

Wandering

Results from a survey about
childhood independence

INSIGHTS PAPER



Queensland
Family & Child
Commission



Queensland
Government



Foreword

Most grown-ups spent the dominant part of their childhood outdoors, with friends, and no adults in sight. Most grown-ups remember a childhood full of freedom, fun, friends and fluency (mastery, challenges or adventures). Able to drop their bag after school and walk out into a neighbourhood full of childhood friends and do whatever they want (within reason). Over the past 30 years this type of childhood has been reversed. Children rarely have time away from adults, are not permitted out their front doors and have no capacity to connect with local friends (unless you count online friends?).

As the CEO for the Australian Institute of Play, I am very focused on the issue at the centre of this research. Children's independent mobility is a core element of play for children. Play is defined as an activity that is self-directed, autonomously engaged, freely chosen and intrinsically motivating. Play is the mechanism built into almost all species to test, practice and master all things needed to grow into a fully functioning adult. Unconsciously, and mostly out of love and fear, we have reduced children's ability to play independently to almost zero. Thus, reducing the capacity of the systems of our society to produce functional adults. By extension of this decision, we have locked the doors on children's ability to grow agency, and independence. Children no longer permitted to roam in their neighbourhoods, with friends, and have adventures, means we have removed children's opportunities to build a connection to their community, to have a deep and personal connection to where they live, and who is in their village.

We are now living out the consequences. Steep rises of mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and virtual autism (especially in younger children). Increases in language delays and speech problems in children. Growing sedentary lifestyle results in rising childhood overweight and obesity. These are all issues growing in concern for many and governments are now formulating strategies and funding programs to address the symptoms. But... they cannot address the cause. It is up to each village to reverse this trend because this is where children grow-up, and spend the dominant part of their lives.

I believe in the saying 'It takes a village to raise a child'. What is the health of your village? Do you know who you live amongst? Our children are a type of indicator species. Their ability to move around their neighbourhoods, connect with friends and play is directly indicative of the health of our society. This research demonstrates there is much work to do to nurture our children and society to grow and flourish.

There are only 3,000 days of childhood for us to make a difference. The solution is simple and within your power. The answer is in your neighbourhood. Start local, hold regular neighbourhood gatherings, close-off your street, connect with those who you live around. I believe we are hungry for connection and contact with those in our villages. It is part of biology. It is only until recent history we have built a social system that ignores this innate urge. When we connect with our villages there is a peace inside us that is satisfied, and our children get to play, and we begin to heal what we have broken.

Hyahno Moser
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Institute of Play
'Local Play, Every Day'



Introduction

As children grow, they naturally seek increasing independence from their parents and carers. Childhood independence assists young people to develop a sense of self, an ability to be self-reliant and a strong sense of self-esteem. Testing boundaries and exploring the world are key to children developing responsibility and competence in how to interact with others and manage themselves without adults present. Learning to safely adventure alone is a critical part of the journey to adulthood. When children roam their communities, they are also developing a sense of and connection to place, spatial awareness, connection to their community and a relationship with nature.

For parents, allowing children increasing independence brings with it new anxieties about how a young person might be able to identify and then manage a situation that could lead to injury or risk. Added to this is the strong media focus on those rare but terrifying cases where children are harmed or go missing, leading to heightened fear among the community about allowing children to be alone.

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) was interested in exploring the particular perception that our parents and grandparents were allowed more freedom to wander from their homes and explore their neighbourhoods without adult supervision. Along with many other shifts and changes between generations, is our current generation of young people less likely to see the benefits that can come from increased freedom of movement around the community?

To find out the dimensions of this issue, we conducted a one-off online survey (the Wandering Alone survey) to gather information about what it is (or was) like growing up in Queensland across generations, locations and gender. The survey comprised seven questions (Appendix 1) asking respondents how far and for how long they were allowed to wander without adult supervision when they were a child (aged 5–11 years). The survey asked a further five questions of parents with children aged 5–11 years to see how far they would allow their own child to wander without supervision.

The survey was promoted on social media and through professional QFCC networks over the period 8 November 2023 to 11 December 2023 which resulted in 165 completed surveys. Unlike some other QFCC projects, this survey was undertaken as a quick snapshot, meaning our results need to be interpreted in this light. The analysis and conclusions we have drawn must be understood within the context of the small number of responses. Nevertheless, we found the results worthy of public presentation.

In reporting survey results, we grouped our respondents into the following four generations to help explore response patterns and answer our question:

- Baby boomers (1946-1964);
- Generation X (1946-1980);
- Generation Y (1980-1995);
- Generation Z (1995-2010).

We also captured results from Generation Alpha (2010-today) through the answers of parents with a child aged 5–11 years in Queensland. The answers from this survey provide insight into how children's behaviour has changed over time. The results have implications for our next generation's ability to interact with their communities in the absence of adult oversight.

As well as exploring responses across generations, this survey gathered responses across locations. Locations have been grouped as follows:

- Metropolitan areas (more than 250,000 people)
- Inner regional areas (48,000–249,999 people)
- Outer regional areas (18,000–47,999)
- Remote areas (5,000–17,999 people)
- Very remote areas (less than 5,000 people)
- Interstate locations (outside Queensland)
- Overseas locations (outside Australia).

Due to the smaller response rates in remote and very remote locations, we have combined the responses from these areas to strengthen the findings.

Understanding our responses by generation, location and gender



Generation Z

Born during 1995 to 2010
This generation have never known a life without tech. They are the first social generation to have grown up with access to the Internet and portable digital technology from a young age.

There were 40 Generation Z responses to our Wandering Alone survey.



Millennials/ Generation Y

Born during 1980 to 1995
This generation are 'digital natives'. It's not entirely certain where the generation starts and ends, but it's approximately those born from 1980 to 1995.

There were 54 Generation Y responses to our Wandering Alone survey.



Generation X

Born during 1964 to 1980
This generation grew up in a time when technology was advancing fast, but it wasn't nearly as readily available as it is today. As such, this generation straddles both the digital and non-digital world.

There were 48 Generation X responses to our Wandering Alone survey.



Baby Boomers

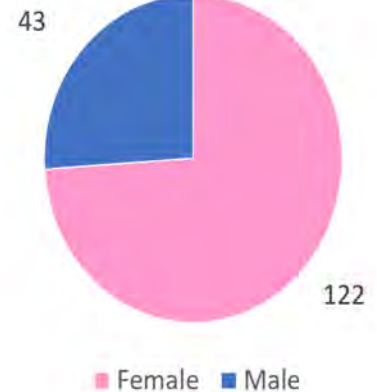
Born during 1946 to 1964
This generation was named after the huge surge of births after the end of World War II. The generation starts in 1946 and ends in 1964 when the birthrate began to decline again.

There were 23 Baby Boomer responses to our Wandering Alone survey.

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- 67 metropolitan responses
- 24 inner regional responses
- 15 outer regional responses
- 10 remote responses
- 7 very remote responses
- 31 interstate responses
- 11 overseas responses



¹ BBC (2023), *Millennials, baby boomers or Gen Z: Which one are you and what does it mean?*, [Which generation are you? - BBC Bitesize](#).

² Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023), *Map of the 2016 Remoteness Areas of Australia*, [1270.0.55.005 - Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\): Volume 5 - Remoteness Structure, July 2016 \(abs.gov.au\)](#).





