

11-1-2002

# LSAY Cohort Report The Year 9 Class of 1998 in 2001: Education, Employment and Interests

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## Recommended Citation

Rothman, Sheldon, "LSAY Cohort Report The Year 9 Class of 1998 in 2001: Education, Employment and Interests" (2002).

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# Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth

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## COHORT REPORT

### **THE YEAR 9 CLASS OF 1998 IN 2001: EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND INTERESTS**

Sheldon Rothman

This report forms part of the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth,  
a research program that is jointly managed by ACER and the  
Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).

The views expressed in this report are those of the author and not necessarily of the Department of  
Education, Science and Training.

November 2002

**ACER**

Australian Council for Educational Research

Produced 2002 by  
The Australian Council for Educational Research Ltd  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the third in a series of annual reports on the activities of the Year 9 class of 1998 in the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) project during the previous year. It provides details of the experiences of the cohort in 2001 and, when used with previous Cohort Reports for 1999 and 2000, can be used to monitor annual changes within the cohort.

### Highlights

#### *Education and Training*

- Eighty per cent of the cohort were still attending secondary school, with differences by gender (84% of females and 76% of males); nearly all were enrolled in Year 12. Ten per cent of the cohort were engaged in other study, including study at a TAFE or some other institution (3%), or in an apprenticeship or traineeship (7%). Nearly 11 per cent were not enrolled in study during 2001.
- Nearly one-fourth (23%) of school students were undertaking some sort of vocational education and training, bringing to nearly one-third (32%) the proportion who had undertaken such study in Year 11 or 12. More than three-quarters of school students in the cohort planned to continue their studies after Year 12 at a university or a TAFE college.
- Of those cohort members who had left school in 2001 without completing Year 12, 28 per cent were engaged in full-time study.
- Of all cohort members who were no longer at school, nearly one-half (47%) were in full-time or part-time study, or in an apprenticeship or traineeship.

#### *Employment*

- Fifty-six per cent of the cohort were employed in 2001, with nearly 45 per cent working part-time and nearly 12 per cent working full-time. These figures are slight increases since 2000.
- Of those cohort members still at secondary school, just over one-half (51%) were employed, working an average of nine hours per week, and earning an average of \$94 per week.
- The majority of females who were employed (74% of those still at school and 66% of those who were no longer at school) had clerical, sales or services positions. These figures are similar to figures for the cohort in 2000.
- Among cohort members no longer at school, males worked an average of 37 hours and earned \$324 each week, and females worked an average of 31 hours and earned \$243 per week.
- Eight per cent of employed cohort members had more than one job in 2001. By taking another job, those at school increased their weekly hours from 9 to 15; those no longer at school increased their hours from 24 to 42.

- Forty-five per cent of all cohort members received some form of workplace training in their jobs, with more than one-half of full-time workers receiving training.
- Young people who were no longer at school used employment agencies when looking for jobs more frequently than those still at school, but there were minor differences between these two groups in the frequency of using other job search activities.

#### *General Attitudes and Other Activities*

- Among cohort members no longer at school, 15 per cent of males and 20 per cent of females were not living in their parents' home.
- Most members of the cohort were happy with their lives, with little difference between those who were still at school and those who were no longer at school. Cohort members were least satisfied with the state of the economy and the way the country is being run, as they were in 2000.
- Between 2000 and 2001, cohort members increased their reading of newspapers and magazines and use of the Internet, but decreased their participation in regular sport and exercise, reading of books and visiting the library.
- Cohort members still at school scored higher than those no longer at school on a measure of curiosity, and lower on a scale of interest in work skills. Female members scored slightly higher on the curiosity measure, but there were no differences on the work skills measure.

#### **Participation in education/training and the labour force during 2001 by the Year 9 class of 1998**

	<b>Not in the labour force</b>	<b>Employed full-time</b>	<b>Employed part-time</b>	<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>Total</b>
Still at secondary school	39%	1%	41%	--	80%
Attending a TAFE institution	1%	<1%	1%	<1%	2%
Apprenticeship or traineeship	<1%	6%	<1%	<1%	7%
Doing some other study	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%
Not enrolled in education or training	1%	5%	3%	2%	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Cells may not sum to totals due to rounding.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report provides details of the experiences of the 1998 cohort of the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (abbreviated to LSAY Y98) at a single point in time. Information on this cohort was first collected in 1998, when these young people were Year 9 students in Australian schools. The reference period for this report is October 2001. Most members of the cohort were in their last year of secondary school, but some had already left school and entered the labour force. Information about the cohort's activities for 1999 is available in Fullarton (2001b) and for 2000 in Rothman (2001).

### **Purposes of the *Cohort Reports***

ACER provides a variety of reports as part of the LSAY program. *Research Reports* concentrate on particular groups of young people, such as early school leavers and university students, or on particular topics, such as part-time work by secondary students. *Technical Reports* provide technical detail on issues such as sampling, the construction of weights, question wording and frequencies for various parts of the LSAY project. These reports contain necessary background material for researchers using LSAY data, including codebooks and questionnaires. *Briefing Papers* summarise findings, often from a number of research reports on a related topic, prepared for a wide audience.

In 2000, ACER introduced *Cohort Reports* as part of a strategy to disseminate information from the LSAY project. These reports provide an overview of the education, training and labour market experiences of the whole cohort on a regular basis, contributing to discussions of issues that affect young people. For example, discussions of school participation rates are more informative when viewed in the context of the other forms of education and training that young people participate in, and of their experiences with school and the wider society.

By providing details about what members of the cohort are doing, Cohort Reports supplement data already available from government statistics on enrolments and apparent retention rates. Research Reports provide a deeper understanding of the cohorts' activities, experiences and aspirations. The Cohort Reports are also intended to help researchers and other users of LSAY to see the potential of the database. By detailing the experiences and activities of a cohort at a single point of time, each report will use a wider range of the variables than may be used in the focused research reports. Table 1 presents details of the cohort: the number of young persons responding in 2001, the numbers in the original sample in 1998 and the percentage retained.

### **Structure of the report**

Chapter 2 of this report outlines who was in the Year 9 class of 1998 in 2001 and gives a brief overview of activities in education and employment for the year. Chapter 3 reports on the education activities of the cohort, including the 80 per cent who were still attending secondary school, and those who had left. For both groups—those attending secondary school and those not attending secondary school—employment activities are reported in Chapter 4, and general attitudes are reported in Chapter 5.



**Table 1 Background characteristics of members of the LSAY Y98 cohort who responded to the telephone survey in 2001, and retention of sample**

