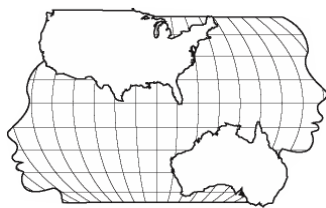


INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STUDY

RESEARCH UPDATE



International Youth
Development Study

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What's happening with IYDS in 2007?

>> All eligible participants from the youngest cohort in Victoria, Australia will be approached for surveying again this year

>> In Washington State the study is no longer collecting data, however, the team have applied for funding to continue the research

A word from the Chief Investigators ..

Thank you for your continued participation in the International Youth Development Study (IYDS).

As you know the IYDS asks a unique range of questions about the social world young people experience today in their local neighbourhood, school, family and peer and friendship groups.

It is now accepted that human behaviour and the social world are important influences on health. For example, research has shown that diseases such as cancer and heart disease are caused by factors such as smoking cigarettes, alcohol misuse, bad diet and lack of exercise. This understanding has led to a new area of health called 'health promotion', which aims to understand human behaviour, the social world, and their influences on health. By following-up young people and asking questions about the changing social world they experience, the IYDS is providing unique information that can inform health promotion.

We continue to work hard to make sure your effort in completing the survey leads to improvements in society. So far there have been over twenty publications from the study on topics including international comparisons of social environments, the impact of school policy on behaviour, and the contribution of the social environment to problems such as drug and alcohol misuse and depression.

We also know that important people are paying attention. For example the study was noted at an international meeting of the Society for Prevention Research where we received the International Collaborative Research Award (see: <http://www.preventionresearch.org>). So, please be reassured – your contribution is making a difference!

Thank you for your ongoing involvement and commitment to our study. It is important we stay in touch with you and all the young people who have been involved with our survey – as you are our experts on youth.

Many thanks again, and we look forward to surveying again this year!

Professor John W. Toumbourou and Professor Richard F. Catalano

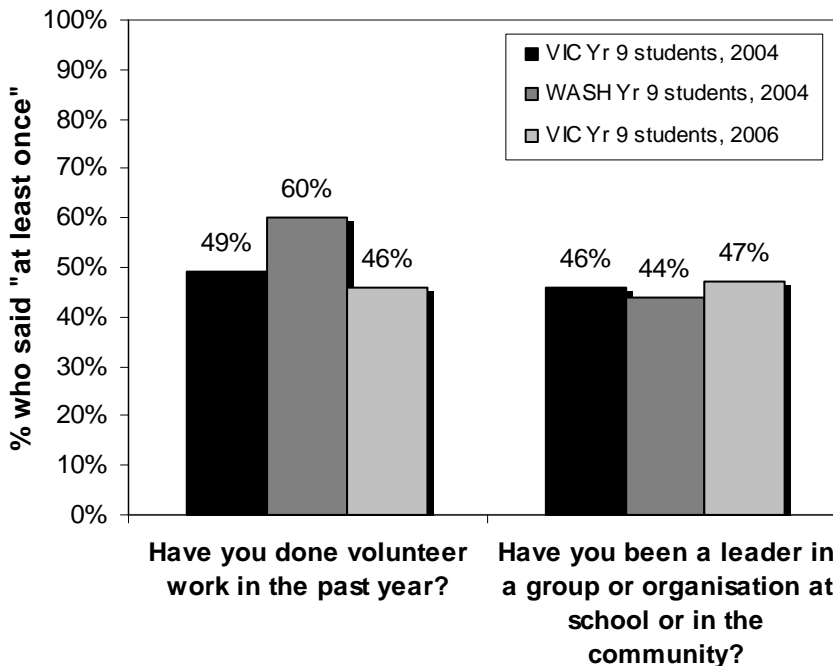
Facts about Victoria's youngest cohort, surveyed in 2006 ...

- ◆ Over 85% of our youngest cohort of students participated in the survey in 2006
- ◆ Students from this cohort were in Grade 5 at the beginning of the project; most of these students will be in Year 10 in 2007
- ◆ Of those participants who completed the survey in 2006, 97% were still attending school in Victoria, 1.2% were attending school interstate, 1.2% were no longer at school, and 0.4% were overseas

Survey Results from 2006

Volunteering and Leadership Year 9 Students

Year 9 students in 2004 and in 2006 were asked about doing volunteer work and being a leader in their school or in the community. The graph below shows the responses from Year 9 students in both Victoria, Australia and Washington State, US.



