



The Tasmania Project Cost of Living Survey

Technical Report

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TASMANIA
— Institute for Social Change



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Introduction

A technical report describes the process of conducting a survey by providing all relevant survey and questionnaire design and data collection details. This technical report covers the methodological aspects of The Tasmania Project Survey 8 (TTP8, 'Cost of Living'), conducted between 29 September and 9 October 2022.

In addition to describing the sample, recruitment, data collection characteristics, and weighting, this report provides additional insight into the motivations of The Tasmania Project research participants to respond to TTP surveys.

The Tasmania Project research

The Tasmania Project (TTP) uses surveys and interviews to understand how Tasmanian residents are faring and what they need and want in the long term, and to make that

information quickly available to those making decisions now and for the future. It was established by the Institute for Social Change (ISC) at the University of Tasmania (UTAS) to give Tasmanians a voice and to gather important information that can support good decisions made by and for the community.

Since April 2020, there have been 15 TTP surveys, conducted in different COVID stages, including lockdown, three easing stages, borders closed, borders opening, COVID safe, borders reopening stages, and 'COVID normal'. Besides the eight general surveys, the ISC conducted seven other surveys focused on narrower and targeted topics as part of The Tasmania Project, including on food, housing, creative and cultural industries, borders and community health, wellbeing, work, and young people's voices.

The latest TTP 'Cost of Living' Survey described in this report continued the scope of The Tasmania Project by both exploring new relevant topics, such as cost of living and food security, as well as seeking a better

understanding of the most important dimensions of life in the Tasmanian context already studied in previous TTP research, such as income and housing aspects of wellbeing.

The insights from TTP surveys (as well as from qualitative interviews) have been summarised in almost 60 reports that have informed the decisions of a number of government agencies in response to the pandemic.

This is a technical report for the TTP8 survey and the following reports based on the survey data collected in September/October 2022:

- *Inflation, inflation, inflation: How Tasmanians are coping with rising costs of living*
- *The effects of rising costs of living on life satisfaction of Tasmanians*
- *“Quality food is too expensive to afford”: 1 in 2 Tasmanians are food insecure due to the rapidly rising cost of living*

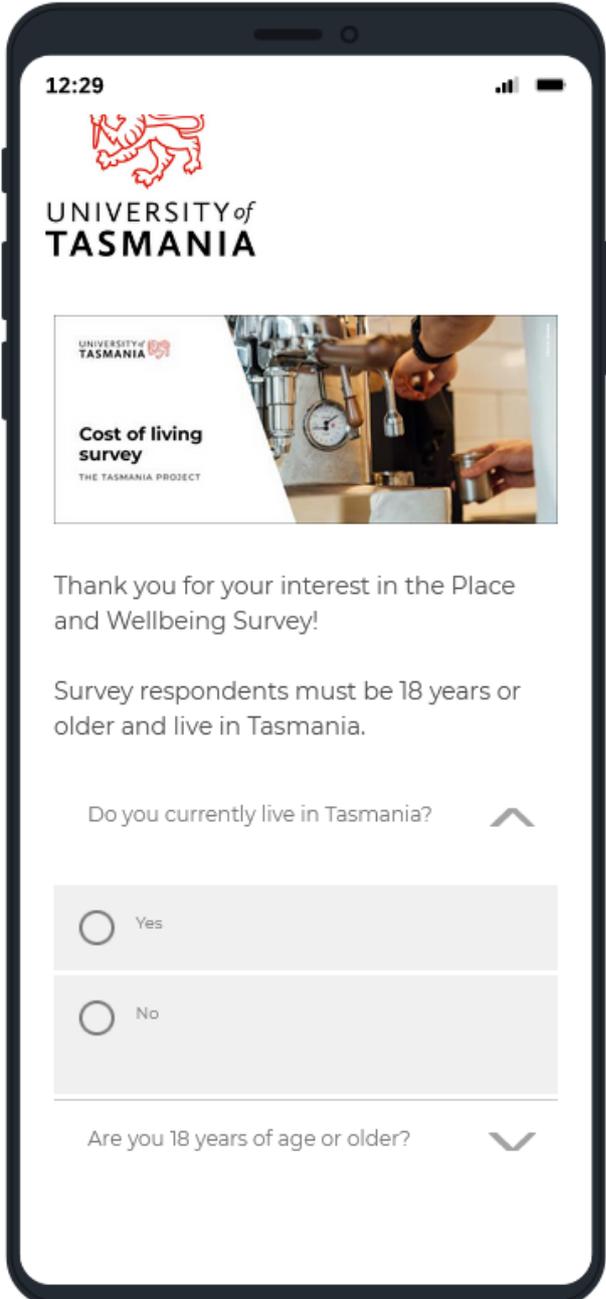
The Tasmania Project Cost of Living Survey methodology