Most children were allowed to wander around the block, to the local park or to a friend's house, and until it got dark without adult supervision



Key Findings:

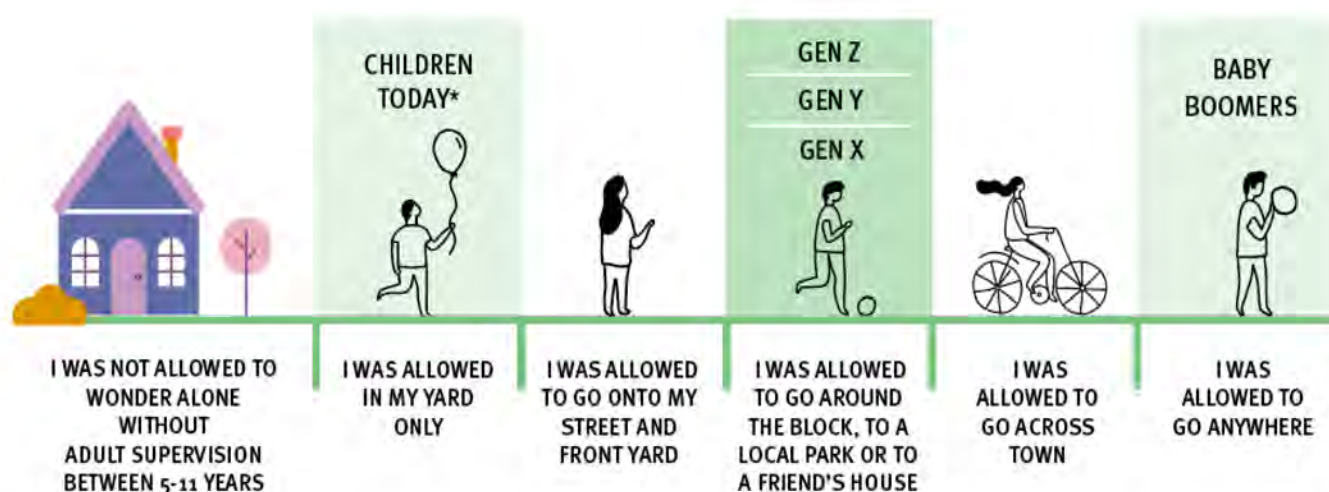
The Wandering Alone survey results indicate that across almost all generations and locations, most respondents indicated they were allowed to wander around the block, to the local park or to a friend's house without adult supervision. The only exception to these results was for most respondents in remote and very remote locations and Baby Boomers who indicated that they were allowed to wander anywhere without adult supervision.

Similarly, the survey results indicate that across almost all generations and locations, most respondents were allowed to wander until it was dark without adult supervision. The exception to this was Generation Y respondents, where the majority reported they were only allowed to wander without adult supervision for a few hours.

Distance most respondents could wander by generation

The majority from almost all generations (Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z) reported they were allowed to wander around the block, to the local park or to a friend's house without adult supervision (Figure 1). However, Baby Boomer respondents reported that most of them were allowed to wander anywhere without adult supervision (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Distance the majority of respondents were allowed to wander without adult supervision, by generation



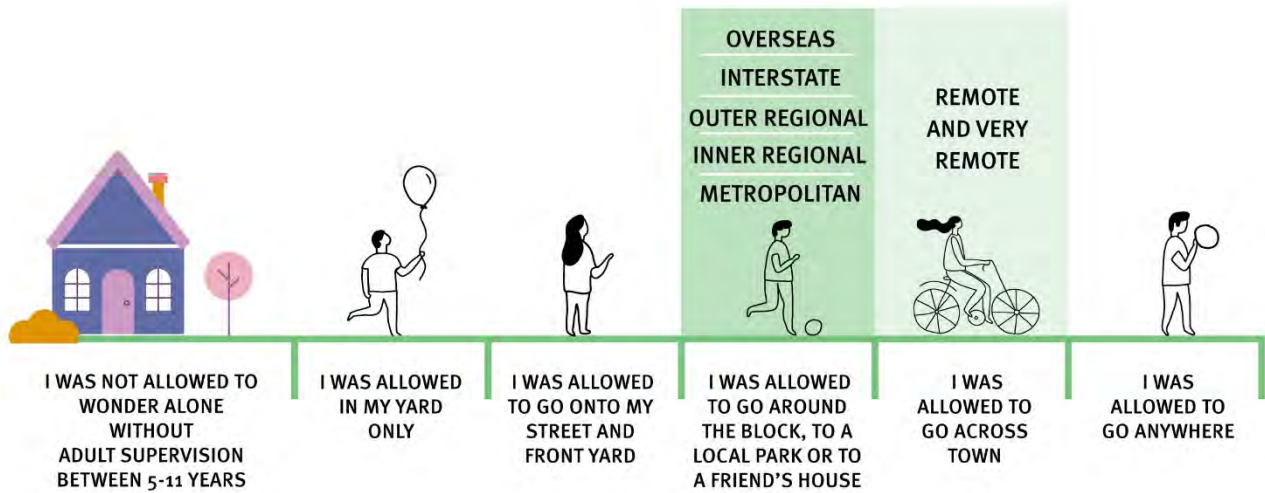
* As indicated by parents and carers



Distance most respondents could wander by location

Figure 2 highlights that the majority in almost all locations (metropolitan, inner regional, outer regional, interstate and overseas) reported they were allowed to wander around the block, to the local park or to a friend's house without adult supervision. However, respondents from remote and very remote locations reported that most of them were allowed to wander anywhere without adult supervision (Figure 2).

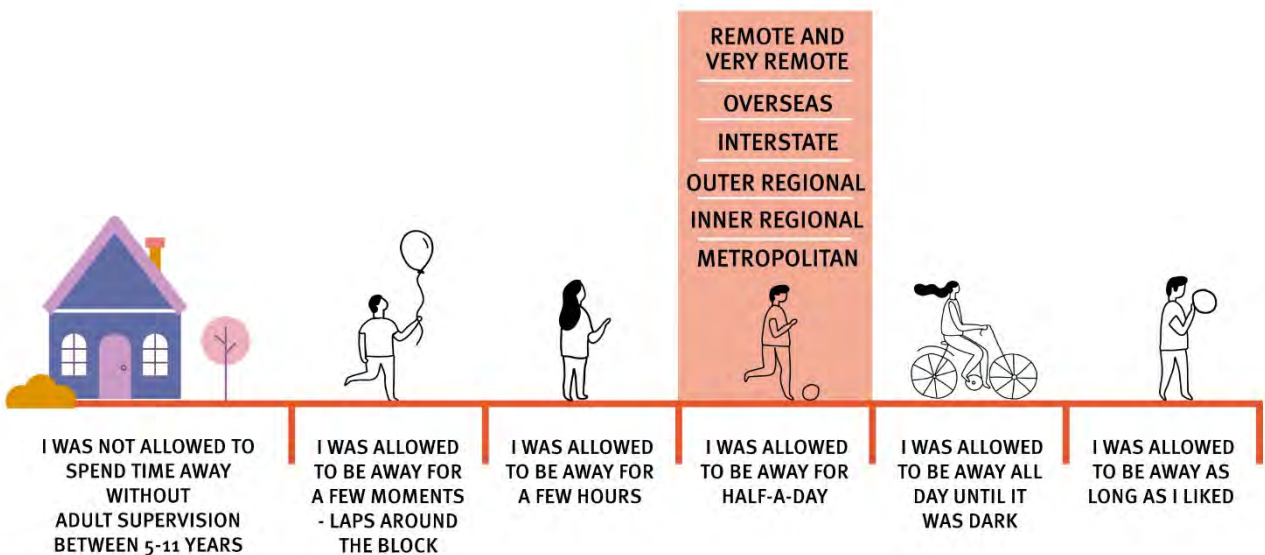
Figure 2: Distance the majority of respondents were allowed to wander without adult supervision, by location



Length of time most respondents could wander by location

Figure 3 highlights the majority in all locations (metropolitan, inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote, interstate and overseas) reported they were allowed to be away until it was dark without adult supervision (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Length of time the majority of respondents were allowed to wander without adult supervision, by location

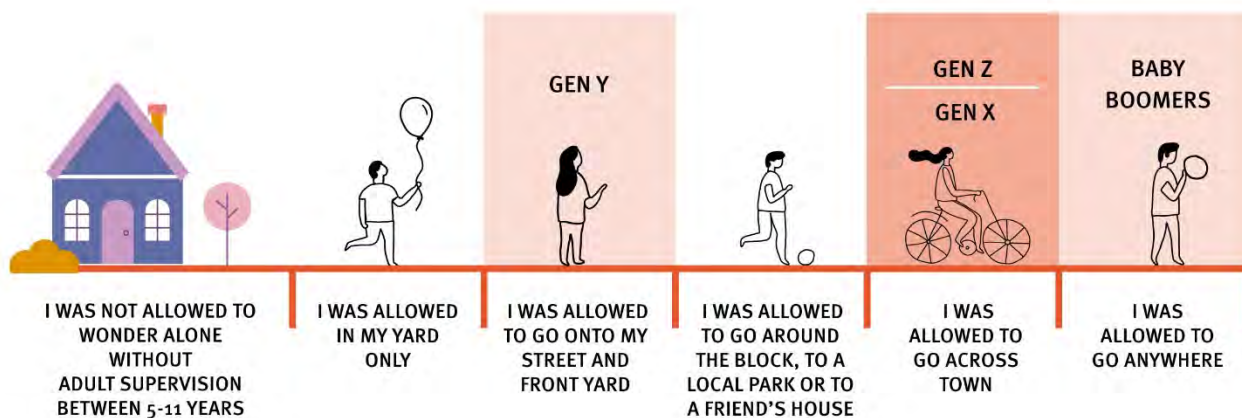




Length of time most respondents could wander by generation

Figure 4 highlights the majority of respondents from almost all generations (Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Z) reported they were allowed to be away until it was dark without adult supervision. However, Generation Y respondents reported that most were allowed to be away for a few hours without adult supervision (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Length of time the majority of respondents were allowed to wander without adult supervision, by generation



Parents reported they are generally more restrictive with their children than their parents were with them



Key Findings:

The Wandering Alone survey results indicate that when asked to respond as a parent to any children aged 5–11 years they might have grown up in Queensland, parents are less likely to allow their children to wander to the same distance they themselves had been allowed to wander. Interestingly, there were no parents who said they would allow their child to wander anywhere or across town without adult supervision. Most parents only allow their child to wander in their yard without adult supervision.

