

GENERATION Z: LIFE DURING COVID-19

The Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) follow young Australians from the age of 15 up until they are 25, exploring young people's experiences as they leave school, begin post-school study, and enter the workforce.

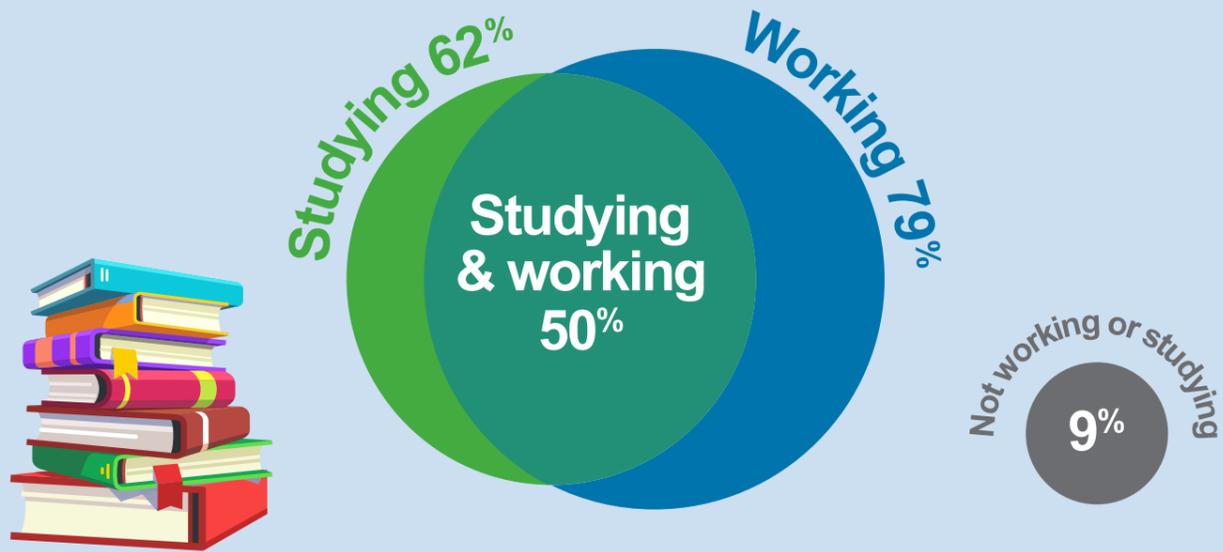
Generation Z: life during COVID-19 brings together information from LSAY participants who commenced the program when they were 15 years old in 2015. Using findings from their interviews in 2020, we look at their engagement with study and work and how this has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. We also explore how the pandemic has affected their living arrangements, finances and mental health.

AGE 20 IN 2020

STUDY & WORK

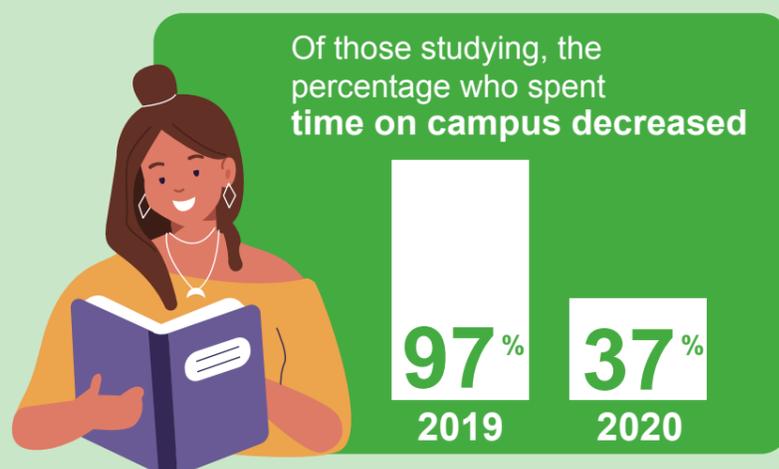
Of those studying,
5% put their study on hold due to the pandemic

