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South Africa's state of mind as we enter 2006

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RS, South Africa's leading marketing and social insights company, has conducted several studies in recent months amongst representative samples of SA adults (aged 18 years and older) from all over South Africa, to determine their reactions to various issues and to determine their overall levels of well-being. What is the state of South Africa's mind, body and soul as we enter 2006 and prepare for the 1 March local government elections?

How do people live? (based on a study of 3 500 adults aged 18 year and over across South Africa in mid-2005) StatsSA estimate that there were 47 million people in SA mid-2005, 27 million being aged 18 years or older. Just over a third live in the seven metropolitan areas and four out of ten live in rural areas. RS estimates that there are 12.3 million households, of which five million are in metropolitan areas.

-> 52% have **municipal water** in their homes and another 19% have municipal water on their stands - so 71% in total have access to decent water where they live (90% in metro areas); 20% use a communal tap and 9% have other sources. -> 54% have a **flush toilet** (88% in metro areas).

-> 86% have electricity (95% in urban areas, 69% in rural areas). Only 28% have hot running water.

-> Of the 12.3 million households, 1.4 million live in **shacks** and 1.5 million live in **traditional huts**. In metro areas, 13% live in shacks, this accounting for half of all shacks.

o Two studies of 2 000 metropolitan adults in during 2005 found that, whilst 67% of people felt that Government had done a good job of providing **housing for the poor**, 72% felt it was still taking too long, and that Government had not lived up to its election promises (57%) because of bureaucracy and time wasting (61%) and housing being allocated in an unfair manner (62%). Hence, many people supported the protest actions seen in 2005 about housing delivery (52%). However, people do feel the situation is getting better (42%) rather than worse (29%).

o A study of 822 metro dwellers found that one of the top causes that businesses should support is **shelters for the homeless and for street-children** (43%).

What do people earn? Poverty, nutrition and stress

-> 45% of adults have some level of employment; 28% are **unemployed and looking for work** (the official definition of unemployment).

-> The median monthly household income is R2 000, increasing at about 5.5% per year. With inflation averaging 4%, this gives a real median income growth of just 1.3%. The third quartile is R5 000; the first quartile is R900.

RS has a **poverty measure** that runs from zero (no material deprivation) to 100 (almost no basic needs filled). The average for 2005 was 41, slightly down from the 2003 figure of 43. Blacks dropped from 50 to 48, coloureds from 32 to 26 and Indians/Asians from 13 to 10. Whites were static on eight.

RS defines **three poverty lines**: people scoring 50 and over (39% of the population) can be said to be experiencing poverty at some level; people scoring 60 and over are defined as "poverty stricken" (25% of the population, 64% of those living in poverty); people scoring 80 and over are defined as living suffering hardship and poverty of the most extreme kind (8% of the total population, 21% of those living in poverty). Poverty levels are worst amongst rural farm workers (78% live in poverty), rural villages (79%) and urban squatter shacks (72%).

Twelve percent of people score over 50 on the zero to 100 stress measure developed by RS and can be regarded as stressed. Poverty stress is a term coined by RS to distinguish between the stress caused by poverty and other stress. Of the 12% of stressed people, 58% suffer poverty stress by scoring 50 and over on both the stress and poverty measures (7% of the population). Of those living in poverty, 18% are stressed compared with only 5% of the relatively affluent.

Overall, 22% of people say that they **cannot afford to eat the correct foods**. This rises to 75% in the most severe poverty category (those scoring 80 and over on the poverty measure). However, the good news is that this has dropped from 30% in 2003.

Education plays a vital role

One adult in seven either has no formal education or has had only some primary school education. One in ten have completed primary school but gone no higher. Almost four in ten have had some high school education whilst 30% have matriculated but gone no further. One in ten adults have gone beyond matric: 2% have done some university, 2% have completed university and 6% have other post-matric qualifications.

-> A sample of 2 000 metro adults feel that school education is getting better (49%), with 30% saying "worse" and 17% saying "same" or "don't know". Poorer people are more positive than more wealthy people: this could be a cause of racial tension in the future.

-> In a more affluent sample of 500 metro dwellers interviewed by telephone in 2005, 62% agreed that education in South Africa is in a crisis whilst 61% of this more-affluent sample agreed that the standard of education in SA is falling. This was at least partly attributed to the government changing its education policy too often in the last ten years (76% agree). Nonetheless, taking a longer term view is more positive: 48% feel that schools are better than ten years ago.

