

Mapping Social Cohesion

THE SCANLON FOUNDATION SURVEYS

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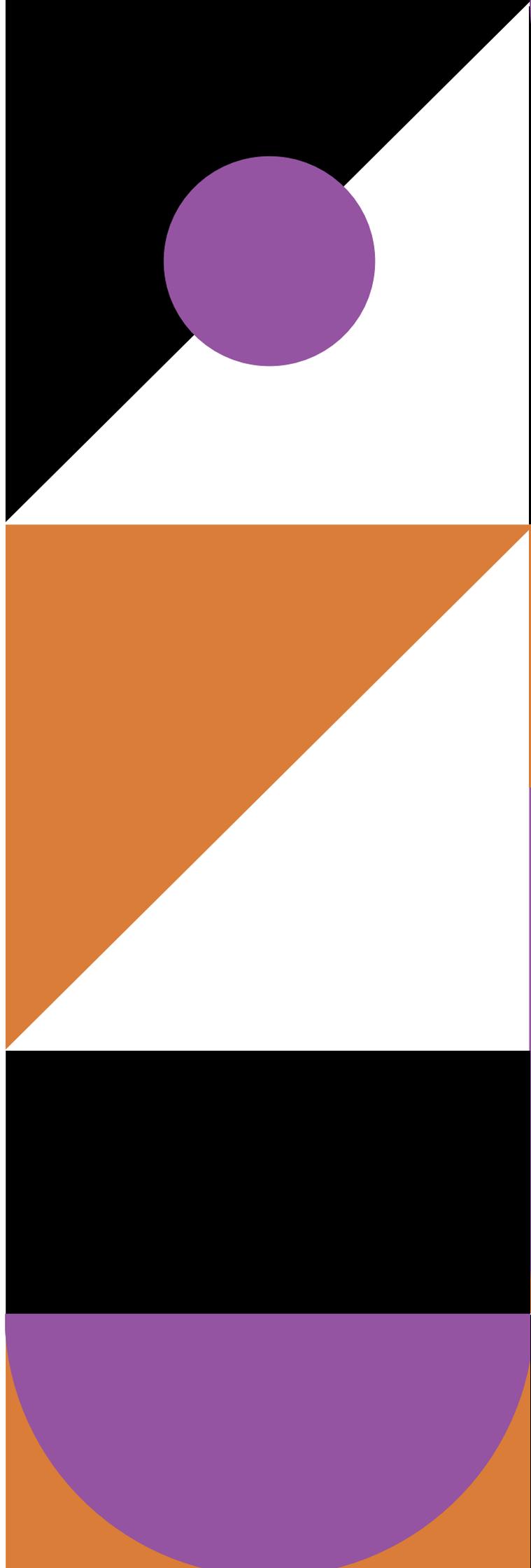
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Scanlon Foundation national social cohesion survey was first conducted in 2007 and has been conducted annually since 2009. In addition to the national surveys, local area and minority group surveys have been conducted on nine occasions, in total twenty-four surveys with more than 55,000 respondents. For the first time in Australian social research, these surveys enable annual tracking of public opinion on social cohesion, immigration and population issues.

From 2007 to 2019 the surveys were administered by telephone to randomly generated samples of landline telephone numbers, also mobile numbers from 2013, abbreviated in the following discussion as RDD (Random Digital Dialling). Beginning in 2018, the survey was transitioned to the Social Research Centre's probability-based Life in Australia™ (LinA) panel on which close to 90% of participants self-complete the survey online. In 2018 and 2019 the survey was administered in parallel in two modes, RDD and LinA, to provide understanding of the impact of mode of administration on patterns of response.

In 2020, in the context of the dislocation of Australian society by the COVID-19 pandemic, **the Scanlon Foundation conducted two national surveys, in July and November, on the LinA panel.** The surveys provide **insight into the resilience of Australian society** when faced with a major crisis.

The Scanlon Foundation surveys are distinctive, first in terms of their **comprehensive coverage**. The July survey employed a questionnaire comprising 127 substantive and 21 demographic questions in nine modules. In November, key issues were re-examined in a shorter version of the survey, 62 substantive questions and the full demographic.

Second, **the sample is sufficiently large (3,090 respondents in July, 2,793 in November)** to provide insight into segments of the population, for example groups differentiated by age, education attainment, financial status and political alignment.

Third, the long record of surveying enables **tracking of the constant and changing elements of Australian opinion over time**: in a broad perspective, from 2007 to 2020, over a three year period, from 2018 to 2020, and during the current year, from July to November.

COHESION OR FRACTURE?