	2001		1998		% retained in sample
	n	%	n	%	
<b>Total</b>	8,777	100%	14,117	100%	62%
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	4,309	49%	7,208	51%	60%
Female	4,443	51%	6,829	49%	65%
<b>Indigenous status</b>					
Indigenous	198	2%	447	3%	44%
Non-Indigenous	8,230	98%	12,926	97%	64%
<b>Student's country of birth</b>					
Australia	7,645	90%	12,040	90%	63%
Other	842	10%	1,411	10%	60%
<b>Main language spoken at home</b>					
English	7,593	89%	12,024	89%	63%
Other	913	11%	1,497	11%	61%
<b>Father's country of birth</b>					
Australia	5,818	69%	9,092	68%	64%
Other	2,627	31%	4,282	32%	61%
<b>Mother's country of birth</b>					
Australia	6,084	72%	9,514	71%	64%
Other	2,397	28%	3,936	29%	61%
<b>Father's level of education</b>					
Did not complete secondary	3,738	47%	5,955	48%	63%
Completed secondary	4,244	53%	6,567	52%	65%
<b>Mother's level of education</b>					
Did not complete secondary	3,660	45%	5,840	46%	63%
Completed secondary	4,419	55%	6,883	54%	64%
<b>Father's occupational group</b>					
Professionals and associate professionals	2,336	32%	3,604	32%	65%
Managers and administrators	1,188	16%	1,865	17%	64%
Clerical, sales and service	707	10%	1,032	9%	69%
Trades	1,686	23%	2,544	23%	66%
Production and transport	919	13%	1,460	13%	63%
Labourers and related	461	6%	758	7%	61%
<b>Mother's occupational group</b>					
Professionals and associate professionals	2,188	36%	3,375	37%	65%
Managers and administrators	253	4%	406	4%	62%
Clerical, sales and service	2,578	43%	3,826	42%	67%
Trades	259	4%	420	5%	62%
Production and transport	158	3%	246	3%	64%
Labourers and related	606	10%	932	10%	65%
<b>Achievement in literacy and numeracy (Year 9)</b>					
Lowest quartile	2,149	25%	3,503	25%	61%
Second quartile	2,188	25%	3,512	25%	62%
Third quartile	2,185	25%	3,480	25%	63%
Highest quartile	2,217	25%	3,543	25%	63%

Notes: Based on weighted data. Occupational groups based on the *Australian Standard Classification of Occupations*, second edition (ABS 1997, catalogue no. 1220.0).

## 2. THE YEAR 9 CLASS OF 1998 IN 2001

A nationally representative sample of 14,117 Year 9 students was selected in 1998 to form the second cohort of LSAY. The sample was constructed by randomly selecting two-to-three classes of Year 9 students from a sample of schools designed to represent each Australian State and school sector. In 1999, a questionnaire was mailed to each member of the sample, with 9,289 useable responses returned. The sample was rebuilt after that survey, and members were contacted by telephone in 2000. There were 9,548 sets of useable responses to the 2000 telephone questionnaire. In 2001, 8,777 persons responded to the telephone survey.

When the sample was first established, smaller States and Territories were oversampled and larger States were undersampled. For this report, sample weights are used to account for attrition caused by non-response and refusal, as well as the distribution of respondents across the States and Territories of Australia. Details of the sampling procedures used for the LSAY Y98 cohort are contained in Long and Fleming (2002).

### Overview of activities in 2001

Most members—80 per cent—of the Year 9 class of 1998 were still attending secondary school in 2001. A further 2 per cent of the cohort were attending TAFE, and 7 per cent were undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship. Eleven per cent of the Y98 cohort were not enrolled in education or training in 2001. Participation in education and training is shown in the rows of Table 2.

**Table 2 Participation in education/training and the labour force during 2001 by the Year 9 class of 1998**

	<b>Not in the labour force</b>	<b>Employed full-time</b>	<b>Employed part-time</b>	<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>Total</b>
Still at secondary school	39%	1%	41%	- -	80%
Attending a TAFE institution	1%	<1%	1%	<1%	2%
Apprenticeship or traineeship	<1%	6%	<1%	<1%	7%
Doing some other study	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%
Not enrolled in education or training	1%	5%	3%	2%	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Cells may not sum to totals due to rounding.

Forty-one per cent of the LSAY Y98 cohort were not in the labour force in 2001, a decrease of five percentage points from 2000. Nearly all of these young people were still at school, with some attending TAFE, undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship, or pursuing further study elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 1 per cent of those not in the labour force were not engaged in any form of study. Twelve per cent of the LSAY Y98 cohort were employed full-time, including some (1%) who were still at school; in 2000, 8 per cent were in full-time employment. Forty-five per cent of the cohort were employed part-time. Approximately 3 per cent of the cohort were unemployed; this represents one in seven of those no longer at school, the same rate as in 2000. Participation in the labour force is shown in the columns of Table 2.

The following chapter provides more detail on the education and training activities of members of the LSAY Y98 cohort during 2001. Chapter 4 contains details of the cohort's employment and work-related activities.

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<sup>1</sup> In this report, young people attending secondary school are considered 'not in the labour force' if they are not employed. Official unemployment statistics generally disregard education attendance if the person is actively looking for work and available to start; however, because of the timing of the LSAY survey (toward the end of the school year), and especially considering the schooling level of the Y98 cohort (most in Year 12), involvement in secondary education will preclude these young people from participation in the labour force. Chapter 4 includes information on young people still attending school and searching for employment, but there is no implication that they are 'unemployed'.

### 3. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Of the LSAY Y98 cohort across Australia, 80 per cent were still at school, but this figure varied by location (see Table 3). The Northern Territory and Tasmania, for example, had the lowest school retention rate of all jurisdictions, with 69 and 70 per cent of the cohort, respectively, still at school. These two jurisdictions also had the highest rates of participation in apprenticeships and traineeships, at 9 and 10 per cent respectively. Some students changed States between Years 9 and 12, and some were able to remain in their schools and undertake courses from another State (see Figure 1). This is most common in the Australian Capital Territory, where students may undertake courses toward the New South Wales Higher School Certificate.

Cohort members who were attending government schools in 1998 were less likely than those from other schools to be enrolled in a secondary school in 2001, but were more likely to be undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship, or undertaking some other study. Cohort members from government schools were less likely than others to be studying at all during 2001.

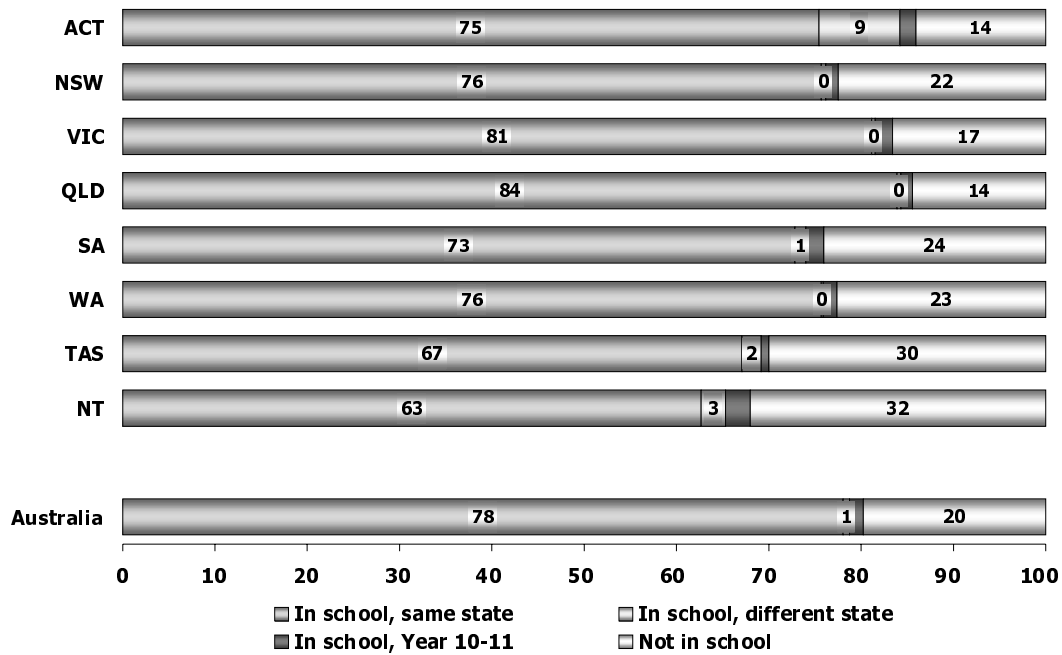
**Table 3 Education activities of LSAY Y98 cohort in 2001, by State and sector of school attended in Year 9**

	<b>Number in cohort, 2001</b>	<b>Attending secondary school</b>	<b>Apprentice or traineeship</b>	<b>Attending TAFE or other study</b>	<b>Not currently studying</b>
<b>State of school attendance</b>					
Australian Capital Territory	170	86%	3%	2%	9%
New South Wales	2,868	78%	8%	3%	12%
Victoria	2,065	83%	6%	2%	8%
Queensland	1,759	86%	4%	2%	9%
South Australia	670	76%	5%	4%	15%
Western Australia	929	77%	6%	5%	12%
Tasmania	241	70%	10%	3%	17%
Northern Territory	76	69%	9%	7%	15%
<b>Sector of school attendance</b>					
Government	5,852	76%	8%	3%	13%
Catholic	1,780	86%	5%	1%	7%
Independent	1,145	90%	3%	2%	5%
<b>Australia</b>	<b>8,777</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>11%</b>

Notes: 'Independent' schools are non-government, non-Catholic schools. Cells may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Based on weighted data. Numbers may not sum to totals for Australia due to rounding.