-> Many people feel Government ministers should be forced to send their children to government schools (54% agree but 42% disagree) although 64% feel that they would rather send their own children to a private rather than a government school.

-> A matric certificate on its own is not seen as a passport to a job (76% agree) - see "Jobs" below.

-> A study of 822 metro dwellers in early 2005 found that 25% feel that adult education is a cause that companies should support, whilst 29% say that schools are a worth Corporate Social Investment (CSI) target.

Health, stress and pressure, leisure time and support systems

"I feel well and in good health" received a 61% response in the 2005 study (2003: 57%), but 11% say that they "don't feel really well most of the time" (28% in the *Severe hardship* poverty group) leaving 28% in an intermediate state of health. A third of people admit to little or no physical exercise whilst 53% consider themselves physically fit.

-> Dietary habits

A quarter of people say that they include a lot of fruit, vegetables and salad in their diet, this being very strongly influenced by income: this rises to 60% for those with a household income of R15 000 or more per month. One person in seven says that they often skip meals.

In metro areas, there is a **health-conscious segment** that are often on a diet (5%, mostly females, especially whites and Indians), prefer a low fat, high fibre diet (10%, similar skews), prefer organic (8%) or free-range products (15%) and watch what they eat (36%). A third of people say that they look at the ingredients on food labels. Against that is a **non-health-conscious segment** that admits that they are not health conscious and eat whatever they like (30%) and often eat at fast-food restaurants (16%). Finally, there is a group who are **poorer**, this preventing them from healthy eating: 4% do not get enough food, 18% do not eat regular meals every day, 16% do not often eat breakfast and 12% do not get enough sleep.

Adequate **leisure** time is only the purview of a third of adult South Africans (2003: 48% - a major drop). Having **good support systems** is a contributor to one's overall mental state: 61% of people say that they have friends and family to turn to whenever needed, this being consistent across all the poverty groups but considerably lower compared with the 2003 figure of 74%. The overall impression is one of increased activity and stress - a vibrancy.

People's self-reported mental and emotional state shows consistency over the years:

- -> "I feel I am a failure" 7% in both 2003 and 2005
- -> "I experience feelings of depression or hopelessness" 15% (2003: 16%)
- -> "I feel like my life is emotionally empty" 12% (2003: 13%)
- -> "I feel anxious, tense and a sense of panic" 7% (2003: 8%)
- -> "I feel lonely" 10% (2003: 12%)
- -> "I feel alive and energetic" 51% (2003: 53%)
- -> "I have a varied life with lots of different activities" 28% (2003: 25%)
- -> "I regard myself as a spiritual person" 39% (2003: 37%)
- -> "My life has meaning and purpose" 49% (2003: 55%)

The average of the zero-to-100 **health** measure developed by RS in 2003 was 72; in 2005, it is 71. The **stress/pressure** measure mean was 29 in 2003; in 2005, it is 32. These are statistically significant changes although small in real terms: the increased activity and stress are partly counteracted by higher levels of fulfillment.

Health has a strong correlation with high levels of poverty: the health mean drops to 56 in the *Severe hardship* group. These averages hide the severity of the situation: overall, 23% of people can be described as either *Sickly and depressed* or as *Poorly* (by having scores of 60 or below on the health measure); this rises to 56% in the *Severe hardship* group. Overall, stress levels are highest for those aged 30 to 34, this being the point at which those with jobs are trying hardest to better themselves; those unemployed will be feeling the stress of needing to provide at an age when marriage and children are most likely.

As well as reduced leisure, for whites, there has been a decline in having friends and family to hand and a greater sense that they have lost direction and purpose. This may be attributed partly to problems induced by affirmative action and broad-based black economic empowerment (jobs are more difficult to find and to keep) and to migration/emigration. Life satisfaction has declined ten points over the two years (69% to 59%).

	Health		Stress/pressure		
	2003	2005	2003	2005	
Total SA	72	71	29	32	
Blacks	70	69	31	33	
Whites	82	79	18	(26)	
Coloureds	72	75	27	26	
Indians/Asians	79	77	25	25	

Table 1 - Health and stress/pressure

People's views on health and related issues

-> *Cholesterol*: A survey of 500 metropolitan adults by telephone in late 2004 showed that 41% of this more affluent sector claimed to know their cholesterol level. Some 15% claim to have experienced heart problems.