Topics

In the TTP8 Survey, we asked Tasmanians about their attitudes, opinions, and behaviours related to different aspects of their lives, including rising costs of living and aspects of their wellbeing. Other UTAS researchers also contributed their own survey questions.

The survey questionnaire included the following sections and topics:

- Cost of living : *impact of price rises for various items, actions taken to manage rising costs of living, increases in wages, mortgage payments and rent;*
- Wellbeing: *(changed) life satisfaction, income and housing-related wellbeing dimensions;*



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Cost of living
survey
THE TASMANIA PROJECT

Thank you for your interest in the Place and Wellbeing Survey!

Survey respondents must be 18 years or older and live in Tasmania.

Do you currently live in Tasmania? ^

Yes

No

Are you 18 years of age or older? v

- Food security and diet: *serves of different foods per week/day, perceived healthy diet, food insecurity questions, other diet questions (fruit, bread, dairy, meat and other protein foods);*
- Socio-demographic questions;
- Motivations, barriers and challenges to participation in TTP surveys.

Population and sample

Population. The population is defined as adult Tasmanian residents. Only those who were 18 years of age or older and lived in Tasmania at the time of data collection could participate in The Tasmania Project surveys.

Sample. The Tasmania Project uses a volunteer sample of adult Tasmanian residents. Over time, about 4,400 Tasmanians have registered their interest to participate in TTP surveys and provided their email address; for the latest survey, we identified 4,128 valid email addresses which belonged to respondents from the so-called “panel sample”. In the Cost of Living Survey, 1,159 participants (or 90.3%) were from “the panel sample”. The other 9.7% of the final sample (or 125 respondents) were not invited directly via email by the ISC research team but rather through alternative internet channels. A total of 80 participants were recruited via social media, and 45 were recruited using “snowball” recruitment – more specifically, TTP8 participants were asked to share a URL to the questionnaire with anyone who they thought would enjoy participating in the TTP8 survey. All three subsamples were combined into the final TTP8 survey sample (n=1,284).

Response. Of 4,128 members of “the panel sample” with a valid email address, 1,159 completed or partially completed the TTP8 questionnaire. That corresponds to a sample yield of 28.1%. However, as we do not have information on how many adult Tasmanians saw an invitation to participate in the TTP8 survey online or were invited by the survey participants (snowball recruitment), sample yield cannot be calculated for those two “subsamples”. Of 1,284 respondents from the final sample, 1,184 completed the full questionnaire and 100 partially completed the questionnaire (i.e. responded to 50% or more questions).

Data collection characteristics

Survey mode. The online mode has been used in all TTP surveys for data collection. The questionnaire was programmed in Qualtrics which was also used as a data collection tool (for invitations, reminders, monitoring, etc.).

Data collection period. The TTP8 data collection started on 21 September 2022 with an invite to the panel sample (see Figure 1 for the timeline). The invitation to participate in the survey was later published on social media,

