



**Longitudinal Immigration Survey:  
New Zealand (LisNZ)**

**Te Ara O Nga Manene**  
*(The Pathway of the Migrants)*

**Key User Group Update**  
**December 2001**



## **Introduction**

This is the fourth in a series of updates for members of the LisNZ Key User Group on progress with the development of the Longitudinal Immigration Survey: New Zealand (LisNZ). These updates are provided every six months, either as a face-to-face meeting or as a mailed summary. The main highlight over the last six months has been conducting the interviews for the wave 1 of the pilot survey. Therefore, the main focus of this update is to provide information on the insights we have gained on the survey methodology and questionnaire design from conducting the wave 1 pilot survey. Interviews for the wave 2 pilot survey will take place in May and June 2002.

The main objective of the LisNZ is to provide reliable, authoritative data about migrants' initial settlement experiences in New Zealand and the outcomes of immigration policies. The LisNZ is being developed by the Department of Labour (DOL) in partnership with Statistics New Zealand (SNZ).

## **The pilot survey**

The key focus of the LisNZ over the last 6 months has been interviewing for the wave 1 pilot survey and making amendments to the survey in preparation for wave 2 of the pilot survey and for the main survey. Interviewing for the LisNZ pilot survey was conducted during July and August 2001, in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch. The main purpose of the pilot survey is to test the survey methodology and the questionnaire. To achieve 500 interviews at the wave 2 pilot survey, around 700 people were interviewed for the wave 1 pilot.

We are pleased to report that the pilot survey generally worked well in the field. While there are a few issues to address regarding the administration of the electronic questionnaire, interviewers were positive about the content of the questionnaire. The key challenge for us will be to increase the number of new migrants we manage to contact for the main survey.

We selected people for the pilot survey on their residence approval and therefore obtaining a New Zealand address at which to contact them was imperative. The overall contact and response rate was 42%, which while comparable to similar overseas surveys was still lower than we anticipated.

Since the last key user group update, both SNZ and the DOL have been working to test the field procedures and improve how we do things in preparation for the start of the main survey. We have also been refining the questionnaire in light of findings from the pilot survey. These topics are discussed in more detail below.

## **Objectives of the pilot survey**

The main objectives of the wave 1 pilot test were to:

- trial the electronic questionnaire, including translations in Samoan and Tongan;
- trial the paper questionnaire in traditional Chinese script (the questionnaires were administered in either Mandarin or Cantonese);
- obtain an indication of the average length of the interview; and

- assess the survey methodology developed to date, in particular whether the sampling methodology produced the required sample size, whether the respondent management methodology provided an acceptable contact rate and to provide indicative contact and response rates.

## **Pilot questionnaire**

The wave 1 pilot questionnaire was generally well received by both respondents and interviewers. Some interviewer training and computer assisted interviewing problems arose during the pilot and SNZ are working on improvements to these aspects of the survey for wave 2 of the pilot and for the main survey. A few minor changes have been made to wording to improve the flow of the questionnaire.

The DOL is currently working through the response categories used in the pilot to determine any changes that need to be made to these as a result of responses received in the pilot.

## **Interview length**

The average interview length was 79.5 minutes and the median length was 79 minutes. This included a language module, which was being tested for developing some additional language questions for the main survey. While the additional language module took around 4 minutes to complete, it is estimated that the questions developed from this test will take around half this time to complete. This total interview time also included time that was spent on non-interview tasks such as making tea and coffee, answering the phone and other interruptions. It is envisaged that there will not be a problem in meeting the target interview time of 75 minutes for the first interview of the main survey. The length of the interview did not seem to pose problems for respondents. The majority of interviewers reported that respondents' reactions to the length of the questionnaire were either neutral or they reacted well. The questionnaire length for the second and third interviews will be substantially reduced.

## **Survey languages**

For the pilot survey, in addition to English language interviews, interviews were conducted in Tongan, Samoan and Chinese by bilingual interviewers. The electronic questionnaire was translated into Tongan and Samoan, and paper questionnaires were provided in Chinese to assist the bilingual interviewers. There was some feedback from interviewers regarding the formal level of language used for the Tongan and Samoan translations. Despite interviewer training there was some deviation from the translated questionnaires because of the formal language used. Of the 687 completed interviews for the wave 1 pilot survey, 129 (25%) were conducted – either fully or partially – in a survey language other than English.

It is envisaged that the questionnaire will be administered in additional languages for the main survey. The current proposal is to interview in eight languages, including English. A final decision on how many, and which, languages we will interview people in will be subject to cost considerations, the diversity of the migrants arriving

and further information being available from 2001 Census data on languages spoken by recent migrants to New Zealand.

## **Contact / response rates**

A major issue for the survey will be to work on improving contact/response rates, particularly for off-shore arrivals. The contact/response rate is the percentage of selected migrants eligible for the survey who complete an interview. The overall contact/response rate for the wave 1 pilot was 42%, which was lower than the expected rate of 46%. It should be noted that the Canadian pilot test, for a similar longitudinal survey, achieved a lower contact response rate (37.6%). The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia had a contact/response rate of 43% at wave 1 of the main survey.

Our key concern is that we are currently obtaining a useable New Zealand contact address for only just over half of those migrants approved off-shore. Both the DOL and SNZ are investigating ways in which contact/response rates can be improved for the main survey and a number of options are being considered.

## **Development work for main survey**

The DOL and SNZ are currently looking at the possibility of changing the sampling for the main survey. For the pilot survey, we are interviewing the principal applicant plus one other person in the approval unit (where there is more than one person in the approval unit). One of the main reasons for choosing the one plus one sampling option for the pilot was the low flow of migrants into New Zealand at the time. With increased numbers of approvals, other sampling options are now viable for the main survey and they could bring considerable benefits. We would still probably need to balance the sample to ensure we had sufficient numbers from certain countries and also for some of the smaller immigration policy categories.

## **Focus until June 2002**

The main focus for both the DOL and SNZ over the next six months will be to analyse the pilot survey methodology to assist in the development of the final survey. We will also be working on the contact methodology for the main survey.

## **Survey timelines**

At this point, the timelines for the survey remain as follows:

May 2002 – June 2002:	Wave 2 interviews for pilot survey
October 2002 – March 2005:	Sample selection for main survey
April 2003 – September 2005:	Wave 1 interviews for the main survey
April 2004 – September 2006:	Wave 2 interviews for the main survey
October 2005 – March 2008:	Wave 3 interviews for the main survey

For the main survey, wave 1 interviews will take place six months after residence approval (for migrants approved on-shore) or six months after arrival in New Zealand (for migrants approved off-shore). Wave 2 interviews will take place 12 months after this, and wave 3 interviews 18 months later or 36 months after residence approval/arrival. Timelines for the main survey may be amended depending on the results obtained from the pilot.

Reports will be produced after each wave of interviewing for the main survey. These are intended to be comprehensive and made widely available to interested government departments, local government, academics, and community and ethnic groups. Reporting of the data is the responsibility of the DOL although the data will also be available via the normal services provided by SNZ.

### **Further information**

If you have any questions or require further information on the survey, please send an e-mail to [longitudinal.survey.policy@nzis.dol.govt.nz](mailto:longitudinal.survey.policy@nzis.dol.govt.nz), or write to:

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Key User Group updates can also be found on our website at: [www.immigration.govt.nz/research\\_and\\_information](http://www.immigration.govt.nz/research_and_information), by clicking on the Longitudinal Immigration Survey: New Zealand (LisNZ) tab.

The next up-date on the survey will be provided to the  
Key User Group in June 2002