Year 9 students from both Australia and the US report being involved as a leader at least once. However, being involved in volunteer work is more common for US students. 60% of US students reported that they had done volunteer work at least once in the past year, whilst less than half of the Australian Year 9 students report doing volunteer work.



Why do you think US students are more involved in volunteer work than Australian students? Do you think it's important to be involved in volunteer work?

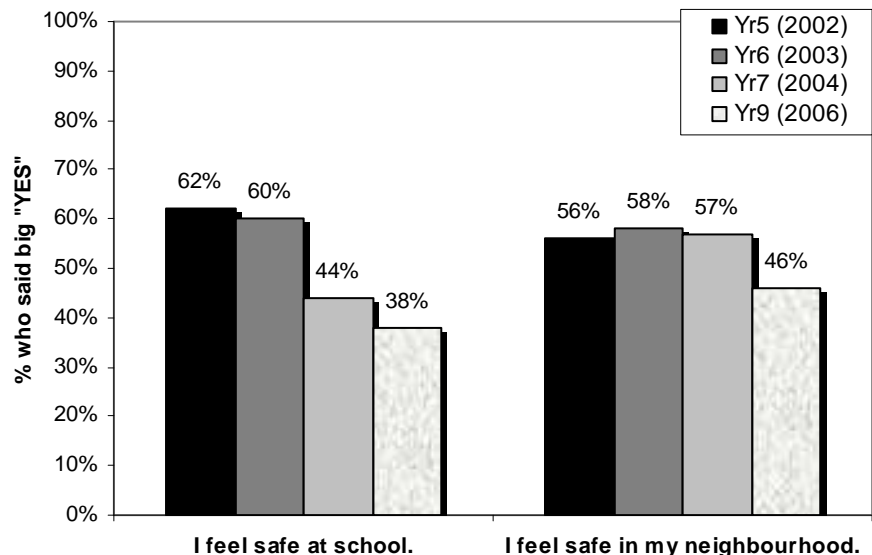
Feelings of Safety in School and Neighbourhood perceptions of our youngest cohort

Perceptions of safety in school have declined for our youngest cohort since they started the survey in Grade 5. The graph below shows that students' perceptions of feeling completely safe in school dropped sharply from primary to secondary school (Grade 6 to Year 7), however, there was no similar drop in perceptions of safety within the community.

Nevertheless, by Year 9 our students' perceptions of feeling completely safe in their neighbourhood had also decreased.



Why do you think primary students feel safer in school than secondary students?



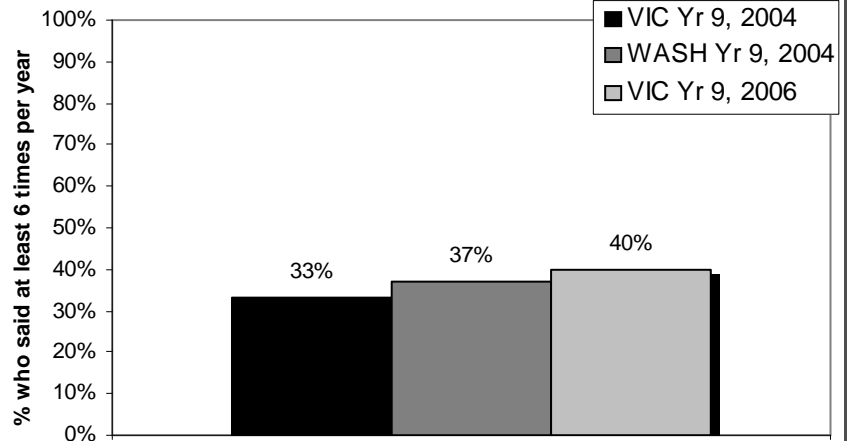


Caring for the environment ...

In 2004 and 2006 students were asked: "How many times in the past 12 months have you made a personal effort to care for the environment in your daily life (like recycled waste or reduced energy use)?" We found that most Year 9 students reported making a personal effort to care for the environment at least once or twice a year.

The graph shows responses from Year 9 students in Victoria, Australia and in Washington State, US. Only about 1/3 of all students reported making an effort at least 6 times—that's once every two months!

Results were consistent for Year 9 students in Australia and the US.



