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OUR LIVES PROJECT WAVE FOUR DRAFT TECHNICAL SUMMARY

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 About this report

This report describes and reviews the conduct of the Our Lives Project Wave 4, (*Wave Four*) 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 managed by Monash University. The project seeks to follow up respondents every two years and explores the attitudes and aspirations of young people in Queensland. The project was managed by the University of Queensland from 2006 until 2013.

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 in Queensland taking part in the survey, with data collection managed by the University of Queensland. Wave Two of the survey was conducted between 2008 and 2009, and resulted in a response from 3,653 original sample members. Wave Three was conducted in 2010 with 3,209 completed interviews and Wave Four was conducted in 2013 with 2,206 completed interviews. Data collection for Waves Two to Four was conducted by the Social Research Centre.

1.3 Project overview

Table 1.3 over the page provides an overview of key project characteristics.

Data collection for Wave Four incorporated an online survey, supplemented by Computer Assisted Telephone interviewing (CATI). The project schedule allowed for a total of three rounds of mailed communications, comprising the following materials:

- Initial online invitation letter (including unique username and password, and instructions to complete online)
- Reminder letter, and
- Final reminder letter.

In addition, a standalone 'tracking' letter was mailed in October 2013 to sample members who had been unable to be contacted since Wave 1 of the survey, but for whom seemingly valid postal address details appeared to be available.

A total of four emails and three SMS notifications were sent during the data collection period to sample members with a seemingly valid email address and / or mobile number.

Initial online invitation letters were mailed to sample members on 18th July 2013, and the survey remained open until 27th November 2013. Telephone non response activity (comprising initial reminder calls and later, full CATI data collection) was conducted between September and November 2013.

The total number of interviews achieved was 2,206

The overall sample yield (interviews as a per cent of selections) was 38.8% and the response rate (interviews as a per cent of in scope sample records) was 40.7%.

Table 1.3 – Summary of key statistics

Original records (Wave 1, 2006)	7,031
Mailing base for Wave 4	5,684*
In scope sample (less sample loss)	5,418
Fully responding	2,152
Partially responding	54
Total responding	2,206
Sample yield	38.8%
Response rate	40.7%
Initial online invitation letter mailing date	18-Jul-13
Cut off for data processing	27-Nov-13

*Figure includes original Wave 4 mailing base plus separate mailing database of 'tracking' records

Refer Section 5 for a detailed analysis of response.

1.4 Response overview

Table 1.4 details the interviews achieved by completion mode.

Table 1.4 – Interviews achieved by mode

Modes of survey completion	Wave 4 completion mode	
	n	As % total responses
Completion via online (incl. Partials)	1,744	79.1
CATI (incl. Partials)	462	20.9
Total surveys completed	2,206	100.0

As can be seen, almost three quarters of responses to Wave Four of the Our Lives survey were obtained via the online survey. Full data collection via Computer Assisted Telephone

Interviewing (CATI) was attributed to around one fifth (20.9%) of all responses. Following on from a recommendation in the Wave Three technical report, no hard copy response option was provided to the survey for Wave Four.

1.5 Overview of Our Lives schedule

Table 1.5 below provides an outline of the schedule for key Wave Four activities.

As can be seen, the total enumeration period for the project spanned over four months from mid July to late November, allowing sufficient time for the conduct of numerous mail-based, telephone-based and electronic (email and Short Messaging Service (SMS)) non response activities.

Final data for Wave Four was delivered in December 2013.

Table 1.5 – Overview of Our Lives schedule

Phase / task	Date
Online survey active	17-Jul-13
Online invitation letter dispatched	18-Jul-13
Email communication 1 released	23-Jul-13
Initial telephone tracking activity commences	24-Jul-13
First reminder letter dispatched	29-Jul-13
Email communication 2 released	6-Aug-13
SMS 1 released (Recently updated mobile numbers only)	7-Aug-13
Second reminder letter dispatched	(from) 23- Aug
Email communication 3 released	23-Aug-13
SMS 2 released (all eligible non respondents)	2-Sep-13
Email communication 4 released	2-Sep-13
Tracking letter (untracked Wave 1 respondents)	1-Oct-13
Commence telephone non-response follow up activity	1-Aug-13
Supplementary data collection via CATI	7-Aug-13
SMS 3 released (all eligible non respondents)	26-Sep-13
Email communication 5 released	2-Nov-13
Cut off for processing	27-Nov-13
Final data file	20-Dec-13

2. SAMPLE FRAME

2.1 Sample frame preparation

The contact database cleaned and updated following two rounds of post Wave Three panel maintenance activities was utilised as the sample frame for Wave Four.