Societies faced with crisis may for a time experience increased cohesion, as people respond to a common threat through mutual support. A current British survey has found that during the pandemic some local government areas which had invested in programs that promoted employability, social mixing and building trust between communities experienced positive social cohesion outcomes: an improvement in relationships with family and neighbours, increased rates of volunteerism, more positive attitudes towards people from immigrant backgrounds, and optimism about the future.¹

On the other hand, societies under pressure may fracture, as its members turn inward, focusing on people to blame, searching for scapegoats. Such societies may experience heightened pessimism, lower sense of wellbeing and life satisfaction, fostering of anti-immigrant sentiment, and opposition to cultural diversity and multiculturalism. A discussion focused on Australia hosted by the Network Ten commentator Waleed Aly was promoted in this negative perspective:

The Covid-19 pandemic has strained the cohesiveness of our society. People are becoming more and more divergent in their views, and more and more distrusting of opposing views. A lot of people feel more marginalised and categorised while some seek strongly to find someone to blame for this crisis.²

What does the Scanlon Foundation survey reveal about the character of the Australian society in the time of crisis? In the first part of this Executive Summary the findings of the July 2020 survey are considered, followed by discussion of the November survey.

¹ Nuffield Foundation, 'People living in local authorities that have invested in social cohesion in the last two years coping better during COVID-19 crisis,' 22 October 2020

² 'So Now What? Social Cohesion,' with Waleed Aly, Network Ten, 12 October 2020

RANKING OF ISSUES

The impact of the pandemic is evidenced in the first question in the Scanlon Foundation survey, which is open-ended and 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 specify issues, rather than requiring selection from a pre-determined and limited list. An open-ended approach necessarily produces a broad range of responses.

Up to 2019 there was a large measure of stability in response to this question. In each survey the economy ranked as the most important issue, but in the open-ended format the highest proportion that has been obtained for the economy was 36%; in 2019 it was indicated by 29%, followed by concern over the impact of climate change on the environment, selected by 17% of respondents.

The impact of COVID-19 produced a dramatic change in priorities, with the pandemic dominating responses, selected by 63% of respondents as the 'most important problem', followed by the economy at 15%, and climate change at 5%. No other issue was selected by more than 2% of respondents.

THE SCANLON-MONASH INDEX

The broad indication of national sentiment is provided by the Scanlon-Monash Index (SMI), which aggregates response to 18 questions. It measures attitudes within the five domains which conceptualise social cohesion: belonging, worth, social justice, political participation, and acceptance of diversity. **In a finding that seems counter-intuitive, in 2020 the SMI moved in a positive direction.**

The index was benchmarked at 100 on the basis of the first Scanlon Foundation survey, conducted in 2007. Since that time, the **SMI registered the highest level of volatility not between 2019 and 2020, as might have been expected, but during the Rudd and Gillard Labor governments.** Between 2009 and 2010 the Index fell from 101 to 93 and remained close to 89 in six of the seven years between 2013 and 2019.

In the 2018 and 2019 LinA surveys the SMI was lower, on average by seven index points, likely explained by a willingness to provide a more truthful response when respondents self-complete a survey, as distinct from responding to an interviewer. **The SMI registered 82 in 2018 and 84 in 2019; in July 2020, the SMI rose to 89.**

In all five domains, the SMI was higher in 2020 than in 2019, although only higher by one index point in the domain of acceptance/ rejection. It was two index points higher in the domains of belonging and participation, four index points higher in sense of worth, with the most significant shift in **the domain of social justice, which was nineteen index points higher.** In large part this finding reflects increased trust in government and positive response to the level of financial support provided for people on low incomes.

DEMOCRACY

Politics in a number of western countries are characterised by rising nationalism and disenchantment with democracy. Newspaper headlines capture the mood: 'Democracy Under Threat', '... Under Attack', '... Undermined', '... A Crisis of Legitimacy'; 'The United States No longer Provides a Model of Democracy ...'

The Scanlon Foundation survey findings do not support the view that such disenchantment characterises Australia in 2020.

The survey asked 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.' **A substantial and increased proportion in 2020 considered that Australian democracy 'works fine' or only 'needs minor change', indicated by 69% of respondents in 2020, up from 57% in 2018 and 62% in 2019.**

The key to the positive findings obtained in the survey appears to be the level of satisfaction with government, the widely held view that effective leadership is being provided in the time of crisis, including financial support to those who have lost their jobs and those whose businesses have been impacted.

Prior to 2020, trust in the federal government was at a low level for a decade, indicated by a question that asked for extent of confidence in government 'to do the right thing for the Australian people.'

In 2009, at the peak of popularity of the Rudd Labor government, trust in 'government to do the right thing' 'almost always' or 'most of the time' was at 48%. Indicating a widespread perception that Labor had failed to deliver on its promises, trust collapsed to 31% in 2010 and remained in the range 26%-31% in the RDD version of the survey since that time.

