

# Life in Australia<sup>™</sup> - Wave 109

**Technical Report** 

January 2025



### Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri People who are the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our company is located, and the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia, where we conduct our business. We pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging. The Social Research Centre is committed to honouring First Nations peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

#### Project sponsor:

The project is funded by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

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# Contents

1.	Introduction			
	1.1.	Project background1		
	1.2.	About this report1		
2.	Life i	n Australia™ methodology2		
	2.1.	Overview2		
	2.2.	Life in Australia™2		
	2.3.	Sample design and size		
	2.4.	Contact methodology4		
3.	Ques	tionnaire design and testing5		
	3.1.	Design5		
4.	Surv	ey completion6		
	4.1.	Length6		
	4.2.	Sundry procedures to maximise response		
	4.3.	Incentive structure		
	4.4.	Response analysis6		
		4.4.1 Completion rate		
		4.4.2 Cumulative response rate		
5.	Data	processing8		
	5.1.	Coding		
	5.2.	Electronic data provision		
6.	Ethic	s and quality assurance9		
7.	Appr	oach to weighting10		
	7.1.	Weights for 18+ respondents10		
	7.2.	Weights for child respondents12		
Refe	rences			

# List of tables

Table 1	Summary of key statistics	. 2
Table 2	Sample profile	. 3
Table 3	Summary of contact schedule	. 4
Table 4	Summary of panel outcome rates (Life in Australia™ only)	. 7
Table 5	Characteristics used for adjusting adult base weights, with population distribution and data sources.	11
Table 6	Characteristics used for adjusting child base weights, with population distribution and data sources	12

# 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Project background

This was the 109<sup>th</sup> wave of data collection undertaken by the Social Research Centre's probability-based panel, Life in Australia<sup>™</sup>. This wave was run on behalf of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (the Agency), focussing on establishing the willingness of Australians to use age assurance methods to access online services where pornography is likely to be encountered, and other services that may pose harm to children/young people, such as sites with violent content, alcohol, gambling and social media.

Further data collection was undertaken via i-link, a non-probability online panel provider, to increase the coverage of parents of children aged 8 to 17 years, and children aged 8 to 12 years (via parent proxy) and children aged 13-17 years.

### 1.2. About this report

This report covers the data collection and methodological aspects of the survey. The purpose of this report is to:

- consolidate and summarise project information and assorted reports generated throughout the survey period
- provide analysis relating to sample characteristics and utilisation
- consolidate issues for consideration relating to the refinement of the methodology.

# 2. Life in Australia<sup>™</sup> methodology

#### 2.1. Overview

The methodology adopted for the core survey included both online and telephone reminders conducted via the Social Research Centre's Life in Australia<sup>™</sup>. The survey was conducted from 15 to 28 October for Life in Australia<sup>™</sup>, and from 21 to 29 October for the i-Link non-probability panel.

The in-scope population for the survey was active online Life in Australia<sup>™</sup> panel members. Due to the topic of the survey being related to digital communications, offline panel members were not invited to participate. As a result, no telephone interviewing was undertaken for this project, and all surveys were completed online. Telephone reminder calls, however, were undertaken in the second week of fieldwork to encourage panellists to complete the survey online.

A total of 2,929 active panel members were invited to take part in the survey and 1,819 (62.1%) completed the survey. For the non-probability panel, the in-scope populations were adults, parents of children aged 8 to 17, and children aged 8 to 17. A total of 23,171 non-probability panel members were invited and 1,321 (5.7%) completed the survey.

#### Table 1 Summary of key statistics

Field	Total	Life in Australia™ online panel members	i-Link non- probability panel members
Invited to complete survey	26,100	2,929	23,171
Total Interviews achieved	3,140	1,819	1,321
Average interview duration (mins)	21.9	23.1	20.4
Completion rate (%)	12.0	62.1	5.7
Main fieldwork start date	-	15-Oct-24	21-Oct-24
Main fieldwork finish date	-	28-Oct-24	29-Oct-24

#### 2.2. Life in Australia™

Life in Australia<sup>™</sup> members were randomly recruited via their landline or mobile phone and provided their contact details so that they could take part in surveys on a regular basis. This means that the population covered by the panel is all Australian adults contactable via either a landline or mobile phone.