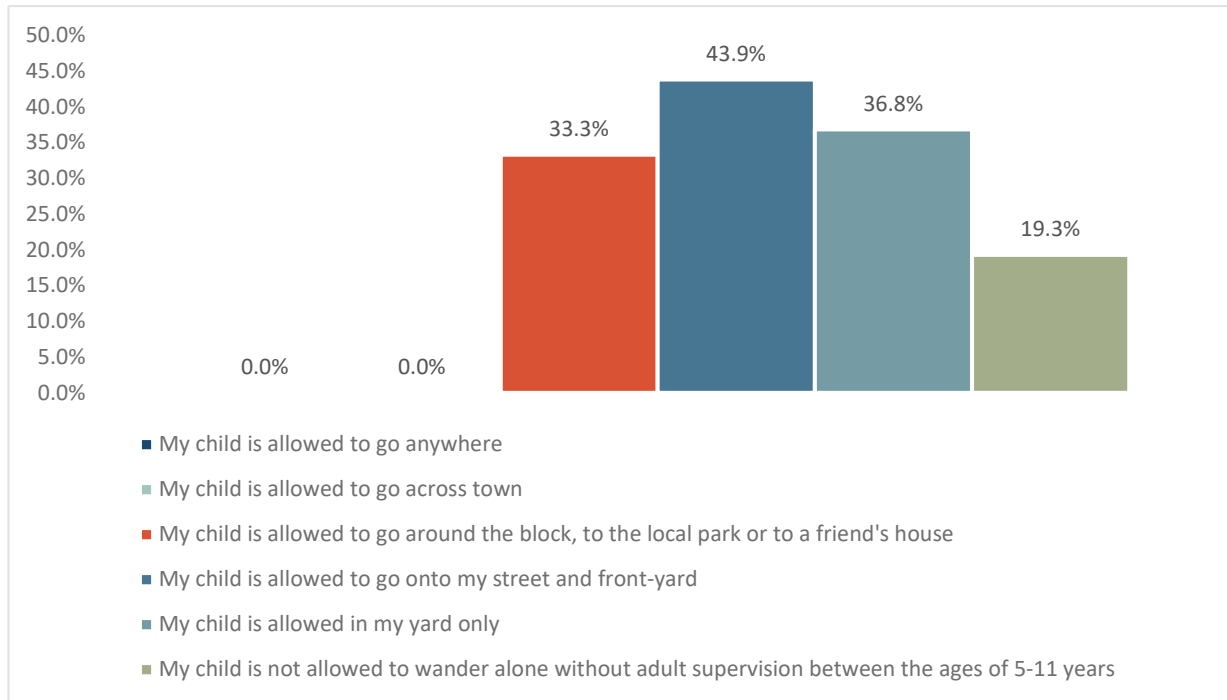
Similarly, parent respondents said their children were not allowed to wander for as long as previous generations without adult supervision. Interestingly, the results highlight that no parents allow their child to wander for as long as they like without adult supervision, and a very small percentage allow their child to wander until dark without adult supervision (1.8%). Almost half of parents reported they do not allow their child to spend time away without adult supervision (49.1%).

Distance parents allow their child to wander

Almost half of parent respondents (43.9%) claimed they allowed their child to wander onto their street or front-yard without adult supervision, while a similarly high proportion (36.8%) said they only allow their child to wander in the yard (Figure 5). Interestingly, no parents reported that they allowed their child to go anywhere or across town without adult supervision, while 19.3 per cent claimed that their child is not allowed to wander without adult supervision (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Percentage of parents who allow their children to wander without adult supervision

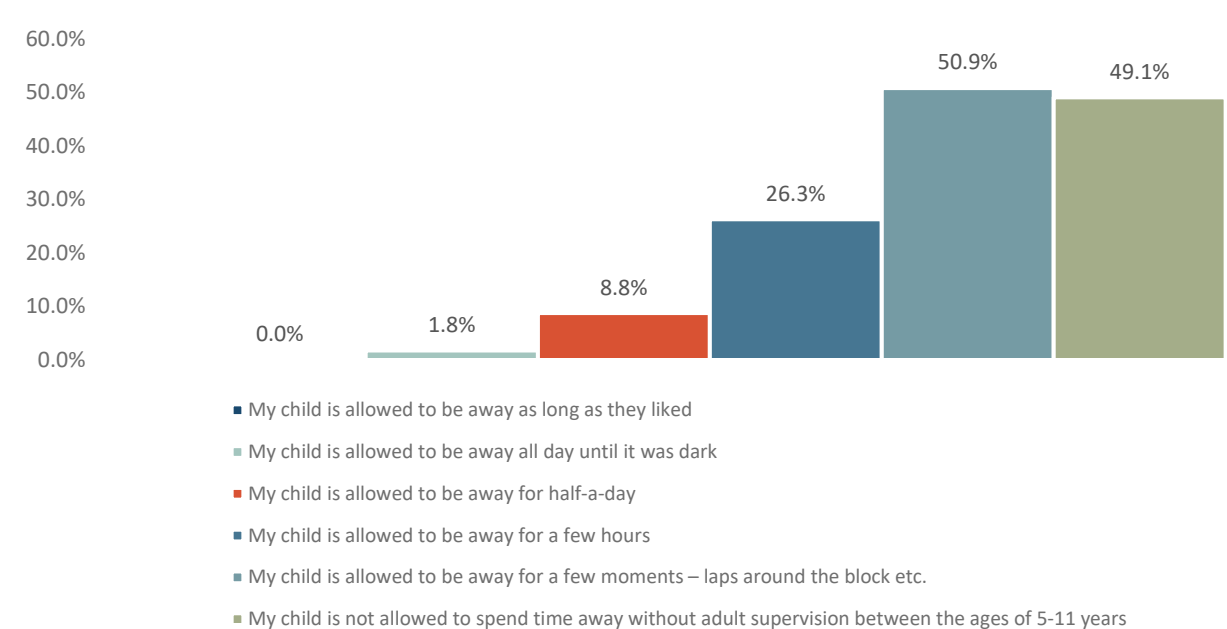


* Respondents could select more than one option

Length of time parents allow their child to wander

Figure 6 highlights almost half of parent respondents (49.1%) claim they do not allow their child to spend time away without adult supervision, while there were no parents who allowed their child to be away for as long as they liked. Results display an upward trend from no parents allowing their child to be away as long as they liked, to 1.8 per cent allowing their child to be away all day until it was dark (Figure 6). These results indicate that parents do not allow their child to wander for as long without adult supervision than they were allowed to as a child.

Figure 6: Percentage of parents by the length of time they allow their children to wander without adult supervision





The distance that children are allowed to wander is different depending on gender, location and generation



Key Findings:

Although there was variation, the findings from the Wandering Alone survey indicate that on average male children were allowed to wander further without adult supervision than female children. The results also indicate that the more remote a child is, the further their parents allow them to wander without adult supervision. This trend was also witnessed across generations, with results indicating that children were allowed to wander further in previous generations: Baby Boomer respondents were almost 14 times more likely to be allowed to wander anywhere alone without adult supervision than Generation Z respondents.

