



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

National Centre for Longitudinal Data

Building a New Life in Australia (BNLA): The Longitudinal Study of Humanitarian Migrants

Wave 5 Update (Addendum to the Wave 3 Report)



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Introduction

Building a New Life in Australia (BNLA): The Longitudinal Study of Humanitarian Migrants is a long-term project researching how humanitarian migrants settle into life in Australia. It is the first long-term study of humanitarian migrants to Australia. The study follows 2,399 humanitarian migrants and their family members who arrived in Australia, or had their permanent residency visa granted between May and October 2013.

An extensive report on the findings from the first three waves of BNLA was published by the Department of Social Services in November 2017 (subsequently referred to as the 'Wave 3 Report'). An update summarising wave 4 findings (subsequently referred to as the 'Wave 4 Update') was published in April 2019.

The Wave 5 Update (this document) summarises additional findings from waves 4 and 5. Due to the smaller size of the report, this update does not provide detailed commentary on or explanation of the data. It includes only updated tables and figures that incorporate data from waves 4 and 5. Readers should consider the data in this update in conjunction with the findings from the Wave 3 Report for a full contextual overview.

Data were collected in face-to-face interviews in waves 1, 3 and 5 and by telephone in waves 2 and 4. Telephone interviews necessitated shorter questionnaires and some questions asked of all respondents in waves 1, 3 and 5 were restricted to principal respondents¹ in waves 2 and 4. There is some evidence that patterns of response varied with interview mode and some caution is recommended when comparing data in waves with different interview modes.

The wave 5 questionnaire included a number of new questions to provide greater clarity around decisions about work and education. There was also a new module asking about childcare use and gender attitudes. Findings from these additional questions are included in this update.

Numbering of the tables and figures in this update reflects the equivalent table or figure number in the Wave 3 Report. Comments on tables and figures are only included to draw attention to changes of note. In a few cases, new figures or tables have been added showing detail previously presented in the text. In these cases, relevant page numbers in the Wave 3 Report are provided for reference.

About Building a New Life in Australia – Survey sample

The attrition between waves 1 and 2 was greater than anticipated but has stabilised since the first two waves (Table 2.2). Methodological issues, such as alternating face-to-face with telephone interviews, introduced some mode effect inconsistencies across waves (that is, some respondents might answer a question asked face-to-face differently than they might answer that question over the phone). It is possible that a change in the mode of interview impacted wave 2 response patterns and contributed to the high attrition between the first two waves.

However, while the wave 4 interviews were also conducted by telephone, the total number of respondents actually increased from wave 3. The number of respondents in wave 5 was lower than in both wave 3 and wave 4, but only marginally. In this update, results for all five waves are included where the questions were asked of the same group of respondents. However, readers should note that anomalous patterns across waves may be in part due to a change in the mode of interview.

Of the 2,399 original respondents, 1,881 respondents participated in wave 5, and 1,447 responded in all five waves. A group who responds in all waves of interest is called a balanced panel. The five wave balanced panel was 53.2 per cent male and 46.8 per cent female compared to 54.5 per cent male and 45.5 per cent female in wave 1. It is important to note that the results in this update may vary from those in the Wave 3 Report as the balanced panel for the first three waves (n=1,704) is different from the balanced panel for the first five waves. The balanced panel for five waves is used in this update where a 'balanced panel' is referred to.

¹ Refer to the Wave 3 Report (page 11) for explanation of this term.

Table 2.2 Numbers in the BNLA sample by wave.

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5
Principal respondent	1 509	1 284	1 181	1 244	1 229
Secondary respondent – Adult	755	632	642	685	652
Secondary respondent – Adolescent	135	93	71	N/A	N/A
Total number of respondents	2 399	2 009	1 894	1 929	1 881
Wave 3 Child module — child respondents	N/A	N/A	427	N/A	N/A
Enumerated person	1 808	1 553	2 141	2 898	3 069
Non-responding/ non-enumerated person	N/A	645	856	851	1 113
Balanced Panel	2 399	2 009	1 704	1 549	1 447

Notes: Adolescent secondary respondents were aged between 15 and 17. By wave 4, these adolescents were 18 or older and were counted as adult secondary respondents. Children responding to the child module in wave 3 were aged between 11 and 17 years.

Language background and English skills and acquisition

Figure 5.3: Self-reported level of understanding of spoken English across six time points (n=1 391), per cent.

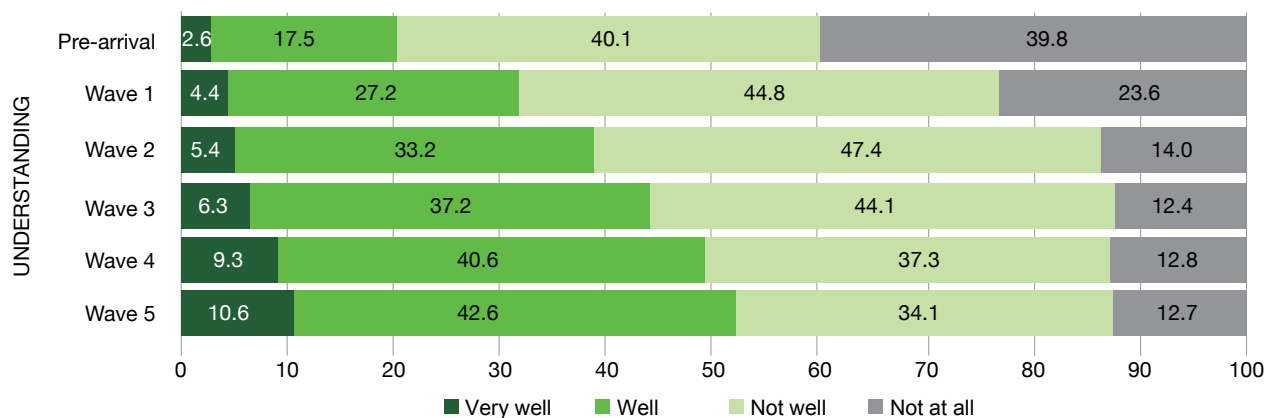
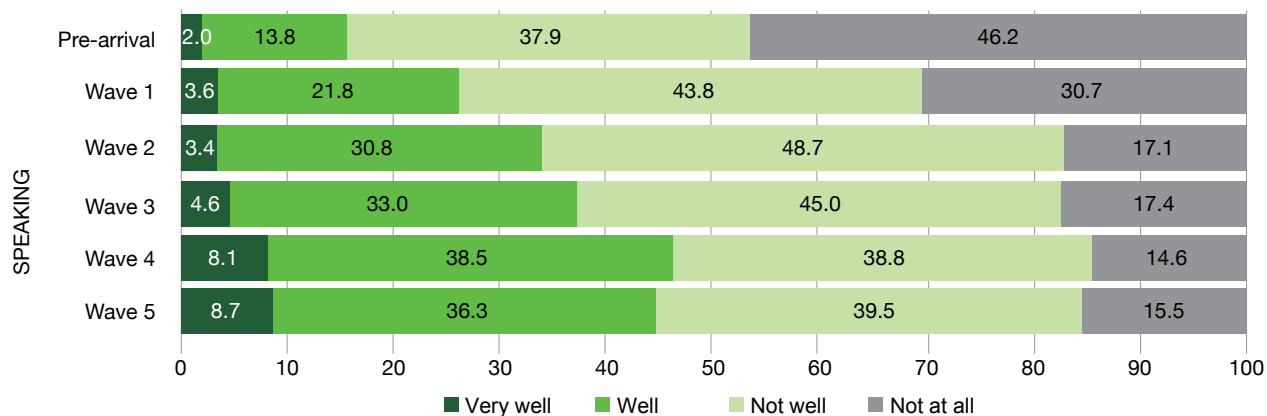
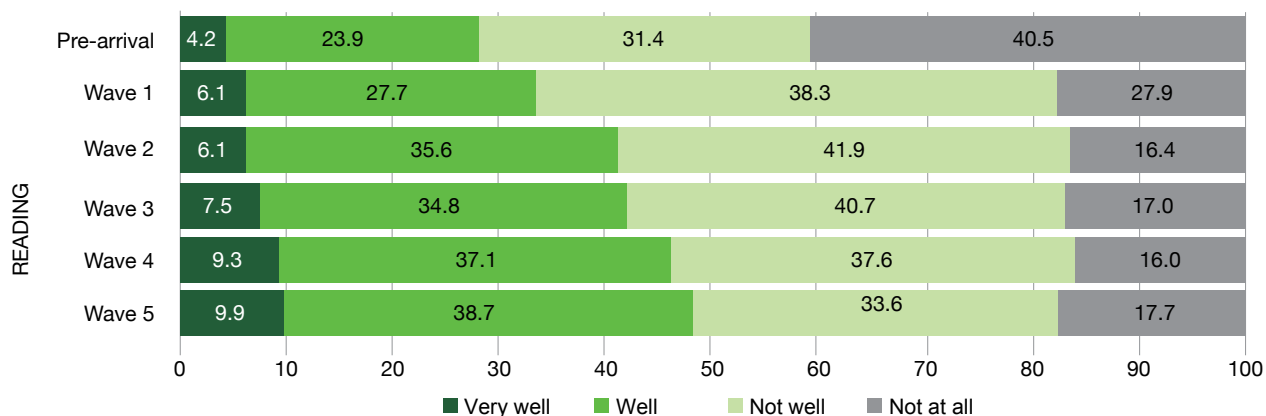


Figure 5.4: Self-reported level of English speaking ability across six time points (n=1 373), per cent.



