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Aussie kids as happy as ever and less worried

What with climate change, economic uncertainty, social upheaval, the threat of terrorism and technological advances so mind-boggling they're practically sci-fi, the world can sometimes seem like a daunting place. But Australian kids are not letting it get to them: they are just as happy as they were in 2007, and considerably less worried. In recognition of International Youth Day (August 12), we take a look at how young Australians are feeling about life these days...

According to Roy Morgan Research's Young Australians Survey, Aussie children aged 6-13 are just as happy as they were back in 2007. And that's very happy: 95% of girls and 94% of boys agree that "I am happy". With a happiness rating of 98%, girls aged 10-11 are the happiest of the lot.

On a similarly encouraging note, the proportion of boys and girls concerned about looking "cool" or having nice clothes has fallen. Big issues such as terrorism and the environment no longer worry as many of them, either.

Boys: maybe school's not so bad after all

As the table below reveals, there have been some discernible shifts in the attitudes of Aussie boys towards some key subjects.

The shifting attitudes of Australian boys

	% agree 2007	% agree 2014
I enjoy reading	67%	72%
I enjoy going to school	63%	69%
I worry about the environment	71%	64%
I want to look cool	59%	55%
Having nice clothes is important to me	50%	43%
I'd rather play computer games than play outside	35%	41%
I worry about terrorism	38%	33%

Source: Roy Morgan Young Australians Survey, January–December 2007 (n=1,172) and January–December 2014 (n=1,162). **Base:** Australian boys 6-13

Not only do almost seven out of every ten boys report that they 'enjoy going to school' (up from 63% in 2007); but reading has also grown in popularity (72%, up from 67%), with the 10-13 age bracket showing the greatest uptake.

Computer games are starting to rival playing outside as a preferred leisure activity, with 41% of boys now saying they'd 'rather play computer games than play outside' (up from 35% in 2007). The 6-7 age group is the most likely to feel this way, with almost half saying they prefer computer games to outside play.

Girls: the sound of music

Munching on healthy food and reading hold even greater appeal for Australian girls now than they did in 2007. Some 87% say they 'like to eat healthy foods' (up from 81%), while 82% enjoy reading (up from 77%). These activities are particularly popular among the 6-7 age bracket (90% of whom like eating healthy food and 87% of whom enjoy reading).

The shifting attitudes of Australian girls

	% agree 2007	% agree 2014
I like to eat healthy foods	81%	87%
I enjoy reading	77%	82%
I worry about the environment	77%	73%
Having nice clothes is important to me	61%	52%
I want to look cool	55%	46%
I worry about terrorism	42%	34%
I take music with me everywhere	23%	30%

Source: Roy Morgan Young Australians Survey, January–December 2007 (n=1,112) and January–December 2014 (n=1,242). **Base:** Australian girls 6-13

Music matters to more girls than it did in 2007, with 30% agreeing they take music with them everywhere (up from 23%). Girls aged 12-13 are the primary impetus behind this growth.

Michele Levine, CEO, Roy Morgan Research, says:

“Our findings show some noteworthy attitudinal shifts among young Australian boys and girls over the past few years. While their happiness levels remain very high, they also seem to be worrying less.

“Incidence of image-related concerns such as looking cool and having nice clothes has declined among girls and boys. While more than half of Aussie girls still consider having nice clothes to be important, and more than half of boys still want to look cool, these figures are substantially lower than they were in 2007, suggesting that a growing number of kids no longer see the need for this kind of external validation.

“Despite the media’s ongoing fixation with terrorism, fewer kids are worrying about it these days, which is great news. Their declining concern about the environment is a little more ambiguous: while it’s not fair for kids to have to worry about serious issues like this, one would hope they don’t forget about it altogether.

“Technology continues to influence children’s lives, with more girls taking music with them wherever they go (presumably in digital format) and a growing proportion of boys preferring computer games to playing outside. Despite what those of us from the analogue generations may think of these developments (particularly the latter), they’re

here to stay. And so far, they do not appear to be having a negative impact on our kids' happiness..."

For comments or more information about Roy Morgan Research's Young Australians data, please contact:

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Related research findings

View our range of reports from the [Young Australians Survey](#), including [Understanding Young Australians: What They Think](#).

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About Roy Morgan Research

Roy Morgan Research is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state of Australia, as well as in Indonesia, the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan Research has over 70 years' experience in collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
7,500	±1.1	±1.0	±0.7	±0.5
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2

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