



OUR LIVES PROJECT WAVE THREE TECHNICAL SUMMARY

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PREPARED FOR

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 About this report

This report describes and reviews the conduct of The University of Queensland Our Lives Wave Three Project, (*Wave Three*) from a data collection and methodological perspective. It provides:

- An overview of the methodology
- Consolidates assorted reports generated throughout the Project
- · Reviews sample utilisation and response dynamics, and
- Considers potential methodological refinements which might be considered for implementation in the future.

1.2 Project background

The Our Lives Project is a longitudinal study run by The University of Queensland. The Project seeks to follow up respondents every two years and explores the attitudes and aspirations of young people in Queensland.

The overall objectives of the Project is to produce a clear picture of change in the values and behaviours of young people in relation to subjects such as educational and occupational aspirations, relationships with peers and family, and lifestyle choices, as respondents grow older.

The first phase of Our Lives was launched in 2006, with 7,031 students from 202 schools across Queensland taking part in the survey. Wave Two of the survey was conducted between 2008 and 2009, and resulted in a response from 3653 original sample members.

Wave Three was the second round of data collection for the Our Lives project conducted by the Social Research Centre for The University of Queensland.

1.3 Project overview

Data collection for Wave Three incorporated initial data collection via an online platform, followed by a hard copy mail out to non respondents, providing the option of hard copy or online completion. The project schedule allowed for a total of four rounds of mailed communications, comprising:

- Initial online invitation letter (including unique username and password, and instructions to complete online)
- Thank you / reminder card (to all sample members)
- Initial questionnaire mailing
- Reminder letter

Each mail milestone was supported by one email notification (distributed to non respondents with an email address), with the final reminder followed by several SMS notifications. A total of five emails and two SMS notifications were sent during the data collection period.

While the original project schedule allowed for telephone reminder activity, a further supplementary activity, comprising full data collection via telephone, was agreed upon in early 2011, with data collection carried out between February and April 2011 via Computer Assisted telephone Interviewing (CATI).

The total number of interviews achieved across both online and hard copy modes was 3,114¹

Table 1.3 – Summary of key statistics

	Original records (from Wave 1, 2006)	7031
Α	Mailing base for Wave Three	5956
В	Fully responding	3114
D	Sample yield (total) (B/A)	52.3
Е	Initial online invitation letter mailing date	25-Aug-10
F	Cut off for data processing	14-Apr-11

As can be seen at Table 1.3, the overall sample yield (interviews as a per cent of selections) was 52.3%.

Section 5 provides a detailed breakdown of response by various characteristics.

1.4 Response overview

Table 1.4 - Total interviews achieved across mode

Modes of survey completion	n	As % total responses
Completion via online (incl. Partials)	2223	72.3
Completion via hardcopy	564	17.6
CATI	327	10.2
Total surveys completed	3209	100.0

As can be seen, almost three quarters of all respondents chose to complete the Our Lives survey via online, with fewer than 20% choosing to complete via hard copy. Full data collection via CATI was attributed to around 10% of all responses.

Data collection was carried out between 25th August 2010 to 14th April 2011.

¹ Figure does not include 95 partial complete interviews included in final data file at request of The University of Queensland

1.5 Overview of Our Lives schedule

The schedule for Wave Three closely adhered to the timings used for the second wave of the survey. Table 1.5 provides the actual dates for key activities.

The incorporation of supplementary activities within the data collection period in order to maximise response, particularly in relation to the decision to implement full data collection activity by telephone, led to a cut off on data collection much later than the original scheduled date.

Minor project delays were also attributable to the severe floods which impacted Queensland in early 2011.

Table 1.5 - Overview of Our Lives schedule

Phase / task	Date
Questionnaire sign off	14-Aug-10
Online invitation letter despatched	25-Aug-10
First reminder card despatched	6-Sep-10
Questionnaire booklet despatched	7-Oct-10
Returns processing commences	12-Oct-10
Reminder letter despatched	25-Oct-10
Commence telephone non-response follow up activity	5-Nov-10
Supplementary data collection via CATI	7-Feb-11
Cut off for processing	14-Apr-11
Final data file	1-Jun-11

2. SAMPLING ISSUES

2.1 Sample frame

In mad 2009, the Social Research Centre undertook to clean the original mailing list of 7031 records provided post Wave One data collection, incorporating updated information provided by a large proportion of sample members during Wave Two. This cleaned, updated mailing list formed the sample frame for Wave Three.