Of those employed, more than
1 in 5 were receiving JobKeeper



STUDY

CURRENT STUDY



WORK

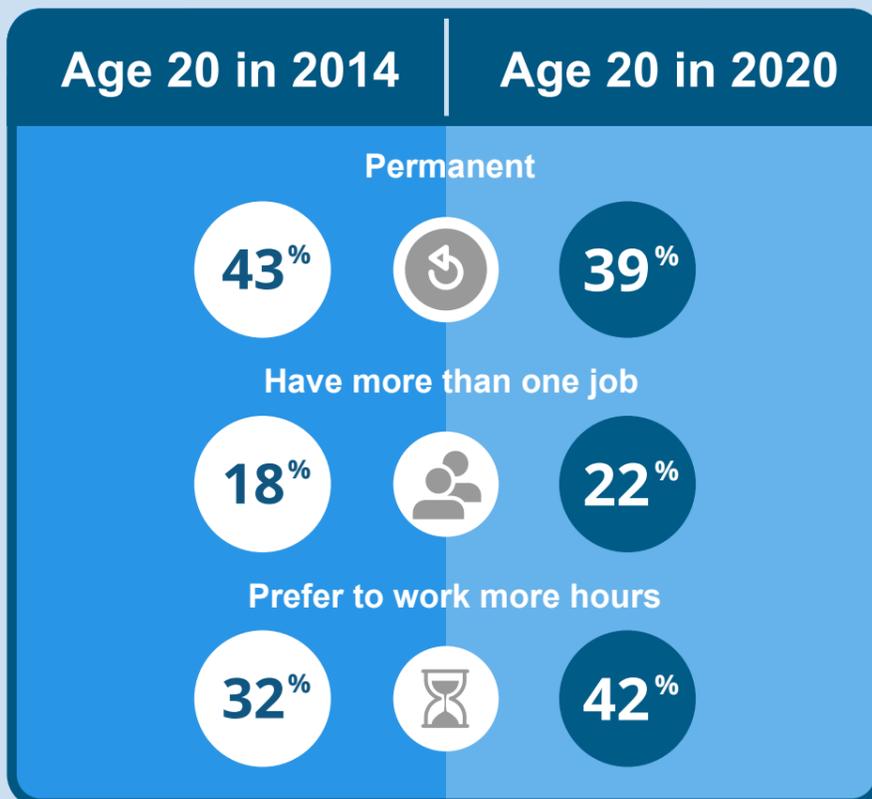
EMPLOYMENT STATUS



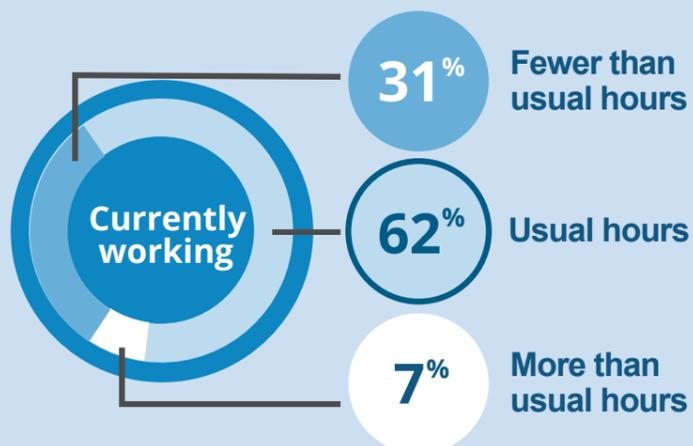
MOST COMMON JOBS for those employed but working zero hours



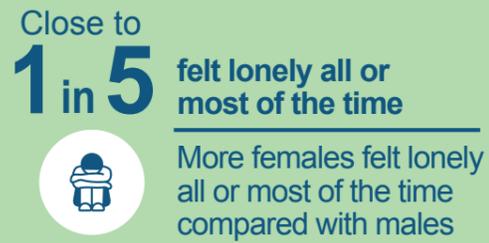
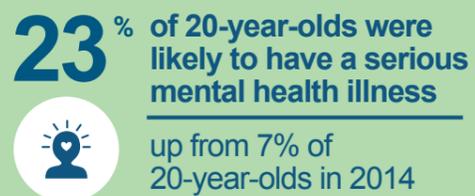
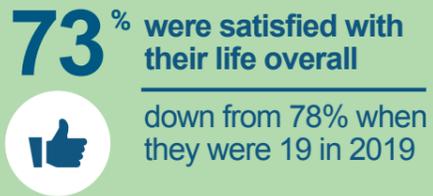
WORK ARRANGEMENTS



