life (Redmond and Skattebol, 2014). Events sometimes included a family member getting sick or dying, break-up of a relationship in the household, or having to move homes for another reason. These adverse events combined with 'everyday' economic stress to create considerable uncertainty in some young people's lives. Gavin (aged 9) summed up the broader parameters of food insecurity and linked these to some of the more adverse effects:

You need food because if you don't have any food you'll be very hungry and you start stealing and you'll be like shoplifting from shops to get food. And you'll go really, really, really skinny.

Young people also indicated that not having clothing of the quality that was customary in their social circles was difficult to manage. Fourteen-year-old Taylah lived on hand-me-downs from her sister:

Yes. My mum doesn't really have money because of the bills and stuff but my sister has a job and gets money so when she gets clothes I get the other clothes but occasionally I get a couple of pieces of clothing that are on special, it is pretty hard but I get used to it. If people had to live on what we have to live on they wouldn't know what hit them.

Taylah used the phrase, 'they wouldn't know what hit them' to indicate that people would experience shock and hardship if they had to make do with the limited resources she had. In families experiencing ongoing hardship, clothes were expensive to replace and addressing one resourcing need often meant going without another. Jeffery noted that:

My mum would take me to the Op shop because I keep on splitting my pants when I kneel down but she can't afford to buy me new pants. I don't get pocket money and have to make my own lunch and sometimes I don't even do that I just go to school with no food.

These young people indicated they were often without clothes that are considered customary in their social worlds. While Adam Smith's characterisation of lack of adequate clothing speaks to a relative concept (what is customary), Sen's (1983) interpretation is that the shame that accompanies missing out on what is customary can be seen as an absolute capability failure. Young people are often very careful about how they articulate experiences of shame in interviews with researchers because they seek to protect their families and avoid positioning themselves as vulnerable (Skattebol *et al.*, 2012). Nevertheless, many of the young people we talked to showed acute awareness of the importance of clothing for fitting in, and intimated that they actively managed social exclusion and feelings of shame that could arise from it.

The young people appeared to know well, and feel, the associations between visible poverty and shame. They wanted decent clothes so that they did not feel ashamed. Sometimes, they could not invite friends to their homes, so as to hide their food poverty. Billie (aged 14) reported:

> *My mum doesn't like having [my friend] over when there isn't much food; she gets ashamed like she is going to go tell her mum. In case she says we didn't have much for dinner tonight.*

Pugh (2009) uses Goffman's (1955) concept of 'facework' to explain how materially disadvantaged young people seek to position themselves in order to avoid shame or stigma in their interactions with their peers. While not every young person we talked with appeared to feel shame or stigma over the clothes they wore, several, like Jeffrey, did. We did not observe the facework that Taylah and Jeffrey engaged in with their peers, only the facework they engaged in with us, the researchers. However, some of the young people, such as Billie, nonetheless made clear to us the necessity of deploying shame avoidance strategies in order to avoid shame in public. This 'facework' was also evident in an interview with an articulate yet poorly educated young man, Linox (aged 17), who claimed his parents could get him anything he needed. Yet at another point of the interview, Linox stated he had trouble getting money for bus fares to go and look for jobs and indeed that he did not have any shoes without holes or clothes for job interviews (see discussion in Skattebol *et al.*, 2012). As we argue in the next section, young people's need to protect themselves from shame had consequences, not only for their social interactions with researchers and other adults and peers, but also for their engagement in school.

Severe deprivation and indicators associated with school engagement
The analysis above shows that food and clothing deprivation are by no means uncommon in Australia. In-depth interviews with young people illustrate how these forms of deprivation impact on their lives. Table 3 shows, for survey participants in Years 6 and 8, the relationship between food and clothing deprivation on the one hand, and seven indicators associated with engagement at school on the other. The Table shows percentages of young people who report going hungry (sometimes and often) or do not have the right clothes according to whether they score higher (in roughly the top 85 per cent) or lower (in roughly the bottom 15 per cent) on the seven indicators, and in the summary index calculated from all seven indicators (see also the Appendix). In most cases, proportions of young people who report going hungry or not having the right clothes are

significantly higher in the bottom 15 percent than in the top 85 per cent of the seven indicators. For example, 26.0% (95% CI 19.7–32.3%) of young people with low levels of school satisfaction report going hungry at least sometimes, compared with 12.8% (95% CI 9.6–16.1%) of young people with high levels of school satisfaction (t(167)=3.94; p<0.001); and 4.9% (95% CI 2.3–7.6%) of young people who assess their performance at school to be average or below report going hungry at least sometimes *and* not having the right clothes, compared to 1.2% (95% CI 0.5–1.8%) of those who assess their performance at school to be good or very good (t(167)=2.94; p<0.01). Young people with a summary index score of 0-3 are also significantly more likely to report going hungry or not having the right clothes to fit in than young people with a summary index score of 6-7.

