

# Technical report

## List of abbreviations and terms

| Abbreviation / term | Description / definition                         |
|---------------------|--|
| SRC                 | The Social Research Centre                       |
| The Survey          | Relationship Indicators Survey 2024              |
| RIS                 | Relationship Indicators Survey                   |
| A-BS                | Address-based sampling                           |
| CATI                | Computer-assisted telephone interviewing         |
| CAWI                | Computer-assisted web interviewing (i.e. online) |
| COMR                | Completion Rate                                  |
| CUMRR               | Cumulative Response Rate                         |
| G-NAF               | Geo-coded National Address File                  |
| IVR                 | Interactive Voice Response                       |
| PROR                | Profile Rate                                     |
| RDD                 | Random digit dialling                            |
| RECR                | Recruitment Rate                                 |
| RETR                | Retention Rate                                   |
| SMS                 | Short Messaging Service (i.e. text message)      |

## Introduction

### Project background

Relationships Australia commissioned the Social Research Centre to conduct the Relationship Indicators Survey 2024. The aim of the survey was to analyse the types and nature of important relationships that people experience in Australia and the impacts of social connectedness on wellbeing outcomes.

This wave of the survey was intended to follow on from the research conducted by Relationships Australia and the Social Research Centre in 2022.

The survey was conducted on the 104<sup>th</sup> wave of Life in Australia™, the Social Research Centre's probability-based online panel.

## Overview

Key project statistics for the survey are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1** Summary of key statistics

| Field                             | Total     | Online    | Offline   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Invited to complete survey        | 4,071     | 4,009     | 62        |
| Total Interviews achieved         | 3,004     | 2,968     | 36        |
| Average interview duration (mins) | 15.0      | 14.8      | 29.9      |
| Completion rate (%)               | 73.8      | 74.0      | 58.1      |
| Main fieldwork start date         | 19-Aug-24 | 19-Aug-24 | 19-Aug-24 |
| Main fieldwork finish date        | 1-Sep-24  | 1-Sep-24  | 1-Sep-24  |

## Life in Australia™

In 2016, the Social Research Centre established Australia's first national probability-based online panel: Life in Australia™ (Kaczmirek et al., 2019). The panel is the most methodologically rigorous online panel in Australia and is one of only a small number worldwide.<sup>3</sup> Members of the panel are recruited via random digit dialling (RDD) or address-based sampling (A-BS) and agreed to provide their contact details to take part in surveys on a regular basis. What separates Life in Australia™ from other online panels is the use of sampling frames for which units have known probability of selection and the fact that people cannot enroll unless invited to participate.

## Ethics and quality assurance

All aspects of this research was undertaken in accordance with ISO 20252:2019 Market, Opinion and Social Research Standard, The Research Society (formerly AMSRS) Code of Professional Behaviour, the Australian Privacy Principles and the *Privacy (Market and Social Research) Code 2021*.

The Social Research Centre is an accredited Company Partner of The Research Society with all senior staff as full members and several senior staff QPMR accredited. The Social Research Centre is also a member of the Australian Data and Insights Association (ADIA formerly known as AMSRO) and bound by the Market and Social Research Privacy Principles/Code.

## Questionnaire design and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Relationships Australia and the Social Research Centre based on the RIS 2022 questionnaire, retaining the key question sets used to build indicators (Wellbeing, Loneliness and Relationship Satisfaction), and including revisions based on key learnings from the previous survey. The Social Research Centre then operationalised the questionnaire. 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

<sup>3</sup> Others include the Pew Research Center American Trends Panel, NORC AmeriSpeak and GESIS Panel.

- 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 on a range of devices
- randomly allocating dummy data to each field in the questionnaire and examining the resultant frequency counts to check the structural integrity of the script.

No formal pilot testing was undertaken. However, a soft launch was undertaken to confirm the integrity of the questionnaire. This involved initiating a small number of offline records on the first planned day of fieldwork. The interviewing team was de-briefed and top-line data reviewed.

The final questionnaire is appended at Appendix 1.

## Methodology

### Sample design and size

#### Target population

The in-scope population for the survey was adult residents in Australia. This was operationalised as all active Life in Australia™ members. Focus was placed on recruiting respondents to wave 1 of the survey, initially conducted in 2022. New respondents were then recruited to the survey to achieve a final response rate of n=3,000.

#### Recruitment to Life in Australia™

Life in Australia™ panellists have been recruited using a variety of probability sampling frames and survey modes. These are summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2** Summary of Life in Australia™ recruitment

| Year | Sampling frame | Recruitment mode(s)     | Panel members profiled (n) | Recruitment Rate* % | Profile Rate % |
|------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 2016 | DFRDD          | CATI                    | 3,322                      | 20.0                | 77.7           |
| 2018 | Mobile RDD     | CATI                    | 267                        | 12.1                | 69.7           |
| 2019 | A-BS           | CAWI / CATI             | 1,810                      | 10.8                | 100.0          |
| 2020 | A-BS           | Mail push-to-web / CATI | 309                        | 6.1                 | 100.0          |
| 2020 | Mobile RDD     | IVR                     | 158                        | 1.6                 | 100.0          |
| 2020 | Mobile RDD     | SMS push-to-web         | 145                        | 3.1                 | 100.0          |
| 2021 | SMS            | SMS push-to-web         | 510                        | 3.4                 | 100.0          |
| 2021 | A-BS           | CAWI / CATI             | 3,715                      | 7.7                 | 100.0          |
| 2023 | SMS            | SMS push-to-web         | 4,164                      | 2.6                 | 100.0          |

| Year | Sampling frame | Recruitment mode(s) | Panel members profiled (n) | Recruitment Rate* % | Profile Rate % |
|------|----------------|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 2024 | SMS            | SMS push-to-web     | 3,267                      | 1.8                 | 100.0          |

Notes: A-BS = address-based sampling; CATI = computer-assisted telephone interviewing; CAWI = computer-assisted web interviewing; DFRDD = dual-frame (landline and mobile) RDD; IVR = interactive voice response; RDD = random digit dialling; SMS = short message service (i.e., text message).

\* AAPOR RR3. See Callegaro and DiSogra (2008) for details on outcome rates for online panels; profile rates are of questionable relevance for non-CATI modes.

### Dual-frame RDD (2016)

Initial recruitment in 2016 used a dual-frame random digit dialling sample design, 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. RDD sample was supplied by SamplePages.<sup>4</sup> Mobile and landline coverage in Australia in 2017–18 was 98% (Phillips et al., 2019), including the 1% error rate from RDD vendor checks for number working status.

### Mobile RDD (2018)

In 2018, the panel was refreshed using only mobile RDD sample. Only online participants that were under 55 years old were recruited, 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%. For both the recruitment in 2016 and panel refreshment in 2018, the RDD sample was provided by SamplePages. Mobile coverage in Australia in 2017–18 was 93% (Phillips et al., 2019), again with a 1% error rate from working number look-up as part of SamplePages' processes.

### Address-based sampling (2019, 2020, 2021)

Between October-December 2019, the panel was expanded. This recruitment used address-based sampling (A-BS; Link et al., 2005) with push-to-web methodology (Dillman, 2017).<sup>5</sup> 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 sampling frame used was the Geo-coded National Address File (G-NAF), Australia's authoritative list of addresses, and is assumed to cover all Australian addresses.<sup>6</sup> An 'any adult' approach to selection was applied; i.e., one adult per household with no attempt to impose a selection routine.<sup>7</sup> The G-NAF is an open-source file that is built and maintained by Geoscape Australia (Australian Government, 2023). Later rounds of recruitment took place in 2020 (with

<sup>4</sup> SamplePages selects numbers randomly from the Australian Communication and Media Authority's register of numbers, which shows all allocated (i.e., potentially in use) blocks of mobile numbers. For mobile RDD, SamplePages does not use a list-assisted approach (Brick et al., 1995); a pure RDD sample is drawn. A list-assisted approach is used for landline RDD. Before release to the Social Research Centre, sampled numbers undergo HLR/SS7 look-up to check for active status (a process sometimes called 'pulsing' or 'pinging'), with inactive numbers not being provided to the Social Research Centre. SamplePages reports a 1% false negative rate for these checks for active status.

