Gen Y on Gen Y

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THE LIFE PATTERNS RESEARCH PROGRAM

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The Life Patterns research program is designed to follow patterns in young people's lives over time to gain a longitudinal and holistic understanding of the ways in which two generations of young Australians are responding to our rapidly changing world.[1] The program is based at the Youth Research Centre, in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne.

The generosity and ongoing support of the Life Patterns participants has meant that this study has built up a unique picture of the reality of the lives of two generations.

Our focus here is on the generation that left secondary school in 2006, who are now 28 – 29 years old, drawing on data they generated in a workshop in 2016. The workshop is a new initiative as part of this large-scale longitudinal study.

The Life Patterns program:

- follows two generations of Australians - one that left secondary school in 1991 (corresponding to the popular notion of 'Gen X') and another that left secondary school in about 2006 (corresponding to the popular notion of 'Gen Y' or the 'Millennials'). Multiple comparisons can be made between the two cohorts across different points in their lives.

- explores the pathways through different areas of life taken by Australian young people including their experiences in education, the labour market, their family and personal relationships, attitudes to life, concerns, and health and wellbeing.

- provides a unique picture, very different from the stereotypes of smooth transitions from education to work, or of the lazy, narcissistic or complacent generation often described in the media or by politicians. We have argued for the importance of paying attention to the diversity of experiences that characterise young people's lives.

- allows for insights to be drawn that feed into policy advice and also into public debate and our work is often in the media disputing the simplistic claims about young people.

- was designed to follow patterns in young people's lives over time in order to gain more than a static glimpse. We are interested in developing a more dynamic picture of young people's lives rather than a single snapshot in time.

- surveys cohort 2 yearly and interviews a small subset of 30-50 participants every second year.

The Life Patterns project is ongoing, thanks to the continued engagement from the participants, and the support of the University of Melbourne and the Australian Research Council.

INTRODUCTION

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By their late 20s, the vast majority of young Australians have completed their educational qualifications (for now), are looking to utilise their qualifications and skills in the labour market, and to pursue meaningful personal and family relationships. The intersections of education, work and relationships are central to determining the quality of people's lives at this age. This report provides an insight into the views, experiences and challenges facing this cohort. We show how the circumstances they face influence their hopes, attitudes and views.

They are seeking the security of employment and income that will enable them to plan for their longer term futures, afford a place to live that is in reach of work, and to foster relationships with friends and family.

It is important to understand the situation of Australia's young adults. For example, there is a growing perception of a generational divide in the quality of life. This does not mean that young people have poor relationships with or do not respect members of the older generation.[2] However, it does reflect a widening consciousness amongst young people that they face distinctive circumstances that mark their lives off from previous generations. This is not unique to Australia. For example, in the 2017 UK election, a relatively high turnout by young people resulted in an unexpectedly low vote for the Conservative party. This 'youthquake' focused attention on the emergence of a political divide in the UK as young people, in particular, feel the brunt of precarious labour markets, combined with increased educational costs and austere social welfare provision. It is clear that young Australians too are experiencing distinctive generational effects. For example, a recent report shows that when

it comes to Australians' wellbeing, 'age matters'. The NAB Wellbeing Report 2017 reveals that while wellbeing has been increasing for Australians aged 50 and above since 2013, it has been falling for young people aged 18 – 29, with mental health, in particular, anxiety, being the most significant contributor.[3] Mental health problems are at their highest prevalence in Australia amongst young adults with 26 percent in the 18-24 years age group and 25 percent in the 25-34 years age group having experienced a mental health problem in the last 12 months.[4]

The past three decades are characterised by marked social changes that create differences between younger Australians and previous generations. Six key differences include the near universal rate of secondary school completion, the high rates of engagement in further education, increased precariousness of employment, the decreasing relevance of traditional patterns of living in households, the high cost of housing, and the pervasive presence of social media. This report provides an insight into how Australians (aged 27 – 28) are impacted by these changes and navigate them as they attempt to build the futures they want.

A SNAPSHOT OF THE GEN Y PARTICIPANTS

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To provide a backdrop to workshop participants' views, we provide a snapshot of the experiences of their cohort based on our regular Life Patterns questionnaire. In many aspects of their life, they are highly successful, with higher levels of education and lower unemployment than a representative sample of their cohort nationally; at age 27 – 28, only 14.6 percent have not achieved some form of post-secondary education, and a majority (62.5 percent) have completed a university degree (see Figure 1). A quarter of the sample are still studying.

