



## Fact Sheet:

# The Continuous Survey of Australia's Migrants

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship's *Continuous Survey of Australia's Migrants* (CSAM) commenced in September 2009. The main objective of the CSAM is to provide timely information on the labour market outcomes of recent migrants. The survey also collects information about qualifications assessment, housing issues and the use of government services.

The first round of CSAM surveys were conducted from September 2009 until September 2011. Results from these surveys were published in February 2013 in the *Cohorts 1 to 5 Report*.

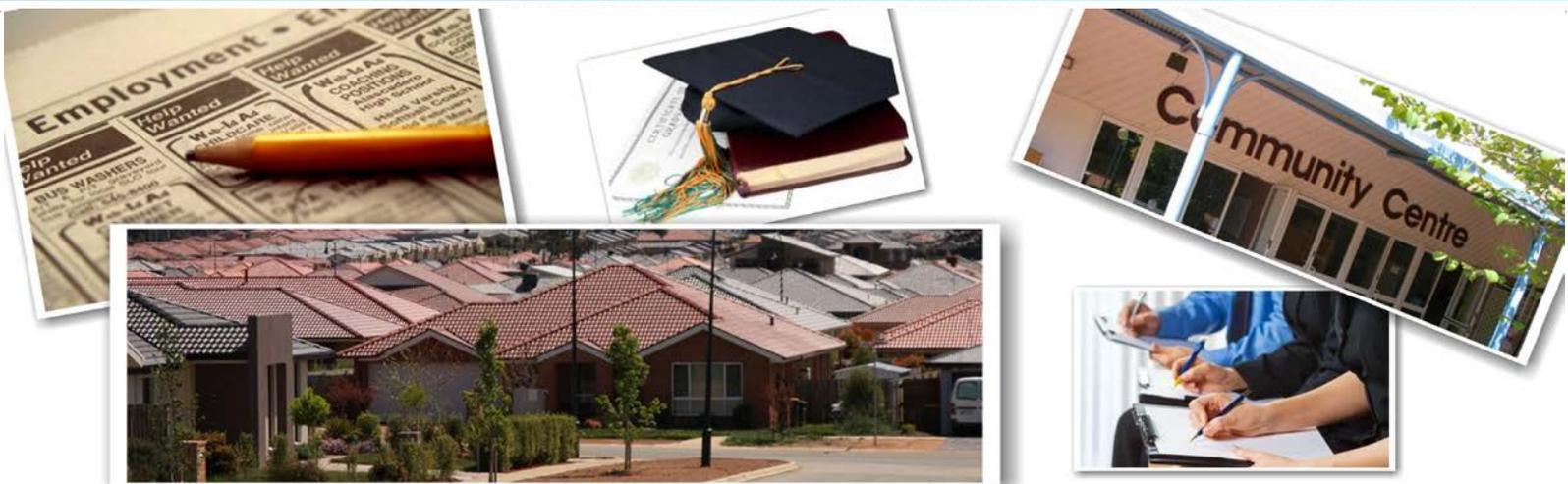
**See:** <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/research/surveys/csam/>

A redesigned CSAM is due to go into the field in 2013.

## Why was the survey established?

Over the years, the department has run many migrant surveys. At the time of commencing CSAM, the most recent survey was four years old, and a lot had changed in the interim – including changes of government, substantial changes in migration policy, and the global financial crisis having had a major impact on the Australian and world labour markets.

In such a dynamic environment, there was a strong need for timely and regular information on migrant outcomes. The CSAM was designed to address these needs.



## Who is surveyed?

The survey covers people who have been granted either a:

- permanent residence visa or
- provisional visa (such as a provisional partner visa) and are thus on the pathway to permanent residence.

The CSAM is limited to migrants from the family and skilled streams. Humanitarian entrants are specifically not included in this survey. A more specialised survey has been established to focus on their settlement outcomes.

The department enlists the assistance of the Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS National) to help clients from non-English speaking backgrounds complete the survey.