Table 3: Prevalence of hunger and 'not the right clothes', by indicators associated with school engagement (per cent)

	Young people who go hungry sometimes		Young people who go hungry often		Young people who do not have the right clothes		Young people who go hungry sometimes and do not have the right clothes	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
School satisfaction								
Medium-high	12.8	9.6 – 16.1	1.6	0.7 – 2.6	4.8	3.0 – 6.6	1.3	0.4 - 2.2
Low	26.0 ***	19.7 – 32.3	5.5 *	2.8 – 8.3	8.9 *	6.1 – 11.8	5.5 **	2.9 - 8.1
Level of teacher support								
Medium-high	13.3	10.0 – 16.5	1.6	1.0 – 2.3	4.4	2.9 – 6.0	1.5	0.6 - 2.4
Low	23.0 ***	18.2 – 27.9	5.5 **	2.6 – 8.4	10.9 **	6.9 – 14.9	4.5 *	1.9 - 7.1
Level of bullying								
Low-Average	12.6	9.5 – 15.6	1.6	0.9 – 2.4	4.3	2.4 – 6.2	1.3	0.4 - 2.3
High	26.8 ***	20.5 – 33.1	5.3 *	2.4 – 8.2	11.3 **	6.8 – 15.9	5.1 **	2.7 - 7.5
Assessment of school performance								
Good or very good	13.1	9.4 – 16.9	1.7	0.7 – 2.7	4.2	2.9 – 5.5	1.2	0.5 - 1.8
Average or below	21.2 *	16.1 – 26.3	4.2	1.7 – 6.8	10.1 **	5.9 – 14.4	4.9 **	2.3 - 7.6
Pressure from schoolwork								
None -somewhat	13.9	10.2 – 17.6	2.1	1.1 – 3.0	4.6	2.7 – 6.5	1.6	0.6 - 2.5
A lot	20.1	15.2 – 25.1	3.1	1.4 – 4.8	10.5 **	7.0 – 14.1	4.2 *	2.0 - 6.3
Misses school								
Less than once a week	13.0	10.0 – 15.9	1.7	1.0 – 2.4	4.8	3.7 – 5.9	1.3	0.7 - 1.8
About once a week or more	29.5 ***	20.4 – 38.6	6.6 *	2.4 – 10.8	10.5	3.0 – 18.0	7.2	-0.2 - 14.7
Educational aspirations								
Aspires to university	12.6	9.9 – 15.2	1.6	0.8 – 2.4	4.6	3.5 – 5.7	1.3	0.6 - 1.9
Does not aspire to university	21.1 **	15.0 – 27.2	3.8 *	2.0 – 5.6	7.7	2.3 – 13.1	3.8	0.7 - 6.9
summary index score								
0-3	35.4	25.6 - 45.3	10.9	3.9 - 8.0	17.8	9.6 - 25.9	13.2	5.1 - 21.3
6-7	10.0 ***	6.8 - 13.1	0.8 **	0.2 - 1.5	3.2 ***	2.2 - 4.2	0.6 **	0.2 - 0.9

Note: weighted percentages. N=3,821. Percentages refer to proportions of young people who go to school or bed hungry, and young people who do not have the right clothes scoring in the top 85% and the bottom 15% (approximately) of each of the indicators associated with engagement in education. Asterisks denote significant difference between proportions in these two groups: *** $p<0.001$; ** $p<0.01$; *$p<0.05$. Indicators are more fully discussed in the Appendix, and in Redmond *et al.* (2016).