Educational Qualifications: 2016
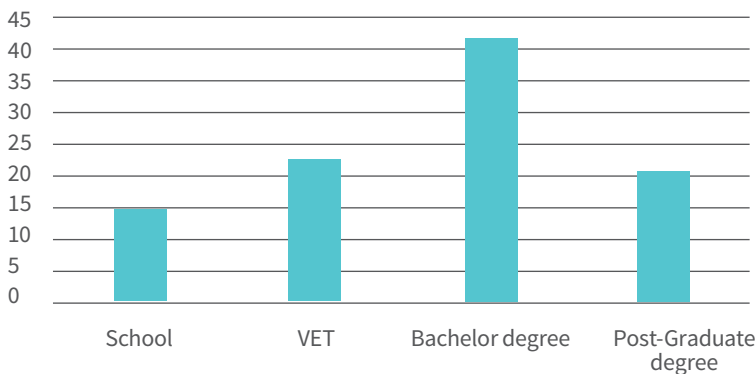
Cohort 2 aged 27-28 years in 2016

Although they have low rates of unemployment, only 71 percent are in a full-time job. A further 17 percent are in a part-time job. Many work long hours, 53 percent of those who were employed worked at least 40 hours in an average week, with 15 percent working in excess of 50 hours per week. While a large majority (77 per cent) of those who were employed worked some hours outside of the 9-5pm, Monday-to-Friday standard.

4% | UNEMPLOYED

8% | NOT IN LABOUR FORCE

17% | PART-TIME JOB

**71%** | FULL-TIME JOB

59% | WORK AT LEAST 40 HOURS/WEEK

23% | WORK 9-5 MONDAY – FRIDAY

A SNAPSHOT OF THE GEN Y PARTICIPANTS

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Just under half of participants (47 percent) are living with a partner, a significant minority (21 percent) are still living with parents and a similar proportion (20 percent), are living in a share house. Only 9 percent are living alone. At this stage very few are parents – only 3.5 percent. Just over one third of participants are single and 34 percent are in a de facto or married partnership.

SINGLE	IN A RELATIONSHIP	DE FACTO	MARRIED
35%	30%	12%	22%
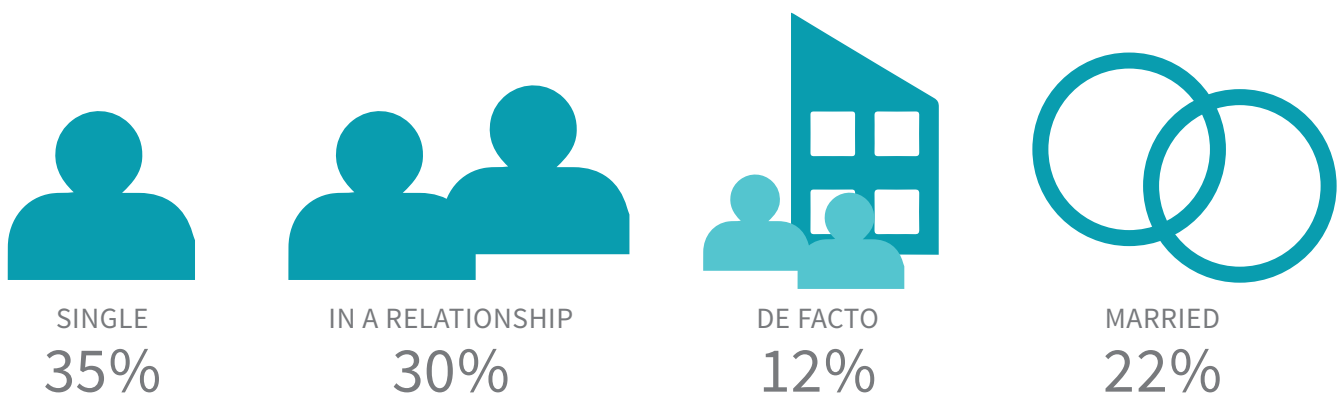
This brief snapshot, taken from the survey of Life Patterns participants in 2016, serves as a backdrop to the views of participants presented in this report. It reveals a heavy investment in education, and the reality that this investment takes time to be reflected in full-time work. Life Patterns participants are not unusual in having to wait until their mid-to-late 20s to find full-time work. An increasing number are in relationships (only one third of participants are single). However, if the pattern of Cohort 1 is followed, Gen Y will face the clash between biology and social conditions: the trend towards 'late' engagement with full-time work will place particular pressure on young women to get established in jobs that use their educational credentials at the precise time that they may wish to start families.[5]

IT'S COMPLEX

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Complexity, insecurity and the constant presence of social media flavours everything, from making decisions about their education, to where and how they live, their work and relationships.[6] The following quotes illustrate the mix of opportunity and risk that make members of this generation feel that they are distinctive.[7] As one young woman said:

> *So education, that level of education, what education we need to then get a job, finding the job, keeping the job, housing, so everything we've had to work twice as hard to get to the same spot. Then the stress of managing work… life balance we thought was quite different for us compared to our parents. These days we're accessible and available all the time, so there is no down time, there is no shutting off.*

The unreliable relationship between education and work was a topic of intense discussion.[8] Much of this focused on the challenge of converting their qualifications and skills into meaningful work. One young man summed this up:

> *Well I think to begin with, there is pressure for us to get higher education, to do a degree. Then by getting a degree then there is pressure to ensure that your work aligns with that degree… but then after that, you discover you might not like that line of work or you might discover that during study. So then there's that I guess, a difficulty of having to switch in-between. Like different career aspirations and that sort of thing.*

Work and housing are closely interconnected.[9] As this young man explains:

> *We also need to have appropriate housing and transport and improve job security. So a lot of the jobs are in metropolitan area, where the cost of living is higher and employment and housing opportunities are uneven, so meaning a lot of the housing is out - not in the metropolitan area, but a lot of the employment is in the metro area, so there's a mismatch there. Affordable housing, suitable infrastructure, planning and parking for housing, public transport and roads and parking, reduced violence and policing and resources to improve living conditions - that's all of the housing stuff.*
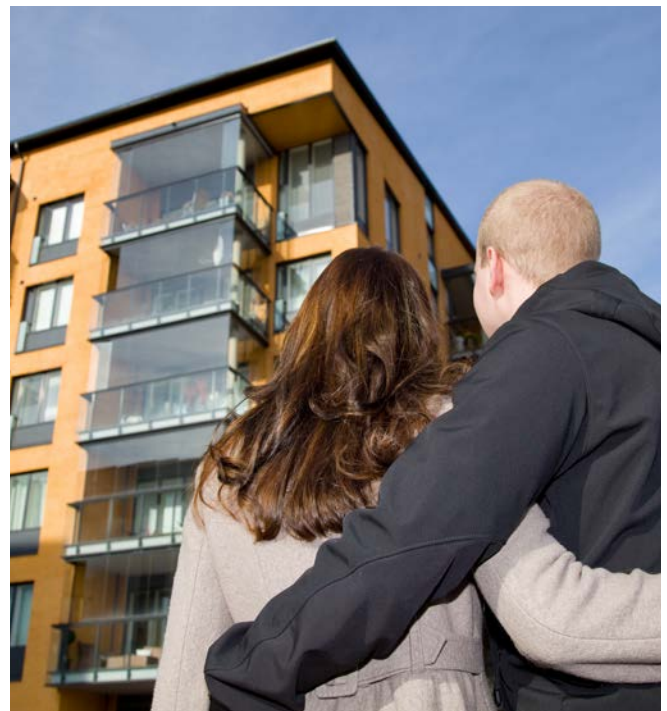
Those who were or had been in short-term and insecure work noted the significant impact this had on all areas of life.[10] Several of the participants reported that contract-based employment caused them to feel pressure to perform well enough to have their contract renewed, which meant that they did not feel able to take the leave that they were entitled to.

One young man called contract work "*the biggest killer to actually getting ahead*" as it meant that they were ineligible for a housing loan. They found that these insecure working conditions also impacted directly on what they could work towards in their relationships. One young man said:

> *I think the other thing that goes into it as well is because people don't have that financial security and don't actually have their own life secured in terms of a job or where they're going in their own life, I feel like marriage almost drops down on that because they don't want to go into that and be responsible for two people when they can't even be responsible for themselves.*

The intersection between insecure work and committed relationships also shows up in the following example shared by a young woman who found that uncertain financial futures put constraints on her long-term relationship:

> *For me, I've been with my boyfriend for nine years. He's only just become secure in a job over the last year but wants to set himself up before we go and do our own thing, and it's more that financial stress. We don't know what's going to happen with rate increases, all that sort of stuff. What do we do with that once - we're still living at home which is a stress in itself, but what do we do with that if we get out and then everything crashes what are we going to do around that?*

Whilst the majority of the participants were in a relationship, around a third of them were single. For some of them, staying single was described as a conscious strategy for managing the complexity (and stress) of life. Starting this conversation, one of the young woman said:

> *Being single, like is one less thing to worry about…..When I've got really high periods of work or when I went back to do my Master's I made sure I was single…. I just made sure that - I mean you know, I went on dates and stuff. But the minute it got a bit serious, I was like, no. No good.*

Other young women in the group agreed with this strategy, describing the problem of getting "*too deep*" in relationships. A second woman added:

> *Don't catch feelings. Don't catch feelings. Because you had too much [to do] and you had goals and ambitions and…*

And a third young woman interjected:

> *Yeah, you don't want someone to get in the way of [that] and you don't want someone else competing for your time, time that you don't even have.*

These young women collectively described the ways in which they managed their intimate relationships in order that they were not confined in their capacity to study, or pursue their work ambitions.

