

MEDIA RELEASE



The Hon. Bruce Billson, MP
Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence

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NEW STUDY CONFIRMS SOCIAL BENEFITS OF YOUNG ENDEAVOUR YOUTH SCHEME

The Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, Bruce Billson today released the findings of a three-year research study into Australia's national youth sail training program conducted through the Young Endeavour Youth Scheme.

Mr Billson said findings from the University of Sydney Study - *Sailing into the Future* - concludes that youth development training conducted by the Royal Australian Navy builds positive social capital in the young people participating in the program.

"The Young Endeavour Youth Scheme and its staff from the Royal Australian Navy offer a confronting and inspirational experience at sea for young people," Mr Billson said.

"On each voyage, youth crew learn to work with a diversity of other young Australians adopting to living and working in a new environment while experiencing the challenges of learning new skills, while often experiencing tiredness and seasickness."

Mr Billson said the study shows that these experiences in *Young Endeavour* translate over time into more enduring social skills such as self control, goal achievement and an outlook of trust, tolerance and cooperation, bringing benefits to the Australian community as well as to youth crew participants themselves.

Findings found that 76% of youth crew participants interviewed stated the voyage had a positive influence on social skills, 85% said their views on cooperation were enhanced by the voyage and 73% youth crew said it shaped their views on tolerance.

Since 1988 over 9,000 youth aged 16- 23 have sailed on *Young Endeavour*. Staffed by the a Royal Australian Navy crew, embarked youth crew learn to work as a team to sail the 44 metre, tall ship on the open sea. During an 11-day voyage they experience challenges including climbing a 30m mast, setting sails, navigating, keeping watch and taking the helm and on the final day of the voyage, take command of the ship for 24 hours. Each voyage, the youth crew host visiting young people with disabilities for a ½ a day sail.

Researchers, Professor Joanna Finkelstein and Dr Susan Goodwin undertook a study consisting of on-board, ethnographic research and interviews with former youth crew who sailed between 1988 – 2001. The research concentrated on the youth crew's sense of engagement with social and community activities, rather than an individually focused, psychological approach.

The Young Endeavour Youth Scheme receives \$2 million in funding from the Commonwealth Government through the Royal Australian Navy to run both the Scheme and operate *Young Endeavour* each year.

Applications are now being accepted for voyages in 2007 and all young Australians aged 16 - 23 are encouraged to apply at www.youngendeavour.gov.au

Note to Editors: An executive summary of *Sailing into the Future* is available from Ms Amy Osborne – Marketing Managing Young Endeavour Youth Scheme on 1800 020 444.

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