-> **Bird flu**: A similar study in late 2005 showed that three-quarters of this more affluent segment were worried about the bird flu problem but that this dropped with increasing affluence, probably as a result of access to better health facilities and lower levels of concern over the health of the main wage earner.

-> *AIDS*: The population is completely divided as well as confused on this issue as well as Government's stance on HIV/AIDS: whilst 86% of metro dwellers feel that the Government should do more to supply medicine to people with HIV/AIDS, only a half say that they understand the Government's approach and support the President's position on this problem and four out of ten feel that Minister Tshabalala-Msimang is doing a good job when it come to HIV/AIDS. A quarter of people approve of the African Potato as a treatment - but 44% gave a "don't know" response. That HIV/AIDS is

stigmatised is evident in that 31% would keep their status a secret if they had HIV/AIDS and 18% could not say. A study of 822 metro dwellers feel that AIDS shelters are the most worthy CSI target (51% agree).

-> *Euthanasia*: A metropolitan telephone survey of 500 showed that seven out of ten people agree that the life-support system of a brain dead person can be turned off if so decided by the appropriate family member. However, the issue of voluntarily taking one's own life even if terminally ill and in considerable pain is more controversial: 50% agree that this is acceptable, 44% disagree and 5% don't know. This response pattern has remained consistent since 2001.

-> *Abortion*: A metropolitan telephone survey of 500 showed that a quarter of this more affluent sample agree that abortion on demand is acceptable, this rising with increasing wealth. Those not agreeing with abortion on demand were asked how they would feel about an abortion if a woman had been raped and had fallen pregnant. Two-thirds of this group then agreed abortion would be justifiable.

-> *Climate change*: Whilst not strictly a health issue, climate change will undoubtedly affect all of us. A metropolitan telephone study of 500 in late 2005 found that 88% of people agreed that it was already having a big effect on the world's weather. However, only 54% felt that it would affect their lives, this rising with income to 73% in the top income group of R20 000 or more monthly household income.

-> Genetically modified (GM) foods: A metro telephone study revealed highly diverse views: 51% agreed that GM foods have not been properly tested yet, 58% say they avoid GM foods and 47% would be quite happy to eat them. From this RS developed a segmentation and defined four groups of people:

o Acceptors (27%) who do not avoid GM foods and are happy to eat them

o Avoiders (21%) who avoid them but would be quite happy to eat them - they clearly lack real knowledge about GM foods o Rejectors (38%) who are not happy to eat GM foods and avoid them

o Uninformed (14%) who gave inconsistent responses or said "don't know"

The main finding is that there is ignorance and (vague) suspicion about GM foods with only 27% of this more affluent sample embracing them.

Optimism

Optimism is a key indicator as it dictates how people will run their lives from an economic perspective. The optimism measure declined two points from 68 to 66, mainly because of a drop amongst whites (-6.0 points). However, 70% of metro South Africans say that they feel positive about South Africa and its future.

Happiness

RS measures happiness in two ways: via an index that looks at people's positive and negative general mood levels, and their satisfaction with their lives (subjective well-being (SWB)), and also via a simple statement:

-> "Generally, I am a happy and cheerful person" - 56% (2003: 60%)

This decline of four points comes largely from a **considerable drop amongst whites** (81% to 65%) and coloureds (73% to 64%). The drop for whites is probably as a result of the above-mentioned factors: pressure, drop in sense of direction, decline in support structures and worries over increased competition. The white population shows poorer results on a number of measures: health (-3.0), quality of the environment (-8.7), pressure (+7.7), access to infrastructure (-4.6, due to the growth of new housing developments where shops and hospitals have yet to be built), and optimism (-6.0).

The SWB measure is constant at 75. There is some variation across race group: blacks - 73, whites - 82 (down two points), coloureds - 76 and Indians/Asians 82. Having a full-time job, on average, lifts SWB scores five points - but eight points above those unemployed. Lack of a job affects one's self-esteem, reward and recognition levels. Working away from home also leads to a drop in SWB by, on average, eight points compared with those working people who live at home.

Market sentiment and the economy

"Consumer confidence" has become an important barometer for economists to monitor. RS's metropolitan Market Sentiment Index (MSI) looks both at how people feel about their current economic circumstances and their future prospects. Jobs and inflation are key components. In 2005, the index averaged 139, up from the 2004 average of 136, the 2003 average of 120 and the average of 99 recorded at the index's inception in 2002.

