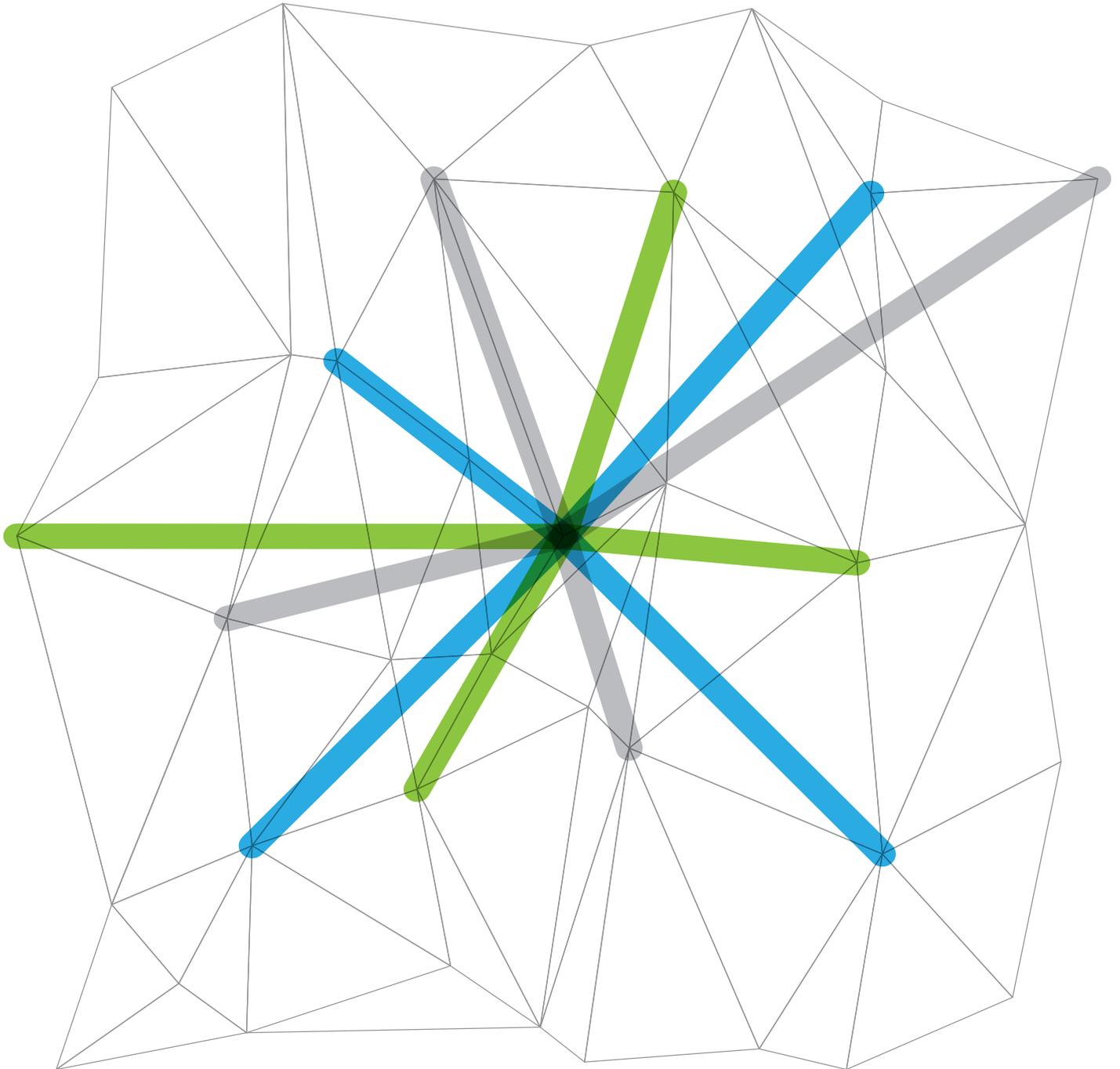


Mapping Social Cohesion

The Scanlon Foundation Surveys 2018



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Copies of this report can be accessed and downloaded at
scanlonfoundation.org.au/research/surveys/
and monash.edu/mapping-population

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Scanlon Foundation surveys

This report presents the findings of the eleventh Scanlon Foundation Mapping Social Cohesion survey. The report builds on the knowledge gained through the ten earlier national surveys (2007, 2009-2017) and twelve local area and experimental surveys, which in total have been completed by 48,000 respondents. **For the first time in Australia, the surveys enable annual tracking of public opinion on social cohesion, immigration and population issues.** The Foundation's social cohesion project also tracks the findings of other Australian and international surveys.

The Scanlon Foundation national surveys are administered by interviewers to respondents selected by randomly generated landline and mobile phone numbers. In 2018, in addition to the interviewer administered telephone survey, the full questionnaire was also administered on the probability-based Life in Australia™ panel, with most panel members completing the survey online. **To our knowledge this is the first major survey on social cohesion that has been conducted simultaneously in interviewer administered and self-administered modes.**

The 2018 survey was conducted from 9 July to 11 August. **The interviewer administered version was completed by 1,500 respondents, the Life in Australia panel version by 2,260.** The survey comprised 77 questions (56 substantive and 21 demographic), including eighteen questions that are used for calculation of the Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion. **This comprehensive questionnaire enables a balanced understanding of public opinion, in contrast with survey findings based on just one or a small number of questions which are typically commissioned for media reporting.**

In this report the focus remains on the results obtained by the interviewer administered survey, to enable consistent tracking of Australian opinion. Findings from the Life in Australia panel provide insight into the variability of public opinion by different mode of surveying.

Demographic context

The Scanlon Foundation surveys have been conducted during a period of sustained population growth and increasing cultural and ethnic diversity in Australia, as indicated by the 2006 and 2016 census findings.

Over the course of the surveys, Australia's population has increased by an estimated five million, from 19.9 million in 2006 to 25 million in August 2018.

Dynamic population movement characterises contemporary Australia. During 2016-17 539,000 migrants in various visa categories (permanent and long-stay) arrived, while 277,000 residents left, resulting in net migration of 262,000. In the same year, 377,000 people moved from one state to another. In Victoria, which has experienced the fastest population growth, there were 86,700 arrivals from another state or territory, while 68,500 moved interstate from Victoria.

In 2016 the overseas-born residents of Australia totalled 6.87 million, comprising 28% of the population, the highest overseas-born proportion in OECD countries with populations in excess of ten million. In addition, 21% of the Australia-born population have one or both parents born overseas, so that almost half the population is either first or second generation.

A high proportion of the overseas-born in Australia live in capital cities: 83% in 2016, compared to 61% of all Australia-born. Within the capitals, the proportion born overseas is unevenly distributed. In Sydney the highest concentrations are in the western region, in Melbourne in the west and south-east.

Australia's immigrants are increasingly drawn from the Asian region: in 2016-17, of permanent additions to the population, 38,264 were born in India, 29,604 in China, and 16,982 in the United Kingdom.

Indicative of the growing diversity of the population, members of faith groups other than Christian increased from 1.1 million to 2 million from 2006 to 2016. Over this period, those who identify as Muslim increased from 340,400 to 604,200, Buddhist from 418,800 to 563,700, and Hindu from 148,100 to 440,300.

Immigration: politics and the media

Over the last twelve months immigration policy has been increasingly contested in politics and the media. Fringe political groupings have called for a halt or drastic reduction in immigration. The One Nation policy specifies a reduction 'closer to the twentieth century average of 70,000'. Former Prime Minister Tony Abbott has been prominent with his calls for a cut, advocating a reduction in the permanent intake from 190,000 to 110,000. Minister for Home Affairs Peter Dutton reportedly favoured a reduction in a recommendation to Cabinet.

Indicative of the increased media coverage, in the national daily *The Australian* there were 16 feature articles on immigration, overcrowding of cities and pressure on infrastructure in the second half of 2017, a much larger 72 in the first six months of 2018.

Poll findings

While there was inconsistency in the exact proportions obtained, a number of polls in 2018 reported **majority negative sentiment, in the range 54%-72%, favouring a cut in immigration**. These findings were reported without scrutiny under headlines such as ‘Voters back migration cut’. Inconsistencies within the one survey and between different surveys were ignored. In the Australian media it is rare to find any attention to survey methodology.

Three surveys obtained different results, highlighting the potential impact of question wording, question context and mode of surveying.

In October 2018 Fairfax-Ipsos, using the three-point response scale that has been employed in Australian surveying on immigration since the 1950s, found that a minority, 45%, favoured reduction, while 52% agreed that the intake should remain at the current level or be increased.

The Scanlon Foundation national survey obtained an almost identical result: 43% of the view that the intake was ‘too high’, 52% that it was ‘about right’ or ‘too low’. The Life in Australia survey conducted for the Scanlon Foundation found 44% of the view that the intake was ‘too high’, 55% that it was ‘about right’ or ‘too low’.

A balanced understanding of public opinion

The annual tracking of opinion and the broad range of questions in the Scanlon Foundation surveys makes possible a balanced understanding of public opinion.

First, consistent with other polling, **the Scanlon Foundation surveys have recorded an increase in the proportion concerned at the level of immigration**, finding an increase of nine percentage points over two years (2016-18). But **they differ in the finding that support for a reduction remains a minority viewpoint**.

Second, it is important to establish the significance of immigration for respondents, not simply to ask for views on immigration. If it was the case, as has been suggested by more than one media commentator, that the population is angry and demand of their politicians that immigration be radically curtailed, then immigration would rank first – or very highly – when survey respondents are asked to indicate issues of importance for the country.

Since 2013 the Scanlon Foundation surveys have asked respondents, in an open-ended question, to indicate ‘the most important problem facing Australia today.’ **In 2018 just 7% of respondents indicate that immigration is the most important issue**. While this proportion has increased since 2015, the increase has been of four percentage points.

Third, the issues that evoke highest negative response are those related to the perceived impact of immigration on overcrowded cities and house prices, and government failure to manage population growth.

Australians continue to endorse the view that their country is an immigrant nation, that immigration benefits the country and will continue to play an important role in the years ahead. Hence only a small minority (14%) disagree with the propositions that ‘immigrants are generally good for Australia’s economy’, the same proportion disagree that ‘immigrants improve Australia society by bringing new ideas and cultures’.

Surveys find a continuing high proportion with positive attitude to immigration when it is considered in general terms. The 2018 Scanlon Foundation survey obtained agreement at 82% with the proposition that ‘immigrants improve Australian society by bringing new ideas and cultures’ and 80% with the proposition that ‘immigrants are generally good for Australia’s economy’.

There is also indication that despite the changing tenor of political discussion of immigration there has been little change in underlying attitudes over the last four years. Evidence is available in the Scanlon Foundation surveys, and also the ANUpoll, the Lowy Institute Poll, and the Essential Report.

A focus on young adults with university level education, a substantial segment of the population that can be expected to exercise a major influence on the direction of Australia in coming decades, finds a high level of concern over house prices (52%) and the impact of immigration on the environment (44%). But a notable distinguishing feature of this group of young adults is the very low level of agreement with the proposition that immigrants increase crime rates (7%), that the immigration intake is too high (7%), that immigrants do not bring new ideas (2%), and are not good for the economy (1%). Less than 1% of respondents in this grouping disagreed with the proposition that ‘accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger’.

Multiculturalism

Since 2013, the Scanlon Foundation surveys have asked for response to the proposition that **'multiculturalism has been good for Australia.'** Agreement has been consistent, in the range 83%-86%. In 2018 it is at 85%. In the Life in Australia panel, agreement is maintained at a high level, at 77%.

It is unusual to find such a high level of positive response to any question that deals with policy that has been a subject of political controversy; for example, in 2018, just 45% of respondents indicate that they have a positive view of government management of population growth, 37% agree with government assistance to ethnic minorities to maintain their customs and traditions. These findings also serve to provide understanding of the meaning of multiculturalism in the Australian context.

The 2018 Scanlon Foundation survey, in keeping with earlier results, finds that **for the majority, multiculturalism is understood as a two-way process of change, requiring adaptation by Australians to immigrants, and immigrants to Australia.** Majority opinion in Australia does not support government funding of cultural maintenance.

The politics of immigration

Politicians present their views on immigration as if they are speaking for the nation, for the Australian people. The reality is that their words are directed to that segment of voters in marginal electorates that supports their party, or that may be attracted to their party, or may be lost to their party.

Immigration and cultural diversity have a different significance for the respective political parties.

The politics of immigration are simpler to navigate for the Greens and One Nation: on the one hand, among Greens supporters there is little demand for a cut in immigration, for One Nation it is the staple of the Pauline Hanson brand.

Immigration is a more complex issue for the Liberal-National Coalition and for Labor, given the profile their support base and those they seek to attract. Among those who indicate that they would vote for the Coalition, a majority (54%-56%) consider that immigration is 'too high,' among Labor voters in the range 36%-43% as indicated by the two modes of surveying. For these mainstream parties there is a juggle, a challenge to balance their electoral appeal given the different elements of the population they seek to retain or attract.

Back to White Australia?

Since the abolition of the White Australia policy in 1973, fringe political groups have called for its reintroduction, with the claim that the fundamental change to Australia's immigration policy has never been approved by the Australian people. These claims ignore the reality that for nearly half a century elections have returned governments opposed to discrimination in immigration policy on the basis of race or ethnicity.

The 2015, 2017 and 2018 Scanlon Foundation surveys tested the extent of support for immigration restriction. Respondents were asked if they agree that in selection of immigrants it should be possible to discriminate on the grounds of race, ethnicity or religion.

Across the three surveys there has been **a large measure of consistency in the rejection of discrimination:** 'strong agreement' with discrimination based on race or ethnicity is in the range 7%-8%, 'strong agreement' with discrimination based on religion at 8%-11%. In 2018 this result is consistent in the interviewer administered and the Life in Australia surveys.

With 'strongly agree' or 'agree' responses combined, support for discrimination based on race or ethnicity is the range 15%-22%; support for discrimination based on religion in the interviewer administered version it is at 18%-22%, a higher 29% in the Life in Australia self-completion version.

It is a notable finding that **across the two modes of surveying, and with a different range of questions, discriminatory immigration policy fails to gain support from more than 30% of respondents.** Within a range of sub-groups considered, majority support is found only among One Nation supporters. **Nonetheless, the level of negative sentiment towards those of the Muslim faith, and by extension to immigrants from Muslim countries, is a factor of significance in contemporary Australian society.**

Deteriorating social cohesion?

The Scanlon Foundation surveys were undertaken with the knowledge that historically, immigration has been central to Australia's economic and social development and its importance was not likely to diminish in the foreseeable future. **The surveys sought to provide evidence to address the critical question of Australia's ability to sustain the migration and social cohesion success of the post-war decades.**

A review in 2017 of the Scanlon Foundation's ten-year record of surveying identified some negative trends which had the potential to undermine social cohesion. There are some indicators of concern in 2018, including the health of the country's political institutions.

Across the western world there is a frequently articulated view that **the public has begun to lose faith in the democratic system. Similar views are evident in Australia.**

In contrast with negative commentary in sections of the media on the Turnbull government, the 2018 Scanlon Foundation survey did not register a low point in government fortunes. Trust in government to 'do the right thing for the Australian people' 'almost always' or 'most of the time' was at a low level (30%) in 2018, but there had been **no significant change in this level over the previous four years.**

When respondents were asked if 'the system of government we have in Australia works fine as it is, needs minor change, needs major change, or should be replaced', 37% in the interviewer administered survey and 43% of Life in Australia panellists indicated that the system 'needs major change' or 'should be replaced'.

Following the vote by the parliamentary Liberal Party which defeated Prime Minister Turnbull, the September 2018 wave of the Life in Australia panel tested change in public opinion. The September survey found that **the proportion of the view that the system 'needs major change' or 'should be replaced' went up by five percentage points to 48%, close to half the sample.**

Another issue of concern is sense of safety. The national survey found concern over becoming a victim of crime was indicated by a minority of respondents at 33%. But in Victoria, where there have been a number of violent incidents and attention in sections of the media to alleged out-of-control 'Sudanese youth gangs', concern about crime was at 41%, ten percentage points higher than in New South Wales and twelve percentage points higher than in Queensland.

There is, however, little additional evidence of deterioration in key indicators of social cohesion; rather, the evidence points to stability.

In 2018, the **SMI registered marginal positive movement**, an increase of 1.2 index points over 2017. The Index is now close to the average of the previous four years.

Questions concerned with sense of belonging, identification with Australia and happiness continue to obtain **positive response from more than 85% of respondents.**

In 2017, 77% of respondents expected that their lives would be 'the same' or 'improved' in three or four years, in 2018 a higher 83%. Asked for their level of satisfaction with their 'present financial situation,' 71% in 2017 and 72% in 2018 indicated that they were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied.' In response to the proposition that 'I am able to have a real say on issues that are important to me in my local area', 62% of respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' in 2017, a higher 68% in 2018.

Given the magnitude of change which has tested Australia's social cohesion since 2007 – the Global Financial Crisis, declining manufacturing industry, heightened cost of living, sustained population growth, increasing cultural and ethnic diversity, political instability with six Prime Ministers in ten years – **Australians remain overwhelmingly supportive of the multicultural character of their nation and of the value of immigration.** Some two-thirds of respondents affirm that Australians should learn from the cultures of new arrivals, but equally that new arrivals should embrace Australian values. Over the course of a period of dramatic change, the Scanlon Foundation research has found that **a large majority of Australians have demonstrated a remarkable resilience and optimism about the future.**

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The 2018 Scanlon Foundation national survey, is the eleventh in the series, following the benchmark survey in 2007 and annual surveys since 2009. In addition to the interviewer administered telephone survey, in 2018 for the first time the full questionnaire was also administered on the Life in Australia™ online panel.

Sample 1: Random Digital Dialling (RDD)

The first five surveys, 2007-2012, sampled households with landline telephones. **Since 2013 the survey has employed a dual-frame sample methodology** involving two separate sample frames; one drawn from random digit dialling (RDD) of landline telephone numbers and a second drawn from randomly generated mobile phone numbers, to achieve the target of 1,500 respondents. Used for the first time in 2013, this approach meant the Social Cohesion Survey was able to include the views of the estimated 36%¹ of adults who live in households without a landline telephone connection on which to make and receive calls (the so-called mobile phone-only population).

As in past years, the Scanlon Foundation national survey was administered by the Social Research Centre. Interviews were conducted by telephone (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing). Landline respondents were selected using the 'next birthday' method, for the mobile component the person answering, provided they were aged 18 years or over. In addition to English, respondents to the telephone survey had the option of completing the survey in one of the six most commonly spoken community languages: Vietnamese, Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), Italian, Greek and Arabic. A total of 23 interviews were conducted in a language other than English.

The sample blend used for the main survey of 1,500 interviews was 50% landline numbers and 50% mobile phone numbers. Overall, 400 (26.6%) interviews were obtained with members of the mobile phone-only population – enough to draw statistically meaningful inferences about this group

Sample 2: Life in Australia™ panel (LinA)

In 2018 the full Scanlon Foundation survey was also administered in a second survey mode, the Life in Australia™ (LinA) online panel. This follows the experimental administration of seven of the survey questions on the LinA panel in 2017.

LinA, Australia's first national probability-based online panel, was established by the Social Research Centre in 2016. It is the most methodologically rigorous online panel in Australia and is one of only several probability-based online panels worldwide.

LinA members were randomly recruited via their landline or mobile phone and paid \$20 to join the panel. Unlike most other research panels, LinA includes people both with and without internet access. Those without internet access or those who are not comfortable completing surveys over the internet are able to complete surveys by telephone. The LinA sample was obtained with 88% of surveys completed online and 12% by telephone. LinA panellists are offered an incentive to the value of \$10, paid by gift voucher, deposit into a PayPal account or charitable donation.

Sample size

The LinA version of the survey was completed by 2,260 panellists, the RDD version by 1500.

Between 2007-2017, a total of 17,280 respondents completed the telephone administered survey, providing scope to interpret trends in Australian opinion on an annual basis. There is also scope, as indicated in this report, to aggregate findings of several surveys to increase the reliability of sub-group analysis.

The sample base of the telephone administered Scanlon Foundation national surveys is expected to yield a maximum sampling error of ± 2.5 percentage points 19 times out of 20. For sub-groups analysis, the margin of sampling error is larger.

Survey administration

The 2018 national survey was conducted from 9 July to 11 August. It comprised 77 questions (56 substantive and 21 demographic) and took on average 19.9 minutes to complete by landline and 19.7 by mobile. **The overall response rate for the national survey was 42%, compared to 45% in 2017.**

The Life in Australia survey was conducted from 16 to 29 July 2018; online completion took 16.0 minutes, the telephone component 18.8 minutes. Of those panel members invited to complete the survey, 79.9% did so.

Full technical details of surveying procedure and the questionnaire are provided in the methodological reports available for download on the Mapping Australia's Population internet site.²

WEIGHTING OF SURVEY RESULTS

Survey data are weighted to adjust for the chance of being sampled in the survey and to bring the achieved respondent profile into line with Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) demographic indicators.

Raking techniques (also known as Rim weighting or iterative Proportional Fitting) were used to weight the data. The population benchmarks included in the weighting solution are: geographic location, gender, age by education, country of birth, and telephone status.

A two-stage weighting procedure was utilised, in part to provide for the use of dual-frame sampling. This involved calculating:

- A design weight to adjust for the varying chances of selection of sample members; and
- A post-stratification weight used to align the data with known population parameters.

Where possible, target proportions were taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics December 2017 Estimated Resident Population counts. The following variables were weighted: state, gender, age (18–34, 35–44, 45–54, 55 plus) by education (university degree, no university degree), country of birth (Australia/ overseas English-speaking country [Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States], overseas non-English speaking country), and telephone status (landline only, dual-user, mobile phone only).

The LinA survey was weighted using the following variables in a regression model: gender, state/rest of state, age/education, country of birth, telephone status, internet usage and frequency, number of adults in the household, number of landlines in the household, and number of mobile phones owned by the respondent.

¹ Australian Communications and Media Authority, Communications Report, 2016/17, p.4

² The Mapping Australia's Population is located at <http://www.monash.edu/mapping-population>

MODE EFFECT AND ONLINE PANELS

The mode of survey administration can have a significant impact on results obtained.

There are two modes of administration: interviewer administered, either in the respondent's home, or over the telephone, and self-administered. Prior to the internet, self-administered surveys were completed in a print copy, now most often completed online.

Since 2010, online completion has been the dominant mode of data collection in the Australian commercial and social research industry. It is estimated that in 2016 there were 50 'research panels' operating in Australia, including the Your Source panel with over 100,000 members, and the Online Research Unit, with 350,000 members, claimed to be the largest in the country.

In terms of cost, face to face interviewing is the most expensive mode of administration, online surveying the least expensive. Online surveys also have the advantage that they are quicker to administer, with scope to complete a survey in a matter of days compared to telephone administration which may take more than a month, depending on sample size and the number of interviewers.

Online panels also enable lower cost targeting of specific sub-groups of the population, for example supporters of a political party or those of a specific ethnicity. Online commercial providers collect detailed demographic data on panel members, which enables them to target invitations to complete a survey to specific sub-groups of the population.

In addition to cost and speed of completion, there are a number of considerations involved in determining mode of surveying.

Interviewer administered surveys

The advantage of interviewer administered surveys via telephone is access to high quality sampling frames via the random generation of telephone numbers.

Probability samples used in telephone surveying provide for a very high coverage of the population and ensure that all members of a population (aged 18 or over and contactable by phone) have an equal chance of being contacted to participate in a survey.

A second advantage is that where a survey is administered by a trained interviewer, **the interviewer is able to repeat the question and response options and probe for strength of opinion.**

There are also a range of potential problems with telephone based administration.

First, random telephone calling typically produces a **low response rate**, as members of the public have become increasingly reluctant to accept an invitation to participate in surveys. The response rate can be below 10%, and below 20% is typical. The low response rate brings into question the representative character of the achieved sample.

A second problem arises from the interaction with the interviewer; the scope for clarifying the meaning of questions may provide for more accurate responses, but despite training and monitoring of calls there remains scope for inconsistencies if a number of interviewers are employed over a lengthy period of surveying (or fieldwork); the **tone, accent, and gender of the interviewer can also impact on response to questions.**

Perhaps the most important issue in interviewer administration is termed '**Social Desirability Bias**' (SDB). SDB refers to the tendency of respondents to give answers they believe are more socially desirable than responses that reflect their true opinions. This form of bias is of particular importance in response to questions that deal with socially sensitive or controversial issues, such as perception of minorities or government programs which provide assistance to sub-groups.

Online surveys

An online questionnaire completed in privacy on a computer, or an anonymous printed questionnaire returned by mail, can provide conditions under which a respondent feels greater freedom to disclose honest opinions on sensitive topics, although a recent development is uncertainty over the security of information provided over the internet. A 2010 report prepared for the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) found that ‘... **respondents may be more honest and accurate when reporting confidentially on a computer.**’ A prominent American researcher, Humphrey Taylor, observes that ‘where there is a “socially desirable” answer, substantially more people in our online surveys give the “socially undesirable” response. We believe that this is because online respondents give more truthful responses.’ Similarly, Roger Tourangeau and his co-authors of *The Science of Web Surveys* report that a review of research ‘demonstrates that survey respondents consistently underreport a broad range of socially undesirable behaviours and over report an equally broad range of socially desirable behaviours.’³

A second advantage of self-completion is conceptualised in terms of ‘**cognitive load**’, referring in part to the scope to administer more complex questions in internet (or printed) surveys. This arises because respondents have greater scope to review and understand the elements of complex questions if they are presented in a readable form and the respondent has time to evaluate and consider a response.

So why is not all surveying completed online?

Given the potential gains from online surveying, together with substantially lower cost and completion in less time, why is not all surveying conducted utilising internet technology?

One main issue relates to **the availability of a comprehensive sampling frame**. If all members of a population had computer access and their computer addresses were centrally listed, as in a telephone directory, then it would be possible to conduct internet random samples. But there is no comprehensive listing of computer users and not all members of a population have access to a computer or are frequent users of the internet – this deficiency of surveys conducted solely online is referred to as **coverage error**.

The majority of online panels worldwide are established via **non-probability** sampling methods; anyone who becomes aware of an invitation to join a panel can volunteer. Part of the attraction is the opportunity to have their views recorded, so **those with strongly formed views may be disproportionately attracted to non-probability online panels**. Panel members usually also receive money for joining the panel, and for each survey they complete, so a **financial consideration** may influence panel membership.

Of all people who become aware of such an invitation, for example through an online advertisement, it is assumed (but cannot be established) that less than 1% join. **There is thus no reliable way to calculate margin of error for a non-probability panel**. Pennay and his co-authors, in their Australian study, observe that ‘although a completion rate can be calculated for within-panel surveys, this rate does not account for the ‘response rate’ when the panel was established.’⁴

Those who decide to join a non-probability online panel are not likely to be representative of a country’s population, nor of the specific sub-groups of the population. For example, those who have not completed their secondary education but choose to join an online panel are unlikely to be representative of all of those who did not complete their secondary schooling; the member of a specific immigrant group who elects to join a panel may not be representative of that group.

Levels of education, computer literacy and English language competence, age and social class, and region of residence, are all factors that influence participation in online panels.

A possible way to overcome the problem of representativeness of non-probability online panels is to recruit panellists on the basis of a random sample – rather than accepting volunteers. The **Life in Australia panel, Australia’s first probability panel** established in 2016 by the Social Research Centre, supplements its panellists recruited by Random Digital Dialling with respondents who do not have internet access or who indicate that they are unwilling to complete surveys online; they participate by telephone.

Probability panels, however, are expensive to establish, and as a consequence are usually limited in the number of panel members; in two known cases, panel members number in the range 3,000 to 5,500.

³ American Association for Public Opinion Research, AAPOR Report on Online Panels, March 2010; Humphrey Taylor, ‘The Case of Publishing (Some) Online Polls’, *The Polling Report*, 15 January 2007; Roger Tourangeau Frederick Conrad and Mick Couper, *The Science of Web Surveys*, Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 133

⁴ D.W. Pennay et al., ‘The Online Panels Benchmarking Study: a Total Survey Error comparison of findings from probability based surveys and nonprobability online panel surveys in Australia’, CSRM & SRC Methods Paper, 2/2018, Centre for Social Research and Methods, Australian National University, p. 32

Given this relatively small number, **a concern is that repeated questioning of the same individuals may yield different results than would be obtained from sampling a larger pool of respondents.** The Pew Research Centre has observed that If the same questions are asked repeatedly, respondents may be influenced by remembering their previous answers. Responding to a number of questionnaires over a twelve month period may also impact on panellists' behaviour or outlook. Pew Research Centre comments that 'Respondents also become more skilled at answering particular kinds of questions ... To the extent it occurs, the panel results may be different from what would have been obtained from independent samples of people who have not had the practice in responding to surveys.'⁵

In addition to sample reliability, there are conceptual issues of relevance to all online surveys.

Conversion of questions from spoken to written form leads to the provision of visual cues that can play a significant role in determining response.

In response to a question asked by an interviewer, a respondent is typically asked if she or he agrees or disagrees. If the response is in agreement then a follow up question may elicit if she or he strongly agrees or just agrees. But if uncertainty is indicated, the respondent may be informed that they have the option of indicating that they 'neither agree nor disagree' or indicate that they 'don't know.' But if the full range of response options are immediately evident on a computer screen, then a higher proportion of 'neither agree nor disagree' and 'don't know' responses may be obtained, creating a different estimate of public opinion.

A strategy to overcome this potential problem is to only show the 'agree' and 'disagree' options, and only indicate other response options if the respondent tries to move to the next screen without providing an answer. That form of programming can lead to an under-estimation of the true level of uncertainty. For example, in the 2018 RDD version of the Scanlon Foundation survey, 20% of respondents indicated to an interviewer that they were uncertain who they would vote for if an election was to be held today, in the LinA version just 4% indicated this response, which was only shown when they attempted to move to the next screen without an answer.

A further issue concerns the **ordering of response options.** Research indicates that in online and other forms of self-completion surveying, a respondent is more likely to select the best 'first' response they see – known as '**primacy**' effect.⁶ On the other hand, in response to an interviewer, a higher proportion of respondents select the best 'last' mentioned response option, known as a '**recency**' effect.

Evaluations

In 2008 the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) established a task force to 'review the current empirical findings related to non-probability opt-in panels utilized for data collection.' Its key findings released in March 2010 stated:

Computer administration yields more reports of socially undesirable attitudes and behaviours than oral interviewing, but no evidence that directly demonstrates that the computer reports are more accurate.⁷

The AAPOR task force also concluded that 'researchers should avoid nonprobability online panels when one of the research objectives is to accurately estimate population values.'⁸

The Science of Web Surveys (2013), authored by Roger Tourangeau, Frederick Conrad and Mick Couper and published by Oxford University Press, reached a similar conclusion:

If the goal of the survey is to generalize to a known population start with a probability sample ...Probability samples seem to represent the population from which they were drawn more closely than self-selected samples do.⁹

Studies of results obtained by European and North American panels have found that non-probability samples completed via online panels are less accurate, on average, than probability samples when measured against known results; non-probability surveys produce results that are more variable from each other than probability surveys; and weighting of online non-probability panels sometimes improved the accuracy of findings, but sometimes reduced their accuracy.¹⁰

⁵ <http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/u-s-survey-research/collecting-survey-data/>

⁶ Tourangeau, pp. 8, 146, 147, 150

⁷ AAPOR, p. 34

⁸ AAPOR, p. 4

⁹ Tourangeau, p. 168

¹⁰ Pennay et al.

