**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.”

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.

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**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Average number of hours spent on household and outdoor tasks</th>
<th>Proportion who felt you did at least your fair share around the house</th>
<th>Proportion employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>5 hrs 55 mins</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>4 hrs 5 mins</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Top 3 occupations</th>
<th>Average wages and salaries</th>
<th>Proportion part of a sporting, hobby or community based club or association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Sales assistants (25%)</td>
<td>$217 per week</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Checkout operators (8%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kitchenhands (6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Sales assistants (23%)</td>
<td>$269 per week</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Checkout operators (12%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waiters (6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Today’s youth have shifted from spending more time doing housework and outdoor tasks, to spending more time at work and earning more money. However, they are less likely to be studying, participating in sporting or hobby groups, or working around the house.

Do you 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.

Just turned 15?

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

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 1988.

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 856 670 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.

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**Other topics**

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

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 wellbeing 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 or letting us know if you are moving by calling 1800 656 670.

Our thanks to you
Once again, we will provide $25 to every person who participates in the study.

Helping to shape Australia’s future

Happiness

Why happiness is important
There is a growing body of evidence that happy 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 (see chart on page 26) have remained reasonably steady since 2001.

The average score for life in general has increased from 6.1 in 2001 to 6.4 in 2005. The largest changes in fact were in levels of satisfaction with your financial situation, which increased from an average of 6.2 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 a 0-10 scale) in any one year was around 3%. Of those interested in relatively low levels of satisfaction (3% reported low levels of satisfaction with life at least once but only 1% reported low levels in at least three years out of five).

So, the Living in Australia data indicates that low levels of life satisfaction vary quite a lot 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 nearly persist, with only a very small proportion of those interviewed reporting dissatisfaction with these things in all 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’s data adds to a database of over 80,000 people in Australia participating in the Living in Australia study each year.

This topic was last included in the study in 2001-2005. 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 shape and size 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.

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.

Did you know that…
• Between 17% and 19% of people had low incomes each year from 2001 to 2005. However, dissatisfaction with income among the low income group fell from 14.5% to 3.1% in 2005.
• 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 17.2% to 14.5%.
• 11% of non-poor in 2001 were poor in at least three years between 2001 and 2005.
• 14% of those who were non-poor in all five years between 2001 and 2005 had low incomes in at least three years.

Did you know that…
• 2008 sees the return of the questions on financial issues.
• Each year about the different sources of income you receive.
• 2008 sees the return of the questions on financial issues.
• The proportion reporting low levels of overall satisfaction with life (a score of less than 5 on a 0-10 scale) in any one year was around 3%.

The value of the information you provide increases each year

Each year’s data adds to a database of over 80,000 people in Australia participating in the Living in Australia study each year.

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