In 2018 in the LinA version of the survey, trust was at 28%, in 2019 at 36%. However, **in 2020 trust rose to 54%, the highest level recorded in the surveys.**

A new question in the 2020 survey asked: **'how well is the federal government responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?' In July, a resounding 85% indicated 'very well' or 'fairly well',** while only a small minority of 14% indicated a negative assessment, 'fairly badly' or 'very badly.' A parallel question on the response of state governments obtained even higher positive assessment for three of the states, above 90% in Western Australia (99%), South Australia (94%) and Queensland (92%), 81% in New South Wales and 65% in Victoria.

With regard to government-imposed **lockdown restrictions,** which were a matter of controversy in the media, in July **over 90% of respondents in the five mainland states indicated that they were 'definitely' or 'probably required'.** Almost no respondents (0%-2%) indicated that lockdowns were 'definitely not required.'

A detailed analysis of the distribution of attitudes across the community presented in the final part of this report found that **just 5% of respondents were strongly opposed to government handling of the crisis.**

The extent of support for a non-democratic system of government was tested by a question that asked if 'having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections' would be a good or bad way of governing Australia?' This question obtained minority support in earlier surveys, 25% in 2018 and 22% in 2019. In 2020, support was marginally lower at 21%, with just 3% of respondents indicating that it would be 'very good', 18% 'fairly good'.

However, when asked if **'during the COVID-19 pandemic ... having a strong leader** who does not have to bother with parliament and elections' would be good way of governing,' a substantially **higher proportion, 37%,** (9% 'very good', 28% 'fairly good') **indicated agreement.**

FINANCIAL WELL BEING, SOCIAL JUSTICE

Evidence of economic dislocation during the pandemic is provided by a question that asked respondents who were in paid employment in the last months of 2019 for their employment situation at the time of the survey in July 2020. It found that **close to one in four (28%) respondents indicated that their employment was impacted:** they had lost their jobs and not found other employment, were not working any hours but still retained their positions or, the largest proportion, were working reduced hours.

Despite this level of dislocation, the surprising finding is that in 2020 more positive responses were obtained for a number of financial questions when compared with the previous two years.

With regard to their **financial circumstances** in 2020, 65% of respondents indicated that they were 'living reasonably comfortably,' 'very comfortably,' or were 'prosperous,' compared with a lower 57% in 2018 and 61% in 2019; 34% indicated that they were 'poor,' 'struggling to pay bills' or 'just getting along,' a lower proportion than in the previous two years (42% in 2018 and 39% in 2019).

In response to a question that asked: 'How satisfied are you with your present financial situation,' **73% indicated that they were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied,'** compared with 61% in 2018 and 64% in 2019.

Asked for response to the statement that 'people on low incomes **receive enough financial support from the government,'** 54% indicated agreement, substantially higher than 44% in 2018 and 40% in 2019.

With regard to future expectations, in response to the statement that 'Australia is a land of economic opportunity where in the long run, **hard work brings a better life,'** 74% agreed, compared with 71% in both 2018 and 2019

NEIGHBOURHOODS

The 2020 survey found no indication of significant deterioration in neighbourhood conditions.

In 2020, an **increased proportion of respondents indicated agreement with the proposition that people were 'willing to help their neighbours,'** 86% in 2020 compared with 81% in both 2018 and 2019.

In 2020, there was also significant increase in agreement with the proposition that in the local area **'people from different national or ethnic groups get on well together,'** 84% in 2020, compared with 76% in 2018 and 78% in 2019.

Concern over becoming a victim of crime in the local area was significantly lower in 2020 than in the previous two years. In 2020, 26% indicated that they were worried about becoming a victim of crime, compared with 34% in both 2018 and 2019. There was a substantial increase in the proportion indicating that they were 'not very worried' or 'not at all worried' about becoming a victim of crime, 74% in 2020 compared with 66% in the previous two years.

Just 16% agreed with the proposition that 'living in your local area is becoming ... worse,' compared with 22% in 2018 and 20% in 2019. A large majority, 70%, indicated that it was unchanged.

One question obtained a lower level of positive response. **Sense of safety walking alone at night was marginally lower in 2020:** 'very safe' or 'safe' was indicated by 59% of respondents, compared with 60% in 2018 and 63% in 2019; those indicating that they felt 'a bit unsafe' or 'very unsafe' increased to 39% in 2020, up from 38% in 2018 and 34% in 2019.

