

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Lost talent?

#### The occupational ambitions and attainments of young Australians

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<b>Project no.</b>	<b>NY08101</b>
<b>Theme:</b>	Students and individuals – Careers and pathways – Pathways after compulsory education Students and individuals – Learner groups – Young people
<b>Project type:</b>	Research – national managed research program
<b>Project approach:</b>	<b>Quantitative</b>
<b>Time frame:</b>	<b>February 2009 – January 2010</b>
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#### **LONGITUDINAL SURVEYS OF AUSTRALIAN YOUTH (LSAY) RESEARCH INNOVATION AND EXPANSION FUND ANALYSIS GRANTS PROGRAM:**

This project has been funded under the Research Innovation and Expansion Fund (RIEF) Analysis Grants Program. The RIEF has been established to provide researchers with the opportunity to use data from the LSAY and to widen the community of researchers with experience in this data. The Analysis Grants Program is one element of the RIEF and complements the broader LSAY Analytical Program ([www.lsay.edu.au](http://www.lsay.edu.au)) being conducted by NCVER on behalf of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

#### **PROJECT PURPOSE:**

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between the occupational expectations of high school students and their actual occupations in adulthood.

The study of the relationship between these occupational plans and attainments is important. In the first place, if there is a consistency between the two, then the earlier expectations of youth become predictive of the future supply-side of the labour market. Moreover, assuming that expectations are realistic and consistent with a young person's ability, then a disjuncture between expectations and attainments can be seen as a form of talent wastage, and this is an important aspect of a country's maximum usage of its potential talent in its labour force.

It is anticipated that this project will result in a better understanding of the interplay between early occupational plans and attainments in the transition from school to work. The project will estimate and discuss the causes and consequences of the discrepancies found between expectations and actual employment.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

1. How important are adolescent career plans for young people's career entry?
2. Are adolescent occupational plans and attainments gender-typed?
3. Are there differences in attainment between adolescents who are able to state their occupational expectations and those who are not?
4. Are early educational intentions consistent with the occupations that students expect to attain?

### **METHODOLOGY:**

There are two main stages to the project:

❖ *Literature review, and preliminary data analysis*

A review of literature will be conducted (relating to the issue of the occupational expectations of high school students) from national and international perspectives. This stage will also be used to undertake preliminary data analysis to determine the level of occupational detail for particular subgroups of respondents.

The data sets to be used in this project are the LSAY 1995 and 1998 cohorts.

❖ *Statistical analysis*

To investigate each of the four research questions both simple descriptive statistics, such as students' modal expected occupations by parents' socio-economic status, and by gender, as well as more complex multivariate analyses will be undertaken.

### **THE ORGANISATION:**

Dr Sikora and Professor Saha are both members of the School of Social Sciences, College of Arts and Social Sciences, at the Australian National University, which constitutes an excellent environment for the proposed project in several ways. The ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences draws together more than 20 teaching and research disciplines in the very broad field of arts, humanities and social sciences. The ANU provides state-of-the-art computing facilities as well as access to relevant databases, typesetting packages and general statistical processing softwares. The ANU has one of the best libraries in Australia with a broad spectrum of electronic and hard copy periodicals and other publications essential for the type of research described in this Services Agreement.