Interviews with young people showed how the stress of not having the right clothes affected how they felt at school. Twelve year old Rose was anxious about going to school in the 'right' clothes. She observed that:

> *'[schools] don't consider the weather involved in drying clothes and some people can't afford dryers to dry them'.*

In a similar vein Louella (13 years), observed that having the wrong clothes could lead to teasing, being ostracised, or bullying:

> *if you're wearing, like a trackie ... tracksuit something, they'll just go, 'oh, look what she's wearing', or something. But I don't care. I don't! But ... like girls at our old school ... [this girl] just wore what she could afford, like from an op-shop or something. And op-shops are good to get stuff, and everybody used to pick on her. And all she was wearing was trackie-daks and a top – who cares?*

Some young people also noted that they did not go to school when there was no food in the house and this often lead to significant regular absences from school. Billie said:

> *My mum struggles, she gets paid on Thursdays but struggles on the Wednesday. Me and my brother, if there is no food for school, we don't go to school at all. She has never sent us to school with no food.*

Table 3 shows that among Years 6 and 8 respondents who reported missing school at least weekly, 6.6% (CI 2.4–10.8%) reported often going to school or bed hungry, compared with 1.7% (CI 1.0–2.4%) who did not miss school so frequently (t(167)=2.28; p=0.024). Being hungry at school placed young people in vulnerable social positions. Mark (aged 14), who reported not having enough food at home on a regular basis said that he was teased on the grounds of *'Being fat, having glasses. How I go to breakfast club every morning and sometimes I'm late so I bring toast to class and they go, oh you still eating Mark'*. These experiences meant he often attempted to convince his mother to let him stay home from school.

As noted above, deprivation in the space of food and clothing were rarely isolated from other forms of deprivation. Engaging in both curricular and extra-curricular activities at school was difficult for young people who did not bring the right equipment to class, and often brought students into conflict with teachers. Being inadequately resourced for school sometimes determined which peer networks were welcoming to young people. Fatima noted:

> *Sometimes when people don't bring pens they constantly get into trouble ... I don't know, not bringing books. I have changed the people that I have been hanging around with, now I hang with the smart people so they do nothing wrong.*

Indeed, Table 3 shows that 5.5% (CI 2.6–8.4%) of Years 6 and 8 students who had a low score on the 'positive relationship with teacher' indicator reported going to school hungry often, and 10.9%

(CI 6.9–14.9%) reported not having the right clothes to fit in, compared with 1.6% (t(167)=2.78; p<0.01) and 4.4% (t(167)=3.42; p<0.01) respectively, for those who had higher scores on the 'positive relationship with teacher' indicator.

6. Discussion

We use the term capability deprivation to describe the constrained opportunities and freedoms, and the amplified experiences of exclusion and even shame, of young Australians who often go hungry or do not have clothes that allow them to fit in. Our survey estimates suggest that significant percentages of students experience one or both of these forms of deprivation. Analysis of young people's voices suggests that hunger and not having the right clothes impact on young people's lives in three ways that are consistent with Sen's (1999) concept of absolute capability deprivation: first, Sen (1990) characterises adequate food and clothing as intrinsically important; second, consistent with Sen's interpretation of Adam Smith, our analysis suggests that young people who experience inadequacies in food and clothing often find it difficult to avoid feelings of shame; third, both the survey and the qualitative data suggest that many of these young people experience disengagement from school. Apart from being intrinsically important in themselves for health, inclusion and belonging, adequate food and the right clothing are also instruments that support young people's intrinsically important capability achievement of learning.

In interviews, young people often engaged in 'facework' (Pugh, 2009) in order to present a more affluent impression. This was apparent in the following exchange with Mark (introduced above) who was given breakfast every morning at school:

Interviewer: Are there any other things the Government could do to help families, to helping them with holidays would be the first one. Are there any other things that the Government could to do help?

Mark: A bit more pay maybe. Because like and also they have millions and billions of dollars that they're just, that's just sitting there in the bank; they should give at least half of it to the people in ...

Interviewer: So not having enough food is hard?

Mark: Well not for my family it's just ..

Interviewer: For others?

Mark: Yeah other families like the people in poverty.

At one level, Mark's discourse can be seen as engagement with what Pugh (2009) calls the economy of dignity. 'Even for children, consumption is a language, a symbolic medium that communicates a message' (Pugh, 2009,: 51). This message can be seen in terms of young people like Mark and Linox (discussed above) constructing a narrative (for us researchers) that

downplayed material deprivation. The economy of dignity is a useful way to understand the strategies young people use to escape the shame that Walker (2014) and Dowler and O'Connor (2012) describe as integral to the experience of poverty in the context of pervasive neoliberal discourses that construct poverty as an *individual* failing. These writers argue that people internalise resource shortages as their own failures. By drawing attention to 'facework' Pugh (2009) shows that this internalisation of structural inequalities occurs from an early age, and can be reinforced by other excluded peers as well as by those that do not experience resource shortages. As Lister (2004) succinctly observes, people experiencing economic deprivation are 'othered'.

