



L'Espresso

What's a million more

AMITA TANDUKAR

312 words

21 September 2006

[BRW](#)

First

12

English

© 2006 Copyright John Fairfax Holdings Limited. www.brw.com.au Not available for re-distribution.

Wanted online: Australians living overseas who were ignored by the Australian Bureau of Statistics census completed in early August.

An online survey, One Million More, conducted by the expatriate networks Advance and the Southern Cross Group, in association with the University of Adelaide's Professor Graeme Hugo, right, will collate the first comprehensive research attempting to count and describe the motivations of an estimated one million Australians living overseas. The survey was launched on census night, August 8, and finishes on September 30.

The survey asks questions on income, ethnic background and educational achievement. It also collects data on why expatriates leave the country, whether they expect to return, barriers to returning, the movement of expatriates between countries, whether they are enrolled with the Australian Electoral Commission as overseas voters and their contact with Australia.

The chief executive of Advance, Elena Douglas, hopes the study will allow Hugo's research team to examine trends such as the motivation of expatriates changing over time and decisions to return before critical family events such as children starting primary or high school. Another important aim for Advance is to examine the connection, including business links, expatriates still have with Australia because the group believes expatriates are critical to wider foreign policy objectives. "We would like the federal government to investigate expatriates being resourced to be ambassadors," she says.

The survey team has contacted about 300 expatriate organisations such as chambers of commerce and sporting clubs, and promoted the study through Australian embassies and consulates. More than 5,000 expatriates had responded by the end of August, most of them living in the United Kingdom and the United States, but large samples had been received from Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Japan and Canada.