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# DESIGN OPTIONS FOR THE *BUILDING A NEW LIFE IN AUSTRALIA LONGITUDINAL SURVEY OF HUMANITARIAN MIGRANTS*

June 2012

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The authors are grateful for comments provided by staff from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship on an earlier version of this paper. Editorial assistance was provided by John Hughes. The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and may not reflect those of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship or the Australian Government.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Australia accepts a substantial number of humanitarian migrants each year, with about 133,000 humanitarian migrants having settled in Australia over the period 2001-02 to 2010-11. The majority of migrants make a successful transition to life in Australia and make significant economic and social contributions to Australia. However, as a group, migrants have a greater level of vulnerability than the non-migrant population and within the migrant population humanitarian migrants are, on average, substantially more vulnerable than other migrants.

There are a range of reasons for the greater vulnerability of humanitarian migrants which include: having being forced to leave their homeland; often having been unable to prepare for migration; often not speaking English; having low levels of education including literacy and numeracy; often having experienced severe trauma; having been unable to bring financial resources with them; and often lacking the family and social networks in Australia that other migrants have (Hugo, 2010, 39).

Having reliable data on the settlement experiences, outcomes and service needs of humanitarian migrants is important for Australia's immigration policies and for ensuring that people who have been forced to leave their homeland and who come to Australia are able to resettle as well as possible. However, there is only limited up-to-date data available on recent humanitarian migrants to Australia and no up-to-date large-scale longitudinal surveys. There is a clear need for a high quality longitudinal survey of refugees and other vulnerable migrants to Australia to help inform public policy development in this area (see for example Hugo, 2010.<sup>1</sup>

While point-in-time (cross-sectional surveys) provide valuable information on the settlement experience and outcomes of migrants, there are many policy, service delivery and research questions which can be answered only through longitudinal data (that is, data from surveys that follow a group of refugees settling in Australia over time). As Hugo (2010, 39) has argued, "there is near unanimity among migration researchers globally that longitudinal approaches to researching migration provide a deeper understanding of the processes of migration and settlement than other methodologies." For example longitudinal data is required in order to properly understand the dynamics of the settlement experience and the duration and persistence of various outcomes such as poverty or depression. Another example where longitudinal data is particularly valuable is in identifying causal relationship by allowing for unobserved differences for people to be taken into account and by allowing the time ordering of events to be analysed.

In order to fill this important data gap, the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) is funding a new longitudinal survey of humanitarian migrants to Australia—the *Building a New Life in Australia Longitudinal Survey of Humanitarian Migrants*. As part of the scoping and development process for the survey, DIAC commissioned the Australian National University to prepare this paper outlining design options for the survey. The paper discusses the key design choices, discusses the strengths and weaknesses of different design options, and outlines a suggested design and architecture for the *Building a New Life in Australia Survey*.

DIAC has also proposed that the data collection for the survey take place over the period 2012 to 2017, and that it will encompass the first five years of settlement in Australia. In developing the proposed design, DIAC indicated an approximate budget within which the proposed design outlined here should be based. While the

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1 A more detailed discussion of the range of potential benefits of having a longitudinal survey of humanitarian migrants are provided by Hugo (2010) and Smith (2010).

proposed survey design has taken account of this budget, it has not been formally costed and the actual cost of implementing a study along the lines of the proposed design will depend upon a number of detailed design decisions that will need to be made.

The optimal design of any survey is determined by the issues it is designed to provide data about. The key policy and research questions identified by DIAC that the survey needs to address are:

- The settlement outcomes of humanitarian migrants and other vulnerable migrants, how they change during the first five-years following settlement, and the factors that influence settlement outcomes;
- The impact of pre-settlement experiences on settlement outcomes, including how they vary between on-shore and offshore humanitarian migrants; and
- The need for, and adequacy and appropriateness of, settlement and other support services available to humanitarian and other vulnerable migrants during their first five years in Australia.

The terms of reference for this paper also indicate that the option of including vulnerable non-humanitarian migrants in the study should be explored, but that the priority for the survey is the experiences of humanitarian migrants. Providing data that can be used to conduct research into the vulnerability of other groups of immigrants, while important, is of secondary importance for the purposes of this survey.

An important longer-term question is whether the settlement outcomes of the current group of refugees differ to those of previous cohorts of refugees who settled in Australia and if so, what the implications of this are. As will be outlined in this paper, Australia is fortunate in having cross-sectional and longitudinal data collected from earlier cohorts of refugees at comparable points in their settlement processes. These earlier data collections can potentially be used as comparison points for the *Building a New Life in Australia Survey*. In order for this to be possible, it will be important to ensure that at least some of the data items used to measure settlement outcomes are comparable to data items used in earlier Australian studies.

The development of the suggested design for the survey has involved a number of steps. The designs of previous longitudinal surveys of migrants to Australia were reviewed, with a focus on their utility for understanding the process of settlement, especially of refugees. Challenges involved in surveying refugees and following them over time are thus discussed, and lessons learnt from other longitudinal surveys conducted in Australia or elsewhere are considered. In addition, consultations were undertaken with academic researchers, those who have had responsibility for designing and running major longitudinal surveys (including surveys of immigrants and surveys of other groups), those involved in providing services to refugees, and officers from DIAC. Finally, earlier versions of this paper were also presented to and discussed at the inaugural meetings of the two groups established to guide the study, the Technical Advisory Group and the Survey Reference Group.

The remainder of this paper is thus structured as follows. Section 2 provides a summary of existing Australian and international longitudinal studies of immigrants and Section 3 provides a brief overview of Australia's immigration program. In Section 4 the suggested design of the survey is described. Section 5 discusses sample size considerations and Section 6 strategies for maximising the initial response rate and minimising sample attrition. The final section concludes.

## 2. EXISTING LONGITUDINAL SURVEYS OF MIGRANTS

This section provides an overview of selected longitudinal surveys of migrants in order to inform the design of the *Building a New Life in Australia Survey*. The overview focuses primarily upon longitudinal surveys of migrants, given that these are most relevant to the design of the *Building a New Life in Australia Survey*.

The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA) is the most relevant study to the discussions here. LSIA collected data on the settlement experiences of three cohorts of immigrants and has provided Australia with high quality longitudinal data on migrants for a number of years. The first LSIA (LSIA1) surveyed migrants entering Australia between September 1993 and August 1995. It involved three waves of interviews over the first three and a half years after arriving in Australia. LSIA2 surveyed migrants entering Australia between September 1999 and August 2000 and involved two waves of interviews over the first 18 months after arrival. The final is LSIA3, which is a survey of migrants entering Australia between December 2004 and March 2005 who were interviewed twice over the first 18 months after arrival.<sup>2</sup>

Both the LSIA1 and LSIA2 included humanitarian migrants, with 831 interviewed at wave 1 of LSIA1 and 558 interviewed at wave 1 of LSIA2. However, the LSIA3 sample was selected only from the Family and Skill immigration streams and thus does not include any humanitarian migrants. The LSIA1 and LSIA2 have been used extensively to analyse the settlement experiences and outcomes of humanitarian migrants (e.g. Cobb-Clark and Khoo, 2006; VandenHeuvel and Wooden, 1999; Richardson, Robertson and Ilsey, 2001; Richardson et al., 2004).