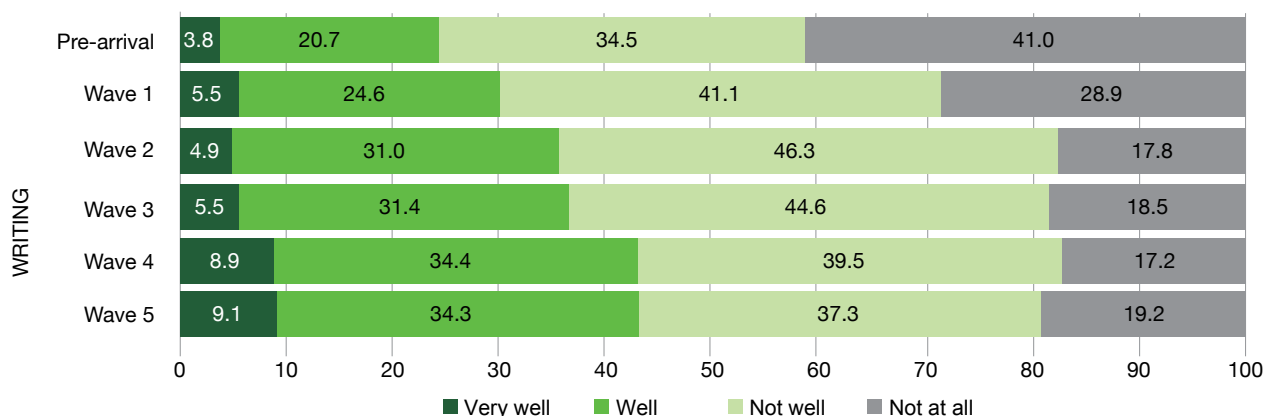
Note: Columns may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Figure 5.5: Self-reported level of English reading ability across six time points (n=1 392), per cent.



Note: Columns may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Figure 5.6: Self-reported level of English writing ability across six time points (n=1 389), per cent.



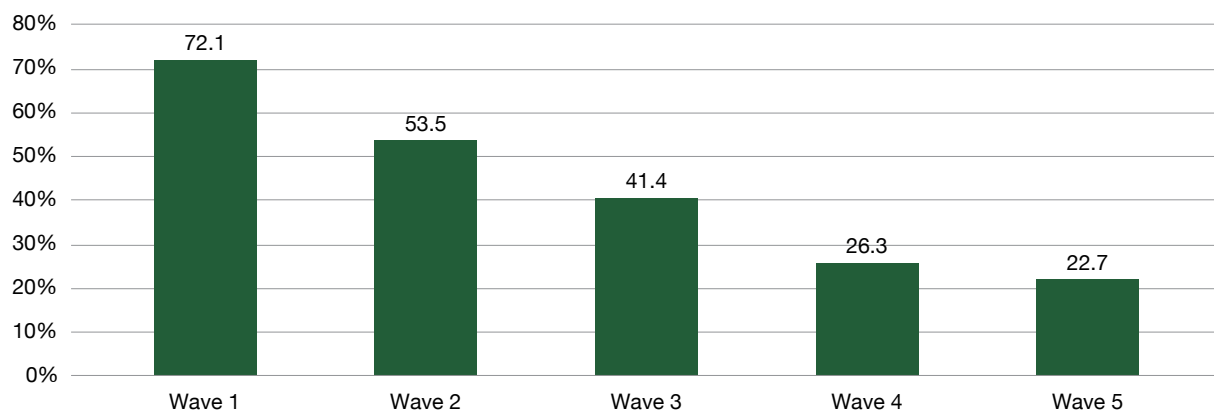
Note: Columns may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Figures 5.3–5.6 show proportions for the balanced panel and only include responses for those who provided a specific response for all six time points for each question.

Figure 5.3 shows a continued increase between waves in the proportion of respondents who report understanding English “well” or “very well”. However, across all language domains (Figures 5.3–5.6), the addition of the wave 5 data continues the trend of little or no improvement for those with lower-level English skills. This pattern suggests that the first two years in Australia are crucial for language skills development. However, it should be borne in mind that this measure of English language skills is subjective and not comprehensive.

Language proficiency in BNLA is self-reported. It should be noted that self-ratings are not a measure of actual language performance but rather a reflection of how a learner feels about their language proficiency at the time of being asked – and this perception may change over time. Examples exist of respondents reporting lower levels of skills in subsequent waves, which may reflect how they see themselves compared to those around them.

Figure 5.12 (new): Proportion of respondents studying English at the time of interview, all waves, balanced panel (n=1 447), per cent.



Note: Respondents who did not provide a specific “yes” response are counted among those not studying.

Figure 5.12 shows a decrease in the proportion of respondents studying English at the time of each interview. However, this proportion does not include respondents who have studied English and stopped prior to interview, or those who had no need to study because their English was “already good”. It should also be noted that a small number of respondents who did not provide a specific “yes” or “no” answer are counted among those who are not studying.

This decrease in the proportion studying English is not surprising as, over time, respondents use up their allocation of free English tuition, reach Functional English proficiency or leave to concentrate on other aspects of their lives. Table 5.5 shows that in waves 1, 2 and 3, work and family were the most common reasons for stopping English lessons (respondents could select multiple responses). However, in wave 4 the most common reason was completion of the course, followed by work or other unspecified reasons. In wave 5, work had once again become the most prevalent reason closely followed by completion of the course. New response options were also included in wave 5 asking about health and language proficiency as the reasons for stopping English lessons. Health was the fourth most common reason for stopping the lessons, with greater numbers selecting it as a reason than selected that their English had improved.

Table 5.5: Reasons for stopping English language lessons, all waves, per cent.

Reason stopped lessons	Wave 1 (n=110)	Wave 2 (n=598)	Wave 3 (n=666)	Wave 4 (n=739)	Wave 5 (n=612)
Work	30.9	31.9	29.9	27.5	30.4
Family	23.6	24.6	29.0	23.7	23.2
Completed the course	21.8	23.4	19.7	30.9	29.1
Class wasn't helpful	16.4	not asked	not asked	not asked	not asked
English improved	10.9	15.1	10.1	14.5	12.3
Transport difficulties	9.1	not asked	4.2	3.4	1.3
Experienced discrimination	2.7	0.2	not asked	not asked	not asked
Cost	0.9	not asked	not asked	not asked	1.6
Health	not asked	not asked	not asked	not asked	16.3
Difficulties with reading and writing	not asked	not asked	not asked	not asked	4.4
Other	not asked	27.6	22.5	27.5	7.8

Note: Respondents could select multiple responses.

In wave 5, additional questions elicited more information on the family-related reasons why respondents had stopped studying English. The most common family-related reason (cited overwhelmingly by women) was caring for their own children. When further asked which childcare-related reasons led to the decision to stop English lessons, the two most common responses (each 41.2 per cent) were that the children were too old or too young for childcare, and that the respondent preferred to look after the children themselves.

Those who had not studied English in the previous year's interview, were asked why they had not studied. Table 5.9 shows the responses to this question. Men were more likely not to be studying English for work reasons whereas women were more likely not to be studying English for family reasons.

Table 5.9 (new): Reasons for not studying English, wave 5 (n=780), per cent.

Reason did not study English	Per cent
Work reasons	31.0
Family reasons	29.5
Health reasons	23.8
English improved	15.1
Old age	11.3
Difficulties with reading and writing	8.1
Never been to school	2.6
Transport difficulties	2.1
Costs too much	1.4
Not interested in learning English	0.9
Never considered it	0.5
Other	3.3

Note: The 780 respondents include four who selected "prefer not to say" and ten who selected "does not apply".

Education

In wave 1, there were 386 respondents who had gained a university, technical or trade qualification prior to their arrival in Australia. Table 6.7 shows the skills recognition status of these respondents by the time of the wave 5 interview. More than half of the 386 respondents (197 respondents) had not applied for recognition of their qualifications as at the most recent wave of data available for them. However, those who did apply were most likely to do so in the period shortly after arrival – out of 174 who did apply, 134 had applied by the time of the wave 1 interview (Table 6.3). Additionally, the majority who received full recognition were also most likely to receive it shortly after arrival.

Table 6.7 (new): Overseas education and skills recognition status in wave 5, number and per cent.

Recognition of qualifications	Number	Per cent
Applied for recognition – Qualifications fully recognised	37	9.6
Applied for recognition – Qualifications partially recognised	29	7.5
Applied for recognition – Qualifications not recognised	45	11.7
Applied for recognition – Outcome unknown	63	16.3
Did not apply for recognition as at wave 5	90	23.3
Did not apply for recognition as at wave 1; further status unknown	107	27.7
Application status not specified	15	3.9
Total	386	100.0

Table 6.3: Educational qualifications recognised in Australia, number.

Recognition status	Wave 1 (n=134)	Wave 3* (n=66)	Wave 4 (n=28)	Wave 5 (n=10)
Yes, fully recognised	20	10	6	1
Yes, partially recognised	10	12	4	3
Not yet, currently being assessed	55	11	7	4
No, assessed but not recognised	25	15	3	2
Not specified	24	18	8	0

Note: Some respondents may be counted more than once, for example if they are waiting for determination in one wave and have received it in another.

*This question was not asked in wave 2.

In addition to learning English, respondents were also undertaking other studies (Table 6.4). From wave 3, women were more likely than men to be studying at the time of interview. However, there were no other consistently significant differences in educational participation between genders.

Table 6.4: Respondents studying (other than English) by gender, balanced panel, per cent.

Whether studying at time of interview	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5
Men (n=692)					
Studying at time of interview	7.7	13.0	11.7	10.7	8.4
Stopped study/job training without completing since previous interview*	1.0	3.2	6.1	4.0	4.9
Completed study/job training since previous interview*	1.7	7.4	10.3	10.5	12.4
Not currently studying and not studied since previous interview*	89.6	76.4	72.0	74.7	74.3
Women (n=580)					
Studying at time of interview	6.4	13.8	17.1	15.2	16.0
Stopped study/job training without completing since previous interview*	0.5	2.1	4.7	3.8	4.7
Completed study/job training since previous interview*	1.7	3.8	6.4	11.0	9.1
Not currently studying and not studied since previous interview*	91.4	80.3	71.9	70.0	70.2

Note: Restricted to respondents who provided a specific response in all five waves.

*In wave 1, these questions refer to the time since arrival in Australia.

Table 6.6: Types of study or training undertaken by respondents, all waves, number.

Type of study	Wave 1 (n=354)	Wave 2 (n=499)	Wave 3 (n=567)	Wave 4 (n=579)	Wave 5 (n=531)
Secondary school	67	58	82	70	48
Work experience	60	48	61	19	61
Short course	56	149	128	124	94
Trade or technical qualification	41	204	178	279	222
University degree	33	28	49	59	79
Paid traineeship	24	not asked	not asked	not asked	not asked
Other	not asked	32	65	30	57
Not specified	90	10	37	29	23

Note: Some respondents undertook more than one type of study or training.