-> *Jobs*: The job market continues to be the most pessimistically viewed part of our economy with 92% of South African metro adults saying that "jobs are hard to find at the moment". This figure has not moved significantly in three years. However, 26% feel that jobs will be easier to find in the next six months, compared with only 14% in early 2002, and 52% feel they will be more difficult to find in six months time, down from 74% in early 2002. Most people do not feel that the Government has done a good job in reducing unemployment (64%) and 81% do not feel that the Government is creating jobs fast enough.

-> **The workplace**: Work that challenges one without being too daunting and work that is not below one's skill level (the concept of "flow") are important in the workplace. Amongst those employed, 29% of people felt they had this balance, but 14% said that work bored them and they had no challenges, whilst 16% said they were anxious about the challenges they faced at work. In addition, 16% do not feel secure in their jobs and 18% say that their work does not make them happy. A quarter feel that they drive themselves too hard in a bid to be best.

-> *Inflation*: Although people's expectations about inflation have improved dramatically over the past two years, the reality is that people still battle with high prices: only 20% say that their income keeps up with inflation and 87% complain of prices rising faster than incomes. Concern over rising inflation is a considerable dampener on market sentiment going into 2006, especially concern around rising fuel prices and the knock-on effect on food prices.

-> *Perceptions of standard of living*: Half of metro adults agree that the Government has improved the standard of living for all South Africans, although, in purely monetary terms, only 23% say they are better off than a year ago (43% said "worse", 30% said "the same" and 4% said "don't know").

-> **Black Economic Empowerment (BEE)**: Two-thirds of a metro telephone sample (late 2004) felt that BEE is necessary to address the wrongs of the past, a similar proportion feeling that it had uplifted the standard of living for many of the previously disadvantaged. However, there were concerns: 70% felt that it had enriched only a select few; 44% felt it was stifling growth and 43% said that it creates an environment for corruption.

-> Corporate Social Responsibility/Investment: A study of 822 metro adults in 2005 showed that the causes people felt businesses should support most are those catering for the most vulnerable: AIDS shelters (51%), shelters for the homeless and street-children (43%) and sanctuaries for abused women and children (41%). Child welfare (37%), children's hospitals (32%) and schools (29%) are next. Care and facilities for the disabled and for victims of rape and violence and adult education all had responses of 25% or more. Causes supporting the environment, animals and wildlife, and arts and culture received support levels of under 10% but this rises with income, whereas poorer people are more likely to want support for poverty-related causes. Gender plays a role too: men are more likely to support sports and environmental causes whereas women tend to be more likely to support feeding schemes (26% vs 19%). Younger people are more vocal about sport development (also seen as poverty-alleviator) and AIDS.

The Government and running the country

Several aspects of people's perceptions around how the Government is running the country have already been addressed in the sections above on housing, education, health and the economy. This section looks at wider issues (see also the section on service delivery):

-> *Crime*: In its well-being studies, RS asks people about two broad types of crime: crimes of violence (hijacking, murder, rape and other crimes of violence) and robbery or burglary. In metropolitan areas, 9% of people say that they or a member

of their household have experienced some form of violent crime at some time; 11% say that they or a member of their household have experienced a robbery or burglary. One in twenty experience a lot of household conflict.

o 61% of people feel that the SAPS keeps them in the dark about crime levels and 72% feel that crime is worse than people say it is. Hence, 86% feel that the Government should be more forthcoming about what is happening with crime in SA. o 41% of people feel that a worthy CSI cause is shelters for **abused women and children** whilst 26% feel the same in

respect of victims of rape and violence.

o In a survey of metro dwellers by telephone, eight out of ten people feel that security on SA's **trains and buses** is terrible whilst 46% felt that security on **passenger aircraft** leaving SA is not up to world standards.