While both LSIA1 and LSIA2 have provided valuable insight into the experiences of humanitarian migrants, they do have—as is the case with all surveys—limitations that arise from their design. First, the sample of humanitarian migrants is relatively small, which limits the extent to which the experiences of different groups can be compared. Second, LSIA1 and LSIA2 are relatively short panels, covering only 3.5 years in the case of LSIA1 and 1.5 years in the case of LSIA2. This means that they can only be used to examine the initial settlement experience and cannot be used to examine settlement outcomes over the medium to longer-term. Third, the sample for LSIA1 and LSIA2 did not include onshore migrants. Fourth, the sampling frame from which the sample was selected had missing contact information for a substantial proportion of the sample, which raises concerns about the representativeness of the sample. Hugo (2011) notes that address details are more likely to be accurate for migrants who use government services, and thus the sample is likely to over-represent this group.<sup>3</sup>

Additionally, DIAC also runs the Continuous Survey of Australia's Migrants (CSAM), a two wave longitudinal survey which involves participants being interviewed twice over a six-month period. CSAM is designed to provide timely information on labour market outcomes for recent immigrants from the Family and Skill Stream (Smith, 2010, p.24).

While there are many smaller longitudinal studies of migrants and indeed of humanitarian migrants, their findings cannot usually be extrapolated with any confidence to the broader experiences of immigrants because of either: small samples sizes; limited country of origin range; or only including immigrants settling in a particular geographic region. Selected examples of such studies are:

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2 An overview of LSIA1 and LSIA2 is provided by Cobb-Clark (2001). Information on LSIA3 has been obtained from various documents on the DIAC website.

3 For example, for LSIA1, of the 10,141 in scope primary applicant arrivals initially selected from the Settlement Database, usable addresses were found for only 4,178 (Hugo, 2011).

- *The AMES Longitudinal Study* (2008–10) followed 245 recently-arrived migrants and refugees enrolled in the Adult Migrant Education Program in Melbourne. Wave 1 was conducted over the period September 2008–March 2009, with wave 2 conducted six months after starting AMEP and wave 3 some 18 months after commencing AMEP.
- *SettleMEN* which followed 233 recently-arrived (2004–2008) men (over 18) from refugee backgrounds living in urban and regional areas of South East Queensland between 2008 and 2010. There was a baseline survey and three follow-up surveys at six month intervals. The survey was conducted by the La Trobe Refugee Research Centre, with the aim to document health and settlement experiences.
- *Good Starts* surveyed recently-arrived youth with refugee backgrounds. The survey followed 120 recently-arrived young people with refugee backgrounds settling in Melbourne between 2004 and 2008. Participants had been in Australia for an average of 5.6 months and were recruited through three Melbourne English Language Schools. Data collection involved participants keeping ‘settlement journals’, as well as activities in classrooms, homes and public libraries, and conversations in person or over the phone. Quantitative data was gathered over three years, and qualitative data over four years. This survey was conducted by the La Trobe Refugee Research Centre.
- *The Longitudinal Study of the Health and Well Being of Refugee Children over their First Two Years of Settlement* is being run by the Sydney Children’s Hospital Department of Community Child Health. It began in December 2010 and will run until December 2012. The survey population is refugee children (aged 0–16 years) arriving in Australia on permanent humanitarian visas and settling within the South Eastern Sydney catchment area and the Illawarra / Shoalhaven local health networks. The first data was collected within six weeks of their arrival, with follow-up collections occurring six-twelve months post-arrival and then at yearly intervals.

Other countries that have undertaken large-scale representative surveys of immigrants include Canada, Germany, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. A summary of selected major longitudinal studies of immigrants (including LSIA) is provided in Table 1. Information included in the table encompasses:

- The time period over which data was collected;
- The length of time between the first and last wave;
- The length of time after settlement at wave 1;
- The method of data collection;
- Whether humanitarian migrants are included in the sample;
- The number of waves;
- The wave 1 response rate;
- The wave 1 sample size;
- The refugee sample size at wave 1; and
- The sample retention rates (i.e., the proportion of the wave 1 sample re-interviewed at each subsequent wave).

There are several observations that can be made about the studies included in Table 1 that are relevant to the design of the *Building a New Life in Australia Survey*.

- For all but one of the longitudinal surveys of immigrants identified, the first wave of data collection is undertaken around six months after arriving in the country;<sup>4</sup>
- The studies have differed in the length of time between interviews (see Table 1), although they have tended towards more frequent interviews;
- The initial response rates for the studies (all of which used administrative data as the sampling frame) varied from 49% to 70%. This is comparable to the initial response rate achieved by the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) which used the Medicare database as its sampling frame.<sup>5</sup> The initial response rate is generally higher for face-to-face than postal surveys; and
- Sample retention rates varied greatly and were lower for mail-out surveys than face-to-face surveys.
- The sample attrition rate (the inverse of the retention rate) does not drop after wave 2. This differs from the experience of most longitudinal studies of other groups and suggests that significant resources should be put into sample retention.

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4 The only survey which conducted the first wave of interviews substantially earlier than the first six months in the country was the Survey of New Refugees: A Longitudinal Study of Refugee Integration in the UK which collected data almost immediately after settlement in the UK. This survey had a good initial response rate (70%) but then a very low retention rate with just 17% of the wave 1 sample reinterviewed at wave 4.

5 In the LSAC survey the final wave 1 sample represented 53% of all families who were sent a letter by Medicare. There was a 10% non-contact rate (address details out of date or if only a post office box address was available). If non-contactable families are excluded the response rate achieved at wave 1 of LSAC is about 60% (Gray and Smart, 2008).

TABLE 1. SELECTED EXAMPLES OF LONGITUDINAL STUDIES OF IMMIGRANTS

										Retention rate		
	Time period	Time between 1 <sup>st</sup> and last wave (months)	Length time after settlement at W1 (months)	Method of data collection	Include d refugees	Number of waves	W1 response rate	W1 sample	Refugee sample size (at wave 1)	W1 - W2	W1- W3	W1- W4
<b>Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia 1</b>	1994-99	36	6	F2F	Yes	3	59%	5,192	831	86%	72%	-
<b>Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia 2</b>	2000-02	12	6	F2F	Yes	2	59%	3,124	558	85%	-	-
<b>Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia 3</b>	2005-06	12	6	W1 - Mail out survey W2 – telephone	No	2	49%	9,865	0	53%*	-	-
<b>Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada</b>	2001-05	42	6	F2F	Yes	3	60%	12,040	2,269	79%	64%	-
<b>Survey of New Refugees: A Longitudinal Study of Refugee Integration in the UK</b>	2005-09	21	1-week	Mail out survey	Yes	4	70%	5,678	5,678	32%	22%	17%
<b>The Longitudinal Immigration Survey: New Zealand</b>	2005-09	30	6	F2F	No	3	66%	7,137	0	85%	72%	-
<b>US New Immigrant Survey</b>	2003-08	60		F2F, some use of phone in W2	Yes	2	69%	8,573	**	46%	-	-

Notes: F2F indicates that the data was collected via an interviewer administered interview in person (face-to-face).

Where the survey involves interviewing more than one person per household, the sample size given in the table is the number of households rather than the number of respondents. For the household based surveys the attrition rate is calculated for the primary respondent.

