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Overview of the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth Program 1996

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Australian Council for Educational Research

LSAY

*longitudinal
surveys of
Australian
youth*

**OVERVIEW OF THE
LONGITUDINAL SURVEYS OF
AUSTRALIAN YOUTH
PROGRAM**

1996

Technical Paper Number 2

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INTRODUCTION

The Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) program brings together two existing, long-established projects, ACER's *Youth in Transition* and DEETYA's Australian Youth Survey. The origins and extent of these two projects are described in the following pages. While contact with the AYS cohort is due to finish in 1997, it is hoped to continue to survey members of the *Youth in Transition* 1975 birth cohort up to at least age 25.

In addition, a new program of surveys of students progressing through school and into postschool education and the labour force was established in 1995. New cohorts of Year 9 students will be introduced into the program at three yearly intervals, and surveyed annually for a period up to about age 25. Sampling details for the 1995 cohort can be found in technical paper number 8, while the codebook for that year's data is found in technical paper number 9.

THE YOUTH IN TRANSITION (YIT) PROJECT

Youth in Transition is a program of longitudinal surveys conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). It began in 1978 with the survey of a single national sample of 17-year-olds, more than 6000 persons who had been born in 1961. In 1981, 1985 and 1989 similarly sized samples from the 1965, 1970 and 1975 birth cohorts were added to the program. Up to 1996 the annual surveys of these samples have yielded information covering ages 17 to 33 years for the 1961 cohort (finished in 1994), 16 to 30 years for the sample born in 1965 (finished in 1995), 15 to 24 years for those born in 1970 (finished in 1994), and 14 to 21 years for the newest of the samples, those born in 1975. Data will continue to be gathered from this 1975 cohort. Gaps in the otherwise annual cycle of surveys, as in the case of the 1961 cohort in 1985 and 1988, indicate where resource constraints precluded a survey in that year.

Figure 1 illustrates the structure of the program, showing sample age and survey year for each of the four samples. As indicated, the overall structure is that of an age-period-cohort design, one that is unique within Australia and rare elsewhere.

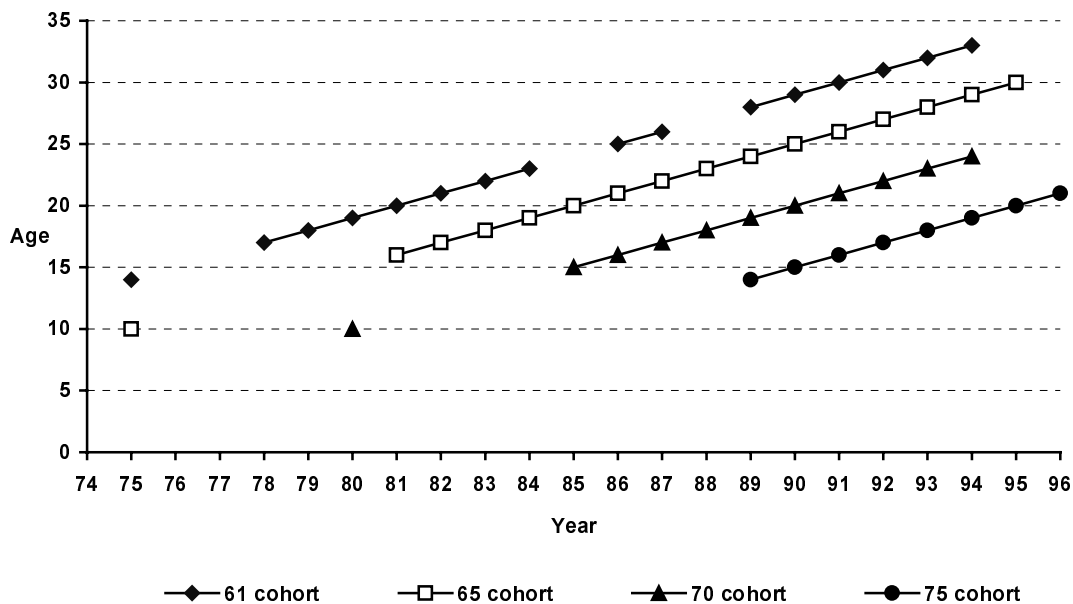


Figure 1. Youth In Transition Samples Surveyed by Year and Age

Age Structure

The structure of the samples is such that the data provide the opportunity to examine changes that occur within samples, as the birth cohort ages, and between samples. The data focus on participation in education and the labour market, along with transitions within and between these states, over the period ranging from the mid 1970s through to the present time. So, as well as being able to examine educational and occupational participation and transition within each of the samples, it is also possible, by looking at differences between samples, to look at the way in which the dynamics of this participation have changed with changing social and economic conditions.