In 2015 the Social Research Centre conducted an Online Panels Benchmarking Study. In the study the same questionnaire was administered over eight different surveys, three using probability generated samples administered by telephone and five different non-probability panels. The findings supported those of the overseas studies with regard to accuracy, consistency and the variable impact of weighting.¹¹

Current surveying practice

A range of different surveying modes are currently employed to obtain estimates of public opinion. Despite the higher cost of administration and slower administration, **leading organisations continue to use telephone administered surveys.**

In the United States, the leading non-partisan provider of information on public opinion on social issues and on demographic trends, the Pew Research Centre, has established the probability based American Trends Panel, a nationally representative panel recruited from landline and cell phone Random Digit Dialling surveys. Panellists participate in monthly self-administered online surveys. Those who do not have internet access are provided with a tablet and wireless connection.

Despite access to the panel and partly determined by the volume of surveying undertaken, a typical Pew Research Centre survey is administered to a RDD sample of both landline and mobile numbers.

Other organisation in the United States, such as the *New York Times* and Gallup, continue to rely on telephone based RDD surveying, or a mixed mode of surveying which includes telephone. A leading survey in the European Union, the EU Barometer, which in 2018 was administered in 34 countries, employs the costly methodology of face-to-face interviews conducted in randomly selected households.

Scanlon foundation surveys

The Scanlon Foundation national surveys have been administered to random samples of the population by telephone, since 2013 using a dual-frame methodology which samples both landline and mobile phones.

The participation rate obtained by the Scanlon Foundation has been consistently high. As part of the measures taken to maximise response, after the sample is drawn, letters explaining objectives of the survey are sent to potential respondents on Monash University letterhead.

Potential respondents are informed that the survey is being conducted by university researchers, not a marketing agency, and there is oversight by the University Ethics Committee. In the 2018 Scanlon Foundation survey the response rate was 42.3% for the telephone administered survey.

In addition to RDD surveying, the Scanlon Foundation has experimented with online surveys which have provided insight into the strengths and limitations of the online methodology.

Prior to 2018, four non-probability online surveys were conducted with the objective of trialling a lower cost approach to reach sub-groups of the Australian population. Three of these surveys used commercial panels, the fourth (conducted in 2015) employed an opt-in approach. The 2015 survey focused on immigrant communities and was available in twenty languages. It was widely promoted by community organisations and was completed by 10,480 respondents. It was supplemented by 52 focus groups.¹²

In 2017, seven questions employed in the Scanlon Foundation national survey were trialled on the Social Research Centre's probability Life in Australia (LinA) panel.

In 2018, the full national survey was administered in parallel mode, utilising both the RDD sample and the Life in Australia panel. For LinA the completion rate was 79.9%.

In this report the main focus remains on the results obtained by telephone surveying, to maintain a consistent approach to understanding the trend of Australian opinion. Findings from the Life in Australia panel are also provided to enable additional insight into the variability in opinion which may be masked by sole reliance on an interviewer administered survey. To our knowledge this is the first time a major survey on social cohesion has been conducted simultaneously in two modes.

While the Scanlon Foundation continues to explore a range of survey methodologies, it does so with the knowledge that **there is no perfect method for conducting surveys, rather each methodology has advantages and disadvantages.**

¹¹ Social Research Centre, *Online Panels Benchmarking Study (Technical Report)* March 2016, Social Research Centre; Pennay et al., p. 35

¹² Andrew Markus, *Mapping Social Cohesion 2013, Recent Arrivals Report*; Andrew Markus, *Mapping Social Cohesion 2014*, pp. 46-55 (third generation Australians); Andrew Markus, *Australians Today: The Australia@2015 Scanlon Foundation Survey*; Andrew Markus, *Mapping Social Cohesion 2017* (One Nation supporters), pp. 81-87

POPULATION GROWTH

Australia experienced above average population growth over the last decade.

Whereas **annual population growth** averaged 1.4% between 1970-2010, between 2006-2009 annual growth averaged above 1.7%, with a peak of 2.1% in 2008-09. Since then annual growth has been in the range 1.4%-1.8%, and at an estimated **1.6% in the year to March 2018**.

Population growth is uneven across Australia. For the year to December 2017, Victoria's population grew by 2.2% (2.5% in the year to December 2016), Queensland 1.7% (1.6%), New South Wales 1.5% (1.7%), Tasmania 1.0% (0.8%), Western Australia 0.8% (0.6%), South Australia 0.6% (0.7%).

At the 2016 census Australia's resident population was 23,401,892, an increase of 3,546,605 (17.9%) over the 19,855,287 at the 2006 census. It is estimated that in August 2018 the population reached 25 million.

There are two components of population growth: natural increase and net overseas migration (NOM), which represents the net gain of immigrants arriving less emigrants departing. Between 1975 and 2005 natural increase accounted for 58% of population growth. Since 2006, net overseas migration has been the major component. **NOM accounted for 62% of growth in the year to March 2018.**¹³

Within the permanent immigration program, the main categories are Skill, Family and Humanitarian. **Skill is the largest category, in recent years more than double the Family category.** The program outcome for 2016-17 was 126,076 Skill stream places, 61,032 Family, and 21,968 Humanitarian.

In 2017-18 the permanent intake under the Skill and Family categories fell to 163,000, the lowest in more than a decade, under new vetting rules enforced by the Department of Home Affairs.

A point often misunderstood in discussion of the immigration intake is that **a substantial proportion of those who gain permanent residence are already resident in Australia.** In the program outcome for 2016-2017, 56% of permanent places in the Skill stream and 38% in the Family stream were allocated to residents.

In recent years the numbers entering on long-term visas, primarily comprising overseas students, business visa holders, and working holiday makers, have exceeded permanent entrants, a marked change from the previous emphasis on permanent immigration.

Consistent with international definitions, a person is regarded by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as a migrant if they have been, or are expected to be, resident in Australia for 12 months or more, regardless of their citizenship, type of visa, or legal status. Of the 539,000 people who migrated to Australia in 2016-17, 315,000 arrived on a temporary visa, including just over 150,000 international students, just over 50,000 working holiday makers, and 32,000 workers on temporary skill visas.

On 30 June 2018, those with resident status included 486,934 students (in June 2017, 443,798), 147,339 business visa holders (161,413), 134,909 working holiday makers (134,269), and 176,216 on various bridging visa categories (137,420).

New Zealand passport holders are an additional entrant category. New Zealand citizens are able to live in Australia indefinitely and to work and study, provided they have no criminal convictions or health problems. But since 2001 those entering on the basis of their citizenship do not gain access to a number of welfare and educational entitlements, including student loans. To gain full entitlement, New Zealand citizens need to apply for and be accepted for a permanent visa under the migration program, or for those arriving between 2001 and 2016 meet an income threshold of \$53,900 per annum over a five-year period. On 30 June 2018 there were 673,198 New Zealand citizens (in June 2017, 665,394) resident in Australia.

Temporary entrant residents in Australia numbered in excess of 1.9 million on 30 June 2018, compared to less than 1.3 million in 2007, an increase of more than 60%. In 2016 temporary entrants represented close to 10% of the total adult resident population.

As evidence of **dynamic population movement in contemporary Australia**, during 2016-17 539,000 migrated to Australia, while 277,000, including Australian citizens and other permanent residents, left the country, resulting in net migration of 262,000.

In the same year, 377,000 people moved from one state to another. Victoria had the largest net gain of 18,200 from interstate migration, 86,700 people who moved from another state or territory to Victoria and 68,500 moved interstate from Victoria. The net gain from interstate migration for Queensland was 17,800, while New South Wales experienced a net loss of 15,200.¹⁴

¹³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Demographic Statistics, March Quarter 2018, Catalogue No.3101.0 (20 Sept. 2018).

¹⁴ ABS media release, 'Australia's dynamic population', 27 July 2018

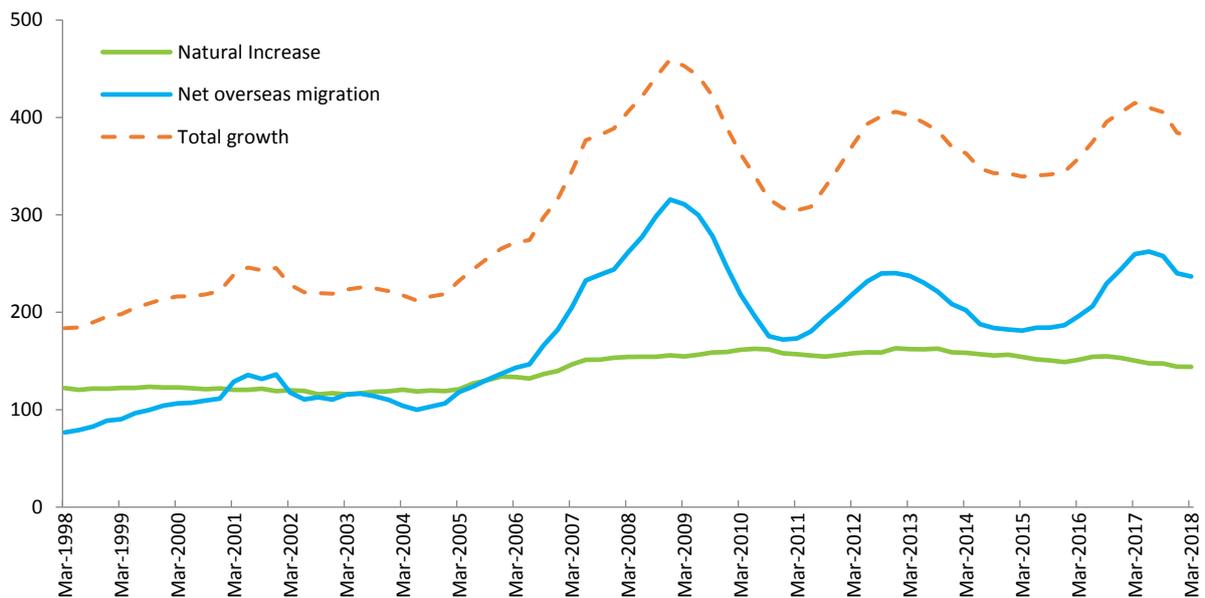
Table 1: Components of population growth, Australia 2007-2018

At 30 June	Natural Increase	Net Overseas Migration	Growth on previous year	Growth on previous year
	'000	'000	'000	%
2007	141.7	232.9	318.1	1.5
2008	148.8	277.3	368.5	1.8
2009	156.3	299.9	442.5	2.1
2010	162.6	196.1	340.1	1.6
2011	156.1	205.7	354.9	1.6
2012	163.1	237.4	414.8	1.8
2013	158.8	206.2	379.6	1.7
2014	156.6	178.8	350.9	1.5
2015	149.0	181.1	340.2	1.4
2016	145.6	216.6	372.8	1.6
2017*	142.7	245.4	388.1	1.6
2018 (March)*	143.9	236.8	380.7	1.6

*preliminary estimate

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, March quarter 2018, catalogue number 3101.0 (released 20 Sept. 2018). Differences between growth on previous year and the sum of the components of population change are due to intercensal error (corrections derived from latest census data).

Figure 1: Components of annual population growth, 1998–2018



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, March quarter 2018, catalogue number 3101.0 Table 1 (released 20 Sept. 2018)

Table 2: Australia, population growth by state, 2012-2017 (percentage)

	AUSTRALIA	VIC	NSW	QLD	WA	SA	TAS
2012	1.80	2.11	1.30	2.05	3.00	0.97	0.01
2013	1.61	2.15	1.38	1.61	1.82	0.90	0.23
2014	1.47	2.14	1.44	1.32	1.06	0.90	0.20
2015	1.46	2.28	1.44	1.21	0.76	0.76	0.32
2016	1.69	2.49	1.65	1.64	0.63	0.67	0.80
2017	1.58	2.23	1.50	1.65	0.80	0.62	0.96

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Demographic Statistics, March quarter 2018, catalogue number 3101.0 Table 2 (released 20 Sept. 2018)

Table 3: Permanent Migration Program by Family and Skill streams, 2009-10 to 2016-17

	Family				Skill			
	Onshore	Offshore	Total	% onshore	Onshore	Offshore	Total	% onshore
2009-2010	16,458	43,796	60,254	27%	46,672	61,196	107,868	43%
2010-2011	13,624	40,919	54,543	25%	67,109	46,616	113,725	59%
2011-2012	16,371	42,233	58,604	28%	62,374	63,381	125,755	50%
2012-2013	39,477	20,708	60,185	66%	55,586	73,368	128,973	43%
2013-2014	20,180	40,932	61,112	33%	75,221	53,329	128,550	59%
2014-2015	20,446	40,639	61,085	33%	70,751	57,023	127,774	55%
2015-2016*	19,128	41,867	60,995	31%	74,126	52,631	126,774	58%
2016-2017*	22,975	38,057	61,032	38%	68,869	57,207	126,076	56%

Sources: For 2009 to 2015 data: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about/reports-publications/research-statistics/statistics/live-in-australia/migration-programme>, Reports on Migration Programmes

*2015- 2017 found at: <https://data.gov.au/dataset/permanent-additions-to-australia-s-resident-population>

Table 4: Humanitarian Program visa grants 2007-07 to 2016-17

Year	Refugee	Special Humanitarian Program	Total offshore	Onshore	Total	% offshore
2006-07	5,924	5,157	11,081	1,707	12,788	87%
2007-08	5,951	4,721	10,672	1,932	12,604	85%
2008-09	6,446	4,471	10,917	2,495	13,412	81%
2009-10	5,988	3,234	9,222	4,535	13,757	67%
2010-11	5,998	2,973	8,971	4,828	13,799	65%
2011-12	6,004	714	6,718	7,041	13,759	49%
2012-13	12,012	503	12,515	7,504	20,019	63%
2013-14	6,501	4,515	11,016	2,752	13,768	80%
2014-15	6,002	5,007	11,009	2,747	13,756	80%
2015-16	8,284	7,268	15,552	2,003	17,555	89%
2016-17	9,653	10,604	20,257	1,711	21,968	92%

Source: Department of Home Affairs, Historical Migration Statistics, table 4.1 (released May 2018)

Figure 2: Permanent Migrant Programme by category, 1996-97 to 2016-17

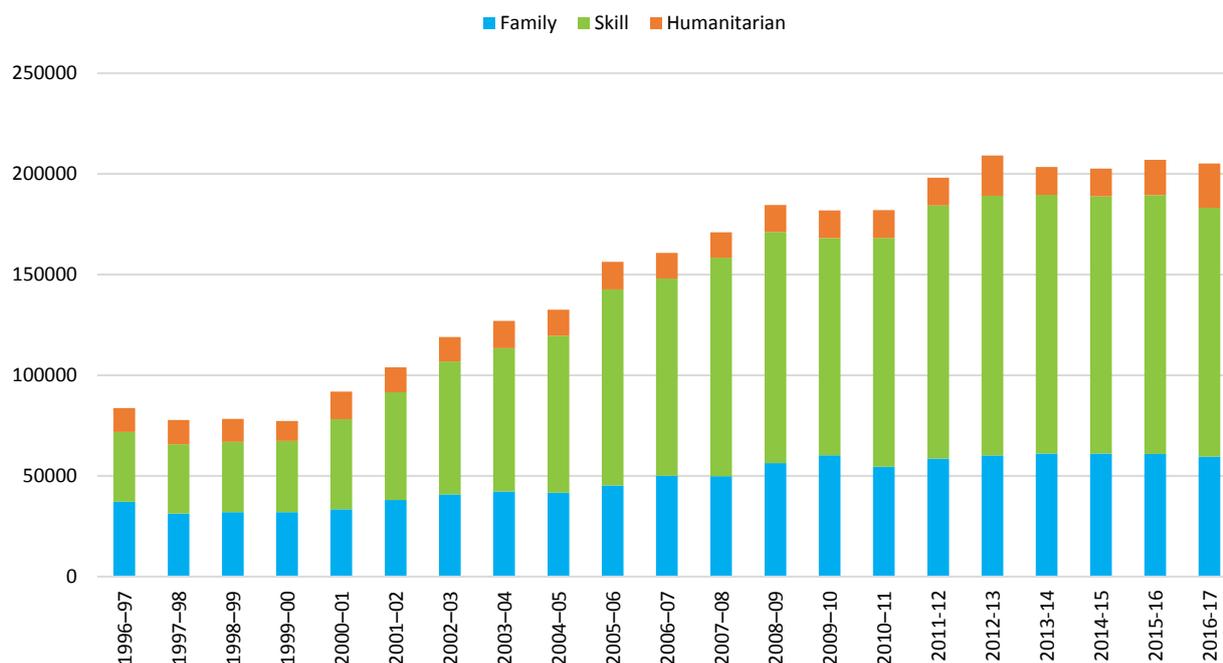


Table 5: Temporary entrants resident in Australia, main categories, 2012-2018

At 30 June	Overseas students	Business Temporary skilled	Working holiday makers	Bridging	Visitor	New Zealand citizens (special category 444 visa)
2012	307,045	162,273	136,593	113,863	202,228	646,093
2013	304,248	191,216	160,503	104,666	198,690	640,770
2014	339,761	195,083	151,201	94,625	200,731	649,085
2015	374,564	188,002	143,918	102,219	226,395	653,832
2016	401,423	170,585	137,376	119,368	262,445	660,182
2017	443,798	161,413	134,269	137,420	294,368	665,394
2018	486,934	147,339	134,909	176,216	304,140	673,198

Source: <https://data.gov.au/dataset/temporary-entrants-visa-holders>

Country of birth

Australia maintains a diverse immigration intake. In 2016-17 permanent additions to Australia's population included nationals of 1000 or more from 29 countries, with four major source countries.

Arrivals from India and China markedly increased in recent years; between 2006-07 and 2016-17, arrivals from India increased from 19,823 to 38,264; from China the increase was from 21,820 to 29,604. In contrast, arrivals from the United Kingdom decreased from 29,789 to 16,982.

Over the last thirty years, an increasing proportion of immigrants have been drawn from the Asian region. In 2016-17, of the top ten source countries, seven are in the Asian and Middle Eastern regions, the exceptions being the United Kingdom, New Zealand and South Africa.

Settler arrivals from New Zealand, who are not included in the Migration Programme, have declined in recent years, from 23,365 in 2014-15 to 8,199 in 2016-17.

In 2016, of the overseas-born population recorded in the Census, the leading countries of birth were the United Kingdom 16% (23% in 2006), New Zealand 8% (9%), China 7% (5%), India 7% (3%), the Philippines 3% (3%), Vietnam 3% (4%), Italy 3% (4%), and South Africa 2% (2%).

Table 6: Top 10 countries of birth of the overseas-born population, 2006, 2016 at the Census

Country of birth	2006	2016	% change
United Kingdom	1,037,475	1,085,050	4.6%
New Zealand	389,465	518,462	33.1%
China (excludes SARs and Taiwan)	206,588	509,558	146.7%
India	147,106	455,385	209.6%
Philippines	120,540	232,391	92.8%
Vietnam	159,850	219,351	37.2%
Italy	199,124	174,042	-12.6%
South Africa	104,132	162,450	56.0%
Malaysia	92,335	138,363	49.8%
Sri Lanka	62,256	109,850	76.4%
Elsewhere overseas	5,782,341	7,787,057	34.7%
Total overseas-born	5,031,630	6,873,050	36.6%

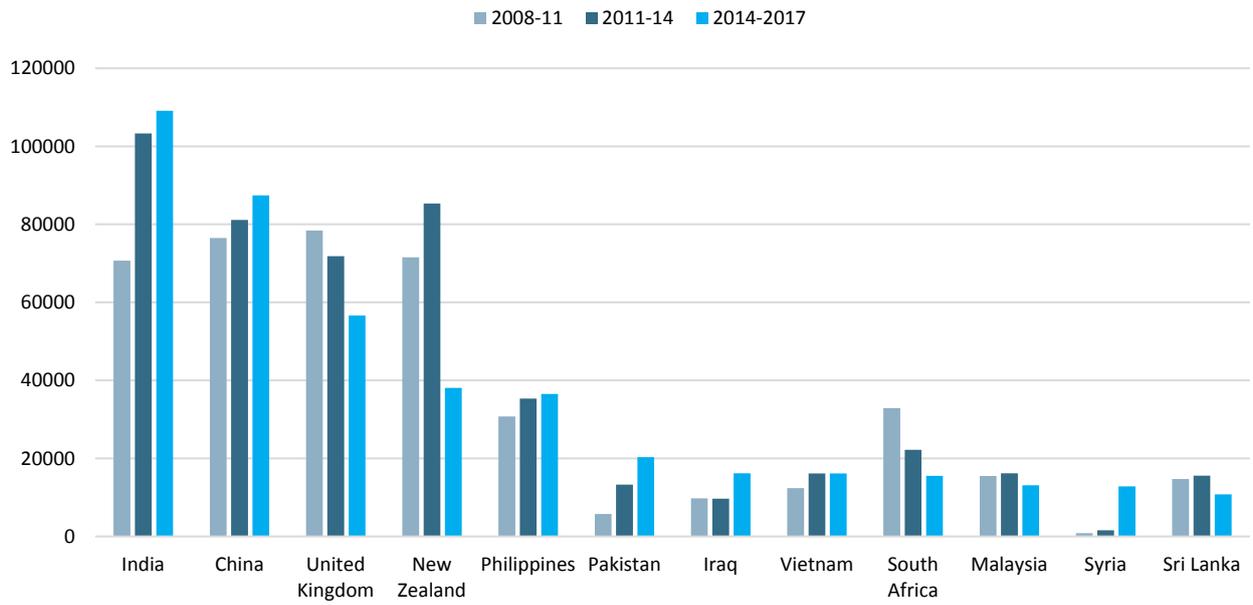
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 and 2016 Census data based on Counting Persons, Place of Usual Residence.

Table 7: Permanent additions to Australia's population by top ten countries of birth, 2016-17 period compared with same countries in 2006-07

Country of birth	2006-07	2016-17	% change
India	19,823	38,264	93.0%
People's Republic of China	21,820	29,604	35.7%
United Kingdom	29,789	16,982	-43.0%
Philippines	6,368	12,180	91.3%
Iraq	2,391	9,771	308.7%
Syria	271	8,229	2936.5%
New Zealand	23,916	8,199	-65.7%
Pakistan	1,848	6,315	241.7%
Vietnam	3,547	5,579	57.3%
South Africa	5,970	5,397	-9.6%
Total top 10	115,743	140,520	21.4%
TOTAL	191,907	225,941	17.7%

Source: Department of Home Affairs, Historical Migration Statistics, tables 2.1 and 2.2 (released May 2018)

Figure 3: Permanent additions by country of birth, major source country, three year intervals, 2008-11 to 2014-17



Source: Department of Home Affairs, Historical Migration Statistics, tables 2.1 and 2.2 (released May 2018)

Ethnic and religious diversity

The 2016 Census indicates that 28% of the Australian population was born overseas, the highest proportion since the late nineteenth century. A further 21% of those born in Australia had at least one overseas-born parent.

There has been a gradual increase in the proportion overseas-born, from 23% in 2001 to 25% in 2006, and 27% in 2011. Between the 2006 and 2016 Census, the number born overseas has increased by 1,841,420 persons, from 5,031,630 to 6,873,050.

The 28% overseas-born ranks Australia first within the OECD among nations with populations over ten million. It compares with 20% overseas-born in Canada, 13% in Germany, 13% in the United States, 12% in the United Kingdom, and 12% in France. The average for the OECD is 12%.

A relatively high proportion of the overseas-born in Australia live in capital cities: 83% in 2016, compared to 61% of all Australia born and 67% of the total population. In 2016, the overseas-born comprised an estimated 37% of Sydney, 36% of the population of Perth, 34% of Melbourne, 26% of Adelaide, Brisbane, Darwin and ACT, and 14% of Hobart.

Within the capitals, the proportion of overseas-born is unevenly spread. In Sydney the highest concentrations are in the western region, in Melbourne in the west and south-east, and the extent of concentration has increased since 2006.

Sydney has higher concentrations of overseas born than Melbourne. In 2006, in 21% of Sydney Local Government Areas 40% or more of the population was overseas born, in Melbourne just half this proportion, 10%. By 2016, the proportion in Sydney had increased to 44%, in Melbourne to 17%.

At the lower level of aggregation of suburb, in 2016, 20% of Sydney's population and 10% of Melbourne's lived in a suburb in which at least 50% of the population is overseas born.

Birthplace statistics do not, however, indicate the full extent of religious, cultural and linguistic diversity in these regions, as country of birth does not capture the extent of diversity among the second generation, those born to immigrant parents. **A fuller insight is provided with reference to religious identification and languages spoken in the home.**

While the census provides the best indication of the **religions of the Australian population**, it is only a partial measure as religion is an optional question in the census, and a change in word-order of the census question meant that there was a break in the series (or lack of direct comparability) between 2016 and earlier censuses. It is likely that the census undercounts adherents of many faith groups, and this undercount increased in 2016.

As enumerated, the adherents of Christian faith groups remained largely constant at over 12 million between 2006 and 2016, while those indicating that they had no religion increased by 87% (from 3.7 million to 7 million), and **those of faith groups other than Christian increased by 84%, (from 1.1 million to 2 million).** The largest increases were among those of the Hindu faith, up 197% (from 148,100 to 440,300) and the Islamic faith, up 78% (from 340,400 to 604,200).

When considered at the Local Government Level, the enumerated main non-Christian faith groups increased between 2006 and 2016 in Canterbury-Bankstown (Sydney) from 66,590 to 99,686; in Greater Dandenong (Melbourne) from 31,110 to 49,082.

With regard to **languages spoken in the home**, in 2016, in the Sydney Local Government Area of Fairfield, which has a population of 198,800, 57% of the population is overseas-born, and only 10% have both parents born in Australia. In 74% of homes a language other than English is spoken and 27% identify with one of the three main non-Christian faith groups.

In the Melbourne Local Government Area of Greater Dandenong, of the population of 152,000, 62% were born overseas and just 12% have both parents born in Australia; 68% speak a language other than English in the home and 32% identify with a main non-Christian faith group.

Further detail on the extent of ethnic and religious diversity is provided in the 2017 Scanlon Foundation social cohesion report.

Table 8: Religious affiliation in Australia, 2006, 2016 at the Census

	2006	2016	% increase/ decrease
Christian			
Anglican	3,718,248	3,101,187	-16.6%
Roman Catholic	5,126,885	5,291,839	3.2%
Other	3,840,695	3,808,579	-0.8%
Total Christian	12,685,828	12,201,605	-3.8%
Non-Christian			
Islam	340,392	604,244	77.5%
Buddhist	418,758	563,675	34.6%
Hinduism	148,125	440,303	197.3%
Judaism	88,831	91,023	2.5%
Other religions	109,026	221,593	103.2%
Total non-Christian	1,105,124	2,027,844	83.5%
No religion*	3,706,553	7,040,715	90.0%
Not stated	2,223,957	2,132,167	-4.1%

* In 2016 'no religion' was reclassified as 'Secular beliefs, other spiritual beliefs and no religious affiliation'.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing, 2006 and 2016, TableBuilder

THE SCANLON-MONASH INDEX (SMI) OF SOCIAL COHESION

A nominal index of social cohesion was developed using the findings of the 2007 national survey to provide baseline data. The following questions, validated by Factor Analysis, were employed to construct the index for the five domains of social cohesion:

Belonging: Indication of pride in the Australian way of life and culture; sense of belonging; importance of maintaining Australian way of life and culture.

Worth: Satisfaction with present financial situation and indication of happiness over the last year.

Social justice and equity: Views on the adequacy of financial support for people on low incomes; the gap between high and low incomes; Australia as a land of economic opportunity; trust in the Australian government.

Participation (political): Voted in an election; signed a petition; contacted a Member of Parliament; participated in a boycott; attended a protest.

Acceptance and rejection, legitimacy: The scale measures rejection, indicated by a negative view of immigration from many different countries; reported experience of discrimination in the last 12 months; disagreement with government support to ethnic minorities for maintenance of customs and traditions; feeling that life in three or four years will be worse.

After trialling several models, a procedure was adopted which draws attention to minor shifts in opinion and reported experience, rather than one which compresses or diminishes the impact of change by, for example, calculating the mean score for a set of responses.¹⁵ **The purpose of the index is to heighten awareness of shifts in opinion which may call for closer attention and analysis.**

In 2018, the SMI registered marginal upward movement, an increase of 1.2 index points compared to 2017. The Index is now close to the average of the previous four years, only 0.2 index points below the four-year average.

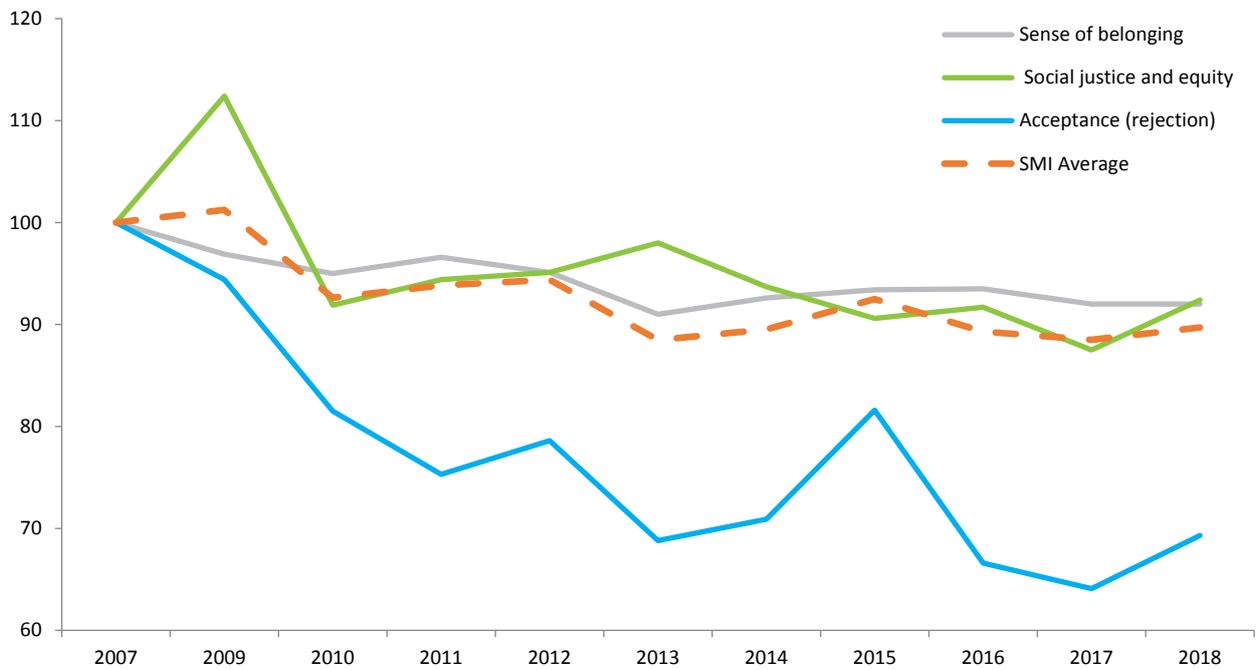
The 2018 SMI registered higher scores in two of the domains of social cohesion, is unchanged in one and lower in two. The largest upward movement is 5 index points in both the domains of acceptance/ rejection and social justice. The domain of social justice, which for the first time fell below 90 index points in 2017, is now above that level. The lowest score remains in the domain of acceptance/ rejection, which is at 69 index points.