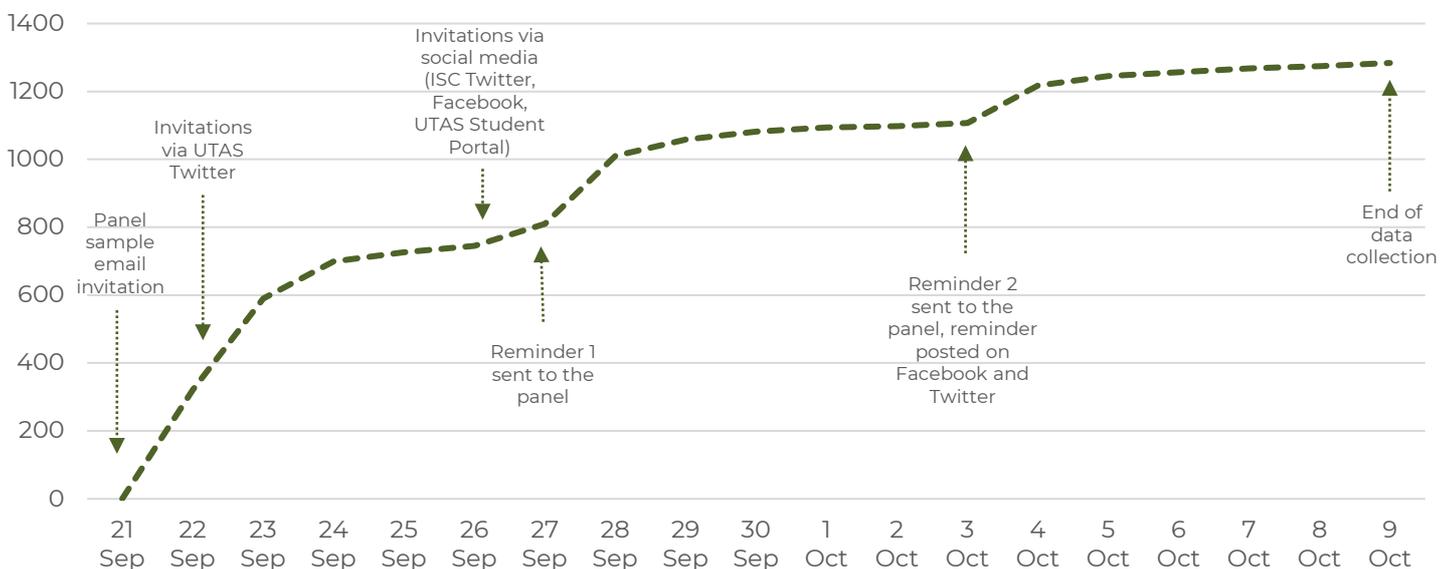


Figure 1: Completed questionnaires by data collection date and invitation/reminder events (cumulative)

including on UTAS Twitter on 22 September, and on Facebook, ISC Twitter and UTAS Student Portal on 26 September. The panel sample was sent reminders on 27 September and 3 October 2022. Social media reminders were also (re)posted on 3 October 2022. The survey was closed on 9 Oct 2022, after a total of 19 days of data collection.

Recruitment channels. The “panel sample” has been gradually recruited since the start of The Tasmania Project, i.e. since April 2020. The study has been advertised across social media (including Instagram, Twitter, Facebook), and on the University and the ISC websites. At the start of the project, various other media, such as three major newspapers, digital media, commercial radio stations and television, were also used to recruit survey participants.

Prior to TTP8 data collection, the “panel” sample consisted of 4,128 adult Tasmanians who had provided their email address (which were valid/active, i.e. did not previously bounce).

To recruit new respondents who had not pre-registered their interest to participate in TTP research, the survey was advertised across social media. In TTP8, we recruited participant with so-called snowball recruitment for the first time.

Response maximisation. To collect survey data from a large sample, as well as to include a wide range of Tasmanian population subgroups, we used a range of different channels, including mailing lists and social media. Also, the panel sample was sent two email reminders on 27 September and 3 October 2022, and we published reminder posts on Twitter and Facebook.

Questionnaire completion time. The median completion time was almost 23 minutes for all respondents. Those who opted not to respond to questions from an optional section of the questionnaire (i.e. additional diet questions), needed about 7.5 minutes less (i.e. median=17.5 minutes) that the respondents who completed the full questionnaire (i.e. median=25 minutes).

Weighting

In all TTP samples, Tasmanian respondents were more likely to be female, 55 years of age or older, more educated, and from the Hobart area. For the sample to better reflect the Tasmanian adult population and to improve sample validity, the TTP8 data were weighted (adjusted post-survey) using representative benchmarks for Tasmania (from the Australian Census 2021).