## How does the survey work?

The first CSAM survey was run in late September 2009. This consisted of around 8000 Primary Applicants who either:

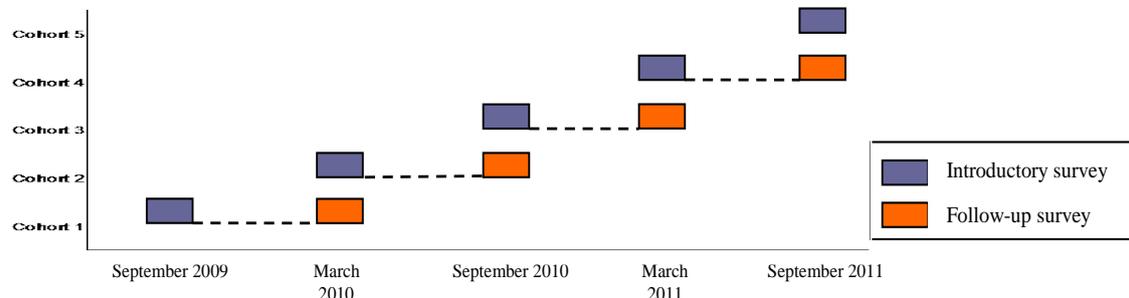
- came to Australia on an offshore visa within the previous six months or
- were granted a visa onshore within the previous six months.

Six months later in March 2010, the next survey was run. This encompassed two separate surveys of distinct cohorts:

1. a new survey of Primary Applicants who had either arrived, or were granted their visa within the previous six months
2. a follow-up survey of the same group of migrants who had been surveyed six months earlier in September 2009.

This process of introducing new migrants and following up migrants surveyed earlier was then repeated every six months, as shown in Figure 1. In the redesigned CSAM, the survey will be run every 12 months and the interval between introductory and follow-up survey will also be 12 months.

**Figure 1 Timing of introductory and follow-up surveys for the first five CSAM cohorts.**



## Why is this approach used?

With a traditional once-off survey only one set of results would become available with no capacity to understand changes over time. For example it might be found that migrant unemployment rates are 10 per cent. Such a finding is of limited value as it will quickly be out of date and there is no way of telling whether the situation improves or worsens.

With the CSAM, it is possible to look at the outcomes of migrants in two ways:

- **Cross-sectionally** – as the survey is run at regular intervals, it is possible to compare the outcomes of different groups of migrants. For example, we can compare the unemployment rate of migrants who arrived in 2010, with that of migrants who arrived during the previous or following year.
- **Longitudinally** – as everyone in the survey is interviewed on two occasions, it is possible to measure changes in outcomes for a particular group of migrants. For example, how the unemployment rate of a specific group of migrants changed between the first and the second survey.

## How is the information collected?

When surveyed for the first time, respondents are sent a written questionnaire by mail which they are asked to complete and return to the nominated mailing address. The follow-up survey is then undertaken via telephone.

An example front page of one of the mailed questionnaire surveys is provided to the right. Copies of all questionnaire surveys are available on request by contacting [economic.analysis@immi.gov.au](mailto:economic.analysis@immi.gov.au).

## What can the survey results tell us?

The CSAM is designed to provide timely information on the labour market outcomes of recent migrants and can give insight into the following:

- how migrants are faring in today's labour market, their unemployment rates, participation rates and earnings over time;
- how outcomes change over time and how they compare with the general Australian population;
- if skilled migrants are working in skilled jobs
- how migrants perform relative to each other, for example, if sponsored migrants perform better than unsponsored migrants.

The survey also collects information on migrant qualifications and the assessment of these qualifications. This information can tell us:

- whether migrants are generally satisfied with the assessment process, the areas where the assessment process is not satisfactory and whether there are any problems
- what skills recent migrants bring with them
- how overseas qualified migrants perform compared to Australian qualified migrants
- the likelihood of migrants working in their nominated occupation
- how many migrants are undertaking further study in Australia.

The ability to communicate in English is an important settlement factor. The CSAM thus collects information on:

- the association between English proficiency and labour market outcomes
- how English proficiency varies for different migrant categories
- the gap in English proficiency between the Primary Applicant and their spouse.

## CSAM results and further Information?

Results are available from <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/research/surveys/csam/>.

Further information on this survey is available from the Department's Economic Analysis area by emailing: [economic.analysis@immi.gov.au](mailto:economic.analysis@immi.gov.au)