2.2 Sample cleaning

In comparison with the sample frame provided post Wave One (where details were collected verbatim from students in year eight) the sample frame prepared ahead of Wave Three was seen to be of improved quality, in that it incorporated contact information which had been cleaned into an appropriate mailing format. The Wave Two survey resulted in the successful confirmation of approximately 25% one quarter of all original records. Significant time was nonetheless invested in extensive sample cleaning to ensure that the frame was as up to date and accurate as possible.

The main tasks carried out in relation to list cleaning for Wave Three included:

- The update of contact information drawn from two rounds of panel maintenance activities carried out in the year and a half between Wave Two and Wave Three. In particular, these activities yielded significant numbers of updated mobile phone numbers and email addresses. It is noted that a large proportion of these details were provided in dubious format, due to a lack of data validation in the online contact form utilised for the activity.
- The update and cleaning of confirmed contact information, stemming from sample member email notifications forwarded on by the Our Lives project management team at The University of Queensland.
- Intensive cleaning of email addresses (following provision of updated information from panel maintenance activities, as outlined above), with many updated email addresses seemingly of poor quality (e.g. misspelt domain names, illogical format).
 Thorough cleaning of email addresses was considered of particular importance, given the prominent role of email activity in the methodology of Wave Three.
- Cleaning of updated details into an appropriate mailing format (including separating out the mailing address details for all records into 5 separate address fields).

It was also necessary to flag records for whom blank, incomplete or incorrect contact information remained present within the sample frame. Where there was a history of inability to make contact, including the failure of intensive yet unsuccessful tracking during Wave Two and/or notification of return to sender outcomes (RTS) in relation to previous mailing activity, it was necessary to make a decision on the viability of continued

approaches. Records for whom, in consultation with The University of Queensland, it was deemed that no approach via any mode was possible (i.e. invalid or blank mailing address, email address and telephone number), were flagged as "unusable" sample records and removed from the mailing base for Wave Three. In total some 1075 records from the original 7031 were removed from the mailing base, leaving 5956 records for the Wave Three approach.

2.3 Outcomes from sample cleaning

Following a review of initial list cleaning outcomes, in consultation with The University of Queensland, it was agreed that:

- An initial online approach letter mailing would be undertaken for all sample members for whom complete and seemingly valid mailing address details were present, including those with a suspected school address which had not been resolved at Wave Two (in the hope that the school would forward the materials to the relevant sample member particularly in the case of borders)
- Where interstate mailing address details for a record existed, the sample member was to be deemed in scope, was to be included in all mail activity and encouraged to complete the survey, and
- Where overseas mailing address details for a record existed, the sample member
 was to be deemed in scope. While it was not possible to include the sample member
 in mail activity, where possible, an email approach would be sent, with the sample
 member encouraged to complete the survey online.

3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

3.1 Overview

The aim of the data collection methodology was to encourage early online response, supported by an incentive. The online only approach was to be followed by a survey pack mailing, providing the option to complete the survey hard copy or online, and was to be supported by a range of complimentary telephone, mail-based, email and SMS response maximisation activities.

In was agreed that some flexibility in approach was necessary to address the various challenges presented by the high level of non response to Wave Two. A "shortened" version of the questionnaire (to be available via both online and hard copy, as discussed in Sections 3.1 and 3.4) was created at the instruction of The University of Queensland, with this questionnaire to be offered to those sample members who had not completed the Wave Two survey, and a small number of other sample members for whom the offer of a shortened questionnaire helped to offset certain refusal to complete the Wave Three survey.

3.2 1800 number operation

The Social Research Centre Our Lives 1800 number was activated at the commencement of fieldwork, and remained active until the end of the enumeration period in April 2011.

The 1800 number was published on survey materials and was made available on the Our Lives website. A comprehensive call log was carefully maintained throughout the data collection period, with all queries logged and followed up as required. Briefed and trained interviewers were on hand to answer respondent queries and update contact details.

A helpdesk email account was maintained throughout the data collection period, with queries answered within 24 hours of receipt, in line with Social Research Centre guidelines.

In total, 87 emails and 132 calls to the helpdesk were logged over the course of the data collection period.