The *US New Immigrant Survey* also included a sample of immigrants with child-of-U.S.-citizen visas who are under 18 years of age and adopted orphans under five years of age. The child sample was 810 and interviews were conducted with sponsor-parents of the sampled child. The information provided in the table is for the adult sample.

All of the studies used administrative data as the sampling frame.

\* The retention rate of LSIA3 is low due to a deliberate decision only to follow-up half of the family stream cohort.

\*\* Migration pathways to the US are complicated and it is not easy to derive a figure for the number of refugees in the NIS sample. There appear to be 175 respondents who are classified as using the refugee/asylee migration pathway (Hayes and Hill, 2008).

Sources: Information on studies is from a combination of documents on the respective study websites, published articles and in some cases personal communications with those responsible for the study

### 3. OVERVIEW OF AUSTRALIA'S IMMIGRATION PROGRAM

In developing methodological options for a longitudinal survey of refugees, it is important to have a clear understanding of Australia's immigration program. The first part of this section provides a brief overview of the program, with a focus on aspects that are relevant to the designs of the survey.<sup>6</sup> While the primary focus is on humanitarian migrants, the terms of reference for this project indicate that DIAC is also interested in the survey providing data on the vulnerability of other migrants. The second part of this section provides basic statistical information about the numbers of migrants arriving under the different migration programs, and then for humanitarian migrants information is provided on country of birth, their age distribution and geographic distribution across Australia in the initial post-migration period.

In Australia there are two pathways to permanent migration: (1) the Humanitarian Program for refugees and those in humanitarian need; and (2) the Migration Program for family and skilled immigrants. The Humanitarian Program consists of two components. The offshore component is for people not in Australia who seek to migrate to Australia under the Humanitarian Program, while the onshore component is for people who claim asylum once they have arrived in Australia (either by boat or by air).

The Humanitarian Program is for refugees and others in refugee-like situations and has two important functions. The onshore protection/asylum component fulfils Australia's international obligations by offering protection to people already in Australia who are found to be refugees according to the Refugees Convention.<sup>7</sup> The offshore resettlement component expresses Australia's commitment to refugee protection by going beyond these obligations and offering resettlement to people overseas. Within the offshore resettlement component there are five visa subclasses, four of which fall within the Refugee category and one within the Special Humanitarian Program. The Refugee category helps people who are subject to persecution in their home country, who are typically outside their home country, and are in need of resettlement. The visa types under this component are Refugee, In-Country Special Humanitarian, Emergency Rescue, and Woman at Risk. The majority of applicants who are considered under this category are identified and referred by UNHCR to Australia for resettlement.

The Special Humanitarian Program helps people outside their home country who are subject to substantial discrimination amounting to gross violation of human rights in their home country, and the immediate families of persons who have been granted protection in Australia. Applications for entry under the SHP must be supported by a proposer who is an Australian citizen, permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen, or an organisation that is based in Australia.

The Migration Program consists of the Family and the Skill streams. The Family Stream allows the immigration of immediate family members of Australian citizens, permanent residents or eligible New Zealand citizens. The Skilled Stream brings migrants to Australia whom have skills assessed as being needed by the Australian economy. A proportion of the Family Stream immigrants are sponsored to come to Australia by people who have originally come to Australia under the Humanitarian Program. While these groups of migrants are technically not classified as being humanitarian migrants, many of them are likely to have experiences and characteristics not dissimilar to those of humanitarian migrants.

Table 2 provides information on the number of migrants coming to Australia by immigration pathway over the period 2001-02 to 2010-11. In 2010-11, 13,799 visas were granted under the Humanitarian Program, of which 8,971 were granted offshore and 4,828 onshore. Of the offshore visas granted, 5,998 were granted Refugee

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6 The information in the section is sourced from the DIAC website and Commonwealth Parliamentary Library Background Notes.

7 Asylum seekers who are in Australia are granted permanent Protection (class XA) (Subclass 866) visas if they are owed protection under Australian migration law, because they have been found to be refugees and satisfied health, character and security requirements.



visas and 2,973 were Special Humanitarian visas. The number of people coming to Australia under the Family and Skill streams is much larger than under the Humanitarian Program. In 2010-11 there were 113,725 visas granted under the Skill Stream and 54,543 visas were granted under the Family Stream.

TABLE 2. NUMBER OF MIGRANTS TO AUSTRALIA BY IMMIGRATION PATHWAY, 2001-02 TO 2010-11

	Humanitarian Program				Family and Skilled Migration Program		Total immigration
	Refugee	Special Humanitarian	Onshore Protection	Total Humanitarian	Family	Skilled	Total
2001-02	4,160	4,258	3,891	12,349	38,090	53,520	105,429
2002-03	4,376	7,280	869	12,525	40,790	66,050	120,595
2003-04	4,134	7,669	2,020	13,823	42,230	71,240	128,183
2004-05	5,511	6,585	1,082	13,178	41,740	77,880	133,238
2005-06	6,022	6,736	1,386	14,144	45,290	97,340	157,074
2006-07	6,003	5,313	1,701	13,017	50,080	97,920	161,217
2007-08	6,004	5,110	1,900	13,014	49,870	108,540	171,644
2008-09	6,499	4,630	2,378	13,507	56,366	114,777	184,825
2009-10	6,003	3,233	4,534	13,770	60,254	107,868	182,393
2010-11	5,998	2,973	4,828	13,799	54,543	113,725	182,484

Sources: Various DIAC statistical reports and Karlsen, Phillips and Koeth (2011).

Since 2001-02 the number of humanitarian arrivals has remained relatively constant, although there has been some change in the composition, with the numbers coming under the Special Humanitarian group falling and the numbers in the onshore protection group having increased (although this group varies from year-to-year depending upon the number of arrivals). In contrast the numbers coming under the Family and Skilled streams have increased substantially since 2001-02.

Table 3 shows the country of birth by category of visa for humanitarian migrants in 2010-11 for the 20 countries of birth from which the largest number of immigrants originated. Overall, these 20 countries accounted for 88% of humanitarian migrants with the five countries from which the most humanitarian migrants come from accounting for 58% of humanitarian migrants. While there are some differences according to type of humanitarian visa, the overall pattern is similar. For offshore refugees the largest country of birth is Iraq followed by Burma and Bhutan. For the Special Humanitarian group the main countries are Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran, and for the onshore group, the most common country of birth is Afghanistan followed by Iran and Iraq. Although these main countries of birth may differ at the time the sample for the survey is selected, but the broad point that most of the humanitarian migrants are coming from a small number of countries has historically been the case and is likely to remain the case.

TABLE 3. COUNTRY OF BIRTH BY CATEGORY OF VISA, HUMANITARIAN ARRIVALS, 2010-11

	Offshore		Onshore	Total
	Refugee	Special Humanitarian	Permanent Protection (Onshore)	
Iraq	1,159	1,112	459	2,730
Afghanistan	327	589	1,360	2,276
Iran	189	275	925	1,389
Burma (Myanmar)	874	40	110	1,024
Bhutan	742			742
Sri Lanka	73	212	355	640
China (excludes SARs and Taiwan)		143	285	428
Pakistan	14	163	226	403
Nepal	364	2	34	400
Congo, Democratic Republic of	329	45		374
Thailand	326	2	2	330
Ethiopia	208	74	19	301
Sudan	88	141	1	230
Laos	200			200
Zimbabwe	2	15	164	181
Egypt	11	27	136	174
Somalia	109	35	2	146
Kuwait	1	40	88	129
Kenya	75	27	4	106
Eritrea	89	2	12	103
Other	605	401	664	1,670
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,785</b>	<b>3,345</b>	<b>4,846</b>	<b>13,976</b>

Source: DIAC Administrative data.

