

A research project about the experiences of young people in Australia

*Jointly funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Australian Research Council and carried out by the Australian National University*

## The preliminary results are in

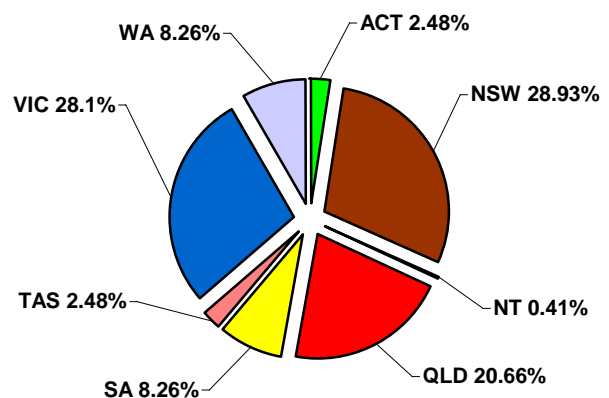
The fieldwork for wave 1 of the survey was conducted in March-December 2006. The survey consisted of two parts: the telephone interview, carried out separately for the 18-year-olds and their parents or guardians, and the self-completion questionnaire for the young adults. This newsletter describes figures and numbers that come from preliminary results based on the interviews conducted during March and April. During those two months, we collected information for 242 young adults and 255 parents/guardians.

## Who are our respondents?

About 49.6% of the surveyed young adults were female and 50.4% male, making the sample representative of the Australian population.

The sample was drawn across all states and territories. Figure 1 to the right shows the shares of young people from different parts of Australia among those surveyed.

Figure 1. Youth Respondents by State



## What do they do?

More than 92% of the surveyed young adults have left school, and the rest are currently enrolled in year 12.

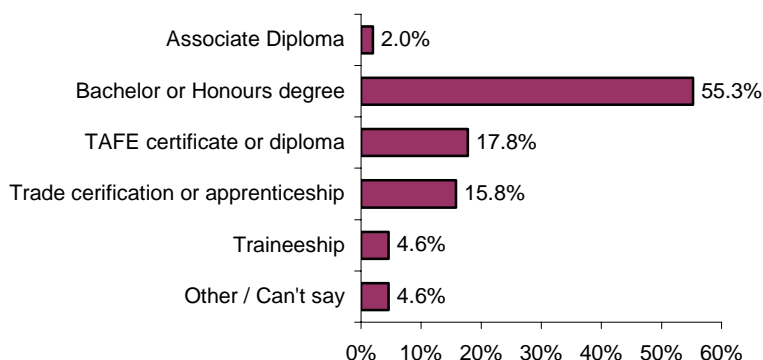
Of those who have left school, almost 66% are studying for further qualification. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of various degrees and qualifications that the youth respondents will receive after completion of their current studies.

In future, around 77% of respondents are planning to study for another degree. The specific degrees that respondents plan to receive are shown in Figure 3.

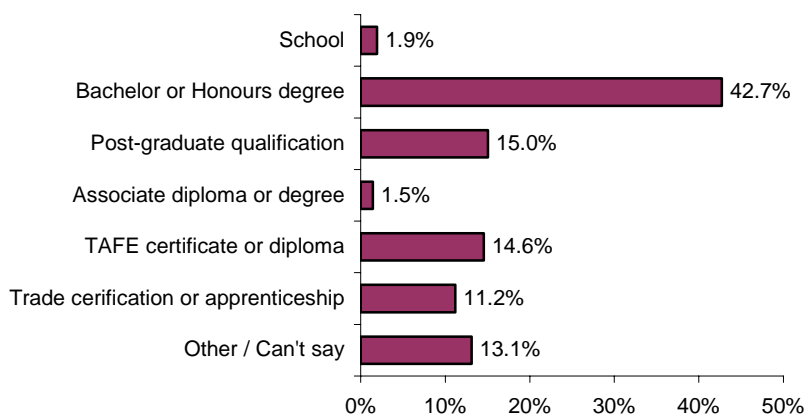
70% of the surveyed young adults are currently working; 21% of respondents have had jobs in the past and around 9% have never worked.

One of the questions that this research project would be able to answer is when and why young people become independent. The preliminary results show that about 14.5% of our 18-year old respondents already live independently; the overwhelming majority lives at home with one or both parents, or a parental figure.