Table 6.6 shows the number of respondents undertaking specific types of study or training. Trade and technical qualifications continue to be the most popular type of course undertaken in the period since the previous interview. However, the number of those undertaking a trade or technical qualification in wave 2 was disproportionately high, while the number undertaking work experience in wave 4 was disproportionately low. This may be a function of the mode of interview. The steady increase in the number of respondents undertaking a tertiary qualification may be indicative of those finishing secondary school and seeking further education.

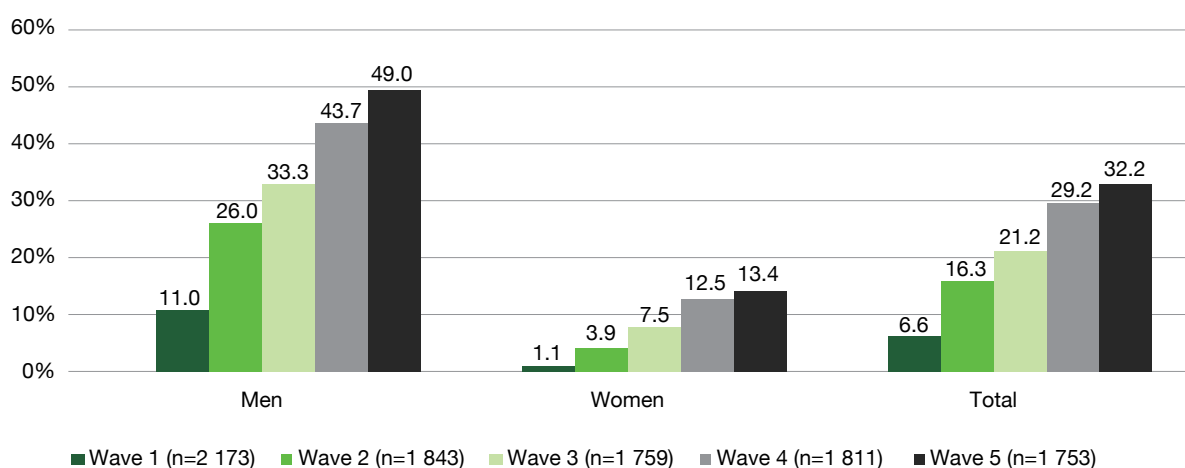
Employment

Of the respondents who were working in wave 5, and had participated in all five waves (n=411):

- 22.1 per cent were working for the first time in wave 5;
- 28.7 per cent had worked in one previous wave; 22.9 per cent had worked in two waves;
- 19.2 per cent had worked in three waves and;
- the remaining 7.1 per cent had worked in all four previous waves.²

Figure 7.1 shows proportions of men and women in paid employment in waves 1–5 of the study. It should be noted that people who are not in paid employment are not necessarily unemployed: they could be not looking for work due to studies, retirement, caring responsibilities or other reasons.

Figure 7.1: Paid employment by gender and wave, per cent.

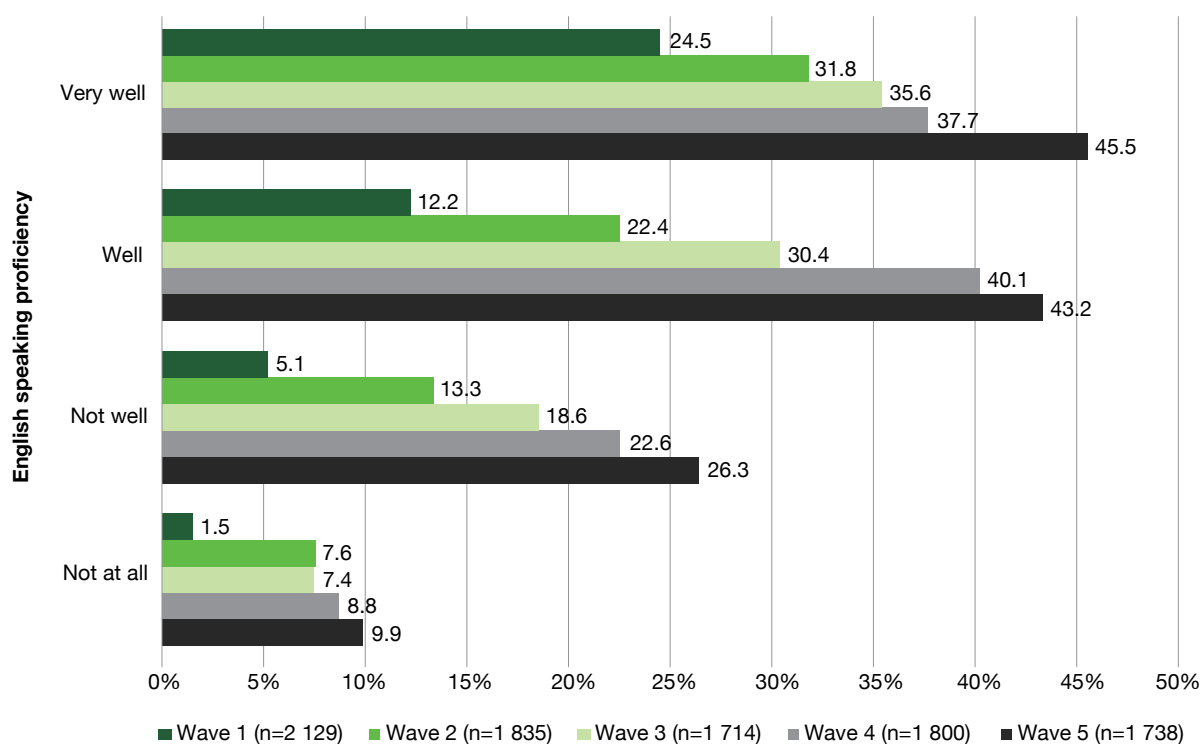


Note: Includes all respondents 18 to 64 years of age. Includes respondents who gave a non-specific response. Columns may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding.

² This is based on the question about employment at the time of interview, and will therefore exclude those who have worked in the period between interviews but not at the time of interview.

Wave 5 data shows a continuation of the trend associating better English speaking ability with employment (Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3: Paid employment by English speaking ability by wave, per cent.



Note: Includes all respondents 18 to 64 years of age. Non-specific responses are excluded.

Table 7.1: Type of employment, principal respondents, all waves, per cent.

Employment type	Wave 1 (n=135)	Wave 2 (n=260)	Wave 3 (n=307)	Wave 4 (n=397)	Wave 5 (n=423)
Casual basis	63.7	56.5	44.3	41.8	39.2
Permanent ongoing basis	17.0	22.7	25.1	27.2	33.1
Self-employed	5.9	5.0	10.7	18.6	11.8
Fixed-term contract	5.2	12.7	15.0	10.8	11.1
Other	5.2	2.3	3.3	1.3	3.8
Non-specific response	3.0	0.8	1.6	0.3	0.9

Note: Restricted to principal respondents between 18 and 64 years of age and in paid employment at the time of interview. Differences from what has been reported previously are due to corrections to ages in the data.

Waves 4 and 5 data shows a continuing decrease in the proportion of principal respondents³ working on a casual basis and a commensurate increase in the proportion in permanent ongoing employment (Table 7.1). There is some possibility of mode effect⁴ in wave 4, with a large jump in the proportion of those who are self-employed.

³ Data on employment type of secondary respondents were not collected in waves 2 and 4. However, at any wave secondary respondents constituted less than 25 per cent of those in employment.

⁴ In survey terminology, 'mode effect' refers to a phenomenon where respondents answer a question differently depending on the mode of data collection (e.g., face-to-face versus over the phone).

Table 7.2: Hours worked per week, all waves, per cent.

Hours worked	Wave 1 (n=123)	Wave 2 (n=292)	Wave 3 (n=336)	Wave 4 (n=508)	Wave 5 (n=540)
15 hours or less	17.9	13.7	17.3	14.2	15.0
16 to 34 hours	23.6	26.0	22.6	25.4	24.1
35 to 40 hours	40.7	45.9	47.0	47.0	44.8
41 hours or more	17.9	14.4	13.1	13.4	16.1

Note: Includes all respondents 18 to 64 years of age. Non-specific responses are excluded. Columns may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding.

The reported number of hours worked is not significantly different across the waves (Table 7.2). However, as shown in Table 7.16 below, respondents who have been employed for longer are likely to be working more hours than those who have been employed in fewer waves.

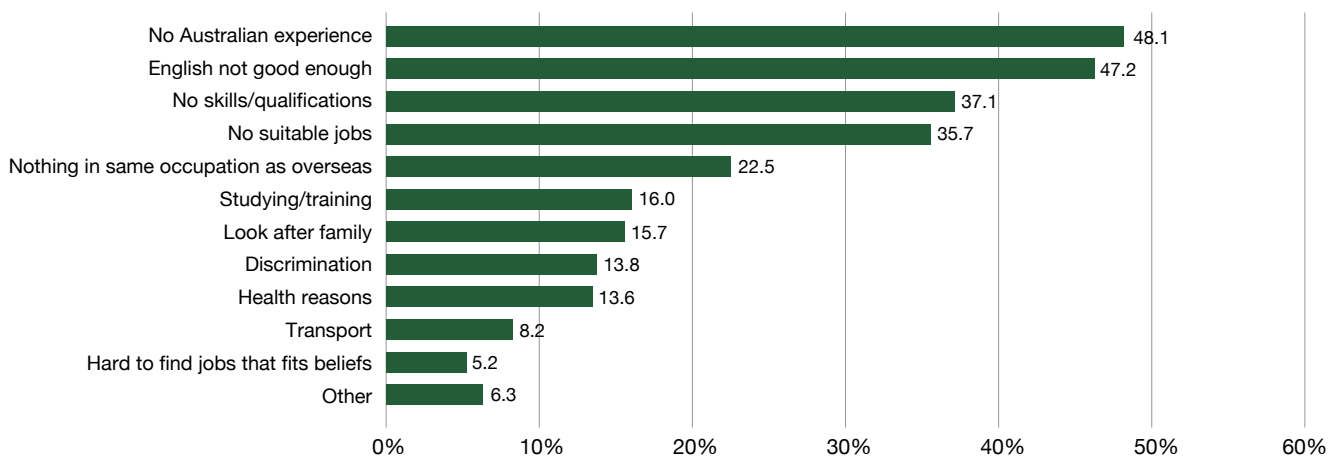
Table 7.16 (new): Hours worked per week in wave 5, by number of waves in employment, per cent.