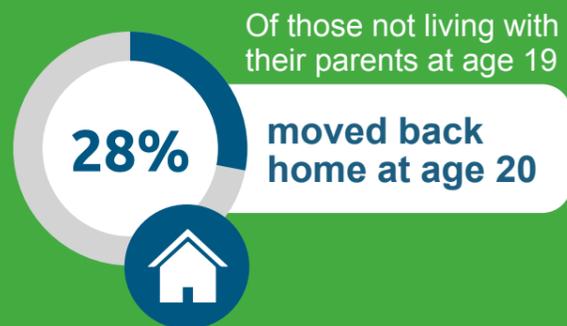
USUAL (PRE-COVID) VS CURRENT HOURS



WELLBEING, HEALTH & SOCIAL SUPPORT



LIVING ARRANGEMENTS



1 in 6 changed their housing circumstances due to the pandemic



MONEY

MANAGING FINANCIALLY



Young people found it easier to manage their finances and a smaller percentage experienced a shortage of money in 2020



SHORTAGE OF MONEY



GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

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

“ There aren't a lot of job prospects due to the Covid situation but I am hoping to find something exciting. ”



“ I hope to make the biggest change in my mental health. I have always struggled with it, but particularly through COVID-19 it has declined considerably and I have given up or stopped most of my hobbies... ”



“ I hope to be financially independent again ... this is after having to use almost all of my savings and borrowing money from family, in order to survive after being stood down in March due to COVID-19... ”



“ Graduate and apply for a graduate degree. Take care of my younger sibling and parents. Be able to earn money for my very first house. ”



“ Career and life experience. I want to travel, be happy and get the most out of life... ”

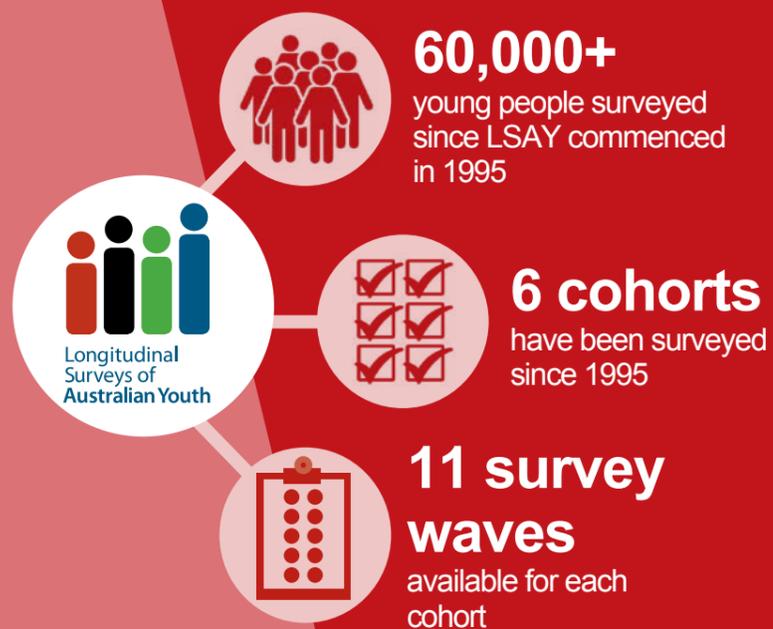


PAVING FUTURE PATHWAYS

As the world experiences unprecedented challenges in the face of COVID-19, understanding the effects of the pandemic on young people is critical for developing appropriate youth policies and initiatives to ensure they have the best supports in place.

For more than 25 years, LSAY participants have shared important information about their life experiences as they transition from school into adulthood, providing an enormous evidence base to explore in detail the key events in the lives of young Australians.