¹⁵ The nominal index scores the level of agreement (or disagreement in the index of rejection). The highest level of response (for example, 'strongly agree') is scored twice the value of the second level ('agree'). Responses within four of the five indexes are equalised; within the index of participation, activities requiring greater initiative (contacting a Member of Parliament, participating in a boycott, attending a protest) are accorded double the weight of the more passive activities of voting (compulsory in Australia) and signing a petition. See Andrew Markus and Jessica Arnup, *Mapping Social Cohesion 2009: The Scanlon Foundations Surveys Full Report* (2010), section 12

Table 9: The Scanlon-Monash Index (SMI) of Social Cohesion, 2007-2018

Domain	2007 ¹⁶	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Change 2017-18 (index points)
1. Sense of belonging	100	96.9	95.0	96.6	95.1	91.0	92.6	93.4	93.5	92.0	92.0	0.0
2. Sense of worth	100	97.2	96.7	96.5	96.5	93.8	96.8	97.2	95.9	94.7	94.4	-0.3
3. Social justice and equity	100	112.4	91.9	94.4	95.1	98.0	93.7	90.6	91.7	87.5	92.4	4.9
4. Political participation	100	105.3	98.0	106.4	106.6	90.8	93.6	99.7	98.8	104.2	100.6	-3.6
5. Acceptance (rejection)	100	94.4	81.5	75.3	78.6	68.8	70.9	81.6	66.6	64.1	69.3	5.2
Average	100	101.2	92.6	93.8	94.4	88.5	89.5	92.5	89.3	88.5	89.7	1.2

Figure 4: The Scanlon-Monash Index (SMI) of Social Cohesion, average and selected domains, 2007-2018



¹⁶ Benchmark measure. The Scanlon Foundation survey changed from bi-annual to annual frequency in 2010.

COMPONENTS OF THE SCANLON-MONASH INDEX

SMI 1: Sense of belonging

General questions relating to national life and levels of personal satisfaction continue to elicit the high levels of positive response that are evident in Australian surveys over the last 20 years. There has been little change within the domain of belonging since it reached a low point in 2013.

Sense of belonging ('great' and 'moderate'): 90% in 2018, down from 94%-96% between 2007-2012. The proportion indicating belonging 'to a great extent' has declined from a high point of 77% in 2007 and is at 64% in 2018.

Sense of pride in the Australian way of life and culture ('great' and 'moderate'): 89% in 2015-18, down from 93% in 2011 and 94% in 2007. Sense of pride 'to a great extent' increased from 51% in 2013, 56% in 2016, 55% in 2018.

Importance of maintaining the Australian way of life and culture ('strongly agree' and 'agree') was constant at 91% from 2010 to 2016, down from 93% in 2009 and 95% in 2007. **In 2017 it dropped to 87%, the lowest result since 2007, in 2018 it increased to 90%.** There has been a marked shift in the balance between 'strong agreement' and 'agreement', with a decrease in 'strong agreement' from 65% in 2007 to 55% in 2012-13; in 2017 'strong agreement' was at 56%, in 2018 at 58%.

Figure 5: Sense of pride and importance in maintaining the Australian way of life, 2007-2018

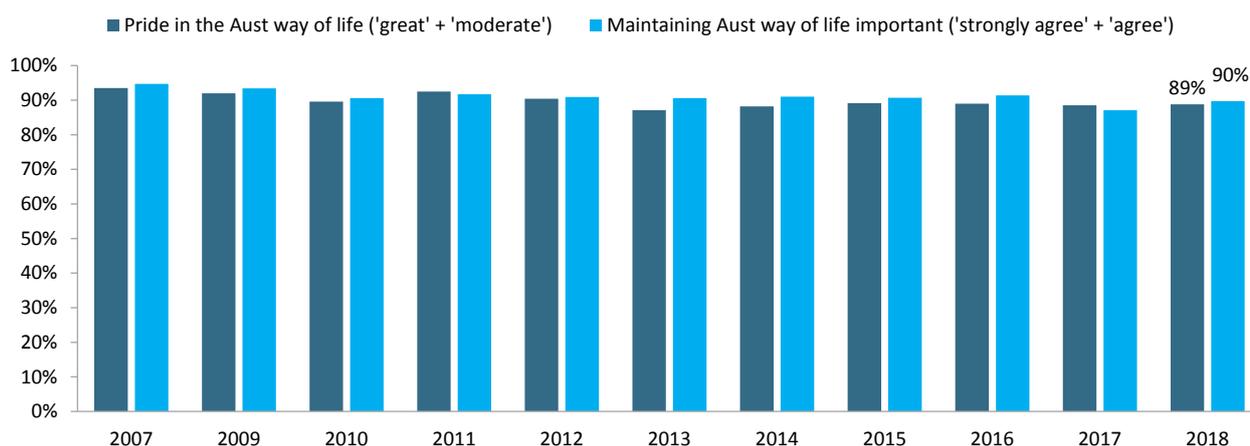
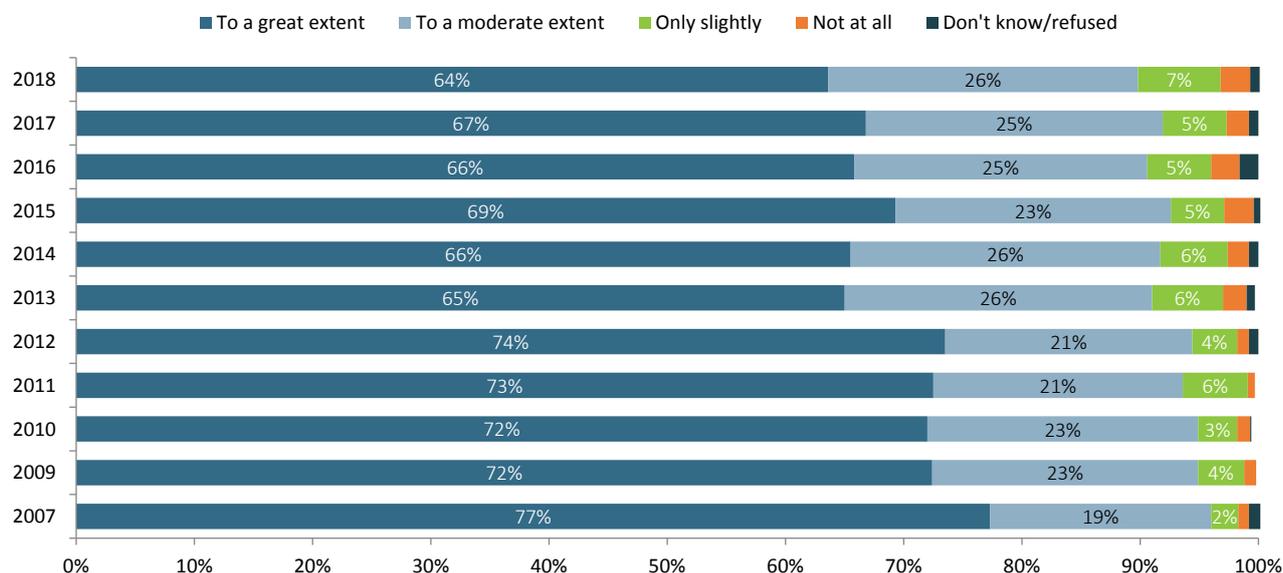


Figure 6: 'To what extent do you have a sense of belonging in Australia?', 2007-2018



SMI 2: Sense of worth

There has been little change in the indicators of worth. Since 2007, financial satisfaction has been in the range 71%-74%, while sense of happiness has been in the range 85%-89% (the low of 85% was recorded in 2016 and 2018).

Financial satisfaction ('very satisfied' and 'satisfied'): 72% in 2016-2018, 71% in 2015, 73% in 2014, and 71% in 2013.

Happiness over the last year: ('very happy' and 'happy'), 85% in 2018, 86% in 2017, 85% in 2016, 89% in 2015, 88% in 2014, and 87% in 2013. There has been a negative shift in the proportion indicating the strongest level of 'happiness': in 2007, 34% indicated that they were 'very happy', in 2017 a statistically significantly lower 26%, in 2018 a marginally lower 25%.

Figure 7: Happiness over the last 12 months and present financial satisfaction, 2007-2018

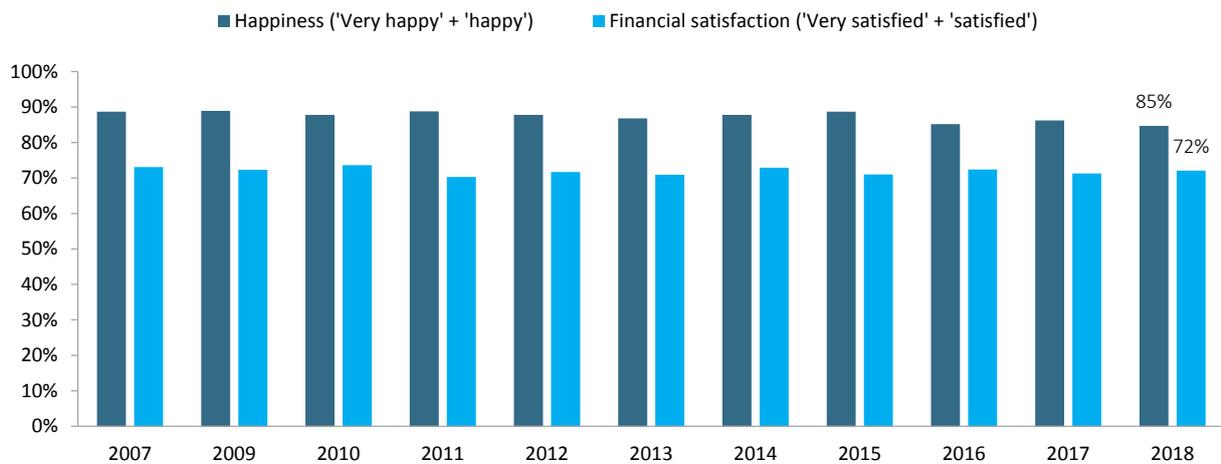
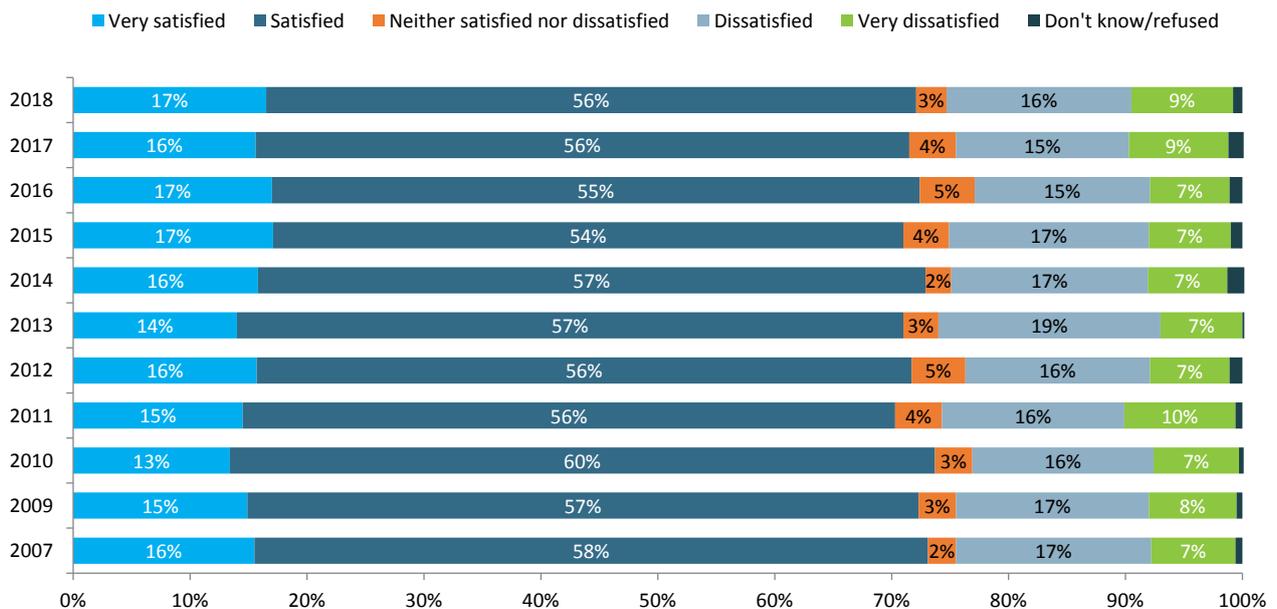


Figure 8 'How satisfied are you with your present financial situation?', 2007-2018



SMI 3: Social justice and equity

The domain of **social justice and equity** registered a **sharp fall between 2009 and 2010**. In 2011, 2012 and 2013 there was marginally positive movement in the domain, but the aggregated score remained significantly below the 2009 peak (112). In 2014 and 2015 the index recorded further decline (94, 91), and after a marginal increase in 2016 it reached its lowest point in 2017 with a score of 88. In 2018 it is close to the 2016 level.

In response to the proposition that **‘Australia is a land of economic opportunity where in the long run, hard work brings a better life’**, the level of ‘strong agreement’ has declined from a high of 40% in 2011 to 33% in 2017 and 34% in 2018. The proportion indicating agreement (‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’) has ranged from 80% to 82% across the surveys to 2013, with a decline to 78%-79% from 2014 to 2016 and a further decline to 75% in 2017 and 74% in 2018. The level of disagreement (‘strongly disagree’ or ‘disagree’) has been in the range 13%-16% to 2013, a higher 17% in 2014, 19% in 2015, 18% in 2016, and 20% in 2017 and **22% in 2018, marginally the highest level registered in the survey.**

In response to the proposition that **‘in Australia today, the gap between those with high incomes and those with low incomes is too large’**, the proportion in agreement has fluctuated between 71% and 78%. In 2015-18 it has been between 76%-78%, in 2018 at 77%.

In response to the proposition that **‘people living on low incomes in Australia receive enough financial support from the government’**, opinion has been close to evenly divided. In 2016, 45% agreed, 46% disagreed. **In 2017 and 2018, however, 38%-39% agreed, the lowest level recorded in the surveys, while in 53%-55% disagreed.**

In 2007, the last year of the Howard government, 39% of respondents indicated **trust in government ‘to do the right thing for the Australian people’ ‘almost always’ or ‘most of the time.’** In 2009, at a time of high support for the government of Prime Minister Rudd, trust in government rose sharply to 48%. **In 2010 there was a sharp fall to 31% in the level of trust in the federal government and the previous levels have not been regained.** From 2013 to 2016 trust was in the range 27%-30%, in 2017 it was at 28%, in 2018 at 30%.

Figure 9: ‘Australia is a land of economic opportunity where in the long run, hard work brings a better life’, 2007-2018

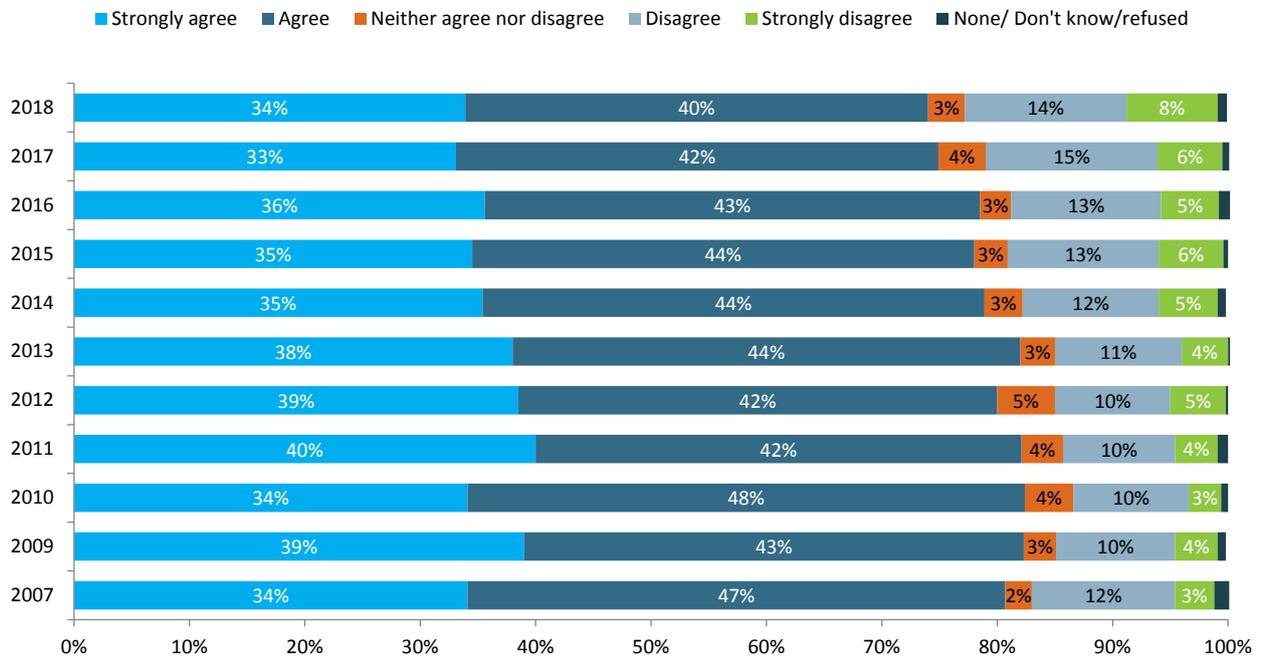


Figure 10: 'In Australia today, the gap between those with high incomes and those with low incomes is too large', 2007-2018

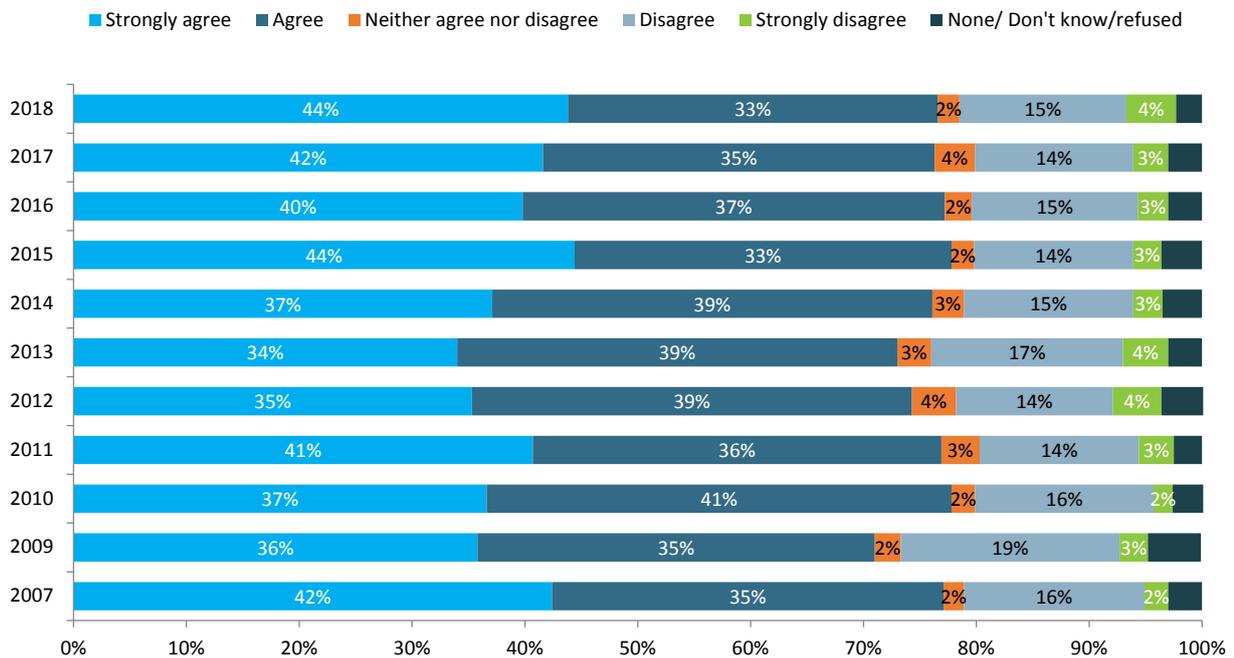
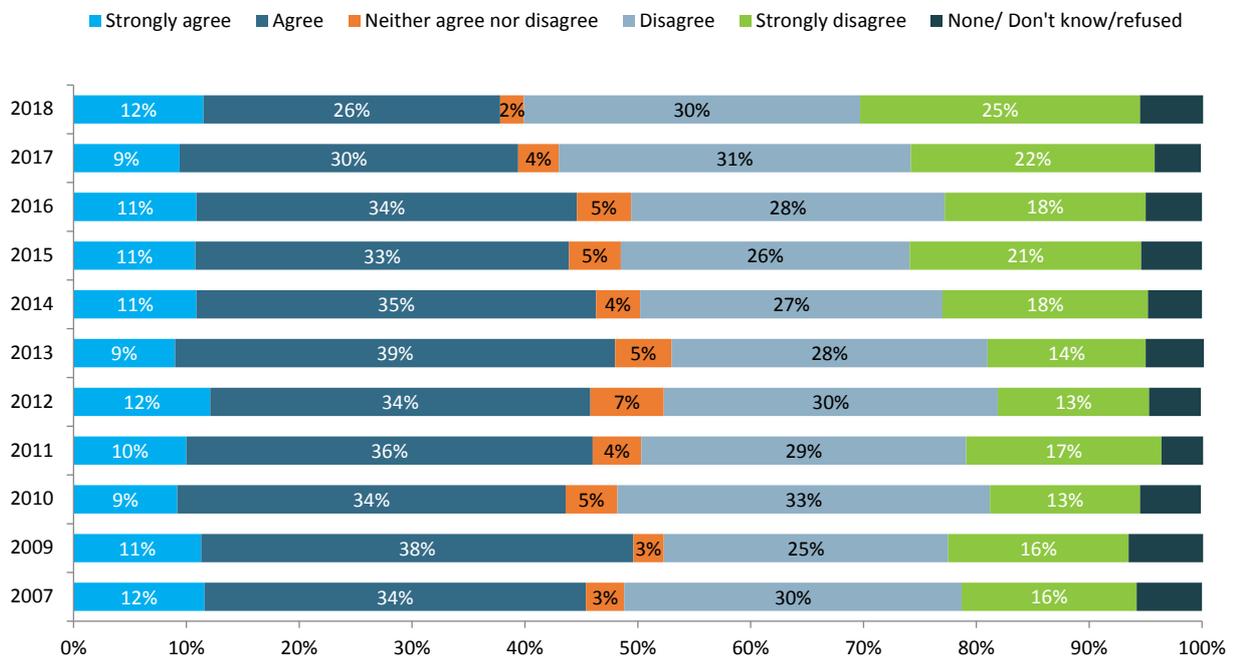


Figure 11: 'People living on low incomes in Australia receive enough financial support from the government', 2007-2018



SMI 4: Participation

In 2018, the SMI indicated increased political participation, with the index at 101, marginally lower than 104 the previous year.

The index reached its highest level in 2011 and 2012 at 106 and 107 respectively, and fell to its lowest in 2013 at 91.

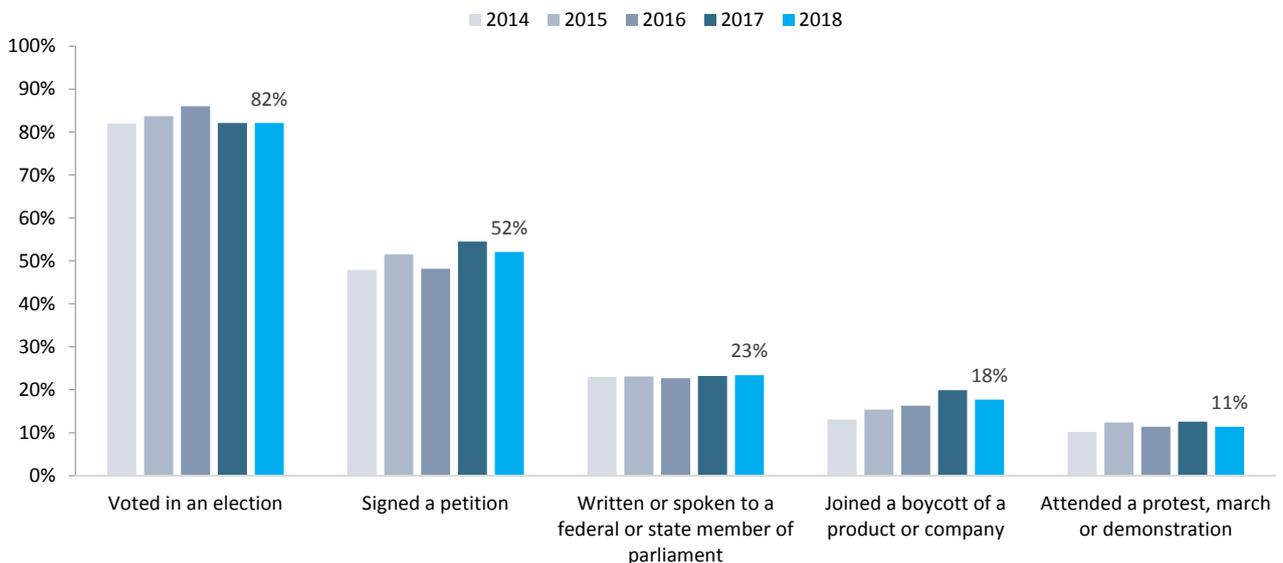
Comparing the results for 2017 and 2018, the proportion indicating that they had voted in an election remained constant at 82%; having signed a petition down from 55% to 52%; contact with a member of parliament remained at 23%; participation in a boycott of a product or company marginally declined from 20% to 18%; attendance at a protest, march or demonstration also marginally declined from 13% to 11%.

Table 10: 'Which, if any, of the following have you done over the last three years or so?', 2007-2018 (percentage)

Response	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
Voted in an election	85	87	83	89	88	79	82	84	86	82	82
Signed a petition	55	56	54	56	54	45	48	52	48	55	52
Written or spoken to a federal or state member of parliament	24	27	25	25	27	23	23	23	23	23	23
Joined a boycott of a product or company	12	14	14	18	15	13	13	15	16	20	18
Attended a protest, march or demonstration	13	13	9	11	14	10	10	12	11	13	11
N (unweighted)	2,012	2,019	2,021	2,001	2,000	1,200	1,526	1,501	1,500	2,236	1,500

*Change between 2017 and 2018 not statistically significant at $p < .05$

Figure 12: 'Which, if any, of the following have you done over the last three years or so?', 2014-2018 (percentage)



SMI 5: Acceptance and rejection

The index of acceptance and rejection found strong downward movement between 2009-2011, 2012-13, and 2015-16. In 2018 it is at 69 index points, higher than 64 recorded in 2017, but at the lowest point for the five domains of social cohesion.

Reported experience of discrimination on the basis of ‘skin colour, ethnic origin or religion’ was at 19% in 2018, close to the level of five of the last six years, but significantly higher than the 9%-10% in 2007-2009. (Experience of discrimination is considered in more detail on pages 67-69.)

Sense of pessimism about the future, in response to a question on expectations for ‘life in three or four years’, was at a high point in 2017, at 19%, close to the level in 2012 and 2014. In 2018 it is considerably lower at 14%.

In response to the proposition that ‘ethnic minorities should be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions’, there was a substantial increase in the level of agreement, from 32% in 2007 to a high of 41% in 2015. This declined to 37% in 2016 and to 34% in 2017; in 2018 it is back at 37%. Disagreement has risen from 53% in 2015 to 57% in 2018.

The fourth question that contributes to the index of acceptance and rejection considers immigration in terms of broad principle.

‘Strong disagreement’ with the proposition that ‘accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger’ was at 8% in 2007, in the range 9%-11% from 2009-2016 and reached 14% in 2017, 13% in 2018. The combined percentage of those who ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ with the proposition is at 30% in 2018, up from 27% in 2015-16. Those in agreement decreased from 68% in 2014 to 63% in 2017, with an increase to 66% in 2018.