#### Secondary school

In 2001, 80 per cent of the LSAY Y98 cohort were still attending secondary school, a decrease from the 99 per cent who were still at school in 1999 (Fullarton, 2001b) and the 86 per cent in 2000 (Rothman, 2001). Nearly all of those who were still at school (98%) were enrolled in Year 12. Two per cent of those still at school were in Year 11, and a small number were in Year 10. Approximately 1 per cent of the cohort had left school in 1999 or 2000 and returned to school during 2001, although some had left again during the year; some of these young people were enrolled in Year 13 programs in their States.



**Figure 1** Distribution of school attendance in 2001, by State of school in Year 9

### Background characteristics of cohort members still at school

The background characteristics of members of the LSAY Y98 cohort who were still at school are similar to the characteristics of the full sample in 1998 (see Table 4), but with some important changes. Males constituted 47 per cent of those still at school, down from 49 per cent in 1998 and 1999, and down from 48 per cent in 2000. Young persons from the lowest achievement quartile represented 20 per cent of the cohort still at school in 2001, down from 25 per cent in 1998 and 21 per cent in 2000.

Overall, 80 per cent of the cohort were still at school in 2001, but the retention rate was not the same across all groups. Retention for females was 84 per cent, compared to 76 per cent for males. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2002) reported a nine percentage point difference between the female apparent retention rate and the male apparent retention rate for the 2001 Year 12 cohort. Of students in the top achievement quartile, 94 per cent were still at school, compared to 64 per cent in the lowest quartile. Students who were born in Australia had lower retention rates than students born overseas. Only 57 per cent of Indigenous students in the sample were still at school in 2001.

### Beyond Year 12

LSAY Y98 cohort members who were in Year 12 during 2001 were asked to give their plans for the first year after school. The majority (62%) said that they planned to go to university; 14 per cent planned to study at a TAFE college; and 10 per cent planned to undertake training through an apprenticeship, traineeship or another course (see Table 5).

**Table 4 Background characteristics of members of the LSAY Y98 cohort attending secondary school in 2001**

	Number at school, 2001	% of those at school, 2001	Retention rate
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	3,289	47%	76%
Female	3,736	53%	84%
<b>Indigenous status</b>			
Indigenous	112	2%	57%
Non-Indigenous	6,711	98%	82%
<b>Student's country of birth</b>			
Australia	6,125	89%	80%
Other	741	11%	88%
<b>Main language spoken at home</b>			
English	6,086	89%	80%
Other	787	11%	86%
<b>Father's country of birth</b>			
Australia	4,625	68%	79%
Other	2,214	32%	84%
<b>Mother's country of birth</b>			
Australia	4,807	70%	79%
Other	2,055	30%	86%
<b>Father's level of education</b>			
Did not complete secondary	2,831	44%	76%
Completed secondary	3,663	56%	86%
<b>Mother's level of education</b>			
Did not complete secondary	2,809	43%	77%
Completed secondary	3,758	57%	85%
<b>Father's occupational group</b>			
Professionals and associate professionals	2,097	35%	90%
Managers and administrators	997	17%	84%
Clerical, sales and service	586	10%	83%
Trades	1,302	22%	77%
Production and transport	663	11%	72%
Labourers and related	342	6%	74%
<b>Mother's occupational group</b>			
Professionals and associate professionals	1,936	39%	88%
Managers and administrators	210	4%	83%
Clerical, sales and service	2,117	42%	82%
Trades	198	4%	76%
Production and transport	115	2%	73%
Labourers and related	438	9%	72%
<b>Achievement in literacy and numeracy (Year 9)</b>			
Lowest quartile	1,370	20%	64%
Second quartile	1,704	24%	78%
Third quartile	1,867	27%	85%
Highest quartile	2,081	30%	94%

Notes: Based on weighted data. Occupational groups based on the *Australian Standard Classification of Occupations*, second edition (ABS 1997, catalogue no. 1220.0).

**Table 5 Year 12 students' plans for the next year**

	<b>% of those in Year 12, 2001 (n=7,027)</b>
Go to university	62%
Go to a TAFE college	14%
Other course/training elsewhere	2%
Get an apprenticeship	6%
Get a traineeship	2%
Look for work/get a job	10%
Other	1%
Don't know	3%

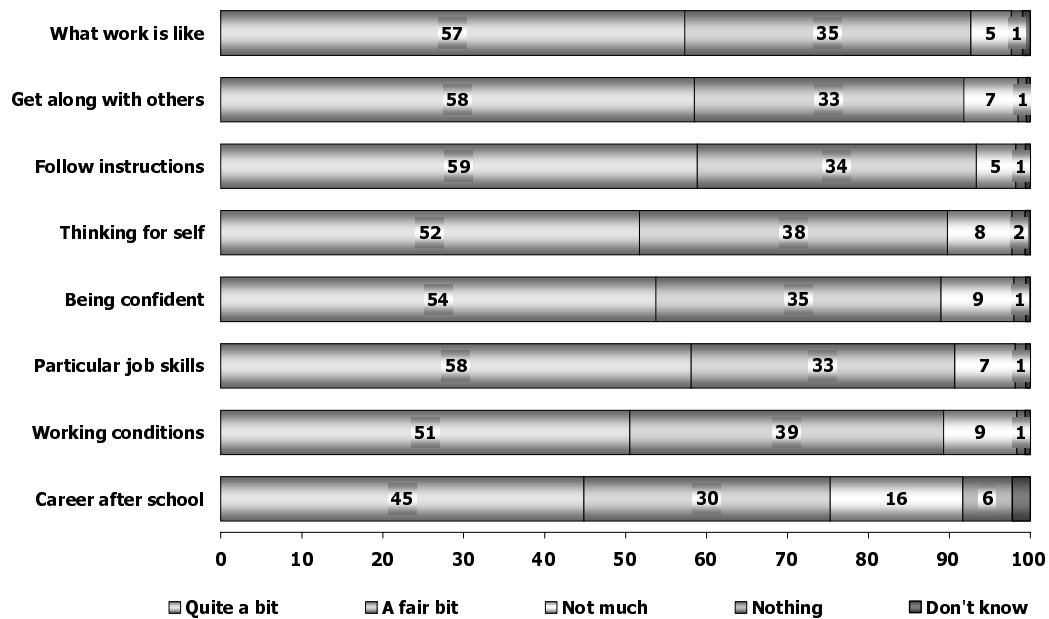
### Participation in vocational education and training while at school

Twenty-three per cent of the LSAY Y98 cohort who were still at school were participating in vocational education and training (VET), undertaking either subjects offered through TAFE institutions or subjects offered at their schools (see Table 6). When this cohort's Year 11 school experiences are included, 32 per cent of the cohort have taken some VET as part of their school study. This is an increase in VET participation compared to the LSAY Y95 cohort, which had 16 per cent undertaking VET studies while in Year 12, and 25 per cent overall (Fullarton, 2001a; Fullarton & Ainley, 2000). Among VET in Schools students, 3 per cent were studying a VET subject as part of an apprenticeship, and 9 per cent as part of a traineeship. Sixty per cent of students enrolled in VET subjects undertook some workplace learning.