2.2 Sample cleaning

A number of core cleaning processes were carried out on the post Wave Three contact database prior to use for Wave Four mailing activity. This included:

- The application of address cleaning macros
- The cleaning of telephone numbers and email addresses, and
- The use of Direct Point Identifier software, ensuring that recognised Australia Post addresses were assigned a barcode for bulk mail sorting purposes.

In addition, the Social Research Centre undertook to incorporate any incremental change of address information obtained and passed on by the Our Lives project team prior to the initial mailing date.

3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

3.1 Overview

The methodological approach for Wave 4 sought to encourage early online response, supported by an 'early online completion' incentive. Following recommendations in the Wave Three technical report to remove the hard copy response option from the survey, the online survey was the only self-completion mode available for Wave Four, and was supported by a range of complimentary telephone, mail-based, email and SMS response maximisation activities.

3.2 1800 number operation

The Social Research Centre's Our Lives 1800 number was activated at the commencement of fieldwork in mid July 2013, and remained active until the end of the enumeration period in late November 2013.

The 1800 number was published prominently on survey materials and was publicised on the Monash University Our Lives website and online survey. A comprehensive call log was carefully maintained throughout the data collection period, with all queries (including refusal and other opt out notifications) 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, 41 calls, 36 emails and 17 text messages to the helpdesk were logged over the course of the data collection period.

3.3 Survey materials

3.3.1 *Initial online survey invitation letter / email*

Following initial sample cleaning (refer Section 2.2), an initial online invitation letter was dispatched to sample members.

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 if required.

The Monash University logo and signature blocks, and Our Lives branding were incorporated onto the letter. The hardcopy letter was dispatched on 18th July 2013.

The letter was supported by the release of a similarly worded and presented email invitation which was dispatched to sample members with an email address. The email was dispatched on 23rd July 2013.

3.3.2 Reminder letters / emails

Two rounds of reminder letters and four rounds of reminder emails were sent to sample members who had not completed the survey at various points within the enumeration period. Reminder letters sought to act as a memory jogger for participation and reiterated the messages of the covering letter in terms of the prize draw, survey completion options and the assistance available.

The first reminder letter was lodged on 29th July 2013 and the second reminder letter was lodged from 23rd August 2013. Reminder emails two to five were dispatched between 6th August and 2nd November 2013.

3.3.3 Envelopes

For the initial online survey invitation letter, the official Monash University branding was incorporated onto the outer envelope alongside the 'Our Lives' project logo.

Following use of the envelopes for the first mailing, feedback was received that some sample members were unfamiliar with the Monash University branding (as all previous waves of the project had utilised the Queensland based University of Queensland branding), and that some survey communications may have been disregarded as a result. In order to ensure that project branding for subsequent mailings remained as recognisable as possible, for the second and subsequent mail outs, it was decided to utilise envelopes with the 'Our Lives' logo only.

For future survey communications, it is recommended that envelope designs continue to incorporate prominent 'Our Lives' branding, and not that of Monash University.

3.3.4 SMS

Tailored SMS messages were prepared for sending to non respondents at various points within the enumeration period. The SMS included the sample member's unique username and password, and a link to the online survey. Sample members were able to reply to the message, with replies sent directly through to the 1800 number. Refer Section 3.7 for further details.

3.4 Online data collection

3.4.1 Design and testing

Scripting and testing of the online version of the survey commenced as soon as the questionnaire content was finalised in early July 2013.

