

Media Release

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MULTICULTURAL NSW MOVES ONWARDS AND UPWARDS TO EVOLVE THE AUSSIE CLASS SYSTEM

- Four new classes emerge: Sloggers, Startup Stars, Gen 2.0s and Gestaters
- Technology and increased access to education is evolving the class system with more New South Wales residents saying they've updated their occupational skills in the last five years than any other state
- Increased multiculturalism is a growing trend in New South Wales and this is encouraging entrepreneurship

The social class system in Australia is evolving with four new groups emerging, as found in the “*Real Insurance Class System Survey*” released today.

The *Real Insurance Class System Survey* is the fourth instalment in a series of national studies, with this instalment investigating the shift in modern day classes.

The Survey found four new classes in Australia:

- **Sloggers:** Senior Australians who have to keep working to support themselves when they would prefer to work less. They are modest with less emphasis on material possessions.
- **Gen 2.0s:** Children of immigrants who have managed to improve their social and economic standing. They seem to be the most generous with their time and money.
- **Startup Stars:** In-demand professionals and entrepreneurs associated with emerging digital industries and work opportunities. They place emphasis on material possessions and tend to be more self-focused.
- **Gestaters:** They are the ‘celeb-generation’. They are living at home comfortably with their parents into their adult years despite having little assets or progression in their careers.

Mr Phillip Anderson, Real Insurance spokesperson, said that in the changing class system, there are clear winners and losers.

“New trends and technologies are rapidly revolutionising the modern day class system. Startup Stars appear to be the group benefiting most from the new system, with Sloggers looking to be left behind. The research challenges traditional assumptions of the fixed Australian class system, with the social ladder becoming more permeable than ever before.”

The research shows that Startup Stars in New South Wales are embracing the age of new technology by improving their skill set and taking advantage of newly developing industries and careers, perhaps more so than any other state. This is evident in that more than three in five of the state's Startup Stars saying they work in occupations that were very rare or did not exist at all 10 years ago – a noticeably higher figure than the rest of the country. Additionally, New South Wales had the highest number of respondents who had updated their occupational skill set in the last five years (63%).

With most New South Wales respondents identifying as Gen 2.0s, more than two in five in this group said they are on track for great career progression. Sloggers, however, are not reaping the same benefits, with over half saying they wish they could work less but can't afford to.

Significantly, half of both Gen 2.0s and Sloggers in New South Wales believe they've exceeded the expectations of their family and friends in relation to career and financial position, reinforcing the fact that success is perceived differently among groups and is based on individual experiences.

"Another interesting finding in New South Wales was that a couple of the identified groups seem to be evolving into 'social snobs.' Startup Stars, for example say they think about social class when they meet new people and when they choose their friends. Alternately, Gen 2.0s and Sloggers indicated they would actually prefer to spend time with people significantly poorer than richer, leading us to believe that a case could also be made for 'reverse snobbery,' according to the research," Mr Anderson added.

Mr Anderson said that there is also a move towards increasing multiculturalism, which is contributing to new ideas, large-scale innovation and the rise of entrepreneurship.

"Multiculturalism and diversity is more prevalent than ever in New South Wales, which had the highest number of respondents who speak a language other than English at home out of all the states. Of these in the state, over 40 per cent of Startup Stars and 50 per cent of Gen 2.0s converse in different languages at home, compared to only nine percent of Sloggers."

"Clearly, multiculturalism has not only resulted in a rich diversity of backgrounds and cultures in New South Wales, but a true diversity of thought, experience and innovation as well," Mr Anderson said.

Dr Anna Hickey-Moody, lecturer in Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney, said that the research adds weight to the cultural and societal trends she has been watching evolve for some time.

"The importance of technology and social media in the digital age is being realised through a number of emerging yet noticeable professional groups. These groups have potential to open opportunities for class fluidity, although the social and financial capital to engage with technology and the personal flexibility to meet the changing demands of the new labour market remain. It is significant that we are starting to see signs of upward intergenerational mobility being created through technology use."

While the majority of Gen 2.0s and Sloggers believe social class is still about money and occupation, other groups disagree. Gestaters believe the 'upper class' is better defined by one's occupation and how important their friends and connections are, while Startup Stars feel that education and material possessions (the brands of clothes they wear, what car they drive and where they live) are the most important factors.

"Big picture statistics show the gap may be widening between social classes, and this is a great concern. It is important to note that groups that have harnessed modern technological advancements are finding it easier to increase their class standing than ever before, and we need to find more ways of facilitating this mobility," Dr Hickey-Moody said.

The research showed that 89 per cent of Startup Stars in New South Wales said they were career focused, and 85 per cent said they felt 'upwardly socially mobile.' Sloggers, however, are struggling to make social class transitions, with less than a tenth saying they think moving up a class is possible.

Interestingly, a large portion of Gestaters in New South Wales said they were ambitious and love their work (87% and 78% respectively), suggesting that a 'failure to launch' may not necessarily indicate a lack of direction or motivation.

The research shows the career-focused groups such as Startup Stars find 'upgrading' easier. Additionally, New South Wales' Gen 2.0s that have managed to 'upgrade' their class attribute their success to better education opportunities (77%).

"The ways people move up in social class has not changed substantially over the years. Those without an inheritance or parents with occupational repute still have a significantly more difficult economic life. While the

rapidly evolving employment and economic landscape in Australia has the possibility to drive the flexibility of social groups, technological training and resources need to be made available to low socio-economic students who all too often leave formal education early,” Dr Hickey-Moody commented.

Mr Anderson added that the new class system is affecting people’s perception of themselves and of those around them.

“What’s particularly interesting is the way social class systems were more apparent to those in the city versus the country. City folk are viewed as more materialistic whereas country dwellers appear to most as more community-minded. City dwellers have also gained a reputation for being more judgmental, with almost a third of those in New South Wales saying this group is more judgmental than those living in the country,” commented Mr Anderson.

The evolution of social classes in this new research clearly demonstrates that class boundaries aren’t becoming more blurred, but instead more well-defined. While there may be more room for mobility in the new class system to both challenge traditional hierarchies and leave some groups behind, it is important to note that success also looks different to each class.

Supporting data is available on the Real Insurance website:

www.realinsurance.com.au/news-views/real-insurance-class-system-survey

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About Real Insurance

Real Insurance is an award-winning Australian insurer, with a goal to protect the quality of people’s lives. Real Insurance has been named as the top Risk and Life Insurer in Roy Morgan’s 2015 annual Customer Satisfaction Awards and was also awarded the 2014 Highly Commended Trusted Brand Award in the Life and Funeral Insurance categories, as voted for by Australian consumers. The company has been in the Australian market since 2005 with product offerings in car, home, life, income, pet, funeral, travel and bike insurance. Real Insurance is a trading name of Greenstone Financial Services Pty Ltd and The Hollard Insurance Company Pty Ltd.

About the ‘Real Insurance Class System Survey’

In order to explore the new class system in Australia, CoreData surveyed over 1000 Australian across the nation in mid-August 2016.

Hard quotas by state were also engaged to ensure all the main states were represented with sufficiently robust samples (NSW = 212, VIC = 212, QLD = 208, WA = 201, Remaining states/territories = 204.)