Design and Data Collection

The design of the *Youth in Transition* surveys was influenced by existing samples and data. The surveys of the 1961, 1965 and 1970 birth-cohort samples were established as follow-up surveys of samples of students tested in 1975 as part of the Australian Studies in School Performance (ASSP) project, and in 1980 as part of the Australian Studies in Student Performance project. In 1975 and again in 1980, in each of the two phases of a national testing program, nationwide samples of 14-year-old and 10-year-old students completed standardised achievement tests in basic reading and mathematics skills. While this testing program was initiated independently of *Youth in Transition*, the longitudinal surveys were designed to capitalise on the fact that standardised achievement test data were available for national samples of an appropriate age. Thus, the first of the longitudinal surveys, which began in 1978, was based on the sample of the 1961 cohort tested in 1975 at age 14 as part of the ASSP project. In 1981, the sample of 10-year-olds tested in 1975 reached age 16, and became the second sample in the longitudinal studies program. And, in 1985, the sample of 10-year-olds tested in 1980 in the second phase of the ASSP project, were surveyed for the first time as part of *Youth in Transition*.

The follow-up of these three samples exhausted the potential of the ASSP studies to provide already-tested samples. In order to introduce a fourth school-age sample into the program, in 1989 analogous standardised tests were designed and administered to a national probability sample of students born in 1975.

Data collection has been exclusively by mail survey, with respondents being asked to complete a single questionnaire each year. Alternative, and more expensive, data collection strategies are not feasible within the limits of the resources available. An initial mailing is undertaken in December of each year, with two additional follow-up mailings to (current) non respondents in the period January through March.

Table 1 provides information about sample sizes for each of the four cohorts, for each year from the time of testing. As noted above, the 1961 cohort was not surveyed in 1985 or 1988. Sample rebuilding has occurred on some occasions, resulting in an increase in sample size over the preceding year.

Table 1 YOUTH IN TRANSITION: Age distribution (in years and months) and size of samples to 1995

Year	1961 Cohort	1965 Cohort	1970 Cohort	1975 Cohort
1975	14 - 14.11 (6246) (ASSP data)	10 - 10.11 (6628) (ASSP data)		
1978	17 - 17.11 (4919)			
1979	18 - 18.11 (4001)			
1980	19 - 19.11 (4203)		10 - 10.11 (5472) (ASSP data)	
1981	20 - 20.11 (3926)	16 - 16.11 (3897)		
1982	21 - 21.11 (3538) Tracing qne in mar83 for yrs 78-82 (esp latter)	17 - 17.11 (3889) Tracing qne in mar83 for yrs 78-82 (esp latter)		
1983	22 - 22.11 (2883)	18 - 18.11 (3149)		
1984	23 - 23.11 (2581)	19 - 19.11 (2872)		
1985 *	No survey	20 - 20.11 (2345)	15 - 15.11 (3294)	
1986	25 - 25.11 (2056) Tracing qne in mar 88 for 87 data	21 - 21.11 (1995) Tracing qne in mar88 for 87 data	16 - 16.11 (2741) Tracing qne in mar88 for 87 data	
1987	26 - 26.11 (3001)	22 - 22.11 (2979)	17 - 17.11 (2533)	
1988 *	No survey	23 - 23.11 (2500)	18 - 18.11 (2060)	
1989	28 - 28.11 (2369)	24 - 24.11 (2221)	19 - 19.11 (1775)	14 - 14.11 (5653)
1990	29 - 29.11 (2200)	25 - 25.11 (1982)	20 - 20.11 (1532)	15 - 15.11 (4752)
1991	30 - 30.11 (2369) Tracing exercise prior to 92 mailout	26 - 26.11 (2211) Tracing exercise prior to 92 mailout	21 - 21.11 (1701) Tracing exercise prior to 92 mailout	16 - 16.11 (4421)
1992	31 - 31.11 (2303)	27 - 27.11 (2147)	22 - 22.11 (1538)	17 - 17.11 (3971)
1993	32 - 32.11 (2124)	28 - 28.11 (1983)	23 - 23.11 (1322)	18 - 18.11 (3344)
1994	33 - 33.11 (2260)	29 - 29.11 (2102)	24 - 24.11 (1481)	19 - 19.11 (3215)
1995	end	30 - 30.11 (1701) end	end	20 - 20.11 (2625)

The Youth in Transition Data

The primary concern of the surveys has been the patterns of participation in education and the labour force, and the transitions within and between the two, of persons in their mid-teens to mid or late-twenties. To address these concerns each of the four surveys has been structured around a core of repeated measures which provide year-by-year information on participation in education and the labour force, information comparable within and between samples across years. The context of this participation was measured by additional questions which appeared in one year only or may have been repeated over several years. Table 2 provides an overview of the YIT database, while the following discussion concentrates on the core items.

Status, month-by-month

Respondents are asked to indicate their educational and/or labour force status in each month. Since multiple responses within columns are legitimate, the recording of a single status or combination of status's is possible. The status distinctions made are those between full-time and part-time work, full-time and part-time education, unemployment, and being out of the labour force. Data obtained in this way provide the more obvious measures of participation on a month-by-month basis, and derived measures of stability in a particular status.