The online survey was accessed by the respondent via the Monash University Our Lives portal, using a unique username and password combination, which was incorporated onto the online invitation letter and 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', 'l', '5', 'S', 0 and 'o'.

Following comprehensive testing by the Social Research Centre and the Our Lives project management team at Monash University, 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 17th July 2013 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. While most questions were treated as mandatory, as instructed by Monash University, a small number of questions were programmed as 'non mandatory', allowing respondents to 'skip through' if they felt that they were unable to or preferred not to answer a particular question.

Similar to the Wave Three online survey, the Wave Four online survey featured the use of 'hover text' which was placed above occupation questions, enabling respondents to quickly and easily view job category information within the online survey.

3.4.3 'Piping' of contact information

Basic contact information for each sample member was '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.

Where relevant contact information was not available, the applicable fields were left blank and the respondent was asked to input this information.

3.5 Telephone non-response follow up

3.5.1 Initial telephone tracking activity

Initial tracking calls were carried out in early August 2013 to 204 sample members for whom contact had not been reached since the second Wave of the survey, but for whom seemingly valid telephone numbers were present.

As a result of this activity:

- Seven full interviews were completed
- Contact information was updated for 47 records
- Thirteen refusals were logged, and
- One 'out of scope' notification was obtained.

3.6 Email response maximisation

Email communications were utilised prominently in Wave Four to strongly encourage online completion and to support the existing mail-based methodology.

As discussed in Section 3.3, the content of email communications was similar to that of the equivalent hard copy communications. All email communications complied with privacy legislation and included an 'opt out' option.

A seemingly valid email address was available for a total of 4,531 sample members at the commencement of data collection, over four fifths (83.1%) of all sample members included in the initial online survey letter mailing. A 'bounce back' notification was subsequently registered for just under one fifth (801, 17.6%) of all records included in the email invitation.

The significant proportion of bounce back notifications suggests that it will be important to continue to request that sample members update email address information on a semi-regular basis.

A total of five email notifications were distributed throughout the data collection period, including one email notification tailored to partial online completers.

Table 3.6 provides details of individual email communication release dates, and numbers of records included.

Table 3.6 – Breakdown of email communications and quantities

Event	Date	Quantity	As % mailout
<i>Initial mailout (online invitation letter)</i>	<i>18-Jul</i>	<i>5,453</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Email 1	23 Jul - 5 Aug	4,531	83.1
Email 2	6 Aug	3,455	63.9
Email 3	23 Aug - 1 Sep	3,368	61.8
Email 4	2 Sep - 1 Nov	2,270	41.6
Email 5	2 Nov – 27 Nov	2,106	38.6
<i>Final cut off for processing</i>	<i>27-Nov</i>		

Refer Section 5 for discussions regarding the correlation of an email address with propensity to respond to the survey.

3.7 SMS reminders

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

- SMS 1 – sent to 718 sample members who had updated their details via post Wave Three panel maintenance but who had not responded as at 7th August

- SMS2 – sent to all non respondents with a seemingly valid mobile number who had not responded as at 2nd September, and
- SMS3 – sent to all non respondents with a seemingly valid mobile number who had not responded as at 26th September

Given the relatively small cost outlay of such an activity, the SMS is considered to have worked relatively well. It is directly attributed to 51 completed surveys, and very few opt outs were received as a result of these activities.

3.8 Contact database maintenance

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

- The initial sample cleaning process (identifying records with incomplete contact name, telephone contact or mailing address details)
- Any return to sender letters received as part of the mail logging process
- The final call outcome from tracking and telephone non response follow up 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 and e-mails forwarded on to the Social Research Centre from Monash University project team, and
- Updated respondent contact details collected from the Wave Four questionnaire.

The contact database was used to generate lists for various response maximisation activities and was used to 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.

3.11 Coding of verbatim responses

Open ended and other specify responses 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 Three, and input from the Our Lives project management team at Monash University, with a view to maintaining overall consistency of approach.

Table 3.11 over the page sets out the coding specifications for Wave Four, and includes a concordance with previous waves of the survey.