We used raking, also known as iterative proportional fitting, as a form of calibration. As previously, we used the following weighting covariates (also see Table 1): sex (male, female), age group (6 categories), education (degree, diploma/certificate, high school), and Statistical Area 4 (Hobart, Launceston and North East, South East, West and North West).

Variable	Unweighed		Weighted	
	n	%	n	%
Gender				
Male	373	29.7	619	48.8
Female	871	69.2	628	49.5
Non-binary sex	14	1.1	21	1.7
Age				
18-24 years	69	5.5	119	9.4
25-34 years	116	9.2	215	17.0
35-44 years	174	13.8	191	15.1
45-54 years	217	17.3	198	15.7
55-64 years	302	24.0	213	16.8
65+ years	379	30.2	330	26.1
Education				
Bachelor’s degree or more	807	64.2	322	25.6
(Advanced) diploma, Cert 1-4	287	22.8	394	31.3
High School	163	13.0	548	43.6
Region (SA4)				
Hobart	617	49.8	539	43.2
Launceston and North East	250	20.2	349	28.0
South East	143	11.6	98	7.9
West and North West	228	18.4	261	20.9

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample (pre- and post-calibration, n=1,284)

Motivation to participate in TTP research

Background

Organisations managing online panels are required to continuously monitor panellists'/ research participants' survey experience. For that reason, they often seek various feedback from their panellists which might help them design more interesting questionnaires, better questions, minimise respondent burden, increase survey satisfaction and, ultimately, decrease unit and item nonresponse.

For that reason, at the end of the TTP8 questionnaire we asked TTP panellists a set of questions on their motivation to participate in The Tasmania Project surveys. A total of 1,103 panellists indicated their level of agreement with ten statements about different factors that motivate them to fill out TTP questionnaires.

Methodology

TTP panellists were asked the following question: *We would like to know how much the following factors motivate your participation in The Tasmania Project. To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements? (0 - strongly disagree, 10 - strongly agree).* The ten statements were designed using participants' feedback previously provided as part of TTP6 survey (Feb/Mar 2022), which was in the form of textual answers to an open-ended question on motivation/reasons for TTP participation/registration.

Results

The findings are fairly consistent with the results from TTP6 survey. The TTP8 participants from the panel sample most strongly agreed with the following statements on their motivation to participation:

- *I participate in The Tasmania Project surveys to help the survey/research* (mean=8.62 on an 11-point scale from 0 to 10);