Hours worked	One wave (n=85)	Two waves (n=113)	Three waves (n=90)	Four or five waves (n=107)
15 hours or less	28.2	16.8	12.2	6.5
16 to 34 hours	30.6	30.1	26.7	10.3
35 to 40 hours	29.4	44.2	46.7	63.3
41 hours or more	11.8	8.8	14.4	29.9

Note: The number of waves in employment is defined as the number of times respondents were employed at the time of interview. Restricted to respondents who participated in all five waves and who were 18 to 64 years of age in wave 5. There was a total of 78 employed wave 5 respondents who were employed at four interviews, and 29 respondents who were employed at all five interviews.

Respondents who had looked for work in the 12 months before the interview, including those who were working at the time of interview, were asked whether they had found it hard to get a job: in wave 5, 80.4 per cent said “yes”. Of the 426 respondents who said they had found it hard to find employment, the most common reasons were that they had no Australian work experience and that their English was not good enough, followed by not having the skills or qualifications and not being able to find suitable jobs. The majority of respondents listed more than one reason for finding it difficult to get a job.

Figure 7.9 (new, Table 7.5 equivalent): Reasons respondents found it difficult to get a job, wave 5 (n=426).



Note: Five respondents who did not specify a reason were not excluded when calculating percentages.

Tables 7.14 and 7.15 show the types of work undertaken by the BNLA respondents. In all waves, respondents most commonly worked as labourers and technicians or tradespersons although this varied by gender. Figures 7.5–7.7 shows that those who were employed as tradespersons or technicians prior to arrival were the most likely to be in similar types of jobs in Australia.

Table 7.14: Types of work done by respondents in Australia, by wave, per cent.

Work type	Wave 1 (n=130)	Wave 2 (n=285)	Wave 3 (n=373)	Wave 4 (n=519)	Wave 5 (n=514)
Managers	4.6	3.9	0.0	2.7	1.0
Professionals	3.8	3.9	4.6	3.7	3.5
Technicians/tradespersons	30.0	31.9	23.9	31.8	34.0
Community/personal services	10.0	10.2	10.5	14.6	14.0
Clerical/administrative	0.8	1.1	0.5	1.7	1.8
Sales	0.8	4.9	3.5	3.3	4.7
Machinery operators	10.0	8.4	7.0	7.5	10.5
Labourers	33.1	35.8	37.8	34.1	30.5
Unassigned	6.9	0.0	12.3	0.6	0.0

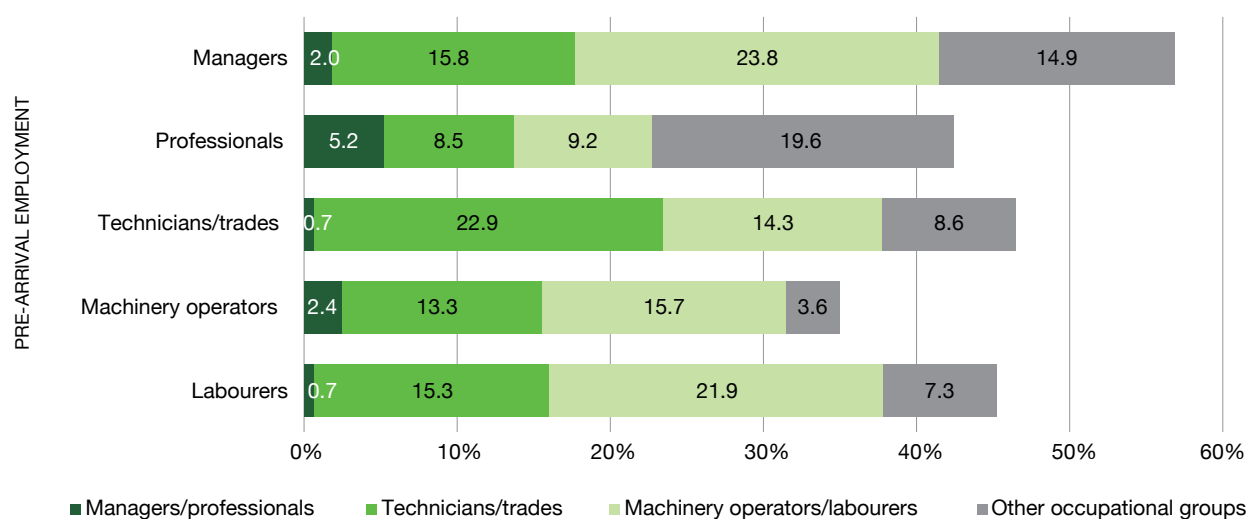
Note: Includes respondents 18 to 64 years of age. Non-specific responses are excluded.

Table 7.15 (equivalent): Types of work done by respondents in Australia by gender, wave 5, per cent.

Work type	Male (n=415)	Female (n=99)
Managers	1.0	1.0
Professionals	2.4	8.1
Technicians/tradespersons	39.8	10.1
Community/personal services	8.4	37.4
Clerical/administrative	1.2	4.0
Sales	4.1	7.1
Machinery operators	12.5	2.0
Labourers	30.6	30.3
Unassigned	0.0	0.0

Note: Includes respondents 18 to 64 years of age. Non-specific responses are excluded.

Figure 7.5–7.7 (equivalent): Paid employment by pre-arrival occupation and occupation in Australia, wave 5, per cent.



Note: Total n=753 (employed n=343). Restricted to respondents 18 to 64 years of age.

Proportions of respondents in employment only show one aspect of economic participation of humanitarian migrants. Many respondents who were not in employment at the time of interview were either looking for work or participating in society in other ways, such as studying, volunteering or care-giving. BNLA does not collect the full range of information that would enable derivation of unemployment statistics comparable to those produced by the ABS. However, additional questions in waves 3 and 5 provide an indication of whether respondents who were not in paid employment at the time of interview were or were not looking for work. Table 7.7 categorises working age respondents into three categories: those who worked in the last seven days; those who had looked for work in the last four weeks and; those who had neither worked nor looked for work. This last category then specifies (in italics) whether the respondents wanted a job, did not want a job, or were unsure about wanting a job.

Table 7.7: Employment and job search status, by gender, wave 5, per cent.

Working status	Men (n=924)	Women (n=829)	Total (n=1 753)
Working (n=564)	49.0	13.4	32.2
Looking for work (n=220)	13.2	11.8	12.5
Neither working or looking for work (n=950)	37.0	73.3	54.2
<i>Wants a job</i>	15.7	29.0	22.0
<i>Doesn't want a job</i>	12.3	29.1	20.2
<i>Unsure if wants a job</i>	7.7	14.2	10.8
<i>Not specified</i>	1.3	1.1	1.2
Not specified (n=19)	0.8	1.4	1.1

Note: Includes all respondents 18 to 64 years of age.

The proportion of those working or looking for work increased from 36.4 per cent in wave 3 to 44.7 per cent in wave 5. For men there was an increase of 9.8 percentage points (from 52.4 per cent in wave 3) and for women, an increase of 6.9 percentage points (from 18.3 per cent).

Between waves 3 and 5, there was a certain degree of movement in respondents' workforce participation. The participation status can be tracked between these two waves for 1,541 respondents: this comprised 533 respondents who were either working or looking for work in wave 3 and, 1,008 respondents who did neither. Of the 1,008 respondents who were neither working nor looking for work in wave 3, 139 were working in wave 5 and 101 had looked for work in the four weeks prior to the wave 5 interview. That is, 23.8 per cent who were not in the workforce in wave 3 were in the work force in wave 5. Conversely, of the 533 respondents who were working or looking for work in wave 3, 115 (21.6 per cent) were no longer working nor looking for work in wave 5, although more than half of them said they still wanted a job.

Respondents who said that they did not want a job were asked the reasons for this (Table 7.8). Health was the most common reason for not wanting a job, accounting for nearly half of those respondents who said they do not want to work. Of the 165 respondents who selected this reason, 119 (72.1 per cent) rated their general health as poor or very poor and/or met the criteria for PTSD. Health was also the top reason for not wanting to work in wave 3 (at 57.1 per cent). However, although the difference in proportions of men and women selecting this reason was significant in wave 3, there was no significant difference in wave 5.

The second most common reason for not wanting a job was looking after the family and/or home. Women were more likely to select this reason than men (48.1 per cent of women compared to 27.4 per cent of men). Respondents who selected this option were asked to provide a more specific explanation; of the 146 who selected this response, 82 were looking after an ill, elderly or disabled person; 71 were caring for their own children; 55 were undertaking home duties and; 20 had other (unspecified) reasons. Women were significantly more likely than men to be caring for children and looking after the house while men were significantly more likely than women to be caring for an ill, elderly or disabled person.

Nearly a quarter of respondents who did not want a job stated poor English skills as a reason. Of the 86 who gave this reason, 30 also responded they could not understand spoken English at all and 41 could not understand very well. While this remained the third most commonly cited reason in wave 5, the proportion stating this reason dropped from 40.9 per cent in wave 3.

Table 7.8: Reasons respondents reported for not wanting a job, wave 5, per cent.