**Table 6 Participation in VET subjects during 2001 by the LSAY Y98 cohort still at school, by gender**

	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
<b>Taking a VET subject (TAFE or non-TAFE)</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>837</b>
TAFE study only	440	468
Non-TAFE VET study only	443	489
Both TAFE and non-TAFE study	125	120
Subject involves workplace learning	441	518
Subject is part of apprenticeship	29	9
Subject is part of traineeship	61	84

Cohort members who had already undertaken workplace learning as part of their VET subjects were asked to comment on its benefits. On a four-point scale that ranged from 'nothing' to 'quite a bit', cohort members most frequently said that they learned 'quite a bit' about general skills—how to get along with others and how to follow instructions—and specific work-related skills—what work is like and job skills particular to the workplaces in which they were located. More than 20 per cent said that they learned 'not much' or 'nothing' about a career after school. Students' comments about workplace learning are presented in Figure 2.



*Note:* For 'Don't know', all percentages are 2% or less, and are not identified.

**Figure 2 Students' perceptions of benefits of workplace learning**

### School leavers, 2001

Since they were last interviewed at the end of 2000, 7 per cent of the LSAY Y98 cohort had left school without completing Year 12. Background characteristics of school leavers are contained in Table 7. These young people were asked two sets of questions regarding their decision to leave school. First, they were asked about important influences on their decision. Second, they were asked the main reason for leaving school. Important reasons influencing the decision to leave school were the desire to get a job or an apprenticeship: More than one in five (22%) had left to start a job or apprenticeship.

### Reasons for leaving school

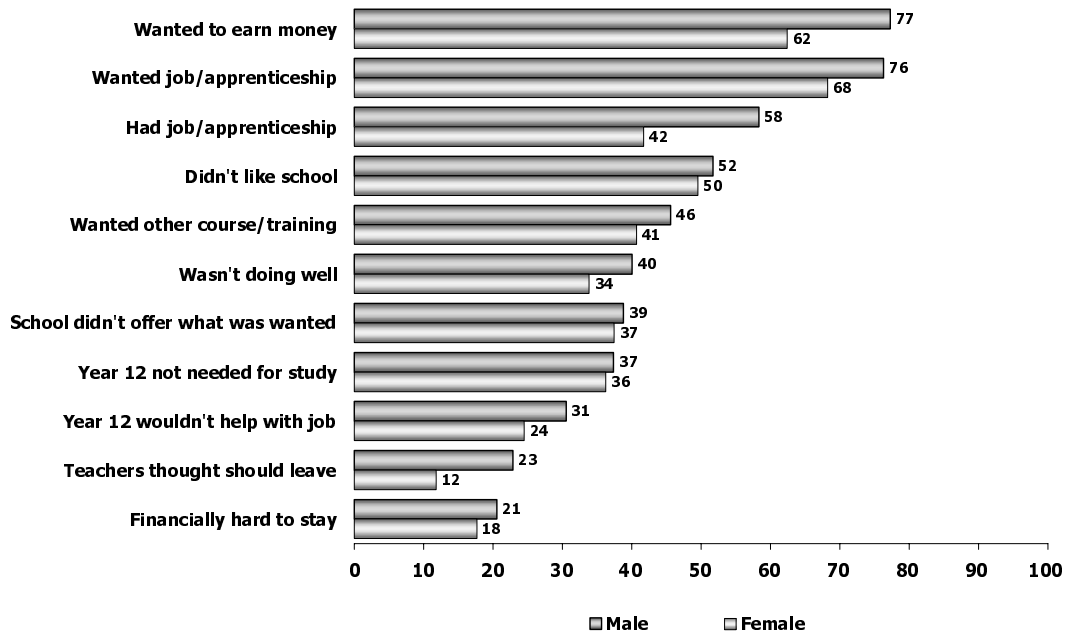
For each of the reasons seen as important influences on the decision to leave school before completing Year 12, males more frequently than females cited them as important reasons (see Figure 3), indicating that males provided more reasons for leaving school. As the main reason for leaving, females most frequently (17%) said that they did not like school; males most frequently (28%) said that they had a job or apprenticeship to take up. Forty-three per cent of those who left school during 2001 (46% of males and 38% of females) had studied a VET in Schools subject during 2000.



**Table 7 Background characteristics of members of the LSAY Y98 cohort who left school during 2001, before completing Year 12**

	Number	% of cohort who left school in 2001	% of 2001 school leavers
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	366	8%	58%
Female	266	6%	42%
<b>Indigenous status</b>			
Indigenous	21	11%	4%
Non-Indigenous	569	7%	96%
<b>Student's country of birth</b>			
Australia	532	7%	90%
Other	56	7%	10%
<b>Main language spoken at home</b>			
English	535	7%	91%
Other	56	6%	9%
<b>Father's country of birth</b>			
Australia	415	7%	71%
Other	169	6%	29%
<b>Mother's country of birth</b>			
Australia	449	7%	76%
Other	138	6%	24%
<b>Father's level of education</b>			
Did not complete secondary	292	8%	55%
Completed secondary	239	6%	45%
<b>Mother's level of education</b>			
Did not complete secondary	274	7%	51%
Completed secondary	261	6%	48%
<b>Father's occupational group</b>			
Professionals and associate professionals	103	4%	22%
Managers and administrators	51	4%	11%
Clerical, sales and service	44	6%	10%
Trades	121	7%	26%
Production and transport	100	11%	21%
Labourers and related	48	10%	10%
<b>Mother's occupational group</b>			
Professionals and associate professionals	106	5%	28%
Managers and administrators	12	5%	3%
Clerical, sales and service	165	6%	43%
Trades	20	8%	5%
Production and transport	26	16%	7%
Labourers and related	57	9%	15%
<b>Achievement in literacy and numeracy (Year 9)</b>			
Lowest quartile	276	13%	44%
Second quartile	171	8%	27%
Third quartile	117	4%	18%
Highest quartile	68	3%	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>100%</b>

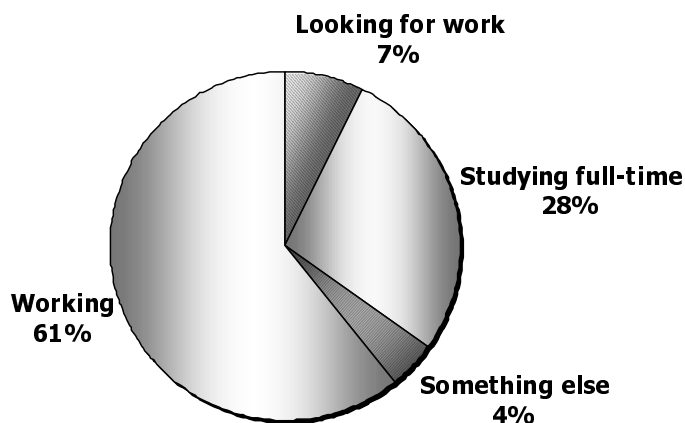
Notes: Based on weighted data. Occupational groups based on the *Australian Standard Classification of Occupations*, second edition (ABS 1997, catalogue no. 1220.0).