A dual-frame random digit dialling (RDD) sample design was employed to undertake recruitment of Life in Australia<sup>™</sup> in 2016, with a 30:70 split between the landline RDD sample frame and mobile phone RDD sample frame. For the landline sample, an alternating next / last birthday method was used to randomly select respondents from households where two or more in-scope persons were present. For mobile sample, the phone answerer was the selected respondent. Only one member per household was invited to join the panel.

In May 2018, the panel was refreshed with n = 287 panellists being retired and n = 267 new panellists being recruited. The recruitment methodology used only mobile RDD sample and recruited only online participants that were under 55 years old in order to balance the demographics (the age profile of panel members was older than that of the Australian population). The recruitment rate (RECR) for the replenishment was 12.1%.

After the refresh, there were n = 2,839 active members of Life in Australia<sup>TM</sup>. For both the recruitment in 2016 and panel refreshment in 2018, the RDD sample was provided by SamplePages.

Between October-December 2019, the panel was refreshed with n = 347 panellists being retired and n = 1,810 new panellists being recruited. This recruitment used a G-NAF (Geocoded National Address File) sample frame and push-to-web methodology. Only online participants were recruited in order to balance the demographics (the age profile of panel members was older and more educated than that of the Australian population). The recruitment rate (RECR) for the replenishment was 12.1%. After the refresh, there were n = 4,025 active members of Life in Australia<sup>TM</sup>.

Between November 2020 and January 2021, the panel was refreshed with n = 385 panellists being retired and n = 612 new panellists being recruited. This recruitment used a combination of recruitment methodologies: G-NAF (Geocoded National Address File) sample frame and push-to-web, mobile sample frame IVR (interactive voice response) push-to-web, and mobile sample frame SMS invitation. Only online participants were recruited in order to balance the demographics (the age profile of panel members was older and more educated than that of the Australian population). The recruitment rate (RECR) for the replenishment was 3.1%. After the refresh, there were n = 4,060 active members of Life in Australia<sup>TM</sup>.

In April 2021, the panel was refreshed with n = 510 new panellists being recruited. This recruitment used an RDD mobile sample frame with SMS invitation. Only online participants were recruited in order to balance the demographics (the age profile of panel members was older and more educated than that of the Australian population). The recruitment rate (RECR) for the replenishment was 3.4%. After the refresh, there were n = 4,499 active members of Life in Australia<sup>TM</sup>.

In August and September 2021, the panel was expanded with n = 3,715 new panellists being recruited. This recruitment used the G-NAF (Geocoded National Address File) sample frame sample frame and push-to-web methodology. The recruitment rate (RECR) for the replenishment was 7.7%. After the refresh, there were n = 7,645 active members of Life in Australia<sup>TM</sup>.

In 2023, a large-scale expansion is underway which will take the final sample size to 10,000 by the end of 2023. Unlike other research panels, Life in Australia<sup>™</sup> includes people both with and without internet access. Those without internet access or those who are not comfortable completing surveys over the internet are able to complete surveys by telephone. Life in Australia<sup>™</sup> members receive a small incentive for joining the panel and another incentive for each survey they complete.

#### 2.3. Sample design and size

The full sample profile is shown below in Table 2.

#### Table 2 Sample profile

Subgroup	Total (completed) %	Life in Australia™ panel (completed survey) %	i-Link non- probability panel (completed survey) %	Benchmark <sup>[1]</sup>
Male	49.3	28.8	20.5	50.8
Female	50.6	29.2	21.5	49.2
18-24 years	8.4	5.8	2.6	11.0
25-34 years	15.2	8.2	7.0	18.8
35-44 years	25.7	13.8	11.9	17.5
45-54 years	20.2	10.4	9.8	16.2
55-64 years	13.0	8.0	5.0	14.9
65-74 years	12.6	8.0	4.7	12.0
75 years or more	4.9	3.9	1.1	9.5