Just over half (58%) of humanitarian migrants are male. Of the primary applicants, 73% are male and 27% are female. By contrast, 56% of secondary applicants are female and 44% male. When considering the sample frame for the survey it is important to take into account the age distribution of humanitarian arrivals, given that it is not envisaged that children will be interviewed. Amongst humanitarian immigrants who arrived in 2010-11 a little over a quarter were aged less than 15-years (Table 4).

TABLE 4. AGE DISTRIBUTION OF HUMANITARIAN IMMIGRANTS (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY APPLICANTS), ARRIVED IN 2010-11

	Number	Distribution (%)
0-4 years	1,200	9
5-14 years	2,530	18
15-24 years	3,110	22
25-34 years	3,393	24
35-44 years	1,998	14
45-54 years	983	7
55-64 years	462	3
65+ years	300	2
Total	13,976	100

Source: DIAC Administrative data.

Consideration needs also to be given to the minimum age for respondents. While children under the age of 15 years are clearly out-of-scope as respondents for this survey, it may be possible to interview those aged 15-17 years.<sup>8</sup> If 15-17 year olds are to be included in the sample, then careful consideration needs to be given to consent issues and whether there are cultural differences regarding the appropriateness of interviewing people in this age range. Other longitudinal studies have differed in the minimum age of respondents. The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada and the LSIA1 and LSIA2 include migrants (including refugees) aged 15-years plus at the time of arrival. By contrast, the *Survey of New Refugees: A Longitudinal Study of Refugee Integration in the UK* is restricted to refugees aged 18 years or older.

Table 5 shows the geographic areas in which humanitarian arrivals from the period November 2010 to October 2011 were living. Immigrants arriving under the Humanitarian Program are concentrated in particular geographic areas that are mainly in capital cities. Almost four out of five (78%) of humanitarian immigrants who arrived over the period November 2010 to October 2011 were living in Melbourne (3,442), Sydney (3,020), Adelaide (1,720), Brisbane (1,273) and Perth (965) in 2011. The numbers living outside of the larger capital cities are quite small. Map 1 shows the cities or town with the largest number of humanitarian arrivals who arrived during 2010-11. These figures indicate the total number of humanitarian arrivals inclusive of children.

8 A number of household longitudinal studies include all household members including children as part of the study but only conduct interviews with those above a particular age (often from the age of 15-years). While longitudinal studies do include children aged less than 15-years as respondents, specialised methods and survey techniques are required, particularly for children who may have experienced very stressful situation and have experienced violence and trauma.

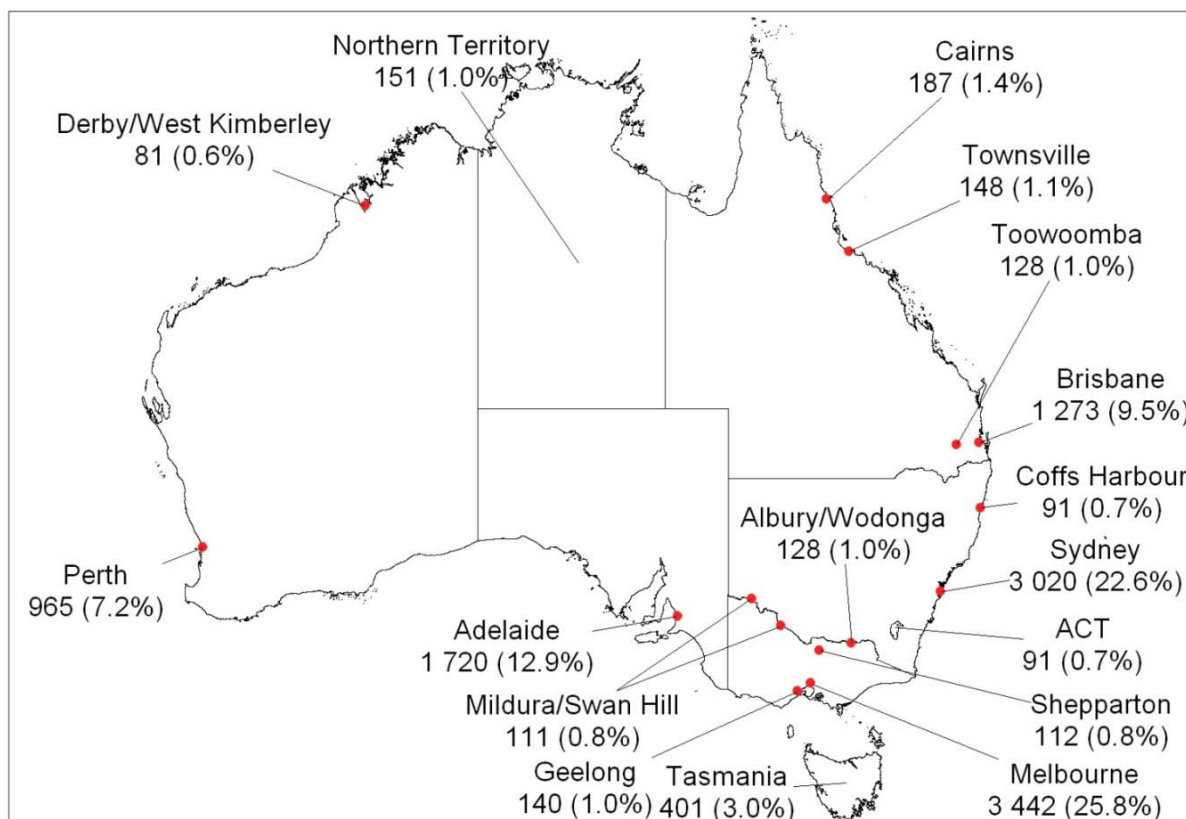
TABLE 5. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF HUMANITARIAN ARRIVALS, 2010-11

	Number	Distribution (%)
Sydney	3,020	22.6
Rest of New South Wales	367	2.7
Melbourne	3,442	25.8
Rest of Victoria	495	3.6
Brisbane	1,273	9.5
Rest of Queensland	702	5.3
Adelaide	1,720	12.9
Rest of South Australia	186	1.4
Perth	965	7.2
Rest of Western Australia	107	0.8
Tasmania, Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory	1,084	8.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,361</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: This data is for the period November 2010-October 2011. Column total may not sum exactly to 100.0 due to rounding errors.

Source: Cully (2011); Figures from DIAC administrative data.

MAP 1. GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF HUMANITARIAN ARRIVALS IN 2010-11



Note: The number of humanitarian arrivals living in areas outside of the cities and towns shown on the map is 1,172.

Source: Cully (2011); Figures from DIAC administrative data.