**Figure 3 Proportion of school leavers who said each reason was important in the decision to leave school before completing Year 12, by gender**

**Main activity since leaving school**

Sixty-one per cent of those members of the LSAY Y98 cohort who left school during 2001 have been working as their main activity (see Figure 4). More than one-quarter (28%) have been studying full-time. The others have been looking for work (7%) or doing ‘something else’ (4%). These figures do not include those whose main activity was working but may have been studying for some time during the year.



**Figure 4 Main activity of members of the LSAY Y98 cohort who left school during 2001**

Among all cohort members who left school during 2001—including those who had completed Year 12—29 per cent were undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship, and 18 per cent were undertaking some other form of study or training in 2001. The remaining 53 per cent were not doing any study or training during the year. These rates varied by gender, with a majority of apprenticeships held by males (see Table 8).

**Table 8 Study activities of members of the LSAY Y98 cohort who left school during 2001, by gender**

	<b>Males (n=394)</b>	<b>Females (n=297)</b>
Full- or part-time study	14%	23%
Apprenticeship or traineeship	38%	18%
No current study	48%	59%

By the end of 2001, a cumulative total of 20 per cent of the LSAY Y98 cohort had left secondary school without completing Year 12. Of those who had left school, 59 per cent were male, 5 per cent were Indigenous Australians, 94 per cent were born in Australia, 92 per cent used English as their main language at home, and 45 per cent had scored in the lowest achievement quartile in Year 9. Males were more likely than females to have left school, Indigenous students were more likely than non-Indigenous students to have left school, and Australian-born students were more likely than those born overseas to have left school.

### Summary

This section provided information on the education and training activities of the LSAY Y98 cohort in 2001. Four out of five were still at school, but there were differential patterns of school retention, with the following groups showing higher retention rates than their counterparts: females, non-Indigenous Australians, those in the highest achievement quartile, those born outside Australia, those whose main language was a language other than English, those whose parents were born overseas, and those whose parents had completed secondary education. VET in Schools participation was higher than among the LSAY Y95 cohort, with nearly one-third of Y98 cohort members having taken a VET subject in either Year 11 or Year 12.

During 2001, 7 per cent of the LSAY Y98 cohort left school without completing Year 12. Males constituted 58 per cent of the group, and 44 per cent of school leavers had scored in the lowest quartile on the achievement tests administered in Year 9. This group had left school to get jobs and earn their own money, with 22 per cent of leavers going directly into a job or apprenticeship. Among those who were no longer at secondary school during 2001—including those who had left school in earlier years—47 per cent were in some form of study, including apprenticeships, traineeships, and university or TAFE study.

## 4. EMPLOYMENT

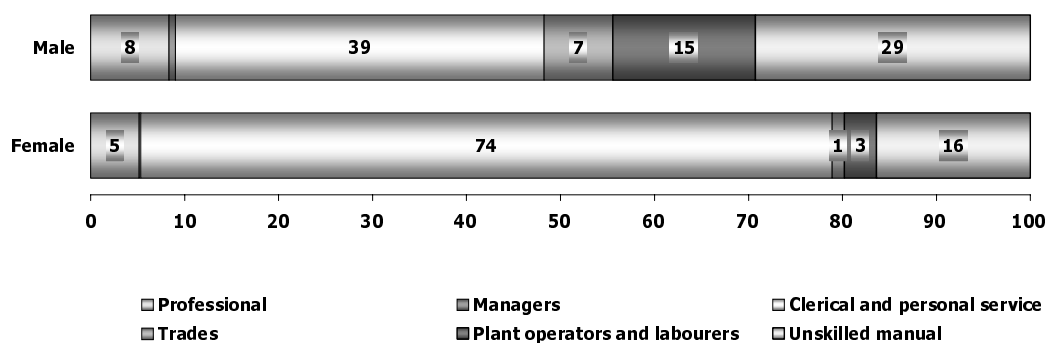
This section concentrates on cohort members' employment activities, providing information on young people's occupations, earnings, hours worked, job satisfaction, workplace training<sup>2</sup>, job search activities, and some comparisons with 2000.

### Employment and school students

Fifty-one per cent of the cohort who were still at school in 2001 were also working, with about 2 per cent working 21 hours or more. Of those still at school, 53 per cent of males and 44 per cent of females were not working at all (see Table 9). On average, male student-workers had gross earnings of \$103 and worked 11 hours per week, compared to female student-workers, who earned \$88 and worked 9 hours per week.

**Table 9** Employment activities of cohort members still at school, by gender

	Males (n=3,289)	Females (n=3,736)	Total (n=7,044)
Not working	53%	44%	49%
Hours worked per week in main job			
Working 1-10 hours	29%	39%	34%
Working 11-20 hours	15%	15%	15%
Working 21 hours or more	3%	1%	2%
Mean gross weekly income	\$103	\$88	\$94



*Note:* For 'Managers', all percentages are 2% or less, and are not identified.

**Figure 5** Distribution of occupation groups for members of the LSAY Y98 cohort who were working while in school during 2001, by gender

The clerical, sales and service area, which includes the retail and hospitality industries, employed more than one-half of student workers: 74 per cent of female students who worked and 39 per cent of males who worked were in this group (see Figure 5). Another 30 per cent of working students (20% of females and 44% of males) had jobs as plant operators or labourers, or in unskilled manual occupations.

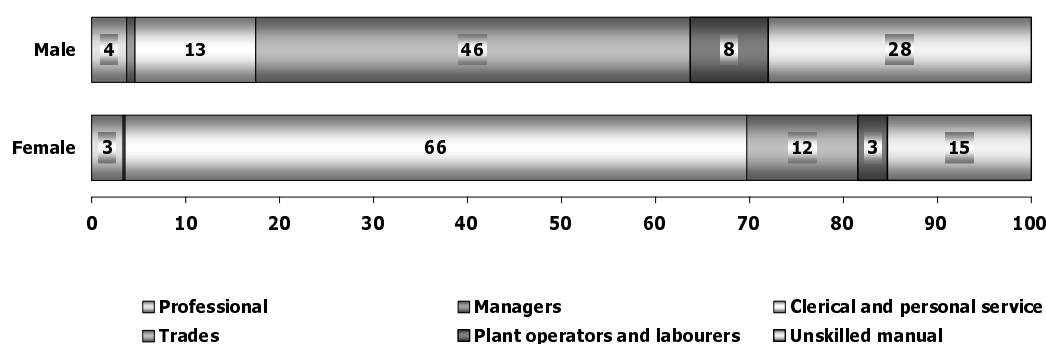
<sup>2</sup> In this section, 'workplace training' refers to learning that is offered to employees as part of one's job. It should not be confused with 'workplace learning' that is part of a vocational education and training course for students.

## Employment and those not attending secondary school

Among those no longer at school, males worked on average 37 hours per week and females worked 31 hours per week, similar to the times reported by school leavers in 2000. The number of hours worked is reflected in the average weekly income, with males earning a gross salary of \$324 per week and females earning \$243 per week (see Table 10).

**Table 10 Average number of hours worked and gross weekly earnings in main job, by gender and occupation group, for LSAY Y98 cohort members not attending secondary school, 2001**

Occupation group	Males		Females	
	Hours worked	Gross earnings	Hours worked	Gross earnings
Managers/professionals	37	\$334	36	\$310
Clerical and personal service	25	\$238	30	\$242
Trades	41	\$321	37	\$262
Plant operators and labourers	36	\$323	17	\$127
Unskilled manual	37	\$370	30	\$241
<b>All groups</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>\$324</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>\$243</b>



*Note:* For 'Managers', all percentages are 1% or less, and are not identified.