Educational participation

Detail on educational participation is asked in a separate question referenced to the month of October. This month was chosen as the reference month on the basis that persons 'dropping out' of education have usually done so by October, the events in October are fairly recent in terms of when the questionnaire is received (usually in December), and because students only rarely complete a course of study prior to November in any year. The basic information asked for consists essentially of type of course of study, type and name of institution, major area of interest (field of study), participation full-time or part-time, and year begun and finished.

Labour force participation

Details on labour force participation are obtained in analogous questions referenced to the month of October. The characteristics asked include occupational title, income, hours worked per week, and number of weeks worked in October.

Transition-to-work

A set of items on the transition from education to work have been included in the years when sample members were most likely to be entering the labour force. Time of leaving education is asked, time of beginning first full time job, and characteristics of that job.

Outcome Measures

Information on school participation, school achievement and post-school destinations is therefore available from these longitudinal surveys. Aspects of participation that can be addressed from the data include: retention rates to post-compulsory years; completion of Year 12; and subjects studied in senior school years. Level of achievement in Year 12 has also been included in data collected from the 1975 cohort. Indicators are available about post-school destinations such as labour force status, participation in further education (TAFE and university), and combinations of work and study (such as apprenticeships and traineeships).

1 Social Origins

- Personal background
 - gender
 - family composition
 - ethnicity
- Socio-economic background
 - parents' occupation
 - parents' level of education
 - family wealth
- Geographic location
 - state/territory of residence
 - rurality

2 Schooling

- Achievement
- Attendance
 - current year level
 - school system
- Achievement
 - literacy
 - numeracy
- Experience and perceptions of school
 - self-concept of ability
 - quality of school life
 - work experience
 - perceptions of value of schooling
 - subjects studied
 - perceptions of courses

3 Educational and Occupational Plans and Expectations

- Staying on at school
 - intention to stay/leave
 - reasons for intentions
 - reference group influence on leaving school
- Postschool plans
 - reference group influence on postschool plans
 - intention to continue study
 - type of postschool study intended
 - reasons for postschool study
 - desire for further study among non students
- Occupational preference
 - preferred job in future
 - personality factors which may influence occupational choice (Holland's RIASEC items)

4 Student Finances

- Sources of financial support while studying
- Student financial assistance programs
- Course fees

5 Level of Educational Attainment

- Year level completed at secondary school
- Postschool qualifications completed

6 The Transition to Work

- Time taken to find first job
- Nature of first job
- Time in first job
- Other

7 Participation in Postschool Education

- Student status (in October)
- Details of current study
 - course type
 - type of institution
 - name of institution
 - part-time/full-time
 - when started/finished
 - qualification
 - area of study

8 Labour Force Participation

- Labour force status (in October)
 - have a job
 - looking for a job
- Nature of employment
 - occupation
 - full-time/ part-time
 - no. other jobs currently held
 - income
 - hours worked per week
 - weeks worked per month
 - length of time in job
 - employer type and size
 - other conditions of work
- Experience/perceptions of employment
 - employment/unemployment
 - perceptions of job
 - combining work and study
- Not working
 - reasons for leaving previous job
 - reasons for not working
 - reasons for not looking for a job
 - problems in looking for a job
- Employment history
 - ever employed
 - number of jobs held

9 Training

- Job training
 - type of training
 - amount received
 - perceptions of usefulness
- Training (general, inc job)
 - subject area
 - where
 - time
 - who paid
 - usefulness
 - reasons

10 Status by Month

- Activity categories
 - Working full-time
 - Working part-time
 - Home duties
 - Not working but looking for work
 - Not working
 - A full-time student
 - A part-time student
 - Other

11 Living Arrangements

- Where living
- Weekly cost of housing
- Household composition
- Length of time with spouse/partner
- Level of education, occupation of spouse/partner
- Children - numbers, ages
- Childrens' education
 - number of school age children
 - type of school they attend
 - feelings about their school
 - views on priorities of schools
 - educational aspirations for children

12 Lifestyle Characteristics

- Participation in leisure activities
- Use of consumer credit
- Division of household labour
- Languages other than English
 - which ones
 - where learned
 - use in job

13 Psychological Well-being

- Influences
 - personal goals
 - sense of autonomy
- Outcomes
 - quality of life (15 item measure)
 - satisfaction with family life
- Feelings about work, study, future

14 Political Socialisation

- Knowledge and opinions about Australian politics
- Views about Australia and Australians
- Perceptions of national characteristics of Australians and Japanese

The Youth in Transition Data - year by year

The following tables, Tables 3.1 to 3.14, provide more details of the data available from *Youth in Transition*, with additional information about the year and the cohort for which the data were collected. In all instances, the respective cohorts are designated in the tables as:

1	1961 cohort
2	1965 cohort
3	1970 cohort
4	1975 cohort

Table 3.1 Social Origins

	75	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
PERSONAL BACKGROUND																			
Date of Birth	1,2			3									4						
Gender	1,2			3									4						
Family Composition:																			
• No. of siblings:																			
- No. of brothers	1,2														4			4b	
- No. of sisters	1,2														4			4b	
- Twin	1,2																		
• Position in family:																			
- No. younger brothers & sisters					2				3						4				
- No. older brothers & sisters					2				3						4				
• Educational attainment of siblings:																			
- No. brothers & sisters left school before Year 12					2														
- No. brothers & sisters left school after Year 12					2														
- No. brothers & sisters in further education					2														
Ethnicity:																			
• Own country of birth	1,2			3											4			4b	
• Father's country of birth	1,2			3											4			4b	
• Mother's country of birth	1,2			3											4			4b	
• Years lived in Australia	1,2			3															
• Language used at home	1,2			3															
• Use of English at home	1,2																		
SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND																			
Parents' Occupation:																			
• Father's occupation		1			2				3						4			4b	
• Mother's occupation		1			2				3						4			4b	
Parents' Level of Education:																			
• Father's education		1			2				3						4			4b	
• Mother's education		1			2				3						4			4b	
Parents gross income (father, mother separately)																			4
Family Wealth:																			
• No. consumer durables in home in first year of secondary school				1				2		3					4				4b
• Family ownership of boat, holiday house								2		3					4				4b
• Father's gross income in 94, if employed																			4b
• Mother's gross income in 94, if employed																			4b
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION																			
State/Territory of Residence	1,2	1	1	1,3	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
Rurality^a		1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2,3	1,2									

Note: (a) For both 1961 and 1965 cohorts, data gathered retrospectively in 1986 for period 1978-86.
(b) For 1975 cohort, background information gathered in 1994 from sample members for whom this info not collected in 1991.

Table 3.2 Schooling

	75	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
ATTENDANCE																			
Current Year Level	1,2		1	3					3	3			4	4	4	4			
School System:																	1,2,3,4		
• in first year of primary school																	1,2,3,4		
• in current year	1		1		2				3	3			4						
• in last year primary school				1													1,2,3,4		
• first year secondary school					2												1,2,3,4		
• last year secondary school				1	2				3								1,2,3,4		
School Location					2														
No. of Schools Attended	1,2																		
ACHIEVEMENT																			
Literacy	1,2			3									4						
Numeracy	1,2			3									4						
Results in Subjects in Last Year of School																			
Year 12: completed?												3							4 4
Year 12: name of certificate																			4
Year 12: TE score																			4
EXPERIENCE, PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL																			
Self-concept of Ability				1 ^a	2 ^b				3 ^c	3 ^d				4 ^c					
Quality of School Life (18 items)									3										
Subjects studied (full yr or half yr)																4			
Work Experience:																			
• Ever participated in work experience									3	3									
• Participation in current year									3	3									
• Time spent in work experience									3	3									
• Value for student									3										
Perceptions of Value of Schooling									2										4
Course Experience items																4			4

- Notes:** (a) Asked retrospectively, as it had been in last year of secondary school.
 (b) In current year.
 (c) In current year, or in last year of secondary school if already left school.
 (d) In current year - only if still full-time student.

For all tables: 1 = 1961 Cohort, 2 = 1965 Cohort, 3 = 1970 Cohort, 4 = 1975 Cohort

Table 3.3 Educational and Occupational Plans and Expectations

	75	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
STAYING ON AT SCHOOL																			
Intention to Stay/Leave		1			2				3				4						
Reasons for Staying at School		1																	
Reasons for Leaving School					2	2													
Reasons for not Completing Year 12																		4	
Reference Group Influence on Leaving School									3										
POSTSCHOOL																			
Reference Group Influence on Postschool Plans				1	2			2	3						4				
Intention to Continue Study:																			
• next year		1	1			2										4			
• when leave school										3			4		4				
Type of Intended Study										3			4			4			
University: apply for place?/receive offer?/accept offer?																			4
Reasons for Postschool Study									2										
Desire for Study among Non-students:																			
• desire to study by non-students							1,2		2,3	1									
• details of desired study							1,2												
OCCUPATIONAL PREFERENCE																			
Preferred Job:															4				
• when leave school															4				
• in 5 years		1		1															
• when aged 30										3			4						
Personality Factors which may Influence Occupational Choice (Holland's RIASEC items)									3	1,2									

For all tables: 1 = 1961 Cohort, 2 = 1965 Cohort, 3 = 1970 Cohort, 4 = 1975 Cohort

Table 3.4 Student Finances

	75	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
SOURCES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT																			
While at School								1,2		3 ^a		3 ^b				4			
While in Postschool Study								1,2	2			3 ^b				3,4			
STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE																			
Knowledge of												3							
Use of												3							
Effect of												3							
AUSTUDY																			
Apply for																3,4		4	4
Amount received																3,4		4	4
Effect of getting/not getting																3,4		4	4
COURSE FEES																			
Whether payable																			1,2,3
Type (inc HECS)																			1,2,3
How much																			1,2,3
Who paid																			1,2,3
PAID WHILE STUDYING /TRAINING																			
																			4

Notes: (a) Question asked of those in full-time study in that year - sample members were aged 16, so most would have been at school.

(b) Question referenced to either 1987 or 1988 - sample members were then aged 17-18, so could include those in school or in postschool study.