Reason	Men (n=113)	Women (n=239)	Total (n=352)
Health reasons	53.1	43.9	46.9
Look after family/home*	27.4	48.1	41.5
English is not good enough	23.9	24.7	24.4
Don't have skills/qualifications	17.7	15.9	16.5
Don't have Australian experience	17.7	15.5	16.2
Childcare reasons* (asked of respondents with children in the household, n=230)	1.4	17.7	12.6
Retired	15.0	9.6	11.4
Currently studying	9.7	10.5	10.2
Never worked before	0.9	5.4	4.0
Spouse working/looking for work* (asked of respondents with a partner, n=251)	0.0	6.1	4.0
Never considered working	1.8	4.2	3.4
Transport difficulties*	0.0	4.6	3.1
Not interested in working	1.8	2.5	2.3
Spouse does not want me to work (asked of female respondents with a partner, n=163)	not asked	1.8	1.8
Experienced discrimination	1.8	0.4	0.9
Other	5.3	2.5	3.4

Note: Multiple responses allowed. Restricted to respondents 18 to 64 years of age. Three respondents gave non-specific responses to these questions and were excluded. Asterisks indicate reasons for which the proportions of men and women are significantly different ($p < 0.05$).

Respondents who said that they were unsure about whether they wanted a job in wave 5 were also asked the reasons (Table 7.17). Respondents who were unsure about getting a job were most likely to say this was due to looking after the home and/or family, followed by health reasons and poor English skills. Of the 98 respondents who selected looking after family and/or home, 56 (mostly women) selected that they looked after their children; 43 were looking after an ill, disabled or elderly person and; 40 had home duty responsibilities. Of the 70 who selected health reasons, 51 respondents either rated their general health as poor or very poor and/or met the criteria for PTSD.⁵

⁵ The indicator for high risk of meeting the criteria for PTSD was derived based on responses to series of questions about respondents' reactions to hurtful or traumatic past events.

Table 7.17 (new): Reasons respondents are unsure whether they want a job, wave 5, per cent.

Reason	Men (n=71)	Women (n=118)	Total (n=189)
Look after family/home*	40.8	58.5	51.9
Health reasons*	47.9	30.5	37.0
English not good enough	22.5	26.3	24.9
Currently studying*	8.5	20.3	15.9
Don't have Australian work experience	16.9	12.7	14.3
Don't have the skills or qualifications	15.5	11.9	13.2
No suitable jobs	8.4	11.0	10.1
Childcare reasons (asked of respondents with children in the household, n=129)	2.2	9.6	7.0
No jobs in same occupation as overseas*	11.3	3.4	6.3
No jobs with suitable hours*	8.5	1.7	4.2
Never worked before	1.4	5.9	4.2
Retired*	9.9	0.0	3.7
Transport difficulties	4.2	2.5	3.2
Spouse is working/looking for work (asked of respondents with a partner, n=140)	0.0	2.3	1.4
Spouse doesn't want me to work (asked of female respondents with a partner, n=87)	not asked	1.2	1.2
Experienced discrimination	1.4	0.8	1.1
Not interested in working	1.4	0.8	1.1
Never considered working	0.0	1.7	1.1
Other	1.4	2.5	2.1

Note: Multiple responses allowed. Restricted to respondents 18 to 64 years of age.

Asterisks indicate reasons for which the proportions of men and women are significantly different ($p < 0.05$).

Table 7.18 (new): Reasons respondents wanted a job but hadn't looked for one, wave 5, per cent.

Reason	Men (n=135)	Women (n=234)	Total (n=369)
Look after family/home*	28.1	47.0	40.1
English is not good enough	30.4	29.5	29.8
Currently studying*	23.0	33.3	29.5
Childcare reasons* (asked of respondents with children in the household, n=228)	11.1	32.7	25.0
Health reasons*	33.3	20.1	24.9
Don't have Australian experience	20.0	23.5	22.2
Don't have skills/qualifications	18.5	20.1	19.5
No suitable jobs*	14.8	6.8	9.8
Transport difficulties	4.4	7.3	6.2
No jobs in the occupation had overseas	5.9	5.1	5.4
Spouse doesn't want me to work (asked of female respondents with a partner, n=142)	not asked	2.8	2.8
Spouse is working/looking for work* (asked of respondents with a partner, n=232)	0.0	4.2	2.6
Experienced discrimination	0.7	1.7	1.4
Other*	8.1	2.6	4.6

Note: Multiple responses allowed. Restricted to respondents 18 to 64 years of age. Sixteen respondents gave non-specific responses to these questions and were excluded. Asterisks indicate reasons for which the proportions of men and women are significantly different ($p < 0.05$).

The final group of respondents who were asked to provide reasons for not working were those who said they wanted a job but hadn't looked for one (Table 7.18). Looking after family and/or home and childcare reasons were still important (and more likely to be picked by women than by men). However, other significant reasons were inadequate level of English and current studies. Similar proportions of men and women chose low level of English as a reason they hadn't looked for a job, but more women chose current studies as the reason (this is consistent with an earlier finding of women being more likely to be studying at the time of interview).

Overall, it would therefore appear that caring responsibilities and health are the major contributors of non-participation in the workforce. However, some responses suggest reasons other than personal circumstances are responsible for being unsure about getting a job. These include lack of Australian work experience, concern that their English was not good enough, or not having the requisite skills and qualifications.

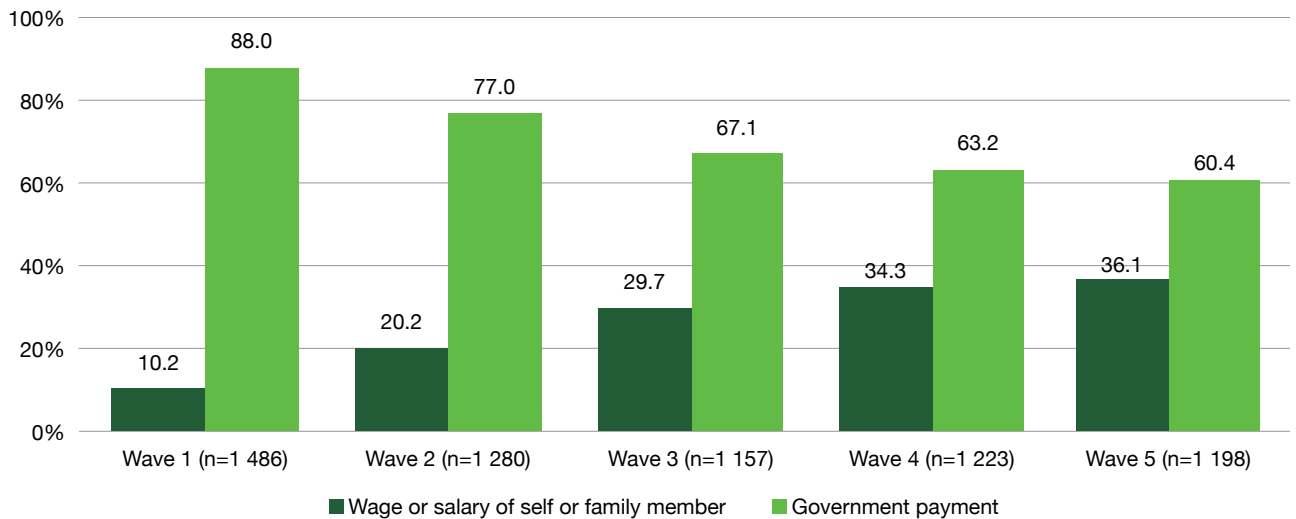
Comparatively low employment rates among the BNLA sample are driven both by respondents having difficulty in finding a job, and by not wanting a job or not looking for one. However, the reasons driving these two non-employment outcomes are quite different. Health and caring reasons are more common reasons for respondents to not want employment in the first place, while difficulties finding employment are due more to lack of skills and experience.

While English skills are listed by nearly a quarter of respondents as a reason for not wanting or being unsure about getting a job, very few reported it as being the only reason, whereas it was more commonly reported as being the only reason by those who found it hard to find a job. Conversely, those who selected health or caring responsibilities as a reason for being unsure or not wanting a job were much more likely to select these as the only reasons as opposed to those who had looked for work and found it hard. The relatively high prevalence of physical and mental health difficulties and the young age of families in BNLA compared to the general Australian population may go some way towards explaining the lower-than-average level of engagement in the workforce among the BNLA sample.

Income and financial stress

While the majority of the sample continues to rely on government payments as their main source of income, this has continued to decrease as more respondents find paid employment.

Figure 8.1: Main source of income for principal respondents, all waves, per cent.



Note: The response option “other” is not shown in the figure. Non-specific responses are excluded.

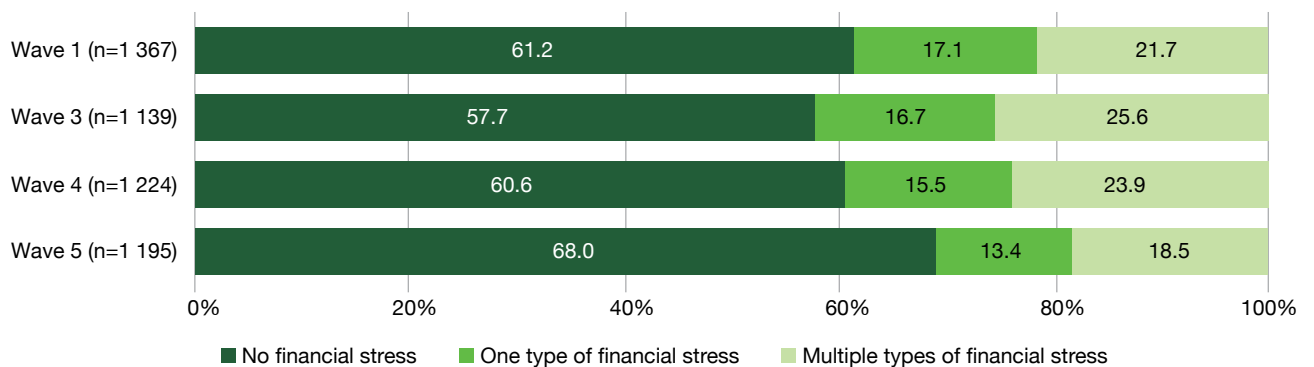
Table 8.3: Financial stress of BNLA principal respondents, waves 1, 3, 4 and 5, per cent.

Financial stress indicator	Wave 1	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5
Were unable to heat (or cool) the home	25.4	22.2	26.8	15.9
Could not pay gas, electricity or telephone bills on time	18.3	27.7	25.4	23.4
Sought assistance from a welfare or community organisation	15.0	19.1	11.2	9.8
Could not pay the mortgage or rent on time	12.1	13.9	12.0	10.5
Went without meals	8.2	7.0	7.5	5.2
Pawned or sold something because needed cash	5.7	7.1	6.3	5.6

Note: Wave 1 n=1,426–1,464; wave 3 n=1,163–1,169; wave 4 n=1,232–1,240; wave 5 n=1,208–1,212. Non-specific responses are excluded.