The data for all six LSAY cohorts, which now spans multiple generations, is freely available to researchers, policymakers and those with an interest in youth issues. Visit www.lsay.edu.au to find out more.



ABOUT THE DATA

The LSAY 2015 sample is designed to be representative of 15-year-old Australian school students in 2015. Survey responses are weighted to the 15-year-old student population to account for the survey being undertaken as a sample rather than the entire target population. Due to population shifts over time and survey non-response: care must be taken when comparing LSAY results against other samples which have been drawn from different populations; and the results reported here may not represent national benchmarks. Further information is available from the [LSAY 2015 cohort user guide](#).

STUDY & WORK

Excludes those whose labour force status is unknown. 'Studying' includes those who put their study on hold due to COVID-19. 'Working' includes those who were employed but not working due to COVID-19 and/or were working zero hours.

STUDY

Includes formally recognised qualifications; excludes short courses and single modules etc. Certificates I-IV include those whose certificate level is unknown. 'Current study' includes those who put their study on hold due to COVID-19. 'Time spent on campus' excludes those whose study is on hold due to COVID-19.

WORK

'Employment status' figures exclude those whose labour force status is unknown.

'Work characteristics' figures are only reported for those who are employed. 'Permanent' includes those who are entitled to holiday or sick pay and excludes those who: are self-employed, are waiting to start a job or whose employment status is unknown. For cases where the respondent does not know whether they are receiving employment benefits, they are: classified as 'permanent' if they are employed on a fixed-term, permanent or ongoing basis; and classified as 'casual' if they are employed on a casual basis.

'Usual vs current hours' figures are only reported for those who are employed. 'Usual hours' refers to usual hours worked per week prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. 'Current hours' refers to current hours worked per week at the time of interview.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

'Living with their parents' includes those living with their parents, step-parents or the parents of their partner, girlfriend or boyfriend.

'Moved back home at age 20' includes those who were not living with their parents, step-parents or the parents of their partner, girlfriend or boyfriend at the time of their 2019 interview (when respondents were, on average, 19 years old) but were living with their parents, step-parents or the parents of their partner, girlfriend or boyfriend at the time of their 2020 interview (when respondents were, on average, 20 years old).

'Changed their housing circumstances due to COVID-19' includes those who had to: move house (i.e. move in with parents, relatives, friends or a partner); and/or negotiate their rental agreement or housing payments.

MONEY

'Managing financially' includes those who, in a typical month, found it fairly or very easy to manage their finances.

'Shortage of money' includes those who responded 'Yes' to any of the shortage of money events. This includes whether they: sold something because they needed money; went without meals; had to ask family or friends for money; had to borrow money just to live on; didn't get medicines or go to a doctor when needed; couldn't buy text books or other study materials; and/or couldn't buy other things they needed. For those who are no longer living with their parents, family members or guardian, it also includes those who: couldn't pay electricity gas or telephone bills on time; couldn't pay the mortgage/rent on time; and/or couldn't afford to heat their home.

WELLBEING, HEALTH & SOCIAL SUPPORT

'Satisfaction with life' excludes those who prefer not to say or don't know.

'Likely to have a serious mental health illness' is derived using responses to the six Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6) question items. Figures exclude those who didn't answer one or more of the six psychological distress questions. For each question, a 5-point Likert scale is used with scores (which take the values 1 to 5) indicating the frequency of the symptom. The total possible values across the six items range from 6-30 and are categorised as:

Likely to have a serious mental illness (total score = 6-17)

Not likely to have a serious mental illness (total score = 18-30).

These categories have been adapted from Kessler et al (2010). See ABS 2012, 'Use of the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale in ABS Health Surveys, Australia, 2007-08', <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookup/4817.0.55.001chapter92007-08>

SOURCE

National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) 2021, Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth, 2015 cohort (version 5.0).

© Commonwealth of Australia, 2021

For details and exceptions visit www.lsay.edu.au/copyright

Stay connected:

 www.facebook.com/LSAY15

 www.instagram.com/lsay_au

 www.lsay.edu.au/subscribe



Australian Government

Department of Education,
Skills and Employment

