

# Today's Youth

# Information and Insight



# living

in Australia newsletter

## Just turned 15?

To our younger members of the study, we would like to say a big special hello!

Once you turn 15, you are eligible to take part. The information you provide is crucial to ensure researchers and policy makers understand the issues that are important to you.

## Have things changed in the last five years?

Comparing the experiences of those who were aged 15 to 19 years old in 2006 with their counterparts in 2001, we can see how things have shifted over those five years for our young people. Today's youth are more likely to be employed and earning more than those five years ago, but are less likely to be studying, participating in sporting or hobby groups, or working around the house.



|   | Aged 15-19 in 2001   | Aged 15-19 in 2006   | Change         |
|---|--|--|----------------|
| Average number of hours spent on housework and outdoor tasks                | 5 hrs 55 mins  | 4 hrs 5 mins   | -1 hr 50 min   |
| Proportion who felt you did at least your fair share around the house       | 62%  | 58%  | -4%            |
| Proportion employed   | 51%  | 54%  | +3%            |
| Of those who were employed:   |  |  |                |
| Job satisfaction of those employed (0-10 scale)                             | 7.6  | 7.6  | 0              |
| Top 3 occupations   | Sales assistants (25%)<br>Checkout operators (8%)<br>Kitchenhands (6%) | Sales assistants (23%)<br>Checkout operators (12%)<br>Waiters (6%) |                |
| Average wages and salaries  | \$217 per week   | \$269 per week   | +\$52 per week |
| Proportion studying full or part time                                       | 75%  | 73%  | -2%            |
| Proportion part of a sporting, hobby or community based club or association | 48%  | 44%  | -4%            |

## Media Watch

In July 2007, the 'Life Matters' programme on ABC Radio National broadcast a feature on the Living in Australia study and the HILDA 2007 Research Conference, held at The University of Melbourne during the same month.

The programme featured an interview with one of the Living in Australia interviewers, Peter George, and excerpts from the speech he gave as the Guest Speaker at the Conference Dinner. Here are some of the things he had to say:

*"One of the hidden pleasures of being a [Living in Australia] interviewer is to reacquaint with the same people every year. It often reminds me of that film 'Same Time Next Year'. Some people are horrified when they see us because they are gobsmacked that a year has already gone by. Others welcome us with open arms because the finance section of the survey motivates them to get their tax returns in order."*

Peter, who has been an interviewer on the Living in Australia study since 2002, reflected on some of his experiences. He particularly enjoys visiting the wide variety of people who take part in the study as they all have a different story to tell.

The feature on our study ended with the presenter, Mark Horstman, saying "If any of the 13,000 participants are listening – we thank you on behalf of the nation."

## Frequently asked questions

### What about privacy?

Your information is protected. The people involved in the study are committed to ethical research and legally bound to ensure your information is secure. All people involved in the project must comply with the *Privacy Act 1998*.

Your identifying information is collected for the purpose of the Living in Australian study. Access to your identifying information will be restricted to those who require it for the purpose of administering or conducting the study.

### Do I have to answer every question?

While we would like to get everyone's input on every topic, if you would prefer not to answer a certain question then please let your interviewer know and he or she can move onto the next question or topic.

## More information

If you have any questions, would like more information, or would like to contact your interviewer please telephone **1800 656 670** or visit us online at **www.livinginaustralia.org**. Your interviewer will also be able to help you with any queries you may have when he or she visits you.

If you should have any concerns about the conduct of this study, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne by **calling 03 8344 2073** or by sending a **fax to 03 9347 6739**.



## Your help will shape Australia's future

### Inside

- What's new in 2008?
- Happiness across the years
- How the study becomes more valuable over time
- Young Australians



[www.livinginaustralia.org](http://www.livinginaustralia.org)

Free call 1800 656 670



# Helping to shape Australia's future

# Happiness

# The value of repeating questions

## What's new this year?

**2008 sees the return of the questions on family issues.**

This topic was last included in the study in 2005 and again some of the questions are part of an international research project coordinated by the United Nations. Another topic also returning from 2005 asks about your intentions and plans for the next three years.



New questions added to the study this year focus on parents, other members of your family, and grown-up children.

## www.livinginaustralia.org

**Are you interested in seeing more results from the study?**

You can view more results from the study on the Living in Australia website. You will also find answers to some frequently asked questions, and useful links, including a link to Melbourne Institute.

The study, also known as the **Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA)** study, has been frequently referred to in the media. Links to some of these articles can also be found on the Living in Australia website.

## Our thanks to you

**Once again, we will provide \$25 to every person who participates in the study.**

When everyone in your household has taken part, your household will receive a bonus \$25. Remember that your cheque will only be valid for 12 months from the date of issue.

## Why are you so important to this study?

**The Living in Australia study is unique.**

It is the only one of its kind that provides regular information on the economic and social welfare of Australians over time.

The strict statistical rules by which the study is conducted mean that you cannot be replaced. Therefore you represent a very important voice in Australian society and by taking part you are having a vital and long term impact on Australia's future.