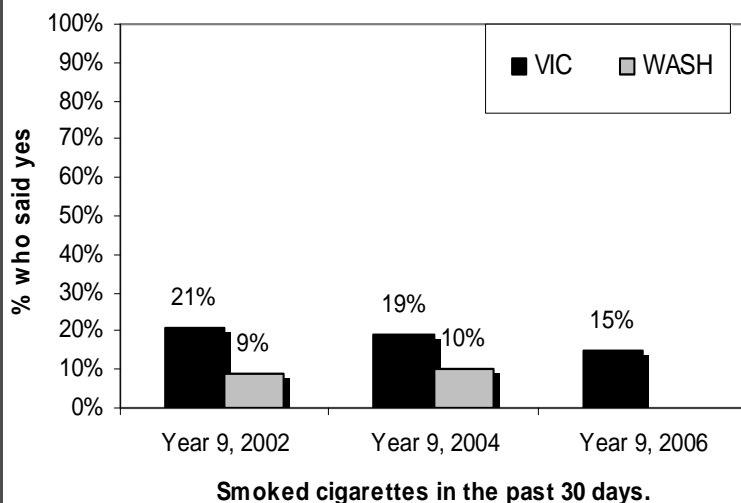
Have you made a personal effort to care for the environment at least 6 - 9 times in the past year?

relationship with parents

Our survey routinely asks students about their relationship with family. All students are asked "Do you feel very close to your mother?" and "Do you feel very close to your father?" The majority of Year 9 students report feeling very close to both their mother and to their father, although more students report feeling close to their mother.

The table below shows that over 80% of **year 9 students** in both Australia and the US report feeling close to their mother, and around 70% report feeling close to their father.

	Victoria, Australia			Washington State, US	
	2002	2004	2006	2002	2004
Year 9 students:					
I feel very close to my mother	88%	84%	84%	85%	81%
I feel very close to my father	74%	69%	73%	72%	65%



Cigarette smoking

Reported rates of recent cigarette smoking for Year 9 students in Victoria have decreased since 2002. On the IYDS survey in 2002, 21% of Year 9 students in Victoria, Australia reported smoking in the past 30 days, while in 2006 this had dropped to 15% of Year 9 students.

Reported rates of recent cigarette smoking are lower in Washington, US, and remained relatively the same from 2002 (9%) to 2004 (10%).

Other Australian surveys are also showing declines in smoking



frequently asked questions ...

Q: How many years will this project continue?

A: Further funding has been sought to survey students in 2008. Beyond this we aim to continue surveying at least until the youngest group (Year 10 in 2007) reach 1 year after secondary school. The longer the project continues the more useful it becomes.

Q: When will the survey be happening again?

A: This year we are surveying the youngest cohort, most of whom are in Year 10 this year. As in previous years, we aim to complete most of the surveys during Terms 3 and 4. Generally we aim to survey everyone roughly 12 months after their last survey.

Q: Why do you ask such personal questions?

A: We're trying to get an accurate picture of the factors that are affecting the health and well-being of young people today. The factors are many and varied and range from physical changes and attitudes through to relationships with their friends, family and community. While some of the questions are very personal, we guarantee that all of your individual answers remain private and confidential.

Q: What if students change schools, leave school or move homes?

A: Even if young people in the study change schools or homes we still want to survey them. This study follows participants as individuals and we are interested in talking to them no matter where they are. It's important that we talk to all of the same young people each year to see how their experiences and attitudes change over time.

Where are you now?

If you move or change schools or are planning to in the near future, please contact us as soon as possible. You can contact us toll-free on 1800 200 141 or e-mail us at internationalyouth.developmentstudy@rch.org.au

Recent Publications

Information from the last 5 years of surveying have contributed to important research articles. Some recent publications that you may be interested in reading include the following:

- ◆ Bond, L., Clements, J., Bertalli, N., Evans-Whipp, T, McMorris, B.J., Patton, G.C., Toumbourou, J.W., Catalano, R.F. (2006) A comparison of self-reported puberty using the Pubertal Development Scale and the Sexual Maturation Scale in a school-based epidemiologic survey. *Journal of Adolescence* 29 (5): 709-720.
- ◆ Hemphill, S. A., Toumbourou, J. W., Herrenkohl, T. I., McMorris, B. J., & Catalano, R. F. (2006). The effect of school suspensions and arrests on subsequent adolescent antisocial behavior in Australia and the United States. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 39, 736-744.
- ◆ Herrenkohl, T. I., McMorris, B. J., Catalano, R. F., Abbott, R. D., Hemphill, S. A., & Toumbourou, J. W. (2007). Risk factors for violence and relational aggression in adolescence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22, 386-405.
- ◆ Mathers, M., Toumbourou, J. W., Catalano, R. F., Williams, J. and Patton, G. C. (2006). Consequences of youth tobacco use: a review of prospective behavioural studies. *Addiction*, vol.101(7), pp.948-58

**You can obtain a copy of these articles by emailing us or
ring our toll free number — 1800 200 141.**

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