

LIFE AT 25 THEN+NOW

The Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) unpack the lives of young Australians as they leave school, enter further study or the workforce and make the transition into adulthood.

Life at 25: Then & Now provides a snapshot of Australians' study and work situation at age 25, along with their living arrangements, financial situation and their goals for the future.

We compare the latest results from the group that commenced the study in 2009 (Y09) who were 25-years-old in 2019 (before the coronavirus pandemic hit) with the 1998 cohort (Y98) who were 25-years-old in 2009.

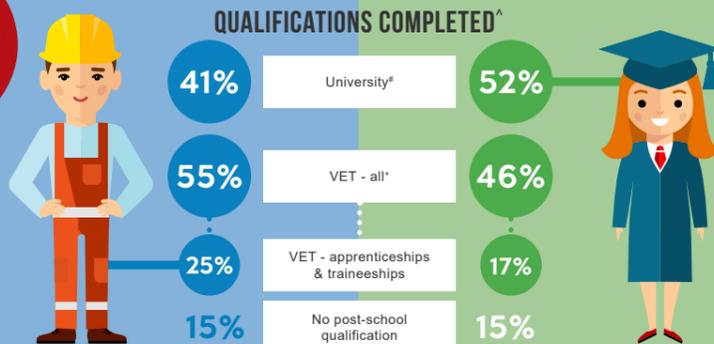
Data shared by two cohorts of LSAY participants gives insights into how the lives of young Australians have changed over the past decade.



AGE 25 IN 2009 | AGE 25 IN 2019

STUDY

Numbers are circled if the differences between 2009 and 2019 are statistically significant



[^] The sum of the figures exceeds 100% because young people may complete more than one type of qualification.
[#] 'University' includes those who have completed a degree and are undertaking further study at a bachelor degree level or higher.
⁺ 'VET-all' includes those who have completed multiple VET qualifications, including apprentice/traineeships.

Today's young people are completing university at higher rates than ever before. There has also been a significant increase in the proportion of 25-year-olds doing further university study (i.e. a second or postgraduate degree) from 6% in 2009 to 9% in 2019.

In contrast, Vocational Education & Training (VET) completions, which includes apprenticeships and traineeships, is declining. This is likely to be an effect of several factors including changes to the labour market and VET funding arrangements.¹

The expansion of higher education through the demand driven system (2010-17) also saw some young people, who might have otherwise studied vocationally, instead opt to go into the university system.²

WORK

EMPLOYMENT STATUS[^]



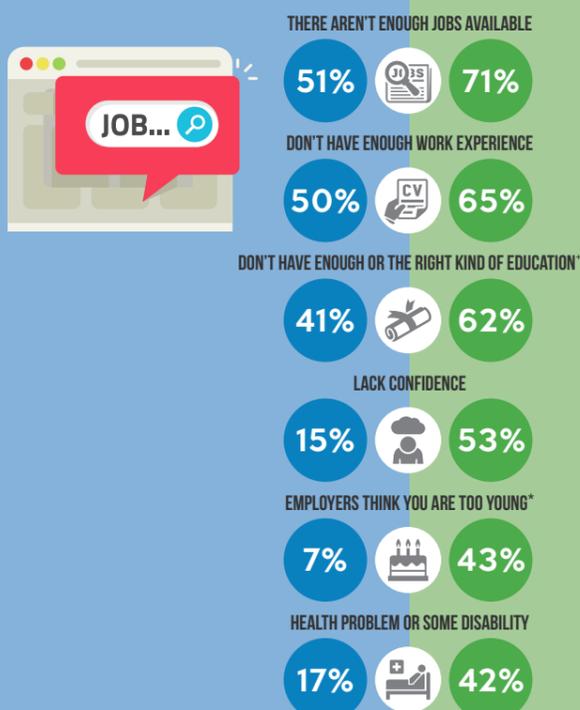
Young people are finding it harder to secure full-time work and are experiencing a different working world to previous generations. They are also completing their post-school study at a later age and as a result are working while studying for longer periods.³

TOP 5 OCCUPATIONS



Jobs in retail, education and the health sector dominated the top 5 occupations for young people in 2009. They continue to do so today, with nursing moving up into second place. Clerical jobs have also increased during this period.

PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO GETTING A JOB[#]



Those who were unemployed at age 25, which makes up just 4 per cent of these survey participants, were asked about their perceived barriers to getting a job.

A shortage of jobs and a lack of work experience continue to be the biggest barriers to securing a job. Meanwhile, young people are now experiencing multiple barriers to finding work, with a significantly higher proportion of 25-year-olds reporting a range of challenges including suitable education, skills, health as well as self-esteem.

[^] Figures for 'Employment status' do not add to 100% because there is a small proportion of respondents who are working but their working time is unknown.
[#] 'Perceived job barriers' is only answered by those who are unemployed (i.e. not working and looking for work).
⁺ 'Don't have enough or the right kind of education' is the wording used for the Y98 cohort. The question was worded slightly differently for the Y09 cohort (i.e. 'Lacking the right kind of education or training').
^{*} 'Employers think you are too young' was the wording used for the Y98 cohort and 'Employers think you are too young (or too old)' was used in the Y09 cohort.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

HOUSING



CURRENTLY OWN OR BUYING



CURRENTLY RENTING



LIVING WITH PARENTS



Rising housing costs and difficulty in securing full-time work have seen a decline in 25-year-olds buying their own home. Young people are also spending more time in education and completing their post-school study at a later age. As a result, an increasing proportion are still living with their parents at age 25.

MARITAL STATUS

MARRIED



DE FACTO



SINGLE, SEPARATED, DIVORCED



MONEY

PERSONAL FINANCES

ABLE TO SAVE



USE OF CREDIT CARD



Today's 25-year-olds were teenagers when the 2008 financial crisis struck. As a result, alongside rising education and housing costs and slow wage growth, today's youth are adopting a more cautious approach to personal finance by saving earlier than previous generations.⁴ In addition, credit card use has dropped as young people shift to alternative payment methods such as 'buy now, pay later' services.⁵

SHORTAGE OF MONEY^{*}

COULDN'T PAY ELECTRICITY GAS OR TELEPHONE BILLS ON TIME



COULDN'T PAY MORTGAGE/RENT ON TIME



COULDN'T AFFORD TO HEAT HOME



While the proportion of young people unable to pay their bills has remained largely unchanged when compared with those at the same age 10 years earlier, it is still concerning that 1 in 10 cannot afford to pay their utility bills on time. In addition, the proportion of 25-year-olds unable to heat their home has more than doubled over the past decade.

^{*} Only respondents who are not living with their parents are asked these 'Shortage of money' questions.

GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

Thinking about the next 5 years, in which aspect of your life do you hope to make the biggest change?

“Do more things that I want to do which I previously couldn't due to a lack of independence and money.”

“I wish to pursue a less time restricting career so that I can start a family.”

“Just improve overall, put more effort in to everything, all aspects of my life. I'm stuck in a bit of a rut.”

“Professionally I want to finish all my study to be able to get the ideal job, I want to get a masters after my diploma.”

“Getting married, have kids, maybe winning the lottery.”

“To save money and have financial security to travel and buy a home.”



“Owning my own home. More responsibility at work.”

Comprising young people born in 1993–94, the LSAY Y09 cohort belongs to the generation known as Generation Y. Since childhood, they have lived in a globalised world connected by technology and had the ability to travel⁶. This is reflected in their goals expressed in a pre-COVID pandemic time to see the world. They possess ambitions to start families, enter the housing market, progress in their careers and earn higher incomes.

PAVING FUTURE PATHWAYS

The data shared by LSAY participants provides a wealth of information about how young Australians' study, work, life and attitudes have changed as a result of a rapidly evolving world. The data are freely available to researchers and policymakers.

Visit www.lsay.edu.au to explore the results of past and present LSAY surveys and see how the lives of Australian youth continue to change over time.



60,000+
YOUNG PEOPLE SURVEYED
SINCE LSAY COMMENCED
IN 1995



6 COHORTS
HAVE BEEN TRACKED
SINCE 1995



11 SURVEY WAVES
AVAILABLE FOR EACH COHORT

Notes:

- Survey responses are weighted to population benchmarks to account for the survey being undertaken as a sample rather than the entire target population.
- Differences across years highlighted using bold circles are statistically significant.
- Totals do not always add to 100% due to rounding.

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— 2020, Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth, 1998 cohort (version 3.2).

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