<sup>5</sup> Addresses matched to telephone numbers received reminder calls; respondents who received a reminder call could join the panel via telephone, with the panel profile being collected via CATI.

<sup>6</sup> The homeless population in 2016 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018b) living in improvised dwellings ( $N = 8,200$ ), supported accommodation ( $N = 21,235$ ) and boarding houses ( $N = 17,503$ ) are assumed inaccessible via address-based sampling, amounted to 0.2% of the total Australian population of all ages ( $N = 23,401,891$ ) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023). The most recent official statistics on internet usage are for the 2016-17 financial year, when 86.1% of adults used the internet (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018a). Indicative of trends since then, internet usage was excluded from the 2021 Census of Population and Housing on the rationale that internet access via smartphones was effectively universal.

<sup>7</sup> In the interest of response maximisation, a decision was made to allow any responsible adult within the household to complete the survey rather than apply a within-household selection procedure. This decision was based on the knowledge that within-household selection methods have been found to add a layer of complexity that increases non-response (Battaglia et al., 2008). Thus, while a within-household selection method may be desired as a means of minimising coverage error, this is overshadowed by the potential to increase non-response error. The accuracy of within-household selection procedures applied to address-based sampling studies has also been questioned (Olson, Stange, & Smyth, 2014).

IVR and SMS push-to-web as described below) and 2021, the panel was expanded using the A-BS sampling frame and push-to-web and CATI methodology, as described above. Offline respondents were recruited in 2021 (a call-in number was provided). Coverage is estimated at 96.1% of addresses due to the Social Research Centre's exclusion of certain addresses that have a low probability of being residential.

### Interactive voice response (2020)

Interactive voice response (IVR) push-to-web makes brief use of IVR (an automated call) to briefly describe the reason for the call; people who are interested are then sent a link to the profile survey via SMS. IVR coverage is estimated at 97%, based on 98% mobile coverage (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2022a) and the 1% working number look-up error rate referred to above.<sup>8</sup>

### SMS push-to-web (2021, 2023, 2024)

SMS push-to-web uses SMS as the mode of invitation, with respondents invited to click a link to complete the profile survey in CAWI mode. As described in footnote 6, above, no up-to-date official statistics on internet access are available, apart from those derived from Life in Australia™; the Australian Communications and Media Authority (2022b) estimates 99% internet coverage, using Life in Australia™ data; we assume that non-internet users overlapped with those without mobile phones.

In April 2021, the panel was refreshed. This recruitment used an RDD mobile sample frame with SMS invitation. Only online participants were recruited. SMS coverage is estimated at 95%, based on 96% mobile coverage (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2022a) and the 1% working number look-up error rate referred to above.<sup>9</sup>

In February-March 2023 and February-March 2024, the panel was expanded using an RDD mobile sampling frame and SMS push-to-web, as described above. Coverage is as described above.

Over time some panellists have withdrawn from future participation in the panel, while others are retired due to non-response or poor-quality responses.

### **Sample selection**

The sample was drawn from Life in Australia™ in two stages. The first was to select all active panellists that completed the Relationship Indicators survey in 2022. Along with a second, stratified random sample from the remaining panellists on strata defined by age (18–34, 35–44, 45–54, 55–64, 65+), gender, education (less than a bachelor's degree, bachelor's degree or above) and speaking a language other than English at home. To come as close as possible to population norms on the stratification variables, target numbers of completed surveys by stratum are set based on population proportions for the stratified sample. Because there may not be sufficient numbers of Life in Australia™ panellists within some strata given expected completion rates, we use non-linear optimisation to determine the number of cases selected that will minimise the sum of squared error between population proportions and the expected proportion of completed interviews, while satisfying constraints including that selections within a stratum may not exceed the available sample and that completed surveys equal the target number of completed surveys.

### **Sample profile**

The final sample profile along with comparison to ABS benchmarks is shown below in Table 3.

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<sup>8</sup> SamplePages was the mobile RDD sample supplier.

<sup>9</sup> SamplePages was the mobile RDD sample supplier.

**Table 3** Sample profile (unweighted)

| Subgroup         | Online members (completed) | Offline members (completed) | Total (completed) | Benchmark <sup>10</sup> |
|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Male             | 46.3                       | 36.1                        | 46.2              | 49.0                    |
| Female           | 52.6                       | 63.9                        | 52.7              | 51.0                    |
| 18-24 years      | 4.3                        | 0.0                         | 4.3               | 11.0                    |
| 25-34 years      | 11.8                       | 0.0                         | 11.7              | 18.8                    |
| 35-44 years      | 16.7                       | 2.8                         | 16.5              | 17.5                    |
| 45-54 years      | 15.8                       | 5.6                         | 15.7              | 16.2                    |
| 55-64 years      | 18.5                       | 11.1                        | 18.4              | 14.9                    |
| 65-74 years      | 20.4                       | 19.4                        | 20.4              | 12.0                    |
| 75 years or more | 12.4                       | 61.1                        | 13.0              | 9.5                     |
| Sydney           | 20.8                       | 8.3                         | 20.6              | 20.6                    |
| Rest of NSW      | 11.1                       | 16.7                        | 11.2              | 11.3                    |
| Melbourne        | 18.4                       | 16.7                        | 18.4              | 19.7                    |
| Rest of VIC      | 6.2                        | 13.9                        | 6.3               | 6.3                     |
| Brisbane         | 9.1                        | 2.8                         | 9.0               | 9.7                     |
| Rest of QLD      | 8.9                        | 11.1                        | 9.0               | 10.4                    |
| Adelaide         | 7.3                        | 11.1                        | 7.4               | 5.4                     |
| Rest of SA       | 2.0                        | 2.8                         | 2.0               | 1.6                     |
| Perth            | 8.1                        | 8.3                         | 8.1               | 8.1                     |
| Rest of WA       | 2.2                        | 2.8                         | 2.2               | 2.2                     |
| Hobart           | 1.3                        | 0.0                         | 1.3               | 0.9                     |
| Rest of TAS      | 1.2                        | 2.8                         | 1.2               | 1.2                     |

<sup>10</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2021 ERPS).

| Subgroup   | Online members (completed) | Offline members (completed) | Total (completed) | Benchmark <sup>10</sup> |
|------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Darwin     | 0.3                        | 0.0                         | 0.3               | 0.6                     |
| Rest of NT | 0.2                        | 0.0                         | 0.2               | 0.3                     |
| ACT        | 2.7                        | 2.8                         | 2.7               | 1.7                     |

## Contact methodology

The contact methodology adopted for online Life in Australia™ members is an initial survey invitation via email and SMS (where available), followed by multiple email reminders and a reminder SMS. Up to 5 reminders in different modes (including email, SMS, and telephone) were administered within the fieldwork period. Telephone non-response of online panel members who have not yet completed the survey commences in the second week of fieldwork and consists of reminder calls encouraging completion of the online survey.

Offline members with a valid mobile telephone number were also sent a short SMS invitation that contained a link to the survey as well as the reminder SMS halfway through fieldwork.