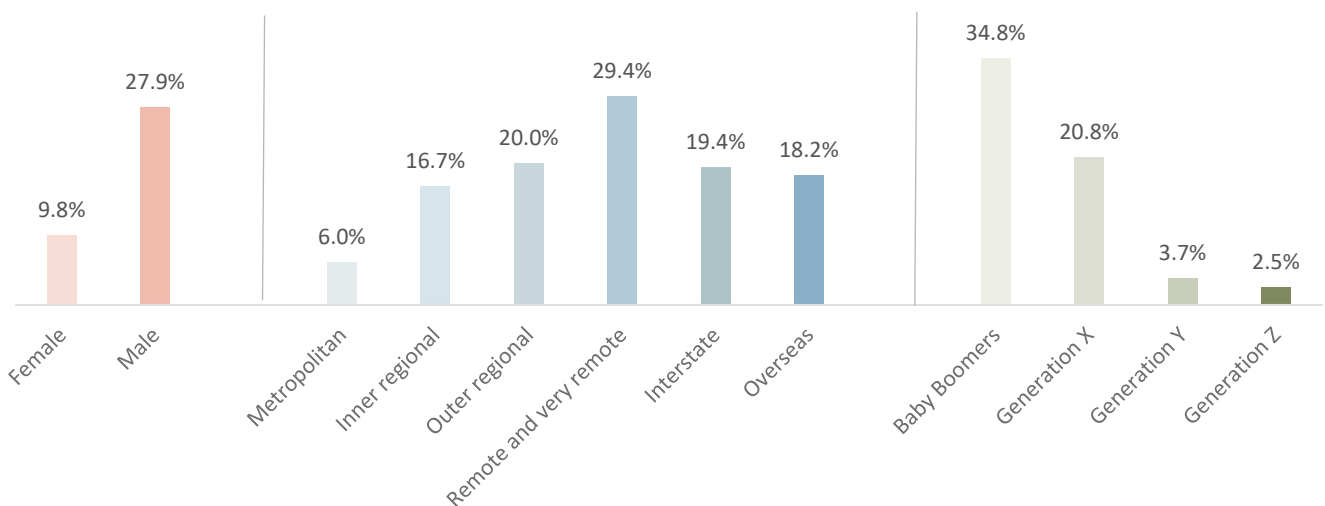
Wandering ‘anywhere’

A larger portion of male respondents (27.9%) indicated they could wander anywhere without adult supervision than female respondents (9.8%) (Figure 7).

Similarly, the further from the city a child lives, the more likely they will be allowed to wander anywhere without adult supervision. While only 6.0 per cent of respondents who grew up in metropolitan areas were able to wander anywhere, this was true of 29.4 per cent of those who grew up in remote and very remote areas. The results are slightly lower for children who grew up interstate (19.4%) and overseas (18.2%) but are comparable to children that grew up in outer regional locations in Queensland (Figure 7).

The number of children allowed to wander anywhere without adult supervision has decreased significantly across generations. About a third (34.8%) of the Baby Boomer respondents reported they could wander anywhere without adult supervision compared to only 2.5 per cent of Generation Z respondents (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Percentage of children (5-11 years) who were allowed to **wander anywhere** without adult supervision



Wandering across town

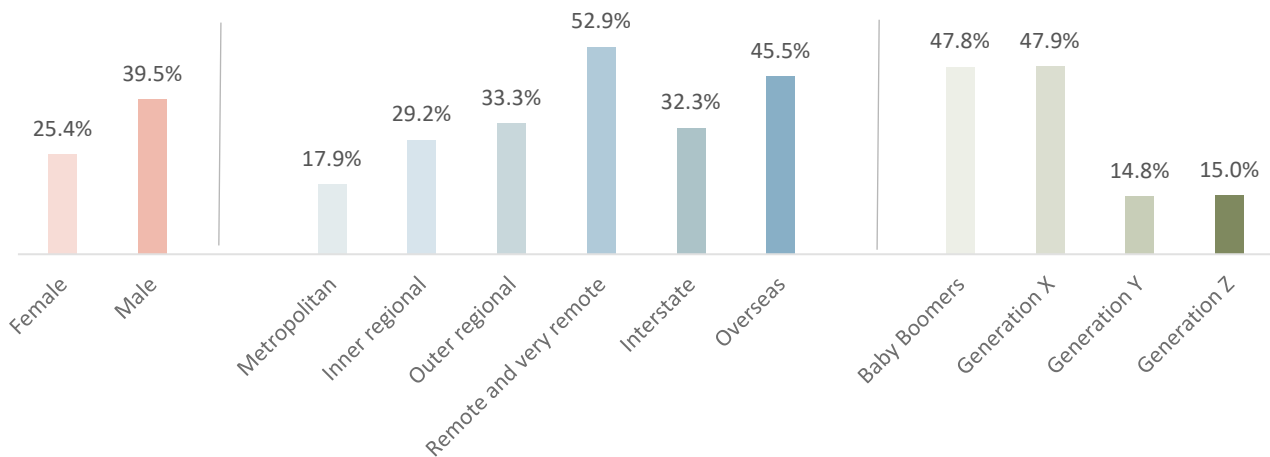
A larger portion of male respondents (39.5%) than female respondents (25.4%) indicated they could wander across town without adult supervision (Figure 8). Like the previous question, children living in remote and very remote areas (52.9%) were more likely to be allowed to wander across town without adult supervision, following the trend in Figure 1. Those who grew up further from cities were more likely to be allowed to wander across



town without adult supervision. It is interesting to note that the second highest proportion of respondents who were allowed to wander across town were from overseas (Figure 8).

The number of children who were allowed to wander across town without adult supervision has decreased across generations, with respondents in the first two generations three times more likely to wander alone across town than those in the latter two generations (Figure 8). There is a clear distinction in the results for the generations before and after the 1980s.

Figure 8: Percentage of children (5-11 years) who were allowed to **wander across town** without adult supervision



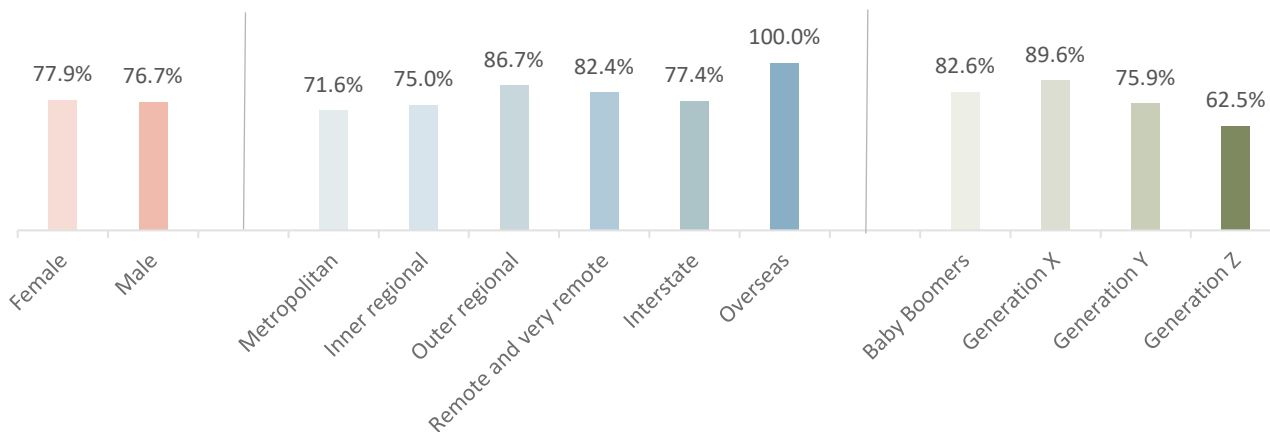
Wandering around the block, to the local park or to a friend’s house

There is gender parity when the locations where children can wander are closer to home. More than three-quarters of both female (77.9%) and male (76.7%) respondents indicated they could wander around the block, to the local park or to a friend’s house without adult supervision (Figure 9).

Results also varied much less from location to location for Queensland-based respondents, with much less divergence in the proportions of children from different locations being allowed to wander around the block, to the local park or to a friend’s house without adult supervision (Figure 9).