**Figure 6 Distribution of occupation groups for members of the LSAY Y98 cohort who were working and no longer attending secondary school in 2001, by gender**

The distribution of jobs held by males who were no longer at school was different from the distribution of jobs held by females (see Figure 6), and different from the distribution of jobs held by students shown in Figure 5. Forty-six per cent of males were employed in the trades, and 28 per cent were working in unskilled manual labour. Two-thirds of females (66%) were employed in clerical, sales and service positions. In their analysis of outcomes for non-completers of school, Lamb, Dwyer and Wyn (2000) found that in the mid-1990s, 46 per cent of males were employed in trades four years after they had left school, and 31 per cent were in unskilled labour positions; 76 per cent of females were in clerical, sales and related positions.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Changes to the coding of Australian occupations should be considered in these comparisons.

## Supplemental employment

Eight per cent of employed young people (9% of those in school; 7% of those not in school) were in more than one job during 2001. For both males and females still attending secondary school, a second job increased the average number of hours worked from nine to fifteen. Among those no longer at school, males increased their average hours from 29 to 48 with an additional job, while females increased their hours from 15 to 33. For males and females, on average, this was a change from working part-time (less than 30 hours per week) to an equivalent of full-time work (see Table 11).

**Table 11 Average number of hours usually worked in main job and all jobs in 2001, for those with more than one job, by school status and gender**

School status	Gender	n	Mean hours worked, main job	Mean hours worked, all jobs
<b>In school</b>	Male	123	9	15
	Female	190	9	15
	Total	312	9	15
<b>Not in school</b>	Male	58	29	48
	Female	33	15	33
	Total	91	24	42

## Part-time workers and full-time work

As young people enter the labour market, they are not always able to obtain full-time employment. Those who are still attending school, however, may not be available for full-time work, so they take on part-time employment while they study. Table 9 showed that one-sixth of cohort members still attending school were working more than ten hours per week in 2001. All young people who were working part-time (less than 30 hours per week) were asked if they preferred working full-time. Just over one-half (52%) of those not in school said they would prefer full-time employment; nearly all (92%) of cohort members in school, however, said they preferred to remain in part-time employment (see Table 12).

**Table 12 Part-time workers and preferences for full-time work, by school status**

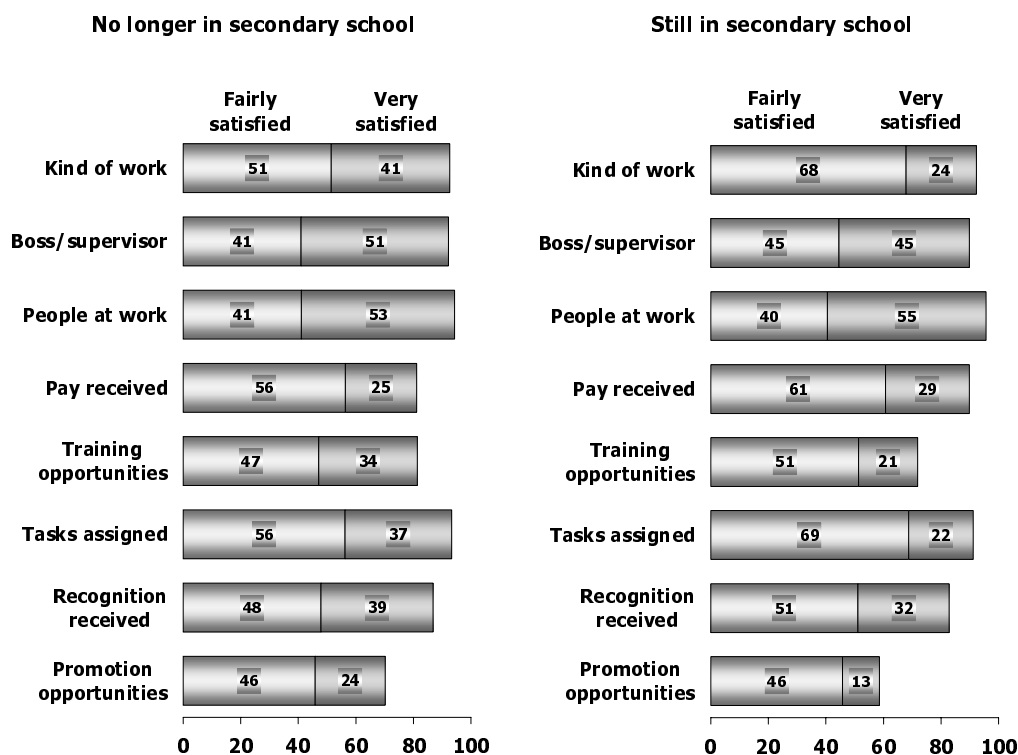
	Not in school (n=294)	In school (n=3,489)
Prefer full-time	52%	8%
Prefer part-time	48%	92%

## Job satisfaction

Members of the LSAY Y98 cohort who were employed while attending school during 2001 saw their jobs as a temporary means for learning about work and earning some money. Even though they were satisfied with many aspects of their jobs, only 9 per cent of this group believed they would like to continue in their jobs as a career, an increase of two percentage points from 2000. For those no longer at school, however, more than one-half (54%) believed the job they were working in was the type of job they would like as a career (see Table 13).

**Table 13 Proportion of cohort members who saw themselves continuing in their current jobs as careers, by school status**

		Not in school	In school
Is the job you have now the type of job you would like as a career?	Yes	54%	9%
	No	41%	90%
	Don't know	5%	2%

**Figure 7 Proportion of the LSAY Y98 cohort fairly satisfied or very satisfied with specific aspects of their work, by school status**

All cohort members who were working said they were satisfied with most aspects of their work, citing satisfaction with the people they worked with more frequently than any other aspect of their jobs (see Figure 7). All workers were least satisfied (and most dissatisfied) with opportunities for promotion, but 12 per cent did not believe it was appropriate to respond to that item. Those who had left school were generally satisfied with all aspects of their work, with more than 90 per cent reporting satisfaction with the kind of work they did, with their supervisors, with the other people they worked with, and with the tasks they were assigned.

### Job benefits

There is some concern that young people are being exploited in the labour market by taking employment in positions that do not offer the same entitlements that are available to more experienced workers. Table 14 shows that 73 per cent of cohort members no longer in school and working full-time were in jobs that included paid

holiday and sick leave entitlements. Of those who were no longer in school and were working part-time, only 21 per cent were working in jobs with these entitlements. Approximately 86 per cent of cohort members still in school were working in jobs that did not offer paid annual leave or sick leave; the vast majority were part-time jobs. Among those who were still at school and worked more than 30 hours per week, only 4 per cent said they were entitled to paid annual leave or sick leave.