Discussions frequently returned to the kinds of strategies that enable participants to make the most of work as an opportunity, whilst also struggling to ensure that it is not at the expense of other aspects of life. For many it was central to their dignity; necessary for meeting the costs of accommodation, and valued as a space within which they could use their qualifications and skills and create something meaningful. For some, having a job in which they are happy means abandoning hopes of home ownership, as the following young man explains:

I decided at the end of last year to stop being a project coordinator for a research company and to go do a Masters degree because I was like, you know what man, I don't want to die and have just regrets. I do not want to have spent my entire life trying to go to a job that makes me really unhappy, eats up all of my time so at the end of the day I can die with a house and regrets. I absolutely don't want that but I'm aware at the same point in time I've got absolutely no savings. I don't even consider and I don't think I've ever really considered that owning a house would be something that would happen for me in my life and am really aware of a just massive sense of insecurity but yeah. I also had to make some of the choices to I don't know, establish an equilibrium of mental health as well.

Another young man made the decision to move to a regional area for work:

I moved regional to start, because I wanted to avoid the competition. I was very lucky to get a great job there for two years. I've just gotten a job in Melbourne and moved back, but you get paid less in Melbourne than you do in regional areas.

The conditions of work also drew a lot of discussion. Contract work and irregular hours require significant management on the part of young people. As two young men comment:

These days it seems almost most jobs are changing to casual because it's easier. Well, we don't have to give you a reason, you just - you don't come to work today and we don't pay you.

You can't really plan a life if you've only got a casual job and you don't know when your next shift will be. Can't plan your ability to pay rent.

Discussions also reflected a sense of powerlessness about working conditions and the acceleration of work demands, reflected in the following quotes:

If they're [the employee] not under an award or under an enterprise agreement, then they're on a statutory contract, and they [the employer] can do what they like.

There's a push within the workplace to always increase, I suppose, output. It must be worse for a lot of other people, I work in learning design but it's constantly more, more, more, faster, faster, faster. The deadlines are getting shorter, shorter, shorter and the numbers within the office aren't increasing, but the role is ever increasing. The wage is not really increasing with the extra responsibility and it's just constant, I don't know, it just gets busier.

Some participants felt that there is "*the perception that our generation is not working very hard.*" Their experiences show that such a perception is a long way off the mark. As one young woman concluded:

I feel like certainly all of my friends, we're working really hard and there's all this pressure around doing more and being financially stable and buying a house and that kind of stuff, I think is a big challenge.

| NIGHT SHIFTS	46
WEEKENDS	59
PUBLIC HOLIDAYS	39
VARIABILITY IN WORK HOURS	40

OPPORTUNITIES, CHOICES AND STRATEGIES

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The conversations about challenges were interwoven with discussion about the strategies used to manage these challenges. Frequent reference was made to the importance of maintaining connections with friends and family as a source of support.[11]

Friends, partners and families

Friends, families and partners are key to the coping strategies used by these members of Gen Y, providing support, affirmation and advice.[12] As one female participant said "*I think the relationships around you colour your whole world and things would be completely different without your partner, or without your close friends.*" Spending time with friends was a distraction from stress and a way of keeping things in perspective as the following quotes illustrate:

I've got some really good friends at work, some who are a bit younger or a bit older and I think we all have really similar experiences of work. So it's really nice to be able to - it's been a lousy day in the office, let's go for a drink, or let's go and have dinner together so we can bitch and moan about the crappy day we've had. I really value that, I think if I had left work and gone straight home, I would have stewed on that on my own for hours and hours and that would have really brought me down.