The exact contact dates are shown below in Table 4.

**Table 4** Summary of contact schedule

| Contact type     | Date                 | Population   |
|------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Phone interviews | 19-Aug-24 - 1-Sep-24 | Offline only |
| SMS              | 19-Aug-24            | Both         |
| Email            | 19-Aug-24            | Online only  |
| Email            | 20-Aug-24            | Online only  |
| SMS              | 20-Aug-24            | Both         |
| Email            | 23-Aug-24            | Online only  |
| Reminder calls   | 27-Aug-24 - 1-Sep-24 | Online only  |
| Email            | 27-Aug-24            | Online only  |
| SMS              | 27-Aug-24            | Both         |

The following call procedures were implemented:

- A 4-call regime for mobile sample with an upper limit of 6 calls and a 6-call regime for landline sample, with an upper limit of 9 call attempts
- For mobile phones, capping the maximum number of unanswered call attempts to no more than four so as to avoid appearing overzealous in our attempts to achieve interviews
- Contact attempts were spread over weekday evenings (6:30 pm to 8:30 pm), weekday late afternoon/early evening (4:30 pm to 6:30 pm), Saturdays (11 am to 5 pm) and Sundays (11 am to 5 pm) (weekdays between 9 am to 4:30 pm are typically reserved for appointment management)

- Appointments were set for any time that the call centre is operational (weekdays between 9 am to 8:30 pm; weekends 11 am to 5 pm)
- 1800 number operation to address sample member queries and support the response maximisation effort and the establishment of a respondent page on our website (with responses to frequently asked questions).

Life in Australia™ members were able to request an email to complete the survey online.

Interviewing was conducted in English only.

## Incentives

All members were offered an incentive to complete the survey. The incentives offered for completing the survey had a value of \$10. The incentive options were:

- Coles / Myer gift card
- Points redeemable as an electronic gift card from GiftPay
- Charitable donation to a designated charity:
  - Children's Ground
  - Food For Change
  - RizeUp
  - Spinal Cord Injuries Australia
  - WIRES Australian Wildlife Rescue Organisation

All members could choose to donate the amount to a nominated charity or could opt out of receiving an incentive.

## Other response maximisation procedures

Other procedures to maximise response for the survey included:

- Leaving messages on answering machines and voicemails.
- Operation of an 1800 number throughout the survey period, 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.

## CATI fieldwork

### Interviewer briefing

All interviewers and supervisors selected to work on the survey attended a two-hour briefing session, which focused on all aspects of survey administration, including:

- Survey context and background, including a detailed explanation of Life in Australia™
- Survey procedures and sample management protocols
- The importance of respondent liaison procedures
- Strategies to maintain co-operation
- Detailed examination of the survey questionnaire, with a focus on the use of pre-coded response lists and item-specific data quality issues.

After the initial briefing session, interviewers engaged in comprehensive practice interviewing. A total of 10 interviewers were briefed on the survey.

### Fieldwork quality control procedures

The in-field quality monitoring techniques applied to this project included:



- Monitoring (by remote listening) of each interviewer within their first three shifts, whereby the supervisor listened in to at least 75 per cent of the interview and provided comprehensive feedback on data quality issues and respondent liaison technique
- Validation of 19.5% of the telephone surveys conducted via remote monitoring (covering the interviewers' approach and commitment-gaining skills, as well as the conduct of the interviews)
- Field team de-briefing after the first shift and, thereafter, whenever there was important information to impart to the field team in relation to data quality, consistency of interview administration, techniques to avoid refusals, appointment-making conventions, or project performance
- Examination of 'Other (specify)' responses
- Monitoring of timestamps for segments of the survey and overall time taken to complete the survey
- Monitoring of the interview-to-refusal ratio by interviewer.

## Response outcomes

### 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™ members invited to participate in this survey. The overall completion rate for the survey was 73.8% (online population = 74.0%; offline population = 58.1%).

### 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™ 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:  $CUMRR2 = RECR \times PROR \times RETR \times COMR$ . 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™ 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 was 4.0% (see Table 5).

**Table 5** Summary of panel outcome rates

| Code | Name             | %    |
|------|------------------|------|
| RECR | Recruitment rate | 9.5  |
| PROR | Profile rate     | 95.0 |
| RETR | Retention rate   | 61.0 |

| Code   | Name                       | %    |
|--------|----------------------------|------|
| COMR   | Completion rate            | 73.8 |
| CUMRR2 | Cumulative response rate 2 | 4.0  |

## Data processing and outputs

### 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.

Code frame extension was undertaken and additional responses were included for questions A11, B1, B1a, B1b, B1c, B13, B14, C6\_new, C7\_NEW, C9\_NEW, and E1. The new codes have been included in the questionnaire as provided in Appendix 1.

### Data quality checks for online completes

Data quality checks for online completes consisted of checks for:

- Logic checks
- Proportion of 'don't know' and 'refused' responses
- Speeding
- Straightlining
- Verbatim responses to open-ended questions

We consider all these indicators when determining whether a respondent is removed for poor data quality. Data quality indicators other than verbatim responses are used to identify potentially problematic cases. Generally, verbatim responses are decisive, with those indicating thoughtful engagement with the survey being kept and others being removed (e.g. nonsense responses like 'asdfgh,' *non sequiturs*, swearing).

Data quality is tracked for panel members over time and those with repeated issues are retired from the Life in Australia™.

After these checks, no cases were removed due to poor data quality.

### Weighting

#### Overview

Sample surveys are a commonly used method for drawing inferences about a population based on responses from just a subset of it. To be able to draw such inferences requires a probability sample – one in which each element of the population has a known, non-zero chance of selection. Since some units in the population may not have a chance of selection (for instance, persons without a telephone have no chance of selection for a telephone survey) and there may be different rates of response across unit characteristics, many sample surveys yield subsets that imperfectly cover their target populations despite the best possible sample design and data collection practices (Valliant *et al.*, 2013). In such situations, weighting can reduce the extent of any biases introduced through non-coverage.

For Life in Australia™, the approach for deriving weights generally consists of the following steps:

- Compute a base weight for each respondent as the product of three weights:

- a. Their enrolment weight, accounting for the initial chances of selection and subsequent post-stratification to key demographic benchmarks
  - b. An adjustment for probability of selection into the sample of the specific survey.
  - c. Their response propensity weight, estimated from enrolment information available for both respondents and nonrespondents to the present survey.
- Adjust the base weights so that they satisfy the latest population benchmarks for several demographic characteristics.

The first step is essential in providing the statistical framework necessary for making population inferences from a sample survey. The second step accounts for the selection of the sample for the specific survey, which varies by stratum. The third step accounts for nonresponse bias and ensures that survey estimates are consistent with other sources. Each step in the weighting will now be covered in turn.

### Enrolment weights

Members of Life in Australia™ were originally recruited through a national dual-frame telephone survey in 2015, and subsequent replenishment rounds conducted through a variety of mechanisms, including mobile telephone, address-based sampling, SMS and IVR (interactive voice response). Design weights for original recruits were derived as the inverse of their probability of selection, based on the approach of Best (2010), and then adjusted to reflect the population distributions for sex, location, age group, highest level of education, household internet access and telephone status. The method for adjusting the design weights was generalised regression (GREG) weighting which uses non-linear optimisation to minimise the distance between the design and adjusted weights, subject to the weights meeting the benchmarks (Deville and Särndal, 1993).