**Table 14 Percentage of cohort members entitled to holidays and sick pay in their jobs, by school status**

School status		Not in school		In school	
		Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Employment status					
Weighted n		920	325	70	3,419
Does your job entitle you to any form of paid annual leave or sick leave, apart from public holidays?	Yes	73%	21%	4%	11%
	No	24%	73%	96%	86%
	Don't know	3%	7%	0%	3%

**Table 15 Changes in aspects of cohort members' work, for those remaining in the same job between 2000 and 2001, by gender**

Comparison between 2000 and 2001	Males (n=1,235)	Females (n=1,592)
<b>Pay rate</b>		
More per hour	75%	76%
Less per hour	2%	3%
About the same	23%	21%
<b>Level of skill needed in job</b>		
More skilled	41%	36%
Less skilled	1%	1%
About the same	58%	63%
<b>Level of responsibility in job</b>		
More responsibility	66%	58%
Less responsibility	1%	1%
About the same	33%	41%
<b>Promotion</b>		
Yes	18%	16%
No	81%	83%
Don't know	1%	1%

### Comparisons of employment in 2000 and 2001

More than 2,800 young persons were employed in the same position they held in the previous year. They were asked four questions comparing conditions in 2001 with conditions in 2000 (see Table 15). Three-quarters of both males and females were being paid at a higher hourly rate than in 2000, 41 per cent of males and 36 per cent of females said that their jobs required more skill, and 66 per cent of males and 58 per cent of females said that there was a greater level of responsibility required in their jobs. Between 2000 and 2001, 18 per cent of males and 16 per cent of females received a promotion.



## Workplace training

Workplace training allows individuals to improve their skills related to their current employment and their career options. Long and Lamb (2002) examined changes in workplace training between the 1980s and 1990s, using cohorts from the Australian Longitudinal Survey (ALS) and the Australian Youth Survey (AYS). They found that, consistent with other research, part-time workers in the ALS and AYS cohorts received less workplace training than full-time workers did. Although many of the young persons in the Y98 cohort have not established themselves yet in their workplaces, the relationship between hours worked and receipt of workplace training is beginning to emerge, as shown in Table 16. Approximately 44 per cent of those working part-time—which includes most of the school students with jobs—received some sort of workplace training, and 53 per cent of full-time workers received some training.

**Table 16 Workplace training for salaried/waged workers, by hours worked per week in main job**

Hours worked per week	n	No training	Any training	Type of workplace training		
				Classroom based	Outside work-place	Other job training
1-10 hours per week	2,393	57%	43%	20%	5%	29%
11-20 hours per week	1,156	56%	44%	22%	4%	31%
21-30 hours per week	220	55%	45%	16%	5%	32%
31-40 hours per week	640	49%	51%	19%	13%	36%
41+ hours per week	268	45%	55%	23%	9%	40%
Total	4,677	55%	45%	20%	6%	31%

Note: Workers may have received more than one type of workplace training. The sum of each type of workplace training is greater than the figure reported for any type of workplace training.

## Searching for employment

Eleven per cent of cohort members were not working but looking for employment at the time they were interviewed. Three-quarters of this group were still in school at the time, and they used more passive methods of searching for work than cohort members who were no longer at school (see Table 17). Both groups—those not in school and those in school—most commonly read advertisements to look for work, but those no longer in school used Centrelink, Job Network, other employment agencies and factory noticeboards much more frequently than those in school did.

**Table 17 Job search activities, by school status**

<b>Job search activity</b>	<b>Not in school (n=253)</b>	<b>In school (n=750)</b>
Read advertisements	86%	84%
Answered advertisements	65%	49%
Contacted employers	75%	68%
Registered with Centrelink	59%	9%
Centrelink touchscreens	72%	19%
Contact Job Network member	60%	17%
Other employment agency	47%	19%
Factory noticeboards	22%	10%
Friends or relatives	61%	59%
Advice from school/other	20%	41%
Posted resume on internet	14%	8%
Other recent job search activity	4%	5%

The 11 per cent of cohort members who were looking for work during 2001 were also asked if they had personally encountered any problems in finding a job (see Table 18). More than two-thirds of male (68%) and female (69%) cohort members most frequently said that they experienced problems because there were not enough jobs available. There was also little difference between the percentage of males (53%) and the percentage of females (52%) who reported that their lack of work experience was a problem. Females reported more frequently than males that they were considered too young for a job, and that they had unsuitable education or training. Males reported literacy problems, poor interview skills and transport problems more frequently than females did. Overall, 25 per cent of males and 16 per cent of females reported no problems.

**Table 18 Problems experienced during job search, by gender**

	<b>Males (n=536)</b>	<b>Females (n=467)</b>
Not enough jobs available	68%	69%
Not enough work experience	53%	52%
Unsuitable education/training	30%	40%
Considered too young	14%	24%
Being male/female	8%	4%
Racial/ethnic background	3%	<1%
Health/disability	5%	5%
Childcare problems	0%	1%
No suitable transport	30%	22%
Literacy problems	7%	2%
Numeracy problems	4%	5%
Poor interview skills	16%	10%
Poorly written job applications	8%	6%
Lack confidence	16%	16%
No problems reported	25%	16%

**Summary**

Between 2000 and 2001, the proportion of young people at school who were also participating in the labour force increased from 48 per cent to 51 per cent. For school students who were working, the occupational distributions were similar to the distributions in the previous year, with most working in clerical, sales and service positions. For those no longer at school, two-thirds of females were working in clerical, sales and service positions, while 46 per cent of males were working in trades. This chapter also provided information on young people's satisfaction with work, workplace training and job search activities.

## 5. GENERAL ATTITUDES AND ACTIVITIES

This chapter reports on social aspects of young people's lives: where they live, how they feel about life, and the activities in which they participate outside of school and work. All members of the cohort answered these items, regardless of whether they were attending school. The final section briefly reports results from items related to intellectual curiosity, which were administered for the first time in LSAY during 2001.

### Place of residence

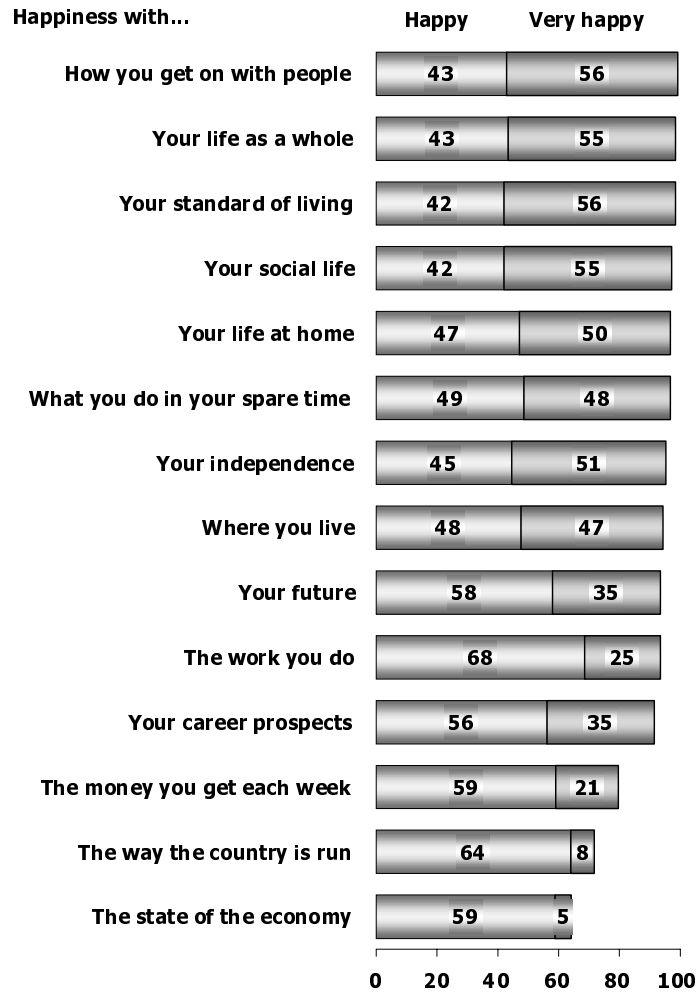
Hillman and Marks (2002) reported on leaving home among the four earlier LSAY cohorts of young people, and found that young people over age 18 who were engaged in full-time education moved out of the parental home later than those who were no longer studying. The median age for LSAY Y98 cohort members in 2001 was 17. However, there were already clear residential differences between those no longer at school and those still at school. Ninety-six per cent of those at school were still living in their parents' home. Among those no longer at school, however, 15 per cent of males and 20 per cent of females had already moved out of home (see Table 19).