OPENNESS TO THE WORLD

As noted, there is concern based on historical evidence that in a time of crisis people will look for scapegoats and discriminate against those who they identify as outsiders. There can also be increased demand for government to adopt policies preferencing to their own citizens, including protectionist policies to safeguard local industries, irrespective of the global impact of such policies. During the Great Depression of the 1930s countries raised tariff barriers, severely curtailing international trade, while minorities, defined by race, religion or political belief, faced hostility. **A feature of the 2020 Scanlon Foundation survey is the detailed insight it provides into the trend of opinion on protectionism, immigration and cultural diversity.**

With regard to openness to the world, as indicated by trade policies, the survey asked: 'Thinking about the growing economic ties between Australia and other countries, sometimes referred to as **globalisation,** do you think this is very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad for Australia?' **A substantial majority, 72%, considered that it was 'very good' or 'fairly good,'** only marginally lower than 76% in 2018 and 75% in 2019.

A new question in 2020 asked: 'Should Australia trade more with the rest of the world, trade about the same, or trade less ...?' In a similar pattern of response to the question on globalisation, 28% favoured more, 42% 'about the same,' a combined 70%, while a minority of 29% favoured less.

IMMIGRATION AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

A consistent finding of the Scanlon Foundation surveys is the strong level of endorsement of immigration and multiculturalism – and rejection of overt discrimination on the basis of race or religion in immigrant selection. This pattern is again evident in 2020; **there has been no significant change in the balance of opinion, which is marginally more positive in response to a number of questions.** Interestingly, a political group that seeks to mobilise disenchantment with globalisation, immigration and multiculturalism, Pauline Hanson's One Nation, saw its vote nearly halved in the October 2020 Queensland state election, from 13.7% to 7.1%, although there are multiple factors to explain the result, including the party's poor election campaign.

The Scanlon Foundation survey asked respondents to reflect on immigration policy in a question worded: 'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia in recent years.' In 2020, 62% considered that the intake in recent years had been 'about right' or 'too low', while **38% considered that the intake had been 'too high.'** This is a lower proportion than the **44% in 2018 and 41% in 2019** who viewed the current intake to be 'too high.'

In response to a question that asked for views on a diverse immigration intake, whether 'accepting immigrants from many different countries **makes Australia stronger,**' **71% indicated agreement,** higher than 63% in 2018 and 66% in 2019.

A further indication of attitude to ethnic diversity is provided by a question which asked for views on discrimination on the basis of race or religion in the selection of immigrants. **In 2020, a higher proportion of respondents disagreed with such discrimination: 82% disagreed with discrimination on the basis of race in 2020, compared with 78% in 2018 and 77% in 2019.** Discrimination on the basis of religion was opposed by 76% of respondents in 2020, 71% in 2018 and 70% in 2019.

A new question in 2020 posed openness to immigrants in different terms: it asked if **'someone who was born outside of Australia is just as likely to be a good citizen as someone born in Australia.'** A very high **90% indicated agreement.** Just 2% indicated 'strong disagreement', 8% 'disagreement', a combined 10%.

The differing proportions obtained in response to questions on immigration and cultural diversity indicate the difficulty of establishing the proportion of the population with negative views. This issue is explored using several approaches in this report, although no definitive answer can be reached.

One approach utilises cluster analysis, which groups individuals whose attitudes are more similar to one another than to those in other groupings. This approach finds that 18% of respondents are defined by negative attitude to a range of questions on immigration and cultural diversity, although heightened concern with immigration is also indicated by those in financial difficulty and those with negative views of government.

While differing approaches yield different answers, some points are clear. Those with 'strong negative' views comprise a small minority, 10% or less on a range of issues. **Most importantly for understanding Australia in 2020, the proportion holding negative views has not increased.**

MULTICULTURALISM

The policy of multiculturalism has obtained consistently strong support since it was first considered in the 2013 Scanlon Foundation survey. In response to the statement that 'multiculturalism has been good for Australia', in 2020 **84% indicated agreement,** higher than 77% in 2018 and 80% in 2019.

While multicultural policy is seen in positive terms by a large majority, a finding not to be undervalued, the positive attitude to multiculturalism exists alongside substantial negative sentiment towards national groups from Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Endorsement of multiculturalism does not **extend to majority support for cultural maintenance.** In response to the proposition that 'ethnic minorities in Australia should be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions,' only a minority agree: 36% in 2020, higher than 30% in both 2018 and 2019, with 63% of respondents indicating disagreement.

For the majority, multiculturalism involves a two-way process. Past surveys found that a majority agree that Australians should 'do more to learn about the customs and heritage of different ethnic and cultural groups in this country,' but also that 'people who come to Australia should change their behaviour to be more like Australians.'

In 2020, in response to the proposition that **'too many immigrants are not adopting Australian values,' 60% agreed,** marginally higher than 57% in 2019 when the question was first asked.