As more panellists were recruited, the method for calculating the panel weights was simplified to use a model-based approach (Valliant *et al.*, 2000; Elliott and Valliant, 2017). Such methods<sup>11</sup> avoid the increasingly cumbersome calculation of selection probabilities for multiple recruitment rounds involving multiple sampling frames, the increasing complexity of weighting, and the decreasing efficiency of the weights, at the same time as generating weights that align with population totals for a wide range of characteristics.

### Probability of selection weight

Sample selection was completed using a stratified sample design, with 40 strata defined by cross-classifying age (5 groups), education (2 groups), gender (2 groups), and use of a language other than English at home (2 groups). This stratification is enforced to ensure representation across the four demographic variables but has the consequence of altering the probability of selection for different groups. As such, panel weights needed adjustment to reflect the selection process. Within each stratum, the probability of selection is equal to the number of selections in the stratum divided by the population of the stratum. The panel weight was divided by this probability of selection to adjust for the selection process. This resulted in a weight which captures both the probability of inclusion in the panel, and selection in the survey.

### Response propensity weights

As is typical for a panel survey, not all members respond to all waves, some withdraw or are retired from the panel and new members are recruited. To limit the impact of such events on the representativeness of estimates made from respondents, enrolment weights were adjusted through the use of propensity scores (Rosenbaum and Rubin, 1983). These were calculated by means of a logistic regression model predicting the likelihood of a panel member participating in the current wave, conditional on characteristics available for both respondents and non-respondents. The model incorporates a wide range of demographic, attitudinal and behavioural characteristics collected from all panel members.

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<sup>11</sup> So-called “superpopulation” models are equivalent to generalised regression if the inverse selection probabilities are all set to 1.

To reduce the impact of very low or very high values, the predicted probabilities were collapsed into classes (after Cochran, 1968), with propensity scores assigned as the mean probability within each class. The base weights were then calculated as the ratio of the enrolment weight to the propensity class score.

### Adjusted weights

To ensure that estimates made from the dataset are representative of Australians aged 18 years or older, the base weights were adjusted using GREG weighting so that, as described above, their distribution matches external benchmarks for the key demographic parameters. The adjustment variables were determined from a number of considerations:

- Which variables are most associated with response propensity?
- Which variables are most associated with key outcome variables?

With these in mind, the characteristics used for adjustment are shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** Benchmarks for these variables were 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.

Large differences in weights may lead to large variances in survey estimates, and so limiting these variations can improve the precision of estimates. The use of constraints in GREG weighting aims to reduce the variance at the same time as limiting increases in the bias. The method applied is incorporated directly in the calibration process. The impact of setting bounds on the weights is assessed by comparing the weighting efficiency (Kish, 1992) of adjusted weights for different constraints. Bounded weights are generally preferred when their efficiency is close to that of the unbounded weights.

For this survey, there were 3004 respondents aged 18+ years and the weighting efficiency was 66.18%, representing an effective base of 1988.

**Table 6** Characteristics used for adjusting base weights, with benchmark totals and data sources for cross-sectional weights

| Category  | Benchmark Target (#) | Benchmark Target (%) | Source     |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|------------|
| <b>Number of adults in the household</b>          |                      |                      | <b>(B)</b> |
| One   | 2,921,060            | 13.99                |            |
| Two   | 11,776,407           | 56.40                |            |
| Three or more                                     | 6,182,241            | 29.61                |            |
| <b>Age group by Highest education</b>             |                      |                      | <b>(A)</b> |
| 18-24 years                                       | 2,369,446            | 11.35                |            |
| 25-34 years x Below Bachelor                      | 2,177,914            | 10.43                |            |
| 25-34 years x Bachelor or higher                  | 1,725,725            | 8.27                 |            |
| 35-44 years x Below Bachelor                      | 2,078,040            | 9.95                 |            |
| 35-44 years x Bachelor or higher                  | 1,639,326            | 7.85                 |            |
| 45-54 years x Below Bachelor                      | 2,195,779            | 10.52                |            |
| 45-54 years x Bachelor or higher                  | 1,098,068            | 5.26                 |            |
| 55-64 years x Below Bachelor                      | 2,272,832            | 10.89                |            |
| 55-64 years x Bachelor or higher                  | 766,722              | 3.67                 |            |
| 65+ years x Below Bachelor                        | 3,736,597            | 17.90                |            |
| 65+ years x Bachelor or higher                    | 819,259              | 3.92                 |            |
| <b>Gender</b>                                     |                      |                      | <b>(A)</b> |
| Man or male                                       | 10,614,696           | 50.84                |            |
| Woman or female                                   | 10,265,012           | 49.16                |            |
| <b>Language other than English spoken at home</b> |                      |                      | <b>(A)</b> |
| Yes   | 5,041,131            | 24.14                |            |
| No  | 15,838,577           | 75.86                |            |

| Category                               | Benchmark Target (#) | Benchmark Target (%) | Source     |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|------------|
| <b>Geographic location</b>             |                      |                      | <b>(A)</b> |
| Capital city                           | 13,995,263           | 67.03                |            |
| Rest of state                          | 6,884,445            | 32.97                |            |
| <b>State or territory of residence</b> |                      |                      | <b>(A)</b> |
| NSW                                    | 6,641,340            | 31.81                |            |
| VIC                                    | 5,372,461            | 25.73                |            |
| QLD                                    | 4,193,691            | 20.09                |            |
| SA                                     | 1,489,153            | 7.13                 |            |
| WA                                     | 2,158,828            | 10.34                |            |
| TAS                                    | 468,157              | 2.24                 |            |
| NT                                     | 181,025              | 0.87                 |            |
| ACT                                    | 375,054              | 1.80                 |            |

Sources:

(A) Census 2021 with ERP updates

(B) National Health Survey, 2020-21

### Treatment of missing values

The regression weighting approach used to adjust the base weights requires that there are no missing values across the adjustment variables or values other than those for which there are reliable benchmarks. Like most surveys, however, some Life in Australia™ respondents did not provide answers to all questions commonly used for weighting.

A statistical model (Stekhoven and Buehlmann, 2012) was applied to each item with missing values to impute the most likely value for a respondent, conditional upon their other responses. Given the very low prevalence of missing values overall (generally much less than 5% for any item), the imputation process is expected to have a negligible impact on weighted estimates made from the dataset.

### Precision of estimates

Estimates made from the survey should be seen as a point-in-time approximation of the underlying population. It may be that if the survey were repeated again at a different time, a slightly different subset of persons would take part and give a slightly different set of responses. To account for the natural variation that would occur through many hypothetical replications of a survey, it is common to associate a level of precision with estimates made from the one survey that we have observed. One such metric is the “margin of error” for a survey estimate, which is used to form a “confidence interval” around the estimate. An example of these concepts is contained in the following statement:

An estimated 50% of persons agreed with survey statement X, with a margin of error of  $\pm 1.2\%$ . This leads to a 95% confidence interval for X of 48.8% to 51.2%.

This means that if our survey were repeated many times and the weights, estimates, margins of error and confidence intervals calculated for each survey, then 95% of the confidence intervals would contain the true population value.

Another often-reported metric is the “relative standard error” of an estimate, which expresses the precision of an estimate as a proportion of the estimate itself. Ideally, the ratio of the precision<sup>12</sup> to the estimate should be small (much less than 25%), indicating that the amount of uncertainty is small relative to the estimate. Estimates with RSEs greater than 25% should be used with caution and those with RSEs greater than 50% should be considered too unreliable for general use.

For this survey, the margins of error and relative standard errors for a range of estimates are shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** These may be used to compare the uncertainty of estimates derived from the survey – an estimate with a margin of error of  $\pm 1.2\%$  may be reported with considerably more confidence than an estimate with a margin of error of  $\pm 12\%$ , for example.