Table 11: ‘In three or four years, do you think that your life in Australia will be...?’, 2007-2018 (percentage)

Response	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Much improved	24	21	18	18	16	19	16	19	17	18	20
A little improved	25	28	27	28	29	30	27	28	25	27	28
Sub-total improved	49	49	45	45	45	48	43	46	42	45	48
The same as now	35	33	37	33	32	31	33	36	36	31	35
A little worse	9	10	10	13	14	13	15	13	13	14	10*
Much worse	2	2	3	5	4	4	4	2	5	5	5
Sub-total worse	11	12	13	17	19	17	19	15	18	19	14
N (unweighted)	2,012	2,019	2,021	2,001	2,000	1,200	1,526	1,501	1,500	2,236	1,500

*Change between 2017 and 2018 statistically significant at p<.05

Figure 13: 'Ethnic minorities in Australia should be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions', 2007-2018

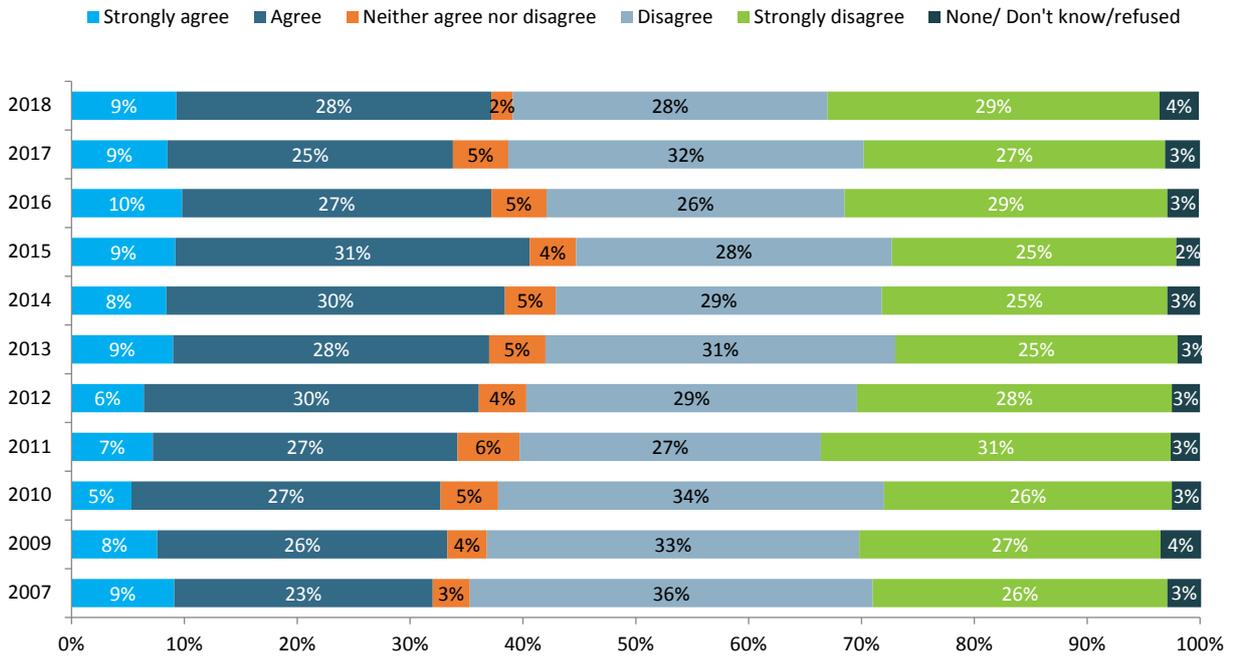
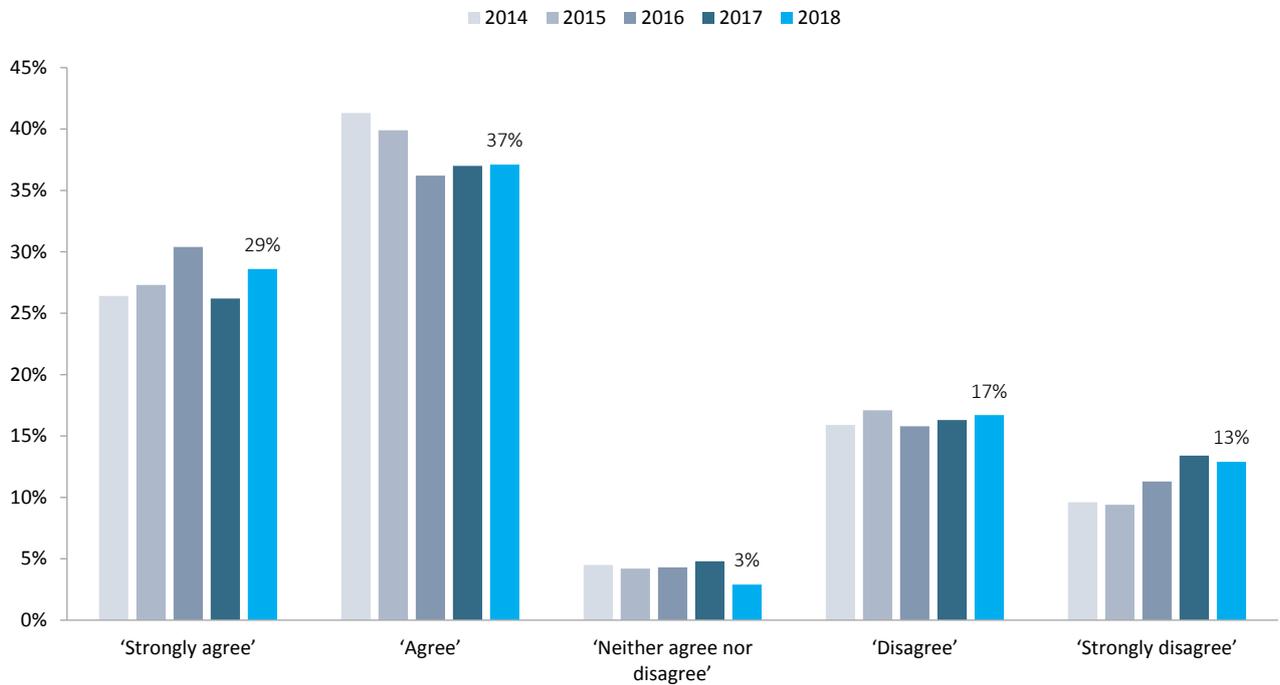


Figure 14: 'Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger', 2014-2018 (percentage)



RANKING OF ISSUES

The Scanlon Foundation survey seeks to determine the issues that are of greatest concern in the community.

Since 2010, the first question in the survey has been open-ended. It asks: 'What do you think is the most important problem facing Australia today?' The value of an open-ended question is that it leaves it to respondents to stipulate issues, rather than requiring selection from a pre-determined and limited list. An open-ended approach necessarily produces a broad range of responses.

In the nine surveys between 2010 and 2018, **respondents have consistently given first rank to issues related to the economy, unemployment and poverty.** The importance of the issue increased from 22% in 2010 to a peak of 36% in 2012, with a marginal decline to 33%-34% in the three surveys 2013-15. It dropped to 28% in 2016 and was 26%-27% in 2017 and 2018, with a similar level recorded in the telephone administered and online versions of the survey.

The quality of government and political leadership has been a consistently prominent issue, specified by 12%-15% of respondents between 2011 and 2014. It was the second ranked issue in 2017, indicated by 10% of respondents, with the same result in 2018.

The issue of **immigration and population** has been within the issues ranked second to fifth between 2016-2018, selected by close to 8% of respondents in 2018, marginally lower in the online version. Of these, 7% indicated concern at the high level of immigration and population growth, an increase from 3% in 2014-2015. This level of concern contrasts with attitudes in the European Union, where surveys in several countries have found that immigration was the top ranked issue.¹⁷

Between 2011 and 2014, concern over **defence, national security and the threat of terrorism** ranked low, indicated by less than 1% of respondents. In 2015, however, it increased to 10%, in the aftermath of the Lindt café siege and other terrorist incidents, including shootings in Paris, making it the second highest ranked issue of that year. In 2016, defence, national security and the threat of terrorism was the third ranked issue at 9%, was marginally lower at 7% in 2017, and fell sharply to 1% in 2018.

In 2018, social issues (family breakdown, child care, drug use, lack of personal direction) were ranked among the issues ranked second to fifth, specified by 8% of respondents, down from 11% in 2015.

Environmental issues have declined from a peak of 18% in 2011 to 7% in 2017, close to the level of the previous four years. In 2018 there was an increase to 10% (but a lower 5% in the online version). Nearly all who mentioned environmental issues in 2018 referred to concern over climate change. The relatively large proportion who in past years mentioned the environment because they were concerned with government over-reaction has declined from a peak of 6% in 2011 to close to zero in the last three surveys.

The decline of concern over the issue of asylum seekers, a major finding of the 2014 survey, remains in evidence in the survey conducted in July-August. Reference to asylum seekers was indicated by 7% of respondents in 2010 and 2011 and increased to 12% in 2012 and 2013. In 2014 concern dropped sharply to 4%. In 2017 concern was specified by just 2%, in 2018 by 3%, with half indicating concern over the poor treatment of asylum seekers.

Change is observed in two additional areas, as shown in Table 12. The issue of **housing affordability** increased from 2% in 2016 to 6% in 2017 and declined marginally to 4% in 2018. There has also been a marginal increase in concern over **crime and law enforcement**, which averaged under 2% between 2012-2015, indicated by 4% in 2017, and in the range 3%-4% in the two versions of the 2018 survey.

As in earlier surveys, in 2018 there was almost no reference to Indigenous issues, mentioned by 0.3% of respondents, or women's issues/gender equality mentioned by 0.3% of respondents. Concern over racism in Australian society declined from 4% in 2016 to 1% in 2018.

¹⁷ See discussion of international surveys in the immigration section of this report, pp. 53-55.

Table 12: 'What do you think is the most important problem facing Australia today?', 2013-2018 (percentage)

2018 Rank	Issue	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		
							RDD	LinA	
1	Economy/ unemployment/ poverty	33	34	33	28	26	27	29	
2	Environment – climate change/ water shortages (concern)	5	6	7	5	6	10	5	} 10 (5)
	Environment – overreaction to climate change/ carbon tax (sceptical)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	
3	Quality of government/ politicians	13	15	9	11	10	10	9	
4	Social issues – (family breakdown, child care, drug use, lack of personal direction)	7	8	11	6	7	8	9	
5	Immigration/ population growth (concern)	3	3	3	5	6	7	7	} 8 (7)
	Immigration/population – too low/ need more people (supportive)	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	
6	Housing shortage/ affordability/ interest rates	2	2	4	2	6	4	5	
7	Health/ medical/ hospitals	4	5	2	5	3	4	3	
8	Crime/ law and order	2	2	2	3	4	3	4	
9	Asylum seekers – too many/ refugees/ boat people/ illegal immigrants (negative comment)	10	2	3	2	1	1	1	} 2 (2)
	Asylum seekers – poor treatment, sympathy towards refugees/ boat people/ illegal immigrants	3	1	2	2	1	1	1	
10	Education/ schools	3	4	2	4	4	2	1	
11	Racism	1	1	2	4	2	1	2	
12	Defence/ national security/ terrorism	0	1	10	9	7	1*	1	
13	Indigenous issues	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	
14	Industrial relations/ trade unions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
15	Women's issues (e.g. equal pay/opportunity, violence, etc.)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	
	Other/ nothing/ don't know	12	16	10	12	14	18*	24	
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
	N (unweighted)	1,200	1,526	1,501	1,500	2,236	1,500	2,260	

*Change between 2017 and 2018 statistically significant at p<.05

Figure 15: 'What do you think is the most important problem facing Australia today?', top five problems in 2018, 2011-2018

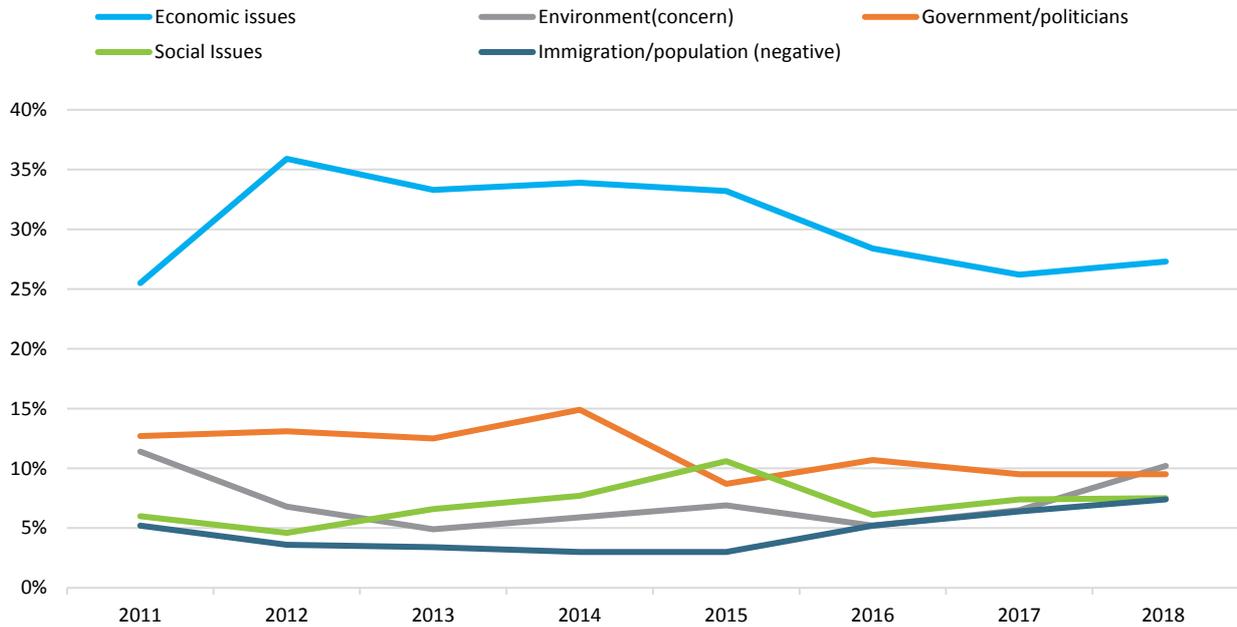
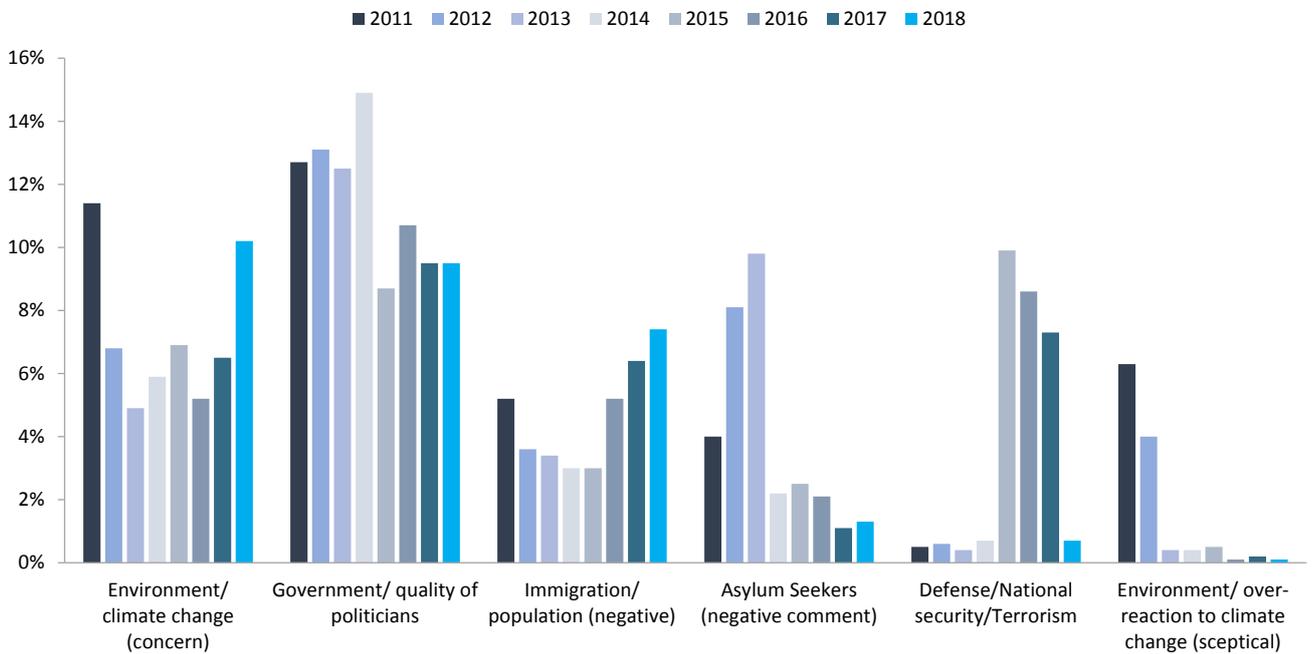


Figure 16: 'What do you think is the most important problem facing Australia today?', selected problems 2011-2018



DEMOCRACY

Concern with the state of Australian democracy remains a frequent topic of public discussion in Australia. The tone of public discussion is indicated by recent headlines:

The fundamental operating model of Australian politics is breaking down (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 April 2018)

Anarchic Senate is undermining our democracy (*Australian*, 6 June 2018)

The breaking of Australian politics: why and how we got here (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 August 2018)

Australian politicians' coup culture holds serious dangers for our democracy (*The Conversation*, 31 August 2018)

Shorten says trust in politics 'at a low point' (*Age*, 15 September 2018)

Dismay with politics prompting young Australians to flirt with autocracy (*ABC*, 17 October 2018)

A number of survey findings which have found majority negative assessment of Australian politics have been featured in the media.

The **Australia Election Study**, a random survey of the voting population conducted after each federal election by researchers at the Australian National University, provides long term data on the trend of opinion. In 2016, satisfaction with democracy was at 60%, down from 86% in 2007 and 82% in 2004. In response to the statement that 'people in government can be trusted', agreement was at 26% in 2016, down from 48% in 1996. Agreement with the statement that 'people in government look after themselves' was at 74% in 2016, up from 52% in 1996.¹⁸

The **Museum of Australian Democracy** and the Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis at the **University of Canberra** surveyed satisfaction with the way democracy is working today. The survey conducted in February-March 2016 found satisfaction indicated by 41% of respondents, almost identical with 42% in 2016 – but almost half the proportion (86%) indicating satisfaction in 2007, and markedly below the range of 71%-82% obtained between 1996-2004. More than 80% indicated that in their view it was 'very common' or 'somewhat common' for politicians not to 'give a straight answer' when questioned, to break promises and to make promises 'they know they can't keep'.¹⁹

The **Lowy Institute** annual poll has included a question on democracy since 2012. It asks respondents to indicate which of three statements about democracy comes closest to 'their own personal view.' In 2012, 60% of Australians indicated agreement with the statement that 'democracy is preferable to any other kind of government,' 20% that 'in some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable', and 15% that 'for someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have.' This initial finding was interpreted as evidence of 'Australian's ambivalence about democracy.' Since first asked there has been a large measure of consistency, with almost the same result each year: in 2017, the relative proportions were 60%, 20%, 16%, in 2018 62%, 20%, 15%.²⁰

Griffith University and Transparency International conducted a survey focused on perception of corruption. The finding obtained in 2018 was that 85% of respondents believed that some, most or all of the federal members of parliament were corrupt, a nine-percentage point increase since 2017. Almost two-thirds of respondents indicated that they had seen or suspected officials using their position to benefit themselves or their family; 56% saw or suspected that decisions were made to favour 'a business or individual who gave them political donations or support'.²¹

The following discussion presents the findings of the 2018 Scanlon Foundation survey, which included nine questions on Australian democracy. In addition to this reporting on the trend of Australian opinion, it provides comparative findings on international views of the working of democracy.

¹⁸ Sarah Cameron and Ian McAllister, *Trends in Australian Political Opinion. Results from the Australian Election Study 1987-2016*, 2016

¹⁹ *The Conversation*, 3 May 2016

²⁰ *Lowy Institute Poll, 2012-2018* at <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/2018-lowy-institute-poll#sec35286>

²¹ 'Overwhelming majority of Australians believe federal politicians are corrupt', *The Guardian*, 21 Aug 2018

Trust in government

The Scanlon Foundations surveys provide the only annual tracking of attitudes to the functioning of the Australian government since 2007. Over the course of the eleven surveys the greatest change occurred between 2009-2010, the period of the Rudd and Gillard governments. Since 2010 the survey has recorded a large measure of consistency, albeit at a low level of confidence in the political system.

Since 2007 the Scanlon Foundation surveys have asked: **'How often do you think the government in Canberra can be trusted to do the right thing for the Australian people?'** Respondents are presented with four options: 'almost always', 'most of the time', 'only some of the time', and 'almost never.' The highest proportion indicating the first or second response, 'almost always' or 'most of the time', was at 39% in 2007, the last year of the Howard government, and rose to 48% in 2009; this was followed by **a sharp fall to 31% in 2010**, in the context of a loss of confidence in the Rudd Labor government. A low point of 26% was reached in 2012, representing a decline of 22 percentage points since 2009, followed by stabilisation in 2013.

There was an expectation that in 2014, following the election of the Abbott government, there would be significant increase in level of trust, on the pattern of the increase in confidence in the early period of the Rudd government. This expectation was not realised. While the level of trust increased, it was only by three percentage points, to 30% in 2014, and has remained at or close to that level (29%-30%) between 2015-17.

The 2018 survey was conducted from 9 July to 11 August, a period of heightened political instability, with frequent criticism in sections of the media of the performance of Prime Minister Turnbull, who was voted out of office by the parliamentary Liberal Party in August.

In contrast with media assessments of the Turnbull government, the 2018 Scanlon Foundation survey did not register a decline in level of confidence. Trust in government (at 30%) was at the level of the previous four years. Additional indication that level of trust in the last period of the Turnbull government is provided by a re-analysis of Newspoll surveys, which pointed to a marginal increase in level of support.²² Former Prime Minister Turnbull stated in November that internal Liberal Party polling in 40 marginal seats conducted in August indicated that the Coalition was leading 52%-48%.²³

²² 'Turnbull axed as gap closed on Labor', *The Australian*, 28 August 2018

²³ ABC, Q & A, 8 November 2018, transcript

Figure 17: 'How often do you think the government in Canberra can be trusted to do the right thing for the Australian people?' Response: 'Almost always' or 'most of the time', 2007-2018

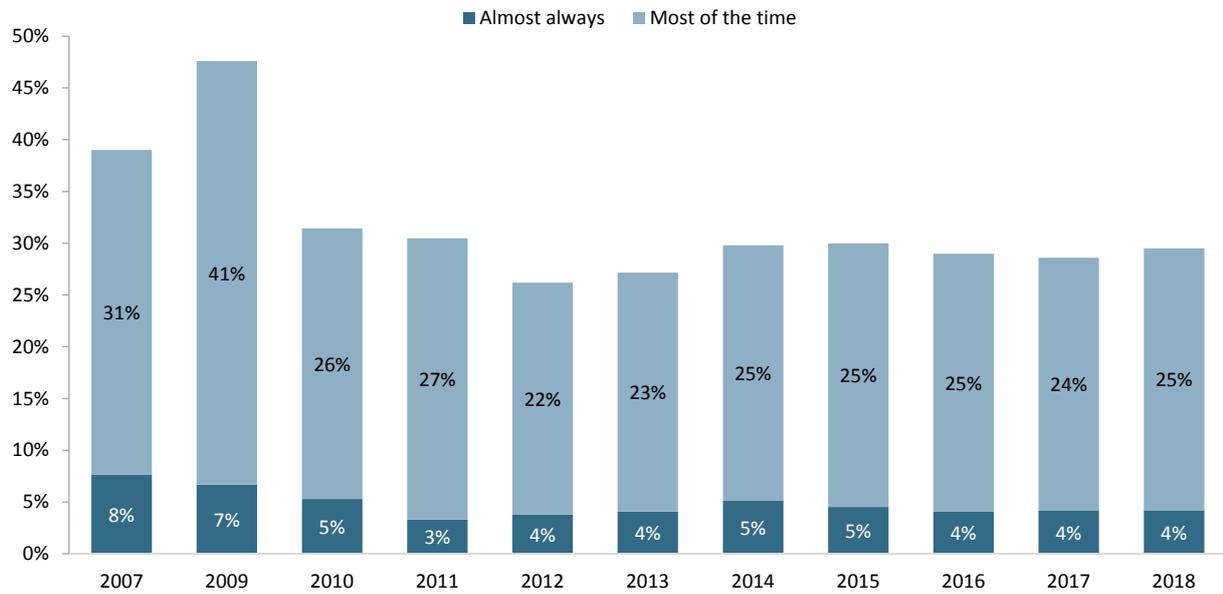
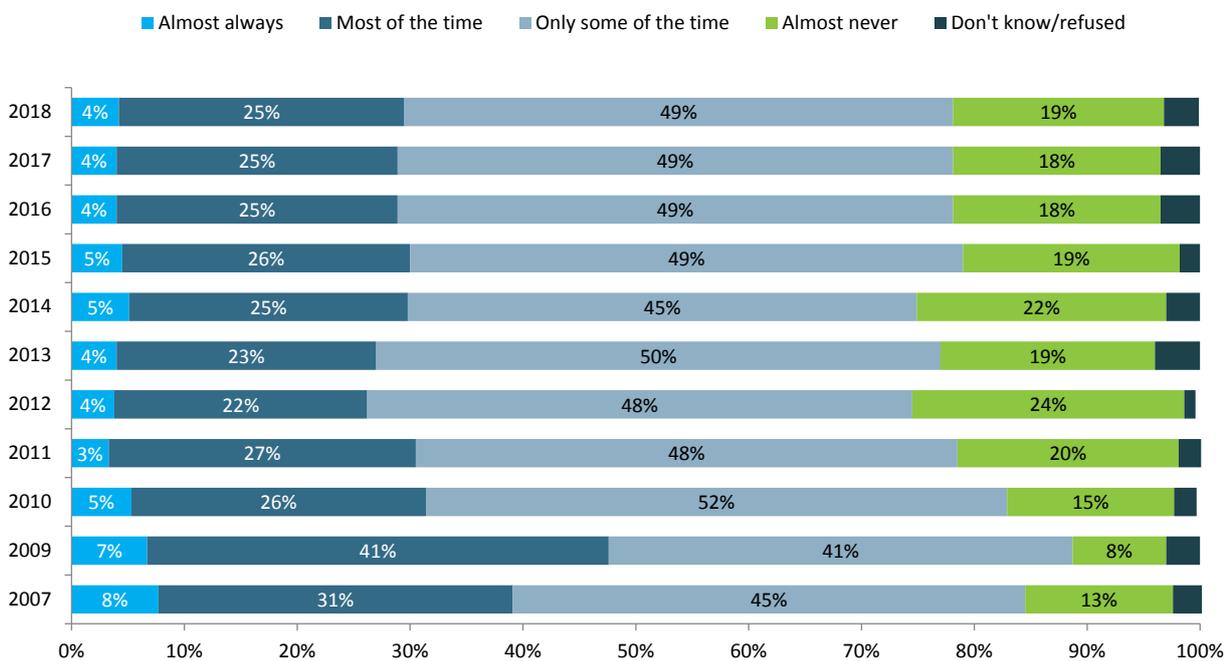


Figure 18: 'How often do you think the government in Canberra can be trusted to do the right thing for the Australian people?', 2007-2018



Analysis of sub-groups was undertaken using the combined 2015-2018 Scanlon Foundation surveys, aggregated to increase reliability, an approach adopted in sections of this report. The finding is of relatively high level of trust among those aged 18-24 (35%) and 75 and over (33%). Higher trust was also indicated by those who described their current financial circumstances as 'prosperous' or 'very comfortable' (41%), those who come from a non-English speaking country (32%), and those who have a university degree (33%).

As in previous survey findings, a notable variation is found by political alignment, indicating that a key predictor of trust in government is a person's support or opposition to the party in power: thus 46% of those intending to vote Liberal/ National indicate trust, compared to 21% Labor, 14% Greens, and a very low 9% One Nation.

A significant finding, consistent with earlier Scanlon Foundation surveys, is that for only two of the thirty-two sub-groups – financial circumstances described as 'prosperous' or 'very comfortable' and intending to vote Liberal/ National – is the level of trust above 40%; and for only one other (aged 18-24) in the range 35%-40%.

This evidence points to a malaise that is not to be explained solely in terms of identification or lack of identification with the party in government: even among Liberal or National voters, only a minority at 46% indicate trust in government.

Table 13: 'How often do you think the government in Canberra can be trusted to do the right thing for the Australian people?' Response: 'Almost always', 'most of the time', 2015-2018 combined (percentage)

Gender	Female	Male					
	28	30					
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	28	30	31	29	29		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	30	27					
Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	35%	29%	28%	28%	27%	29%	33%
Highest completed education	BA or higher	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11		
	33%	29%	24%	29%	25%		
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	41%	31%	22%	13%			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	21%	46%	14%	9%			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	28%	30%	32%				

Ranking ‘the most important problem’

As discussed earlier in this report, the first question in the survey is open-ended and asks: ‘What is the most important problem facing Australia today?’

In 2018, quality of government and politicians remains in the bracket second or third ranked issue, as it has in all but one survey conducted since 2010. It is indicated by 10% of respondents; this proportion is at the average of the last three years (9.7%), but almost four percentage points below the average of 2012-14 (13.5%).

Table 14: ‘What is the most important problem facing Australia today?’ Response: ‘quality of government and politicians’, 2010-2018 (percentage and rank)

Survey year	%	Rank
2010	11	3
2011	13	3
2012	13	2
2013	13	= 2
2014	15	2
2015	9	4
2016	11	2
2017	10	2
2018	10	3

Need for change?

The Scanlon Foundation survey asks respondents if ‘the system of government we have in Australia works fine as it is, needs minor change, needs major change, or should be replaced.’ This question was first asked in 2014.

The proportion opting for the end-point responses has remained largely constant over the four surveys, with 14%-16% indicating ‘works fine as it is’ and 10%-11% ‘should be replaced.’ In the middle ground, those indicating ‘needs minor change’ has been in the range 40%-48% (43% in 2018), ‘needs major change’ in the range 23%-31% (28% in 2018).

A combined 37% of respondents indicated ‘needs major change’ or ‘should be replaced’, a higher 43% by Life in Australia panel members. Following the voting out of office of Prime Minister Turnbull by the parliamentary Liberal Party, the September 2018 wave of the Life in Australia panel tested change in public opinion. **The September survey, completed by 1096 panel members, found an increase of five percentage points to 48% of the view that the system ‘needs major change’ or ‘should be replaced’.**

Analysis of sub-groups in the Scanlon Foundation survey favouring major change or replacement of the system of government finds the highest proportion among those whom the system has failed: 67% of respondents who indicated that they are ‘struggling to pay bills’ or that their financial circumstances are ‘poor’ and 46% who are ‘just getting along.’ Analysed by intended vote, the highest proportion is among those intending to vote for One Nation (73%), more than double the proportion intending to vote Liberal or National (29%). Relatively high proportions are also found among those whose highest level of education is trade or apprenticeship (48%) and up to Year 11 (47%).

The lowest proportion favouring major change is among those whose self-described financial circumstance is ‘prosperous’ or ‘living very comfortably’, 27%; intending to vote Liberal/ National, 29%; those from a non-English speaking background, 32%; and those with a university degree 32%.

Figure 19: 'Would you say the system of government we have in Australia works fine as it is, needs minor change, needs major change, or should be replaced?', 2014-2018

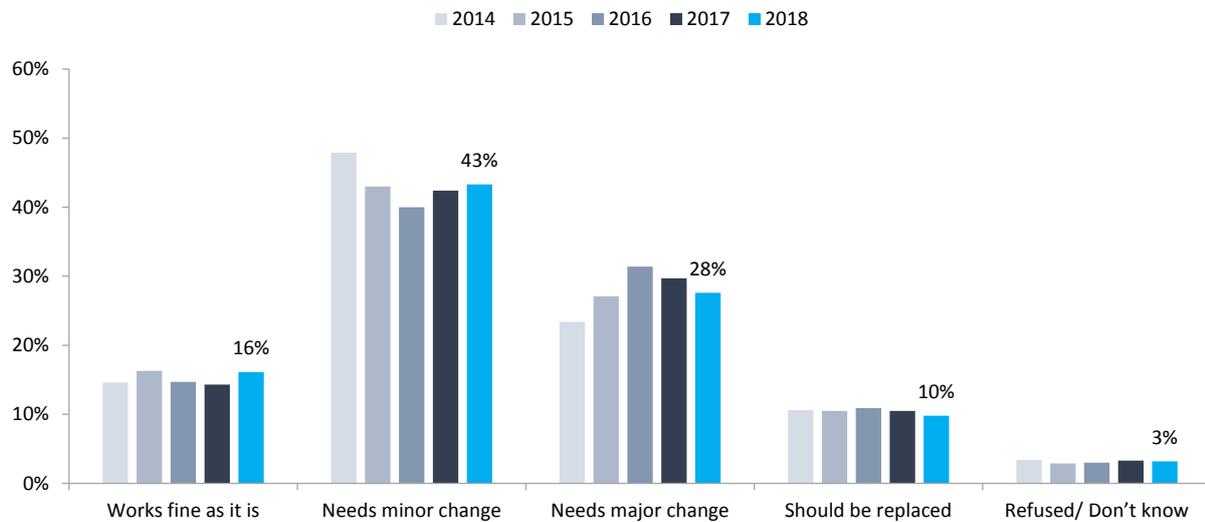


Table 15: 'Would you say the system of government we have in Australia works fine as it is, needs minor change, needs major change, or should be replaced?' Response: 'Needs major change' or 'should be replaced', 2015-2018 combined (percentage)

Gender	Female	Male					
	37	39					
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	38	39	35	38	41		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	36	41					
Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	31	36	39	41	41	38	34
Highest completed education	BA or higher	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11		
	32	39	48	37	47		
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	27	34	46	67			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	41	29	42	73			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	39	39	32				

International mood

Australia is not distinctive for its level of dissatisfaction with government. In the United States, for example, the Democracy Project in 2018 undertook a rigorous process of consultation, followed by a telephone administered survey completed by 1700 respondents. It found that when respondents were asked to ‘describe America’s system of democracy these days as weak or strong’, 55% indicated that it was weak, 37% that it was strong, and a large majority (68%) agreed that it was getting weaker.