## 4. DESIGN OF THE SURVEY

The terms of reference for this paper are that the survey needs to provide information on the settlement outcomes of humanitarian migrants and possibly other vulnerable migrants. As outlined in this section, the population of humanitarian migrants can be readily defined on the basis of visa type. It is however much more difficult to identify other migrants or groups of migrants who are vulnerable.

This section will first consider the issue of including a non-humanitarian cohort of migrants in the study before moving on to consider the more specific details of the survey design. This includes coverage of the key issues warranting consideration including sample frame, geographic scope, data collection methods and timing of interviews. Where appropriate, a recommendation has been put forward in each case.

### 4.1 NON-HUMANITARIAN MIGRANTS

If seeking to recruit a cohort of non-humanitarian vulnerable migrants, there appears to be two approaches to obtaining a representative sample of such persons. The first is to identify the characteristics of migrants that are known to increase vulnerability in Australia and then to construct the sample using criteria based upon these characteristics. The difficulty with this approach is that it requires vulnerability to be accurately identified at the point of defining the sample. The data resulting from such an approach could be used to analyse the experiences and outcomes of a group of migrants who have characteristics which are believed to make them vulnerable, but would not allow an analysis of the extent of vulnerability amongst the group more broadly. The second approach is to include all recent migrants (humanitarian and other) in the survey and then to use the survey data to identify those who are vulnerable migrants.

Given the difficulties outlined here, the limited available budget, and that the priority of DIAC for this survey is to understanding the settlement experiences and outcomes of humanitarian immigrants, it is recommended that a general sample of non-humanitarian vulnerable migrants not be recruited. However, one group arriving under the Family stream that may provide a useful comparison group are those who are sponsored by someone who themselves came to Australia as a humanitarian migrant. It is thus suggested that this group be included in the sample since they are likely to have pre-settlement experiences that are similar to those of the humanitarian immigrant who sponsored them. Given these points, it is suggested that the population for the survey be migrants who have been granted a Permanent Protection Visa<sup>9</sup> and Family Reunion stream migrants who are sponsored by a humanitarian migrant.

### 4.2 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

It is strongly recommended that the *Building a New Life in Australia Survey* be conducted largely via face-to-face interviews. There are a number of distinct and different reasons supporting this approach, each of which is outlined below.

A primary reason is the greater capacity to build rapport with participants and thus retain their involvement in the study for a longer period of time. Indeed, virtually all of the long-running major national longitudinal studies which have high retention rates of the sample over time have the majority of the data collection conducted face-to-face. It is thus a tried and tested approach which lends itself to this type of study.

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9 Until late 2011 bridging visas were uncommon for protection visa applicants. However, policy changes announced on 25 November 2011 mean that Irregular Maritime Arrivals will now be released into the community on bridging visas prior to a decision on their protection visa application. Asylum seekers granted bridging visas will be allowed to undertake paid employment, will have access to health services and may be eligible for refugee support services. A decision will need to be made as to whether to include this group in the sampling frame for the survey. To the extent to which many of those granted a Bridging Visa are likely to be subsequently granted a Permanent Protection Visa then it would be desirable to begin collecting data from them shortly after being released into the community since this the settlement process is likely to start once they are released into the community.

Additionally, for this study, many recent humanitarian migrants have limited or no English language skills, limited education and low levels of literacy, and thus difficulties are more likely to arise using self-complete or telephone methods. Finally, the sensitive nature of the topics which are expected to be covered in the survey also lends itself towards face-to-face approaches.

This means that the case for conducted face-to-face interviews is particularly strong for a longitudinal survey of humanitarian arrivals to Australia. However, within the face-to-face approach there can be several different administration approaches including paper-and-pencil or Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI). Studies such as the Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey and the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) are now using the CAPI approach and it has been found to provide a number of benefits. In particular it eliminates the need for separate data entry, speeds up the delivery of data, allows the use of dependent data in the questionnaire (information provide in questions is fed forward into subsequent questions), allows for automatic checking of inconsistencies in survey respondents and makes it easier to build skips into the questionnaire.

#### 4.3 GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE OF THE SAMPLE

In principle, the best sampling approach is that all geographic areas in which migrants are living are included. This results in a sample that provides the most representative survey of the population. However, in order to contain the costs of collecting the data, most Australian longitudinal studies that involve face-to-face data collection, select the initial sample from only some areas of Australia. Given that this study also has a limited budget, it is therefore recommended that the sample is clustered.<sup>10</sup> The cost savings from clustering the sample arise from a reduction in the number of areas that interviewers need to travel to. It is also common for major longitudinal surveys to exclude very remote areas of Australia due to the high data collection costs and the fact that only a small proportion of the Australian population live in these areas. Examples of studies that have made this decision are the HILDA and LSAC surveys.

As outlined in Section 3, recent humanitarian arrivals tend to be clustered within particular geographic areas of Australia. This means that in order to contain costs the sample will need to be restricted to people living in geographic areas in which larger numbers of humanitarian arrivals live. There is however a trade-off between the cost savings resulting from collecting data from a smaller number of geographic areas, particularly regional and remote areas, and the potential loss of representativeness of the sample by going to only a limited number of areas.

If the question of whether there are differences in settlement experiences and outcomes between humanitarian arrivals who initially settle in regional and rural areas and those who settle in major cities is a high priority then it will be necessary to include several regional and rural areas in the sample. If only one or two regional and rural areas are included in the sample then it will not be possible to determine whether any differences in outcomes are explained by settling in a regional centre as compared to a major city, or whether any differences are explained by particular features of the regional centres that happen to have been selected for the survey. The small numbers of humanitarian arrivals outside of the larger capital cities (Map 1) means that it will be necessary to go to several regional sites in order to achieve a sample of sufficient size to allow statistical comparisons between humanitarian immigrants in major cities and those in regional areas. This would however add significantly to the survey costs. Therefore, given the budget for the project and the geographic distribution of recent humanitarian migrants, we would recommend trading-off fewer sites for a larger total sample size.

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10 LSIA1 and LSIA2 covered all of the state and territory capitals and other selected major urban areas which are relatively close to the capital cities. In addition, in LSIA1 Cairns was included. It is estimated that LSIA1 and LSIA2 represented approximately 96 per cent of the population (Cobb-Clark, 2011).

#### 4.4 NUMBER AND TIMING OF SURVEY WAVES

Longitudinal studies differ in the length of time between interviews (waves). In deciding upon the optimal length of time between interviews there are a number of considerations. The more rapidly the circumstances of the population change then the more frequently interviews are needed. For more geographically mobile populations, more frequent interviews can assist in reducing attrition due to non-contact.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand there are costs associated with conducting interviews more frequently. First, there is the increased burden to those participating in the survey, which can lead to respondents dropping out and which undermines its value as a longitudinal survey. Second, there is the financial cost to the data collection agency of undertaking additional waves of data collection, particularly if the interviews are conducted face-to-face but also if they are conducted over the telephone.<sup>12</sup>

It is recommended that the survey involve annual waves of data collection. This recommendation is based upon the following considerations. The initial period following settlement in Australia is typically one of significant adjustment and change. It is thus important to collect data at relatively frequent intervals. Another reason for conducting annual data collection is that a shorter period between survey waves is generally associated with lower rates of not being able to locate respondents between survey waves, and thus lower rates of sample attrition. This is likely to be particularly important for humanitarian migrants given the evidence that refugees often have frequent changes in their living circumstances during the initial settlement period (Beer and Foley, 2005). It is well known that those who change addresses often generally have higher attrition rates from longitudinal surveys.