Table 3.5 Level of Educational Attainment

	75	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
SCHOOL																			
Year Level Completed at Secondary School		1			2	2	2	1,2	3	3		3		4	4		1,2,3,4	4	
POSTSCHOOL QUALIFICATIONS COMPLETED																			
Type of Institution Attended			1			1				1,2,3					1,2,3		1,2,3,4	4	2
Qualification				1		1		1,2		1,2,3					1,2,3		1,2,3,4	4	2
Area of Study						1		1,2		3								4	
When Started/Finished						1				1,2,3					1,2,3		1,2,3,4	4	2
Whether Completed										1,2					1,2,3		1,2,3,4	4	2
Full-time/Part-time										1,2,3					1,2,3		1,2,3,4	4	2
Paid while studying?/Who paid?																		4	

For all tables: 1 = 1961 Cohort, 2 = 1965 Cohort, 3 = 1970 Cohort, 4 = 1975 Cohort

Table 3.6 Transition to Work

	75	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
TIME TAKEN TO FIND FIRST JOB																			
Date Completed Full-time Secondary Studies		1			2	2		2	3	3		3		4	4				
Date Started First Job after Leaving School		1			2	2	2	2	2,3 ^a										
Date Completed Full-time Study ^b									2	2	1,2,3	2,3	3	2,3		3	1,2,3,4	4	4
Date Started First Full-time Job after Finished Full-time Study ^b							1 ^a			2,3 ^a	1,2,3	2,3	3	2,3	4	3	1,2,3,4	4	4
NATURE OF FIRST JOB																			
Full-time/Part-time		1			2	2	1,2	2	2,3	3									
Status (Permanent/Temp)							2		2,3	3									
Occupation in First Job ^{c,d}					2	2	1,2	2	2,3	2,3	1,2,3	2,3	3	2,3	4	3	1,2,3,4	4	4
Income in First Job ^{c,d}							1,2	2	2,3	2,3	1,2,3	2,3	3	2,3	4	3	1,2,3,4	4	4
Desirability of Job ^c		1			2	2	1,2		2,3	2,3									
TIME IN FIRST JOB^c																			
Still in First Job					2	2	1,2	2	2,3	2,3									
Length of Time in First Job							1	2	2,3	2,3									
OTHER																			
Advantages of Current Job			1																
Use of Govt Training Programs			1																
Methods of Job Search				1															
Ever Unemployed		1																	
Length of Time Unemployed ^e		1			2	2	1												
Length of Time in Part-time Jobs in Year after Left School							1												

Notes: (a) Both date started first job, and date started first Full-time job.

(b) From 1987, question referenced to completion of Full-time study in the current year.

(c) From 1983, information refers to first Full-time job.

(d) From 1987, question referenced to first Full-time job since completion of Full-time study in current year.

(e) In 1978, for period since left school.

In 1981-82, for period since left first job.

In 1983, for period of first 12 months after left school.

Table 3.7 Participation in Postschool Education

	75	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
STUDENT STATUS^a			1	1	1	1	1,2	1,2	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2 ^c ,4
DETAILS OF CURRENT STUDY^a																			
Course type							1,2		2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2 ^c ,4
Type of institution		1	1	1	1	1,2	1,2	1,2	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2 ^c ,4
Name of institution							1,2	1,2	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2 ^c ,4
Full-time/Part-time							1,2	2 ^b	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2 ^c ,4
Year level of course			1	1	1			1,2	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2 ^c ,4
When started/finish								1,2	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2 ^c ,4
Qualification			1	1	1	1,2	1,2	1,2	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3,4				
Area of study					1	1,2	1,2	1,2	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2 ^c ,4
Length of course					1			1,2											

- Notes:** (a) Referenced to October of each year.
 (b) Not asked of those who had been non-students for <1 year.
 (c) In 1995, for 1965 cohort, parallel questions for both October study and study at any time during the year.

For all tables: 1 = 1961 Cohort, 2 = 1965 Cohort, 3 = 1970 Cohort, 4 = 1975 Cohort