Presented with aspects of ‘our society’ that are ‘getting better or worse in recent years’, large majorities indicated that ‘the tone of politics in Washington’ was getting worse (83%), as was the ‘influence of money in politics’ (80%), ‘political and partisan polarisation’ (71%) and ‘accuracy and quality of news in the media (68%).²⁴

Internationally there is concern over the failures of democratic systems of government. The Democracy Project argues that:

Democracy is facing its most significant challenge of recent years. Worldwide, the uneven distribution of economic progress and unrelenting pace of change have tested the capacity of democratic institutions and their leaders to deliver. At the same time, authoritarian regimes and populist national movements have seized the opportunity to undermine democracy ... These trends have raised questions about whether the public has begun to lose faith in basic democratic concepts and what can be done to strengthen popular support.

A number of polling agencies conduct international polls that make possible cross-country comparison of the functioning of the political system. **These polls find that Australia ranks at the mid-level or lower among western democracies surveyed, although quality of life indicators find Australia near the top in international rankings.**²⁵

The topline finding of the 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer, an annual survey conducted in 26 countries, is that trust in Australia continues to decline across four key institutions: government, NGOs, media and business. **The aggregated level of trust in Australia is just four percentage points above Russia, the country with the lowest level.** On a nine-point scale, where one means ‘do no trust at all’ and nine means ‘trust a great deal’, government in Australia scored 35, down from 37 in 2017. Asked to indicate which of four institutions ‘is the most broken’, 4% indicated NGOs, 6% business, 17% media, and a much larger 56% government. This result compared to an average of 42% indicating government across the survey.²⁶

²⁴ Freedom House, George W. Bush Institute, Penn Biden Center, The Democracy Project, 2018

²⁵ See UN Human Development Index; OECD Better Life Index; Economist Global Liveability Report; US News Best Countries Rankings

²⁶ For the Edelman Trust Barometer, see <https://www.edelman.com/trust-barometer>

The 2017 Pew Research Centre international survey on democracy was conducted in 38 countries.²⁷ Noting the ‘deepening anxiety about the future of democracy around the world’, the findings were interpreted as indicating ‘reasons for calm as well as concern.’ In each of the countries surveyed, more than half of the respondents agreed that democracy was a ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ good way to govern, yet there was support among substantial minorities for various non-democratic systems, including rule by experts, by a strong leader or by the military.

When respondents were asked, ‘How satisfied are you with the way democracy is working’, in ten western countries, dissatisfaction ranged from 74% in Spain to 20% in Sweden. Australia was close to the mid-point, with 41% indicating that they were dissatisfied.

Responses to the question ‘How much do you trust the national government to do what is right for our country?’ ranged from 17% indicating ‘a lot’ or ‘somewhat’ in Spain to 71% in the Netherlands. Australia was again close to mid-point, with 48% indicating trust.

Table 16: ‘How satisfied are you with the way democracy is working in our country?’ Pew Research Centre, 2017 (percentage)

	Not satisfied	Satisfied
Spain	74	25
Italy	67	31
France	65	34
United States of America	51	46
United Kingdom	47	52
Australia	41	58
Canada	30	70
Germany	26	73
Netherlands	22	77
Sweden	20	79

Source: Richard Wike et al., ‘Globally, Broad Support for Representative and Direct Democracy’, Pew Research Centre, October 2017, p. 13

Table 17: ‘How much do you trust the national government to do what is right for our country?’ Pew Research Centre, 2017 (percentage)

	A lot	Somewhat	Total
Spain	5	12	17
Italy	1	25	26
France	3	17	20
Australia	7	41	48
United Kingdom	14	35	49
USA	15	36	51
Sweden	15	52	67
Canada	20	47	67
Netherlands	24	47	71
Germany	26	43	69

Source: Richard Wike et al., ‘Globally, Broad Support for Representative and Direct Democracy’, Pew Research Centre, October 2017, p. 13

The 2017 Scanlon Foundation social cohesion report presented a comparison of attitudes to the working of government in Australia and Canada and found consistently higher negative results in Australia. For example, the 2016 IPSOS Global Trends survey found that satisfaction with ‘the way the government is running the country was at 20% in Australia, 42% in Canada. In response to the negative statement ‘Our government does not prioritise the concerns of people like me’, IPSOS obtained 75% agreement in Australia, 64% in Canada.²⁸ Findings for Australia and Canada are updated in the following.

²⁷ Pew - administered in February-March, with achieved samples of 1000 in each country. , and employed telephone administered (landline and mobile) Random Digital Dial methodology identical with the approach of the Scanlon Foundation.

<http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/10/16/globally-broad-support-for-representative-and-direct-democracy/>

²⁸ Ipsos Global Trends, <https://www.ipsosglobaltrends.com/no-easy-answers-political-uncertainty-in-a-mixed-up-world/>

The 2017 Pew Research Centre survey found satisfaction with working of democracy was at 70% in Canada, 58% in Australia; trust in the national government was at 67% in Canada, 48% in Australia.

In June 2017, the *Globe and Mail* reported on a survey which found Canada to be an ‘“island of stability” amidst a Western world roiled by political discontent and populism.’ A second survey, based on a sample of 4000 Canadians, was reported as finding that the ‘Health of Canadian democracy improving, but concerns remain’ (CBC News, 28 March 2017). It was found that 71% of Canadians were ‘very’ or ‘fairly satisfied’ with their democracy, compared to 65% in 2014.

In his first years in office following his election in 2015, Prime Minister Trudeau enjoyed a high level of support. Environics Canada surveys found that trust in the Prime Minister improved between 2014 and 2017, reflecting change of leader and party in government. The rating of the performance of the Prime Minister in 2017 was 43% positive, 24% negative, net 19% positive; for the previous Canadian Prime Minister, the net result in 2014 had been 2% negative.

In Australia, surveys adopt different wording, but the net satisfaction rating provides some basis for comparison. Surveys conducted by Newspoll and Galaxy ask respondents for level of satisfaction ‘with the way the Prime Minister is doing his job’ (Newspoll); in the period August-October 2017 these surveys obtained net negative results in the 17%-28% range.

In July 2018, Prime Minister Turnbull had reduced the net negative result to 6 percentage points (42% satisfied, 48% dissatisfied); but in the context of heightened negative coverage in sections of the media and the move in August to replace him as Prime Minister, the net negative increased to 19 percentage points (36% satisfied, 55% dissatisfied).²⁹

In Canada the relatively positive assessment of Prime Minister Trudeau did not continue into 2018. The Angus Reid Institute, a highly regarded non-profit foundation which undertakes independent research, found that Trudeau’s approval rating fell by 25 percentage points between September 2016 and March 2018, when his approval was at 40%, disapproval at 56%.³⁰

The Nanos Institute for Research on Public Policy in its Mood of Canada survey found that when elected 60% of respondents judged that the Trudeau government was doing a ‘very good’ or ‘somewhat good’ job; in late December 2017 the proportion had declined to 37%.

Ipsos Public Affairs polling, in a poll conducted in June 2018, asked Canadians to rate the government’s performance on a broad range of issues. It found that on key indicators there was a perception of worsening conditions: thus 47% indicated that ‘our immigration system had worsened, 17% that it was improving; 46% indicated that ‘day to day’ affordability had worsened, just 9% that it had improved, while 45% indicated that Canada’s finances had worsened, 11% that they had improved.

This comparison of Australian and Canadian opinion indicates that the difficulties facing government are not simply to be explained in terms of personalities, of the capacity of party leaders. Rather, the shifting electoral standing of government in the two countries are also to be understood in terms of the difficulties in the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis, ‘the uneven distribution of economic progress and unrelenting pace of change’,³¹ and the challenges posed by accelerating climate change.

Table 18: Rating of government performance, Ipsos survey Canada 2018 (percentage)

	Worsened	Improved	Stayed the same
Our immigration system	47	17	36
The affordability of your day to day life	46	9	45
Canada’s finances	45	11	44
The gap between Canada’s rich and poor	43	8	49
Our economy	38	15	47
Hope about the future	33	19	48
Opportunities for young people to find good jobs	28	15	56
Your access to quality of healthcare services	23	12	64

Source: <https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/news-polls/Global-News-Fed-Vote-July-3-2018>

²⁹ The Australian, 29 October 2018; Newspoll Archive

³⁰ <http://angusreid.org/trudeau-tracker/>

³¹ The Democracy Project, Foreword, p.1

IMMIGRATION

Media context

In the first half of 2018 there was heightened media attention to immigration, in part a reflection of a changing political environment.

In the national daily *The Australian*, feature articles on immigration, overcrowding of cities, pressure on infrastructure, and inability of local services to cope numbered 16 in the second half of 2017, 72 in the first six months of 2018; the respective numbers for Melbourne *Age* were 7 and 23, for the Melbourne *Herald Sun*, 10 and 20, for the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* 8 and 16. A high point in coverage of these issues occurred in April 2018, in response to a joint Treasury and Department of Home Affairs report which presented positive assessment of the impact of immigration on the Australian economy.

There has been a different tenor in the coverage of immigration issues in the various newspapers. The News Corp media, for example *The Australian* and the tabloids *Herald Sun* and *Daily Telegraph*, provide editorial level endorsement of immigration and feature articles that challenge critics of immigration. Thus in April *The Australian* editorialised: 'Over the past two years, the intake totalled 189,000 and 183,000. This is no bad thing. A healthy level of migration, as *The Australian* has argued, serves the national interest' (13 April 2018). Headlines indicating the challenging of critical views include 'Migration cuts would hurt us' (*The Australian*, 26 July 2018) and 'Abbott wrong to push cut immigration, says cities expert' (*The Australian*, 3 April 2018).

Yet the News Corp media also features **columnists consistently critical of current immigration policy**, notably Judith Sloan, Andrew Bolt and Rita Panahi. The newspaper database Factiva indicates that in the twelve months to 30 June 2018, Judith Sloan wrote numerous critical articles in the print and online editions of *The Australian* with emphasis on 'congestion, crowded public transport, over-development, house prices and the loss of urban amenity (13 April 18). The influential columnist Andrew Bolt wrote articles, published in newspapers across Australia, critical of both the size of the intake and the nationality, culture and religion of those who gain admission. One August article which led to formal complaints to the Press Council was headlined 'The foreign invasion' and presented the argument that 'there is no us anymore, as a tidal wave of immigrants sweeps away what's left of our national identity' (*Herald Sun, Daily Telegraph*, 2 August 2018).

In contrast, the Fairfax dailies *The Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* did not employ columnists consistently negative in their views of immigration, while the online Australian edition of *The Guardian* was distinguished by its sympathetic coverage of the plight of refugees in offshore detention.

Offshore detention also became a topic of greater attention across the media in 2018. In *The Australian* there were eight feature articles in the last half of 2017, 27 articles in the first half of 2018; the respective numbers were 10 and 47 in *The Age*, 1 and 10 in the *Herald Sun*, 8 and 23 in the *Daily Telegraph*.

Political context

While immigration has been an issue of ongoing discussion in Australian politics, in the months leading to and during the 2018 Scanlon Foundation national survey a number of prominent politicians called for a reduction in the intake. In February 2018 the **former Prime Minister Tony Abbott called for a cut in the permanent intake from 190,000 to 110,000** (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 February 2018). In June 2018, asked to nominate one thing he would 'fix' if he became prime minister again, Abbott nominated two: energy prices and 'scale back the rate of immigration' (*The Australian*, 6 June 2018).

The Minister for Home Affairs, Peter Dutton, whose portfolio included immigration, commented negatively on several occasions on youth crime, with specific reference to African youth gangs in Melbourne. It was reported in *The Australian* that Dutton favoured a reduction in the immigration intake and had unsuccessfully taken a recommendation to Cabinet. While a reduction in the intake was not accepted, *The Australian* reported that the intake in the permanent 2017-18 program fell some 30,000 below the target.

Within some minor parties and fringe political groupings immigration issues were prominent. One Nation leader Senator Pauline Hanson advocated the holding of a plebiscite at the next federal election to determine the size of the immigration intake. In an interview Hanson stated that Australian electors 'never had a say in the level of migration coming into Australia' and made a number of suggestions about how the question could be formulated (*The Australian*, 28 June 2018). Bob Katter, leader of the Katter Australian Party, in August 2018 described immigration policy as a 'program to line the pockets of the rich and powerful in Sydney' (*The Guardian*, 15 August 2018).

Claims concerning public opinion

A number of claims about current public opinion have been made by advocates of a reduction in the immigration intake.

The former Labor politician Bob Carr, long serving Premier of New South Wales and Minister of Foreign Affairs, asserted on the ABC's Q & A program (12 March 2018) that there has been a 'big shift' in public attitudes. A recent poll indicated that '74% of Australians think there is enough of us already ... It's the first breakthrough ... in the last twelve months, the message has sunk in.'

Bob Katter asserted on national television that '75% of Australians agree with our position' to cut immigration.³²

Tony Abbott justified his call for a cut in immigration by reference to poll findings: 'A recent Newspoll showed 72 percent support for Dutton's cut in permanent immigration and the latest Lowy survey showed a 14 percentage point leap in opposition to present migration levels' (*The Australian*, 27 July 2018).

A common theme of newspaper columnists is that public opinion does not support the immigration program and if the Coalition is to win back public support it needs to cut the intake.

- Judith Sloan: 'The Turnbull government has two chances to win the next election: do something dramatic about electricity prices and cut the immigration programme'; 'A clear majority of Australians would prefer to see lower migrant numbers' (*The Australian*, 9 April, 24 April 2018).
- Rita Panahi: 'A number of polls have shown a clear majority want to curb immigration ... If the Coalition wants to claw back lost ground and have some chance at re-election ... then it needs to listen to the masses'; 'In survey after survey, Australians have demanded a halt to the high migration numbers ...both the Coalition and Labor have steadfastly ignored majority opinion' (*Herald Sun*, 16 April, 2 July 2018).
- Peta Credlin: 'why is cutting immigration to Howard-era levels proving so hard? ... It would be popular, if the polls are to be believed' (*Herald Sun*, 1 July 2018).

Interpreting survey findings

A feature of media commentary is that **poll findings are taken at face value**, with little critical scrutiny. Inconsistency in findings for different questions in the one survey, and between different surveys, is ignored, as are polls that present a different or nuanced perspective. **It is rare to find any attention to survey methodology**, for example the number of questions, the wording of questions, the mode of surveying, the sample size, or the margin of error, and in particular whether there was an earlier survey that enables opinion to be tracked over time.³³

The public is understood to have clearly formed views on immigration (and a host of other issues). Opinion is supposedly unambiguous and independent of survey methodology and question wording.

There is, however, a more complex understanding of surveying, as explained by the leading American research body the Pew Research Centre, with reference to 'ambiguous or biased questions':

The choice of words and phrases in a question is critical in expressing the meaning and intent of the question to the respondent and ensuring that all respondents interpret the question the same way. Even small wording differences can substantially affect the answers people provide. ... Because slight modifications in question wording can affect responses, identical question wording should be used when the intention is to compare results to those from earlier surveys.³⁴

One specific problem arises from 'double barrelled questions' – question wording that raises more than one issue, so it is not possible to determine what is being responded to. An example is a question that does not merely ask a respondent their attitude to the current immigration intake, but first provides detail on the size of the intake, without determining the respondent's understanding of immigrant numbers.

³² ABC Q & A, 'Chaos, Crocs, and Coal Mining', 27 August 2018, transcript

³³ In contrast with Australian media practice, in Canada reports typically provide details of the survey conducted. Thus the Canadian *Globe and Mail*: The Environics Institute poll of 2,000 Canadians, conducted by telephone between Feb. 5 and Feb. 17, has asked the same questions for three decades. It has a margin of error of 2.2 percentage points, in 19 out of 20 samples. *Globe and Mail*, 22 March 2018, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-canadian-attitudes-toward-immigrants-refugees-remain-positive-study/>

³⁴ Pew Research Centre, Questionnaire design, <http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/u-s-survey-research/questionnaire-design/>

2018 surveys on immigration

A number of surveys conducted in 2018 have found majority support for a lower immigration intake. They have also registered high levels of concern over lack of planning, inadequate infrastructure and overcrowding.

The Lowy Institute poll, conducted in March with 600 respondents interviewed by telephone and 600 completing the survey on the Life in Australia probability panel, asked respondents 'Do you personally think that the total number of migrants coming to Australia each year is too high, too low or about right?'; a majority, 54%, indicated that the intake was 'too high', a significant increase from the 40% obtained when the question was asked in 2017.

The April 2018 Essential Report, a non-probability panel survey completed by approximately 1000 respondents, first asked a question about the level of immigration over the last ten years, not the current intake: 'Overall, do you think the level of immigration into Australia over the last ten years has been too high, too low or about right?' 37% of respondents indicated it was 'much too high', 27% 'a little too high', a combined 64%. A follow-up question informed respondents that Australia's population had reached 25 million and it was growing by about 400,000 a year, without reference to the two components contributing to population growth, natural increase and immigration. It then asked if the growth rate was 'too fast, too slow or about right?' 54% responded 'too high', up from 45% when a similarly worded question was asked in 2013. While the 54% is the same result as obtained by Lowy to a differently worded question, the pattern of increase was different: Lowy obtained an increase of 14% in one year in the view that immigration was too high, Essential obtained a lower 9% increase and it was over five years.

Indicative of the influence of question wording, when Essential asked for response to the proposition that 'Our cities can't cope with further population growth and we should reduce immigration until the infrastructure is in place', agreement reached 62%, while the earlier question had obtained 54% agreement that the growth rate was 'too high.'

Newspoll, using a methodology that is reported to yield a margin of error of less than 3%, asked for response to the 'immigration cap of 190,000' and obtained a similar result to Lowy and Essential – 56% indicated that it was 'too high.' In July, Newspoll tested reaction to the Turnbull government's stated 'cut of more than 10 per cent to the annual permanent migrant intake to 163,000 last financial year'; this form of wording obtained agreement at 72%: 47% 'strongly approved' the cut, 25% 'somewhat approved.'

Two separate polls conducted in New South Wales and Victoria in September, with little detail on methodology reported in media coverage, obtained identical results. ReachTel posed the proposition that 'Migration to Sydney should be restricted and new arrivals sent to live in regional NSW' – 63% of respondents agreed. In Victoria YouGov Galaxy asked whether Melbourne's population growth was too high or about right: 63% indicated agreement that it was 'too high.'

While there is inconsistency in the exact proportions obtained by a number of polls, they agree in finding majority negative sentiment, in the range 54%-72% depending on the question asked. Except for Lowy and Essential, no benchmarking data was provided to enable the extent and pace of change to be established.

There were, however, three surveys that did not obtain majority opinion in support of a cut in immigration, highlighting the potential impact of question wording, question context and mode of surveying.

In October Fairfax-Ipsos, in a survey administered by telephone and with a sample of 1200, asked two questions. When asked to indicate satisfaction or dissatisfaction with 'the way the government is handling the issue of immigration?' and with apparently two response options, 64% indicated dissatisfaction.

The second question, using the three-point response scale that has been employed in Australian surveying on immigration since the 1950s, asked 'Do you think the number of immigrants coming to Australia nowadays should be increased a lot, increased a little, or remain the same, reduced a little, or reduced a lot?' It found that 29% indicated 'remain the same', 23% 'increase a lot or a little', a total of 52%, while a minority, **45%, indicated 'reduce a lot or a little.'**

The response obtained by the two surveys conducted for the Scanlon Foundation is discussed in the following section.

Table19: Australian polling on immigration, 2018

Poll	Sample size	Question	Response				
Lowy Institute Poll, 5-15 March	1200 random sample (telephone 600, online panel 600)	'Do you personally think that the total number of migrants coming to Australia each year is too high, too low or about right'	Too high	About right	Too low	Don't know	
			54%	30%	14%	3%	
Essential Report 24 April	1000+ Online panel, majority recruited using off line methodologies	'Overall, do you think the level of immigration into Australia over the last ten years has been too high, too low or about right?'	Much too high	A little too high	About right	A little/much too low	Don't know
		'Australia's population has nearly reached 25 million and is growing by about 400,000 a year. Do you think Australia's population growth rate is too fast, too slow or about right?'	Too fast	About right		Too slow	Don't know
			54%	31%		4%	11%
Newspoll, 23 April (The Australian)	2,068	The existing Immigration cap of 190,000 a year	Too high	Right level	Too low		
			56%	28%	10%		
Newspoll, 24 July (The Australian)	1,644	Turnbull government's cut of more than 10 per cent to the annual permanent migrant intake to 163,000 last financial year	Strongly approve	Somewhat approve		Disapprove	
			47%	25%		9%	
ReachTel poll for Fairfax media, 24 September (SMH)	1,627	Migration to Sydney should be restricted and new arrivals sent to live in regional NSW	Agree				
			63%				
YouGov Galaxy, 17 September (Herald Sun)	1,008 - online and automated – for BusVic organisation	Asked whether Melbourne's population growth was too high or about right	Too high	About right			
			63%	29%			
Fairfax-Ipsos, 15 October (The Age)	1,200 national sample, telephone	'Do you think the number of immigrants coming to Australia nowadays should be increased a lot, increased a little, or remain the same, reduced a little, or reduced a lot?'	Reduce a lot or a little	Remain the same	Increase a lot or a little	Don't know	
			45%	29%	23%	3%	

Scanlon Foundation findings

The Scanlon Foundation survey is the only annual tracking of opinion on immigration providing consistent questionnaire structure and question wording to measure the trend of public opinion.

In the years 2007-2009, the survey found that the proportion who considered the intake to be ‘about right’ or ‘too low’ was in the range 53%–55%.

In 2010 there was heightened political debate over immigration and the desirable future population of Australia, in the context of increased unemployment and economic uncertainty. In that year the Scanlon Foundation survey obtained the largest single year increase in agreement that the intake was ‘too high’, up from 37% in 2009 to 47%. This finding was almost identical to the 46% average result from five polls conducted by survey agencies in the period March–July 2010.³⁵

This increased negativity towards immigration was, however, temporary. Between 2011 and 2013 the proportion in agreement that the intake was ‘too high’ was in the range 38%-42%, between 2014 and 2016 a lower 34%-35%. In 2016 a substantial majority, 59%, considered that the intake was ‘about right’ or ‘too low.’

In 2017 there was a minor increase in the proportion of the view that the intake was ‘too high’, up three percentage points from 34% to 37%, while 56% considered that it is ‘about right’ or ‘too low.’ **In 2018 the negative proportion increased, this time by six percentage points to 43%.**

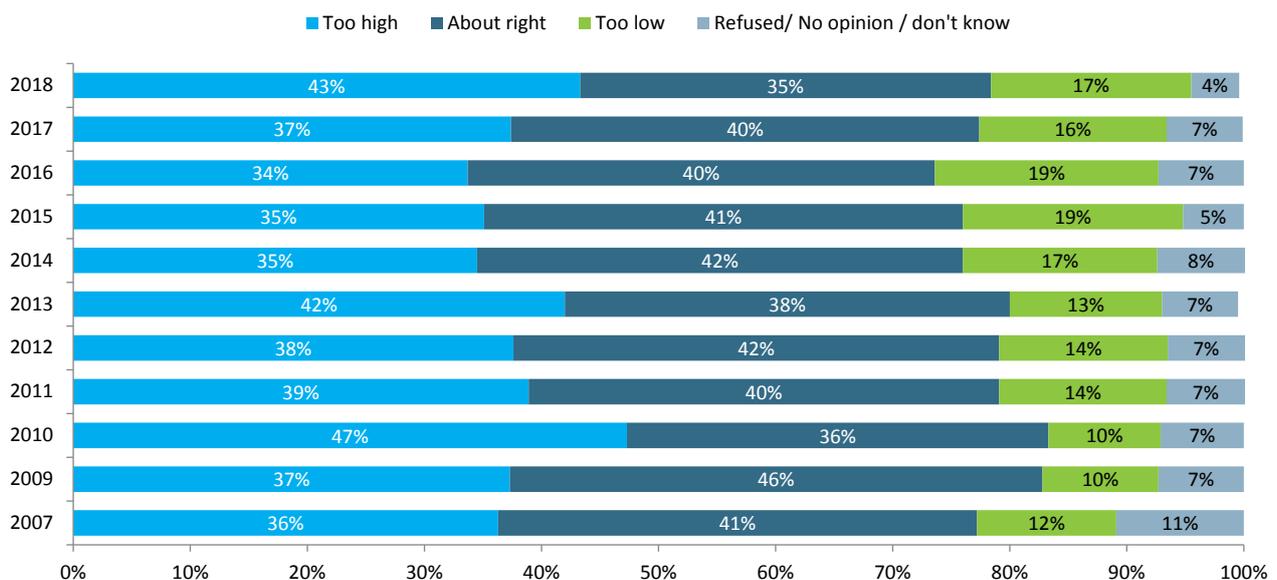
The Scanlon Foundation survey is thus consistent with the findings of polls that have recorded an increase in the proportion concerned by the level of immigration, an increase of nine percentage points over two years (2016-18), but it differs in finding that this remains a minority perspective, with the majority (52%) of the view that the intake is ‘about right’ or ‘too low.’

If attention is narrowed to those who are Australian citizens (and have voting rights) there is little difference in the result. Across the eleven Scanlon Foundation surveys, 40% of citizens have considered the intake to be ‘too high’; for the last five years the proportions are 36%, 34%, 38% and 45%.

As noted, **the October Fairfax-Ipsos poll obtained a result similar to the Scanlon Foundation: 45% of the opinion that the intake should be reduced, 52% that it is about right or too low.**

There is a **third survey** which includes questions on immigration. As has been noted earlier in this report, the full Scanlon Foundation questionnaire was administered on **the Life in Australia panel**. The individual question on views of the current immigration intake was also included in the 2016 and 2017 Life in Australia panel surveys, providing a further data source on the trend of opinion. **The findings closely parallel those obtained by the telephone administered Scanlon Foundation survey; over the three years 2016-18, the proportion of the view that the intake was ‘too high’ remains a minority position, but has increased, from 35% to 40% to 44%.**

Figure 20: ‘What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia?’, 2007-2018



³⁵ Age (Nielsen), 31 July 2010; Roy Morgan Research Finding No. 4536; Essential Report 5 July 2010; Age (Nielsen), 19 April 2010; Roy Morgan Research Finding No. 4482.

Table 20: 'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia at present? Would you say it is...', 2007-2018 RDD (percentage)

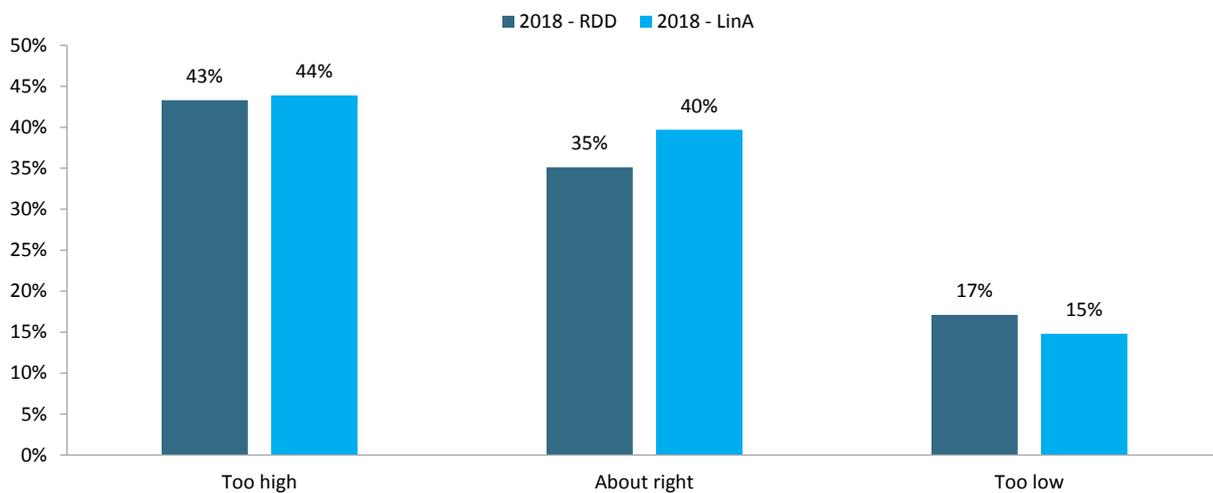
	Too high	About right	Too low	About right + Too low	No opinion/ Don't know
2007	36	41	12	53	11
2009	37	46	10	55	7
2010	47	36	10	46	7
2011	39	40	14	55	7
2012	38	42	14	56	7
2013	42	38	13	51	7
2014	35	42	17	58	8
2015	35	41	19	60	5
2016	34	40	19	59	7
2017	37	40	16	56	7
2018	43*	35*	17	52	5*

*Change between 2017 and 2018 statistically significant at p<.05

Table 21: 'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia at present? Would you say it is...', 2016-2018 LinA (percentage)

	Too high	About right	Too low	About right + Too low	No opinion/ Don't know
2016	35	39	19	58	7
2017	40	33	15	48	13
2018	44	40	15	55	2

Figure 21: 'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia?' 2018, two survey modes (RDD and LinA) compared



EXPLAINING SHIFTS IN OPINION

In past years the interpretation presented in the Scanlon Foundation survey reports has been that two key factors determine shift in opinion in Australia on attitudes to the immigration intake: the condition of the labour market, particularly the level of unemployment, and the political prominence of immigration issues.

Over the long term, there has been a strong correlation between changes in the level of unemployment and shifts in attitude to immigration, a Pearson correlation of 0.8799.

From 1989 to 1992 unemployment in Australia increased from 6% to 11%; in that context, the negative view of immigration recorded in a number of polls exceeded 70%. As labour market conditions improved, concern at the level of immigration decreased.

In recent years, as the level of unemployment has been below 6%, concern that the immigration intake was too high was close to a historical low for Australia, in the range 34%-37%.