According to the DIAC timetable for the survey, five waves of data collection would be undertaken annually from 2012 to 2016. If interviews were conducted annually the respondents would have spent between 49 and 54 months in Australia, slightly less than the required 60 months. If it is necessary to have data covering the full first 60 months after settlement in Australia in order for the survey to address the key policy questions there are several options. One option is to add an additional wave of data collection. Another option is to increase the length of time between interviews.

Depending upon the geographic regions in which interviews are conducted, there may be no choice but to conduct interviews over a longer time period in order to achieve the required sample size. There are however advantages and disadvantages in having shorter or longer fieldwork periods for each wave which need consideration. Advantages of having relatively short (2-3 month) fieldwork periods include:

- Potential efficiencies in the fieldwork that result from reduced costs of management;
- Some advantages from an analysis point of view that relate to removing seasonality as an issue; and
- Reducing the variability in length of time between waves for survey respondents.

Advantages of having a longer fieldwork period include;

- Potentially being able to use fewer but more highly skilled bilingual interviewers with experience in collecting data from people that have undergone significant levels of trauma;

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11 Beer and Foley (2005) using data from a survey of 434 refugees in 2002-2003 found that the housing experience of refugees reflect a period of transition as they settle in Australia and become familiar with Australia's housing system (p. ii). They find that many refugees 'experience profound housing problems early in their Australian housing careers' (p. ii).

12 Major longitudinal household surveys differ in the length of time between interviews. A number of surveys conduct interviews annually (e.g., British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA), German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP), Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID)). Other surveys have longer period between waves. For example, the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) has two years between waves. The 1970 British Cohort Study has involved 7 waves being conducted between 1970 and 2005.

- Being able to obtain greater levels of community engagement; and
- Potentially increasing the initial response rate.

#### 4.5 SAMPLING FRAME AND RECRUITMENT

There are a variety of ways of obtaining the sample for a longitudinal survey of migrants. By far the best approach is to use a pre-existing sample frame that contains all or a high proportion of the population of interest. Another potential method is to identify people within the survey population scope by screening households. However, because recently-arrived humanitarian migrants are only a very small proportion of the population, this approach is not feasible. Other methods such as snowball sampling do not produce representative samples of the population of interest and therefore can only be used to produce findings for the particular sample interviewed. They cannot be used to produce estimates which are related to the broader population of interest.

In fact, one of the major limitations of much of the research on refugees has been the lack of a complete sampling frame which can be used to draw a random probability sample (Bloch, 2007). Australia is fortunate in having what appears to be a good sampling frame for the purposes of this particular survey, the Settlement Database (SDB) held by DIAC which contains a range of information on migrants to Australia including contact details. This database is generated using information from a variety of sources including the Settlement Details form and departmental systems used to process migration applications both in Australia and at overseas posts. Address information is also captured when the immigrant enrolls for services such as Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) classes in Australia. Address details are also updated once a month using data from the Department of Human Services. This provides up-to-date addresses based on client interactions with Centrelink and Medicare.

While the SDB does not have current contact information for all immigrants, and the accuracy of the contact information declines the longer the migrants have been in Australia, consultations with DIAC officials suggest that the contact details are reasonable good for recent arrivals. This is in part a consequence of the vast majority (over 90%) of migrants registering with Medicare, irrespective of type of visa. While Family and Skill stream migrants generally have a 104-week waiting period before they can access Medicare, humanitarian arrivals do not have any such waiting period. This means that their Medicare contact details are more likely to be up-to-date than for some other groups of migrants, and thus the SDB is more likely to have up-to-date contact details for this group, particularly in the initial period of settlement in Australia. Further investigation of the completeness and accuracy of the contact information in the SDB will need to be undertaken during the development phase of the survey.

While there will be missing or out-of-date address/contact information for some recent humanitarian arrivals, from a sample representativeness perspective the key question is whether having out-of-date address/contact information is systematically related to the characteristics of the humanitarian arrivals. While it will almost certainly be the case that some biases are introduced into the sample as a result of the missing contact information, the extent of such biases are likely to be relatively small. This is an issue that will require further investigation.<sup>13</sup>

The sample should be chosen randomly from the in-scope population including all members of immigrating family units. When members of a family unit apply for a visa together one person, the main applicant, must meet the visa requirements and the other applicants must be members of the family unit. The survey population should include all members of immigrating family units and thus include the primary applicant and

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13 Other major Australian longitudinal studies have used Australian Government departments administrative data sets as the sampling frame and source of contact information include the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, which used Medicare data as the sampling frame, and Journeys Home: A longitudinal study of factors affecting housing stability, which used Centrelink data as the sampling frame.



secondary applicants. This differs from the sampling method used for LSIA1, 2 and 3 which restricted the sample largely to primary applicants with limited numbers of secondary applicants. However, the characteristics, settlement outcomes and service needs of primary and secondary applicants may differ. Given that the key research and policy questions of the survey relate to all humanitarian arrivals and not just primary applicants, it is important that the respondents include both primary and secondary applicants. It should also be noted that members of the migrating family unit may not be living in the same household at the time of the first interview. This could occur for a number of reasons including relationship breakdown or different generations of the family living separately (or for a range of other reasons). It is recommended that an attempt be made to include all households resulting from the migration of a family unit in the sampling frame, although this may be difficult to achieve in practice.

Often the first few months after settlement in Australia are ones of great change. It is therefore important that the survey collect data from people as soon as possible after their arrival in Australia. As noted above, most studies have conducted the first wave of interviews about six months after arrival in Australia. While the rationale for this is not entirely clear, it appears that around six months is the period which it takes many humanitarian migrant to deal with the initial 'shock' of settling in a new country and be ready to participate in a major longitudinal survey. It is therefore recommended that the sample be drawn from immigrants who arrived in Australia three to six months before the first wave of interviews.

Generally, when administrative data is used as the sampling frame for a survey, potential respondents are sent a letter by the department which is responsible for the database which advises them that they have been selected to take part in a survey and that unless they contact the department and advise otherwise (opt-out) that their name and contact information to the fieldwork organisation that will be running the survey. It is crucial that an opt-out rather than an opt-in process be used. Opt-in processes which require a person to contact the department and say that they wish to participate in the survey usually result in non-representative samples. Of course, informed consent to participate in the study is obtained at the time of the interview.