Table 3.8 Labour Force Participation

	75	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
LABOUR FORCE STATUS^a																			
Employed		1	1 ^b	1 ^b	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
Looking for a Job							1,2	1,2	2	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT^a																			
Occupation		1	1	1	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
Full-time/Part-time		1			1	1,2	1,2	1,2	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
No. Other Jobs Held					1	1,2	1,2	1,2	2,3 ^c	3 ^c				1,2,3 ^j	1,2,3,4 ^j	1,2,3			2
Weekly Net Income			1	1	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	2	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3	1,2,3,4 ^k	1,2,3,4	2,4
Gross Annual Income																		1,2,3	2,4
Hours Worked Weekly					1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4		1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
Weeks Worked Monthly						2	1,2	1,2	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
Length of Time in Job							2	1,2	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
Employer:																			2,4
• Type of employer								1					1				1,2,3,4	1,2,3	2,4
• Size of employer								1									1,2,3,4	1,2,3	2
Other Conditions of Work:																			
• Shift work, fringe benefits								1											
EXPERIENCE/ PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYMENT																			
Employment/unemployment																1,2,3,4			
Perceptions of job																		1,2,3	2
Working while studying																			
• When working (vacation/term)																			3,4
• Reasons for working																			3,4
• Effects of working on study																			3,4
NOT WORKING^a																			
Changed Job in Year			1					1,2											
Reasons for Leaving Previous Job			1					1,2	2	3								1,2,3,4	
Reasons for not Working			1	1	1	1,2												1,2,3,4	
Reasons for not Looking for Job							1,2	1,2	2	1,2,3									
Problems in Looking for Job ^d			1				1,2	1,2	2,3 ^e	1,2,3									
EMPLOYMENT HISTORY																			
Ever Employed ^f		1			2	2	2	2	2,3	2,3	3							1,2,3,4	
No. of Jobs Held in Year:																			
• No. of Full-time jobs		1 ^g	1	1	1,2 ^h	1,2	1,2	1,2 ⁱ	2	1,2,3									
• No. of Part-time jobs		1 ^g	1	1	1,2 ^h	1,2	1,2	1,2 ⁱ	2	1,2,3									

Notes for Table 8

- (a) Referenced to October of each year, except in 1978, when question referred to time when questionnaire completed (i.e. late 87-early 88).
- (b) Question asked 'Were you out of work?'
- (c) Number of other jobs held - no distinction between full-time and part-time.
- (d) In 1979, this question asked of all respondents; in other years, only of those looking for job.
- (e) Question asked of those who did not have job, but not asked whether they were looking for job.
- (f) Until 1984, question referred to period since left school. From 1985, referred to since left full-time study.
- (g) Question referenced to 'since leaving school'.
- (h) Referenced to October 1981 for this 1965 cohort, not whole of year. Among those who were non-students, question asked only of those who had a full-time or part-time job at that time.
- (i) For both cohorts question only asked of those who had FT or PT job in October 1984, not of all respondents.
- (j) Total number of part-time jobs only for respondents who volunteered this information.
- (k) Income per pay period (so weekly income to be derived)

Table 3.9 Training

	75	78	79 ^a	80 ^b	81 ^b	82 ^b	83	84	85	86 ^c	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
JOB TRAINING																			2c
Type of training																1,2,3			
Amount received																1,2,3			
Perceptions of usefulness																1,2,3			
TRAINING (General)																			
Subject area																			1,2,3
Where																			1,2,3
Time (in hours)																			1,2,3
Who paid																			1,2,3
Usefulness																			1,2,3
Reasons (if job-related)																			1,2,3

Notes: (a) Whether any training was provided by employer, and if so, where?.

Table 3.10 Status by Month

	75	78	79 ^a	80 ^b	81 ^b	82 ^b	83	84	85	86 ^c	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
STATUS BY MONTH			1	1	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	4
Working full-time																			
Working part-time																			
Home duties																			
Not working but looking for work ^d																			
Not working																			
A full-time student																			
A part-time student																			
Other ^e																			
STATUS FOR MOST OF YEAR																			2

Notes: (a) January - October only; November, December excluded.

(b) January - November only; December excluded.

(c) Matrix question in 1986 questionnaire for 1961 and 1965 cohorts covered period October '85 - December '86.

(d) This category of activity not listed at all in 1979-80. In 1981-82, category was listed as 'Looking for a job'.

(e) This category of activity not listed in 1979-82

Table 3.11 Living Arrangements

	75	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
Where Living						1	1	1,2	2	1,2	1,2,3	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
Weekly Cost of Housing						1	1		2	1,2	1,2,3	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
Household Composition						1	1	1,2		1,2	1,2,3	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
Spouse/Partner:																			
• How long married/living together						1	1	1,2		1,2	1,2,3	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
• Partner's educational background													1						2
• Partner's occupation													1						2
Ages of Children					1	1	1,2			1,2	1,2,3	2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	3	1,2,3,4		2
Number of Children																		1,2,3,4	4
Children's Schooling																			
• Number of school age children																			2
• Type of school they attend																			2
• Perceptions of child's school																			2
• Views on priorities of schools																			2
• Educational aspirations for children																			2

Table 3.12 Lifestyle Characteristics

	75	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
Participation in Leisure Activities								1		1,2									
Use of Consumer Credit													1,2,3						
Division of Household Labour													1						
Languages Other Than English																			
• Which ones spoken																		1,2,3	
• Where learned																		1,2,3	
• LOTE and job																			
- how often used at work																		1,2,3	
- how useful at work																		1,2,3	