I get great stability and support from my friends but that often comes with a general kind of like huddling together in the coldness of the storm and we're giving each other body warmth to be able to keep going.
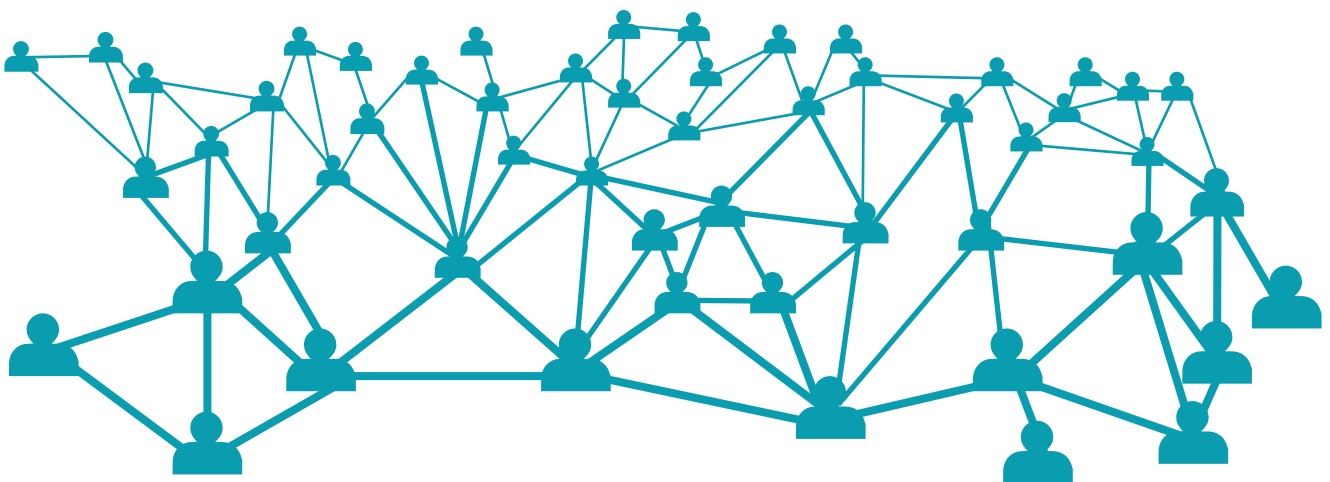
The availability of friends did not necessarily translate into emotional support during hard times. As one young man noted, it can be difficult to reach out to others when you most need support:

> *… asking for peer support is really important, but actually doing it, I've found - yeah, to be quite hard…*

As well as providing support, friendships were also described as a source of stress. This related to finding time to maintain friendships, finding ways to connect when people move for their own or their partner's work or in order to find affordable housing.[13]

> *Creating friends is really difficult at this age, I think. Moving away, I lost my network and coming back, I tried fitting back in with that network.*

Other challenges were described in relation to conducting friendships via social media. Some participants felt that friendships conducted online lacked some of the same standards of accountability. For example, one woman said:

> *Well just personally I know that people say one thing to your face but will do something completely different online. They're friends with you online but won't talk to you in person and things like that. I don't put up with that stuff, I just delete them. Things like if people cheat and all that sort of stuff, people would just push it aside back before Facebook and all that, but now everyone's got photos of it and all that sort of thing. I think it changes relationships, I think it changes the way that people see things and see people and all that sort of thing.*

And another added that there was a degree of unreliability experienced in managing social commitments via Facebook, leading to uncertainties in social interaction.

> *I think probably Facebook has made us all a bit noncommittal as well. People put events up, let's do a birthday party, or let's go out for drinks on Friday. You click attending and you might not go.*

Friendships also changed with the arrival of children, leaving less time for friends and a breach between those with and without children due to a shift in priorities and interests.

The respondents also noted that some of them had begun to experience changed relationships with their parents. Whilst families were described as a very important source of support, parents could also require support from them:

> *The roles change a little bit as you get older with parents. My mother was recently sick, and that sense of mortality and things that hit you, but also they're so stressed. You realise they've spent their whole lives stressing about you, and sometimes you might be faced with a problem, and you might not want to put it on them because you just don't want to add that stress to their lives.*

MANAGING STRESS

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Stress was a consistent theme across all workshop groups. Discussions about almost all topics inevitably touched on stress. As one young woman pointed out:

People say that stress is the biggest burden of this generation, but it's a bit hard to avoid it. It doesn't matter how Zen you try and be when you're being mindful or whatever. You still at the end of the day have to make ends meet, have to always be dealing with those things there. They're ever present. You can't escape them. I think it's quite condescending when academics who are of the Baby Boomer generation say things like we need to reduce stress levels. You're like, well, it's not about the individual.

Stress is a common way in which Life Patterns participants conceptualise mental health challenges.[14] Most importantly, since 2010, through our annual surveys, we have found that the percentage of participants self-reporting poor mental health grew from 14.5 percent to 23.1 percent of the total cohort. This young woman illustrates the significance of mental health for Gen Y:

I think a big one that I think of straight away is the focus on mental health, and how much in the previous generations it just wasn't talked about, and in our generation we're really working hard to break down that stigma about mental health, and people's wellbeing, and work life balance, and that kind of stuff.