**Figure 2. What type of qualification will you receive when you complete this study?**



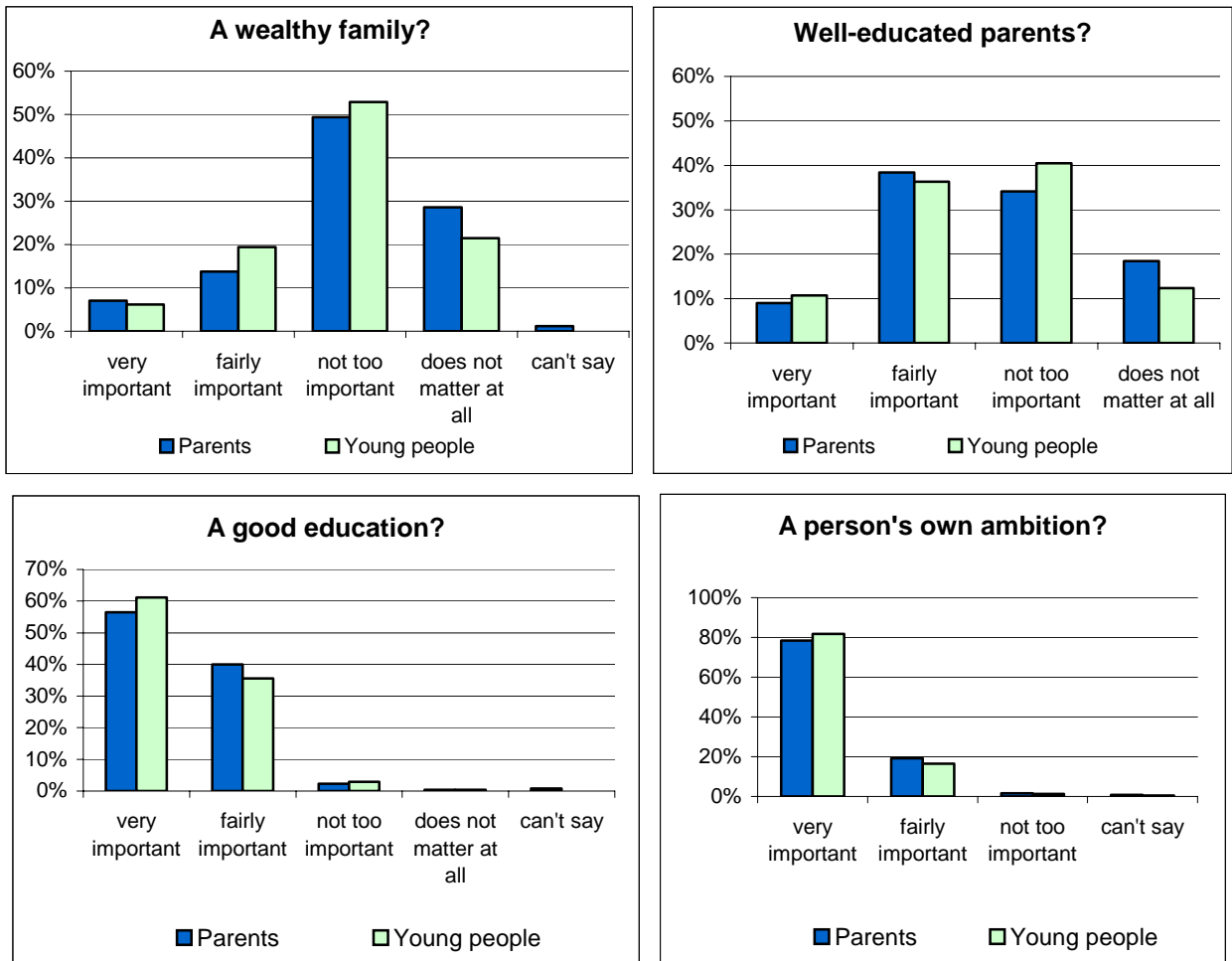
**Figure 3. What is the highest level of education you are planning to obtain in the future?**



## What do they think about success in life?

In addition to the social and economic characteristics, the survey also collected information on the opinions and attitudes of the young adults and their parents and guardians. Of particular interest were the questions whether good education, wealthy family, and own ambition are important for achieving success in life. The four graphs below reflect opinions of both of the surveyed groups.