Subgroup	Total (completed) %	Life in Australia™ panel (completed survey) %	i-Link non- probability panel (completed survey) %	Benchmark <sup>[1]</sup>
New South Wales	32.1	18.9	13.2	31.8
Victoria	26.4	15.4	11.0	25.7
Queensland	17.8	10.4	7.5	20.1
South Australia	7.4	4.2	3.2	7.1
Western Australia	10.3	5.6	4.7	10.3
Tasmania	2.8	1.4	1.3	2.2
Northern Territory	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.9
Australian Capital Territory	2.4	1.6	0.8	1.8
Metro	65.8	39.5	26.3	67.0
Regional	32.2	18.4	13.8	33.0

#### 2.4. Contact methodology

The contact methodology adopted for online Life in Australia<sup>™</sup> members is an initial survey invitation via email and SMS (where available), followed by multiple email reminders and a reminder SMS. Up to seven reminders in different modes (including email, SMS, and telephone) were administered within the fieldwork period. Telephone non-response of online panel members who had not yet competed the survey commenced in the second week of fieldwork and consisted of reminder calls encouraging completion of the online survey. The exact contact dates are shown below in Table 3.

The contact methodology for the i-Link non-probability panel is an online invitation followed by multiple email reminders. As there were strict quotas in place for the i-Link sample, quotas were closely monitored and invitations were sent out iteratively each day. Reminders were sent every few days to those who had not yet responded. A full contact schedule is not shown below for the i-Link panel due to the iterative approach.

Contact type	Life in Australia™ panel (date)
Email	15-Oct-24
SMS	15-Oct-24
SMS	16-Oct-24
Email	16-Oct-24
Email	19-Oct-24
Reminder calls	22-Oct-24 - 29-Oct-24
Email	22-Oct-24
SMS	22-Oct-24
Email	26-Oct-24
Email	27-Oct-24
Email	28-Oct-24

#### Table 3 Summary of contact schedule

### 3. Questionnaire design and testing

### 3.1. Design

The questionnaire was developed by the Social Research Centre in consultation with the Agency. Prior to fieldwork starting, standard operational testing procedures were applied to ensure that the script truly reflected the agreed final electronic version of the questionnaire. These included:

- Programming the skips and sequencing instructions as per the final questionnaire
- Rigorous checking of the questionnaire in 'practice mode' by the Social Research Centre project coordinator and the project quality supervisor, including checks of the on-screen presentation of questions and response frames
- Randomly allocating dummy data to each field in the questionnaire and examining the resultant frequency counts to check the structural integrity of the script.

# 4. Survey completion

### 4.1. Length

The average survey length for those completing the survey via Life in Australia<sup>™</sup> was 23.1 minutes. For the i-Link non-probability panel the average survey length was 20.4 minutes. Note that these are combined averages for the adults and children's surveys; due to the set-up of the children's survey as a subset of the adults' survey, it is not possible to determine separate averages.

#### 4.2. Sundry procedures to maximise response

Additional procedures to maximise response for the survey included:

- Operation of an 1800 number throughout the survey period by the Social Research Centre, to help establish survey bona fides, address sample members' queries, and encourage response
- Provision of the Social Research Centre / Life in Australia™ website upon request
- Focus on interviewer training and respondent liaison techniques during interviewer briefing and throughout fieldwork.

#### 4.3. Incentive structure

For Life in Australia<sup>™</sup>, all members were offered an incentive to complete the survey. The incentives offered for completing the survey had a value of \$10. Each child that completed the survey was also provided with a \$10 e-gift voucher, which was sent to the email address of the parent who completed the survey initially.

### 4.4. Response analysis

#### 4.4.1 Completion rate

The Social Research Centre uses standard industry definitions for calculating outcome rates (American Association for Public Opinion Research, 2023; Callegaro & DiSogra, 2008). The completion rate (COMR) represents completed interviews as a proportion of all Life in Australia<sup>™</sup> members invited to participate in this survey. The overall completion rate for the survey for Life in Australia<sup>™</sup> members was 62.1%. The overall completion rate for the survey for i-Link members was 5.7%.

