

HILDA Survey

What is the HILDA Survey?

The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (or HILDA) Survey is a household-based panel survey, which aims to track all members of an initial sample of households over an indefinite life. Further, the sample is automatically extended over time by “following rules” that add to the sample any new children of members of the selected households well as new household members resulting from changes in the composition of the original households. The first wave of the survey was conducted in the second half of 2001.

What topics does the survey cover?

It is intended that the HILDA Survey will collect data in three main areas: economic and subjective well-being, labour market dynamics and family dynamics. In Wave 1 data was collected on a wide range of issues, including: household structure, family background, marital history, family formation, education, employment history, current employment, job search, income, health and well-being, child care and housing.

How is the survey administered?

Wave 1 of the survey involved administration of four questionnaires. Two of these – the Household Form and the Household Questionnaire – were administered by personal interview to at least one adult member of the household. A Person Questionnaire (PQ) was then administered, again via personal interview, to all household members aged 15 years and over. Finally, a Self-Completion Questionnaire was provided to all persons completing the PQ and collected by the interviewer at a later date.

For Wave 2 this basic format is to be retained. In subsequent waves, however, it is anticipated that the main mode of delivery survey will be computer-assisted telephone interviewing.

How big is the sample?

The initial sample selected for the first wave of the HILDA Survey comprised 12,252 households selected from 488 different neighbourhood regions across Australia, of which 11,692 were subsequently identified as in-scope. Interviews were successfully conducted with 13,962 members of 7680 households, giving a household response rate of 66 per cent.

Who is involved?

The HILDA Survey is funded by the Commonwealth Government through the Department of Family and Community Services. Responsibility for the design and management of the survey, however, rests with a group comprising the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research (University of Melbourne), the Australian Council for Educational Research and the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Data collection, however, has been sub-contracted to ACNielsen, a private market research company.

Will the data be made publicly available and when?

It is expected that a moderately confidentialised unit-record data file will be made available for research purposes in October 2002. The conditions under which users will be given access to the data, however, are still to be finalised. These conditions of use will be placed on the HILDA website (see below) once they have been determined.

How can I learn more about the HILDA Survey?

If you want more information about the HILDA survey, visit our website:

www.melbourneinstitute.com/hilda

When at the site you will be able to view and download survey instruments and discussion papers, obtain updates on the progress of the survey development and fieldwork, learn how to join the HILDA mailing list, and find useful links to other panel survey websites.

Alternatively you can contact Nicole Watson (03 8344 5744 or n.watson@unimelb.edu.au) with any questions you may have about the HILDA Survey.