While the variation across the generations for this survey item remain, they are much less marked than for the previous two destinations (‘anywhere’ and ‘across town’). While roughly eight in ten (82.6%) Baby Boomer respondents and nine in ten (89.6%) Generation X respondents indicated they could wander around the block, to the local park or to a friend’s house without adult supervision, this was lower for Generation Y respondents (75.9%) and Generation Z respondents (62.5%) (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Percentage of children (5-11 years) who were allowed to **wander around the block, to the local park or to a friend’s house** without adult supervision



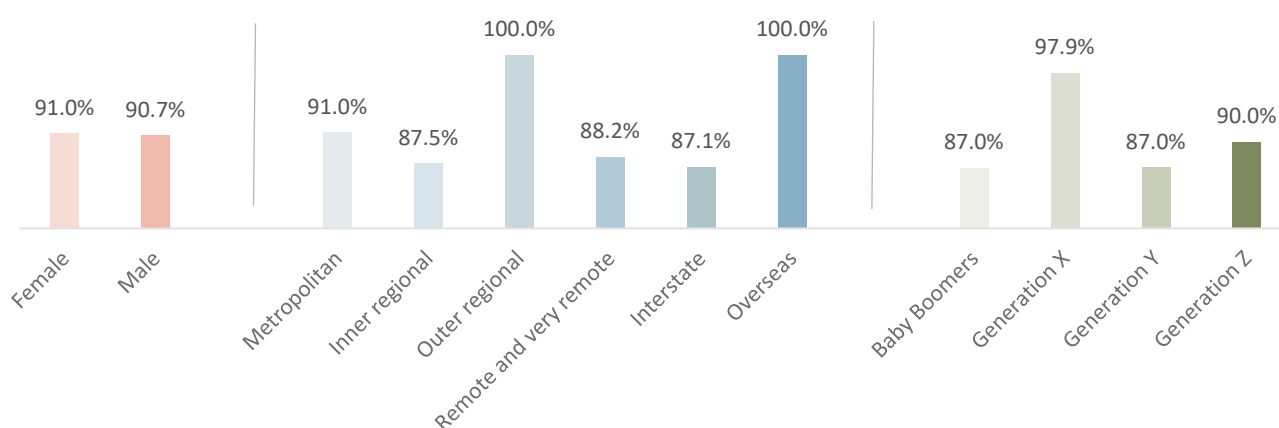


Wandering on the street or front yard

Nine in 10 respondents from both generations could wander onto their street or front-yard without adult supervision, with the results slightly higher for female respondents (91.0%) than male respondents (90.7%) (Figure 10). The results again varied by location, with all outer regional and overseas respondents (100.0%) indicating they were able to wander onto their street and front-yard without adult supervision. There was variation among the other respondents with interstate respondents (87.1%) reporting the lowest likelihood of being allowed to wander onto their street and front-yard without adult supervision (Figure 10).

The number of children who were allowed to wander onto their street and front-yard without adult supervision has varied across generations. Baby Boomer and Generation Y respondents (87.0%) indicated the lowest likelihood of being allowed wander onto their street and front-yard without adult supervision, compared to 97.9 per cent of Generation X respondents and 90.0 per cent of Generation Z respondents (Figure 10).

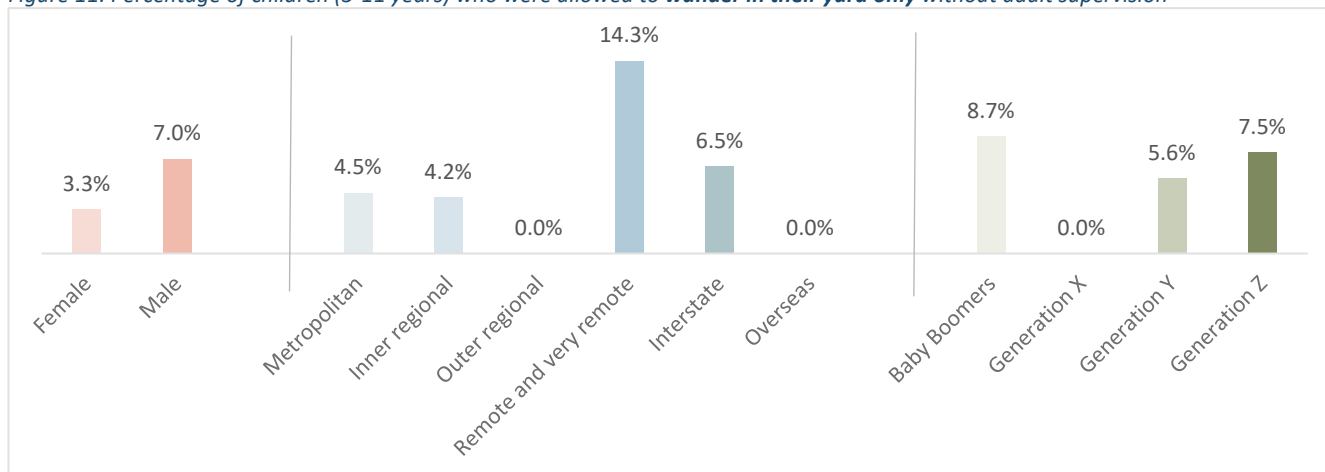
Figure 10: Percentage of children (5-11 years) who were allowed to **wander onto the street and front-yard** without adult supervision



Wandering in the yard only

More male respondents (7.0%) reported they could wander in their yard only without adult supervision, compared to 3.3 per cent of female respondents (Figure 11). The results varied by location, with no respondents from outer regional and overseas locations indicating they were able to wander in their yard only without adult supervision. There was variation among the other locations, with remote and very remote respondents most likely to agree with the statement, followed by those who grew up interstate (Figure 11). The number of children who were allowed to wander in their yard only without adult supervision varies across generations, although there was no real pattern of increase or decrease over the generations (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Percentage of children (5-11 years) who were allowed to **wander in their yard only** without adult supervision



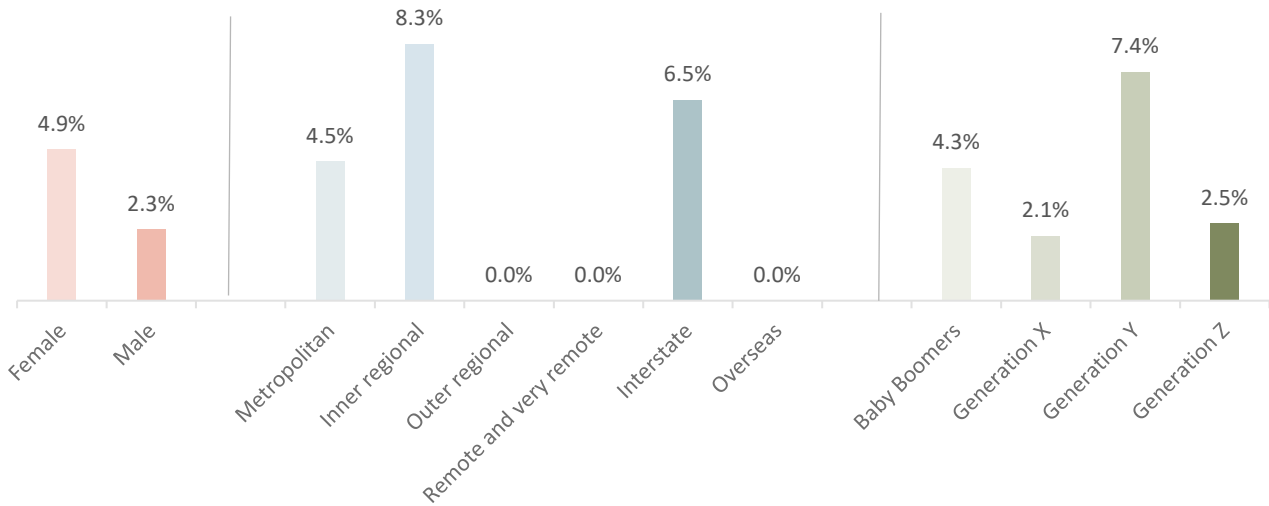


Never wandering

Across the survey sample, only small numbers of respondents reported they were not allowed to wander without adult supervision at all. Figure 6 indicates that twice the number of females responded this way than males, and that this was more common for children in metropolitan and inner regional locations.

Results indicate some variation across generations on this item, although again the pattern is less clear. Generation Y respondents were the most likely to indicate they were never allowed to wander alone (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Percentage of children (5-11 years) who were **not allowed to wander** without adult supervision



The length of time children are allowed to wander also varies depending on gender, location and generation



Key Findings:

Although there was variation, the findings from the Wandering Alone survey indicate that on average male children were allowed to wander for longer periods of time without adult supervision than female children. The results also indicate that by location, the more remote a child is, the longer their parents allow them to wander alone without adult supervision. This trend was also observed across generations, with results indicating that children were allowed to wander for longer in previous generations. There was more variation to these results than reported for the distance children were allowed to wander.