**Figure 4. What is important to achieve success in life?**

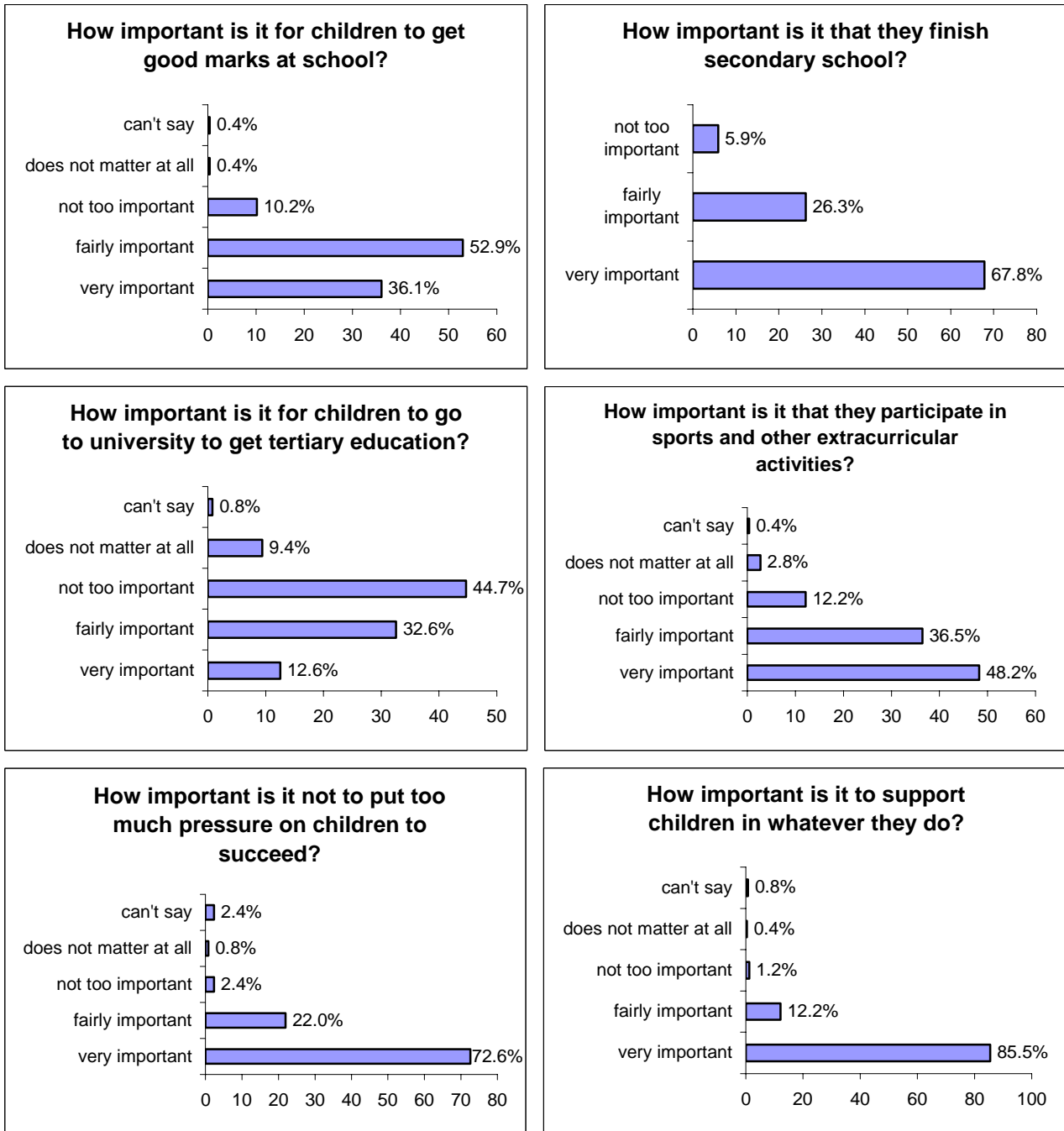


**Parents' attitudes**

Since the outcomes for a young person greatly depend on the family background and experiences while growing up, we also interviewed one of the parents or guardians of the young respondent. This way we were able to collect information on the childhood and upbringing of the youth respondents, such as the mother's and father's educational and professional background, the young person's health while growing up, housing circumstances etc.

One of the key factors that affect the outcomes and beliefs of young adults is their parents' attitudes towards the upbringing of their kids. The graphs below summarize parents' opinions on what are the more important of the children's accomplishments and whether the parents should support children in their aspirations in life.

**Figure 5. Importance of school and extracurricular activities, as viewed by parents**



**What's next?**

Young adults who took part in wave 1 of the survey will be invited to participate in two short follow up surveys. The first of these surveys is currently planned to take place in the middle of 2007.

Research papers and publications discussing the results of wave 1 will be put up on the Youth in Focus web-site at <http://youthinfocus.anu.edu.au> in 2007.

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