

MEDIA RELEASE

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Busy young Australians get most satisfaction

Young Australians are highly satisfied with their life and careers according to new research that suggests being fully occupied in work, study or a combination of the two is a major influence on satisfaction.

A study of over 6000 young people released today by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) explored how their self-reported life satisfaction is related to educational activities and various labour market outcomes during the early post-school years. The participants were tracked for four years after completing secondary school from 1999 to 2002 when they were between 18 and 21 years old.

Overall, the study's participants were highly satisfied with their career and life in general. Those who had the greatest time commitments to study and/or work were the most satisfied.

Young people who were occupied full-time in education, training, employment or a combination of these activities reported higher levels of satisfaction, with both their careers and their lives in general, than those who were occupied only part-time. Those who were occupied part-time were in turn more satisfied than those who were not in education, training or employment.

Changing the amount of time dedicated to work and/or study during the four years of the surveys resulted in changes in satisfaction. Changes such as moving from full-time work or study into unemployment, led to decreased satisfaction levels. However, activity changes that resulted in an increase in time allocated to study and/or work led to greater career satisfaction but not necessarily to greater general satisfaction.

Chief executive of ACER, Professor Geoff Masters said the pathways taken from school to further study or the workforce do have an impact on young people's lives that go beyond having sufficient income or good career prospects.

"Connections with other people, through the workplace or classroom, and a sense of shared purpose are some important, although possibly unintended, benefits of involvement in work and study."

He said the study provides further evidence of the importance of a smooth transition from school to further study or employment and for policymakers to identify effective strategies for engaging and supporting young people at risk of disconnecting from education and work.

Further findings are available in the report, *Life Satisfaction of Young Australians: Relationships between Further Education, Training and Employment and General and Career Satisfaction* by Kylie Hillman and Julie McMillan. The study is research report number 43 in the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY), a program conducted jointly by ACER and the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).

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