The proportion of BNLA households experiencing various types of financial stress has decreased across all indicators since wave 4 (Table 8.3).

Figure 8.3: BNLA principal respondents experiencing multiple types of financial stress, waves 1, 3, 4 and 5, per cent.



There is an overall reduction in financial stress experienced by respondents in wave 5; while the proportion of respondents experiencing multiple types of financial stress is still larger than that of the overall Australian population,⁶ it has fallen considerably from previous waves (Figure 8.3).

Housing and neighbourhoods

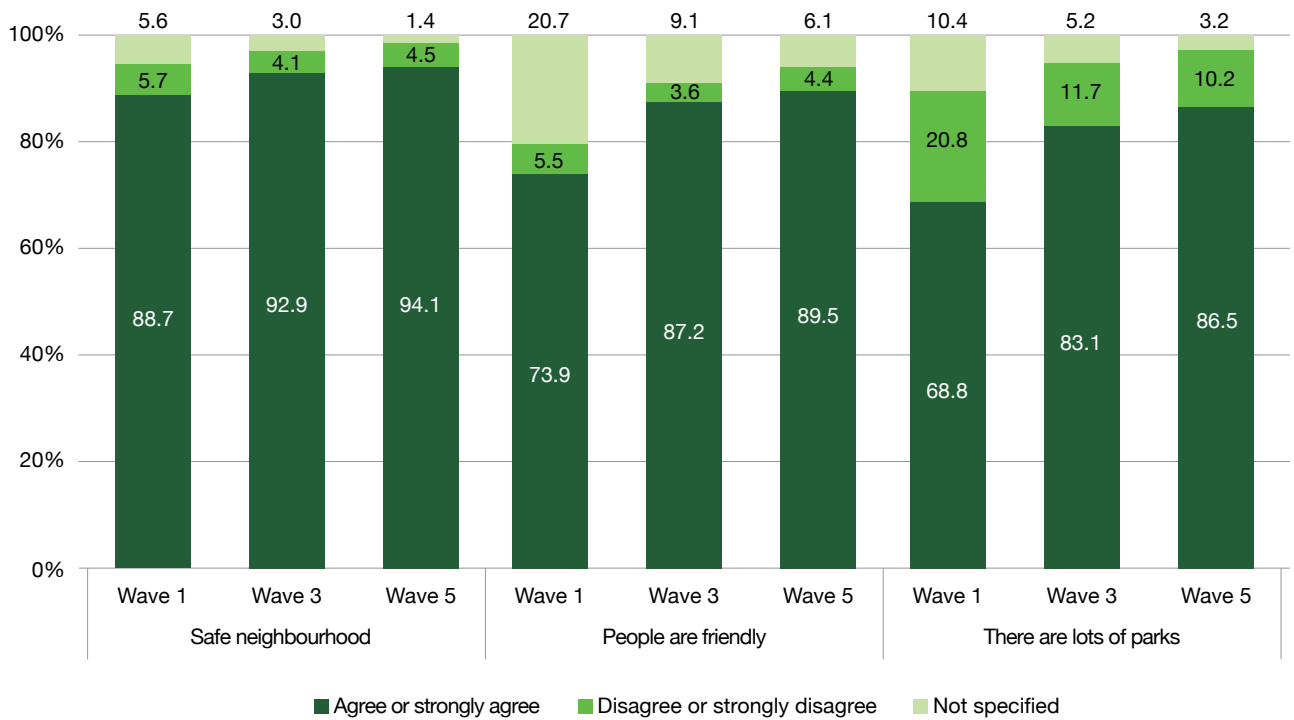
While the majority of BNLA families continue to live in privately rented accommodation, the proportion living in their own house (either with or without a mortgage) has risen considerably (Table 9.2).

Table 9.2: Current housing tenure, by wave, per cent.

Housing tenure	Wave 1 (n=4 147)	Wave 2 (n=3 541)	Wave 3 (n=3 299)	Wave 4 (n=3 444)	Wave 5 (n=3 357)
Private rental	86.4	90.2	88.6	85.1	79.3
Public rental	10.5	4.2	4.2	5.6	5.5
Housing provided by others	1.5	0.9	1.1	0.5	0.4
Mortgage	0.5	1.9	4.4	8.0	12.5
Board	not asked	2.9	1.8	0.8	1.2
Mortgage paid off	not asked	not asked	not asked	not asked	1.2
Other	1.1	not asked	not asked	not asked	not asked

Note: This table uses data provided by the principal respondent and applied to all BNLA participants (responding and enumerated) in the original participant sample.

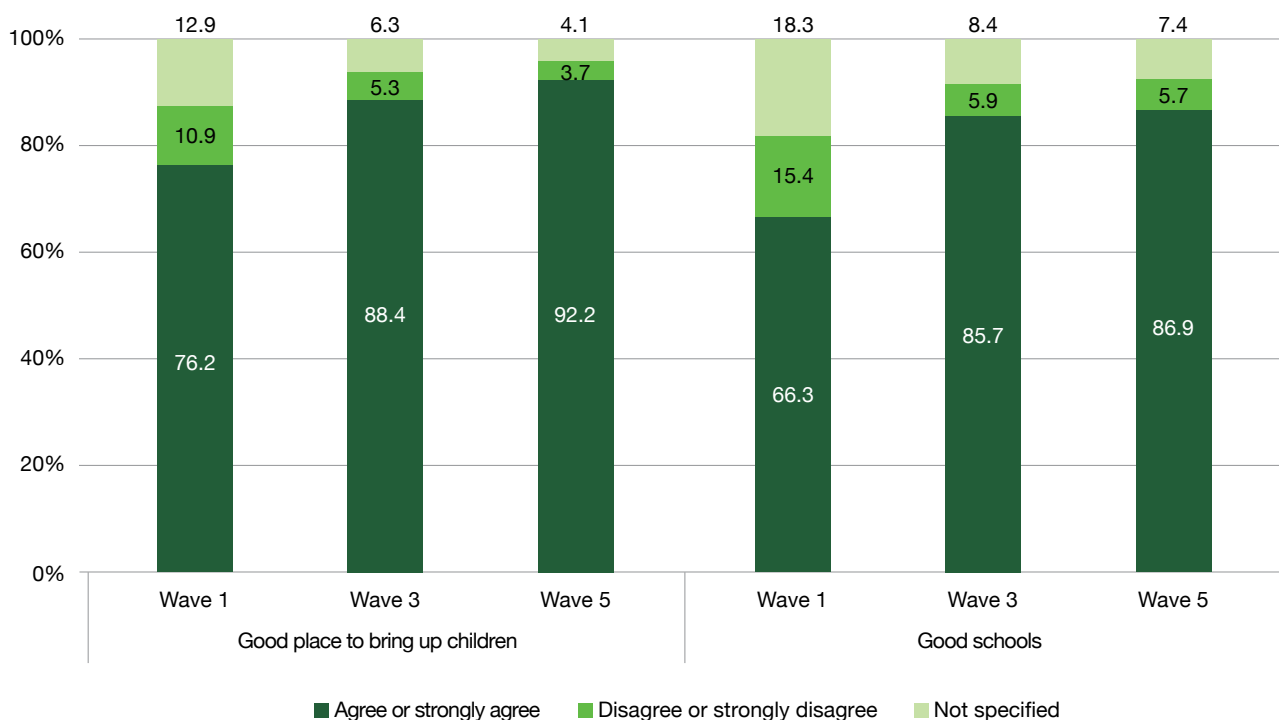
Figure 9.5: General perception of neighbourhood, waves 1, 3 and 5, per cent.



Note: Wave 1 n=2 399; wave 3 n=1 894; wave 5 n=1 881. Columns may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding.

6 See Figure 8.2 (page 64) in the Wave 3 Report for comparison.

Figure 9.6: Perception of neighbourhood for children, waves 1, 3 and 5, per cent.



Note: Restricted to respondents with children in the household. Wave 1 n=973; wave 3 n=940; wave 5 n=1 002.

Health

The self-reported health of the BNLA respondents remained consistent between waves 1 and 5 (Figure 10.1). Across all five waves, men were more likely than women to rate their health as excellent or very good, and less likely than women to rate their health as poor or very poor (Figures 10.3a and 10.3b).

While there is very little overall change in response pattern across waves, there is considerable variation within individuals' responses. Of the 1,447 respondents in the balanced panel, 19.3 per cent rated their health consistently across waves. Only 98 respondents (6.8 per cent) rated their health as excellent or very good in all waves and 553 (38.2 per cent) rated it excellent or very good in no waves. Conversely, 42 respondents (2.9 per cent) rated their health as poor or very poor in all five waves while 848 (58.6 per cent) never rated their health as poor or very poor.

Figure 10.1: Self-reported health rating of BNLA respondents, all waves, balanced panel (n=1 447), per cent.