Policy in Australia has long supported neoliberal discourses on shaming by presenting a narrative of employment as a sure route out of poverty, and welfare dependency among those of working age as 'bludging' (Archer, 2009; Engels, 2006; McClure, 2000). However, lack of engagement at school, associated with poverty, also undermines human capital development, as Heckman (2006) recognises in his call for greater investment in universal structures which support early childhood. Heckman argues that reinforcing quality early childhood education with continued high-quality learning in primary and secondary school maximises the potential for human capital development, and (ultimately) economic growth. The young people's voices in this paper provide further evidence of the association between deprivation in the space of food and clothing and school engagement, and by extension, on human capital development.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, we use Amartya Sen's Capabilities Approach as a framework for elaborating on how severe poverty impacts on young people's freedoms and opportunities to live a life they have reason to value. Severe deprivation in the space of basics such as food and clothing has been neglected by policymakers in Australia, in spite of evidence in this country and elsewhere of its adverse impact of on young people's development and educational achievement (Anglicare Australia, 2012a; Holloway, Mahony, Royston *et al.*, 2014; Skattebol *et al.*, 2012). This lack of attention is surprising, not only because of the country's affluence, but also because it has largely escaped the Great Recession of recent years that has had a huge impact on child poverty and wellbeing, and subsequently on public expenditure, in many other OECD countries (UNICEF, 2014). In this respect, it is worth noting that large once-only lump-sum transfers to families with children and people in receipt of most government payments as part of the Australian Government's response to the Global Financial Crisis in 2009 appear to have had a significant positive impact, albeit a temporary one, on the lives of severely disadvantaged young people, as reported to the authors (Redmond *et al.*, 2013; Skattebol *et al.*, 2012). Yet the goal of this response was fiscal stimulus, not poverty reduction (Redmond *et al.*, 2013). The current policy focus in Australia on trimming public expenditure in order to reduce the deficit in the public budget may indeed have the impact of increasing poverty in Australia in the coming years, with particularly large losses in income predicted for low income lone parent families (Phillips, 2015).

In this context of fiscal restraint, the paper makes two contributions to knowledge: first, that significant proportions of young Australians in their middle years experience food and/or clothing poverty; and second, that these forms of poverty impact not only on their day-to-day living standards, but also on their engagement in education. While the survey findings outline the dimensions of the issue, the in-depth interviews show that experience of severe hunger and clothing poverty is often associated with the impoverishment of whole networks. The young people we spoke to related how their families often sought support from other people in their social and familial networks to get them through the next payday when the money ran low. Deprivation crises are more likely to occur when these networks break down, or are unable to help. Further research could usefully analyse the role of networks in protecting young people from severe deprivation, and the extent to which these networks are sustained over long periods. Such research could uncover new evidence on the adequacy of income support systems in Australia, especially for socially isolated families. Our expectation is that the Australian income support system may perhaps be adequate to cover families' short term basic needs. However the young people's narratives suggest that it is not sufficient for coping with long term entrenched poverty, especially where families do not have support networks with resources to call on.

It is worth highlighting some limitations of this study, and some gaps in knowledge that remain to be addressed. First, hunger and inadequate clothing are by no means the only poverty-related factors that can impact on young people's wellbeing and school engagement. Further work could employ multivariate approaches to more comprehensively examine these and other associations between deprivation and capabilities. Moreover, both the qualitative and quantitative data used in this analysis are cross-sectional. Added knowledge could be gained from research that focuses on how young people's experience of severe deprivation changes through the middle years, and how these changes are associated with their engagement at school. In particular, it would be worth focusing on whether changes in young people's support networks are associated with variations in the deprivations that they experience.

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Appendix: Indicators associated with school engagement

Seven binary indicators derived from the Australian Child Wellbeing Survey database were used to analyse the relationship between going hungry or not having the right clothes to fit in, and engagement at school. Approximately 15% of those with the 'worst' scores (that is, those consistent with less engagement at school, or associated in the literature with low levels of engagement) were given a value of 0 on the binary indicator, and the remainder given a value of 1. Tables A1 to A7 in this Appendix show how each binary indicator was derived, and its association with hunger and not having the right clothes. Indicators were only calculated for Years 6 and 8 students, since some items were not included in the Year 4 survey instrument (see Redmond *et al.*, 2016). The Tables show unweighted and weighted percentages of Years 6 and 8 students in each 0/1 category students who are:

- Going to school or bed hungry at least sometimes
- Often going to school or bed hungry
- Not having the right clothes to fit in
- Materially disadvantaged (included for comparison)

P values show the statistical significance of the difference in percentages between those with 0 and 1 scores on each indicator who report going hungry or not having the right clothes, or who are identified as materially disadvantaged.

