

Gen Y's dirty little secret

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Young adults who live at home into adulthood still rely on their mothers to do housework, new research has found.

Associate Professor Lyn Craig and Dr Abigail Powell from UNSW's Social Policy Research Centre compared the domestic work of 5512 [young people](#) and adults aged 15-34 living at home with that of their [parents](#), using household data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Time Use Surveys (1992, 1997 and 2006).

The study, which builds on Associate Professor Craig's previous research, also found an uneven distribution of domestic tasks between young men and women living with their parents.

"We know that [housework](#) is unevenly distributed between parents but these results show that the gender division of labour is trickling down to the next generation," she said.

"The age that young people move out of the family home is rising in Australia but our findings show that young people do not become less of a burden to their parents domestically as they get older."

The findings will be presented at the [Australian Women's and Gender Studies Biennial Conference](#) at UNSW.

Key findings:

- 97% of mothers participated in domestic work per day, compared to 81% of fathers, 73% of young women and 54% of young men
- The young men that did participate in domestic work spent the same amount of time as young women – both averaging 70 minutes per day
- Young men aged 25-34 years contribute to [household tasks](#) more than 15-24 year-old men
- Employment status plays the greatest role in determining participation and time spent in domestic activities for young people, with those working contributing less
- Young people who participate in domestic labour do so alongside their parents, rather than taking individual responsibility for it

Overall the research found that young people's participation in domestic work is low and does not displace the time spent by parents on these activities.

"You might think as the children get older they would make a more equal contribution to housework, cleaning, cooking and washing, but it's really not the case," she told Fairfax media.

"It does seem to be a sticky problem. You would hope for more signs of change which are sadly not really there."

Provided by University of New South Wales

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