

## What about privacy?

Your information is protected.

The people involved in the study are committed to ethical research and legally bound to ensure your information is secure. All people involved in the project must sign and comply with the Privacy Act 1988. Your rights are protected by Australian law. Your identifying information is collected for the purpose of the Living in Australia study only. Access to your identifying information is restricted to only those who require it for the purpose of administering or conducting the study.

## Thinking of moving?

Your participation is critical to the success of the study, so please let us know if you are moving.

To update your contact details, either:

- Call **1800 656 670** and talk to our friendly support team;
- Email your new address to **HILDA@roymorgan.com**; or
- Update your address online: **<https://livinginaustralia.org/change-your-details>**

## More information about Living in Australia

If you have any questions, would like more information, or would like to contact your interviewer please freecall **1800 656 670** or visit us online at **[www.livinginaustralia.org](http://www.livinginaustralia.org)**.



## Offer to all Living in Australia participants

We are pleased to offer you a free Living in Australia report (Issue 6) – a short, stylish summary report of key study findings.

Each year we also produce a very detailed Statistical Report which shows findings from topics like households, the labour market, economics, family formation, and health outcomes.

This report is available for free download from: **<https://livinginaustralia.org/publications>**

This project has human research ethics approval from The University of Melbourne [Project ID 31363]. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Research Integrity Administrator, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. **Tel: +61 3 8344 1376** or **Email: [research-integrity@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:research-integrity@unimelb.edu.au)**. All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team (HILDA Study) and / or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.

The HILDA Study is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services



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2026

LIVING  
IN AUSTRALIA



WEALTH, ASSETS AND  
SUPERANNUATION



# Message from Professor Roger Wilkins

## Dear HILDA Survey participant,

I am very pleased to let you know that the Australian Government recently confirmed its longstanding commitment to the HILDA Study by providing additional funding for future years. This means our interviewers at Roy Morgan will therefore once again be inviting you to participate in 2026.

Thanks to you, the HILDA Study is truly a national treasure. It's the only study of its kind in Australia helping us understand how life is changing for Australians and how we adapt to those changes.

This year we will be asking some questions about your household's finances. We know that these questions can feel a little detailed, but this information is vital for understanding how Australians are coping and how government policies affect our wellbeing. For example, the Reserve Bank of Australia uses the HILDA data to examine how interest rate changes impact different households. And, rest assured, your confidentiality is fully protected. No-one using the HILDA data knows who you are – not even me.

Your story matters – and by continuing to share it with us, you help build this amazing resource.

On behalf of all Australians, I thank you for being a part of the HILDA Study.

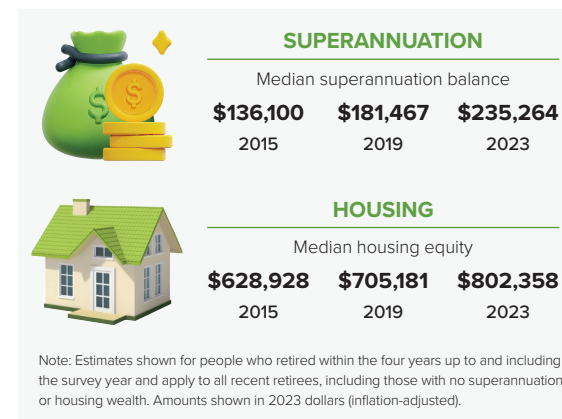


Professor Roger Wilkins

Co-Director of the HILDA Survey  
Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research  
The University of Melbourne

## Retirement Wealth Trends: Superannuation and Homeownership in Australia

For many recent retirees in Australia, superannuation savings and the value of their home play a key role in shaping their financial wellbeing in retirement.



Between 2015 and 2023, both superannuation and housing wealth among recent retirees grew strongly after adjusting for inflation. Median super balances rose by 73% (from \$136,100 to \$235,264), while housing equity increased by about 28% (from \$628,928 to \$802,358).

Even with faster growth in super, housing remains by far the largest source of retirement wealth. Most recent retirees still own their homes outright. But that share has fallen from 76% in 2003 to 66% in 2023, pointing to a growing divide between outright owners and everyone else.

As superannuation balances grow and homeownership rates decline, the gap between those entering retirement with housing security and those without is becoming a more important driver of inequality in later life.

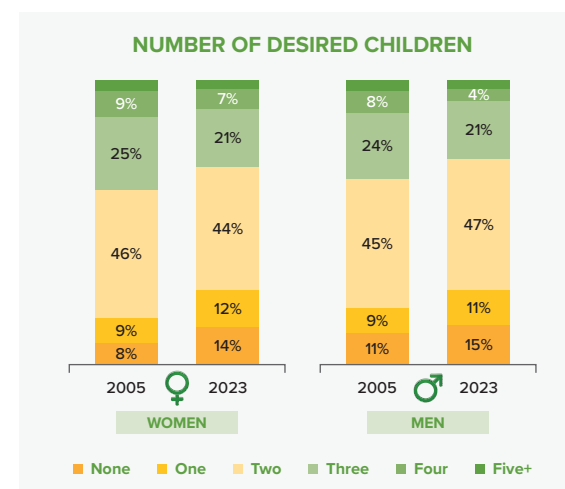
## Rethinking Family Size: Shifting Trends in Modern Australia

The average number of children potential parents would like to have has decreased over the past two decades. For women aged 18 to 44 years, it dropped from 2.31 in 2005 to 2.04 in 2023, while men showed a similar decline from 2.17 to 1.95 over the same period.