1. **School satisfaction**

This indicator is calculated from the School Satisfaction Scale (developed for the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth), which is in turn derived from the following six items

My school is a place where…

…I feel happy
…I really like to go to each day
…I find that learning is a lot of fun
…I feel safe and secure
…I like learning
…I get enjoyment from being there

Responses ranged from 0 (strongly disagree) to 3 (strongly agree). Cronbach's Alpha for this scale is 0.89 in Years 4 and 6, and in Year 8. The six items were aggregated into an additive scale with a value range of 0-18. Observations with a score on this scale of 0-8 (14.4% of Year 6 and 8 observations) were given a score of 0 on the School Engagement Scale, and observations with a score of 9 or more were given a score of 1.

Table A1: School Satisfaction Scale, Year 6 & 8 students (per cent)

Scale value	Unweight-ed N	Weight-ed per cent	Cumulative per cent	Materially disad-vantaged	Goes hungry to bed at least sometimes	Often goes hungry to bed	Does not have the right clothes
0	71	1.3	1.3				
1	20	0.3	1.5				
2	44	0.7	2.2	U: 12.1%	U: 22.1%	U: 5.9%	U: 9.0%
3	30	0.5	2.7	[9.2 – 15.1]	[18.7 – 25.5]	[3.9 – 7.8]	[7.2 – 10.6]
4	48	0.9	3.6	W: 13.4%	W: 26.0%	W: 5.5%	W: 8.9%
5	47	1.2	4.8	[8.4 – 18.5]	[19.7 – 32.3]	[2.8 – 8.3]	[6.1 – 11.8]
6	125	2.9	7.6				
7	135	2.3	10.0				
8	231	4.5	14.4				
9	276	5.5	20.0				
10	388	8.0	27.9				
11	356	8.5	36.4				
12	806	21.4	57.8	U: 7.5%	U: 11.2%	U: 1.9%	U: 5.2%
13	277	9.1	66.8	[6.0 – 9.0]	[9.6 – 12.7]	[1.3 – 2.4]	[4.2 – 6.2]
14	235	8.1	74.9	W: 8.9	W: 12.8%	W: 1.6%	W: 4.8%
15	199	5.7	80.6	[7.0 – 10.7]	[9.6 – 16.1]	[0.7 – 2.6]	[3.0 – 6.6]
16	155	4.9	85.5				
17	117	3.9	89.4				
18	261	10.6	100.0				
Total	3,821	100.0		U: p<0.000	U: p<0.000	U: p<0.000	U: p<0.000
				W: p=0.091	W: p<0.000	W: p=0.013	W: p=0.012

Note: U= unweighted percent; W = weighted percent, where weights take account of survey non-response at school and student levels. 95% confidence intervals presented in square parentheses.

2. Enjoys a positive relationship with a teacher or other adult at the school

This indicator was derived from the Teacher Support Scale (Constantine and Bernard, 2001), originally constructed for the California healthy Kids Survey. The scale comprises 3 items:

At my school, there is a teacher or another adult …
… who really cares about me
… who believes that I will be a success
… who listens to me when I have something to say

Responses ranged from 0 (Not at all true) to 3 (Very much true), giving a final scale range of 0-9. Cronbach's Alpha was 0.81 for Year 6 respondents, and 0.85 for Year 8 respondents. Observations with a score on this scale of 0-3 (14.7% of Year 6 and 8 observations) were given a score of 0 on the School Engagement Scale, and observations with a score of 4 or more were given a score of 1.

Table A2: Teacher Support Scale, Year 6 & 8 students (per cent)