3.3 Survey materials

3.3.1 Online invitation letter

Following sample cleaning, an online invitation letter was dispatched to the 5956 sample members included in the approach for Wave Three.

The personalised letter provided login and password details for access to the online survey, along with details of the prize draw and provided instructions on accessing helpdesk assistance.

The University of Queensland logo and signature blocks, and Our Lives slogan were printed on the letter.

The letter was dispatched on 25th August 2010.

3.3.2 Reminder card

The reminder card served to thank all sample members who had already responded to the survey request, act as a memory jogger for those who had not, and reiterated the messages of the covering letter in terms of the prize draw, survey completion options and the assistance available.

The reminder card was lodged exactly one week after lodgement of the online invitation letter, on 1st September 2010.

3.3.3 Questionnaire booklet

Full questionnaire booklet

The "full" questionnaire mailing pack comprised a 24 page booklet, with a covering letter on the outside front cover, an instruction sheet on the inside front cover, and 22 A4 panels of survey questions, comprising six sections. The back cover of the booklet was overprinted with the following:

- Barcode (for returns logging), and
- Unique sample member id.

Shortened questionnaire survey booklet

The "shortened" questionnaire mailing pack comprised a 20 page booklet, with a covering letter on the outside front cover, an instruction sheet on the inside front cover, and 18 A4 panels of survey questions, comprising five sections. As per the full questionnaire version, the back cover of the booklet was overprinted with the barcode and the unique sample member id.

The following materials were also included within the initial materials mailing for both questionnaire types:

- Job categories sheet (for referencing at occupation questions), and
- Reply paid envelope.

The questionnaire booklet was lodged in one batch on 7th October 2010.

Copies of both "full" and "shortened" questionnaire booklets are included at Appendix A.

3.3.4 Survey stationery

A survey brochure, with answers to frequently asked questions, the reply paid address, the Our Lives 1800 number and email address, was included on the inside front cover of the questionnaire booklet.

The official University of Queensland logo was incorporated onto the outer envelope.

3.4 Online data collection

3.4.1 Design and testing

The online version of the survey sought to replicate the 'look' of the hard copy survey as far as was possible, with scripting and testing commencing as soon as the content for the hard copy survey questionnaires was finalised in early August.

The two versions of the questionnaire were consolidated into a single script, with question sequencing based on a sample record flag linked to the unique identifier.

The online survey was accessed by the respondent via the www.uq.edu.au/ourlives portal, using a unique username and password, which was included as part of the online invitation letter and all subsequent communications. As is standard, passwords were generated as a unique set of random letters (lower case) and numbers, which avoided the use of potentially confusing characters, such as '1', 'I', '5', 'S', 0 and 'o'.

Following comprehensive testing by the Social Research Centre and the Our Lives project management team at The University of Queensland, a full 'dummy' data run was conducted, with extensive checking of data impacts of the back button and partial completion carried out by the Social Research Centre.

The online survey went 'live' on 24th August 2010 and remained open until the end of the data collection period.

3.4.2 Online survey features

The final online survey presented as a series of screens with individual questions, or response grids. All questions were treated as mandatory, with the exception of the collection of contact information at the end of the survey.

In consultation with The University of Queensland, the Social Research Centre developed "hover text" which was placed above occupation questions A8, A14, F10 and F14, enabling respondents to quickly and easily view job category information within the online survey, negating the need for the respondent to refer to the separate job categories sheet.

3.4.3 'Piping' of contact information

Contact details for each sample member were 'piped' into the last screen of the online survey, allowing respondents to quickly review and confirm their information, rather than needing to enter all information.

3.5 Telephone non-response follow up

3.5.1 Initial reminder calls

Reminder calls were carried out to non-responding sample members following the last mail-based approach in late September 2010. A total of 2697 sample members were included in

the initial reminder call. Of these, 1780 sample members were successfully personally reminded to complete the survey.

The reminder call was carried out via CATI, with the script incorporating a section for collection and confirmation of contact details from sample members.

3.5.2 Partial completer reminder calls

Reminder calls were carried out to 115 sample members for whom a partially completed online survey had been registered as at late September 2010. This activity was supported by a tailored email. As a result of this approach, a total of 22 partially complete surveys were subsequently converted to "full" completes by the end of the data collection period.