Irrespective of the exact question wording, whether it is concerned with behaviour 'more like Australians,' adopting Australian values, or government funding for cultural maintenance, **majority opinion continues to favour the ideal of integration,** in a context in which there is also openness to learning about diverse immigrant cultures.

EXPERIENCE OF DISCRIMINATION

A question in the survey since 2007 asks: ‘have you experienced discrimination in the last twelve months on the basis of your skin colour, ethnicity or religion?’ In 2020, **18% of survey respondents indicated that they have experienced discrimination, close to the level in 2018 (19%) and 2019 (16%).**

There is, however, as in past years, **substantial variation within the population.**

Data disaggregated by three groups – Australia-born, of English-speaking background and of non-English speaking background – obtains **results in July 2020 within the range of the previous two LinA surveys.** Experience of discrimination was reported by

- 14% Australia-born in 2020, 13% in 2018 and 2019
- 15% of those born overseas of English-speaking background in 2020, 23% in 2018 and 15% in 2019
- 31% of those born overseas of non-English speaking background in 2020, 35% in 2018 and 26% in 2019

ATTITUDES TO MINORITIES

As discussed in previous reports on the Scanlon Foundation survey, **in Australia as in all countries there is a hierarchy of ethnic preference which informs attitudes towards religious and ethnic minorities.** This hierarchy is evident in the 2020 survey, but **where identical question wording allows for comparison of 2020 results with those of earlier surveys no substantial negative trend – or heightened xenophobia – is evident.**

FAITH GROUPS

The 2020 survey asked respondents for their attitude to six faiths: as in past years, by a large margin the highest proportion indicating a negative view was towards Muslims, at 37%. This compared with negative attitude to other faiths in the range 5%-13: 5% towards Buddhist, 9% Jewish, 11% Christian, 12% Hindu, and 13% Sikh.

Comparison of 2020 findings with 2018 and 2019 indicate that the proportion of respondents with negative views has remained largely constant. Thus, in 2018-19 negative attitude to Muslims was in a marginally higher range, 39%-41%, towards Buddhists and Hindus in the range 6%-7% and Christians 12%-14%.

ASIAN AUSTRALIANS

The survey provides evidence of relatively high level of negative opinion towards Asian Australians – and evidence of high levels of concern indicated by Asian Australian respondents. There are similar findings with regard to **some Middle Eastern and African national groups**, although the sample obtained in a national survey for small minorities does not provide scope for statistically reliable analysis. **Such indications as are available point to a long-standing problem of negative valuation of some groups, not a new development in 2020.**

For example, in 2020 experience of discrimination was indicated by 39% of respondents born in an Asian country, much higher than the 14% indicated by Australia-born – but it averaged 41% for Asia-born in 2018-19, hence not significantly changed in 2020.

The 2020 survey asked with reference to ten specified national groups: 'Would you say your feelings are positive, negative, or neutral towards ... [national group]?' and obtained a relatively high negative response towards a number of national groups.

Negative response ('very negative', 'somewhat negative') was at 6%-7% towards British, Italians, and Germans, 18% towards Americans, close to 30% towards Indians (28%) and Ethiopians (35%); and **above 40% towards Lebanese (42%), Chinese (47%), Iraqis (49%) and Sudanese (49%).**

Additional questions in the 2020 Scanlon Foundation survey find highest indication of discrimination and level of concern by respondents born in an Asian country.

In response to a question that asked if they had '**experienced discrimination more often**, about the same as before, or less often ... since the COVID-19 pandemic began in Australia', responses at the national level were evenly divided: 22% indicated more, 22% less, and 55% about the same. Analysis by sub-group finds that 14% of Australia-born indicated increased experience of discrimination, **compared with 39% born in an Asian country.**

When respondents were asked if they were concerned 'about discrimination experienced by your friends and/or members of your local community ... during the COVID-19 pandemic...?' 32% indicated concern, a higher proportion than those who reported personal experience of discrimination. Again, the highest proportion at 55% was indicated by those born in an Asian country. This compares with indication of concern by 19% born in the United Kingdom and Ireland and in the range 24%-30% by those born in Australia and Europe.

In response to a question that asked respondents to indicate their view of racism in Australia, **the highest proportion of the view that racism was 'a very big problem' or 'a fairly big problem' was indicated by those born in an Asian country, 59%** compared with 36% born in Australia, 35% in the United Kingdom, 28% Europe.

When asked if they had seen racist content online, overall, 56% of respondents indicated that they had, compared with 68% of respondents born in an Asian country.

CHINESE AUSTRALIANS

To further understanding of the experience of Chinese Australians, a small survey comprising seven questions was conducted between 25 May-10 June for the Scanlon Foundation by Bastion Insights, an organisation with track record of surveying the Chinese population in Australia. The survey was conducted in Simplified Chinese on a panel established by Bastion on the WeChat online platform and was completed by 500 respondents.