Scale value	Unweight-ed N	Weight-ed per cent	Cumulative per cent	Materially disad-vantaged	Goes hungry to bed at least sometimes	Often goes hungry to bed	Does not have the right clothes
0	98	1.8	1.8	U: 12.1%	U: 20.5%	U: 6.1=0%	U: 8.8%
1	103	1.7	3.5	[9.0 – 15.2]	[16.8 – 24.1]	[4.0 – 7.9]	[7.0 – 10.6]
2	123	2.3	5.8	W: 14.7%	W: 23.0%	W: 5.5%	W: 10.9%
3	379	8.9	14.7	[9.7 – 19.8]	[18.2 – 27.9]	[2.6 – 8.4]	[6.9 – 14.9]
4	370	8.3	23.0				
5	442	9.6	32.6	U: 7.6%	U: 11.7%	U: 1.9%	U: 5.3%
6	815	21.1	53.7	[6.0 – 9.1]	[10.1 – 13.3]	[1.4 – 2.4]	[4.3 – 6.2]
7	410	11.3	65.0	W: 8.6%	W: 13.3%	W: 1.6%	W: 4.4%
8	418	13.5	78.6	[7.0 – 10.2]	[10.0 – 16.5]	[1.0 – 2.3]	[2.9 – 6.0]
9	663	21.4	100.0				
				U:p=0.002	U:p<0.000	U:p<0.000	U:p<0.000
Total	3,821	100		W:p=0.012	W:p<0.000	W:p=0.006	W:p=0.001

Note: U= unweighted percent; W = weighted percent, where weights take account of survey non-response at school and student levels. 95% confidence intervals presented in square parentheses.

3. Bullying

Questions on bullying in the ACWP survey instrument were taken from Cross, Shaw, Hearn *et al.* (2009). This scale has been validated and is widely used in Australia.

THIS TERM how often did these things happen to you?

- Students deliberately ignored or left me out of a group to hurt me
- I was teased in nasty ways
- I had a student tell lies about me behind my back, to make other students not like me
- I've been made to feel afraid I would get hurt
- I had secrets told about me to others behind my back, to hurt me
- A group decided to hurt me by ganging up on me

Responses ranged from 0 (This did not happen to me this term) to 4 (Several times a week or more this term were added to give a final scale range of 0-24. Cronbach's Alpha was 0.9 for both Year 6 and Year 8 respondents. Observations with a score on this scale of 0-5, indicating very low levels of bullying, were given a score of 1, and observations with a score in the range 6-24 (15.3% of Year 6 and 8 observations) were given a score of 0 on the School Engagement Scale. Only 3.9 per cent of observations had a score of 15 or more on the bullying scale.

Table A3: Bullying Scale, Year 6 & 8 students (per cent)

Scale value	Unweighted N	Weighted per cent	Cumulative per cent	Materially disadvantaged	Goes hungry to bed at least sometimes	Often goes hungry to bed	Does not have the right clothes
0	1,759	43.5	43.5				
1	513	14.3	57.8	U: 7.5%	U: 10.9%	U: 1.8%	U: 4.9%
2	408	11.0	68.8	[5.9 – 9.0]	[9.2 – 12.5]	[1.2 – 2.3]	[4.0 – 5.7]
3	274	7.6	76.4	W: 8.3%	W: 12.6%	W: 1.6%	W: 4.3%
4	182	5.3	81.7	[6.5 – 10.1]	[9.5 – 15.6]	[0.9 – 2.4]	[2.4 – 6.2]
5	115	3.2	84.9				
6	103	2.3	87.2				
7	64	1.9	89.2				
8	52	1.9	91.0				
9	48	1.1	92.1	U: 13.7%	U: 27.4%	U: 7.5%	U: 12.1%
10	39	1.0	93.2	[10.6 – 16.8]	[23.9 – 30.8]	[5.3 – 9.8]	[9.4 – 14.8]
11	25	0.6	93.7	W: 16.5%	W: 26.8%	W: 5.3%	W: 11.3%
12	41	1.0	94.7	[11.4 – 21.7]	[20.5 – 33.1]	[2.4 – 8.2]	[6.8 – 15.9]
13	28	0.6	95.3				
14	25	0.8	96.0				
15-24	145	4.0	100.0				
Total	3,821	100.0		U:p<0.000 W:p=0.004	U:p<0.000 W:p<0.000	U:p<0.000 W:p=0.010	U:p<0.000 W:p=0.009

Note: U= unweighted percent; W = weighted percent, where weights take account of survey non-response at school and student levels. 95% confidence intervals presented in square parentheses.

4. **Subjective assessment of school performance**

ACWP respondents were asked the following question from the Health Behaviour in School Aged Children Survey (Currie et al., 2012):

In your opinion, what does your class teacher(s) think about your school performance compared to your classmates?

Responses to this question are in Table A4 below. Observations ranking 'below average' or 'average' were given a score of 0 on the School Engagement Scale (19.8% of all observations), while observations ranking 'good' or 'very good' were given a score of 1.

