



## Young Australians and the Future of Work

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Over the coming decades the nature of work and working in Australia is predicted to dramatically change. Increased automation, demographic changes, and greater competition for jobs means that employment in the future is expected to become more precarious.

There is a growing body of literature devoted to predicting how jobs will change in the 21st century. Suggestions have also been posed regarding the types of knowledge and skills that young people will require. The literature, however, does not tell us if young adults of today feel adequately prepared for the future of work.

The 'Our Lives' project is an ongoing longitudinal study of a single-aged cohort of more than 2000 young people from Queensland, Australia. Currently aged approximately 25 years old, many participants in this project have already embarked on a career pathway. We have undertaken in-depth interviews with a subset of 50 Our Lives participants on their expectations and plans regarding work and working in the future.

In this paper we report our participants' views regarding the extent to which their chosen careers are likely to change in the future and the various strategies they will use to ensure that they remain employable over the decades to come. Our participants are well aware that their chosen careers will likely undergo some dramatic transformations, but are confident in their ability to adapt should the need demand. They have also articulated the types of skills they believe will be necessary in order to 'future proof' their career trajectories. These skills include flexibility, entrepreneurialism, innovation, and imagination.

The findings from this study will be of interest to both researchers and practitioners and can help inform ongoing discussion related to education policy, employment training, and career development practice in Australia.