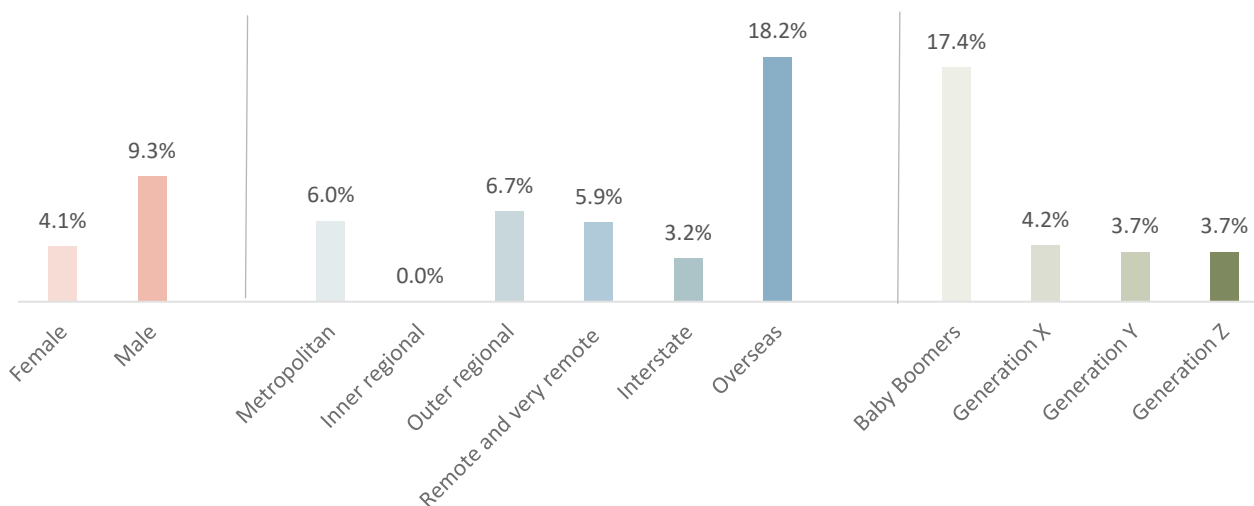
Wandering for as long as they like

When asked the length of time a child was allowed to wander without adult supervision, roughly twice the number of male respondents (9.3%) than female (4.1%) indicated that they could wander for as long as they liked without adult supervision (Figure 13).

The results varied across locations, with outer regional (6.7%) and overseas respondents (18.2%) indicated they were mostly likely to be allowed to wander for as long as they liked without adult supervision, while no respondents in inner regional areas reported that they were allowed out for as long as they liked without adult supervision (Figure 13).

The number of respondents who could wander for as long as they liked clearly decreased following the Baby Boomer generation where 17.4 per cent of this generation reporting they could wander for as long as they liked without adult supervision, dropping dramatically to under five per cent of respondents for all other generations (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Percentage of children (5-11 years) who were allowed to be away without adult supervision **for as long as they liked**





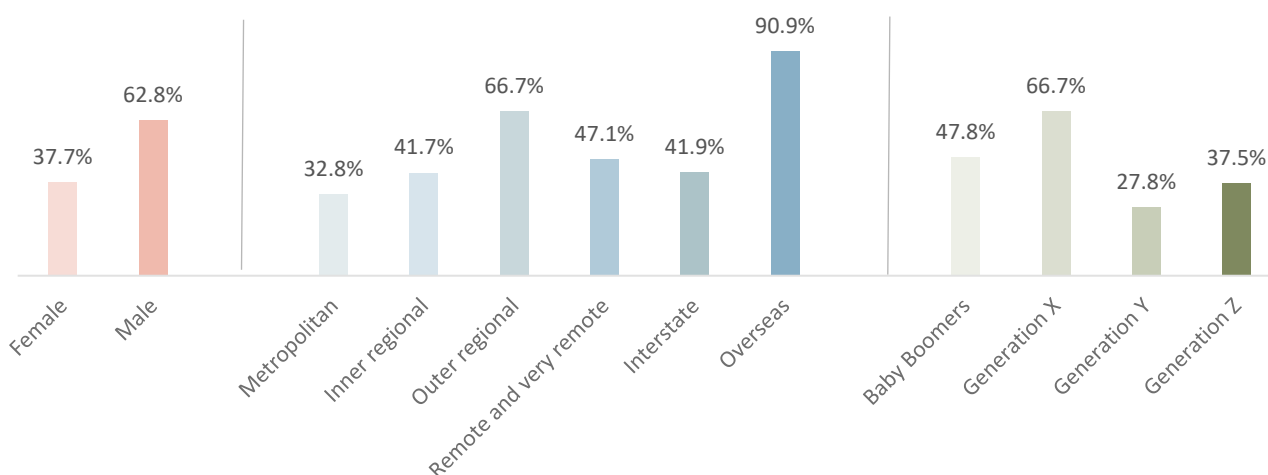
Wandering until it was dark

Almost double the number of male respondents (62.8%) could wander until it was dark than female respondents (37.7%) (Figure 14).

The results appear as a bell-curve when asked if children were allowed to wander until dark without adult supervision. This is because outer regional respondents (66.7%) reported the highest likelihood, followed by remote and very remote (47.1%) and inner regional respondents (41.7%), then interstate (41.9%) and metropolitan respondents (32.8%). Overseas respondents (90.9%) reported the highest proportion of being allowed to wander without adult supervision until dark (Figure 14).

Results varied across generations for those who were allowed to be away all day until it was dark. Figure 8 shows two-thirds of Generation X respondents (66.7%) reporting that they could wander all day until it was dark without adult supervision, compared to 27.8 per cent of Generation Y respondents.

Figure 14: Percentage of children (5-11 years) who were allowed to be away **all day until it was dark**



Wandering for half-a-day

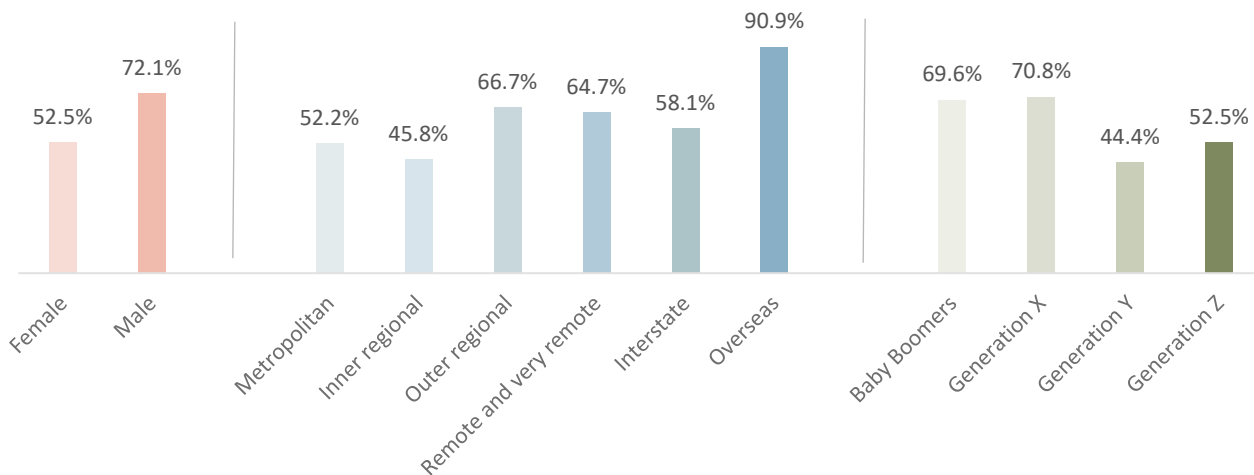
Again, male respondents (72.1%) were more likely to be allowed to be away for half-a-day without adult supervision than female respondents (52.5%) (Figure 15).

There was an upward trend (with some variation), indicating that the further a child lives from the city, the more likely they are to be allowed to be away for half-a-day without adult supervision. This is demonstrated by 45.8 per cent of respondents from inner regional and 52.5 per cent of respondents in metropolitan areas agreeing to the statement, compared to 66.7 per cent of outer regional respondents and 64.7 per cent of remote and very remote respondents (Figure 15). Again, overseas respondents (90.9%) reported the highest proportion of being allowed to wander for half-a-day without adult supervision.

Generational variation is also observed in relation to this question – Generation X respondents were the most likely to indicate they were allowed to be away for half-a-day, while Generation Y were the least likely to agree with the statement (Figure 15).