Some of the stress they experienced relates to the pressure to be constantly available and contactable. 'Performing' for the employer 'bleeds' into leisure and relationships time, eroding the possibility of downtime as described graphically by this young man, with strong agreement from the workshop members:

So often you'll have your work phone and it'll be connected to the email and emails will be coming through. Then people are questioning you; why didn't you check your email at eight o'clock at night? Hang on a minute, that eight o'clock at night is my time, not work's time. I'm not getting paid for this. There's almost this expectation of - I don't know, it's a huge amount of hours that our generation are putting in on top of the work that we go to. So our 9:00 to 5:00 job doesn't end at five o'clock, it continues and it haunts us on our weekends and it follows us on our holidays.

Rather than things improving, participants held the perception that things are becoming more stressful, as this young woman explains:

I think now, more than even say like five years ago, I'm 28 now and the pressure every year. It's like the pressure - it gets exponentially bigger.

FUTURES

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Participants were mixed in their attitudes to their personal futures, and their shared futures as a cohort in Australia. Some felt that they were well served with opportunities:

> *In a place like Australia as a woman, as a young person I can do basically - I can get such great access to education and job opportunities that it just seems like you don't want to waste it so you put that pressure on to absolutely make the most of every opportunity you've been afforded, which can be exhausting.*

However others, like this young man, referred to the unpredictable nature of unfolding lives, and expressed a sense of powerlessness and the lack of a sense of control over one's life opportunities:

> *I feel like that uncertainty that I mentioned before is coupled with just broadly I guess a feeling like nobody's able to control anything. There are so few aspects of your life and your future that you can actually do anything about and know that that will actually have any kind of outcome or thing that will happen as a result of you doing a thing. I think lack of agency is a big one.*

Some saw positive future opportunities for work-life balance in flexible work arrangements. For example, one young man said:

> *I think there'll be more choice in the future with how we work and when we work. It's happening now already, so there'll be greater flexibility in the workplace working from home, working in the city, working in regional cities and potentially still be working in the city, that sort of thing.*

However, this shift towards flexibility was also seen as a threat by some, who felt that flexible work practices *"leads to working on weekends and at night"*, and ends up *"taking up a whole lot of a person's actual life"*.

Participants were also invited to comment on their shared futures as a generation in Australia. Some felt that it was possible for their generation to make a positive difference, as a result of their greater awareness of environmental and social issues and their capacity to think about the *"big picture"*:

> *One thing that I feel like might be a bit more unique to our generation is that I think we all feel like we can make a difference to the world and that I think is a positive thing. It means that we have our minds placed on something else rather than just our own wealth and security. I know there's a lot of conversations there about environment and climate change, change in the media, things like that.*

There was a generally positive view about what it meant to be located in Australia, as opposed to elsewhere on the globe:

I'm pretty happy with our country, how stable it is. People want to make a life and generally they can, whereas when you see things happening in Syria and stuff like that we're very lucky. That's something that I'm proud of, I haven't done much to contribute to that but I'm happy to be in this country rather than somewhere else. There's only a couple of other countries like yeah that's on the level.

However, when considering world events, some expressed a sense of powerlessness and confusion, as summed up in the response below:

I feel more broadly just a giant level of uncertainty of the future, generally. Seriously, the last half of 2016 has completely shot my ability to be able to determine when somebody's trolling me and when it's real life. I guess in terms of just the ridiculousness of some of the things that are happening in the world at the moment, like Trump… I absolutely have no understanding of what's happening in this world anymore.
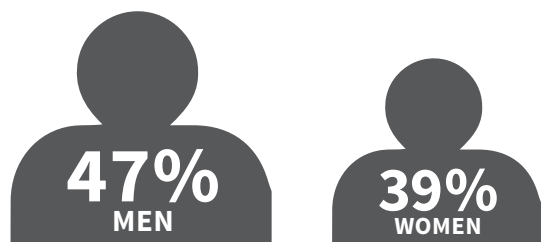
What are the three most important issues in Australia today?

