



Australian Government
Department of Social Services



Longitudinal Studies

Journeys Home: Longitudinal Survey of Factors Affecting Housing Stability



Overview

Journeys Home was a research study investigating homelessness and housing insecurity over a three-year period.

The Australian Government Department of Social Services administered and guided the project. The Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research (MI) at the University of Melbourne designed and managed the study. MI subcontracted Roy Morgan Research to undertake the fieldwork.

The survey comprises six waves, each six months apart, undertaken between September 2011 and May 2014.

Purpose of the study

Journeys Home aimed to improve the understanding of, and policy response to, the diverse social, economic and personal factors relating to homelessness and the risk of becoming homeless.

Key research questions

Key research questions that guided the study are:

- What are the characteristics of people identified as homeless or at risk of homelessness and what characteristics distinguish people who become homeless from those who do not?
- What lengths of time have people experienced homelessness?
- What are the factors associated with housing instability/stability?
- What are some key intervention points to prevent homelessness and chronic homelessness? What are the factors that are important in the road out of homelessness?

Study topics

Journeys Home has collected information on participants':

- Personal circumstances—physical and mental health; employment, education and training and significant life events
- Family circumstances—family status and living arrangements; support networks and experiences of domestic and family violence
- Housing circumstances—housing situation and the periods, type, and reasons for homelessness
- Use of formal and informal support services.

Data collection

Journeys Home combines de-identified longitudinal information held by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and a survey of approximately 1,600 income support recipients across Australia who have been flagged as homeless or at risk of homelessness. A third group, identified as vulnerable to homelessness, is also included. Participants were selected randomly from DHS records and invited to take part in the survey on the understanding that participation is entirely voluntary.

Use of Journeys Home

The data collected provides robust information on the experience and longer-term impacts of homelessness, the demographics of the homeless and those at risk, as well as effective means of service provision.

According to the bibliography maintained by the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, Journeys Home data have been used in 16 academic journal articles, two conference papers and 11 reports and working papers.

More information about DSS longitudinal surveys is available at: www.dss.gov.au/longitudinal-studies

Data access - you can apply via the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research - see melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au/journeys-home

Ad hoc data requests are available for small requirements. Please email your request to: LongitudinalStudies@dss.gov.au

Bibliographic research repository for longitudinal analysis using DSS datasets: see flosse.dss.gov.au