**Table 19 Cohort members' place of residence, by school status and gender**

	Not in school		In school	
	Male (n=1,021)	Female (n=707)	Male (n=3,289)	Female (n=3,736)
Parents' home	85%	80%	97%	95%
With other relatives	4%	3%	1%	1%
Private house as boarder	2%	1%	1%	1%
Shared house/flat	6%	12%	1%	1%
Hostel	<1%	0%	<1%	<1%
Somewhere else	3%	3%	1%	1%

### Happiness with aspects of their lives

All members of the LSAY Y98 cohort were asked about their happiness with various aspects of their lives. Results for 2001 were very similar to results for 2000. Nearly all (99%) responded that they were happy or very happy with how they get on with other people, and 98 per cent said they were happy or very happy with their lives overall and their standard of living (see Figure 8). Seventy-two per cent were pleased with the way the country was being run and 64 per cent were pleased with the state of the economy, similar to cohort members' responses in 2000.



**Figure 8 Proportion of the LSAY Y98 cohort who were happy or very happy with various aspects of their lives in 2001**

### Spare time activities

During their spare time, members of the LSAY Y98 cohort were involved in a variety of leisure activities in 2001 (see Table 20). Eighty-eight per cent of cohort members said they read newspapers or magazines in their spare time at least once a week, which is a slight increase from 2000. Sport/exercise was another popular activity, with 83 per cent of the cohort participating at least once a week, a slight decrease from 2000. Thirty-eight per cent of cohort members said they never go to the library, and 23 per cent never read books in their spare time; both figures represent increases since 2000. One in ten said they never use the Internet, down from 14 per cent in 2000.

**Table 20 Cohort participation in spare-time leisure activities in 2001, by gender**

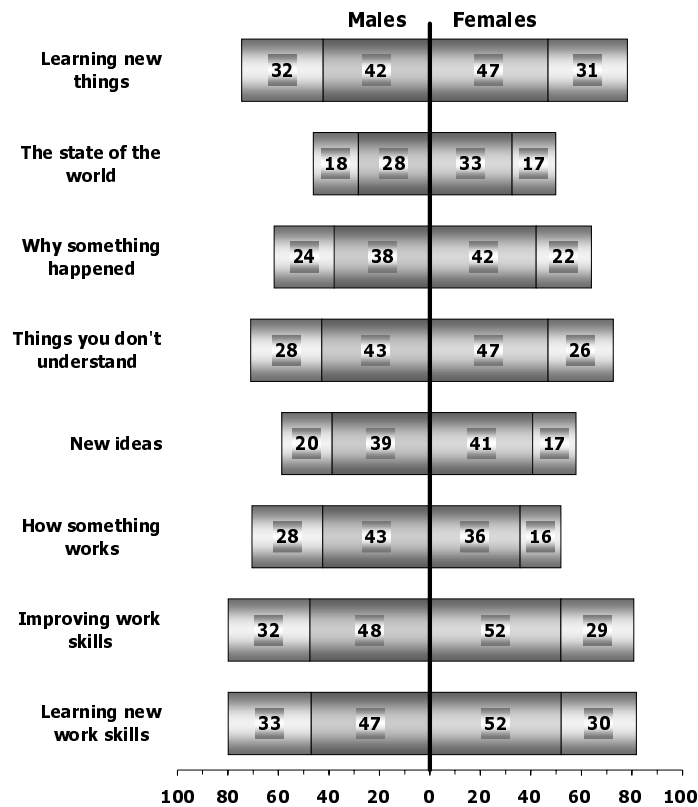
	<b>At least once a week</b>	<b>At least once a month</b>	<b>At least once every 3 months</b>	<b>At least once a year</b>	<b>Less often than once a year</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b>Go to the library</b>						
Males	13%	19%	9%	12%	4%	43%
Females	17%	24%	14%	10%	3%	32%
<b>Read books</b>						
Males	29%	19%	12%	9%	2%	29%
Females	38%	22%	13%	8%	1%	18%
<b>Read newspapers or magazines</b>						
Males	90%	6%	1%	<1%	<1%	2%
Females	86%	10%	2%	1%	<1%	2%
<b>Use the Internet</b>						
Males	76%	10%	3%	1%	<1%	10%
Females	73%	13%	3%	1%	<1%	10%
<b>Play sport or do regular exercise</b>						
Males	88%	5%	1%	<1%	<1%	5%
Females	79%	9%	2%	1%	<1%	9%
<b>Take part in any community based activity</b>						
Males	14%	7%	3%	5%	2%	69%
Females	14%	8%	4%	5%	1%	68%

## Interests

In 2001, cohort members were asked a number of items about specific interests, based on the curiosity scales of Ainley (1986). They responded to six items relating to 'curiosity' and two items relating to 'work skills'. Response options ranged from 'none' to 'a great deal'. For the Interest: Curiosity subscale, the maximum score was 30; for the Interest: Work Skills subscale, the maximum score was 10. The mean scores on the subscales are shown in Table 21. Cohort members who were still in school scored slightly higher than those not in school on the curiosity items, and slightly lower on the work skills items. Within these groups, there was little overall difference between male and female cohort members. Figure 9 shows the percentage of males and females who said they had 'a lot' or 'a great deal' of interest in specific ideas. On most items, there was little difference between the percentage of males and the percentage of females responding 'a lot' or 'a great deal'; however, 70 per cent of males and 52 per cent of females said they were interested in finding out how something works.

**Table 21 Cohort members' mean scores on interest scales, by school status and gender**

<b>School status</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Interest: Curiosity</b>	<b>Interest: Work skills</b>
Not in school	Male	1,021	21.9	8.3
	Female	707	21.6	8.2
In school	Male	3,289	22.5	8.1
	Female	3,736	22.3	8.1



**Figure 9 Percentage of LSAY Y98 cohort who said they were interested in selected ideas 'a lot' or 'a great deal', by gender**

### Summary

This section provided information on the general attitudes of members of the LSAY Y98 cohort. Members of the cohort were happy with the social aspects of their lives, and were most unhappy with aspects outside their direct control—the running of the country and the state of the economy. On most aspects of their lives, there were only minor differences between those still at school and those who had left school before completing Year 12, and little change since 2000. A greater proportion of cohort members than in 2000 used the Internet and read newspapers or magazines at least once a week in their spare time, but fewer were playing sport, going to the library or reading books for pleasure.

## 6. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This Cohort Report has presented an overview of what the Year 9 class of 1998—the LSAY Y98 cohort—were doing during 2001. Of the cohort, 80 per cent were still at school, enrolled in Year 12. Most of those who had left school before completing Year 12 had been working, and most of those working had been employed full-time. More than one in six of those no longer at school had been participating in some other form of study. Nearly one-half of the school students were working while at school. Regardless of whether they are at school or not, members of the Y98 cohort were satisfied with how they were spending their time and happy with their lives in general.

These Cohort Reports are intended to provide information on what each LSAY cohort has been doing during a year. In 2001, the majority of the LSAY Y98 cohort were in Year 12 at school, and more than three-quarters were planning on further study, with the majority planning to attend university. Major changes to the cohort will occur in 2002, with many moving out of home, undertaking further study, and establishing themselves in the labour market. The Cohort Report for 2002 will report on these important changes.



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