#### 4.4.2 Cumulative response rate

Completion rates only tell part of the story. The panellists invited to participate in this survey had to agree to participate in Life in Australia<sup>™</sup> in the first place, then provide essential details in order to join the panel by completing the panel profile and finally remain in the panel until they were invited to complete this survey. The cumulative response rate (CUMRR2) takes account of non-response at each point. It is the product of the recruitment rate (RECR), the profile rate (PROR), the retention rate (RETR) and the completion rate: CUMRR2 = RECR × PROR × RETR × COMR. The recruitment rate is the rate at which eligible individuals agree to join the panel. The profile rate is the rate at which initially consenting individuals complete the panel profile, thus joining the panel. The retention rate is the proportion of active panellists at the time of this survey out of all those who joined the panel. Because Life in Australia<sup>™</sup> is made up of panellists recruited at different points in time, the recruitment, profile, and retention rates shown are weighted in proportion to the composition of the panellists invited to complete this survey. The cumulative response rate for this survey is 1.8%; see Table 4 for details.

#### Table 4 Summary of panel outcome rates (Life in Australia™ only)

Code	Name	%
RECR	Recruitment rate	6.5
PROR	Profile rate	97.0
RETR	Retention rate	60.6
COMR	Completion rate	62.2
CUMRR2	Cumulative response rate 2	2.4

### 5. Data processing

### 5.1. Coding

Open-ended questions and back-coding of questions with an 'Other (specify)' option was undertaken by experienced, fully briefed coders. Outputs were validated in accordance with ISO 20252 procedures, using an independent validation approach.

#### 5.2. Electronic data provision

A final version of the data file (with weights) was provided in SPSS format. Supporting documentation, including a data dictionary, was also provided.

### 6. Ethics and quality assurance

This survey was undertaken in accordance with:

- The Privacy Act (1988) and the Australian Privacy Principles contained therein
- ADIA Privacy (Market and Social Research) Code 2021
- The Research Society Code of Professional Behaviour
- ICC/ESOMAR Code of Conduct
- ISO 20252 Market, Opinion and Social Research Standard

The survey was reviewed and approved by the Bellberry Ethics Committee (Ethics Number: 2024-08-1149).

# 7. Approach to weighting

### 7.1. Weights for 18+ respondents

The Age Assurance Consumer Research consisted of two components that were combined for weighting purposes:

- 1. A random (probability) sample of adults from Life in Australia™.
- 2. A convenience (non-probability) sample to support extended reporting and analysis.

The usual approach to weighting random (probability) samples is a two-step process that aims to reduce biases caused by non-coverage and non-response and to align weighted sample estimates with external data about the target population (Kalton and Flores-Cervantes, 2003). First, base weights are calculated to account for each respondent's initial chance of selection and for the survey's response rate. Next, the base weights are adjusted to align respondents with the population on key socio-demographic characteristics. Refer to Särndal et al. (1992) for detailed information about model-assisted survey sampling and estimation, and to Valliant et al. (2018) for a contemporary treatment of weighting and estimation for sample surveys.

The convenience (non-probability) sample used a non-random mechanism to recruit participants to the survey, which means that the design-based approach just described does not apply. Refer to Elliott and Valliant (2017) for a discussion and further references about the challenges of making inferences from non-random samples. There are several methods for weighting such samples and making estimates from them, however (refer to Valliant, 2020). One of these methods, used here, is "quasi-randomisation" which requires a reference sample chosen at random from the target population. The reference sample is used to estimate selection probabilities for the convenience sample, to adjust for selection bias. For this survey, the reference sample consisted of the probability cases from Life in Australia<sup>™</sup>.

The combined sample then had base weights for the two groups – a probability-based one for Life in Australia<sup>TM</sup> cases and an estimated one for convenience cases. To derive the adjusted weights, consideration then had to be given to the characteristics on which to align the base weights with the population. The choice of characteristics was guided by three factors:

- Which characteristics are most different between the probability and convenience samples?
- Which characteristics are most associated with the survey's key questionnaire items?
- Which characteristics are most different between the combined sample and the population?