Table A4: How does your teacher think about your school performance compared to your classmates? Year 6 & 8 students (per cent)

	Unweighted N	Weighted per cent	Cumulative per cent	Materially disadvantaged	Goes hungry to bed at least sometimes	Often goes hungry to bed	Does not have the right clothes
Below average	112	2.1	2.1	U: 12.4% [9.5 – 15.3]	U: 18.4% [15.6 – 21.1]	U: 4.5% [3.0 – 6.0]	U: 9.0% [7.0 – 11.0]
Average	775	17.6	19.7	W: 17.4% [11.6 – 23.3]	W: 21.2% [16.1 – 26.3]	W: 4.2% [1.7 – 6.8]	W: 10.1% [5.9 – 14.4]
Good	1,761	46.0	65.6	U: 7.2% [5.6 – 8.8]	U: 11.8% [10.1 – 13.5]	U: 2.1% [1.4 – 2.7]	U: 5.0% [4.1 – 5.9]
Very good	1,173	34.4	100.0	W: 7.6% [6.2 – 9.0]	W: 13.1 [9.4 – 16.9]	W: 1.7% [0.7 – 2.7]	W: 4.2% [2.9 – 5.5]
Total	3,821	100.0		U:p<0.000 W:p=0.001	U:p<0.000 W:p=0.016	U:p=0.003 W:p=0.089	U:p<0.000 W:p=0.002

Note: U= unweighted percent; W = weighted percent, where weights take account of survey non-response at school and student levels. 95% confidence intervals presented in square parentheses.

5. Feeling pressured by schoolwork

ACWP respondents were also asked the following question from the Health Behaviour in School Aged Children Survey (Currie, Zanotti, Morgan *et al.*, 2012):

How pressured do you feel by the schoolwork you have to do?

Responses to this question are in Table A5 below. Observations responding 'not at all', 'a little' or 'some' were given a score of 1 on the School Engagement Scale, while observations responding 'a lot' (13.4% of all observations) were given a score of 0.

Table A5: How pressured do you feel by the schoolwork? Year 6 & 8 students (per cent)

	Unweight-ed N	Weight-ed per cent	Cumulative per cent	Materially disad-vantaged	Goes hungry to bed at least sometimes	Often goes hungry to bed	Does not have the right clothes
Not at all	391	14.7	14.7	U: 7.7%	U: 11.9%	U: 2.1%	U: 4.8%
A little	1,546	44.2	58.9	[6.2 – 9.3]	[10.1 – 13.6]	[1.5 – 2.7]	[3.8 – 5.7]
				W: 9.2%	W: 13.9%	W: 2.1%	W: 4.6%
Some	1,202	27.7	86.6	[7.3 – 11.0]	[10.2 – 17.6]	[1.1 – 3.0]	[2.7 – 6.5]
A lot	682	13.4	100.0	U: 11.4%	U: 20.1%	U: 5.1%	U: 11.3%
				[8.5 – 14.4]	[16.9 – 23.3]	[3.5 – 6.7]	[9.1 – 13.5]
				W: 11.8%	W: 20.1%	W: 3.1%	W: 10.5%
				[7.6 – 16.0]	[15.2 – 25.1]	[1.4 – 4.8]	[7.0 – 14.1]
Total	3,821	100.0		U: p=0.005	U: p<0.000	U: p<0.000	U:p<0.000
				W:p=0.240	W:p=0.085	W:p=0.330	W:p=0.004

Note: U= unweighted percent; W = weighted percent, where weights take account of survey non-response at school and student levels. 95% confidence intervals presented in square parentheses.

6. Missing school

Finally, ACWP respondents were asked about missing school (for any reason):

Last term, how many times have you missed school?

Responses to this question are in Table A6 below. Observations responding 'never' or 'hardly ever' were given a score of 1 on the School Engagement Scale, while observations responding 'about once a week', 'most days' or 'every day' (10.6% of all observations) were given a score of 0.

Table A6: How often have you missed school in the past term? Year 6 & 8 students (per cent)

