

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release Friday 2 September 2005

New study shows intentions and attitudes predict participation in schooling

Nurturing positive attitudes to school could be the key to increasing participation in post-compulsory education according to new research. The latest findings from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY), released today by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), show that intentions to complete or leave school formed early in secondary schooling are powerful predictors of participation in the latter years of school.

Attitudes to school were in turn found to strongly influence these educational intentions prompting researchers to conclude that by promoting a positive attitude toward school, educators can increase participation in education beyond compulsory schooling.

The study, based on analyses of the educational and occupational activities of a nationally representative sample of 13 600 young Australians who were in Year 9 in 1995, found that 87 per cent of students who planned to proceed to Year 12 did continue to Year 12 while 79 per cent of students who intended to leave school before Year 12 did so. Overall, 33 per cent participated in university study; including 52 per cent of those who intended to enter university and 12 per cent of those had not planned university study.

ACER's deputy chief executive and co-author of the report Dr John Ainley said the study's findings indicate that attending to aspects of curriculum, teaching practices and organisational arrangements that are likely to influence student attitudes could have a beneficial effect.

"Other things being equal, students who are positively oriented to their schools and are actively engaged in its academic work and other activities are more likely to develop an intention to continue through to the end of secondary school and beyond. Once students intend to continue with their education it is highly likely that they will."

"Previous LSAY studies have shown consistently that students who have acquired mastery in literacy and numeracy are more likely to complete Year 12, continue in education and find jobs with higher incomes. These latest findings suggest that if we can enhance engagement with schooling in addition to building a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy we can assist more students to continue with their education."

Further information and additional findings are contained in the report, *Attitudes, Intentions and Participation*, by Siek Toon Khoo and John Ainley, research report number 41 in the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) conducted jointly by ACER and the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).

*****ENDS*****

Media enquiries:

Louise Reynolds

Corporate Publicity and Communications Manager

Phone: (03) 9277 5582 Mobile: 0419 340 058 Email: reynolds@acer.edu.au

LSAY background information is available on the ACER website at www.acer.edu.au