Table 3.11 – Wave Three coding specification

Wave 4 Q no	Wave 3 Q no	Wave 2 Q no	Question text	Coding instructions
D2	C6	n/a	Wave 4 (D2): Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as Liberal, Labor, National or what? Wave 3 (C6): Thinking about Australian political parties, would you consider yourself a supporter of the Labor party, Liberal party, National party or some other party?	Code to AES 2013 codeframe.
H5	E1	D1	Which of the following BEST DESCRIBES your present situation?	Code to standard ABS frame.
H8	F2	E2	Wave 4 (H8): What is the MAIN LANGUAGE spoken in the residence where you spend most of your time? Wave 3 (F2): What is the MAIN LANGUAGE spoken at home?	Code to Australian Standard Classification of Languages
D7a/b	n/a	n/a	In the 2013 federal election for the House of Representatives, which party will you vote for first in the House of Representatives? And in the Senate election?	Code to AES 2013 codeframe.
H4	n/a	n/a	What is your marital status? Are you:	No extensions required.
H8	n/a	n/a	What is the MAIN LANGUAGE spoken in the residence where you spend most of your time?	Code to 2nd Edition 4 digit ASCL

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 Monash University consolidating return status information throughout the data collection period.

Return status information was compiled on a weekly basis from:

- 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 and other sample loss from response maximisation 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
- Partially complete
- Out of scope (e.g. away duration overseas, deceased)
- 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.

5. RESPONSE OVERVIEW

5.1 Response summary

Table 5.1 consolidates outcomes from all phases of Wave Four. A comparison is provided by 'sample type' (whether the sample member had Wave Three or not).

As can be seen, there were:

- 2,206 responding units across the two modes of completion – online and CATI, including 54 partially completed survey returns included within the dataset as directed by Monash University
- Seven 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
- 3,354 non-respondents.

The sample yield, defined as fully responding units as a per cent of total selections was 38.8% across the project. The response rate, defined as fully responding units as a per cent of in scope selections, was 40.7%.

Not surprisingly, a significantly higher sample yield (61.9%) was registered for those sample members who had completed Wave Three as compared with non-respondents to Wave Three (9.1%). The extremely low Wave Three completion rate for Wave Three non-respondents suggests that there may be merit in choosing to discontinue contact to some groups of sample members with which no contact has been achieved for some time. Refer Section Eight for further discussion.

Table 5.1 – Response summary by sample type

	Wave Three respondent	Wave Three non respondent	Total
Mailed	3,197	2,487	5,684
Responding	1,979	227	2,206
Total responding as % selections	61.9	9.1	38.8
Refusals	196	159	355
Sample loss	16	101	117
Non respondents	1006	2000	3006

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.

5.2 Response by phase

Table 5.2 details the contribution attributable to each phase of activities carried out across the four month enumeration period for Wave Four.

As can be seen, the initial online invitation letter and the associated email was directly attributable to around one third (31.2%) of all responses to the survey.

Table 5.2 – Response by data collection phase

Project phase	n	As % total responses
Initial online invitation letter / email 1	689	31.2
First reminder letter / email 2 / SMS 1	200	9.1
Second reminder letter / email 3	379	17.2
CATI reminder calls / email 4 / SMS 2	140	6.3
CATI data collection phase (final email and SMS)	798	36.2
Total responses	2,206	100.0

The first reminder letter and associated email and SMS activity was attributed to almost one in ten (9.1%) of survey responses, while the second reminder letter and associated email / SMS activity was attributed to 17.2% of responses.

The CATI reminder call phase, which also included the release of email four and SMS 2, was attributable to just 6.3% of responses. These findings are similar to Wave Three, where reminder call activity was associated with a very low yield of responses to the survey.

The CATI data collection phase, which featured full interviewing and incorporated the release of a number of email and SMS based final response maximisation activities, was attributed to over one in three responses to the survey (36.2%).