In response to the question that asked: 'Have you experienced any form of discrimination because of your appearance, ethnicity or national origin over the last 12 months?', **27% responded yes and a further 20% declined to answer.** The high proportion not answering was interpreted by Bastion as a cultural reluctance to draw attention to themselves by a people who prefer a non-confrontational approach which emphasises harmony over conflict. As a consequence, experience of discrimination is likely to be under-reported by Chinese Australians.

When asked to indicate their opinion on the problem of '**racism in Australia** during the Covid-19 crisis', **59% of Chinese Australians responded that it was 'a very big problem' or 'a fairly big problem,'** the same proportion that was obtained in the Scanlon Foundation national survey for Asian-born respondents.

POPULATION SEGMENTS: EMPLOYMENT STATUS

In addition to analysis by birthplace and religion, this report includes analysis by other segments of the population to determine the extent to which opinion varies from findings for the total population. One segment selected for analysis comprises the 28% of survey respondents who indicated that they had lost their jobs and not found other employment or were working no hours or reduced hours. **The objective of the analysis is to determine if there are heightened negative attitudes within this segment.**

In response to some questions a substantial difference was evident. Thus, when asked 'how satisfied are you with your present financial situation,' a **substantially lower 58%** (although still a majority) of those whose employment was impacted indicated satisfaction, **compared with 82%** of those working the same hours as before the pandemic – a difference of 24% percentage points

Asked if they are 'optimistic or pessimistic about Australia's future,' again a substantial difference was indicated: 35% of those impacted indicated that they were pessimistic, compared to 26% of those working the same hours; however, a substantial majority (64%) of those impacted indicated that they were optimistic.

But in response to the statement that 'people on low incomes receive **enough financial support from the government**', 55% of those impacted indicated agreement, only marginally lower than the 58% of those working the same hours.

While there were substantial differences recorded with regard to a range of financial issues, there was little indication that those whose employment was impacted had substantially heightened negative attitude when questioned on Australia's openness to the world, immigration and multiculturalism – with difference typically in the range 2-7 percentage points.

Globalisation, described as 'the growing economic ties between Australia and other countries,' was seen as 'fairly bad' or 'very bad' by 33% of those impacted, 26% by those less impacted.

The number of immigrants accepted in recent years was seen as too high by 38% of those impacted, 33% less impacted.

Agreement with the statement that 'immigrants take jobs away' finds a difference of 6%; 32% of those impacted agree, 26% of those less impacted.

The proposition that 'multiculturalism has been good for Australia' finds agreement at 87% among those impacted, 85% less impacted.

When asked if 'someone who was born outside Australia is just as likely to be a good citizen as someone born in Australia,' 91% those impacted agreed, just 9% disagreed, the same proportion as those less impacted.

POPULATION SEGMENTS: YOUNG RESPONDENTS

In discussion of the impact of the pandemic, it has been argued that youth **disproportionately bear the economic cost** and the Scanlon Foundation survey finds evidence that this has occurred.

Analysis of the level of unemployment or under-employment reported in the July survey finds that among those aged 18-24, 18% lost their jobs; this compares with 6% aged 25-34 who lost their jobs and 4% aged 45-54.

In July, only 42% of respondents (47% in November) aged 18-24 indicate that they were working the same hours as before the pandemic, compared with 64%-72% (74%-77% in November) of those aged 25-64.

The survey registers lower positive response to some questions on economic circumstances and future outlook among those aged 18-24.

Of those aged 18-24, 44% agree that those on low incomes receive enough financial support from the government: this compares with 57% aged 25-34 and 58% aged 45-54.

The statement that Australia is a land of economic opportunity where in the long run hard work brings a better life obtains agreement at 61% among those aged 18-24, compared with 72% aged 25-34 and in the range 73%-79% aged 45-74.

Fewer of those in the youngest age group are positive about the future: **58% aged 18-24 are optimistic, compared with 70%-73% aged 25-74.**

However, with regard to issues of immigration, multiculturalism and ethnic diversity, past surveys found that the younger age groups are most positive, and this finding remains a feature of the 2020 survey.

The view that immigration in recent years has been too high is indicated by a small minority of 17% among those aged 18-24, 25% aged 25-34, 46% aged 45-54, and 50% aged 65-74.

The statement that 'immigrants are generally good for Australia's economy' finds agreement at 88% among those aged 18-24, in the range 78%-83% among other age groups.

Agreement with the statement that 'immigrants take jobs away' is at 18% of those aged 18-24, close to 30% among other age groups.

The proposition that 'multiculturalism has been good for Australia' finds almost unanimous agreement at 96% among those aged 18-24, 90% aged 25-34, and 75% aged 65-74.