Mission Australia[15] (participants aged 15-19 in 2016)

Our participants (aged 28-29 in 2017)

31% MEN   **27%** WOMEN
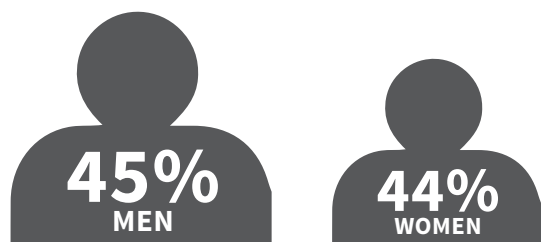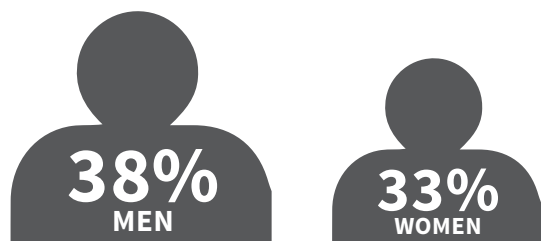
DRUG ABUSE

47% MEN   **39%** WOMEN

LACK OF JOBS

24% MEN   **29%** WOMEN
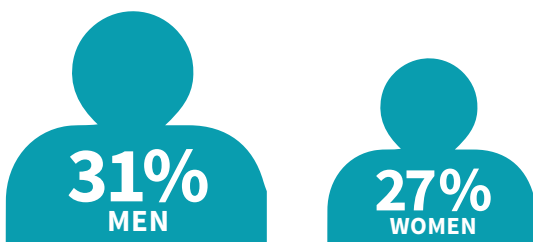
EQUITY AND DISCRIMINATION

45% MEN   **44%** WOMEN

LACK OF MONEY

14% MEN   **26%** WOMEN

MENTAL HEALTH

38% MEN   **33%** WOMEN

DRUG ABUSE

ARE WE THERE YET?

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The questions about futures evoked expressions of anxiety and pressure to perform and accomplish certain markers of progression to independence and security, whilst also perceiving that these benchmarks had become unrealistic. As one participant said, there was a perception that "You should be achieving certain things at certain times" but it was hard to know what was reasonable. Basic life goals, such as having work that pays enough to live reasonably, security of employment and housing to enable relationships to be built, that were taken for granted in earlier generations, are difficult to reach for many. The following quotes are typical:

Even now - I've only just started full-time work again this year, and I'm like I couldn't - I have no aspiration to really get a house any time soon, because I know that it's so unattainable at this point.

I feel like a lot of us - looking at my friends and stuff - and even my brothers and sisters, we're all sort of the same age - but all of us are just kind of - we're just staying afloat. We just need to pay off our house and we just need to go to work and we just need to see this person and see that person. Then when I get to 40 maybe I'll be sorted, and maybe I won't but you know. Forty is like a few years away so it gives you time to get there. You're not in a rush.

Another participant pointed out that strategies such as living with parents is not possible or desirable for everyone:

It feels unattainable at times, what you see, to get there. Some people are a bit more fortunate, like they can live with their parents

at home for - I don't know how they do it because I couldn't do it, but for 10 years after high school.

The workshops highlighted the pressure that Gen Y feels to achieve benchmarks and goals that worked for their parents' generation, a pressure that some felt was exacerbated by social media. As one young woman put it:

I think that fits into what sometimes social media - to go, oh these people are doing this at this stage, because this popped up on my feed or whatever. It's - you don't really know what's really happening.

Another woman sums up some of the frustration that Gen Y feels about the unattainability of the life goals of home ownership (and security) that were achieved by the previous generation:

Because we spend so much time at work - because we don't go home and hang out with 27 year olds, we actually spent most of our day hanging out with 40, 50 year olds - you actually feel like you need to be doing what they're doing. So they're talking about their three houses that they've got and you're like crap. I just bought half of one, like what do I do with that? So I think there's actually a massive stress just based on who we're having to associate with for most of our day. I know a guy who's just bought a Mustang, brought it from over overseas and loves it and drives everywhere and then, we're just like what are you doing? Where do you drive that and who cares?

CONCLUSION

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This report has provided an insight into Gen Y's views on the lives their cohort are living in contemporary Australia. There is a pervading sense of a stressed generation, managing the unpredictability of personal economic futures, along with the pressure to attain standards of economic independence that their parents' generation had enjoyed. Although this group of participants is, on many measures, more successful than their generational cohort as a whole, they still felt a strong sense of disjuncture between the promise of reward that was supposed to come following investment in education, and the reality of contemporary work that affected them and so many in their peer groups. They shared the sense of pressure they felt in relation to demands to be 'flexible' and ever available to both employers and friends.

The support provided by friends, partners and families was felt to be critical to the management of these stresses. As a generational group in which around a quarter of the age group had experienced mental health problems in the last 12 months it is not surprising that the participants had a lot to say about stress. On the positive side, there was also a sense that their generation had become more open in speaking about the impact of mental health distress, and that potentially they stood to offer a greater capacity for tolerance, compassion and inclusion than previous generations.

WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

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Twenty-five Life Patterns participants from cohort two took part in the dialogic workshop[16] in November 2016 at the University of Melbourne, when they were aged 27 – 28. The workshop was designed to capture the explanatory theories that the participants themselves use to understand their lives, with a focus on the connections between education, work, leisure, family, relationships and wellbeing. A selection of volunteers from the larger Life Patterns cohort was invited to attend, selected to represent the wider participant group in terms of gender, educational qualifications and employment status.

The one-day workshop engaged the participants in participatory activities both with the whole group and, at various times, reporting in from four smaller focus groups. Members of the Life Patterns research team and Youth Research Centre post-graduate students facilitated each focus group. The groups worked through a series of questions and discussions designed to elicit their understandings of the following three questions:

What are the key causes of challenges and stress experienced by young people in your generation?

What are the types of choices and strategies people use to deal with the impact of these challenges and stressors?

What is needed for people around your age to live a secure and worthwhile life? What needs to change?

These questions were explored through focus group interviews that were recorded and transcribed and group interactive activities that were filmed and photographed.

The facilitated conversations in the workshop enabled participants to spend time exploring topics in depth, embellishing on and contesting each other's views, but largely revealing strong common generational experiences. The conversations revealed the interconnected ways in which dimensions of life such as work, family, relationships, education, housing, and wellbeing were interwoven. Overall, while there was frustration with the ways in which education and work prescribed what was possible in their lives, there was also a sense of hope and optimism about their futures. These hopes were not grandiose; they want to share experiences which they believed characterised the lives of their parents' generation: establishing home, family, predictable work, and the opportunity to construct meaningful relationships.

As this report reveals, in sharing their views on these topics, participants were able to test their understandings of life in light of other participants' views and experiences. The dialogic workshop created a space for conversations between participants, deepening understanding and also highlighting a range of experiences. Although these participants represent the diversity of the Life Patterns cohort, the themes that emerged across each of the four workshop groups were remarkably consistent in naming pressures related to contemporary work patterns affecting their capacity to plan for the future and fashion relationships and families. Participants welcomed the opportunity to talk back to the stereotypes and caricatures of their generation, and to outline the ways in which uncertainties, and stress, but also social connections, characterised their lives. What emerges is a new insight into how this generation sees itself, the issues that concern them, their strategies for managing the present and their hopes for the future.

RESEARCH

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Recent publications

- Wyn, J., Cuervo, H., Crofts, J. & Woodman, D. (2017). Gendered transitions from education to work: the mysterious relationship between the fields of education and work. *Journal of Sociology*, 53(2), 492-506.

- Cuervo, H. & Wyn, J. (2017). A longitudinal analysis of belonging: temporal, performative and relational practices by young people in rural Australia. *Young*, 25(3), 1-25.

- Cuervo, H. & Wyn, J. (2016). An "unspoken" crisis: The "scarring effects" of the complex nexus between education and work on two generations of young Australians. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 3, 1-22.

- Crofts, J., Cuervo, H., Wyn, J., Woodman, D., Reade, J., Cahill, H., & Furlong, A. (2016). *Life Patterns: Comparing the Generations*. Melbourne: Youth Research Centre, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne.

- Landstedt, E., Coffey, J., Wyn, J., Cuervo, H. & Woodman, D. (2016). The complex relationship between mental health and social conditions in the lives of young Australians mixing work and study, *Young*, 1-16. DOI: 10.1177/1103308816649486

- Woodman, D., & Wyn, J. (2015). *Youth and generation: Rethinking change and inequality in the lives of young people*. London: Sage.

- Woodman, D., & Wyn, J. (2015). Class, gender and generation matter: using the concept of social generation to study inequality and social change. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 18(10), 1402-1410.

- Crofts, J., Cuervo, H., Wyn, J., Smith, G. & Woodman, D. (2015). *Life Patterns: Ten years following Generation Y*. Melbourne: Youth Research Centre, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne.

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Participant reports
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projects/life_patterns#publications

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END NOTES

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4 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). *National Survey of Mental Health and Well-being: Summary of results.* Catalogue No. 4326.0. Canberra, ACT: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

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8 Cuervo, H., Crofts, J. & Wyn, J. (2013). *Generational insights into new labour market landscapes for youth.* Research Report 42, Youth Research Centre. Melbourne: University of Melbourne.

9 Crofts, J., Cuervo, H., Wyn, J., Smith, G. & Woodman, D. (2015). *Life Patterns: Ten years following Generation Y.* Youth Research Centre. Melbourne: University of Melbourne.

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11 White, R., Wyn, J. Robards, B. (2017). *Youth & Society. 4*th edition. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

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16 A dialogic workshop is a facilitated discussion designed to encourage in-depth conversations and enable participants to enter into dialogue about key themes emerging from the data.