3.5.3 Full data collection via CATI

Overview

Following the initial round of telephone non-response follow-up calls, a supplementary activity, incorporating full data collection via CATI, was commissioned. This activity commenced in early February 2011 and continued until the cut off for processing approximately two months later.

Sampling

Sampling instructions for the CATI data collection activity were provided by The University of Queensland. Directives were given to target non respondents with characteristics which had historically registered low response rates for the survey. These groups included:

- Males, and
- Those attending State and Catholic schools, as opposed to independent schools.

A total of 327 completed interviews were achieved as a result of the full data collection activity. Where a sample member declined to complete via CATI, self completion via the online survey was strongly encouraged. As detailed in Section 5.2, a further 158 self completion surveys are attributed to this activity.

3.6 Email response maximisation

Building on the recommendations in the Wave Two Technical Summary, an investment was made in capturing current email addresses for sample members as part of panel maintenance activity carried out ahead of Wave Three. Email communications were then utilised prominently in Wave Three to strongly encourage online completion and to support the existing mail-based methodology.

The content of email communications was similar to that of the equivalent hard copy communications, with email1 similar in content to the initial online invitation letter, and email2 and email3 similar in content to the reminder card and questionnaire booklet cover. All email communications complied with privacy legislation and included an 'opt out' option.

A seemingly valid email address was provided for a total of 5479 sample members at the commencement of data collection. A 'bounce back' notification was subsequently registered for just under one fifth of all email addresses, an outcome which is considered to be quite good.

A total of five email notifications were distributed throughout the data collection period, including one email notification tailored to partial online completers (as discussed in section 3.5.2).

3.7 SMS reminders

Two rounds of SMS reminders were distributed towards the end of the data collection period to non responding sample members with a seemingly valid mobile number. Details of notifications sent are as follows:

- SMS One sent 30th March to 805 sample members
- SMS Two sent 6th April to 736 sample members

The SMS consisted of a short 160 character message, directing sample members to complete the survey online. The message included login details needed for accessing the online survey.

Given the relatively small cost outlay of such an activity, the SMS is considered to have worked well. It is directly attributed to 51 completes (as outlined in Section 5.1) and very few opt outs were received as a result of this activity.

3.8 Contact database maintenance

The master contact database was maintained carefully throughout the data collection process with data updated regularly following the activities below:

- The initial sample cleaning process (identifying records with incomplete contact name, telephone contact or mailing address details)
- The mail returns logging process (accepted for processing, return to sender, refusal, out of scope)
- The final call outcome from tracking and reminder call activity (contact details established, disconnected / respondent not known, refusal, out of scope)
- Calls to the Our Lives 1800 number, emails to the Our Lives email helpdesk, e-mails forwarded on to the Social Research Centre from The University of Queensland project team
- Updated address details collected as part of the initial CATI reminder calls conducted in late 2010, and
- Updated respondent contact details collected from Section F of the Wave Three questionnaire.

The contact database was used to generate lists for the various components of the projects and provide progress information and sample yield statistics.

Sample records logged as "return to sender" from mail activity were included in telephone and email non-response follow up activity - in a number of cases, the telephone number or email address was proved to be valid even when address details had changed.

3.9 Returns logging

Hard copy survey returns were logged on a daily basis and sorted into the following categories for return status reporting:

- Accepted for processing some effort had been made to complete the form, usually
 with sufficient information to confirm the status of the sample member
- Refusal includes blank returned forms that were not 'return to sender'
- Out of scope where it was clear from the form or the attached correspondence that the sample member was no longer in scope
- Other where it was clear from the form or the attached correspondence that the sample member was unable or not available to complete the form (e.g. overseas, temporarily incapacitated due to health reason, deceased), and
- · Return to sender.

3.10 Data capture

Hard copy mail returns were scanned and processed on a daily basis using a mixture of optical mark read and key from image technologies.

Fully trained data entry operators reviewed scanned images of the returned survey forms to:

- · Resolve multiple responses for questions requiring a single response
- Verify that responses to multiple response questions were valid
- Check 'blanks' where the survey sequencing suggested that the respondent should have answered the question, and
- Key responses in all free response fields

A double-key and verify process was used to ensure the accuracy of data capture, and a batch processing workflow was used to track returns from initial logging to the completion of data capture.

Hard copy forms were securely destroyed upon the provision of data for final cleaning and processing and a reference file of scanned images.