The long period of time over which responses to the survey are registered suggests that for future surveys, there is a need to continue to allow for a survey enumeration period of at least three months. The analysis presented in Table 5.2 suggests that:

- There is value in continuing to invest in an initial online invitation letter / email, supported by an attractive 'early' online completion incentive for future similar surveys, with almost one third of responses achieved at the initial phase
- The methodology for future similar surveys should continue to include provision for a number of mail-based and electronic-based response maximisation activities, as these activities are associated with strong incremental response to the survey
- Consideration could be given to removing standard CATI reminder call activity from the methodology for future similar surveys, with this activity associated with only minor incremental response to the survey, and

- It will be important to continue to invest in intensive CATI interviewing activity for future similar surveys, with this activity associated with over one third of all survey responses.

5.3 Response by mode

Table 5.3 details response by completion mode for Wave Four, providing a comparison with Waves Two and Three. Both Waves Two and Three incorporated a hard copy self completion option.

As can be seen, the proportion of self completion surveys completed online for Wave Four (79.1%) has risen slightly since the previous wave (72.2%) and significantly since Wave Two (26.6%), where hard copy self completion was marketed as the primary mode of response. CATI completion accounted for over one-in-five (20.9%) of responses in Wave Four compared to one-in-ten (10.2%) in Wave Three. As hardcopy self-completion was not a response option in Wave Four, the CATI component accounted for a significantly higher proportion of responses for Wave Four, when compared with Wave Three.

Table 5.3 – Mode of response by Wave

	As % Wave Four total responses	As % Wave Three total responses	As % Wave Two total responses
Online	79.1	72.2	26.6
CATI	20.9	10.2	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

5.4 Response by stream

Table 5.4 below provides an overview of sample yield by stream, where stream is defined by the mode(s) of communication sent to the sample member.

As can be seen, the presence of an email address and mobile number is generally correlated with a higher response to the survey, with sample members contacted via email and SMS registering a higher response to the survey than sample members contacted by hard copy only, or hard copy and CATI. This finding is consistent with previous surveys in the series.

Table 5.4 – Response by approach stream

Stream	Mailed out	n responding	% responding (sample yield)
SMS, email and hard copy	345	340	98.6
Email and hard copy	1,527	980	64.2
SMS, email, hard copy and CATI	413	217	52.5
Email, hard copy and CATI	2,246	538	24.0
Hard copy and CATI	469	77	16.4
Hard copy only	684	54	7.9
Total	5,684	2206	38.8

Sample members for whom an approach was able to be made via SMS, email and hard copy registered a sample yield of almost 100% (98.6%). It is not surprising that the majority of these sample members had updated their details during the post Wave Three panel maintenance period, and therefore were most likely to have had a valid email address and mobile number for Wave Four (refer also analysis at Section 5.6).

Those sample members for whom only partial contact information was available (i.e. those who were only able to be approached via hard copy survey communications and telephone, or via hard copy only) registered the lowest response to the survey, with a sample yield of 16.4% and 7.9% respectively.

These findings suggest that there is a strong correlation between presence of an email address and / or a mobile phone number with successful survey completion.

5.5 Response by last wave of completion

Table 5.5 provides an outline of response by last wave of completion.

As can be seen, almost nine out of ten sample members who responded to the Wave Four survey had responded to Wave Three (the previous wave).

A small number of responders (5.8%) had last responded to the Wave Two survey, while an even smaller pool of responders (4.5%) had last responded at Wave One.

Table 5.5 – Response by last wave of completion

Last response wave	n	%
Wave Three	1979	89.7
Wave Two	128	5.8
Wave One	99	4.5
Total	2206	100.0

5.6 Response by post Wave Three contact detail update status

Table 5.6 provides an overview of response by post Wave Three contact detail update status.

As can be seen, those who had updated their details post Wave Three were significantly more likely to respond to the survey than those who had not (82.1% versus 22.8%).

Table 5.6 – Response by update status

	Details updated	Details not updated	Total
Mailed	1535	4149	5684
Responding	1261	945	2206
Responded online (Partial online response)	1138	606	1744
Responded via CATI	17	27	44
Total responding as % selections	123	339	462
	82.1	22.8	38.8

These findings suggest that it will be important to continue to encourage sample members to update their details in between waves.