Figure 15: Percentage of children (5-11 years) who were allowed to be away **for half-a-day** without adult supervision

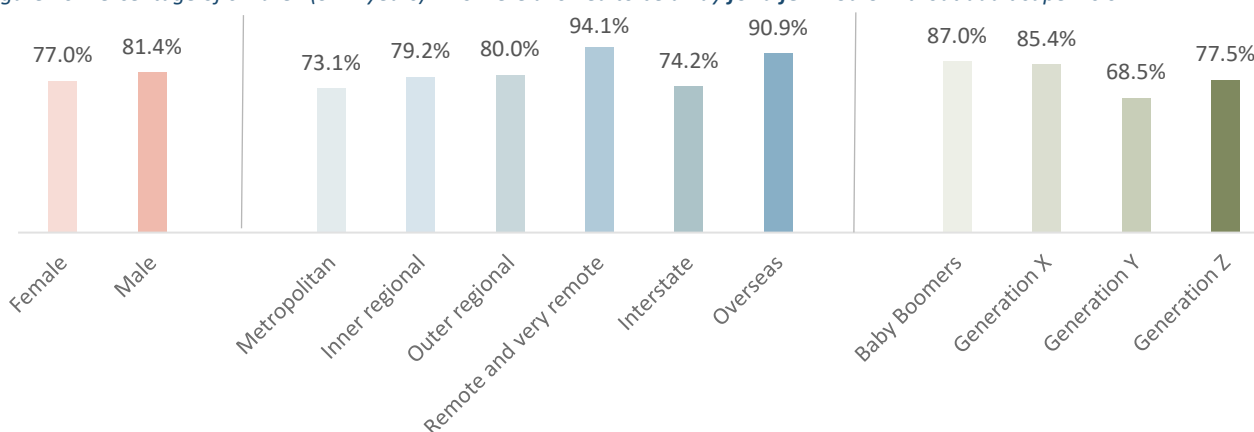


Wandering for a few hours

Wandering for a few hours was the survey item with the closest gender parity, with high proportions of both male (81.4%) and female (77.0%) respondents indicating they were allowed to be away for a few hours without adult supervision (Figure 16).

While the pattern holds true that the further from the city a child lives, the more likely they will be allowed to wander for a few hours without adult supervision, respondents were again much closer in the proportions of those allowed to do so (Figure 16). This can also be observed in relation to differences between the generations, where the change between Generations X (85.4%) and Y (68.5%) is marked in relation to how many of these respondents were allowed to wander for a few hours (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Percentage of children (5-11 years) who were allowed to be away **for a few hours** without adult supervision



Wandering for a few moments

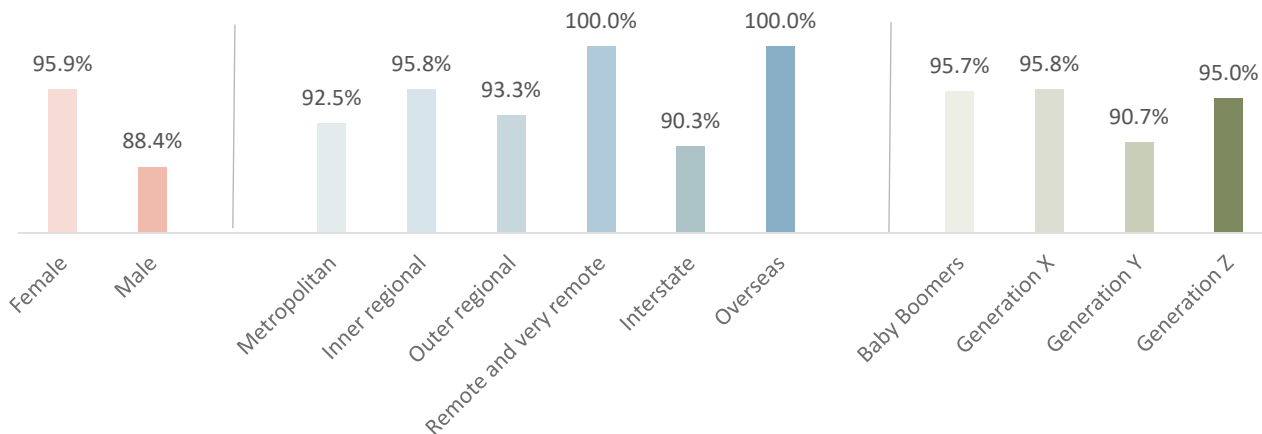
A larger portion of female respondents (95.9%) indicated that they were allowed to be away for a few moments without adult supervision than male respondents (88.4%) (Figure 17).

Apart from inner regional, the more remote children live, the more likely they will be allowed to be away for a few moments without adult supervision. This is seen by 92.5 per cent of respondents who grew up in metropolitan areas as compared to all respondents that grew up in remote and very remote areas (100.0%). The results are slightly lower for children who grew up interstate (90.3%), but equally high for overseas respondents



(100.0%) (Figure 17). The number of children who were allowed to be away without adult supervision for a few moments varies across generations, although the pattern is less clear (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Percentage of children (5-11 years) who were allowed to be away **for a few moments** without adult supervision



Never wandering

Again, only a small number of respondents indicated they were never allowed to wander without adult supervision (Figure 18). Respondents from all areas except remote and very remote, and overseas locations experienced never being allowed to be away without adult supervision to some extent. Respondents from interstate (9.7%) reported the highest likelihood of never being allowed to be away, followed by those from metropolitan areas (7.5%) (Figure 18).

It appears that the number of children who were not allowed to be away without adult supervision has remained constant across generations, apart from Generation Y. This is displayed by 4.3 per cent of Baby Boomer respondents reporting that they were not allowed to be away without adult supervision, compared to 5.0 per cent of Generation Z respondents, but 9.3 per cent of Generation Y respondents (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Percentage of children (5-11 years) who were **not allowed to be away** without adult supervision

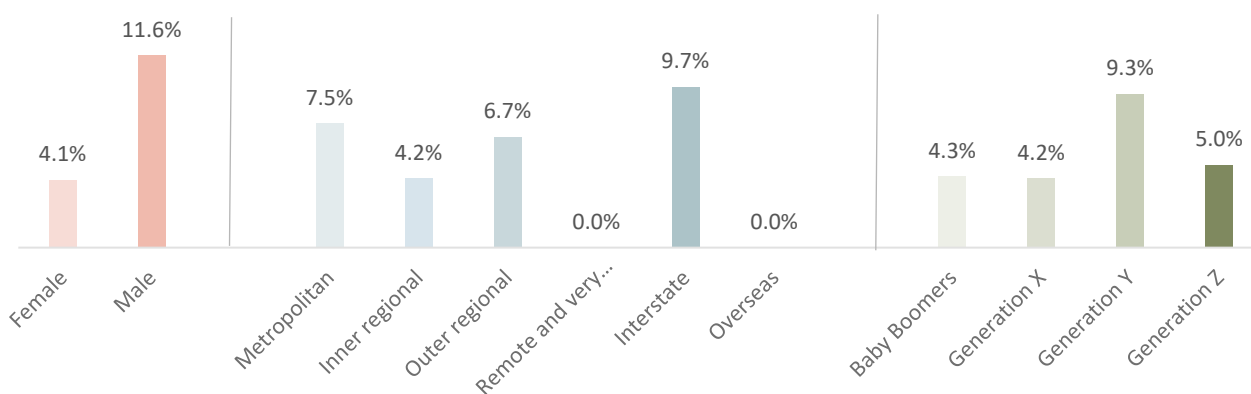
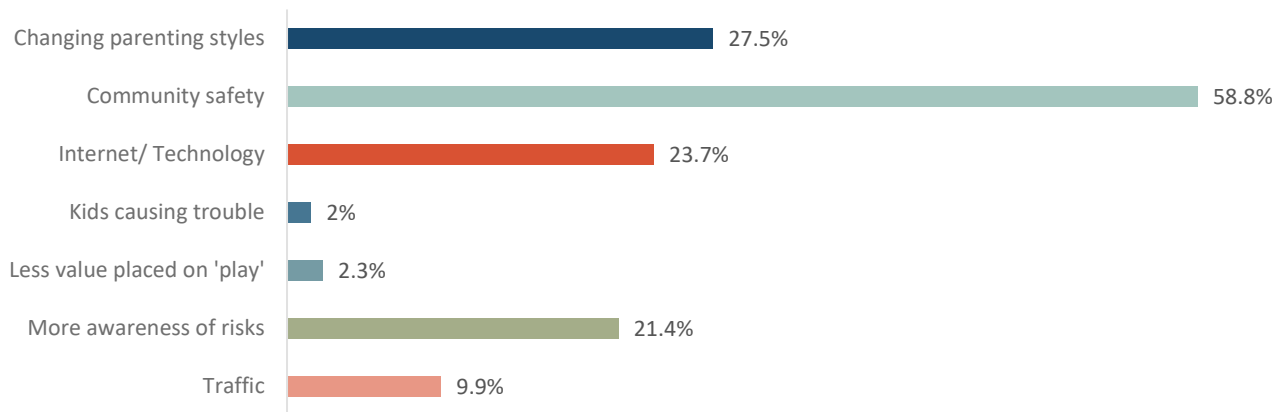