## Let us know if you're moving

Your participation is really important, so please let us know if you are moving by calling **1800 656 670** or emailing your new address details to **livinginaustralia@nielsen.com**

## Why happiness is important

There is a growing body of evidence that happier people tend to be:

- healthier,
- better partners, parents and friends,
- more likely to participate in community life,
- more productive, and
- likely to live longer.

As happiness plays a vital part in the social and economic wellbeing of Australians, we have included questions about this in the Living in Australia study each year.

## Average levels of satisfaction are steady

**We measure your happiness by asking you to rate your satisfaction with various aspects of your life on a scale of 0 (completely dissatisfied) to 10 (completely satisfied).**

The average scores for most aspects of life scarcely changed between 2001 and 2005. The largest change in fact was in levels of *satisfaction with your financial situation*, which increased from an average of 6.1 in 2001 to 6.4 in 2005. This does not mean that everyone's satisfaction has remained steady, only that the average has.



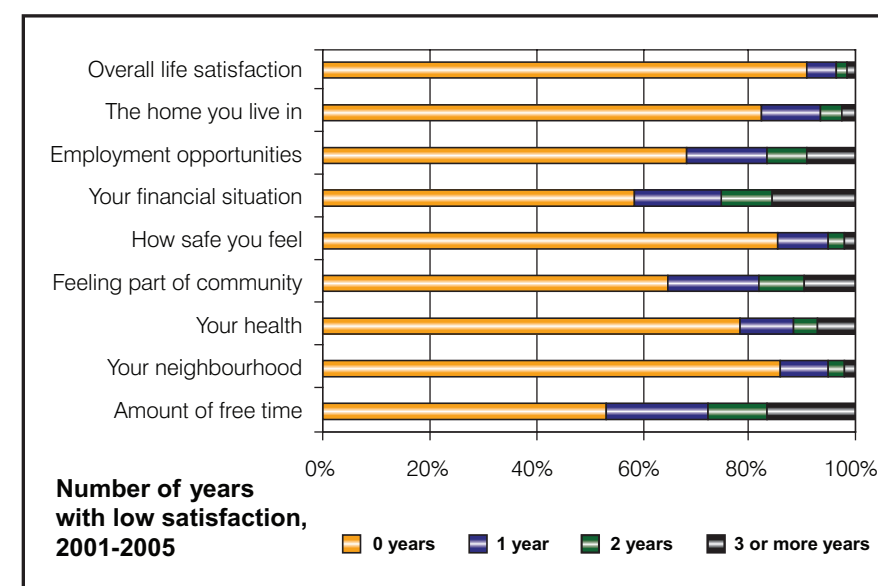
## Does low satisfaction persist?

**If you are dissatisfied with aspects of your life, does this dissatisfaction persist for several years, or are problems usually solved within a year or two?**

The proportion reporting low levels of overall satisfaction with life (a score of less than 5 on the 0-10 satisfaction scale) in any one year was around 3%. Of those interviewed

in all five years, 9% reported low levels of satisfaction with life at least once but only 1.4% reported low levels in at least three years out of five. So, the Living in Australia data indicates that low levels of life satisfaction very rarely last for several years.

This also appears true of some specific aspects of life. Problems causing dissatisfaction with the home you live in, your neighbourhood, and how safe you feel rarely persist, with only a very small proportion of those interviewed reporting dissatisfaction with these things in at least three years. On the other hand, problems relating to dissatisfaction with your financial situation, feeling part of the local community and the amount of free time you have seem to be somewhat harder to solve.



## The value of the information you provide increases each year

**Each year, your interviewer asks you a range of questions, many of which are the same as last year but some are new. You may have wondered why we repeat questions...**

Take income, for example. We ask a series of questions each year about the different sources of income you might have, such as wages and salaries, business income, pensions and benefits, and investment income. These questions have not changed since the first time we asked them. The reason for this is so that we can build a consistent picture of people's income over time and how this stays the same or changes. If we were to ask different questions, we would not know what to make of any changes in the data – were they due to real differences in income or simply because we changed the questions or a mixture of both?



Having asked the same income questions of the same people over time in the Living in Australia study, researchers can assess the financial security of different types of Australian households. There is no other data collected like this in Australia.

The proportion of households that are struggling financially each year has been reasonably steady since 2001. Knowing whether it is the same or different households over time is an important piece of the jigsaw puzzle you are helping us put together of life in Australia. Understanding the types of events or circumstances that make it more likely for someone to move into or out of financial difficulty will really assist policy makers help these Australians.

## What if I miss a year?

Missing a year is like taking a piece of the jigsaw puzzle and throwing it out. While we will still be able to see the overall picture, we will need to make assumptions about the size and shape of the missing piece. However, we may not get it right! Only you know exactly what size and shape the last year has taken for you... The more pieces we have, the more accurate our picture will be.

## Did you know that...

- Between 13% and 14% of people had low incomes each year (that is, they received less than half the income that a typical Australian received).
- 10% of people had low incomes in three of the five years between 2001 and 2005.
- Most people whose income fell to a low level had an increase in their income within one to two years.
- Government pensions and benefits reduced the proportion of the population that would have been poor in all five years between 2001 and 2005 from 14.5% to 3.3%.
- Income alone does not provide the complete picture of a person's financial situation – wealth and expenditure are also important factors in assessing this. As a result, we ask questions about these things as well from time to time.