Despite this overall decrease, the most common preference in 2023 remains two children, with approximately 44% of women and 47% of men expressing this desire.

However, significant changes have occurred in other categories. The desire for larger families has notably decreased.

In 2023, about 21% of both women and men would like three children – a decrease of 5 percentage points for women and 3 percentage points for men compared to 2005. The preference for four children has also declined, with only 7% of women and 4% of men expressing this desire. Those wanting five or more children now represent a small minority of 2-3% for both genders.



Conversely, there's an increasing trend towards having fewer or no children. The combined group of those wanting one child or no children has grown and now represents about a quarter of both women and men. These shifts suggest a changing landscape in family preferences among Australians, with a clear trend towards smaller family sizes.



# Insights from the Living in Australia data



## What's new this year?

The Living in Australia (HILDA) Study continues to be a vital resource in understanding the changing lives of Australians, offering unique insights that shape policies and support our communities.

This year, in addition to getting a general update, we will ask you and your household about superannuation, assets and wealth. Whether you're just starting out or planning for retirement, these money matters affect us all. As the cost of living continues to rise - due to higher housing costs and everyday household expenses - many Australians are feeling the financial pressure.

This year's interview aims to better understand how these challenges have impacted the everyday lives of Australians like you.

### Our thanks to you

We greatly appreciate the time you spend with our interviewers each year. As a thankyou for your participation, you will receive a \$50 gift after your interview. You will receive an additional \$30 after you have completed and returned the Self-Completion Questionnaire, either as an online or hardcopy survey.

### Why are you so important to this study?

The Living in Australia (HILDA) Study is truly one of a kind. It provides regular information on the household, economic and social experiences of the same people living in Australia over time and provides a true, detailed story of Australian life. Strict statistical guidelines that the Living in Australia (HILDA) Study adheres to mean that you cannot be replaced or represented by any other person. The ongoing success of this study is dependent upon your participation.

### Participating this year

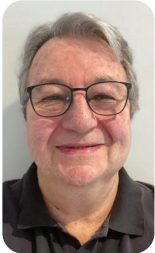
Your interviewer will be in contact soon to arrange a time for your interview. In the meantime, we encourage you to complete your Self-Completion Questionnaire online either now, or at the time of your interview. In the letter addressed to your household; you can find instructions on how to complete the Self-Completion Questionnaire online including a QR code you can use to access your survey. You will need your unique ID number to complete the survey online.

# Meet the Interviewers



## Donna C

I initially joined the Living in Australia project as it was a flexible job that fit into my lifestyle, but I very quickly learned that it was more than that. Living in Australia is a unique study that covers multi-generations, multi-cultures and is conducted across Australia. It is a meaningful social research study that follows families over many years to gain insights for change. It's an absolute privilege to be welcomed into family homes, be inspired by life stories, hear about celebrations and success, and to learn about hardships and hope. For me this work is deeply rewarding - not only because of the families I meet year after year, but also because of the team that supports me from within Roy Morgan. To all the HILDA families, see you again soon!



## John C

Each year brings welcome anticipation of the commencement of another year of HILDA interviews! Since joining the team as an interviewer in 2022, I've enjoyed every moment. The opportunity to meet - and re-meet - respondents is a special privilege in our increasingly private world, which I greatly respect. As I interview households from year to year, it is amazing just how an hour or so together each year resonates in my mind as we chart life's ups and downs, victories and challenges. To be able to share people's life stories in a study that enriches lives and informs social change is both meaningful and a pleasure to be involved in.



## Pat K

I have been involved with the HILDA Study since it started and over the years, respondents have become my extended family which I visit every year. This study provides valuable insight into how household dynamics can change over time, and welcoming young participants as they turn 15-year-olds is very rewarding. HILDA has given me a great opportunity to explore vast areas in South Australia - from the far west coast to the east regions and everywhere in between. I look forward to continuing with this study for many years to come.

# Just turned 15?

**Young people, such as you, are critical to the future of Australia. By sharing your unique experience you are assisting all young Australians to influence their future.**

If you have turned 15 (as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026), we want to talk to you! Whether you are still at school, just started work, or trying to figure out your next steps, you can make sure that young people in Australia are represented in this important study.

For your time, you will receive a \$50 gift in thanks for your participation. In addition, you will receive an extra \$30 gift when you complete a Self-Completion Questionnaire.