#### 4.6 FOLLOWING RULES

If the sample for the survey includes more than one household member (for example if two adults within the household are interviewed) then decisions need to be made as to what to do when people leave the household in which they were living at a previous wave (i.e., one household becomes two or more households). The decisions surveys make about this issue is referred to as their 'following rules'. Schonlau, Watson and Kroh (2010) find, in a study of the impact of different following rules on the sample sizes of household longitudinal surveys, that a number of different following rules have been used and that exactly which rule is used makes relatively little difference to the sample size. They conclude that,

*While sample size and associated costs are important considerations, other factors also affect the decision of whether to adopt wider or narrower following rules. Certain research questions require wide following rules such as economic and social consequences of divorce. One the other hand, wider following rules may be less desirable because additional respondents may be somewhat similar to existing respondents, giving too much weight to people already in the sample.(p. 11)*

Other major household longitudinal studies have employed a range of different following rules, with some studies following all household members irrespective of whether they lived in the initial household and others retaining only one household and so if one household becomes two or more households then only one study member will remain in the survey. Decisions about the following rules have implications for sample size, costs and for the range of questions which the data can be used. As such, before deciding upon what following rules are to be adopted in this study, DIAC needs to have in place a very clear and detailed set of research questions for which the data will be used to answer. These questions will be critical in determining the specifics of the following rules adopted.

#### 4.7 TRANSLATION, INTERPRETING AND INTERVIEWERS

Many interviews will need to be conducted in a language other than English. Previous longitudinal studies of migrants to Australia have allowed a family member to interpret for the respondent. While this approach is cost-effective, and may in some cases be the respondent's preference, it is not recommended for this survey given that the questionnaire will include questions on sensitive topics such as mental health and family relationships.

It is difficult to know exactly what proportion of interviews will need to be conducted in a language other than English: this is likely to differ from year to year depending upon the countries of origin of humanitarian arrivals and other factors. The LSIA1 and LSIA2 experience provides some guide. For both LSIA1 and LSIA2 for the first wave of interviews which were conducted about six months after arrival in Australia, around 80% of interviews with humanitarian arrivals were conducted in a language other than English (Table 6). The proportion of interviews conducted in English increases in each wave subsequent to wave 1. For example, for LSIA1 the proportion of interviews conducted in English increased from 19% at wave 1, 39% at wave 2 (around 18 months after arrival) to 56% at wave 3 (around 42 months after arrival).

TABLE 6. PROPORTION OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED IN A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH IN THE LSIA1 AND LSIA2, HUMANITARIAN IMMIGRANTS (%)

	LSIA Cohort 1			LSIA Cohort 2	
	Wave 1 (6 months after arrival)	Wave 2 (18 months after arrival)	Wave 3 (42 months after arrival)	Wave 1 (6 months after arrival)	Wave 2 (18 months after arrival)
			%		
Interview conducted in English	19	39	56	18	36
Interview with assistance of friend or family	37	27	22	34	35
Interpreter required	35	27	16	43	28
Bilingual interviewer	9	7	7	4	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>831</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>479</b>

Source: Information provided by DIAC.

This suggests that for wave 1 it is reasonable to estimate that 80% of interviews will need to be conducted in a language other than English. Consultations with stakeholders suggest that an estimate of 80% is not unreasonable for the current cohort of humanitarian immigrants.

The best approach in circumstances such as this is to use bilingual interviewers. The other approach involves the interviewer working with an interpreter. In principle this could be done either through an interpreter physically attending the interview or through a telephone interpreting service. The use of telephone interpreting services for face-to-face interviews is not recommended, except for cases where a respondent would prefer a telephone interpreter be used.

Many of the participants in the survey will be survivors of torture and violence and have mental and/or physical health problems. Many have spent protracted periods of time in resettlement camps or detention centres pending resolution of their status. Given this nature of the survey, interviewers with experience working with vulnerable families will be needed. In many cases culturally appropriate gender matching of interviewers to participants will also be required. The interviewers will need to have protocols and procedures to be able to refer people on to support and other services if required and there will need to be very clear protocols to deal with any child protection concerns that may arise during the course of interviews.

#### 4.8 PROPOSED SURVEY ARCHITECTURE

This section summarises the proposed survey architecture. The suggested approach takes into account the experience of previous longitudinal studies of migrants and in particular humanitarian migrants, the experience of other Australian longitudinal studies, and the specific issues discussed in the sections above. Given all of these issues, it is suggested that the survey architecture adopt the following approaches:

- The population for the survey comprise Humanitarian Program immigrants who were granted a Permanent Protection Visa between three and six months prior to the wave 1 interview. Consideration could also be given to including Family stream migrants who were sponsored by a humanitarian immigrant;
- At wave 1 interviews be conducted in seven sites (four major cities and three regional centres);
- A random stratified sample be used;
- Five waves of interviews be conducted with waves 14 to 15 months apart;
- The first wave of interviews be conducted face-to-face (preferably using CAPI). Given the budget for the survey it will probably necessary for some of the waves to be conducted using computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). It is suggested that the first, third and fifth waves be face-to-face and the second and fourth waves be conducted using CATI (See Table 7);
- Interviews should be conducted with up to two adult immigrants (aged 15 years plus) per household and for households with dependent children data would be collected about one of the children (as reported by a parent). One of the adults would do a longer interview (the primary respondent) and the other a shorter interview (secondary respondent);<sup>14</sup>
- Respondents who participate in wave 1 but are not interviewed at a subsequent waves should remain in the sample and interviews attempted at subsequent waves. The only exception would be if they clearly indicated that they are withdrawing from the survey and do not want to be contacted again;<sup>15</sup>
- Survey participants who move away from their wave 1 geographic location to areas in which interviews were not conducted at wave 1 will be followed in subsequent waves;<sup>16</sup>
- That the primary and secondary respondents be followed into new households;<sup>17</sup> and
- Participants in the survey who are overseas at the time of an interview, either temporarily or permanently should remain in the sample and an attempt made to secure an interview by telephone, online or self-complete mail back questionnaire.

While the primary methodology for the survey is expected to be a structured quantitative questionnaire, there would be significant benefits of conducting in-depth qualitative interviews with a small number of the participants in the survey (a 'nested study'). This is an optional component but is likely to increase the utility of the survey at a relatively small additional cost. The collection of some qualitative data as part of major

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14 There are several potential benefits to conducting interviews with two adults in the household. First, it allows within family experiences and outcomes to be analysed and questions such as what impact does the experience of one household member have on other household members. Second, it can provide a relatively cost effective means of increasing the sample size. However, interviewing the secondary respondent is not integral to the proposed design and whether it is worthwhile will depend upon the precise questions that the survey designed to address and the additional data collection costs.

15 Retaining survey members who do not participate in a particular wave in the sample for subsequent waves minimises the biases in the data that arise from attrition and is common practice in major longitudinal studies such as the BHPS, HILDA, PSID and SOEP.

16 A few survey members may move to areas that are remote and are very expensive to travel to in order conduct a face-to-face interview and in these cases telephone interviews should be permitted.

17 A decision on this aspect of the design should be driven the precise research questions the survey is being designed to address.

quantitative surveys can increase the value of the survey by allowing specific topics to be explored in more detail with study participants. While valuable in its own right, the qualitative data can assist in the interpretation of the quantitative data.

TABLE 7. OVERVIEW OF SURVEY ARCHITECTURE

	Method of data collection	Time in home or on phone (minutes)	Respondent	
			Primary respondent	Secondary respondent
Wave 1	Face-to-face	100	✓	✓
Wave 2	Telephone	15	✓	
Wave 3	Face-to-face	100	✓	✓
Wave 4	Telephone	15	✓	
Wave 5	Face-to-face	100	✓	✓

## 5. SAMPLE SIZE

Deciding upon the sample size is difficult with a range of factors needing to be taken into account. It is important to work out what sample is required by the end of the survey and to estimate the expected rate of attrition over the life of the survey. However, it is impossible to know precisely what rate of attrition will occur and it is therefore prudent to make a conservative estimate.