**Table 7** Margin of error (MoE) and relative standard error (RSE) of estimates

| Proportion of respondents in an item category | RSE (%) | MoE (%) |
|---|---------|---------|
| 0-5%  | 43.2    | 0.4     |
| 20-25%  | 3.5     | 1.5     |
| 25-50%  | 2.5     | 1.7     |
| 5-20%   | 6.4     | 1.2     |
| 50-75%  | 1.4     | 1.6     |
| 75-100%                                       | 0.7     | 1.2     |

### Longitudinal weights

In addition to the cross-sectional weights, longitudinal weights for those who have completed both the 2022 and 2024 waves will be calculated. This will be done by first filtering to respondents who completed the 2022 wave. Similar to cross-sectional weights, the weights used in the 2022 wave were then be adjusted for non-response using a logistic regression model. However, this model instead predicts the likelihood of a sample member participating in the 2024 wave, based on their responses to the 2022 wave. Finally, propensity-adjusted weights are re-aligned with population totals that can be found in **Error! Reference source not found.**

<sup>12</sup> Specifically, the estimate’s standard error.

**Table 8** Characteristics used for adjusting base weights, with benchmark totals and data sources for longitudinal weights

| Category                                   | Benchmark Target (#) | Benchmark Target (%) | Source     |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|------------|
| <b>State or territory of residence</b>     |                      |                      | <b>(A)</b> |
| New South Wales                            | 6,383,208            | 31.86                |            |
| Victoria                                   | 5,261,500            | 26.26                |            |
| Queensland                                 | 3,986,990            | 19.90                |            |
| South Australia                            | 1,400,481            | 6.99                 |            |
| Western Australia                          | 2,054,078            | 10.25                |            |
| Tasmania                                   | 428,097              | 2.14                 |            |
| Northern Territory                         | 184,604              | 0.92                 |            |
| Australian Capital Territory               | 334,887              | 1.67                 |            |
| <b>Geographic location</b>                 |                      |                      | <b>(A)</b> |
| Capital city                               | 13,237,683           | 66.08                |            |
| Rest of state                              | 6,796,162            | 33.92                |            |
| <b>Gender</b>                              |                      |                      | <b>(A)</b> |
| Male                                       | 9,826,039            | 49.05                |            |
| Female                                     | 10,207,806           | 50.95                |            |
| Language other than English spoken at home |                      |                      | <b>(A)</b> |
| Yes  | 4,645,064            | 23.19                |            |
| No   | 15,388,781           | 76.81                |            |
| <b>Number of adults in the household</b>   |                      |                      | <b>(B)</b> |
| 1  | 3,417,205            | 17.06                |            |
| 2  | 11,060,137           | 55.21                |            |
| 3 or more                                  | 5,556,503            | 27.74                |            |
| <b>Age group by Highest education</b>      |                      |                      | <b>(A)</b> |



| Category                         | Benchmark Target (#) | Benchmark Target (%) | Source |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------|
| 18-24 years                      | 2,322,014            | 11.59                |        |
| 25-34 years x Bachelor or higher | 1,475,414            | 7.36                 |        |
| 25-34 years x Below Bachelor     | 2,353,788            | 11.75                |        |
| 35-44 years x Bachelor or higher | 1,248,325            | 6.23                 |        |
| 35-44 years x Below Bachelor     | 2,205,478            | 11.01                |        |
| 45-54 years x Bachelor or higher | 841,866              | 4.20                 |        |
| 45-54 years x Below Bachelor     | 2,398,580            | 11.97                |        |
| 55-64 years x Bachelor or higher | 664,543              | 3.32                 |        |
| 55-64 years x Below Bachelor     | 2,328,564            | 11.62                |        |
| 65+ years x Bachelor or higher   | 570,747              | 2.85                 |        |
| 65+ years x Below Bachelor       | 3,624,526            | 18.09                |        |

Sources:

(A) Census 2016 with ERP March 2021 updates

(B) National Health Survey, 2017-18

## Electronic data provision

A final version of the data file (with weights) was provided in SPSS format as both a 2024 standalone data file and a longitudinal timeseries file. Supporting documentation, including a data dictionary, was also provided.

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# Appendix 1: Questionnaire

\*(ALL)

EMPLOY1 Which one of the following best describes your current employment status?

(READ OUT)

1. Self-employed
2. Employed
3. Employed casually
4. Unemployed
5. Engaged in home duties
6. A student
7. Retired
8. Unable to work (for example, due to a disability)
9. A carer (for example, for a family member or friend)
96. Other (please specify)
  
98. (Don't know) / Not sure
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(ALL)

A3 What is the postcode of your current residence?

1. (Predictive text verbatim text box) \*PROGRAMMER NOTE USE POSTCODE LOOKUP LIST LOCATED HERE
  
98. (Don't know) / Not sure
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(ALL)

A12 Which of the following best describes your **current gender identity**?

*Gender refers to current gender, which may be different to sex recorded at birth and may be different to what is indicated on legal documents.*

1. Man or male
2. Woman or female
3. Non-binary / Gender fluid
96. I use a different term (please describe)
  
98. (Don't know) / Not sure
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(ALL)

A4 Which category best describes your sexual orientation?

(READ OUT)

1. Straight (heterosexual)
2. Gay
3. Lesbian
4. Bisexual
5. Queer
96. Prefer to self-describe (please specify)
  
98. (Don't know / Questioning) / Not sure / Questioning
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(ALL)

A5 Do you identify as any of the following?

*Please select all that apply.*  
(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

(READ OUT)

1. Person with disability
2. Person with long-term physical health condition/s
3. Person with long-term mental health condition/s
4. Carer of someone who has a disability, mental health condition, alcohol or other drug issue, chronic condition, dementia, terminal or serious illness or who needs care due to ageing
97. I do not identify as any of these \*(EXCLUSIVE)
  
98. (Don't know) / Not sure \*(EXCLUSIVE)
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say \*(EXCLUSIVE)

\*(ALL)

A7 Which of the following best describes your household?

(READ OUT)

1. Person living alone
2. Couple living alone
3. Couple with non-dependent child/children
4. Couple with dependent child/children
5. Couple with dependent and non-dependent children
6. Single parent with non-dependent child/children
7. Single parent with dependent child/children
8. Single parent with dependent and non-dependent children
9. Couple living with other family members (e.g., parents)
10. Non-related adults sharing house/apartment/flat
96. Other (please specify)
  
98. (Don't know) / Not sure
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(A7=3-8, LIVING WITH CHILD/CHILDREN)

A8 What is the age of the youngest child living with you, some or all of the time?

1. 0-4 years old
2. 5-9 years old
3. 10-14 years old
4. 15-18 years old
5. 19+ years old
  
98. (Don't know) / Not sure
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(ALL)

A9 On a scale of one to seven, where one is terrible and seven is excellent, how would you rate your mental health over the last six months?

1. 1 – Terrible
2. 2
3. 3
4. 4
5. 5
6. 6
7. 7 – Excellent
97. Not applicable
  
98. (Don't know) / Not sure
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(ALL)

A10 During the past six months, how often has your mental health affected your relationships?

1. Often

- 2. Sometimes
  - 3. Not often
  - 4. Never
- 98. (Don't know) / Not sure
  - 99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(A10=1-2, MENTAL HEALTH HAS AFFECTED YOUR RELATIONSHIPS OFTEN OR SOMETIMES)

A11 How has it affected your relationships?