-> Corruption:

o The **Shabir Schaik** trial and verdict and the **Zuma** affair (see below) had a strong impact in perceptions around corruption in South Africa.

o In general, however, about 80% of metro dwellers with telephones feel that **corruption** has become a way of life in South Africa and that there is corruption in senior levels of Government. Almost everyone (95%) feel that this needs to be eliminated. The good news was that the President's handling of the release of Deputy President Jacob Zuma was seen, at the time, to have sent a very positive message in this regard (86% agreed it sent a clear message on corruption to the rest of Government) and 83% felt it demonstrated his commitment to a transparent government. Over the April to August period (Zuma was released on 13 June), the President's approval rating in metro areas averaged an all time high of 63% and 65% across the whole country (but only 49% in KwaZulu-Natal).

o 80% of metro adults with telephones agree that many police officers take **bribes** and that it is easy for criminals to bribe justice officials.

o The **arms deal** was felt by the same people to have been tainted by corruption (65%) and the investigation into it needs to be re-opened (72%), even though Zuma had been fired.

o The media is seen to be necessary in exposing corruption (70%).

-> Trust in the judiciary:

o Half of metropolitan adults feel that the courts are independent of the Government.

o About a half of adults also feel that either the race or gender of a judge influences how a judge makes decisions and judges a case.

o Variability between judges is also an issue with 63% of metro adults feeling that whether a criminal goes to jail depends on what judge is (s)he gets.

o Almost everyone (85%) feel it takes too long for criminals to be sentenced

-> The Schaik and Zuma affairs:

o Metro adults with telephones (more affluent people than average) agreed with Shabir Schaik's **guilty verdict** (85%) but were more ambivalent about his **15-year sentence** with 46% saying it is too severe and 46% disagreeing; 61% agreed that he was responsible for the downfall of Jacob Zuma.

o RS tracked the Zuma affair in a number of studies in 2005:

* In a metro telephone study just after Zuma's release, 74% agreed that the **President was correct** to release him although 28% felt he had used this as an opportunity to get rid of a rival. The effects on perceptions of corruption in Government were positive at the time. **Cosatu**'s proposed funding of Zuma's defence was only approved by a third of the sample.

* A larger study of 2 000 metro dwellers (no telephone restriction), 55% agreed that Zuma could not continue in office. Blacks in Durban were the outliers with only 39% agreeing (58% amongst blacks in other provinces)

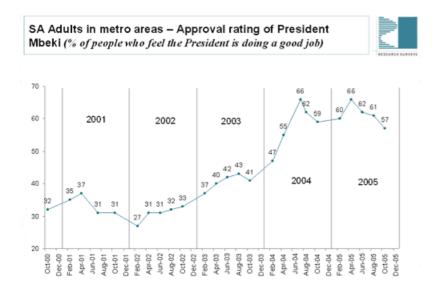
* A study of 3 500 across all of South Africa in August 2005 showed that 53% felt Zuma had been released in accordance with the Constitution, but 28% attributed it to party politics. Overall, 58% across the country as a whole approved the action. Deeper analysis showed very clearly that **Zuma's support base is primarily black KwaZulu-Natal-based**: only 9% of blacks in KwaZulu-Natal supported the action compared with two-thirds of people across all demographics in other provinces.

-> **Tolerance**: A metro telephone study found that nine out of ten people feel that it is important to be tolerant of other people's religious beliefs and that it is not right to label or blame a whole group of people for just the actions of a few, this in the wake of the London bomb attacks. In this regard, Muslims were felt by three-quarters of those interviewed to be unfairly

targeted as a group because of the bomb attacks in London and Iraq.

How does the President fare?

For three years - from 2000 to 2001 - the President's approval rating lay generally in the low 30s. But from February 2003, the percentage of people who feel that President Mbeki is doing a good job as President began to rise. By the end of 2003, it was in the low 40s. 2004 saw a remarkable rise with the Ten Years of Democracy celebrations and the successful second democratic elections. 2005 has scaled new heights for the President, during which his approval score averaged 61%, up three points from his 2004 average of 58%.



In non-metro areas, his approval rating rises even further - to 67% (April/August 2005), compared with 68% in August 2004 and 46% in August 2003. His overall average for the whole country is 65%. All in all, this is a remarkable and sustained performance in a controversy-ridden year, despite the slight fall-off at year-end.

%	Mbeki	All-	All-	Mandela
	Ave	time	time	1998
	2005	low	high	
Total metro SA	61	27	66	55
Blacks	74	35	81	72
Whites	37	9	47	28
Coloureds	40	17	55	29
Indians/Asians	47	11	62	21

Comparing these results with those for President Mandela in 1998

1998 represents the last full calendar year of President Nelson period in office. President Mbeki's results for 2005 show an almost identical rating amongst blacks, and a better rating amongst all other race groups. This comparison must be made with caution, however, as SA has had the benefit of a longer period of stability that had President Mandela in 1998.