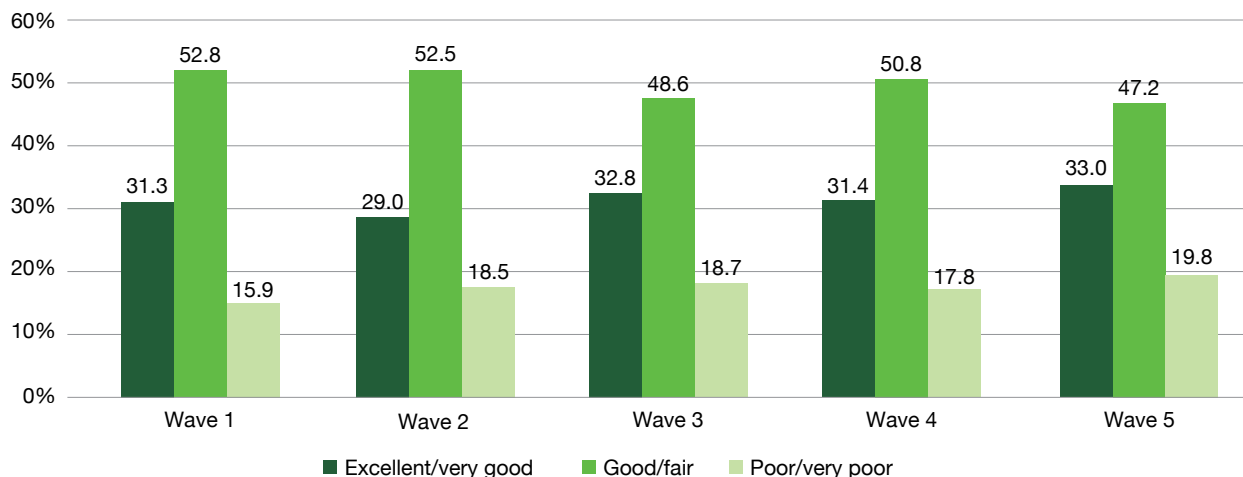


Figure 10.3a (Figure 10.3 equivalent): Self-reported health rating of BNLA male respondents, all waves, balanced panel (n=770), per cent.

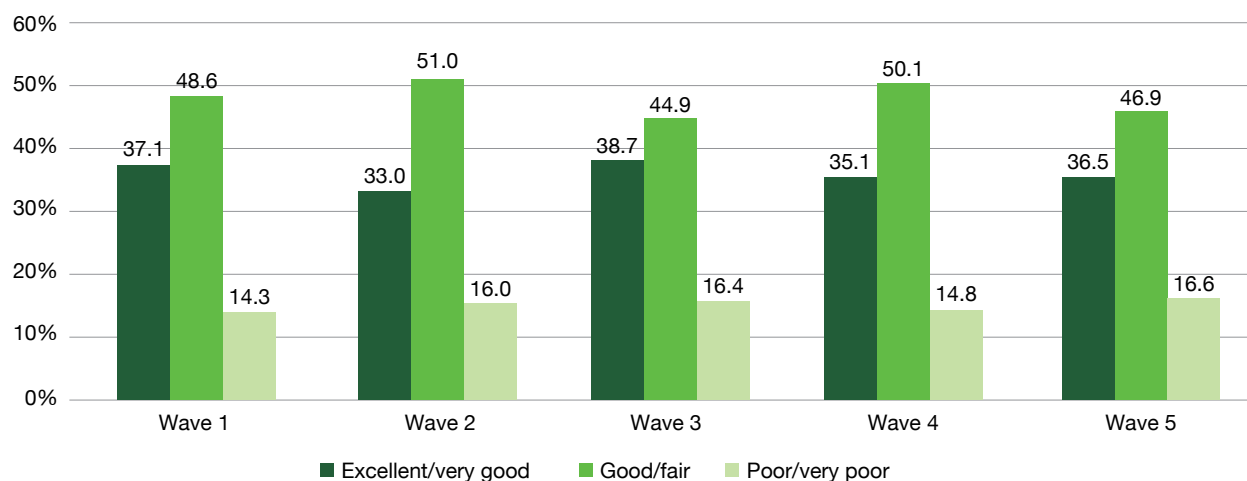
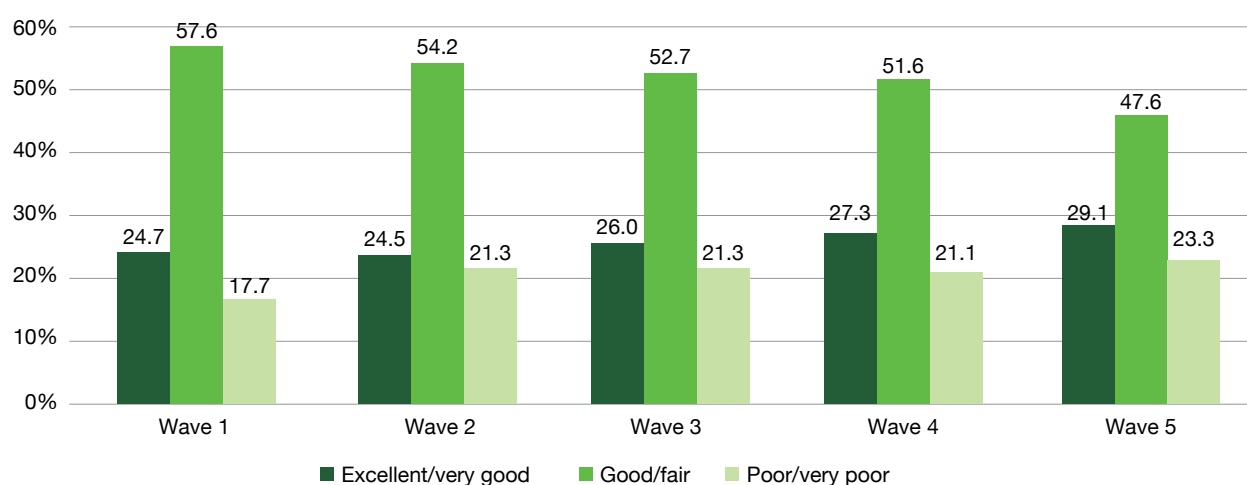


Figure 10.3b (Figure 10.3 equivalent): Self-reported health rating of BNLA female respondents, all waves, balanced panel (n=677), per cent.



Mental health problems among respondents were measured in the study using the Kessler-6 psychological distress scale. Responses for each item in the scale were summed to generate a total score, then categorised into three groups for low, moderate or high risk of psychological distress.

Table 10.2: High risk of serious mental health problems, by gender, all waves, per cent.

Wave	Men (n=715)	Women (n=628)	Total (n=1 343)
Wave 1	14.7	22.0	18.1
Wave 2	13.7	21.0	17.1
Wave 3	16.2	25.2	20.4
Wave 4	11.7	19.4	15.3
Wave 5	16.8	19.7	18.2

Note: Restricted to respondents who provided a valid response in all waves. Based on Kessler 6 (K6) psychological distress scale. K6 score groups provide an indication of whether a severe mental illness is likely to be present; the score should not be interpreted as a diagnosis of (or lack of) a mental illness.



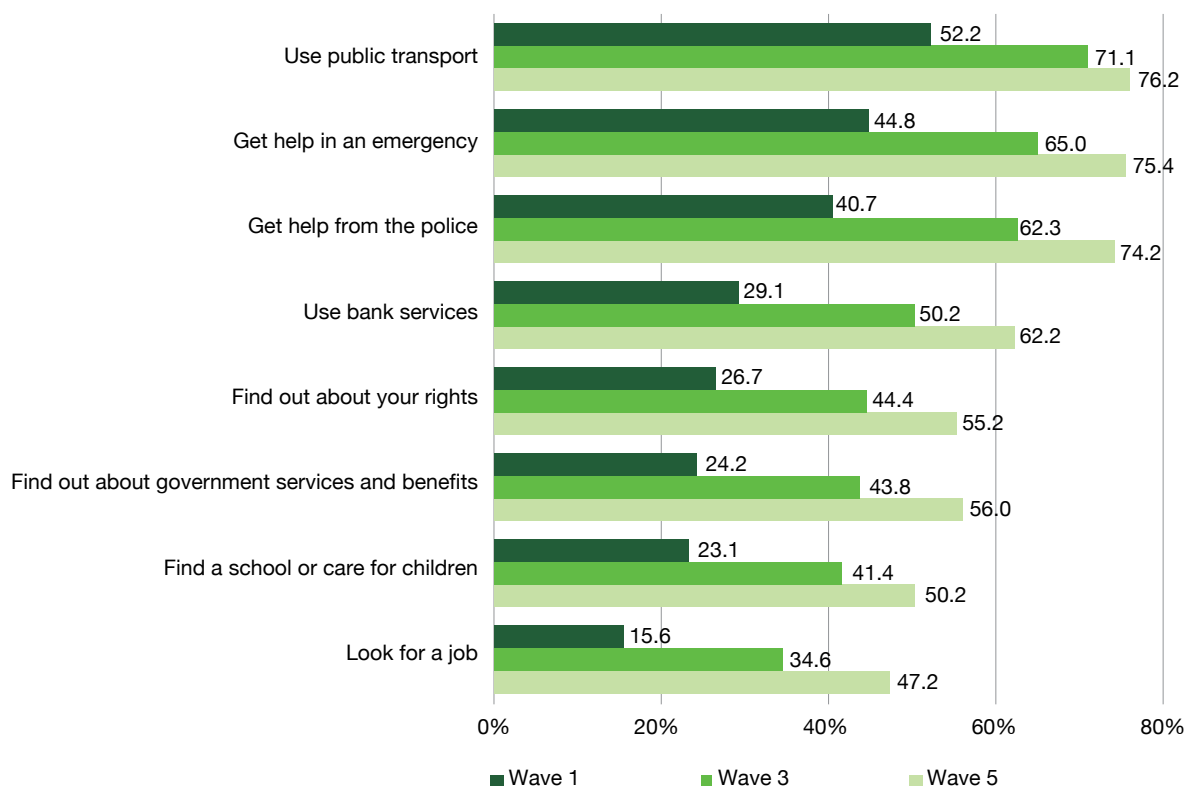
In all waves, women were more likely than men to indicate being at risk of serious mental health problems (Table 10.2). Men were significantly less likely to indicate being at high risk of mental health problems in wave 4 than in any other waves. For women, there was a significant drop in wave 4 that continued in wave 5.

It should be noted that changes in the mode of collection may have affected the pattern of responses collected from participants over the five survey waves on questions relating to psychological distress. One possible explanation is that the differing survey administration methodologies influenced participants' willingness to disclose mental health problems. The telephone interviewing mode used in waves 2 and 4 may have potentially inhibited some respondents from disclosing mental health issues over the telephone compared to waves 1, 3 and 5, which were conducted face-to-face with a trained interviewer or by respondents self-completing the survey themselves. These potential mode effects are important to consider when interpreting the findings presented in this section.

Self-sufficiency

Overall levels of self-sufficiency continued to increase between waves 3 and 5 (Figure 11.1), although the increase was less marked than between waves 1 and 3. Table 11.1 shows that even in wave 5 women express considerably less confidence than men in being able to undertake all of these tasks (except finding a school or care for children).

