

# MEDIA RELEASE

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*Becoming an Adult: Leaving home, relationships and home ownership  
among Australian youth  
Young People Delay Transition to Adulthood*

New research conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has found that relatively simple and condensed transitions from education to full-time employment, to moving out of home and into home ownership, from 'singledom' to marriage are no longer the norm for young people.

The report entitled *Becoming an Adult: Leaving Home, Relationships and Home Ownership Among Australian Youth*, by ACER researchers Kylie Hillman and Gary Marks, is Research Report Number 28 in the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth research program, jointly managed by ACER and the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training.

Among the report's key findings are that young people are remaining in the parental home longer, a change that is more evident amongst young women than young men; they are choosing less formal de facto relationships more frequently and delaying their entry to marriage; are spending more time in rental accommodation; and are entering home ownership at decreasing rates.

The Deputy Director of ACER, Dr John Ainley, said "the report reveals that young people (under 25) are now making the transition to independent living at much older ages than in previous cohorts and there is some indication that a growing number of young people may not achieve the traditional markers of adulthood."

"With a growing number of young people opting to delay marriage and the purchase of a home, this research indicates the possible existence of new markers of adulthood such as establishing a serious de facto relationship or entering rental accommodation."

The report focuses on three aspects of adulthood: moving out of home, establishing a relationship and buying a house. The report documents the incidence of these events over time and analyses their relationship with social background, demographic and labour market factors. The study uses data from the four Youth in Transition cohorts born in 1961, 1965, 1970 and 1975.

The report found that location and cultural background were two of the strongest influences on leaving home amongst young people. Non-metropolitan people were up to twice as likely to leave home as their metropolitan peers. Those whose parents were from a non-English speaking country were half as likely to leave as those whose parents were born in Australia.

Young people who hold a university qualification were less likely to marry in the surveyed period (ages 19-25) with the effect of higher education being stronger on females than on males.

The research also found that the relationship between marriage and home ownership is extremely strong. Young people who were married were two to four times as likely to purchase a home as their unmarried peers.

Dr Ainley said that the report's findings indicate a number of potential policy implications.

"Policies that target educational participation employment could affect the ability of young Australians to gain independence and complete various transitions. We have found previously that the attainment of markers of adulthood has some bearing on the levels of wellbeing of young Australians. It is possible, therefore, that policies that delay the attainment of independence can also affect the life satisfaction and wellbeing of young Australians at many points in their journey."

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