3.11 Coding of verbatim responses

Open ended and other specify responses across all modes of data collection were consolidated into a single workflow for coding, with a view to ensuring the efficient and consistent application of the agreed coding rules.

Rules for the back-coding of responses were informed by final frequency distributions for relevant questions from Wave Two, and input from the Our Lives project management team at The University of Queensland, with a view to maintaining overall consistency of approach.

Table 3.11 over the page sets out the coding specifications for Wave Three, and includes a concordance with Wave Two.

Table 3.11 - Wave Three coding specification

Wave 3 Q no	Wave 2 Q no	Coded in W2?	Question text	Coding instructions
A7	n/a		Are you currently doing a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE), a Queensland Certification of Individual Achievement (QCIA), or something else?	No extensions required.
А7а	n/a		What are you mainly doing for your Queensland Certificate of Education in years 11 and 12?	No extensions required.
A8	A9	YES (1 digit ASCO)	If you could have ANY JOB as an adult, what would you LIKE it to be?	Code to 2nd Edition 2 digit ASCO.
A14	A16	YES (1 digit ASCO)	What job do you think your parents or carers want you to have as an adult?	Code to 2nd Edition 2 digit ASCO.
C6	n/a		Thinking about Australian political parties, would you consider yourself a supporter of the Labor party, Liberal party, National party or some other party?	No extensions required.
E1	D1	NO	Which of the following BEST DESCRIBES your present situation?	Code to standard ABS frame.
E10	D10	NO	What CULTURE do they (best friend) come from?	
E11	D11	YES	What COUNTRY were they (best friend) born in?	Code to Australian Standard Classificaiton of Languages
F2	E2	YES	What is the MAIN LANGUAGE spoken at home?	Code to Australian Standard Classificaiton of Languages
F4	E4	YES	What is your religion or faith?	Code to Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups 2005
F10	E10	YES	What is your father's / carer's CURRENT occupation?	Code to 2nd Edition 2 digit ASCO.
F14	E14	YES	What is your mother's / carer's CURRENT occupation?	Code to 2nd Edition 2 digit ASCO.
F23	E23	YES	What is the NAME of your school?	Clean response only, to list of schools provided in Wave Two.

All coding was undertaken by experienced, fully briefed coders, accustomed to working with standard Australian Bureau of Statistics code frames, whether as an interviewer or a coder.

4. RETURNS REPORTING

4.1 Returns report inputs

Regular reports were provided to The University of Queensland consolidating return status information throughout the data collection period.

Return status information was compiled on a weekly basis, compiled from:

- Daily summary reports from mail returns logging activity (refer Section 3.9 above)
- Daily summary reports for online completes
- Outcomes from calls to the Our Lives 1800 helpdesk, and email communications logged through the helpdesk
- Details of opt outs from email activity, and
- Call outcome reports generated from CATI activity.

4.2 Status hierarchy for returns reporting

In some cases, more than one outcome status could be associated with an individual sample record across multiple activity streams. An outcome status hierarchy was therefore established to identify how such cases should be presented in the returns and technical report.

The status hierarchy used for returns reporting by primary outcome category is as follows:

- Online completion
- Hard copy completion
- Partially complete
- Out of scope
- Refusal (e.g. refusal to 1800 number)
- Sample loss (e.g. return to sender, respondent not known during tracking and reminder call), and
- Non-respondent.

For cases where multiple completion was detected (i.e. respondent completed by both hard copy and by online modes), online completion was accepted due to perceived improvement in data quality (logic / sequencing etc) for data collected online, compared with data collected hard copy.

It is noted that a total of 34 sample members completed the survey multiple times. In most cases, both a completed online survey and a hard copy survey booklet were received.

5. RESPONSE OVERVIEW

5.1 Response summary

Table 5.1 consolidates outcomes from all phases of the project by sample type (Wave Two respondent and non respondent).

As can be seen, there were:

- 3,209 responding units across all three modes of completion online, hard copy and CATI, including 84 partially completed survey returns included within the dataset on the direction of The University of Queensland.
- Three refusals across all stages of the project, whether at the initial call, by calling the survey 1800 number, by e-mail, by return mail, or at the reminder call – an extremely low number, and
- 2,258 non-respondents.

The sample yield, defined as fully responding units as a per cent of total selections was 53.9% across the project.

