

New Zealand youth engaging in less risky pursuits

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Drinking, drugs and other risky behaviours are on the decline according to a nationwide report on New Zealand youth launched at Parliament recently.

"The Health and Wellbeing of New Zealand Secondary School Students" report published by The University of Auckland and Auckland UniServices Ltd is the third in the Youth 2000 Survey Series which provides insights into trends of adolescent experience from 2001.

The 2012 survey was completed by 8,500 secondary school students and provides the country's most comprehensive data on current adolescent concerns and behaviour.

Researchers from The University of Auckland suggest that the findings show broad overall improvement in the health and wellbeing of young people.

In particular, the report shows a marked reduction in tobacco, [alcohol consumption](#), [binge drinking](#) and [illegal drug use](#) as well as lower rates of dangerous driving and small positive shifts in school life.

Primary investigator from the University, Dr Terryann Clark, says that the significant overall reduction in risk-taking [behaviours](#) among adolescents is exciting and is cause for optimism.

"The report indicates some strong positive emerging trends which

represent huge gains for the future of New Zealand," she says.

Other results indicate negative changes in young people's lives. For example, [youth](#) from across the social spectrum are increasingly aware of [parental concerns](#) around not having enough money for food, and increasing numbers of young people are unable to secure part-time work or access healthcare when needed.

Divisions continue between the 'haves' and 'have nots' particularly in healthcare and nutrition, and in outlook for future education and training.

In general, the rates of young New Zealanders who are emotionally distressed, bullied, using contraception inconsistently, and/or are overweight remain static.

"The report series builds a rich and compelling picture of the health and development of young New Zealanders and elucidates the key areas of importance that we as a society needs to invest in order to nurture positive, healthy and vibrant generations of New Zealanders," says the Instigator of the Youth 2000 Survey Series and Clinical Director Mental Health Services at Counties Manukau DHB, Peter Watson. "The findings will be enormously valuable to policymakers, schools, parents and caregivers."

The full report findings are now publically available at [The University of Auckland Youth 12 site](#). Separate reports including findings for Maori adolescents using the same survey data will be released from October 2013.

Provided by University of Auckland

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