

# LIVING IN AUSTRALIA NEEDS YOU!

## *You are important to the Living in Australia study*

The study is made up of a cross section of the Australian community. When people don't take part the results cannot represent the factors that are important to their stage of life and their needs.

## *Who gets the data and what do they do with it?*

Researchers use the Living in Australia data to help understand the issues for Australians in managing their lives, especially over time. The work they do with the data will be extremely important in influencing the way governments spend our tax dollars.

Non government support agencies will also be using the data to help them ensure they are providing services to the people most in need.

## *Can I see the results?*

Articles using the results of the study are often in the press and on the radio. The results usually refer to the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia study (HILDA), as this is the research title of the project.

## *A message From Peter Dawkins, The University of Melbourne*

The Living in Australia project is an important investment in our future. It will improve the understanding of the various paths individuals and households take through life. The study shows how policy decisions are affecting all Australians. As a result government and welfare agencies will be able to better concentrate their decision making on the areas of most need.

I appreciate the effort of everyone involved with this project - the research staff, interviewers and most importantly, you the respondent. Thank you for your assistance and I look forward to your continuing participation in the study.



Professor Peter Dawkins  
Dean, Faculty of Economics and Commerce  
Director, Melbourne Institute of Applied  
Economic and Social Research  
The University of Melbourne

*To continue with this valuable research we need to collect information from the same people over time - your ongoing involvement and support is vital to the success of the study.*

# Study Sheds Light on Variety of Topics

## What's best for working hours?

*Taken from West Australian, July 2003*

Discusses how the Living in Australia data is being used to help understand whether a shorter working week is what is needed or wanted. Using the data on 1500 full-time working fathers from the study, researchers are comparing over time the wellbeing of those working a standard 35-40 hour week with those working 60+ hours.

## Should the government consider "happiness effects" in its funding decisions?

*Taken from Sunday Mail, April 2003 & Northern Territory News, April 2003*

Researchers from the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research are delving into factors that make people happy... or unhappy. Professor Mark Wooden, Director of the Living in Australia project said the results showed that where people lived made a difference to their happiness, as did income (but only if it's a substantial amount), marital status, having children aged under 15, and religious beliefs. Happiness is an important factor in health and wellbeing.

## Are the policies and plans for supporting our aging population working?

*Taken from The Age, April 2003*

There is growing concern with Australia's declining birth rates and how the nation will support the increasing proportion of elderly Australians. The Living in Australia study is collecting data over a period of time to assist in the development of policies and support structures for current and future generations of Australians.

## Will access to stress leave make a difference in the longer term?

*Taken from The Australian, March 2003*

The article considers the links between time stress and various aspects of people's lives. It discusses the implications for people who have access to sick leave and those that don't, the rates of stress leave taken in different industries and the links between income and reported high stress levels. The Living In Australia study will enable the effects to be assessed over time.

## How much effort should we put into encouraging finishing Year 12?

*Taken from Sydney Morning Herald, October 2002*

The article uses the results of the Living in Australia study to relate the satisfaction of young people to various aspects of their lives, in particular finishing year 12. The study reveals that almost 90% of young people who finished year 12 are satisfied with "life as a whole". This drops to 73% for early school leavers. And the completion of year 12 makes the biggest difference to job prospects. The Living in Australia study will be able to monitor whether changes in education and support are helping young people.

### *Living in Australia also helps with issues such as:*

- How do employment and unemployment affect our health over time?
- What happens in households as people move towards retirement?
- What are the effects of credit card debt, increased interest rates and tax creep on people and families?