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MEDIA RELEASE

New research shows our teenagers want to be heard

NAB has released its 2018 Independent Schools Survey. This year we switch our focus from principals, teachers and administrators to the students themselves - over 300 girls and boys currently in years 10 through to 12 participated in this research.

“What comes through very clearly is our country is in good hands as the next generation of workers, parents, business owners and community leaders, start to make their mark”, said NAB’s Head of Behavioural & Industry Economics, Dean Pearson.

Teenagers are concerned about the future - their own and Australia’s more generally.

“But, they’re not going to live their lives as passive observers - they want to be proactive in shaping their future and that of our country”, said Dean. “And, they’re critical of the overall direction Australia is currently heading and don’t believe their voice is being sufficiently heard, particularly by Government”.

One frequently cited culprit of growing teenage stress is social media. And, this group spends a lot of time on it - 2 hours or more a day is not uncommon.

“But, while they recognise many of its shortcomings, they’re more likely to highlight the benefits of social media”, said Dean. These include keeping in touch with friends, staying informed about big issues such as world politics and the environment, and as a key platform for them to be heard.

“This is also an entrepreneurial generation, perhaps by default, as the pace of change necessitates them taking greater control of their careers and lives”, said Mr Pearson.

Most have or aspire to have a part time job, and a large number would love to start their own business, even while still at school. And, when they leave school most plan to go to university.

This generation has very high expectations about the type of organisation they want to work for and the positive impact their work will have on the world.

“Passion for what they do is extremely important to them. And, if finding a job or advancing their careers requires moving overseas, they’re ready to do so”, said Dean.

They also have strong expectations in regards to gender equality both at work and at home - raising children should be a shared responsibility and men and women should always be paid the same for the same job.

Importantly, while some differences remain, many of the traditional gender biases in areas such as numeracy, literacy, leadership, speaking up and business are fundamentally challenged by this research.

“It was very heartening to see that when girls and boys were asked to self-rate their own abilities in these areas, there was little difference between how girls and boys saw themselves”.

“Schools should be extremely proud of that result”, said Mr. Pearson.

Media

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