With regard to attitude to minorities, negative attitude towards immigrants from Iraq, China and Sudan is lowest in the 18-24 age group, in the range 31%-33%, compared with 38%-45% among those aged 25-34, and 51%-56% aged 65-74.

THE NOVEMBER SURVEY

A second Scanlon Foundation survey was conducted in November to determine if the relatively positive findings obtained in July still characterise the mood in Australia. Troubling changes and negative indicators of social cohesion have been found in a number of countries, including Japan, South Korea, France, Russia, and Brazil by Ipsos, a leading international survey company:

There is no question that the pandemic created a more 'cohesive' society in many countries in its early days. People will always pull together when there is a common enemy (COVID-19), especially the double challenge of a health enemy and an economic enemy. But our COVID-19 tracking surveys have suggested that **social cohesion has started to fray as the pandemic has evolved.**³

Such fraying has not been observed in Australia, as governments have succeeded in controlling the spread of the virus and there are signs of economic recovery. Asked if they were 'optimistic or pessimistic about Australia's future', 70% responded that they were optimistic in July, 75% in November.

Positive assessment of government handling of the pandemic has remained at the very high level observed earlier in the year: it was 85% positive in July, 85% in November. Positive views of the actions of some state governments has been even higher, above 90% in Western Australia, South Australia and New South Wales.

In Victoria, which was the state that endured the most rigorous and sustained second lockdown, in November 78% of respondents supported the government response to the crisis. When asked if the lockdown was required, 87% indicated that it was (63% 'definitely,' 24% 'probably'), while only 6% viewed the lockdown as 'definitely not required.'

In addition to controlling the spread of the pandemic, a key factor in maintaining support for government is its financial management; loss of jobs and inadequate financial support to those in need drives negative sentiment. Again, the November survey finds relatively positive attitudes.

In response to the proposition that 'people living on low incomes in Australia receive enough financial support from the government,' 59% disagreed in 2019, a much lower 45% in July 2020. This proportion increased to 50% in November, but it remained substantially below the average of the previous two years.

When asked '**How satisfied are you with your present financial situation?**', **73% in July and 72% in November responded that they were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied.'** The proportion indicating that their financial status was 'poor', 'struggling to pay bills' or 'just getting along' was 34% in July, 32% in November.

Relatively high positive findings obtained in July are replicated across the survey, although not without exception.

A high proportion of positive responses are obtained for questions concerned with the respondent's neighbourhood. Asked if 'living in your local area is becoming better or worse ...', in July 84% indicated that it was better or unchanged, in November 88%; in July 86% agreed that 'people ... are willing to help their neighbours', in November 87%; in July 26% were worried 'about becoming a victim of crime' in their local area, the same 26% in November.

In response to a key indicator, level of personal trust, in July 49% agreed that 'most people can be trusted', in November a higher 53%.

Neither survey obtained indication of heightened support for raising barriers and closing Australia to the world.

Asked if they considered 'growing economic ties between Australia and other countries, sometimes referred to as globalisation' as good or bad, 72% in July and 74% in November indicated that it was good.

Asked to reflect on the immigration intake of recent years, 61% in July and 64% in November viewed it as 'about right' or 'too low.' Agreement with the proposition that 'accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger' was at 71% in July, 74% in November.

The policy of multiculturalism was viewed as good for Australia by 84% of respondents in July, 84% in November. 90% in July and 91% in November agreed that 'someone born outside Australia is just as likely to be a good citizen as someone born in Australia.'

Experience of discrimination on the basis of 'skin colour, ethnicity or religion' was significantly lower in November, down from 18% to 13%. Analysis by birthplace finds that the change is largely a function of decline in experience of discrimination indicated by respondents born in Australia, down from 14% in July to 9% in November. Among respondents of non-English speaking background, discrimination was at 32% in July, 31% in November.

³ Ipsos, 'Social cohesion in the pandemic age. A global perspective', October 2020

Negative sentiment towards some ethnic and religious minorities, which was relatively high in July remains relatively high in November, and for some groups it is at an increased level.

Negative attitude to those of the Muslim faith was at 37% in July, marginally lower at 35% in November. Negative attitude towards immigrants from China was at 47% in July, 44% in November; towards Indian nationals at 28% in July, higher at 33% in November; for Lebanese 42% in July and 45% in November, for Sudanese 49% in July and 56% in November.

The proportion of respondents who viewed ‘racism in Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic?’ as a problem has remained at a relatively high level, at 39% in July and November. Racism was viewed as a problem in the range 35%-37% by respondents born in Australia, the United Kingdom and Ireland, by a substantially higher 55% among those born in an Asian country, albeit marginally lower than 59% in July.