The increase in negative sentiment over the last two years does not appear to be linked to economic concerns. At 5.4% the current level of unemployment is below the average of the last five years and is continuing to trend downwards.

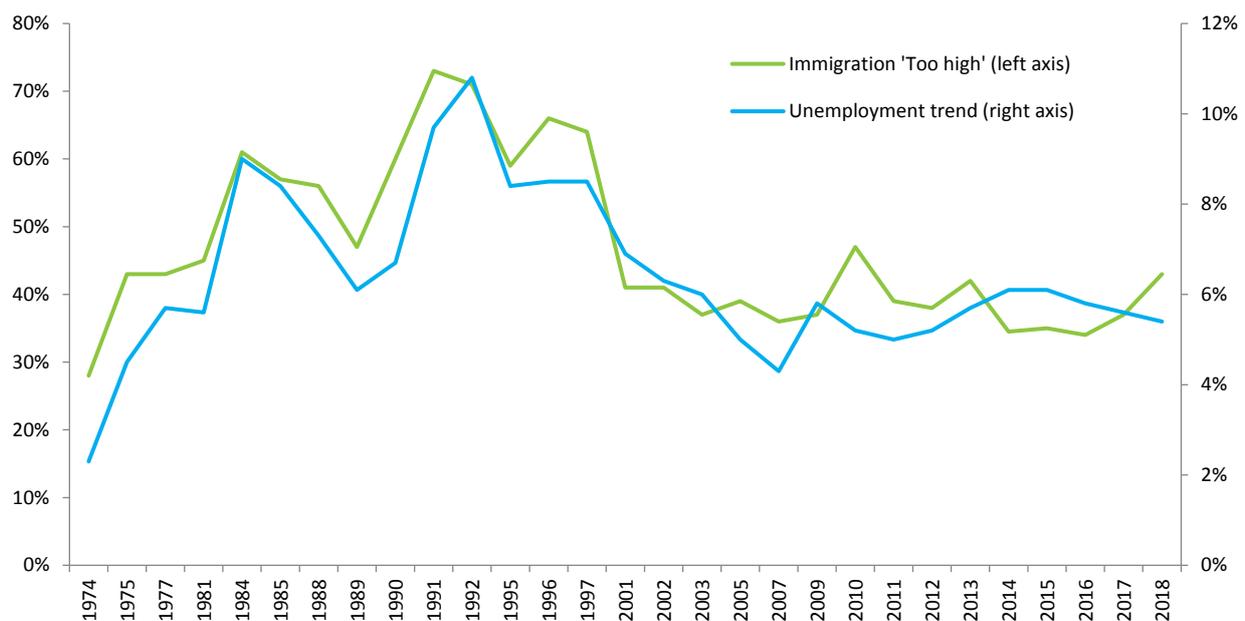
The Scanlon Foundation surveys have not found a significant increase in the level of economic concern between 2015 and 2018. Economic issues are ranked first as the major problem facing Australia, but the proportion of respondents specifying this has declined since 2014.

The 2014-2018 surveys asked respondents 'how worried are you that you will lose your job in the next year or so.' Of respondents aged 18-64 and in employment, 20% in 2014 indicated that they were 'very worried' or 'worried', 17% in 2015, 23% in 2016, a much lower 10% in 2017, and 12% in 2018.

The proportion aged 18-64 indicating that they were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with their 'present financial situation' has changed little over the last three years: 26% in 2015, 23% in 2016, 24% in 2017, and 26% in 2018.

While there is no evidence that links current shifts in attitude to economic insecurity, there is evidence that links to **the second explanatory factor, the political context.** The proportion of the view that immigration is 'too high' markedly increased in 2010, to a lesser extent in 2013 and 2018; 2010 and 2013 were years in which federal elections were held, with attendant political campaigning; 2018 has been a year of political instability, with increased attention to immigration as has been discussed.

Table 22: Time series, trend of unemployment and view that immigration is 'too high', 1974-2018



A third explanatory factor is the impact of immigration on quality of life in major cities, although this is a factor that is not simply quantifiable in terms of increased population size and its impact. It needs to be considered in the context of the character of individual cities and the politics of immigration in specific regions.

Melbourne has experienced the fastest rate of growth and ongoing public discussion of infrastructure deficits and rising house prices, yet the indication from the Scanlon Foundation survey is that in Melbourne a relatively low proportion are of the view that the immigration is 'too high.' In 2018 in Melbourne 33%-35% (RDD-LinA) of respondents indicated that immigration is 'too high', substantially below the 44%-45% national average.

Eight new questions included in the 2018 Scanlon Foundation survey provide insight into issues of greatest concern.

In order, the highest level of concern is over the 'overcrowding in cities'; the perceived 'impact of immigration on house prices'; government failure to 'manage population growth'; and the 'impact on the environment'.

Consistent with the argument that the shift in attitudes that has occurred is not primarily driven by economic fears, only a minority of close to one-third (31%) indicate concern that immigrants take jobs away, and one-in-seven (14%) disagree with the proposition that immigrants are good for the economy.

With attention narrowed to that portion of survey respondents who indicate that the current immigration intake is 'too high', an almost identical pattern of response is obtained, but negative sentiment is up to 20 percentage points higher. The one difference in the rank order is the higher ranking of concern over increase in crime. On the other hand, among those who consider the intake to be 'about right' or 'too low', the levels of concern are markedly lower: thus 40% are concerned by the impact on overcrowding, 36% by the impact on house prices, and just 15% that immigrants take jobs.

Table 22: Concerns about immigration, selected questions, (i) all respondents, (ii) those who consider the immigration intake 'too high', (iii) those who consider the immigration intake 'about right' or 'too low', 2018 (percentage)

Question and response	All respondents	Respondents who consider the intake to be 'too high'	Respondents who consider the intake is 'about right' or 'too low'
Concern at 'impact of immigration on overcrowding of Australian cities' – 'a great deal', 'somewhat'	54	73	40
Concern at 'impact of immigration of house prices' – 'a great deal', 'somewhat'	49	65	36
Government management of population growth – 'very badly', 'fairly badly'	48	66	36
Concern at 'impact of immigration on the environment' – 'a great deal', 'somewhat'	38	51	29
'Immigrants increase crime rates' – 'strongly agree', 'agree'	34	58	15
'Immigrants take jobs away' – 'strongly agree', 'agree'	31	50	15
'Immigrants are generally good for the Australian economy' – 'strongly disagree', 'disagree'	14	27	4
'Immigrants improve Australian society by bringing new ideas and cultures' – 'strongly disagree', 'disagree'	14	25	4
N (unweighted)	1,500	638	792

Age and education

Further analysis was undertaken to provide insight into the attitudes of highly educated young Australians, aged 18-29, a cohort that can be expected to have a major influence on the direction of Australian society in coming decades. The 2016 Census indicated that close to 40% of young adults now have a university level qualification, compared to 15% of those over the age of 65.

The main concerns of 18-29 year olds who have obtained a university degree is similar to the full sample, but with concern over house prices and the impact on the environment ranked first and second, where for the total sample these concerns were ranked second and fourth.

A notable feature of highly educated young adults is the very low level of agreement with the propositions that immigrants increase crime (7%), that the immigration intake is too high (7%), that immigrants do not bring new ideas (2%), and are not good for the economy (1%). There is no disagreement with the view that a diverse immigration intake benefits Australia.

There is a marked contrast in attitudes of those aged 65 or above whose highest educational qualifications were at the trade or apprenticeship level. On two issues there is close to unanimity across the two age and educational groups: concern over the impact of immigration on house prices and the environment. But there are marked contrasts in attitude to the level of immigration (a difference of 55 percentage points), the value of a diverse immigration intake (48%), the impact of immigrants on the crime rate (44%), and concern at overcrowding (37%).

Those aged 18-29 whose highest level of education is trade, diploma or apprenticeship are closer in their attitudes to the older respondents (aged 65 or above) with similar educational attainment than to their own age group with a university level qualification. Thus 43% consider that the immigration intake is too high, 31% agree that immigrants 'take jobs away', 30% that immigrants 'increase crime rates', although only 27% disagree with the proposition that that 'accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger'.

Table 23: Attitudes towards immigration, two age groups and highest educational attainment compared, 2018 (percentage)

Question and response	18-29 BA or higher	65+ School, trade, or apprenticeship	Difference
Concern at 'impact of immigration of house prices' – 'a great deal', 'somewhat'	52	46	-9
Concern at 'impact of immigration on the environment' – 'a great deal', 'somewhat'	44	35	-9
Government management of population growth – 'very badly', 'fairly badly'	38	46	8
Concern at 'impact of immigration on overcrowding of Australian cities' – 'a great deal', 'somewhat'	33	70	37
'Immigrants take jobs away' – 'strongly agree', 'agree'	18	38	20
'Immigrants increase crime rates' – 'strongly agree', 'agree'	7	51	44
Number of immigrants at present – 'too high'	7	62	55
'Immigrants improve Australian society by bringing new ideas and cultures' – 'strongly disagree', 'disagree'	2	20	18
'Immigrants are generally good for the Australian economy' – 'strongly disagree', 'disagree'	1	18	17
'Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes stronger' – 'strongly disagree', 'disagree'	0	48	48
N (unweighted)	63	309	

From one dimensional to multi-dimensional understanding

There are two additional issues to be considered if discussion of attitudes towards immigration is to move beyond a narrow focus on the size of the intake: **the relative importance of the issue, and the perceived value of immigration to the nation. Do Australians still embrace the notion that their country is an immigrant nation, one in which immigration will continue to play an important role**, or is there readiness to bring the program to an end, a rejection of the idea that immigration is good for the country?

If it was the case, as has been suggested by more than one media commentator, that the population is angry and demand of their politicians that immigration be radically curtailed, then immigration would rank first – or very highly – when survey respondents are asked to rank issues of importance for the country.

Since 2011 the Scanlon Foundation surveys have asked respondents, in an open-ended question, to indicate ‘the most important problem facing Australia today.’ In both the interviewer administered and the Life in Australia self-completion versions of the survey, **just 7% of 2018 respondents indicated that immigration was the most important problem.** While this proportion has increased since 2015, the increase has been only by four percentage points.

There is further evidence on the relative importance of the immigration issue. In a 2018 poll (24 April) the Essential Report specified six ‘main problems facing Australia’, one of which was ‘excessive levels of immigration.’ In the ranking, which combined respondents’ first, second and third choices, immigration came fifth, after ‘housing affordability pushing people to the fringes of major cities’ (66%); lack of government investment in infrastructure like roads and public transport’ (62%); lack of employment opportunities driving people to the cities’ (62%), ‘poor planning that means people live too far from where they work’ (45%), ‘excessive levels of immigration’ (37%), and ‘lack of regulations for property developers’ (29%).

Table 24: What do you think is the most important problem facing Australia today?, 2013-2018 (percentage)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 RDD	2018 LinA
Immigration/ population growth (concern)	3	3	3	5	6	7	7
Immigration/population – too low/ need more people (supportive)	1	0	0	1	1	1	0

Continuing positive outlook on immigration

Surveys find a continuing positive attitude to immigration. The 2018 Scanlon Foundation surveys found agreement at 82% (76% LinA) with the proposition that ‘immigrants improve Australian society by bringing new ideas and cultures’ and 80% (74%) with the proposition that ‘immigrants are generally good for Australia’s economy.’

There is also **evidence that despite the changing tenor of political discussion of immigration, there has been little change in attitudes over the last four years.** Four questions included in the 2018 Scanlon Foundation survey were selected because they provided scope to measure change since 2015 as measured by an ANUpoll. Both the Scanlon and ANUpoll were interviewer administered to a random sample of the population and by the same surveying organisation, the Social Research Centre. Comparison of the results obtained by the two surveys finds that opinion has shifted in a negative direction, but only by a marginal 3 to 4 percentage points, with the exception of the proposition that immigrants increase crime, which has seen a shift from 67% in disagreement to 57%.

Other surveys provide evidence of ongoing positive majority disposition towards the value of immigration for Australia.

In 2018 the Lowy Institute poll presented respondents with two statements:

Australia’s openness to people from all over the world is essential to who we are as a nation

If Australia is too open to people from all over the world, we risk losing our identity as a nation.

A majority of 54% agreed that openness was essential, while 41% were concerned over loss of identity.³⁶

Essential Report (24 April 2018) presented respondents with a number of propositions on the impact of immigration. It found that 61% agreed (26% disagreed) with the proposition that ‘Overall immigration has made a positive contribution to Australian society’; 55% agreed (32% disagreed) that ‘multiculturalism and cultural diversity has enriched the social and economic lives of all Australians’, the same proportions as were obtained in 2015.

In the same survey in which Essential Report found majority agreement that Australia’s population growth rate is too fast, it obtained majority support for the entry of specific immigrant categories: entry on short-term student visas was accepted at present levels (or higher) by 58%, short-term working holiday visas by 54%; permanent family reunion by 52%, and skilled working visa by 51%.

Table 25: Perceptions of immigrant impact, ANUpoll April 2015 and Scanlon Foundation 2018 (percentage)

	ANUpoll 2015	Scanlon 2018
‘Immigrants improve Australian society by bringing new ideas and cultures’ – ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’	86	82
‘Immigrants are generally good for Australia’s economy’ – ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’	83	80
‘Immigrants take jobs away’ – ‘strongly disagree’, ‘disagree’	68	64
‘Immigrants increase crime rates’ – ‘strongly disagree’, ‘disagree’	67	57
N (unweighted)	1,200	1,500

³⁶ Lowy Institute Poll 2018, p.15

The politics of immigration

The previous discussion considered shifts in attitude across the total population. In seeking to understand the political significance of immigration a narrower focus is required, one that considers different segments of the electorate.

In their campaigning, political parties focus not on all voters, but on the voters who are most likely to switch their support to – or from – their party, and in marginal electorates. There is a different salience of immigration for the respective political parties.

The current party of government, the Liberal-National Coalition, is positioned as the party more closely aligned to the business sector, which in large measure is a supporter of current immigration levels.³⁷ But Liberal-National voters also indicate a relatively high level of concern at the current immigration intake – in the telephone administered version of the survey (RDD), **56% of Coalition supporters indicated that the current intake is ‘too high’, compared to 36% Labor and 13% Greens.** There is a similar pattern of response in the online version (LinA), with the main difference being the higher level of concern (relative to the telephone survey) among Labor voters over the immigration intake.

Analysis by the range of variables employed in this report for the 2018 telephone administered survey finds that the highest proportion in agreement that the immigration intake is ‘too high’ is found amongst supporters of One Nation (91%), those with education up to Year 11 level (58%), struggling to pay bills or poor (65%) or ‘just getting along’ (50%), over the age of 55 (52%-58%), with Trade or Apprenticeship qualifications (55%), resident outside capital cities (50%), and residents of New South Wales (51%). These findings are reported with the qualification that for sub-samples the margin of surveying error is greater than for the total sample.

The relatively high levels in agreement that the intake is ‘too high’ among those ‘struggling’ or ‘poor’ highlight a potential problem for Labor, as these segments of the population include relatively high level of supporters of the party. [ref Election study]

The politics of immigration are simplest to navigate for the Greens and One Nation – on the one hand, among Greens supporters there is little demand for a cut in immigration, on the other for One Nation it is a major demand.

Table 26: ‘What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia?’, Response: ‘Too high’ by intended vote, 2018, RDD and LinA (percentage)

2018	Greens	Labor	Liberal/ National/ LNP	One Nation
RDD	13	36	56	91
LinA	10	43	54	82

³⁷ See for example, James Pearson, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, ‘Immigration a resounding positive for business and communities’, 27 February 2018; Paul Karp, ‘Industry brands Australia’s 10% migration intake drop disappointing’, *The Guardian*, 13 July 2018

Table 27: 'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia?', Response: 'Too high', 2018 (percentage)

Gender	Female	Male					
	45	42					
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	38	51	36	36	48		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	39	50					
Age	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65–74	75+
	20	38	45	42	52	58	55
Highest completed education	BA or higher	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11		
	23	46	55	49	58		
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	27	42	50	65			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	36	56	13	91			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	47	41	33				

Australia in the international context

There is substantial evidence to indicate that Australia and Canada rank as the countries most receptive to immigration and have relatively high level of acceptance of cultural diversity.

A major survey conducted between 2012 and 2014 in 142 countries by Gallup World Poll – conducted by telephone and face-to-face interviews with approximately 1,000 adults, aged 15 and older in each country – provides scope for comparison across regions. The aggregated results indicate that support for immigration at current or higher levels is **at 69% in the Oceania region (Australia and New Zealand)**, 57% in Northern America (Canada and the United States of America), and at 38% in Europe. Analysis by country indicated support at 70% in Australia, 67% in Canada, and 29% in the United Kingdom.³⁸

Gallup's 2016-17 Migrant Acceptance Index found that Oceania ranked first, North American second. **In the ranking of 138 countries, Australia ranked seventh, Canada fourth.** The Index is based on three questions concerning the value of migrants to the country, acceptance of an immigrant becoming a neighbour, and an immigrant marrying a close relative, and data was obtained by telephone and face-to-face interviews with approximately 1,000 adults in 140 countries.³⁹

The Ipsos survey on Global Views on Immigration and the Refugee Crisis was conducted in June-July 2017 on the Ipsos Online Panel System. It achieved a sample of 1000+ in Australia, Canada, the United States and a number of European countries. When asked 'Would you say that immigration has generally had a positive or negative impact on your country' an average 21% provided a positive response in 25 countries; **Canada and Australia ranked equal fourth, with 38% positive**, the United States was next with 35% positive. The low ranked countries were Hungary at 5% positive, Turkey and Russia 9%, France 14%, and Germany 18%. **While Australian responses on the economic and social impact of immigration were not at a high level**, in response to the proposition 'immigrants make your country a more interesting place to live', **Australian and Canada ranked equal third with 48% in agreement** and the United States ranked sixth with 47% in agreement, compared to the average score of 31% for the 25 countries.⁴⁰

The IPSOS Public Affairs Global Inclusiveness of Nationalities survey was conducted in 27 countries in April-May 2018 using the Ipsos Online Panel. On the **overall inclusiveness index, Australia ranked fifth of the 27 countries**, behind Canada, United States, South Africa, and France. In acceptance of 'an immigrant who has become a citizen and is fluent in our language' Australia ranked second, behind the United States and marginally ahead of Canada, which ranked third. David Elliott, a director of the Ipsos Social Research Institute, commented that Australia's high ranking on the index was not surprising. The finding 'fits with previous Ipsos studies ... which highlighted **Australia as one of the more positive countries globally** in terms of ... views on immigration and refugees.'⁴¹

Polls conducted in 2018 in Europe and the US find a lessening of concerns and a more positive attitude toward immigration.

The 2018 Eurobarometer survey⁴² – with fieldwork conducted in March 2018 with face-to-face interviews from a random sample of 1000 in each of 34 countries or territories found that **concern about immigration declined from the high point in 2015.** The 'two most important issues facing our country' were specified as unemployment (25%) health and social security (23%) with immigration (21%) third ranked. **Immigration was the first ranked issue in four countries, Germany (38%, down from 76% in 2015), the Netherlands (21%, 56%), Sweden (25%, 53%), and Denmark (34%, 60%).** The UK is now at 17%, down from 44% in 2015.⁴³

³⁸ International Organization for Migration 2015, *How the World Views Migration*, <http://publications.iom.int/books/how-world-views-migration>

³⁹ New Index Shows Least- Most-Accepting Countries for Migrants, Gallup News, 23 August 2017, <http://news.gallup.com/poll/216377/new-index-shows-least-accepting-countries-migrants.aspx>; Migrant Acceptance in Canada, US, 26 April 2018, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/233147/migrant-acceptance-canada-follows-political-lines.aspx>

⁴⁰ Nick O'Malley and Matt Wade, 'Australia's conflicted relationship with its vast and growing immigrant family', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 September 2017; https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2017-09/Global_Advisor_Immigration.pdf

⁴¹ The Age, 27 June 2018; Ipsos Public Affairs, 'The Inclusiveness of Nationalities. A Global Advisor Survey'

⁴² Standard Eurobarometer 89, 2018, Public Opinion in the European Union, <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2180>

⁴³ Pew Research Centre, Immigration concerns fall in Western Europe, 22 October 2018

Other surveys, however, indicate the continuing importance of the refugee issue in Europe. When the Pew Research Centre in May-July 2018 asked for views on ‘the way the European Union is dealing with the refugee issue’, disapproval was at 92% in Greece, 84% Sweden, 78% Italy, 74% France, 71% Spain, 66% Germany, and 66% United Kingdom.⁴⁴

In the United States, surveys have found evidence of concern over illegal entry, but also greater support for immigration

When **Gallup** asked in June 2018 concerning the level of immigration, **67% favoured increase, 29% decrease.** Those favouring decrease had been at 38% in 2016 and 41% in 2014.⁴⁵ In June, Gallup also obtained a **record-high 75% of Americans**, including majorities of supporters of all parties, **in agreement that immigration is a good thing for the U.S.** Just 19% considered that immigration was bad for the country.⁴⁶

A June 2018 Pew survey found 70% in support of current levels or an increase in legal immigration into the United States. While there has been strong negative attitude towards illegal immigration into the U.S., a contrary trend has been evident towards legal immigration.⁴⁷

In Britain, negative opinion on immigration far outweighs positive, but it has declined since 2013. The 1995 British Social Attitudes survey found that just 4% of respondents supported an increase in immigration, 27% indicated that it should ‘remain the same as it is’, while 63% favoured reduction. The subsequent trend was towards increased negativity, with 78% favouring reduction in 2008. Of the 77% who favoured reduction in 2013 (in a large sample of 3,243), 21% favoured ‘reduce a little’, 56% ‘reduce a lot.’ Ipsos Mori British polling in October 2016 found a more positive trend, but a majority (60%) continued to favour reduction, 27% the current level, and just an 8% increase.⁴⁸ **In 2018 – after the Brexit vote – the positive trend continued, but over half still favour a reduction in immigration.**

Table 28: ‘Do you think the number of immigrants to Britain nowadays should be increased a lot, increased a little, remain the same as it is, reduced a little or reduced a lot?’ 2003-2018 (percentage)

	2003	2008	2011	2013	2015	2016	2018 March	2018 May
Reduce a little, a lot	72	78	75	77	62	60	54	56
Remain the same	16	17	18	17	23	27	30	27
Increase a little, a lot	6	4	3	4	10	8	10	12

Source: National Centre Social Research, British Social Attitudes 2013, Attitudes to Immigration; Ipsos MORI, Shifting ground; 8 key findings from a longitudinal study on attitudes towards immigration and Brexit; Ipsos MORI, ‘Attitudes towards immigration after Windrush’

⁴⁴ Pew Research Centre, 2018 Global Attitudes survey, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/09/19/a-majority-of-europeans-favor-taking-in-refugees-but-most-disapprove-of-eus-handling-of-the-issue/>

⁴⁵ <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1660/immigration.aspx>

⁴⁶ <https://news.gallup.com/poll/235793/record-high-americans-say-immigration-good-thing.aspx>

⁴⁷ <http://www.people-press.org/2018/06/28/shifting-public-views-on-legal-immigration-into-the-u-s/>

⁴⁸ Ipsos Mori, Shifting Ground, Eight key findings from a longitudinal study on attitudes to immigration and Brexit, 2017, https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2017-10/Shifting%20Ground_Unbound.pdf; see also Scott Blinder and William Allen, UK Public Opinion toward Immigration: Overall Attitudes and Level of Concern, The Migration Observatory, November 2016

In Canada, the tracking survey conducted for the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship employs a Random Digital Dialling methodology, similar to the Scanlon Foundation survey. It achieves a sample of 1,600 and has found continuing strong level of support for the immigration intake, considerably above the level in Australia. Surveys between 2006 and 2017 found agreement with the view that there are ‘too many immigrants coming to Canada’ in the range 23%-28%, while **in excess of 60% supported the view that the intake was ‘about right’ or ‘too few.’**

The Focus Canada survey, conducted annually by the Environics Institute, by telephone with a sample of 2,000, has found that a majority of Canadians reject the proposition that the country is taking too many immigrants, despite an annual intake above 300,000. The survey found that **in 2018, 60% (62% in 2017) of respondents disagreed with the proposition that ‘overall, there is too much immigration in Canada,’** while 35% (unchanged from 2017) agreed. These proportions have remained largely unchanged over the last four years and indicate ‘stability of opinion’; 80% (up 2 points since 2017) of respondents agreed that ‘overall, immigration has a positive impact on the economy’ (16% disagreed, down 4 points).⁴⁹

One Canadian survey has, however, obtained a different result. The survey conducted by the highly regarded Angus Reid Institute found opinion divided on immigration. Conducted online among members of the Angus Reid Forum and with a sample of 1500, it found that 49% favoured a reduction in the immigration target, up from 36% in a 2014 Harris/Decima poll which asked a similarly worded question. 31% (48% in 2014) indicated that the number should stay the same and 6% (9%) favoured an increase. Angus Reid Institute commented that **‘For the first time in a while, we are seeing Canadians more inclined to say that we should be decreasing the amount of immigration, and fewer Canadians saying that we should stick with the status quo’**, possibly the result of an increase in irregular arrivals and the size of the refugee intake. The finding was headlined ‘Canadians split on issue of immigration, survey finds’ on CBC News, ‘Record opposition among Canadians to taking in more immigrants ...’ in the *National Post*.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ The Environics Institute, Focus Canada – Winter 2018, , ‘Canadian public opinion about immigration and minority groups’

⁵⁰ CBC News, 22 August 2018; National Post, 21 August 2018

BACK TO WHITE AUSTRALIA?

For the first half of the twentieth century Australia's White Australia Policy denied permanent residence to non-Europeans and strictly limited the numbers granted temporary entry.

This policy underwent a gradual change in the 1950s and 1960s, with reform in 1966 and a formal end to the policy in 1973, although informal discrimination was not immediately ended.

The first major break came under the Coalition government led by Malcolm Fraser with the admission of a large number of refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia, a total of 81,548 in the period 1977-84. By the mid-1980s close to 40% of the immigration intake was from Asian countries.

Over the decades since, fringe political groups have continued to call for the re-introduction of immigration restriction, with the claim that the fundamental change to Australia's immigration policy has never been approved by the Australian people. These claims ignore the reality that for nearly half a century, elections have returned governments opposed to discrimination in immigration policy on the basis of race or ethnicity. **In recent years calls for discrimination have been primarily raised in the context of advocacy of a ban on Muslim immigration, but also with attention to African youth.**

Senator Pauline Hanson has been a prominent advocate of discrimination, at one time focused on Asian immigrants, recently on Muslims. Hanson's One Nation immigration policy, which describes second and third generation Australians as 'migrants', calls for a ban on entry from countries 'that are known sources of radicalism': 'Our Constitution prevents us from asking the religion of those who seek to migrate to Australia, but equally, we cannot ignore first, second and third generation migrants who violently reject Australia's democratic values and institutions in the name of radical Islam. Until we can find a solution to this problem, we believe in a Travel Ban (similar to the Trump administration in the United States) on countries that are known sources of radicalism coming into Australia.'⁵¹

Former One Nation member Fraser Anning, who defected from the party following his election to the Senate and later joined Katter's Australian Party, is a more radical exponent of discriminatory attitudes.

His maiden speech in August 2018, in which he referred to the need for a 'final solution' of the immigration problem, exemplifies themes current among far-right groups, whose influence in Australia has grown through social media. Anning and the viewpoint he represents evokes an imagined harmonious society united by 'common threads of inherited identity', a time when 'everyone, from the cleaners to the captains of industry, had a shared vision of who we were as a people.' His immediate objective is to 'end all further Muslim immigration' and 'restrict entry to those who will best assimilate.'⁵²

While Anning's speech was condemned in both Houses of Parliament, his party leader Bob Katter welcomed it as 'absolutely magnificent', 'solid gold', deserving of his '100% support' (*The Guardian*, 15 August 2018). But two months later, as Anning sought to introduce a bill for a plebiscite on non-European migration to Australia, 'to give the people a say on who comes to this country', he was expelled from the Katter party. Katter, possibly concerned that he might lose his own seat through the allocation of Labor preferences, now commented that Anning had repeatedly ignored his warnings not to use racist language or call for a European immigration program. (ABC News, 25 Oct 2018)

Discrimination in selection policy

In 2015, 2017 and 2018, the Scanlon Foundation survey tested the extent of support for immigration restriction. Respondents were asked:

Do you agree or disagree that when a family or individual applies to migrate to Australia that it should be possible for them to be rejected simply on the basis of...

[a] Their race or ethnicity?

[b] Their religion?

Across the three surveys there has been a large measure of consistency in the rejection of discrimination: 'strong agreement' with discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity is in the range 7%-8%, with discrimination on the basis of religion at 8%-11%. In 2018 this result is consistent in the telephone and self-administered version of the survey.

With 'strongly agree' or 'agree' responses combined, support for discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity is in the range 15%-22%; on the basis of religion 18%-20% in the interviewer administered version, a higher 29% in the self-completion version. The level of support for discrimination is marginally lower in 2018 than in the two earlier surveys.

⁵¹ <https://www.onenation.org.au/policies/immigration-and-the-rule-of-law/>

⁵² Parliament of Australia, Senate Hansard, 14 August 2018

Table 29: 'Do you agree or disagree that when a family or individual applies to migrate to Australia, that it should be possible for them to be rejected simply on the basis of their race or ethnicity?' 2015, 2017, 2018 RDD and 2018 LinA (percentage)

	2015	2017	2018	2018 LinA
Strongly agree	7	8	7	8
Agree	12	8	8	13
Sub-total agree	19	16	15	22
Neither agree nor disagree	1	2	1	0
Disagree	36	32	32	43
Strongly disagree	41	48	49	35
Sub-total disagree	77	80	81	78

Table 30: 'Do you agree or disagree that when a family or individual applies to migrate to Australia, that it should be possible for them to be rejected simply on the basis of their religion?' 2015, 2017, 2018 RDD and 2018 LinA (percentage)

	2015	2017	2018	2018 LinA
Strongly agree	9	9	8	11
Agree	12	11	9	17
Sub-total agree	20	20	18	29
Neither agree nor disagree	2	3	2	0
Disagree	38	33	35	39
Strongly disagree	39	41	43	32
Sub-total disagree	76	74	78	71

Support for discrimination

Analysis by intended vote finds that by a large margin the highest proportion in favour of discrimination in selection policy are supporters of One Nation.

Comparing the telephone administered and self-administered versions of the Scanlon Foundation survey finds support for discrimination on the basis of religion in the range 8%-13% among Greens voters, 17%-24% Labor, 26%-35% Liberal and National, and 56%-59% One Nation. Close to one-third of One Nation supporters indicate 'strong agreement' with discrimination.

Analysis of support for discrimination was undertaken by eight additional variables, comprising 36 sub-groups: gender; state of residence; region (capital city or rest of state); age; highest level of educational attainment; self-described financial situation; citizenship; religion; and country of birth. Since attitudes on discrimination are largely constant, the 2015, 2017 and 2018 telephone administered data sets were combined to provide greater reliability for this sub-group analysis.

