

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## *X, Y and Z: Research charts education across three generations*

Three decades of research into young people's education and post-school transitions reveals trends for future generations.

ACER researchers Dr Sheldon Rothman and Kylie Hillman will present their findings at the annual ACER research conference on Monday.

Young people's literacy or numeracy levels have remained constant since 1975, showing no decline, according to the researchers. Average literacy scores have improved for females and for students with language backgrounds other than English.

Year 12 completion rates have increased dramatically, from 35 per cent in 1975 to 79 per cent in recent years, mostly for students from lower-socioeconomic-status families, in non-metropolitan areas and in government schools.

For school non-completers, the proportion undertaking apprenticeships and traineeships increased from 24 to 40 per cent over the last 30 years.

Participation in higher education has doubled over the period, from 20 to 40 per cent.

Consistently over the last 30 years, young people who were fully occupied in study or work or some combination of the two activities reported higher levels of satisfaction with their lives than those who were not.

In their home lives, young people who are married were consistently more satisfied than those who were in de facto relationships and those who were single, despite marriage among young adults (ages 20–25) declining significantly and more people entering de facto relationships.

Young people are increasingly living in their parents' home for longer, although those from non-metropolitan areas were more likely to leave home earlier. Home ownership among young adults has decreased over time.

The data are drawn from the *Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth*. Dr Sheldon Rothman is a Principal Research Fellow and Kylie Hillman is a Research Fellow with ACER.

The ACER Research Conference 2008, on the theme *Touching the Future: Building skills for life and work*, takes place in Brisbane from 10 to 12 August.

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