*Please select all that apply*

[PROGRAMMING: MULTIPLE CHOICE]

- 1. Difficult to communicate effectively
  - 2. Unable to be emotionally available
  - 3. Insecurity, jealousy, or lack of trust
  - 4. Unable to manage stress
  - 5. Lower self-esteem
  - 6. Lack of empathy for others
  - 7. Diminished interest in sex or other physical intimacy
  - 8. Becoming withdrawn or isolated
  - 9. Anger or irritability
  - 10. Fatigue or exhaustion
  - 11. Problems with executive function (e.g., inability to focus, problem solve)
  - 12. Experiencing mental health issues
  - 96. Other (please specify)
- 98. (Don't know) / Not sure
  - 99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

## SECTION B: MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

\*(ALL)

REL\_INTRO Relationships Australia are really interested in the variety of important relationships people experience in their lives. The results of this survey will be used to support Relationships Australia to better understand Australian relationships and inform their advocacy, policy development and future research.

\*(ALL)

B1 Thinking now of the three people closest to you and their relationship to you. Firstly, we would like to ask you about your most important, meaningful relationship.

Would you say the person who is closest to you is your...?

(READ OUT)

- 1. Aunt
- 2. Brother
- 3. Daughter
- 4. Father
- 5. Friend
- 6. Grandchild
- 7. Grandparent
- 8. Mother
- 9. Neighbour
- 10. Nephew
- 11. Niece
- 12. Partner (e.g., a sexual, romantic or intimate relationship. Other terms for this could include boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, de facto, intimate partner, husband, wife)
- 13. Sister
- 14. Son
- 15. Uncle
- 16. Cousin
- 17. In-laws
- 18. Colleague
- 96. Other (please specify)

- 98. (Don't know) / Not sure
- 99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(ALL)

B1a And the second closest person?

(READ OUT)

- 1. Aunt
  - 2. Brother
  - 3. Daughter
  - 4. Father
  - 5. Friend
  - 6. Grandchild
  - 7. Grandparent
  - 8. Mother
  - 9. Neighbour
  - 10. Nephew
  - 11. Niece
  - 12. Partner (e.g., a sexual, romantic or intimate relationship. Other terms for this could include boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, de facto, intimate partner, husband, wife)
  - 13. Sister
  - 14. Son
  - 15. Uncle
  - 16. Cousin
  - 17. In-laws
  - 18. Colleague
  - 96. Other (please specify)
- 98. (Don't know) / Not sure
  - 99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(ALL)

B1b And the third closest person?

(READ OUT)

- 1. Aunt
  - 2. Brother
  - 3. Daughter
  - 4. Father
  - 5. Friend
  - 6. Grandchild
  - 7. Grandparent
  - 8. Mother
  - 9. Neighbour
  - 10. Nephew
  - 11. Niece
  - 12. Partner (e.g., a sexual, romantic or intimate relationship. Other terms for this could include boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, de facto, intimate partner, husband, wife)
  - 13. Sister
  - 14. Son
  - 15. Uncle
  - 16. Cousin
  - 17. In-laws
  - 18. Colleague
  - 96. Other (please specify)
- 98. (Don't know) / Not sure
  - 99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(ALL)

B1c Who do you consider to be the most challenging relationship in your life? This can be one you previously listed or a different relationship.

(READ OUT)

1. Aunt
2. Brother
3. Daughter
4. Father
5. Friend
6. Grandchild
7. Grandparent
8. Mother
9. Neighbour
10. Nephew
11. Niece
12. Partner (e.g., a sexual, romantic or intimate relationship. Other terms for this could include boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, de facto, intimate partner, husband, wife)
13. Sister
14. Son
15. Uncle
16. Cousin
17. In-laws
18. Colleague
96. Other (please specify)
  
98. (Don't know) / Not sure
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(B1c=1-96, IDENTIFIED THEIR MOST CHALLENGING RELATIONSHIP)

CHA\_INTRO The following questions ask about your most challenging relationship.

\*(B1c=1-96, IDENTIFIED THEIR MOST CHALLENGING RELATIONSHIP)

B1d How would you characterise this relationship?

*Please select all that apply*

(READ OUT) [PROGRAMMER: MULTIPLE CHOICE]

1. Conflictual
2. Distant
3. Fearful
4. Co-operative
  
98. (Don't know) / Not sure
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(B1d=1, CONFLICTUAL IN A RELATIONSHIP)

B1e When you have conflict in this relationship...

*Please select all that apply*

(READ OUT)

1. I often seem to get blamed for issues
2. I feel criticised by them
3. They do not accept responsibility for their part in the fight
4. They often withdraw from me and the situation
  
98. (Don't know) / Not sure
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(B1c=1-96, IDENTIFIED THEIR MOST CHALLENGING RELATIONSHIP)

B1f On a scale of one to seven, where one is very distressed and seven is not at all distressed, how distressed have you felt about this relationship over the last six months?

1. 1 – Very distressed
2. 2



- 3. 3
- 4. 4
- 5. 5
- 6. 6
- 7. 7 – Not at all distressed
- 97. Not applicable
  
- 98. (Don't know) / Not sure
- 99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(B1=5 OR 12, SELECTED FRIEND OR PARTNER AS MOST MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP)

B2\_NEW The following questions ask about your most important, meaningful relationship.

What is the gender of your (INSERT 'partner' IF B1=12, OR 'friend' IF B1=5)?

*Gender refers to current gender, which may be different to sex recorded at birth and may be different to what is indicated on legal documents.*

- 1 Man or male
- 2 Woman or female
- 3 Non-binary / Gender fluid
- 96. They use a different term (please describe)
  
- 98. (Don't know) / Not sure
- 99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(B1=1-96, IDENTIFIED THEIR MOST MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP)

B6 Considering now only the **positive qualities** of your relationship and ignoring the negative ones, please evaluate your relationship on the following qualities: Our relationship is...?

(STATEMENTS) (RANDOMISE)

\*(ONL: DISPLAY FULL GRID)

- a. Interesting
- b. Full
- c. Sturdy
- d. Enjoyable
- e. Good
- f. Friendly
- g. Hopeful

(RESPONSE FRAME) (READ OUT)

- 1. Not at all
- 2. A tiny bit
- 3. A little
- 4. Somewhat
- 5. Mostly
- 6. Very
- 7. Extremely
- 8. Completely
  
- 98. (Don't know) / Not sure
- 99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(B1=1-96, IDENTIFIED THEIR MOST MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP)

B7 Considering now only the **negative qualities** of your relationship and ignoring the positive ones, please evaluate your relationship on the following qualities: Our relationship is...

(STATEMENTS) (RANDOMISE)

\*(ONL: DISPLAY FULL GRID)

- a. Bad

- b. Lonely
- c. Discouraging
- d. Boring
- e. Empty
- f. Fragile
- g. Miserable

(RESPONSE FRAME) (READ OUT)

- 1. Not at all
- 2. A tiny bit
- 3. A little
- 4. Somewhat
- 5. Mostly
- 6. Very
- 7. Extremely
- 8. Completely

- 98. (Don't know) / Not sure
- 99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(B1=1-96, IDENTIFIED THEIR MOST MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP)

B10 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(STATEMENTS) (RANDOMISE)

\*(ONL: DISPLAY FULL GRID)

- a. We have fun together
- e. I know I can depend on them
- b. We communicate openly about our problems
- c. We don't spend enough time together
- d. We have lots of disagreements
- f. I feel confident we can deal with whatever problems might come up

(RESPONSE FRAME) (READ OUT)

- 1. Strongly agree
- 2. Agree
- 3. Neither agree nor disagree
- 4. Disagree
- 5. Strongly disagree

- 98. (Don't know) / Not sure
- 99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(B1=1-96, IDENTIFIED THEIR MOST MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP)

B11 On a scale of one to seven, where one is 'not at all' and seven is 'to a great extent', to what extent do you feel safe disagreeing with them?