As could be reasonably expected, a high retention rate (74.3%) was registered amongst those sample members who had completed Wave Two.

Conversely, and perhaps unsurprisingly, the retention rate for those who had not previously completed Wave Two, and for whom the first and only response to the survey was registered in 2006 in a school setting, was 22.2%.

Given that the scope status of some non-respondents was not established during survey activity, it is possible that there is a portion of unusable sample which is not stated.

Table 5.1 – Response summary by sample type

	Wave Two respondent	Wave Two non respondent	Total
Mailed	3624	2332	5956
Responding	2691	518	3209
Responded online	1920	303	2223
(Partial online response)	84	11	95
Responded hard copy	480	84	564
Responded via CATI	207	120	327
Total responding as % selections	74.3	22.2	53.9
Refusals	2	1	3
Sample loss	131	355	486
Non respondents	800	1458	2258

5.2 Response by phase

Table 5.2 details the contribution attributable to each phase of activities carried out across the Our Lives Project from August 2010 to April 2011.

As can be seen, the initial online invitation letter and supporting email notification was considered a highly effective means of approach, with almost 45% of all responses attributable to this initial communication. It is strongly suggested that this approach is incorporated into the methodology for future waves of the Our Lives project.

The contribution of further mail activities and supporting email notifications to the overall response averaged around 10% for each activity. A small contribution (1.6%) was achieved via the use of SMS, whilst full CATI data collection contributed towards 15.1% of all response.

As detailed in Section 3.5.1, while 1780 sample members were successfully personally reminded to complete the survey, it is noted that reminder calls contributed less than 7% to the overall response, with only 279 responses directly attributed to this activity (representing a reminder call "success" rate of just over 15%).

Refer Section 3 for further details of response maximisation activities carried out.

Table 5.2 - Response by data collection phase

Project phase	n	As % total responses
Initial online invitation letter (incl. associated email notification)	1435	44.7
Reminder card (incl. associated email notification)	387	12.1
Questionnaire (incl. associated email notification)	358	11.2
Reminder letter	279	8.7
Reminder calls (all phases)	214	6.7
SMS	51	1.6
Full CATI data collection	485	15.1
Total selections	3209	100.0

5.3 Response by mode

Table 5.3 outlines the proportion of responses by each mode for Wave Three, providing a comparison, where possible, with Wave Two.

As can be seen, the proportion of self completion surveys completed online for Wave Three has risen significantly since the previous wave. While almost three quarters of respondents in Wave Two chose to complete the survey via hardcopy (73.3%), with the residual 26.6% completing online, this trend appears to have been reversed completely for Wave Three, with 72.2% of respondents now choosing to complete online, and under one fifth (17.6%) completing via hard copy.

The significant shift towards online response is considered to be attributable to an increase for in the proportion of records for which an email address has been provided, and the successful implementation of an initial online only approach to respondents within the methodology for Wave three.

Table 5.3 – Mode of response by Wave

	As % Wave Three total responses	As % Wave Two total responses
Online	72.2	26.6
Hardcopy	17.6	73.3
CATI	10.2	-
Total	100.0	100.0

5.4 Response by stream

Table 5.4 outlines the number and proportions of response by stream, where stream is defined by whether the sample member was sent an email invitation / reminder (in addition to the hard copy materials), or only the hard copy materials.

Valid email addresses were provided for just over 65% of sample records approached to complete Wave Three. As discussed in Section 3.6, email addresses which "bounced" (i.e. were returned to sender due to incorrect of misspelt address details, mailbox quota full, or similar) accounted for a further 15% of sample members. Sample members for whom a "bounced" email notification was registered, are reported as part of the hard copy only stream.

As can be seen, a significantly higher rate of response was registered for those who had a seemingly valid email address (65.3%) than for the 'hard copy only' stream (31.4%). This analysis suggests that it will be of particular importance to continue to collect and update email addresses for sample members, for use in future waves of the project.