Overall Everyday Quality of Life (EQLi™)

This overarching measure takes a holistic view of all aspects of a person's well-being. In 2003, the measure stood at 58 (on a zero-to-100 scale); in 2005, it is 57, an insignificant overall change. Despite the small real growth in incomes over the past two years, this has not yet greatly affected the overall quality of people's lives when taken as an average over the whole country. For whites, however, the measure declined from 82 to 78 for reasons already given. The black figure was steady at 52, a decline of three points in small urban areas being almost balanced by one point rises in metropolitan and rural areas:

-> Metropolitan areas o Blacks - 59 (2003: 58) o Whites - 78 (2003: 83) o Coloureds - 68 (2003: 69) o Indians/Asians - 74 (2003: 74)

-> Other urban areas o Blacks - 56 (2003: 59) o Whites - 79 (2003: 81) o Coloureds - 63 (2003: 61)

-> Rural areas o Blacks - 45 (2003: 44) o Whites - 70 (2003: 77) o Coloureds - 58 (2003: 48) (caution: small sample base)

For blacks in metro areas, improvements are evident in basic infrastructure (such as hot running water, up to 24% from 14%, a substantial rise in cell phone ownership (in the household) from 38% to 62%, a life of increasing variety (20% to 31%), feelings of better health (but a slight decline in exercise levels), a drop in the levels of people saying that they cannot afford to eat correctly (25% to 17%), and an improvement in air quality. This is partly balanced by a decline in having friends and family to turn to (73% to 66%) and somewhat less leisure time.

For blacks in other urban areas, there have been improvements in cell phone ownership (40% to 53%), but some drops in the provision of basic services such as water and sanitation, a drop in the variety of one's life, an increase in fear level (15% to 23%), a decline in leisure levels and a decline in having friends and family to turn to. There are also generally greater feelings of anxiety and depression.

20% of South Africans experienced the death of someone in their household and a third expressed concerns about the health of the main wage earner - jobs and AIDS are major issues driving people's everyday lives.

The overall impression is one of a country where family and community structures are in considerable flux. Pressure levels are higher in a more vibrant but more stressed environment. For blacks, there are some clear improvements in metro areas in basic living conditions, but service delivery is a potential problem in non-metro areas.

SUMMARY

Job creation (as well as concerns about the death or ill-health of the main wage-earner, or the loss of that earner's job), poverty alleviation, inflation control and housing delivery are the four most pressing problems faced by the ordinary South African in 2005, in approximate order of importance. These are all so pressing, indeed, that, whilst one looks to Government for leadership, action and the creation of a suitable climate, they become imperatives for us all. Any action or policy that, in any way, contributes to these problems must be subjected to the most intense scrutiny and debate.

The AIDS and Zimbabwe issues raise real concerns, as does the Zuma affair, which has spiraled out of control. On these issues, there is considerable controversy and division amongst the general public as well as within the tripartite alliance. Decisive and visible action is required on all of these problems.

Serious problems besetting the government itself at all levels are those of unacceptable service delivery and corruption: again, decisive and visible action is needed. However, President Mbeki's personal standing over 2005 was very good, despite slipping somewhat towards year's end.

Despite the serious problems facing the average South African and a sense of increasing stress in the white population, we enter 2006 in a reasonably positive state of mind. Our society is clearly in a state of flux but there is a sense of excitement

and vibrancy which bodes well for 2006. This can be enhanced by Government if top decision-makers address key issues decisively and visibly.

Technical note

The studies were conducted throughout 2005 amongst national samples of 3 500 adults from all parts of South Africa, samples of 2 000 metropolitan dwellers and samples of 500 to 822 metro dwellers with telephones: the study have margins of error of under 2.0 %, 2.5%, 5% and 4% respectively for the results found. The studies were conducted by Research Surveys (Pty) Ltd (RS) as part of its ongoing research into people's well-being and attitudes tkey issues of the day and was funded by RS. Some studies, while funded by RS, were conducted specifically on behalf of e-tv and the Judge for Yourself" programme. The FinScope study was conducted on behalf of The FinMark Trust and consisted of a national sample of 3 885 across South Africa. The information given above represents merely extracts from more detailed press releases issued throughout 2005. For more details, please contact Neil Higgs, Director, on (011) 778-7500 or 082-376-6312.

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