- 1. 1 - Not at all safe
- 2. 2
- 3. 3
- 4. 4
- 5. 5
- 6. 6
- 7. 7 - To a great extent, safe
- 97. Not applicable

- 98. (Don't know) / Not sure
- 99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(B11=1-3, FEELS NOT SAFE WITH DISAGREEING WITH THEM)

B11a What do you fear when you have a disagreement?

*Please select all that apply.*

(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)  
(READ OUT)

1. Fear for my wellbeing / worried it could become verbally abusive or aggressive [DISPLAY IF B11=1, Not at all safe]
  2. Worried my concerns will be dismissed or invalidated
  3. Worried it will lead to a withdrawal of affection or may end the relationship
  4. Worried it will make the fight worse
  5. I don't feel confident expressing myself effectively
98. (Don't know) / Not sure\*(EXCLUSIVE)  
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say\*(EXCLUSIVE)

\*(B1=1-96, IDENTIFIED THEIR MOST MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP)

B12 When things are difficult in this relationship, where do you go for support?

*Please select all that apply.*  
(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)  
(READ OUT)

1. Family
  2. A friend
  3. Colleague
  4. Neighbour
  5. Priest/Imam/Rabbi/other religious leader
  6. Community leader
  7. Doctor
  8. Professional support, e.g., a counsellor
  9. Books/publications, either physical or online
  10. Interactive online sources, e.g., forums, Facebook groups
  13. Search engine, such as Google
  11. I manage on my own
  96. Other (please specify)
  12. We don't have difficulties \*EXCLUSIVE)
98. (Don't know) / Not sure\*(EXCLUSIVE)  
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say\*(EXCLUSIVE)

\*(B12=11, MANAGES RELATIONSHIP DIFFICULTIES ON YOUR OWN)

B12a If you manage your relationship difficulties on your own, when would you seek external support?

*Please select all that apply.*  
(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)  
(READ OUT)

1. If we had repeated unresolved conflicts
  2. If we stopped being able to communicate easily about the problem
  3. If the other person began emotionally withdrawing, losing intimacy, and disconnecting from the relationship
  4. If we contemplated ending the relationship
  5. When someone else told me to seek support
  6. Never^
98. (Don't know) / Not sure\*(EXCLUSIVE)  
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say\*(EXCLUSIVE)

\*(B1=1-96, IDENTIFIED THEIR MOST MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP)

B13 There are a range of pressures that impact all types of relationships. Which, if any, of the following pressures have impacted this relationship in the last six months? e.g. *what causes stress in your relationship?*

*Please select all that apply.*  
(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)  
(READ OUT)

(RANDOMISE)

1. Mental health (diagnosed and undiagnosed conditions)
  2. Alcohol use
  3. Drug use
  4. Gambling
  5. Unfulfilled expectations
  6. Cultural differences
  7. Controlling behaviour
  8. Fear
  19. Cost of living
  10. Social media use
  11. Different values/beliefs
  12. Division of childcare tasks
  13. Division of household tasks
  14. Money problems
  15. Study or work commitments
  16. Discrimination or prejudice
  18. Health issues
  20. Caring responsibilities (E.g., for disabled or elderly family member)
  21. Distance (e.g., long distance relationship)
  96. Other (please specify)
  17. There have been no pressures in the last six months \*(EXCLUSIVE)
98. (Don't know) / Not sure \*(EXCLUSIVE)
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say \*(EXCLUSIVE)

\*(B1=1-96, IDENTIFIED THEIR MOST MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP)

\*PROGRAMMER NOTE: DO NOT PROMPT QUESTION IF ONLY ONE ANSWER SELECTED AT B13. AUTO-CODE ACCORDINGLY INSTEAD

B14 Which pressure is affecting this relationship the most?

(READ OUT)

\*(PROGRAMMER NOTE: SHOW ONLY THOSE SELECTED AT B13)

1. Mental health (diagnosed and undiagnosed conditions)
  2. Alcohol use
  3. Drug use
  4. Gambling
  5. Unfulfilled expectations
  6. Cultural differences
  7. Controlling behaviour
  8. Fear
  19. Cost of living
  10. Social media use
  11. Different values/beliefs
  12. Division of childcare tasks
  13. Division of household tasks
  14. Money problems
  15. Study or work commitments
  16. Discrimination or prejudice
  18. Health issues
  20. Caring responsibilities (E.g., for disabled or elderly family member)
  21. Distance (e.g., long distance relationship)
  96. Other (please specify)
98. (Don't know) / Not sure
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say \*(EXCLUSIVE)

\*(B14≠98 OR 99, PROVIDED ANSWER AT B14)

B14a On a scale of one to seven, where one is very distressed and seven is not at all distressed, how distressed have you felt about this relationship pressure over the last six months?

1. 1 – Very distressed
2. 2
3. 3
4. 4
5. 5
6. 6
7. 7 – Not at all distressed
97. Not applicable

98. (Don't know) / Not sure
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(B14≠98 OR 99, PROVIDED ANSWER AT B14)

B15 What strategies, if any, are you are using to manage this pressure?

1. Communicating about the pressure
2. Compromising or providing understanding to them / each other
3. Seeking professional help
4. Using time management or scheduling
5. Providing them / each other with emotional support
6. Financial management
7. Stress management
8. Self care practises
9. Accepting the situation / letting go
10. Separation or providing each other with space
11. Faith / spirituality
12. Avoiding the pressure
13. Planning ahead
96. Other strategies (please specify)

14. I am not using any strategies to manage^

98. (Don't know) / Not sure
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say \*(EXCLUSIVE)

\*(B1=1-96, IDENTIFIED THEIR MOST MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP)

B16 Do you and \*(IF B1≠96 DISPLAY 'your' AND PIPED IN ANSWER FROM B1, IF B1=96 DISPLAY: the person) that you are closest to live in the same household?

1. Yes
2. No

98. (Don't know) / Not sure
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say \*(EXCLUSIVE)

## SECTION C: OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

\*(ALL)

INTROC We would now like to ask a few questions relating to partner relationships in general.

\*(ALL)

C3 Are you currently in, or have you ever been in a relationship with multiple partners at once?

IF NECESSARY: *This is sometimes known as a polyamorous relationship, consensual non-monogamous relationship or ethical non-monogamous relationship. It is different from infidelity because everyone is aware and consents.*

1. Yes
2. No

98. (Don't know) / Not sure
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(ALL)

C4 Have you experienced a break-up, separation or divorce?

IF NECESSARY: This refers to a partnered relationship that you have personally been in, not observing anyone else's partnered relationship (e.g., parents' divorce).

*Please select all that apply.*  
(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)  
(PROBE TO CODE FRAME)

1. Yes, a break-up
  2. Yes, a separation
  3. Yes, a divorce
  5. No \*(EXCLUSIVE)
98. (Don't know) / Not sure \*(EXCLUSIVE)  
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say \*(EXCLUSIVE)

\*(C4=1-3, EXPERIENCED BREAK-UP, SEPARATION OR DIVORCE)

C5\_new Following this experience, did you receive any **valuable** support from any of the following sources?

