

The Community Hopes, Fears and Actions Survey was mailed to a random sample of Australians between June and October 2000. The purpose of the survey was to obtain a snapshot of the beliefs, attitudes, values, and motivations that Australian citizens held in relation to the Australian Taxation Office (Tax Office), the tax system, Australian democracy, and fellow taxpayers during the first phase of tax reform. The survey was designed to canvass a broad range of issues relating to taxation in Australia and produced data on some 500 variables (see Braithwaite, 2001). The survey questionnaire was divided into 12 sections. Respondents were encouraged to take breaks, rather than complete the questionnaire in one sitting, and were reminded to do so during the questionnaire.

The sample was selected from publicly available electoral rolls, and thus included both taxpayers and non-taxpayers. The sampling frame excluded those who participated in the tax system but were ineligible to vote because they were under 18 years of age, not Australian citizens, or were excluded on other criteria. Useable replies were received from 2040 respondents, giving a response rate of 29%. Overall, the final sample matched the social demographic profile of Australia reasonably well. Details concerning the methodology of the survey are provided in Working Paper No. 4 (Mearns & Braithwaite, 2001).

The present working paper is divided into two parts. Part 1 (overview) explains what is being measured in each section of the survey and highlights findings from the survey that will be followed up in future working papers. Part 2 (basic descriptive findings) details the breakdown of responses to each of the questions asked in the survey.