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MEDIA RELEASE

Fearless and Flexible: Gen Y talks about their generation

Almost without realising it Generation Y have adjusted fully to the globalised world. In that way they are dramatically different from their parents, and represent a point of change in Australian social and economic history.

This is the conclusion prominent pollsters and social researchers, Irving Saulwick and Dennis Muller, have reached in their latest report, *Fearless and Flexible: Views of Gen Y*. Talking to young people directly in this way throws new light on the extensive commentary and statistics that percolate around Gen Y.

In an intriguing paradox, these Gen Yers have apparently come to terms with globalisation while barely registering its presence.

As Saulwick and Muller put it: *Big-picture issues that affect employment, specifically globalisation, are not on their radar ... Perhaps liberated by a broad disinterest in these matters and emboldened by having never known anything other than sustained economic growth, they hold few fears for the future.*

The young people revealed in *Fearless and Flexible* are in sync with the times.

They display a pragmatism born out of prosperity; little awareness of issues outside their immediate orbit; an acceptance of the status quo. Their values are conventional and their ambitions modest. For many of these young people their dreams-come-true are about family, home, and the car.

They see a multicultural Australia in which the key is for immigrants to fit in and conform to our ways. They've grown up in prosperous times and don't fear an economic downturn if for no other reason than it is beyond their ken.

The report, commissioned by the Dusseldorf Skills Forum (DSF), summarises focus-group research among Gen Y in July 2006.

Dr John Spierings, DSF's Research Strategist, says: *of course, the young people we've spoken with don't speak for all young people. We all know idealistic young people who are extremely conscious of the bigger world around them and whose ambitions soar. Even among those we did meet with opinions and attitudes varied.*

But for all that, we couldn't help but be struck by the strength of these dominant themes and their emergence in every group whether city or country, school aged, tertiary educated or in the workforce.

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Copies of *Fearless and Flexible: Views of Gen Y* are available for downloading from the DSF website: <http://www.dsf.org.au>

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