Figure 20: Qualitative reasons for why children have different rules today



* Respondents could select more than one option

When participants could select more than one option, almost six in 10 respondents (58.8%) indicated that children today have different rules to when they grew up because of community safety concerns, including the risk of their child being harmed while wandering alone. Just over a quarter of respondents (27.5%) believed it could be due to changing parenting styles such as parents becoming stricter or working longer hours. Just under a quarter of respondents (23.7%) believed it could have been due to the rise of technology and the internet that has meant parents can more easily track their children's whereabouts, and children being more likely to be at home playing online games etc. than wandering. A similar percentage (21.4%) noted there is more awareness of the risks involved in allowing their child to wander due to more news reporting and access to information. An additional 9.9 per cent of respondents claimed that children might not be allowed to wander as far without adult supervision due to traffic concerns and more cars on the road which may result in their child being hit by a car while unsupervised. A small percentage of respondents claimed it might be due to concerns that their child may cause trouble while alone (2.0%), or that there is less value placed on play today (2.3%).



Conclusion

Children from previous generations have been allowed to wander further and for longer periods than children growing up today. These results are consistent with the results we gained from parents; with many highlighting they never allow their child to wander without supervision.

We also found that when looking through a locational lens, the closer a child lives to a major city the less likely they are to be allowed to wander to the same degree as a child raised rurally. A similar trend was seen between genders, with male children tending to be allowed to wander to a much greater extent than female children.

A significant reason for this shift in independent mobility was clearly due to increasing concern about community safety and perceptions of the risks associated with allowing children to wander without adult supervision. It is important to find a balance between mitigating these risks as much as possible while also allowing our children to develop independence and make their own choices. Equipping our young people with the resilience and independent thought practices necessary to keep themselves safe means we need to allow them to take risks. “With children out and about ... and getting ready to travel to and from school, it's important they know how to stay safe and have a safety plan for when the unexpected happens.”³ We recommend checking out the Daniel Morcombe Foundation’s *Keeping Kids Safe*⁴ resources for a range of videos, activities and fact sheets to help kids stay safe.

Similarly, the rise of technology and the internet have had significant impacts on the shift in independent mobility for children growing up today. Recent research indicates that 80 per cent of children (8-12 years) and 86 per cent of teenagers (13-17 years) use social media.⁵ Another survey of young people aged 12-17 years found that on average Australian teens spent 14.4 hours a week online, with males spending more time online (15 hours) than females (13.8 hours).⁶ Of those hours spent online, 93 per cent was spent chatting with friends and 77 per cent was online gaming.⁷ This indicates that children and young people growing up today spend more time hanging out with friends online than previous generations, explaining the drop in independent mobility since the rise of the internet. It isn’t that children and young people today are spending less time catching up with friends, but rather the way they do so has changed. Given this, we recommend parents understand online safety challenges to help their children have positive online experiences.

There are many positive effects of allowing children to wander without adult supervision, including greater connection with their communities and neighbourhoods. Currently, around six in 10 young Queenslanders report that their community is a place where they feel they belong.⁸ We encourage families and communities to enable child-led play through initiatives such as the *Neighbourhood Play Project*⁹ which supports local communities to re-activate their neighbourhoods as a place for children to play, - giving children free play, ownership, agency and space to express themselves in ways that are meaningful to them.

Learning to safely adventure alone is a critical part of the journey to adulthood and one that all children should be allowed to safely do. It is important to find a balance between mitigating safety concerns and risks as much as possible but also allowing our children to independently develop, make choices and experience life.

³ The Daniel Morcombe Foundation (2024), [Feed | LinkedIn](#).

⁴ The Daniel Morcombe Foundation (2024), *Keeping Kids Safe Resources*, [Keeping Kids Safe ALL Resources - The Daniel Morcombe Foundation](#).

⁵ Australian Government eSafety Commissioner (2021), *Young people and social media use*, [Young people and social media usage | eSafety Commissioner](#).

⁶ Australian Government eSafety Commissioner (2020), *Digital lives of Aussie teens*, [Digital lives of Aussie teens | eSafety Commissioner](#).

⁷ Australian Government eSafety Commissioner (2020), *Digital lives of Aussie teens*, [Digital lives of Aussie teens | eSafety Commissioner](#).

⁸ Queensland Family and Child Commission (2020), *Growing up in Queensland*, [GUIQ report 2020 Digital.pdf \(qfcc.qld.gov.au\)](#).

⁹ Logan Play Action Plans (2022), *Neighbourhood Play Network introduction*, [Neighbourhood Play Champion Promo Vid - YouTube](#); Logan Play Action Plans (2022), *Child Voice Evaluation*, [Neighbourhood Play Network - Child Voice Evaluation - YouTube](#); Logan Play Action Plans (2022), *Parent Voice Evaluation*, [AIP Neighbourhood Play Network Grown Ups Voice - YouTube](#).



Appendix 1 – Survey Questions

Below are the survey questions that respondents were asked in the Wandering Alone survey.

- 1) Where did you grow up?
 - Metropolitan (more than 250,000 people)
 - Inner regional (48,000-249,999 people)
 - Outer regional (18,000-47,999 people)
 - Remote (5,000-17,999 people)
 - Very remote (less than 5,000 people)
 - Interstate
 - Overseas
- 2) What postcode did you grow up in?
- 3) Which generation were you born in?
 - Baby Boomer (1946–1964)
 - Generation X (1964–1980)
 - Generation Y (1980–1995)
 - Generation Z (1995–2010)
 - Generation Alpha (2010– today)
- 4) How do you describe your gender?
 - Woman or female
 - Man or male
 - Non-binary
 - I use a different term
 - Prefer not to say
- 5) Before you went to high school (up to 11 years), how far were you allowed to wander without adult supervision?
 - I was allowed to go anywhere
 - I was allowed to go across town
 - I was allowed to go around the block, to the local park or to a friend’s house
 - I was allowed to go onto my street and front-yard
 - I was allowed in my yard only
 - I was not allowed to wander alone without adult supervision between the ages of 5–11 years



- 6) Before you went to high school (up to 11 years), how long were you allowed to spend without adult supervision?
- I was allowed to be away as long as I liked
 - I was allowed to be away all day until it was dark
 - I was allowed to be away for half-a-day
 - I was allowed to be away for a few hours
 - I was allowed to be away for a few moments- laps around the block etc.
 - I was not allowed to spend time without adult supervision between the ages of 5–11 years
- 7) If you think kids today have different rules to you, what do you think has changed?
- 8) Are you the parent of a child aged up to 11 years in Queensland?
- 9) Where is your child growing up?
- Metropolitan (more than 250,000 people)
 - Inner regional (48,000–249,999 people)
 - Outer regional (18,000–47,999 people)
 - Remote (5,000–17,999 people)
 - Very remote (less than 5,000 people)
 - Interstate
 - Overseas
- 10) What postcode is your child growing up in?
- 11) How far do you allow your child (up to 11 years) to wander without adult supervision?
- My child is allowed to go anywhere
 - My child is allowed to go across town
 - My child is allowed to go around the block, to the local park or to a friend's house
 - My child is allowed to go onto my street and front-yard
 - My child is allowed in my yard only
 - My child is not allowed to wander alone without adult supervision between the ages of 5–11 years
- 12) How long do you allow your child (up to 11 years) to spend without adult supervision?
- My child is allowed to be away as long as I liked
 - My child is allowed to be away all day until it was dark
 - My child is allowed to be away for half-a-day
 - My child is allowed to be away for a few hours
 - My child is allowed to be away for a few moments- laps around the block etc.
 - My child is not allowed to spend time without adult supervision between the ages of 5–11 years