With these factors in mind, the set of characteristics used to adjust the weights are those shown in Table 5. This table also includes the population counts and percentages sourced from official Australian Bureau of Statistics sources including the 2021 Census, supplemented by the latest Demographic Statistics, and the 2020-21 National Health Survey. All population counts refer to the Australian adult population aged 18+ years.

The method used to adjust the base weights was regression calibration (Deville et al., 1993), implemented in R (R Core Team, 2023) using the survey package (Lumley, 2020). For more information on weighting of sample surveys, refer to Valliant et al. (2018).

# Table 5 Characteristics used for adjusting adult base weights, with population distribution and data sources.

Category	Benchmark target (#)	Benchmark target (%)	Source
State or territory of residence			(A)
New South Wales	6,641,340	31.81	
Victoria	5,372,461	25.73	
Queensland	4,193,691	20.09	
South Australia	1,489,153	7.13	
Western Australia	2,158,828	10.34	
Tasmania	468,157	2.24	
Northern Territory	181,025	0.87	
Australian Capital Territory	375,054	1.80	
Part of state			(A)
Capital city	13,995,263	67.03	
Rest of state	6,884,445	32.97	
Number of adults in the household			(B)
One	2,921,060	13.99	
Two	11,776,407	56.40	
Three or more	6,182,241	29.61	
Age group by Highest education			(A)
18-24 years	2,369,446	11.35	
25-34 years x Bachelor or higher	1,725,725	8.27	
25-34 years x Below Bachelor	2,177,914	10.43	
35-44 years x Bachelor or higher	1,639,326	7.85	
35-44 years x Below Bachelor	2,078,040	9.95	
45-54 years x Bachelor or higher	1,098,068	5.26	
45-54 years x Below Bachelor	2,195,779	10.52	
55-64 years x Bachelor or higher	766,722	3.67	
55-64 years x Below Bachelor	2,272,832	10.89	
65+ years x Bachelor or higher	819,259	3.92	
65+ years x Below Bachelor	3,736,597	17.90	
Language other than English spoken at home			(A)
Yes	5,041,131	24.14	
No	15,838,577	75.86	
Gender			(A)
Man or male	10,614,696	50.84	
Woman or female	10,265,012	49.16	

Sources:

(A) Census 2021 with ERP updates

(B) National Health Survey, 2020-21

### 7.2. Weights for child respondents

A second weight for respondents who completed the child section of the questionnaire was also calculated. This weight reflects the child in the context of the population of Australian 8–17-year-old children. Like the non-probability sample, the design-based approach to weighting does not apply to child respondents, as there is a non-random mechanism of recruitment. Unlike the adult weighting, there is no probability-based reference sample with which the quasi-randomisation approach can be applied. Instead, a super-population approach is taken, in which all respondents are assigned the same base weight of 1, and regression calibration is used to adjust base weights. More information on the super-population approach can be found in Elliott and Valliant (2017).

The set of characteristics used to adjust the child weights are those shown in Table 6. This table also includes the population counts and percentages, obtained from Census 2021 TableBuilder (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). All population counts refer to the Australian 8-17-year-old population.

# Table 6 Characteristics used for adjusting child base weights, with population distribution and data sources

Category	Benchmark Target (#)	Benchmark Target (%)	Source
Age group by Gender by Geographic location			(A)
8-12 years x Male x Capital city	507,054	17.5	
8-12 years x Male x Rest of state	252,847	8.7	
8-12 years x Female x Capital city	480,835	16.6	
8-12 years x Female x Rest of state	239,145	8.3	
13-17 years x Male x Capital city	479,660	16.6	
13-17 years x Male x Rest of state	247,963	8.6	
13-17 years x Female x Capital city	452,013	15.6	
13-17 years x Female x Rest of state	233,255	8.1	
Country of Birth			(A)
Australia	2,600,018	89.88	
Other	292,754	10.12	

Sources:

(A) Census 2021 (ABS 2021)

Note that there were small numbers of 'Don't know', 'Refused' or 'Other' responses to some items. Since there were no corresponding categories in Census TableBuilder, such values were imputed using a statistical model (Stekhoven and Buehlmann, 2012). Given the very low prevalence of these responses, the imputation process is expected to have a negligible impact on estimates made using the weights.

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