*Please select all that apply.*  
(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)  
(READ OUT)

1. Family
  2. A friend
  3. Colleague
  4. Neighbour
  5. Priest/Imam/Rabbi/other religious leader
  6. Community leader
  7. Doctor
  8. Professional support, e.g., a counsellor
  9. Books/publications, either physical or online
  10. Interactive online sources, e.g., forums, Facebook groups
  96. Other (please specify)
  11. I did not receive any support \*(EXCLUSIVE)
98. (Don't know) / Not sure\*(EXCLUSIVE)  
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say\*(EXCLUSIVE)

\*(C4=1-3, EXPERIENCED BREAK-UP, SEPARATION OR DIVORCE)

C6\_new Which, if any, of the following affected your ability to access **valuable** support?

*Please select all that apply.*  
(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)  
(READ OUT)

6. I received adequate support from others
  1. Lack of understanding from chosen support person/s
  2. Isolation
  3. Lack of motivation/desire
  4. Expense of service
  5. Location of service
  7. Feeling embarrassed, afraid or ashamed
  8. I managed on my own
  96. Other (please specify)
98. (Don't know) / Not sure\*(EXCLUSIVE)  
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say\*(EXCLUSIVE)

\*(C4=1-3, EXPERIENCED BREAK-UP, SEPARATION OR DIVORCE)

C6a With regard to your former partner, over the past 6 months, how often have you:

(STATEMENTS) (RANDOMISE)  
\*(ONL: DISPLAY FULL GRID)

- a. Felt hostile or hateful towards him/her/them?
- b. Had angry disagreements with him/her/them?
- c. Avoided or kept away from him/her/them?

(RESPONSE FRAME) (READ OUT)

1. Often
2. Sometimes
3. Not often / never

98. (Don't know) / Not sure
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(C4=1-3, EXPERIENCED BREAK-UP, SEPARATION OR DIVORCE)

C6b Do the impacts of this break-up, separation or divorce still impact you today?

1. Yes
2. No

98. (Don't know) / Not sure
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(C6b=1, YES THE IMPACTS OF THIS BREAK-UP, SEPARATION OR DIVORCE STILL IMPACT YOU TODAY)

C7\_NEW What are the ongoing effects or challenges you have experienced as a result of the break-up, separation, or divorce?

*Please select all the apply*

(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

1. Feelings of sadness or loneliness
  2. My confidence / self-esteem is lower
  3. Ongoing sadness / regret around the relationship ending
  4. Difficulty in connecting with others
  5. Reduced trust in others
  6. Reduced interest in future relationships
  7. Negative impacts on mental health
  8. Difficulty in communicating with others
  9. Ongoing negative or problematic behaviour from the previous partner
  10. Reliance on alcohol, drugs etc.
  11. Financial impacts
  12. Challenges with shared parenting arrangements
  13. Negative impacts on children / other family members
  14. Feelings of guilt or shame
  15. Feeling angry or resentful
96. Other effects or challenges (please specify)
  97. I have not had any ongoing challenges^ (EXCLUSIVE)
  98. (Don't know) / Not sure
  99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(C6b=1, YES THE IMPACTS OF THIS BREAK-UP, SEPARATION OR DIVORCE STILL IMPACT YOU TODAY)

C8\_NEW What have you done to manage the impact/s of the break-up, separation, or divorce?

*Please select all the apply*

(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

1. Talking with friends / family
2. Taking time to heal
3. Focusing on distractions e.g. hobbies, work, etc.
4. Communicating openly with previous partner
5. Seeking professional help e.g. Counsellor, GP, Mediator

- 6. Self-care practises
- 7. Faith / spirituality
- 8. Finding new friends / hobbies
- 9. Accepting the situation / letting go
- 96. Did other things to manage (please specify)
- 97. Have not done anything to manage it^ (EXCLUSIVE)
  
- 98. (Don't know) / Not sure
- 99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(C6=1, YES THE IMPACTS OF THIS BREAK-UP, SEPARATION OR DIVORCE STILL IMPACT YOU TODAY)  
 C9\_NEW Did anything good come from the break-up, separation, or divorce?  
 Please select all the apply

(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

- 1. My confidence / self-esteem improved
- 2. My mental health improved
- 3. I was able to pursue new experiences
- 4. I have a sense of increased independence / freedom
- 5. My finances improved
- 6. Stronger relationships with others
- 7. A friendship developed with my previous partner
- 8. I developed a new relationship
- 9. A sense of safety
- 96. Other positive things (please specify)
- 97. Nothing good came from it
  
- 98. (Don't know) / Not sure
- 99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

## SECTION D: ABOUT YOU

\*(ALL)

INTROD Next, we would like to ask some general questions about yourself.

\*(ALL)

D1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(STATEMENTS) (RANDOMISE)

\*(ONL: DISPLAY FULL GRID)

- a. In most ways my life is close to my ideal
- b. The conditions of my life are excellent
- c. I am satisfied with life
- d. So far I have gotten the most important things I want in life
- e. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing

(RESPONSE FRAME) (READ OUT)

- 1. Strongly agree
- 2. Agree
- 3. Neither agree nor disagree
- 4. Disagree
- 5. Strongly disagree
  
- 98. (Don't know) / Not sure
- 99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(ALL)

D2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(STATEMENTS) (RANDOMISE)

\*(ONL: DISPLAY FULL GRID)



- a. I feel loved
- b. I miss having people around
- c. I experience a general sense of emptiness
- d. There are many people I can count on completely
- e. Often, I feel rejected
- f. There are plenty of people that I can lean on in case of trouble
- g. There are enough people that I feel close to

(RESPONSE FRAME) (READ OUT)

1. Yes, I agree
  2. More or less
  3. No, I disagree
98. (Don't know) / Not sure  
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

\*(ALL)  
D3

On a scale of one to seven, where one is strongly disagree and seven is strongly agree, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

(STATEMENT)

- a. I often feel very lonely

(RESPONSE FRAME)

1. 1 - Strongly disagree
  2. 2
  3. 3
  4. 4
  5. 5
  6. 6
  7. 7 - Strongly agree
98. (Don't know) / Not sure  
99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

## SECTION E: WIDER COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

\*(ALL)

INTROE So far, we have asked lots of questions about relationships you have with individuals. In this last section, we'd now like to ask about the relationships that you have with groups of people and the wider community.

\*(ALL)

E1 From the following list, please select which, if any, of the following groups play an important role in your life.

*Please select all that apply.*

(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)  
(READ OUT)

1. Colleagues IF NECESSARY: Includes current or prior colleagues
2. Community group/s
3. Environment/gardening group/s
4. Family group/s IF NECESSARY: Refers to a family unit
5. Friendship group/s
6. Neighbourhood group/s
7. Online group/s, e.g., forums, Facebook groups
8. Political party/organisation/s
9. Religious group/s
10. Sporting group/s
11. Union/s
12. Music or art group/s

- 13. Book club or group/s
- 96. Other (please specify)
- 97. Groups do not play an important role in my life \*(EXCLUSIVE)
  
- 98. (Don't know) / Not sure \*(EXCLUSIVE)
- 99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say\*(EXCLUSIVE)

\*(ALL)  
E7

Who would you turn to first for the following situations?

(STATEMENTS)

- a) If you needed help with a household or garden job that you couldn't do yourself
- b) If you needed help around your home because you were sick
- c) If you felt a bit down or depressed and wanted to talk about it
- d) To enjoy a pleasant social occasion with

(RESPONSE FRAME)

- 1. Your most important, meaningful relationship: (INSERT RESPONSE FROM B1. IF B1= 98 OR 99 JUST DISPLAY 'Your most important, meaningful relationship')
- 2. Somebody else
  
- 98. (Don't know) / Not sure
- 99. (Refused) / Prefer not to say

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