Table 3.13 Psychological Well-being

	75	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
INFLUENCES																			
Personal Goals										3									
Sense of Autonomy^a								1		3			1						2
OUTCOMES																			
Quality of Life^b:																			
• Life as whole			1	1	1	1,2	1			1,2,3		2,3	1,2,3	2	1,2,3	3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
• Work			1	1	1	1,2	1			1,2,3		2,3	1,2,3	2	1,2,3	3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
• What you did in spare time			1	1	1	1,2	1			1,2,3		2,3	1,2,3	2	1,2,3	3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
• Life at home						1	1			1,2,3		2,3	1,2,3	2	1,2,3	3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
• How you got on with people in general ^c			1	1	1	1,2	1			1,2,3		2,3	1,2,3	2	1,2,3	3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
• Money each week			1	1	1	1,2	1			1,2,3		2,3	1,2,3	2	1,2,3	3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
• Social life			1	1	1	1,2	1			1,2,3		2,3	1,2,3	2	1,2,3	3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
• Independence			1	1	1	1,2	1			1,2,3		2,3	1,2,3	2	1,2,3	3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
• People worked with			1	1	1	1,2	1			1,2,3		2,3	1,2,3	2	1,2,3	3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
• Prospects for promotion							1			1,2,3		2,3	1,2,3	2	1,2,3	3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
• Standard of living				1	1	1,2	1			1,2,3		2,3	1,2,3	2	1,2,3	3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
• Where you lived			1				1			1,2,3		2,3	1,2,3	2	1,2,3	3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
• Way country was run			1				1			1,2,3		2,3	1,2,3	2	1,2,3	3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
• State of economy			1				1			1,2,3		2,3	1,2,3	2	1,2,3	3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
• Your future			1	1	1	1,2	1			1,2,3		2,3	1,2,3	2	1,2,3	3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
• Way school prepared you for a job			1											2	1,2,3	3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	2,4
Satisfaction with Family Life													1						2
OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS																			
How do you feel about your work?																			2,4
How do you feel about study?																			2,4
How do you feel about the future?																			2,4

Note: (a) Not parallel questions between years.
 (b) Response categories are 1 = 'Very happy', 2 = 'Happy', 3 = 'Fairly happy', 4 = 'Unhappy', except for 1979-82, category 1 response = 'Delighted'.
 1979-80, category 4 response = 'Terrible'.
 From 1989, new category 5 response = 'Not applicable'.
 (c) From 1983-89, this item was 'how you got on with the people you worked with'.

Table 3.14 Political Socialisation

	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
Knowledge and Opinions about Australian Politics												4 ^{a,b}						
Views about Australia and Australians												2,3,4 ^a						
Perceptions of the National Characteristics of Australians and Japanese												4 ^a	2,3					

Notes: (a) Data not available for respondents in ACT.

(b) Data on one question not available for respondents from Victoria.

For all tables: 1 = 1961 Cohort, 2 = 1965 Cohort, 3 = 1970 Cohort, 4 = 1975 Cohort

THE AUSTRALIAN YOUTH SURVEY

The Australian Youth Survey (AYS) is a major longitudinal survey of young Australians set up to provide policy-relevant information on young people's education and training pathways as well as their access to and success in the Australian labour market. The survey follows a nationally representative group of young people aged 16 to 19, with the initial cohort of approximately 5500 young people interviewed for the first time in 1989. Since then the sample has been interviewed annually on a wide range of topics including school experiences, school-to-work transition, labour market experiences, post-school education and training, income, health, housing and job satisfaction. New nationally-representative samples of sixteen year-olds have been added each year to maintain up-to-date information on school completion and post-school education and training.

A major aim of the survey is to help monitor national levels of school completion, entry to higher education, transition from school to work, take-up of training and labour market behaviour. Information on these areas of activity can be produced for a variety of social and demographic groups.

The sample and survey design permits groups of students to be tracked as they leave school and enter further education and the workforce. Information is provided on qualitative issues relating to experiences and activities as they move from one area to another. For example, the types of courses students enter as they move from school to TAFE and the types of work they gain. Data is also collected for measuring activities in quantitative terms, for example, the length of time spent looking for work, numbers of jobs and periods of study. This information is recorded using a weekly calendar to map out periods of activity.

Brief History

The AYS was part of a program of longitudinal studies managed by the Economic and Policy Analysis Division of the Department of Employment, Education and Training (and initially, for a short time, by the Australian Bureau of Labour Market Research). The program commenced in the mid 1980s with the Australian Longitudinal Survey (ALS). The ALS comprised two samples of Australian youth:

- long term unemployed young people aged 15-24 who were registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES sample), and
- a nationally representative sample of 9000 young people aged 16 to 25 (the Youth Sample).

The sample of unemployed young people was surveyed for the first time in 1984 and interviewed again in 1985, 1986 and 1987. The Youth sample was surveyed for the first time in 1985 and re-interviewed in 1986, 1987 and 1988. From 1989 the interviews for the Youth sample were conducted by telephone rather than face-to-face and respondents left the sample after the year in which they turned 25.

One of the main reasons for commencing the Australian Longitudinal Survey was to learn more about the labour market experiences of young people at a time when youth unemployment was two to three times above that for older workers and the number of entry-level jobs for school leavers was falling. With this aim there was a strong focus in the survey on employment, unemployment and labour market outcomes. Consequently, the largest section of questions in the survey related to labour market experience. It included information on such matters as job history, employment status, income, on-the-job training, participation in formal training courses, union membership, unemployment experience, and difficulties experienced in obtaining work.