Figure 11.1: Respondents who felt they could undertake specific tasks well or fairly well, waves 1, 3 and 5, per cent.



Note: Restricted to respondents who provided a specific response to the questions in all three waves. The exact question wording for each listed task starts with "If you had to, would you know how to..."

Table 11.1: Respondents who felt they could undertake specific tasks well or fairly well, by gender, waves 1, 3 and 5, per cent.

Tasks	Wave 1		Wave 3		Wave 5	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Use public transport	59.3	44.5	77.4	64.2	82.7	69.2
Get help in an emergency	51.5	37.5	73.3	56.1	80.3	70.1
Get help from the police	46.3	34.6	69.6	54.3	80.0	68.0
Use bank services	37.3	20.1	59.7	39.9	70.3	53.3
Find out about your rights	31.1	21.8	50.8	37.5	61.8	48.0
Find out about government services and benefits	28.6	19.6	51.4	35.7	62.6	48.9
Find a school or care for children ^a	28.9	17.7	44.2	38.8	51.5	49.1
Look for a job	23.2	7.2	44.5	23.9	58.8	34.5

Note: Restricted to respondents who provided a specific response to the questions in all three waves. The exact question wording for each listed task starts with "If you had to, would you know how to..."

Data from waves 2 and 4 omitted as secondary respondents were not asked these questions in these waves. Men n=818-838; women n=750-770.

^a Question only asked of respondents with children in the household (men n=301, women n=322).

Respondents were also asked whether they had an Australian driver's licence. By wave 5, 78.5 per cent of respondents had their licence and 12.4 per cent did not. The remaining 9.1 per cent indicated in a preceding survey wave that they did not have a driver's licence, but did not answer this question in wave 5. In wave 5, 66.3 per cent of principal respondents drove their own car or vehicle.

Community support and participation

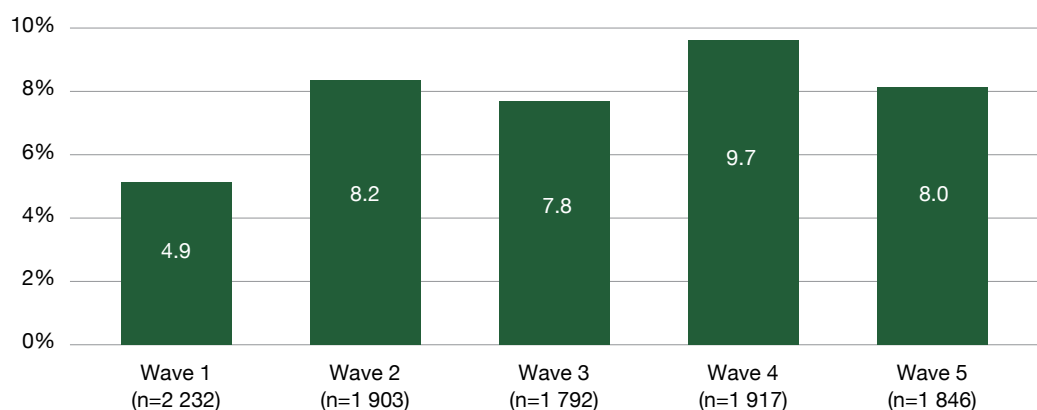
The proportion of principal respondents who found it easy or very easy to interact with the wider Australian community decreased between waves 4 and 5 (Table 12.1), but the difference is statistically significant only for the question about understanding Australian ways and culture.

Table 12.1: Whether principal respondents find it easy or very easy to interact with the Australian community, all waves, per cent.

Community interaction	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5
Understanding Australian ways and culture	44.2	61.2	55.6	69.6	61.3
Making friends in Australia	37.7	45.4	49.3	60.3	56.9
Talking to Australian neighbours	23.8	not asked	44.6	58.6	55.0

Note: As only principal respondents were asked these questions in waves 2 and 4, data in this table is restricted to principal respondents who responded in all waves (n=886). Non-specific responses are included.

Figure 12.7 (new): Proportion experienced discrimination, adult respondents, all waves, per cent.



Note: Restricted to principal and secondary adult respondents.

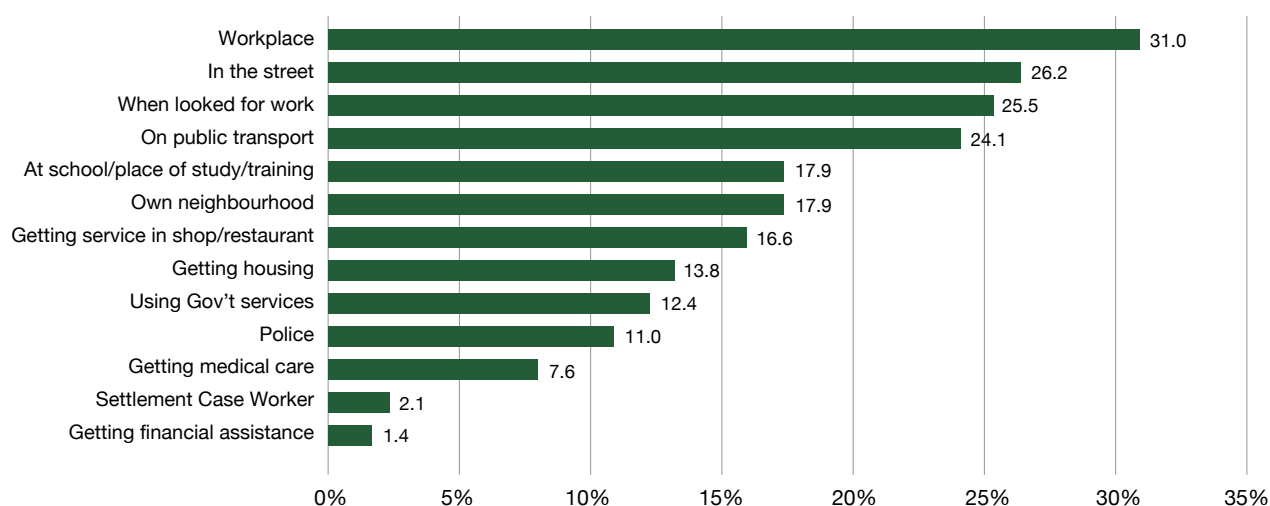
Figure 12.7 this figure displays the proportion of adult respondents reporting having experienced discrimination in each wave. The proportion is below 10 per cent in each wave, and there is no particular pattern across time: 4.9 per cent in wave 1, 8.2 per cent in wave 2, 7.8 per cent in wave 3, 9.7 per cent in wave 4 and 8.0 per cent in wave 5. The number of respondents in each wave varies.

In wave 5, respondents who said that they had experienced discrimination were asked questions about the impact it had on them and their response to discrimination. Of the 148 who had experienced discrimination, 52.7 per cent said they found it extremely or very stressful, and a further 31.1 per cent said it was somewhat stressful.

Those who had reported experiencing discrimination were proportionately more likely than the whole sample to understand English better and to be employed.

Respondents who had reported experiencing discrimination were also asked where this had occurred. As Figure 12.8 shows, people who had reported experiencing discrimination most commonly had it happen at their workplace (31.0 per cent) or when looking for work (25.5 per cent), in the street (26.2 per cent) and/or on public transport (24.1 per cent).

Figure 12.8 (new): Where respondents reported experiencing discrimination, wave 5, per cent.



Note: n = 148. Restricted to adult respondents who indicated they had experienced discrimination in the 12 months before the interview. Multiple responses allowed.

Use of childcare services and gender-role attitudes

Wave 5 included a new module on respondents' use of childcare services and gender-role attitudes.

The childcare services module was administered to primary caregivers of children aged 6 years or under who were not yet in school. In wave 5, there were 209 BNLA households which fell into this category. Only 17.7 per cent of these families used childcare services other than those provided by family members. In 69.9 per cent of families, the only form of childcare was provided by the child's primary caregiver or the primary caregiver's partner. This is significantly different to the general Australian population. For instance, the latest figures from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey⁷ show that in 2017 (which corresponds to the wave 5 BNLA data collection), approximately 53 per cent of coupled parents and 41 per cent of single parents were using paid child care for their children not yet at school (aged 0 to 4 years).

Respondents were also asked about their attitudes towards gender roles. They were asked to rate their agreement to the following four statements on a five-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree":

- *It is better for the family if the husband is the principal breadwinner outside the home and the wife has primary responsibility for the home and children.*
- *If both husband and wife work, they should share equally in the housework and childcare.*
- *Ideally, there should be as many women as men in important positions in government and business.*
- *There should be satisfactory childcare facilities so that women can take jobs outside the home.*

⁷ As reported in Wilkins, R., Butterworth, P., and Vera-Toscano, E. (2019) *The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey: Selected Findings from Waves 1 to 17*. Melbourne Institute: Applied Economic & Social Research, University of Melbourne.

Table 15.1 (new): Gender-role attitudes, per cent.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Husband breadwinner, wife homemaker	16.2	24.8	23.0	29.6	6.4
Husband and wife share housework/childcare	2.5	2.5	8.3	53.3	33.5
Equal men and women in important positions	2.7	3.0	16.5	49.8	28.0
Satisfactory childcare so women can work	2.4	1.9	11.7	53.4	30.6

Note: Non-specific responses are excluded. Depending on the question, the rate of non-response varied between 5.4 per cent and 7.0 per cent. There was no significant difference in non-response between genders.

Findings reported in Table 15.1 reflect a high level of support for equality of men and women in terms of paid employment and running the household. The observed response pattern to the first statement is different to the other three, but is consistent since the first statement represents more ‘traditional’ attitudes to gender roles, while the other statements represent more ‘progressive’ views. For the first statement, the responses are spread more evenly across the options with 41.0 per cent strongly disagreeing or disagreeing and 36.0 per cent strongly agreeing or agreeing. This contrasts with around 80 per cent of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing to the other three questions.

For the first statement, there was no statistically significant difference in response patterns between men and women. For the other three statements, some statistically significant trends were found, with women more likely to agree or strongly agree with these statements.