The highest level of agreement (above 25%) with discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity is among those aged 75 or above (29%), and with trade or apprentice qualifications (27%).

The highest level of agreement (above 25%) with discrimination on the basis of religion is among those with trade or apprentice qualifications (31%), aged 75 or above (26%), with highest level of educational attainment up to Year 11 (26%), resident outside capital cities (25%), and of the Anglican faith (25%).

Table 31: 'Do you agree or disagree that when a family or individual applies to migrate to Australia, that it should be possible for them to be rejected simply on the basis of their religion?' 2015, 2017, 2018 combined, RDD (percentage)

	Greens	Labor	Liberal/ LNP/ National	One Nation
Strongly agree	4	6	12	36
Agree	4	11	14	20
Sub-total agree	8	17	26	56
N (unweighted)	444	1,278	1,595	153

Table 32: 'Do you agree or disagree that when a family or individual applies to migrate to Australia, that it should be possible for them to be rejected simply on the basis of their religion?' 2018, LinA (percentage)

	Greens	Labor	Liberal/ LNP/ National	One Nation
Strongly agree	5	11	14	32
Agree	8	13	21	27
Sub-total agree	13	24	35	59
N (unweighted)	287	571	759	125

Table 33: ‘Do you agree or disagree that when a family or individual applies to migrate to Australia, that it should be possible for them to be rejected simply on the basis of their race or ethnicity or religion?’ by selected demographics 2015, 2017, 2018 combined

		Reject on basis of race or ethnicity	Reject on basis of religion
		Strongly agree + agree	Strongly agree + agree
Gender	Male	17	22
	Female	16	17
State	VIC	15	17
	NSW	17	18
	WA	17	19
	SA	20	24
	QLD	18	23
Region	Capital city	14	17
	Rest of state	21	25
Age	18-24	8	10
	25-34	11	14
	35-44	14	18
	45-54	19	25
	55-64	19	24
	65-74	23	24
	75+	29	26
Education	BA or higher	10	13
	Diploma/Technical Certificate	17	21
	Trade/Apprenticeship	27	31
	Year 12	13	16
	Up to Year 11	24	26
Financial situation	Prosperous/very comfortable	15	18
	Reasonably comfortable	15	18
	Just getting along	20	21
	Struggling to pay bills/poor	21	25
Citizenship	Australian	17	20
	Other	14	14
Religion	Catholic	19	20
	Anglican	22	25
	Other Christian	17	21
	Other religions	16	15
	No religion	12	17
Background	Born in Australia	17	21
	(3rd Gen Australian)	18	23
	Overseas-ESB	15	18
	Overseas- NESB	16	15

A diverse immigration intake

Further insight into levels of support for discrimination in immigration policy is provided by other questions in the Scanlon Foundation surveys.

In response to the proposition that ‘accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger’, there has been a consistent level of agreement, in the range 62%-68%. Over the last four surveys agreement has been in the range 63%-67%. Less than one-third of respondents have disagreed, with a marginally higher 36% when the survey was self-administered. ‘Strong disagreement’ is at 13% in 2018, with only minor variation (under four percentage points) since 2010.

Table 34: ‘Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger’, 2007-2018 (percentage)

Response	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 RDD	2018 LinA
Strongly agree	22	25	19	24	26	22	26	27	30	26	29	17
Agree	45	43	43	40	39	40	41	40	36	37	37	46
Sub-total agree	67	68	62	64	65	62	68	67	67	63	66	63
Neither agree nor disagree	3	3	6	6	6	6	5	4	4	5	3*	0
Disagree	18	18	19	16	15	18	16	17	16	16	17	24
Strongly disagree	8	9	11	11	11	11	10	9	11	13	13	13
Sub-total disagree	26	27	30	27	26	29	26	27	27	30	30	36
N (unweighted)	2,012	2,019	2,021	2,001	2,000	1,200	1,526	1,501	1,500	2,236	1,500	2,260

*Change between 2017 and 2018 statistically significant at $p < .05$

Nationality

The Scanlon Foundation survey also tested attitudes towards specific national groups.

Between 2010 and 2013 the telephone administered Scanlon Foundation surveys asked respondents if their feelings were positive, negative or neutral towards specific national groups – and obtained a large measure of consistency across the four surveys. Ten nationalities were specified, selected to include English-speaking, European, Asian, Middle Eastern, African and Pacific countries.

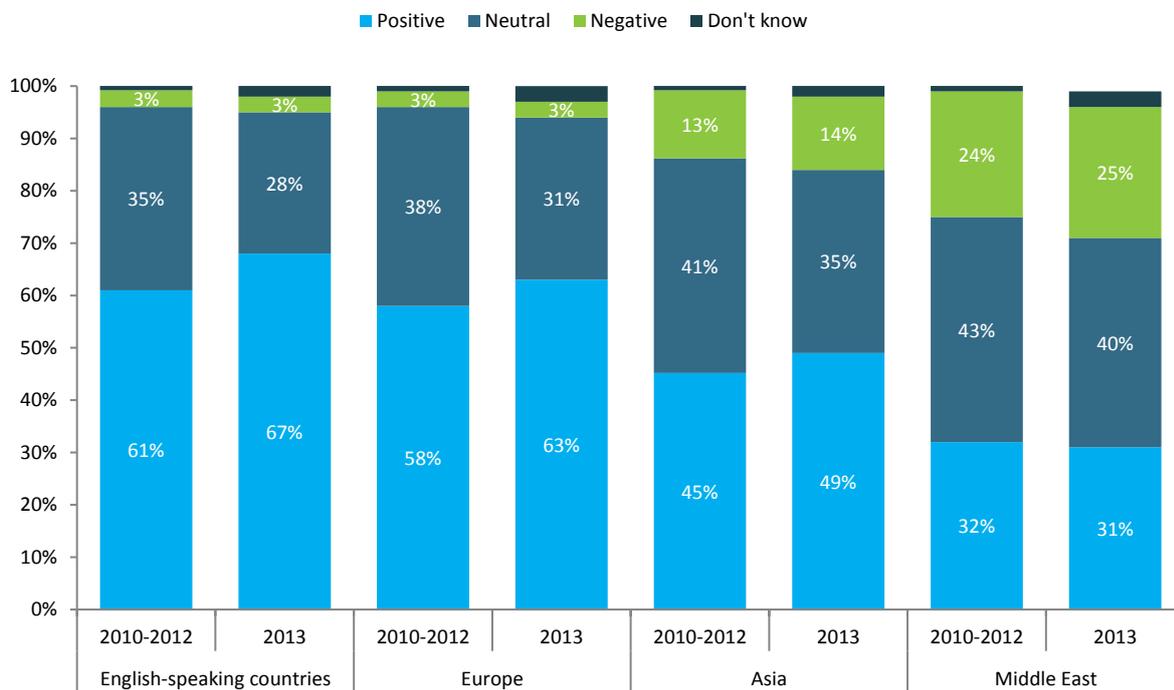
Indicating high levels of acceptance, the level of negative sentiment towards immigrants from English speaking and European countries was close to 3%, towards immigrants from the Pacific Islands at 5%, and 12%-14% towards specified Asian countries (China, India). The highest negative sentiment at 16% was towards a specified African country (Ethiopia), and Middle Eastern countries – 22%-24% towards Iraq and 23%-27% towards Lebanon.

A relatively high proportion of respondents indicated that they were neutral towards the least favoured groups, in the range 28%-45% in 2013, with the highest proportion indicating a neutral response towards Lebanon 38%, Pacific Islands 38%, Iraq 43%, and Ethiopia 45%.

These findings indicate that, as in all countries, in Australia there continues to be a hierarchy of ethnic preference which informs attitudes towards immigrants, with negative sentiment held by a minority. The pattern of neutral response, however, may be taken to indicate that survey respondents are reluctant to disclose their true level of unease or opposition to immigrants from a number of countries.

The potential impact of the interview administration of the surveys between 2010-13 – what is termed Social Desirability Bias discussed in the methodology section of this report – can be explored through consideration of attitudes to faith groups, with questions asked in the interviewer and self-administered versions of the survey.

Figure 23: ‘Would you say your feelings are positive, negative or neutral towards immigrants from?’, 2010-13



Faith groups and Muslim immigration

Eight Scanlon Foundation surveys (2010-12, 2014-18) have asked questions on attitudes to three faith groups, Christian, Buddhist, and Muslim. These surveys provide a comprehensive time series on attitudes to specific faith groups.

Over the course of the eight interviewer administered Scanlon Foundation surveys (RDD), negative opinion towards Christians and Buddhists has been in the range 4%-5%. Negative attitude towards Muslims has been significantly higher, in the range 22%-25% (11% - 14% very negative), at an average of 24%.

The results obtained in the 2017 and 2018 self-administered versions (LinA) find minor difference when attitudes to Christians and Buddhists are considered. Negative attitude to Buddhists is in the range 3%-4% interviewer administered, 6%-7% self-administered. Negative attitude towards Christians is 5%-6% interviewer administered, 12% self-administered.

Much larger variation is obtained with reference to Muslims, close to 15 percentage points – 23%-25% (RDD), 39%-41% (LinA).

This finding may indicate that while there is a strong measure of reliability in the finding of the interviewer administered survey with reference to immigration from Asian countries, on the assumption that respondents recognise that the highest proportion of Buddhists are from Asia, the same reliability is not obtained in the interviewer administered question on attitudes to Muslims.

The level of negative sentiment towards those of the Muslim faith, largely constant across eight years of surveying, and by extension to immigrants from Muslim countries, is a factor of significance in contemporary Australian society. It possibly explains the higher level of support for discrimination in immigrant selection policy on the basis of religion than race or ethnicity.

It is, however, a notable finding that across the two modes of surveying, and with different questions posed, **support for discrimination on the model of the historic White Australia Policy fails to gain support from more than 30% of respondents, and within sub-groups of the population appeals to a majority only among One Nation supporters.**

Figure 24: 'Is your personal attitude positive, negative or neutral towards Muslims?', 2010-2018

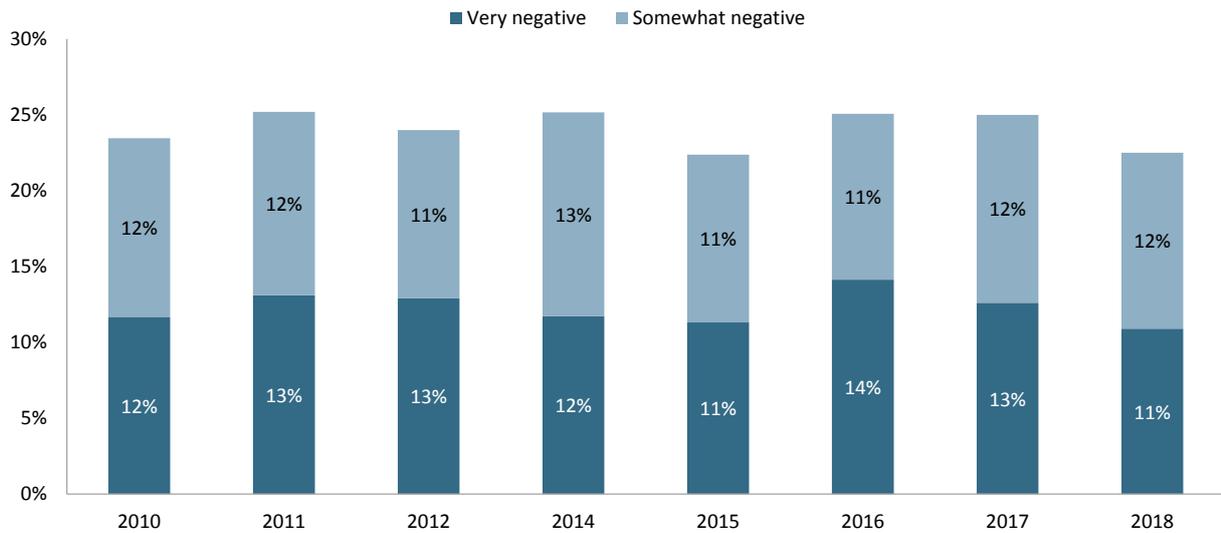


Table 35: 'Is your personal attitude positive, negative or neutral towards Muslims?', 2010-2018 (percentage)

	2010	2011	2012	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
Very positive	9	10	11	10	10	10	9	10
Somewhat positive	23	20	24	18	18	20	19	17
Sub-total positive	32	30	35	28	28	30	28	27
Neutral	42	43	40	44	47	42	44	48
Somewhat negative	12	12	11	13	11	11	12	12
Very negative	12	13	13	12	11	14	13	11
Sub-total negative	24	25	24	25	22	25	25	23
Don't know/decline	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	2
N (unweighted)	2,021	2,001	2,000	1,526	1,501	1,500	1,500	1,500

*Change between 2017 and 2018 not statistically significant at $p < .05$

Table 36: 'Is your personal attitude positive, negative or neutral towards Muslims?', RDD and LinA, 2017 and 2018 (percentage)

Question and response	RDD		LinA	
	2017	2018	2017	2018
'Is your personal attitude positive, negative or neutral towards Christians' – 'very negative', 'somewhat negative'	6	5	12	12
'Is your personal attitude positive, negative or neutral towards Buddhists' – 'very negative', 'somewhat negative'	4	3	6	7
'Is your personal attitude positive, negative or neutral towards Muslims' – 'very negative', 'somewhat negative'	25	23	41	39

MULTICULTURALISM

The Scanlon Foundation surveys have found a consistently high level of endorsement of multiculturalism.

Since 2013, the Scanlon Foundation surveys asked for response to the proposition that **‘multiculturalism has been good for Australia.’ Agreement has been consistent, in the range 83%-86%**, with an increase in the proportion indicating ‘strong agreement,’ from 32% in 2013 to 41%-44% in 2015-18. Disagreement has been in the range 10%-12%.

A high level of agreement with the value of multiculturalism was also obtained **in the online version of the survey: in 2018, 77% indicated agreement, 22% disagreement.**

It is unusual to find such a high level of positive response to any question that deals with a government policy that has been a subject of controversy; for example, in 2018 just 45% of respondents indicated that they had a positive view of government management of population growth, 37% agree with government assistance to ethnic minorities ‘to maintain their customs and traditions’.

Table 37: ‘Multiculturalism has been good for Australia’, 2013-2018 (percentage)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
Strongly agree	32	37	43	41	41	44
Agree	52	48	42	42	44	42
Sub-total agree	84	85	86	83	85	85
Neither agree nor disagree	3	4	2	3	2	2
Disagree	8	6	7	7	7	6
Strongly disagree	3	4	4	5	5	6
Sub-total disagree	11	10	11	12	12	12
N (unweighted)	1,200	1,526	1,501	1,500	2,236	1,500

*Change between 2017 and 2018 not statistically significant at p<.05

Figure 25: ‘Multiculturalism has been good for Australia’, 2013-2018

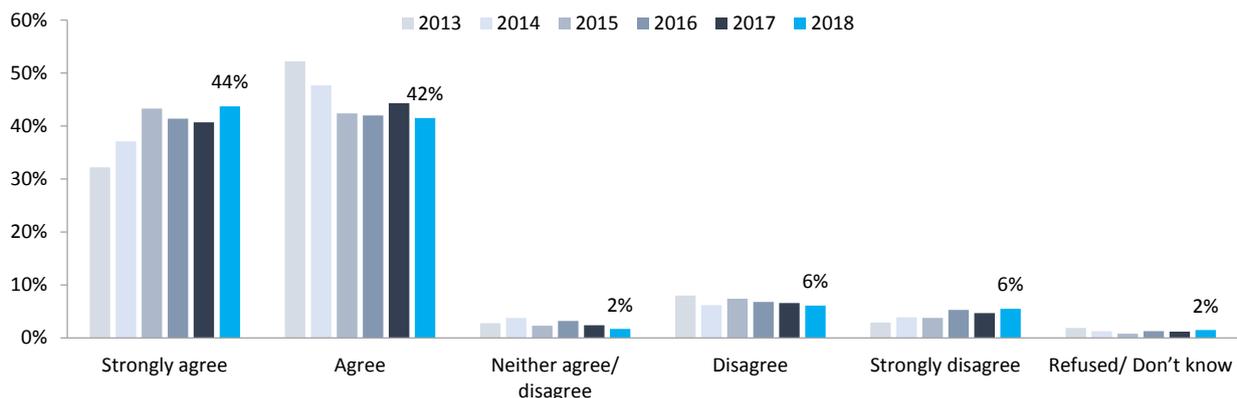


Table 38: ‘Multiculturalism has been good for Australia’, Response: ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ (‘strongly agree’ in brackets), 2015-2018 combined (percentage)

Gender	Female	Male					
		86 (40)	84 (45)				
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	90 (50)	83 (41)	84 (39)	86 (38)	83 (38)		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	88 (47)	79 (33)					
Age	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65-74	75+
	94 (59)	90 (49)	87 (44)	84 (40)	81 (36)	78 (32)	73 (27)
Highest completed education	BA or higher	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11		
	93 (57)	85 (39)	83 (35)	89 (47)	73 (27)		
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	90 (52)	86 (42)	83 (40)	76 (35)			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	88 (49)	81 (32)	96 (70)	45 (4)			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	82 (38)	87 (41)	92 (55)				

Table 39: ‘Multiculturalism has been good for Australia’, Response: ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ 2015-2018 combined (percentage)

Gender	Female	Male					
		11	12				
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	8	13	12	10	14		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	9	16					
Age	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65-74	75+
	5	7	10	11	16	18	22
Highest completed education	BA or higher	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11		
	5	12	14	10	20		
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	8	11	13	20			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	10	14	3	46			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	14	11	6				

Two-way change

The 2018 Scanlon Foundation survey, in keeping with earlier findings, indicates that **for the majority multiculturalism involves a two-way change, requiring adaptation by Australians as well as immigrants.**

The 2015-2018 surveys presented respondents with two propositions, that ‘we should do more to learn about the customs and heritage of different ethnic and cultural groups in this country,’ and ‘people who come to Australia should change their behaviour to be more like Australians.’ Across the four years of surveying, close to two out of three respondents (in the range 60%-66%) indicated agreement with both propositions.

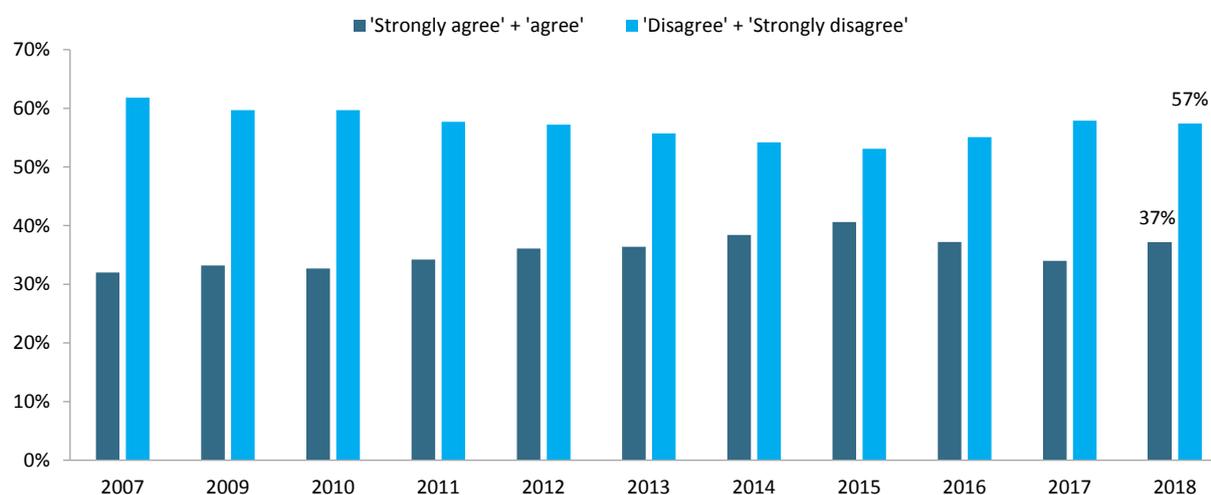
Hence, whilst the majority support the notion that **Australians should do more to learn about ethnic customs and cultures, the surveys also consistently indicate agreement with the view that immigrants should change their behaviour to be more like Australians.**

Majority opinion in Australia does not support government funding of cultural maintenance. As has been noted, in response to the proposition that ‘ethnic minorities in Australia should be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions’, the majority consistently disagrees. Over the last five surveys, disagreement has been in the range 53%-58%, agreement in the range 34%-41%.

Table 40: ‘We should do more to learn about the customs and heritage of different ethnic and cultural groups’ and ‘People who come to Australia should change their behaviour to be more like Australians.’ 2015-2018 (percentage)

	We should do more to learn about customs and heritage of different ethnic and cultural groups				People who come to Australia should change their behaviour to be more like Australians			
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2015	2016	2017	2018
Strongly agree	25	28	22	23	27	29	30	30
Agree	43	38	38	42	38	30	34	34
Sub-total agree	68	66	60	65	65	60	64	64
Neither agree/ disagree	3	4	5	3	7	6	8	8
Disagree	19	18	21	20	21	23	19	19
Strongly disagree	8	10	12	12	6	10	7	7
Sub-total disagree	27	28	33	32	27	32	26	26
Don't know/ decline	1	2	2	1	2	2	3	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Figure 26: ‘Ethnic minorities in Australia should be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions’, 2007-2018 (percentage)



EXPERIENCE OF DISCRIMINATION

A question posed in the Scanlon Foundation surveys asks respondents if they have experienced discrimination over the previous twelve months; the 2007 survey question was worded ‘Have you experienced discrimination because of your national, ethnic or religious background in the last twelve months?’ In 2009 there was a minor change of wording to specify discrimination ‘because of your skin colour, ethnic origin or religion’, and this form of wording has been used in all subsequent surveys.

Reported experience of discrimination increased from 9% in 2007 to a peak of 19% in 2013; this level dropped over the next two surveys, but rose again in 2016 and 2017. It is at 19% in 2018. **The average for the first five surveys (2007-2012) was 11.8%, for the last six surveys (2013-2018) a much higher 18.3%.**

Analysis by age group finds that the reported experience of discrimination for the surveys 2013-18 has been highest among those aged 18-34.

Figure 27: ‘Have you experienced discrimination in the last twelve months because of your skin colour, ethnic origin or religion?’ Response: ‘yes’, 2007-2018

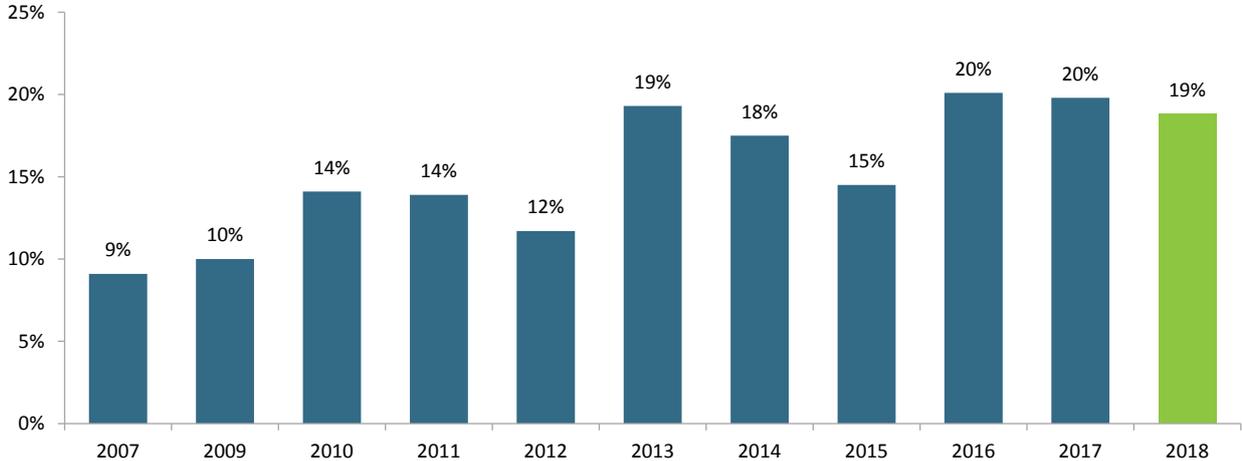


Figure 28: Reported experience of discrimination by age, 2007-2012 and 2013-2018 (percentage)

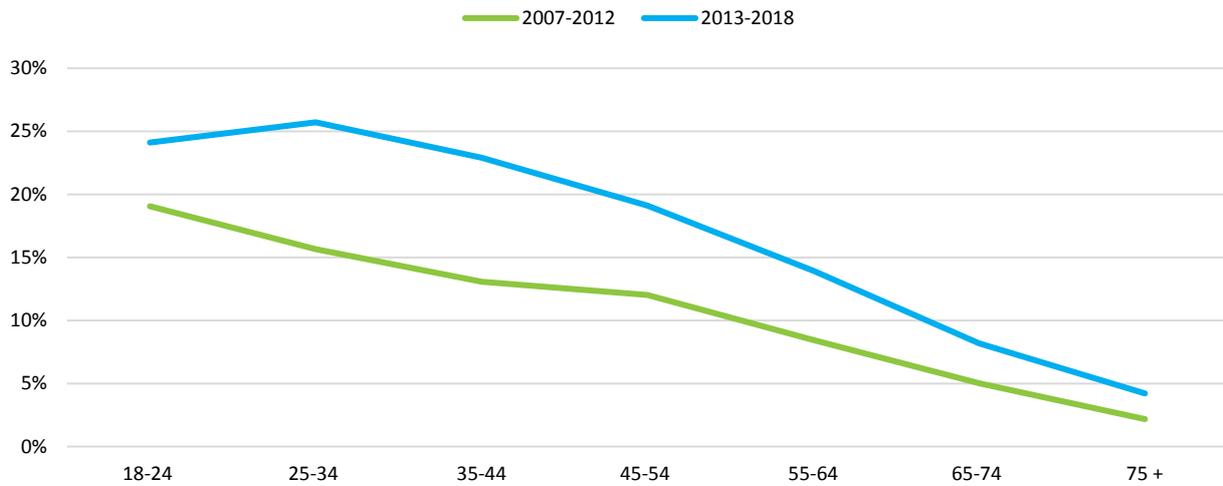
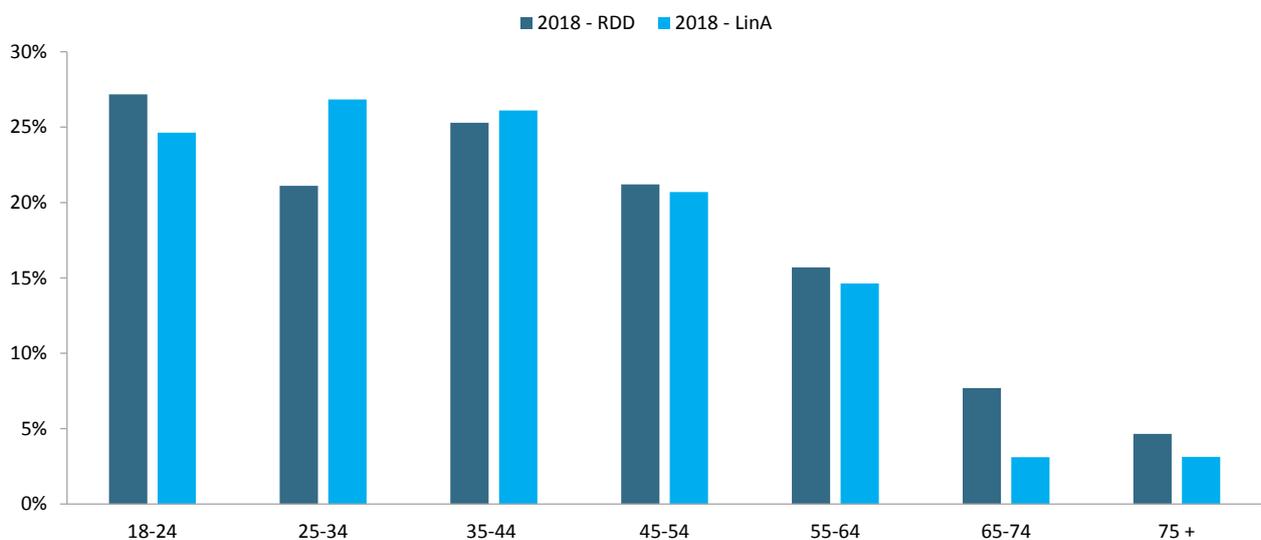


Table 41: ‘Have you experienced discrimination in the last twelve months because of your skin colour, ethnic origin or religion?’ Response: ‘yes’ by age, 2018 RDD and LinA (percentage)

Response ‘yes’	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
2018 - RDD	27	21	25	21	16	8	5
2018 - LinA	25	27	26	21	15	3	3
N (unweighted) RDD	105	133	153	236	319	316	231
N (unweighted) LinA	134	287	324	401	427	460	222

Figure 29: ‘Have you experienced discrimination in the last twelve months because of your skin colour, ethnic origin or religion?’ Response: ‘yes’ by age, 2018 RDD and LinA (percentage)



Continuing the pattern of previous surveys, in 2018 those of a non-English speaking background reported the highest experience of discrimination, 25%, compared to 17% of those born in Australia and 20% of those born overseas in English speaking countries.

The reported experience of discrimination by those from a non-English speaking background fell from 34% in 2017 to 25% in 2018 and is within four percentage points of the proportions indicated in the 2013-2016 surveys.

The aggregated data for the last six national surveys (2013-2018) indicates a pattern of differentiation when responses are analysed by religion, financial circumstances and political preferences of respondents. Reported experience of discrimination ranges from 13% Anglican and 14% Catholic, to 22% Buddhist, 36% Hindu and 39% Muslim.

Reported experience of discrimination is highest among those whose self-described financial status is 'struggling to pay bills' or 'poor', 34%, more than double the proportion of those who indicated that they were 'prosperous', 'very comfortable', or 'reasonably comfortable.' High levels are also indicated by those who support One Nation, which at 29% is close to double the proportion (14%-16%) indicated by supporters of the major parties

Table 42: Reported experience of discrimination by birthplace, 2013-2018 (percentage)

Birthplace	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Australia	16	16	12	17	15	17
English-speaking background	16	11	11	19	21	20
Non-English speaking background	28	29	22	26	34	25

Table 43: Reported experience of discrimination by birthplace, 2013-2018 combined (percentage)

Gender	Female	Male					
	17	20					
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	19	19	20	13	19		
Region	Capital	Rest of state					
	20	16					
Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	24	26	23	19	14	8	4
Highest completed education	BA or higher	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11		
	21	20	15	18	16		
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	15	16	21	34			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	16	14	14	29			
Religion	Catholic	Anglican	Buddhist	Islam	Hindu		
	14	13	22	39	36		

NEIGHBOURHOOD

The 2017 and 2018 surveys have found no statistically significant change in a number of indicators of relations in local areas.