	Unweight-ed N	Weight-ed per cent	Cumul-ative per cent	Materially disad-vantaged	Goes hungry to bed at least some-times	Often goes hungry to bed	Does not have the right clothes
Never	662	19.2	19.2	U: 7.3% [5.9 – 8.7]	U: 11.7% [10.3 – 13.1]	U: 2.1% [1.5 – 2.7]	U: 5.8% [4.9 – 6.7]
Hardly ever	2,730	70.3	89.4	W: 8.6% [7.0 – 10.1]	W: 13.0% [10.0 – 15.9]	W: 1.7% [1.0 – 2.4]	W: 4.8% [3.7 – 5.9]
About once a week	301	7.5	97.0	U: 16.8% [12.6 – 20.9]	U: 26.3% [22.0 – 30.1]	U: 7.0% [4.7 – 9.3]	U: 7.2% [4.4 – 10.1]
Most days	115	2.7	99.7	W: 17.5% [9.6 – 25.3]	W: 29.5% [20.4 – 38.6]	W: 6.6% [2.4 – 10.8]	W: 10.5% [3.0 – 18.0]
Every day	13	0.3	100.0				
Total	3,821	100.0		U:p<0.000 W:p=0.027	U: p<0.000 W:p<0.000	U:p<0.000 W:p=0.024	U:p=0.319 W:p=0.108

Note: U= unweighted percent; W = weighted percent, where weights take account of survey non-response at school and student levels. 95% confidence intervals presented in square parentheses.

7. Aspirations

ACWP respondents were asked about their educational aspirations:

What is the highest level of education you would like to finish?

Responses to this question are in Table A6 below. Observations responding 'Year 10', 'Year 11', , 'Year 11', 'Year 12', 'Trade Qualification (apprenticeship)' or 'TAFE Certificate (or similar)' (25.6% of observations) were given a score of 0 on the School Engagement Scale, while observations responding 'University' (74.5% of observations) were given a score of 1.

Table A7: How often have you missed school in the past term? Year 6 & 8 students (per cent)

	Unweight-ed N	Weight-ed per cent	Cumulati ve per cent	Materially disad-vantaged	Goes hungry to bed at least some-times	Often goes hungry to bed	Does not have the right clothes
Year 10	49	2.4	2.4				
Year 11	32	0.8	3.2				
Year 12	358	11.7	14.9				
Trade Qualification (apprentice-ship)	162	3.7	18.6	U: 14.2% [11.3 – 17.0] W: 14.0% [9.8 – 18.2]	U: 18.9% [16.1 – 21.6] W: 21.1% [15.0 – 27.2]	U: 5.2% [3.5 – 6.9] W: 3.8% [2.0 – 5.6]	U: 6.6% [4.7 – 8.5] W: 7.7% [2.3 – 13.1]
TAFE[a] Certificate (or similar)	246	6. 7	25.3				
University	2,974	74.7	100.0	U: 6.8% [5.3 – 8.2] W: 8.0% [6.2 – 9.8]	U: 11.7% [10.0 – 13.4] W: 12.6% [9.9 – 15.2]	U: 1.9% [1.4 – 2.4] W: 1.6% [0.8 – 2.4]	U: 5.7% [4.8 – 6.7] W: 4.6% [3.5 – 5.7]
Total	3,821	100.0		U:p<0.000 W:p=0.010	U:p<0.000 W:p=0.003	U:p<0.000 W:p=0.021	U:p=0.414 W:p=0.268

Note: U= unweighted percent; W = weighted percent, where weights take account of survey non-response at school and student levels. a. TAFE = Tertiary and Further Education. A TAFE certificate is a vocational qualification. 95% confidence intervals presented in square parentheses.

8. **Summary index of factors associated with school engagement**

The index of indicators associated with school engagement was constructed from the seven indicators discussed above in this appendix. As noted above, each indicator was converted to a binary indicator, with approximately 15% of those with the 'worst' scores given a value of 0, and the remainder given a value of 1. The index is summative, with each element weighted equally.

It is important to note that the index as presented in the paper is not a psychometric scale of school engagement. Although exploratory factor analysis suggests that the seven indicators do load onto a single dimension, reliability, as measured by Cronbach's α, is low (0.55). Therefore, the index should be seen as a summary measure of diverse indicators relating to different aspects of school engagement. Table A8 shows that only 8 observations (0.1 %) scored 0 on all seven indicators, giving them an index score of 0. On the other hand, 1,412 observation (37.9%) scored 1 on all seven indicators, giving them an index score of 7.

Table A8: Summary index of factors associated with school engagement, Year 6 & 8 students (per cent)

Index score	Unweighted N	Weighted per cent	95% Confidence interval	
			Lower bound	Upper bound
0	8	0.1	0.0	0.2
1	39	0.6	0.4	1.0
2	84	1.3	0.9	2.0
3	185	4.1	3.2	5.2
4	404	8.7	7.2	10.5
5	611	16.1	14.0	18.4
6	1,078	31.2	28.2	34.3
7	1,412	37.9	34.2	41.8
Total	3,821	100.0		

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The authors declare no conflicts of interest' is fine (sent by email).