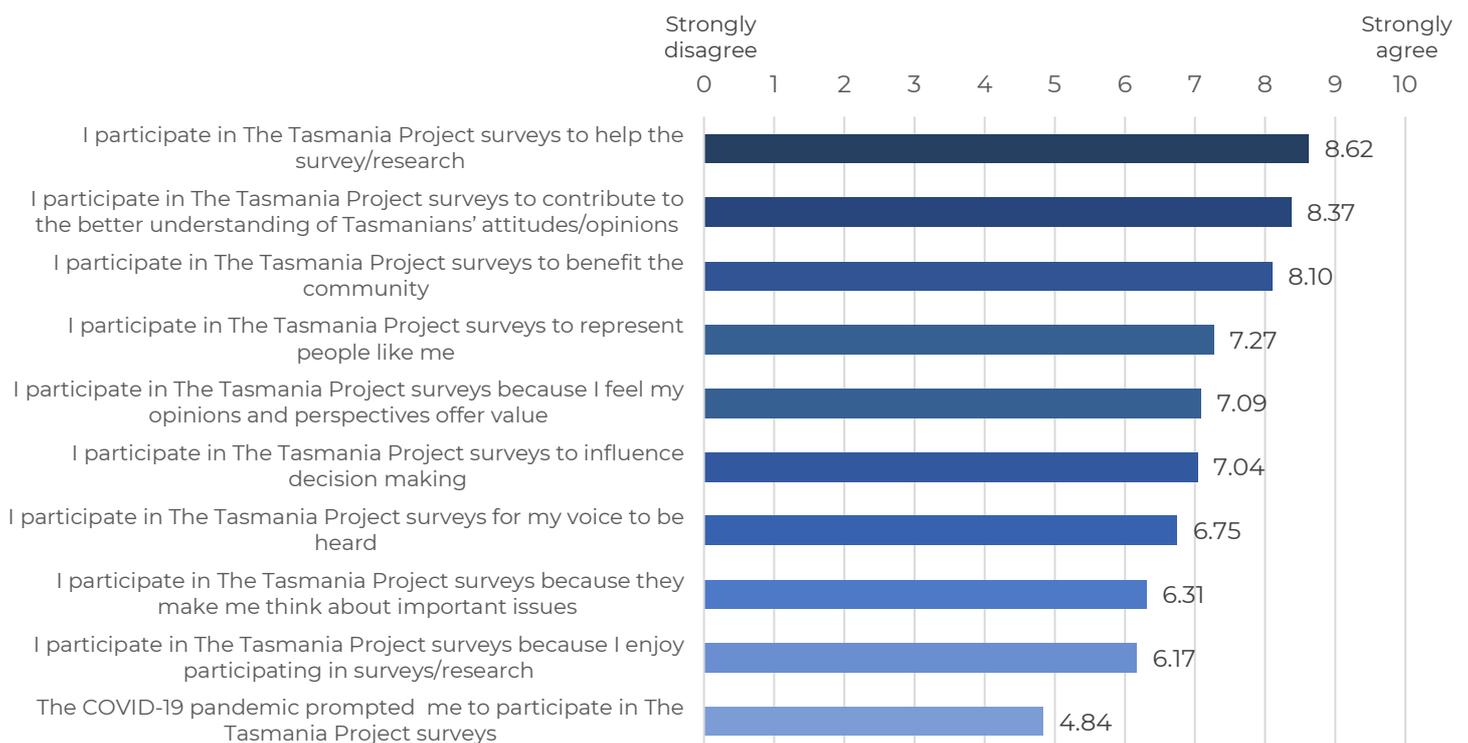


Figure 2: Motivations for participation in TTP surveys, unweighted (n=1,103)

- *I participate in The Tasmania Project surveys to contribute to the better understanding of Tasmanians' attitudes/opinions* (mean=8.37);
- *I participate in The Tasmania Project surveys to benefit the community* (mean=8.10).

Those three statements indicate a strong intrinsic “contribution-focused” motivation to participation. On the other hand, the next four motivations which were slightly less important to TTP panellists are fundamentally more “respondent-focused” motivational factors:

- *I participate in The Tasmania Project surveys to represent people like me* (mean=7.27);
- *I participate in The Tasmania Project surveys because I feel my opinions and perspectives offer value* (mean=7.09);
- *I participate in The Tasmania Project surveys to influence decision making* (mean=7.04);
- *I participate in The Tasmania Project surveys for my voice to be heard* (mean=6.75).

In addition, panellists also participate in TTP surveys due to their “survey-focused” motivational factors, including:

- *I participate in The Tasmania Project surveys because they make me think about important issues* (mean=6.31);
- *I participate in The Tasmania Project surveys because I enjoy participating in surveys/research* (mean=6.17).

However, while a number of TTP6 respondents previously associated their survey participation with the COVID-19 pandemic, “*The COVID-19 pandemic prompted me to participate in The Tasmania Project surveys*” (mean=4.84) was the least important motivation of the selected ten. That said, contribution to the research project/community/understanding of Tasmanians' attitudes and opinions through the COVID-19 lens might have been a more important motivational factor in the earlier stages of the pandemic, as well as soon after the Tasmanian borders reopened in December

2021. Respondents' continued participation in the project as general interest in COVID-19 wanes among much of the public indicates that their interest in the project is broader than just the pandemic.

Conclusion

The findings provided an important insight into the motivations for participation in The Tasmania Project, as well as more broadly – they could potentially be extended to other research projects, surveys, and survey modes.

Importantly, this feedback from TTP panellists should be used in practice: (1) to improve their panel experience (e.g. by asking relevant questions that could ultimately lead to better community outcomes), and (2) to communicate the most important motivations to potential respondents in order to explain better the benefits of participation in future TTP research (e.g. communication in survey recruitment materials).