- 81% of respondents indicated that people were 'willing to help their neighbours', 83% in 2017;
- 74% agreed that in the local area 'people from different national or ethnic groups get on well together', 76% in 2017. The minority indicating a negative response to this question is at 12%, similar to the result obtained in 2017 but significantly higher than 7% in 2010 and 9% in 2011.
- 67% feel safe 'walking alone at night' and 67% are not 'worried about becoming a victim of crime' in their local area, a marginal increase on 2017 (66% and 64% respectively).

With regard to negative sentiments, in 2018 15% disagreed with the proposition that people in their local area 'are willing to help their neighbours', compared to 14% in 2016 and 13% in 2017.

33% stated that they were worried about becoming a victim of crime in 2018, marginally lower than 35% in 2017 but significantly higher than the 26% recorded in 2010, 2012 and 2015.

State level comparison of sense of safety when walking at night and concern at becoming a victim of crime finds some marked differences.

In Victoria in 2018, 41% of respondents indicated concern at becoming a victim of crime, ten percentage points higher than New South Wales (31%) and twelve higher than Queensland (29%).

In response to sense of safety when walking alone at night, 33% of Victorian respondents indicated that they felt 'very unsafe' or 'a bit unsafe', 23% of New South Wales respondents and 22% of Queensland.

Table 44: Selected questions concerning neighbourhood, 2010-2018 (percentage)

Question and response - POSITIVE	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
[1] 'People in your local area are willing to help their neighbours.' Response: 'Strongly agree', 'agree'	83	84	84	84	84	85	81	83	81
[2] 'Your local area... is a place where people from different national or ethnic groups get on well together.' Response: 'Strongly agree', 'agree'	75	74	72	76	79	78	74	76	74
[3] 'How safe do you feel walking alone at night in your local area?' Response: 'Very safe', 'safe'	65	65	65	65	68	68	64	66	67
[4] '...how worried are you about becoming a victim of crime in your local area.' Response: 'Not very worried', 'not at all worried'	73	69	73	n/a	70	73	64	64	67

Question and response - NEGATIVE	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
[1] 'People in your local area are willing to help their neighbours.' Response: 'Strongly disagree', 'disagree'	13	12	11	12	12	12	14	13	15
[2] 'Your local area is a place where people from different national or ethnic groups get on well together.' Response: 'Strongly disagree', 'disagree'	7	9	9	11	10	9	11	12	12
[3] 'How safe do you feel walking alone at night in your local area?' Response: 'Very unsafe', 'a bit unsafe'	30	30	28	30	26	26	28	29	27
[4] '...how worried are you about becoming a victim of crime in your local area.' Response: 'Very worried', 'fairly worried'	26	31	26	n/a	30	26	36	35	33

*Change between 2017 and 2018 not statistically significant at $p < .05$

Figure 30: 'Thinking about all types of crime in general, how worried are you about becoming a victim of crime in your local area?' Response: 'very worried' and 'fairly worried', Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, 2018

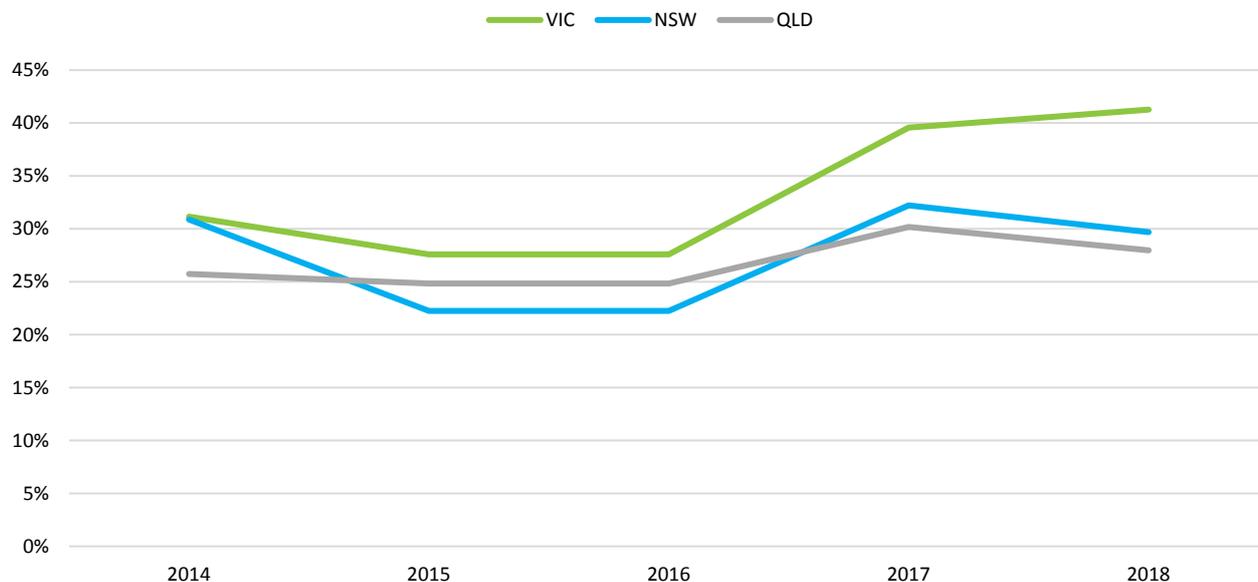
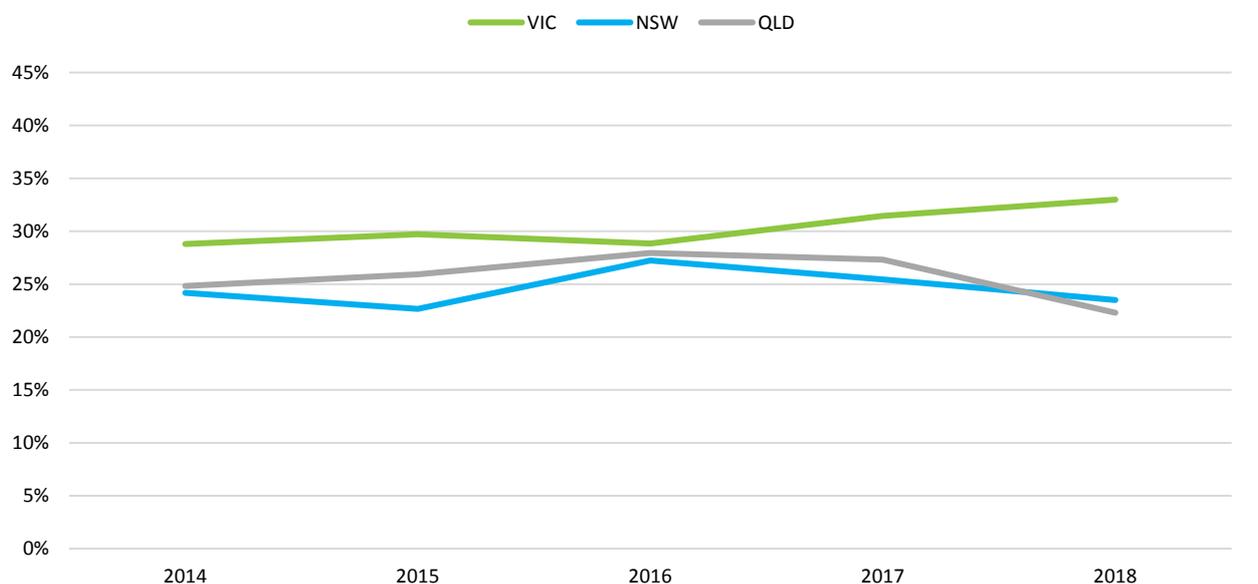


Figure 31: 'How safe do you feel walking alone at night in your local area?' Response: 'Very unsafe' and 'a bit unsafe', Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, 2018



TRUST

A question posed in a number of Australian and international surveys asks respondents, ‘Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?’

The Scanlon Foundation national surveys have found that opinion is close to evenly divided, with results in the range 45%-55% across the eleven surveys. In 2018 personal trust was close to the mid-point in the range (48%), within two percentage points of the previous four years.

Over the last five surveys (2014-2018) the highest level agreement that ‘most people can be trusted’ was among those intending to vote Greens (67%), with a Bachelor degree or higher, (64%), and those who indicate that their financial situation is ‘prosperous’ or ‘very comfortable’ (62%).

The lowest level of agreement was among those intending to vote for One Nation (25%), whose financial situation was self-described as ‘struggling to pay bills’ or ‘poor’ (26%), whose highest level of education was up to Year 11 (36%), and who described their financial situation as ‘just getting along’ (38%).

Figure 32: ‘Most people can be trusted’, Scanlon Foundation surveys 2007-2018

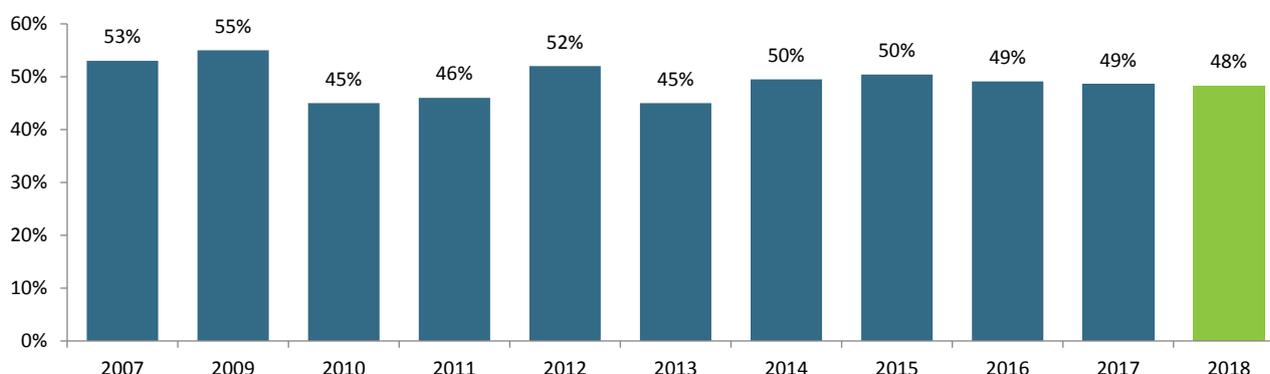


Table 45: ‘Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?’ Response: ‘Can be trusted’, last 5 years 2014-2018 combined (percentage)

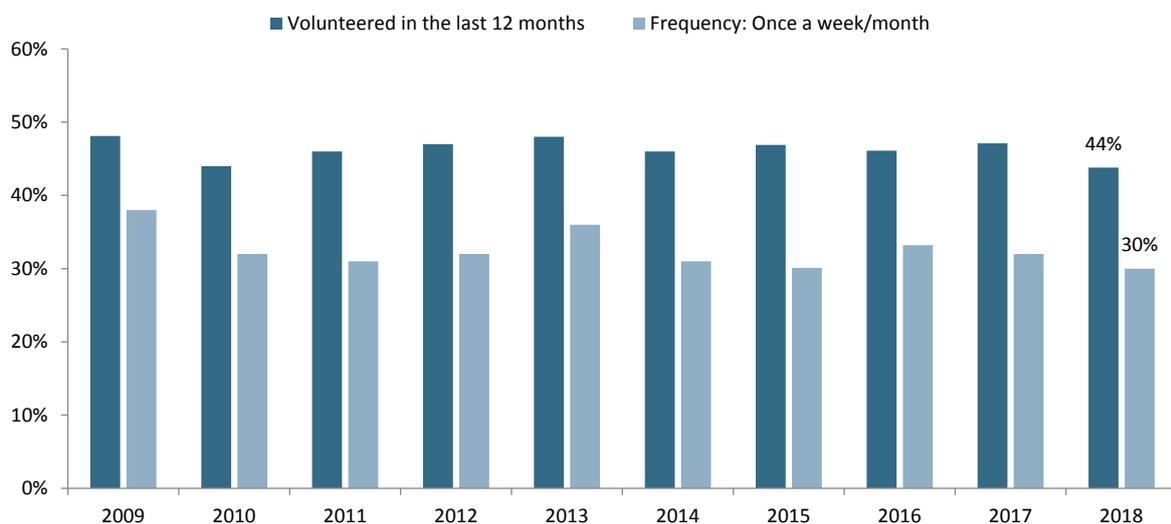
Gender	Female	Male					
	47	51					
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	49	50	49	50	47		
Region	Capital	Rest of state					
	51	46					
Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	46	47	51	50	52	52	44
Highest completed education	BA or higher	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11		
	64	49	47	47	36		
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	62	55	38	26			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	48	54	67	25			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	49	54	49				

VOLUNTARY WORK

Participation in voluntary work has shown minor variation over the Scanlon Foundation surveys. The survey asks respondents about their involvement in 'unpaid voluntary work', which is defined as 'any unpaid help you give to the community in which you live, or to an organisation or group to which you belong. It could be to a school, a sporting club, the elderly, a religious group or people who have recently arrived to settle in Australia.'

In 2018, 44% of respondents indicated participation in voluntary work over the last 12 months, which is slightly below the average (46%) for the last 10 surveys. A follow-on question asks respondents for frequency of participation in voluntary work. In 2018, 30% of respondents indicated participation 'at least once a week' or 'at least once a month', two percentage points lower than 2017 and three percentage points below 2016. As a proportion of those who said that they volunteered, 70% do so 'at least once a week' or 'at least once a month', which is the same level as the average over the last 10 surveys.

Figure 33: 'Have you done any unpaid voluntary work in the last 12 months?' and 'How often do you participate in this sort of voluntary activity?' Response: 'at least once a week' or 'at least once a month', 2009-2018



BALANCE OF AUSTRALIAN OPINION

Previous sections of this report focussed on specific aspects of social cohesion. This final section is concerned with the broad perspective, to establish the balance of opinion on a range of issues related to immigration and cultural diversity.

The objective is to determine the relative proportions with strongly held views – whether positive or negative – and the proportion in the middle ground, with views tending negative, tending positive, or who do not have a view on the issue considered.

There is, however, no simple or definitive basis to determine the balance: answers are dependent on the specific questions considered, also there are differences obtained by mode of surveying.

The range of questions in the Scanlon Foundation surveys provide scope to consider a number of perspectives. The following analysis considers ten questions that dealt with immigration and cultural diversity in the 2015-2018 surveys, most of them requiring response to a statement. Only questions with a five-point response scale (from strongly agree/positive to strongly disagree/negative) are included.

The ten questions are:

1. 'People who come to Australia should change their behaviour to be more like Australians.'
2. 'Ethnic minorities in Australia should be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions.'
3. 'Is your personal attitude positive, negative, or neutral towards Muslims?'
4. 'Is your personal attitude positive, negative, or neutral towards Buddhists?'
5. 'We should do more to learn about the customs and heritage of different ethnic and cultural groups in this country.'
6. 'Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger.'
7. 'Do you agree or disagree that it should be possible to reject [applicants to migrate to Australia] simply on the basis of their religion?'
8. 'Do you agree or disagree that it should be possible to reject [applicants to migrate to Australia] simply on the basis of their race or ethnicity?'
9. 'Multiculturalism has been good for Australia.'
10. 'My local area is a place where people from different national or ethnic backgrounds get on well together.'

These questions were also included in the 2018 Life in Australia panel survey, which provides additional insight into variability of public opinion. As was discussed in the Mode Effect section of this report, it is known that self-completion surveys find higher proportions indicating 'socially undesirable attitudes', but this does not necessarily mean that such indications of public opinion are more accurate. Each methodology has advantages and disadvantages.

Strong negative

The proportion holding strong negative views for eight of the ten questions in the interviewer administered survey are in the range 1%-14%. The pattern of response finds three groupings.

[A] The lowest level of negative response is to questions concerning local areas, multiculturalism and those of the Buddhist faith. Across the 2015-18 surveys, the **strongly negative has been in the range 1%-6%** (see Table 46, responses coded green).

[B] Questions on discrimination in immigrant selection based on race or ethnicity, or religion, the value of a diverse immigration intake, willingness to learn about immigrant cultures, and attitudes to those of the Muslim faith, finds **strong negative sentiment in the range 7%-14%** (Table 46, responses coded yellow).

[C] General statements that may be interpreted as a rejection of cultural diversity and in favour of integration find relatively high levels of strong agreement, **in the range 25%-33%** across the 2015-18 surveys. Thus when presented with the proposition that immigrants 'should change their behaviour to be more like Australians', in 2018 33% indicated that they 'strongly agree'; 29% 'strongly disagree' with government assistance to ethnic minorities for cultural maintenance (Table 46, responses coded orange).

With regard to strong negative opinions, there is only minor variation by mode of survey administration. Thus 6% in the interviewer administered version (RDD) and 8% in the panel version (LinA) strongly disagree that multiculturalism has been good for Australia; the relative proportions in response to the proposition that people of different backgrounds get on well together are 4% and 4%; strong support for discrimination in selection policy based on race or ethnicity are 7% and 8%.

Strong positive

While for eight of the ten questions strong negative responses do not reach 15%, for these **questions the highest level of strong positive response is close to 50%**; in other words, **the peak of strong positive on a number of issues outnumbers strong negative by a ratio of more than 3 to 1.**

[A] The highest level of strong positive response is indicated in valuation of multiculturalism and rejection of discrimination in immigrant selection based on race or ethnicity, or religion. For these three questions the **strong positive response across the 2015-2018 surveys is in the range 43%-49%** (Table 46, responses coded green).

[B] The second level of strong positive response is obtained in response to the statement that immigrants from many different countries make Australia stronger, and questions concerning people of different ethnic backgrounds in the respondent's local area, the affirmation of learning about immigrant cultures, and the positive attitude to those of the Buddhists faith. For these four questions, strong positive response is in the **range 21%-29%** across the 2015-18 surveys (Table 46, responses coded yellow). One notable variation is the high proportion providing a neutral response to questions on attitude to faith groups.

[C] The lowest level of strong positive response (indicating strong agreement) is obtained in response to the proposition that immigrants do not need to change their behaviour to be more like Australians, government assistance to ethnic minorities for cultural maintenance, and in the attitude to those of the Muslim faith. For these three questions, strong positive response is in the **range 6%-10%** across the 2015-18 surveys (Table 46, responses coded orange).

The Life in Australia panel finds a statically significant difference in the level of strong positive response, an average of nine percentage points lower for the ten questions considered. **There are also a lower proportion of mid-point responses in the Life in Australia panel**, with higher proportions tending negative or tending positive. For example, strong support for a non-discriminatory immigration policy (indicated by strong disagreement with discrimination) is fourteen percentage points lower with reference to race or ethnicity (49% RDD, 35 LinA) and eleven percentage points lower with reference to religion (43% RDD, 32% LinA). Strong positive attitude to multiculturalism is lower by eighteen percentage points (44% RDD, 26% LinA).

While there are significant differences by mode of surveying in the level of strong positive response, as indicated by Figure 35, the balance of opinion remains in large measure consistent.

Thus with strong positive and positive responses combined, agreement that multiculturalism has been good for Australia is at 85% RDD, 77% LinA. Agreement with discrimination based on race or ethnicity in immigration selection is at 15% RDD, 22% LinA. Larger variation by survey mode is obtained with reference to some questions on religion: negative attitude (strong negative and negative combined) to those of the Muslim faith is at 23% RDD, 39% LinA, agreement with discrimination in immigration selection on the basis of religion is at 18% RDD, 29% LinA.

Racist nation?

An issue which from time to time engages public debate in Australia concerns the extent of racism in the country, posed in terms of **'Is Australia a racist nation?'**

This issue can be considered from a number of different perspectives, including legal, institutional, and social.

In legal terms, is racial discrimination established in law? Are there legal safeguards and protections afforded to racial groups?

In institutional terms, do government and non-government organisation discriminate in their treatment of clients on a racial basis?

With reference to the tone of public discussion, to what extent is there licence to demean racial groups in the mainstream electronic and print media? What licence to demean is afforded by the main social media platforms?

The Scanlon Foundation surveys are of relevance to a fourth dimension, attitudes within the community.

All populations comprise people with diverse personalities and views ranging, for example, from the tolerant to the intolerant – from those who celebrate cultural diversity to those who are comfortable only with what they perceive to be Australian culture.

As discussed in this report, the Scanlon Foundation survey findings establish that in contemporary Australia **racist values are held by a small minority** – arguably most clearly indicated by 'strong agreement' with discrimination in immigrant selection policy based on race, ethnicity or religion. **Across the two survey modes, 'strong agreement' with such discrimination is indicated by 7%-11% of the population.**

Table 46: Immigration and cultural diversity, selected questions, 2015-2018 (percentage)

	Survey	Strong negative	Negative	Neither	Positive	Strong positive
'People who come to Australia should change their behaviour to be more like Australians' ('strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree')	2018	33	35	5	19	7
	2017	30	34	8	19	7
	2016	29	30	6	23	10
	2015	27	38	7	21	6
'Ethnic minorities in Australia should be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions' ('strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree')	2018	29	28	2	28	9
	2017	27	32	5	25	9
	2016	29	26	5	27	10
	2015	25	28	4	31	9
Personal attitude towards Muslims ('very negative' to 'very positive')	2018	11	12	48	17	10
	2017	13	12	44	19	9
	2016	14	11	42	20	10
	2015	11	11	47	18	10
Personal attitude towards Buddhists ('very negative' to 'very positive')	2018	1	2	50	24	21
	2017	2	2	44	26	22
	2016	3	3	43	27	22
	2015	2	3	45	27	22
'We should do more to learn about the customs and heritage of different ethnic and cultural groups in this country' ('strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree')	2018	12	20	3	43	23
	2017	12	21	5	38	23
	2016	10	18	4	38	28
	2015	8	19	3	43	25
'Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger' ('strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree')	2018	13	17	3	37	29
	2017	14	16	5	37	27
	2016	11	16	4	36	30
	2015	9	17	4	40	27
'Do you agree or disagree that it should be possible for them to be rejected on the basis of their race or ethnicity?' ('strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree')	2018	7	8	1	32	49
	2017	7	8	2	32	48
	2015	7	12	1	36	41
Do you agree or disagree that it should be possible for them to be rejected on the basis of...their religion?' ('strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree')	2018	8	9	2	35	43
	2017	9	11	3	33	41
	2015	9	12	2	38	39
'Multiculturalism has been good for Australia' ('strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree')	2018	6	6	2	42	44
	2017	5	7	3	44	41
	2016	5	7	3	42	41
	2015	4	7	2	42	43
'My local area is a place where people from different national or ethnic backgrounds get on well together' (excludes 'not enough immigrants in my area') ('strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree')	2018	4	8	3	49	25
	2017	3	9	3	51	25
	2016	3	8	5	51	24
	2015	2	7	3	55	23

Orange: High strong negative/ low strong positive
 Yellow: Mid-range strong negative/mid-range strong positive
 Green: Low strong negative/high strong positive

Figure 34: Immigration and cultural diversity, selected questions, 2018 (percentage) (excludes 'Don't know' and 'decline to answer')

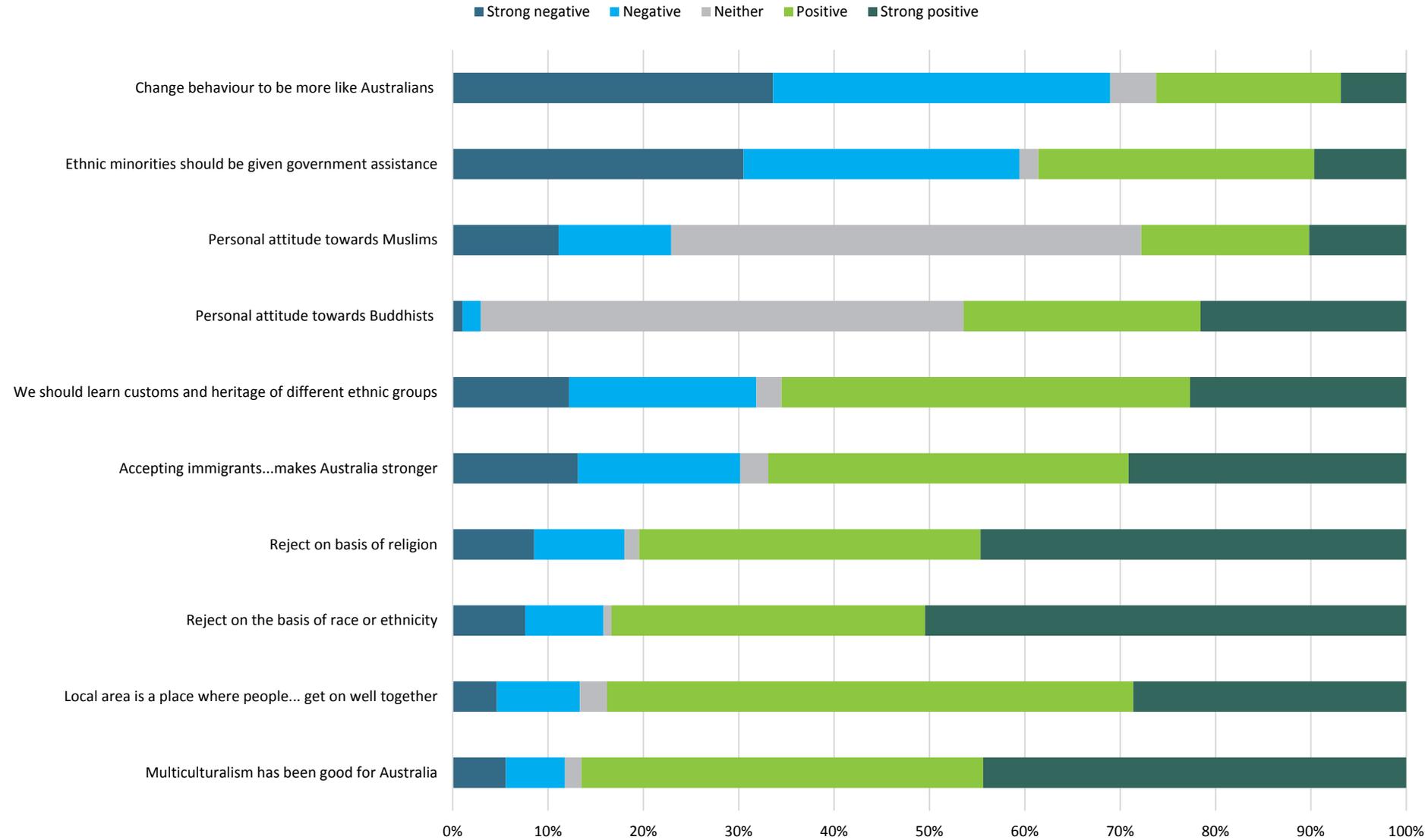
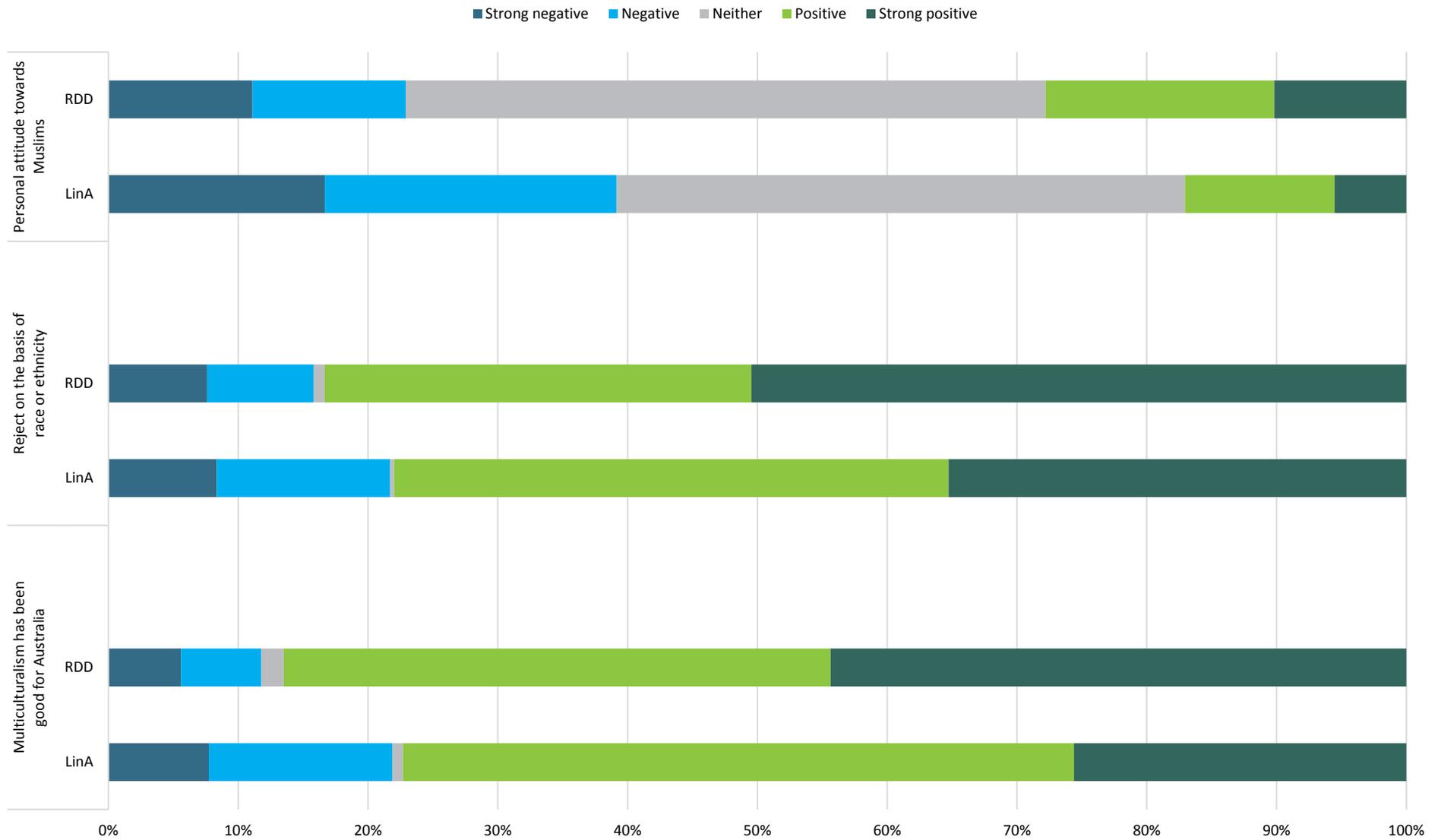


Figure 35: Immigration and cultural diversity, selected questions, 2018 RDD and 2018 LinA (percentage) (excludes 'Don't know' and 'decline to answer')



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CREDITS

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The Scanlon Foundation is a member of Philanthropy Australia, the national membership organisation for grant-making trusts and foundations. Established in June 2001, the Foundation's mission to support 'the advance of Australia as a welcoming, prosperous and cohesive nation' has led to the support of a number of social cohesion research projects, including this tenth survey of social cohesion in Australia.

The Australian Multicultural Foundation was established in 1989 as a legacy of Australia's Bicentenary, to promote an awareness among the people of Australia of the diversity of cultures, and the contributions made by those from different backgrounds to the development of Australia's social, cultural and economic wellbeing, by adopting issues of national significance and initiating projects in any worthwhile field or activity to the benefit of the community.