For design purposes here a wave-to-wave attrition rate of 10% is assumed. This attrition rate results in 66% of the wave 1 sample being re-interviewed at wave 5 (a wave 1 to wave attrition rate of 34%). A wave-to-wave attrition rate of 10% is not inconsistent with the experience of the LSIA1. LSIA1, for the humanitarian sample, experienced a 12% attrition rate between waves 1 and 2 (about 12 months) and 27% attrition rate between wave 1 and 3 (about 35 months). LSIA2 had an attrition rate for the humanitarian sample of 14% between waves 1 and 2 (about 12 months). Given the budget for the survey it may be possible to achieve a wave 1 sample of 1,500 households. Assuming a 10% wave-to-wave attrition rate, the projected number of responding households at each wave is shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8. PROJECTED NUMBER OF RESPONDING HOUSEHOLDS AT EACH WAVE

	Number of responding households at each wave
Wave 1	1,500
Wave 2	1,350
Wave 3	1,215
Wave 4	1,094
Wave 5	984

Notes: Assumes a 10% wave-to-wave attrition rate

A wave 5 sample of 984 will be just sufficient to allow many of the key research and policy questions to be answered. It however will not be possible, with this sample size, to understand differences in settlement experience and outcomes for some of the smaller groups of humanitarian immigrants or to analyse relatively uncommon settlement outcomes. Given the uncertainty about the attrition rate that will be actually achieved, it is prudent to make the wave 1 sample size as large as possible given the available budget.

Another important consideration in deciding upon the sample size is the size of the population from which the sample is being drawn. Given the number of humanitarian arrivals to Australia over a six months period (for 2010-11 this was 6,000 to 7,000 individuals and a smaller number of households) and the fact that the number of geographic locations in which interviews are conducted will need to be limited for reasons of cost, it may be challenging to achieve the initial sample size of 1,500. If this proves to be a problem the arrival time period from which the sample is selected would need to be increased.

## 6. MAXIMISING THE INITIAL RESPONSE RATES AND MINIMISING ATTRITION

The process of response to a survey can be separated into three stages, with each stage being necessary for the subsequent stage:

1. The sample member is located;
2. Contact is made with the sample member; and
3. The sample member provides an interview.

Attrition can occur at each of these stages and minimising the attrition rate requires strategies to minimise drop-out from the survey at each stage.<sup>18</sup>

### 6.1 MAXIMISING INITIAL RESPONSE RATE

A number of factors have been found in previous studies to be effective in increasing the initial response rate to a survey. Providing potential participants with clear information about the background to the survey, its purposes and how the data from the survey will benefit people in their circumstances. It is important that this information be provided in a way that is appealing to potential participants. This is likely to be particularly important in the context of recent humanitarian migrants. This is because pre-settlement experiences may result in many humanitarian migrants having understandable distrust and fear of authorities (Cottone, 2005). This means that making it clear to potential survey participants that information they provide will not affect their ability to remain in Australia or how they are treated by government departments.

Gaining the trust of potential respondents may also be assisted if the survey is managed by an organisation other than DIAC. It is also likely that response rates and retention rates could be increased by gaining the support for the survey from humanitarian and migrant groups. This support can help to reassure participants that the survey is legitimate, that their privacy will be protected and that they will not come to any harm from participating in the survey. The use of incentives can also improve the initial response rate to a survey (and reduce the rate of attrition from the survey). This is discussed below.

### 6.2 TRACKING SAMPLE MEMBER BETWEEN WAVES

Finding a sample member is generally straightforward when the person has not moved since the last interview. There can however be significant challenges in locating sample members who have moved since the last interview. A range of tracking strategies can be used, including:

- Collection of information which can be used to locate a survey participant if they move. This can include multiple contact details for the respondent (e.g., home number, mobile, work number, email address) and the contact details of family and friends who are likely to know where the respondent is;
- Searching telephone directories or electoral rolls;
- Asking neighbours at the last known address; and
- Use of administrative data to try and identify current address and other contact details. If the DIAC settlement data base is used as the sampling frame for the survey then this can be used to track respondents.

All of these methods have been found to be effective in other major Australian government funded longitudinal studies such as HILDA and LSAC (Gray and Smart, 2008; Watson and Wooden, 2004). An option which could be explored in the context of this particular survey is using community organisations as a potential further way of tracking individuals. However, this would need to be done very carefully, with the ethical and practical implications carefully considered.

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18 This section draws upon the review of factors affecting response and attrition in longitudinal surveys by Watson and Wooden (2006).

### 6.3 INCENTIVES

Longitudinal studies have often provided respondents with a gift or money as a form of incentive to participate in the survey. Such incentives also provide recognition of the time that the respondent spends participating in the survey. Being able to offer the participant a gift or money can help the interviewers approach potential participants in terms of the relationship being a reciprocal one. A number of studies have been undertaken into the effectiveness of participant incentives and these have been reviewed by Laurie and Lynn (2009).

Incentives to participants have been provided in several different ways. They can be in the form of money, a small gift or entry into a lottery or prize draw. They can also be provided either unconditionally prior to the interview being undertaken or promised contingent on participant in the survey. There is also some evidence that the greater the burden of participating in a survey, the more effective is a financial incentive in increasing the response rate. There is also some evidence that incentives have a greater impact upon the participation rates of those with a low income or who typically have lower participation rates in surveys.

Laurie and Lynn (2009) conclude that the evidence is that the use of incentives increases the response rate in interviewer administered interviews (face-to-face and telephone). The existing evidence also suggests that money is more effective than a gift and that a prepaid incentive increases response rates by more than a conditional incentive.

Given the evidence that incentives can increase initial response rates and retention, it is recommended that incentives be offered to participants and that the incentives be in the form of a cash payment, possibly in the order of \$30 and that it be paid either at the start of the face-to-face interview or upon completion of the interview. Consideration also needs to be given as to whether it is worthwhile providing an incentive payment for the waves of interviews conducted by telephone. One option is to send a small gift as a token of appreciation for participation in the telephone interview.

### 6.4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Studies of migrants have found that gaining the support of the migrant community and organisations that work with migrants is very important to maximising participation in surveys. This is likely to be particularly the case for humanitarian arrivals. While a detailed discussion of the how the community engagement could be undertaken is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important that a significant time and effort be put in to community engagement during the survey design and fieldwork phases.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This paper has provided a suggested design for the *Building a New Life in Australia Longitudinal Survey of Humanitarian Migrants*. This study will make an important contribution to filling a significant data gap on the experiences, needs and outcome of humanitarian migrants who settle in Australia. In developing the suggested survey design, the lessons from other longitudinal surveys of migrants and other more broadly based household longitudinal surveys have been drawn upon. Of critical importance however is that the quality of the data resulting from any survey is dependent upon the initial design. This is particularly important in the case of longitudinal studies because once the initial design of the survey is determined it cannot be subsequently changed and will limit options for the life of the survey. As this study is likely to extend to a number of years, and encompass a significant financial investment, it is critically important that the initial design of the study is considered very carefully.

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