5.7 Overview of CATI activity

Table 5.7 over the page provides an outline of CATI activity for Wave Four of the Our Lives survey. As can be seen:

- A total of 3,128 sample members were approached as part of the CATI activity
- A full CATI interview was completed for 463 records, with a reminder call successfully carried out for a further 208 records
- No contact was able to be achieved for over one third of all records (34.8%). It is thought that many of these numbers may be invalid, with most of these outcomes attributable to sample members who had not updated their telephone number in a number of years
- A total of 540 telephone numbers were found to be unusable, again with most of these numbers attributable to sample members who had not updated their telephone number in a number of years
- A small number of sample members were found to be out of scope during the course of telephone activity (having registered, for example, an outcome of 'away for duration, having claimed to have completed the survey, or with a 'language difficulty' having been registered for a member of the household).
- Around one in ten calls (9.7%) resulted in a refusal to the survey, either from an unknown person in the household before the sample member was identified (a 'household refusal') or from the selected respondent.

Only a small number of successfully completed telephone reminder calls resulted in the achievement of a completed survey, with 42 of the 208 sample members successfully reminded going on to complete the survey online (a yield of 20.2%). However, it is also important to note that a significant proportion of sample members successfully reminded (152), subsequently went on to complete a full telephone interview when followed up intensively later in the enumeration period. An outcome of 'Full CATI interview completed' is registered for these sample members.

These findings support the analysis presented in Section 5.2 of this report, which suggests that consideration could be given to removing standard CATI reminder call activity from the methodology for future similar surveys, as this activity is associated with only minor incremental response to the survey.

Table 5.7 – CATI final call outcome

Final call outcome	n	%
Total numbers initiated	3,128	100.0
Full CATI interview completed	463	14.8
Reminder call successfully carried out	208	6.6
Unusable		
Number disconnected	540	17.3
Not a residential number	8	0.3
Fax / modem	20	0.6
Incoming call restrictions	30	1.0
<i>Subtotal unusable</i>	<i>598</i>	<i>19.1</i>
Out of scope		
Language difficulty - no follow up	9	0.3
Claims to have done survey	22	0.7
Selected respondent away for duration	54	1.7
Completed survey received	2	0.1
<i>Subtotal out of scope</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>2.8</i>
No contact		
No answer	580	18.5
Busy (callback)	18	0.6
Answering machine	491	15.7
<i>Subtotal no contact</i>	<i>1,089</i>	<i>34.8</i>
Refusals		
Household refusal / selected person not known	190	6.1
Refused prior	8	0.3
Remove number from list	5	0.2
Selected respondent refusal	83	2.7
<i>Subtotal refusal</i>	<i>303</i>	<i>9.7</i>
Unresolved appointment	92	2.9

6. INTERVIEWER BRIEFING & QUALITY CONTROL

6.1 Interviewer training and briefing

All interviewers attended a comprehensive two hour briefing session prior to undertaking telephone non response follow up activities. The initial briefing session took place on 26th July 2013. 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 the online survey script
- A detailed discussion of the likely challenges for the project, and how these may be overcome
- A tailored respondent liaison module focusing on strategies to encourage response, and procedures for dealing with household and respondent refusals
- 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, and
- An outline of the sample management protocols and the call regime that applied for the initial call.

A total of six interviewers were briefed, with the same team undertaking tracking calls and responding to sample member queries on the 1800 hotline.

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

Consolidated data from the online survey and CATI 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. A small number of derived variables were included in the file, as agreed with Monash University.

7.2 Contact database

An updated mailing database, incorporating confirmed and updated information collected over the course of Wave Four data collection.

Separate lists of precluded participants and details of return to sender information were also provided.

7.3 Verbatim responses

Cleaned verbatim responses were provided to Monash University 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 / scope of future panel maintenance activities

Given that the presence of an email address and mobile number is strongly correlated with strong survey response, it will be important that strategies continue to be developed to ensure that contact details are confirmed regularly and maintained as up to date as possible.

The significant Wave Four completion rate for sample members who successfully completed panel maintenance activity following Wave Three suggests that there is merit in implementing a panel maintenance activity ahead of the Wave Five fieldwork period for the project.