Table 6.4 – Response by approach stream

Stream	Mailed out	N responding	% responding
Email	3946	2578	65.3
Hard copy only	2010	631	31.4
Total	5956	3209	53.9

6. INTERVIEWER BRIEFING & QUALITY CONTROL

6.1 Interviewer training and briefing

All interviewers attended a comprehensive two hour briefing session prior to undertaking initial tracking call activity. The initial briefing session took place on 25th August 2010. The briefing was delivered by the Social Research Centre project manager and included:

- Full details of the Our Lives survey background, objectives and methodology
- A review of all hard copy survey materials and the online survey
- A detailed discussion of the likely challenges for the project, and how these may be overcome
- All aspects of administering the initial tracking call
- Practice interviewing and role play, with a focus on issues relating to respondent liaison, and strategies for engaging sample members to participate in the Project
- An outline of the sample management protocols and the call regime that applied for the initial call.

A total of six interviewers were briefed on the initial call component, with the same team undertaking non-response reminder calls and responding to sample member queries on the 1800 hotline. A similar briefing was held prior to the commencement of the non-response reminder call activities.

6.2 Fieldwork quality control procedures

The in-field quality monitoring techniques applied to this project included:

- Validation of each interviewer's work, in accordance with ISO 20252 standards via remote monitoring (covering the interviewer's approach and commitment gaining skills, as well as the conduct of the call)
- Field team de-briefing after the first shift, and thereafter, whenever there was important information to impart in relation to data quality, consistency of tracking and reminder call administration and techniques to avoid refusals, and
- An end of fieldwork de-briefing.

7. DATA PROCESSING AND OUTPUTS

7.1 Coded consolidated data file

Data from hard copy returns (both the full questionnaire and shortened questionnaire data sets) and the online survey was consolidated and cleaned according to agreed rules.

A fully coded, consolidated and labelled data file of key survey variables was produced in SPSS format.

7.2 Contact database

An updated mailing database, incorporating confirmed and updated information collected over the course of Wave Three data collection, was provided by the Social Research Centre in June 2011.

7.3 Verbatim responses

Cleaned verbatim responses were provided to The University of Queensland at the completion of data collection, along with relevant sample variables to assist in analysis.

8. ISSUES FOR FUTURE SURVEYS

8.1 Maintenance of contact information

As sample members grow older and undergo changes to their lifestyle (including changes to living circumstances), it is essential that strategies continue to be developed to ensure that contact details, particularly email addresses and mobile phone numbers, are confirmed regularly and maintained as up to date as possible.

Strategies for consideration include:

- The continuation of panel maintenance activities, designed to keep the survey 'top of mind' for sample members and with the dual purpose of updating mailing details immediately prior to data collection activities, and
- Continuing to encourage sample members to update email addresses and mobile phone numbers within the sample frame.

8.2 Methodology

8.2.1 Investment in online data collection and discontinuation of mail-based data collection approach

Following the significant increase in online self completion, with almost three quarters of all respondents choosing to complete online, and over 45% of overall completion attributable to the online invitation letter, the Social Research Centre believes that an online methodology, where sample members are encouraged to complete early via mail and email based approaches, and with the use of targeted incentives, should be considered as a viable option for future surveys.

The rationale for seeking to encourage early online completion includes:

- Some improvement in data quality for data collected online, compared with data collected hard copy
- Significant decrease in hard copy processing costs
- Potential decrease in collation and dissemination costs for further mailing activity

Conversely, consideration could be given to discontinuing the use of a hard copy self completion approach, with self completion via hardcopy attributed to only 17.6% of returns in Wave Three, down from 73.3% in Wave Two.

8.2.2 Focus of telephone activity

It is recommended that any methodology is supported by intensive CATI follow up, which has the flexibility to target groups registering a low response rate. It is strongly recommended that CATI follow up takes the form of a full CATI data collection exercise, as opposed to a simple reminder call. As discussed in Section 5.2, and based on the Social Research Centre's

experience with the previous Wave of the survey, it is evident that only a small proportion of those who are successfully reminded will go on to complete the survey as a direct result of the reminder.

8.2.3 Focus on email response maximisation activities

It is noted that approximately 65% of sample members within the useable sample frame utilised for Wave Three currently have a valid email address, up from 30% post Wave Two.

As outlined in Section 5.4, those with a valid email address were almost twice as likely to complete the survey as those sample members who received a hard copy only approach.

Email response maximisation activities in particular continue to be a cost effective and viable activity, which is directly attributable to an increase in online completion for Wave 3. It is strongly recommended that email communications continue to be utilised within the methodology across future waves.

APPENDIX 1SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX 2 CATI SCRIPT