The Australian Youth Survey grew out of this earlier work. It comprises comparable samples of young people and contains many of the same fields of data. However whereas the longitudinal survey program was begun to closely examine issues relating to long-term unemployment and labour market experience, the AYS has developed into a more general purpose data set for the study of school experiences, school completion, post-school education and training as well as employment and unemployment.

The initial 1989 sample contained 5350 young people aged 16-19. A new group of 16 year olds (about 1500) was added in 1990. Further additions of 16 year olds (approximately 1200 per year) were made from 1991 to 1994. No further samples have been added since 1994. From 1995 the AYS sample has been interviewed by telephone rather than face-to-face.

Key Research Questions

The principal aim of the survey is to examine questions regarding the education and training pathways of young people as they move from school to work, and their experiences in the Australian labour market. The information collected is broad, covering different facets of young people's lives as they attempt to make the transition from school to independent adult life.

In terms of student pathways the survey provides information on such issues as:

- **school completion:** Who fails to complete secondary school? What have been recent trends in school completion for different social and demographic groups? What about differences for males and females? Have the recent gains in school completion represented genuine gains in opportunity?
- **participation in post-compulsory education and training:** Who takes up apprenticeships in Australia? Has this changed in recent years? What proportions of young people receive formal accredited training through their work as well as informal on-the-job training? Who does not participate in training programs? Do girls have equal access? What are the national estimates of required growth needed for different social groups to reach national targets of participation in post-compulsory education and training?
- **transition to higher education:** In Australia who goes on to higher education and who does not? Have participation rates in higher education changed in recent years for different equity groups? What are the links between Year 12 study and access to different university courses?

- **participation in technical and further education:** Who enrolls in TAFE, and have national patterns of enrolment changed in recent years? What impact have recent changes in school retention had on TAFE enrolments? What are the main areas of work entered by young people undertaking TAFE courses? Do young people undertaking TAFE courses fare any better in the labour market to those who seek direct entry?
- **transition from school to work:** What is the initial labour market relevance of completing Year 12? How do early school leavers fare in the labour market compared to school completers? What types of employment do school leavers enter? Which groups of young people are more likely to experience extended periods of unemployment in attempting to gain entry to the workforce?
- **labour force experiences:** What are the labour market experiences of young Australians over the longer term? Which groups of young people find long term secure employment? Which young people tend to experience recurrent unemployment? What are the links between schooling, employment and unemployment? Are there income advantages of participation in post-compulsory education and training? What about the labour market relevance of higher education?

Fields of data

1. Identifying equity groups

To compare different groups of young people in terms of education and career paths, data are collected on the backgrounds of respondents as well as their current household details. This information includes the following fields:

- **Family background:** birthplace of parents, place of residence when aged 14, education and occupation of parents when respondent was aged 14, languages spoken at home, number of siblings.
- **Household information:** age, sex, employment status and income of all household members.
- **Personal details:** age, sex, birthplace, race, disability, languages spoken, fluency in English.

2. Measuring school activity and school experience

For respondents who are still in school, details are collected on their secondary schooling as they progress through the senior years. For those who have left school, summary information is collected on school background. The following fields are available for measuring activities and experiences in secondary schooling:

type of school attended, state in which attended school, year level, subjects studied in senior years, plans for length of schooling, level of schooling reached, reasons for leaving school before Year 12, reasons for completing Year 12, post-school educational aspirations of parents and self, AUSTUDY assistance, participation in work experience, course advice.

3. Mapping post-school destinations

Extensive information is collected on the paths and destinations of young people as they move from school to further education, training, and work. This includes information on:

- **Participation in higher education and TAFE:** date of commencement and completion of study, place of study, course of study, length of time in study, part time or full time enrolment, reasons for dropping out, financial assistance received.
- **Transition from school/study to work:** length of time finding a job, periods of unemployment, length of time in first job, type of work, employment status.
- **Workforce participation:** employment status, type of employment, income, job history, periods of employment and unemployment, reasons for leaving or changing jobs, hours of work, working conditions (annual leave, sick leave, superannuation), job satisfaction, use of CES and other government services.
- **Training:** participation in apprenticeships and traineeships, participation in other employer-based training programs, participation in on-the-job training, time spent in training.
- **Social dimensions:** health, housing and finance, marital status and marital history, voting behaviour.

4. Calendar recording of activity

A feature of the AYS is the recording of an individual's work and education activities on a calendar. Information on the labour market experiences of respondents over the preceding twelve months is plotted in some detail, providing a weekly record of all jobs held, spells of looking for work and spells of study. This permits the survey to map out in fine detail actual periods that individuals are engaged in different activities, and at what points major changes occur. In conjunction with the qualitative information on activities, it helps document important periods and junctures in the trajectories of young people's lives.

The main types of information that can be derived from the calendars include: time spent in employment, looking for work, and in study over the reference periods, periods of time spent neither in the labour force nor studying.

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