Given the significant proportion of bounce back notifications registered for email activity and the relatively high proportion of sample members who do not appear to have a reliable phone number (resulting in 'invalid number' or 'non contact' outcomes as part of the telephone non response phase), it will be important to strongly encourage sample members to update email and phone information as part of any panel maintenance activity.

8.2 Methodology

8.2.1 Continued investment in online data collection

The Wave Four methodology, which incorporated data collection via online survey and CATI only, is considered to have worked well, with over three quarters of all respondents choosing to complete online and no requests / concerns raised by sample members in regards to accessing hard copy self completion. It is recommended that an online methodology, where sample members are encouraged to complete early via combined mail and email based approaches, and with the use of targeted 'early online completion' incentives, should continue to be utilised for future surveys.

8.2.2 Focus of telephone activity

For future waves of the project, it is recommended that an online self completion methodology is supported by intensive CATI follow up. Following the analysis presented in Section 5 of this report, it is recommended that any CATI follow up activity is focussed on the achievement of an interview, rather than completion of a reminder call, as only a small proportion of those 'successfully' reminded are expected to then go on to self-complete the survey online.

Given the costs associated with full CATI interviewing, consideration could be given to administering a 'cut down' version of the interview, with only 'core' questions asked.

8.2.3 Focus on email and SMS response maximisation activities

As outlined in Section 5, those with a valid email address and / or mobile phone number were much more likely to complete the survey when compared with those sample members who received a hard copy only, or hard copy and CATI approach.

Email and SMS response maximisation activities are associated with minimal cost outlay and resulted in only minimal refusals for Wave Four. It is strongly recommended that up to five email and up to three SMS communications are incorporated within the methodology for future waves.

8.2.4 Length of enumeration period

The analysis presented at Section 5.2 shows that responses to Wave Four were registered over a long period of time, with over one third of responses achieved in the last phase of the project. This suggests that for future waves, it will be important to allow for a survey enumeration period of at least three months within the overall project schedule.

8.3 Interview length

The Wave Four interview length was registered at approximately 33 minutes when completed online, and at 36 minutes when completed via telephone. While Wave Four was supported by a generous incentive pool, the interview length registered for the survey was still considered to be quite long. In line with Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS) guidelines, for future waves of the survey, it is recommended that the interview length is reduced to around 20 minutes duration. A significantly lower interview length is likely to assist in the maintenance of current response rates for the project, and may also result in an improved achieved yield from telephone interviewing activity. In addition, significant budget savings will be achieved, with a smaller number of interviewing hours able to be costed for.

As raised at Section 8.2, for future waves, consideration could also be given to expanding the telephone non response activity, through the administration of a 'cut down' version of the interview.

8.4 Project branding

Following the move of the Our Lives project from the University of Queensland to Monash University in 2013, it has become apparent that some sample members may be unfamiliar with the Monash University branding, and / or may be less positively predisposed to a survey based in Victoria, as most sample members are Queensland-based.

In order to ensure that project branding remains recognisable and relevant, it is recommended that the survey branding continues to incorporate prominent 'Our Lives' branding, and not that of Monash University.

8.5 Discontinuation of contact to 'dormant' sample records

A review of analysis in Section 5 of this report suggests that for future waves, Monash University may wish to consider discontinuing contact with some groups included in the Our Lives Project, due to only very low sample yields being achieved for Wave Four making

continued contact impractical from a cost perspective. Consideration could be given to discontinuing contact with the following groups of sample members:

- Sample members who last completed the survey in Waves Two or Wave One (with sample yields of only 5.8% and 4.5% achieved respectively in these groups for Wave Four)
- Sample members for whom only a hard copy address, or hard copy address and a landline telephone number is present (with the presence of a valid email and / or mobile number strongly correlated with response to the survey), and
- Non responding sample members to the Wave Four survey, for whom 'return to sender' mail, 'non contact' or 'invalid CATI and / or 'bounce back' email outcomes have been registered.

APPENDIX 1 SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX 2 CATI SCRIPT