2020 IN PERSPECTIVE

The 2020 Scanlon Foundation surveys have found **evidence of a resilient society.**

Despite the level of economic dislocation, the **surprising finding is that in 2020 more positive responses were obtained for a number of questions on personal financial circumstances** than in the previous two years.

Unexpectedly, the Scanlon-Monash Index moved in a positive direction, both in July and November.

The key to the positive findings appears to be the level of trust in government, the widely held view that effective leadership is being provided in the time of crisis, including financial support to those who have lost their jobs and those whose businesses have been impacted.

Neither survey obtained indication of heightened support for raising barriers and closing Australia to the world. A substantial majority of survey respondents continue to endorse open trade, immigration and multicultural policies. **Almost all Australians endorse the general statement that immigrants make just as good citizens as the native born, but there are reservations.**

Alongside the positive findings, there is evidence of a relatively high level of negative opinion towards Australians of Asian, African and Middle Eastern background, and of **high levels of concern within the Asian Australian population.**

In November, nearly nine months since the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted life across the world, a large majority of Australians remained optimistic for the future. Although not without qualification, the substantially positive attitudes identified in the survey provide **evidence of a strong, cohesive and resilient society.**

METHODOLOGY

The 2020 Scanlon Foundation national survey, is the thirteenth in the series, following the benchmark survey in 2007 and annual surveys since 2009. In 2020, for the first time, the survey was administered twice, first in July and then in November, to track opinion over the second half of the year.

LIFE IN AUSTRALIA™ PANEL (LinA)

In 2020 the Scanlon Foundation survey was administered on the Life in Australia™ (LinA) online panel. This follows the experimental administration of seven of the survey questions on the LinA panel in 2017 and of the full questionnaire in 2018 and 2019, when the survey was administered in parallel mode both by telephone (landline and mobile) and online.

The LinA panel, established by the Social Research Centre in 2016, comprises 4,025 active members. It is Australia's first and only national probability-based online panel and is the most methodologically rigorous panel in Australia.

LinA panel members were initially recruited via their landline or mobile phone and paid \$20 to join the panel; additional panel members were recruited in October-December 2019 via a sample drawn from the Geocoded National Address File. 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. LinA panellists are offered an incentive of \$10 for each survey completed, paid by gift voucher, deposit into a PayPal account or charitable donation. Both the July and November 2020 LinA sample were obtained with 94% of surveys completed online and 6% by telephone.

SAMPLE SIZE

The July survey was completed by 3,090 respondents, the November survey by 2,790. In large measure the views of the same respondents were tracked over the second half of the year, as 94% (2,613) of the November respondents had also completed the July survey.

Between 2007-19, a total of 21,016 respondents completed the telephone administered national Scanlon Foundation surveys, with the 2018-19 LinA surveys completed by 4,293, providing scope to interpret trends in Australian opinion. This wealth of data also makes possible the aggregation of findings over several years, to increase the reliability of sub-group analysis.

The sample base of the 2020 Scanlon Foundation national surveys is expected to yield a maximum sampling error of approximately ± 2 percentage points 19 times out of 20, with additional margin of close to ± 2 percentage points associated with the establishment of the LinA panel. For sub-groups analysis, the margin of sampling error is larger.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The July 2020 national survey employed the questionnaire structure common to the 2007-19 surveys, together with questions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The July questionnaire comprised:

- 127 substantive questions in nine modules and including sixteen questions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 14 demographic questions, plus seven demographic variables obtained from the panel member profiles.

A shortened version of the questionnaire was employed in November, comprising:

- 62 substantive questions, including eight questions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 6 demographic questions, plus 15 demographic variables obtained from the panel member profiles and information provided by respondents to the July survey.

QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTRATION

The first LinA survey was administered from 14-27 July 2020; online completion took 20.4 minutes, completion by telephone took a longer 25.6 minutes. Of the 3,900 panel members invited to complete the survey, 3,090 (79.2%) did so, 19.7% were non-contactable during the fieldwork period and only 1.1% invited members refused to take part.

The second survey was administered from 9-23 November; online completion took 11.7 minutes, completion by telephone took 17.2 minutes. A total of 3,029 active panel members were invited to take part in the survey, 2,793 (92.2%) did so.

Full details of surveying are provided in the technical report available for download on the Mapping Australia's Population internet site.⁴

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.

For Life in Australia, the approach for deriving weights consists of the following steps:

1. Compute a base weight for each respondent as the product of two weights:
 - a. Their panel weight, accounting for the initial chances of selection and subsequent post-stratification to key demographic benchmarks.
 - b. Their response propensity weight estimated from information available for both respondents and non-respondents to the present wave.
2. Adjust the base weights so that they satisfy the latest population benchmarks for several demographic characteristics.

The demographic benchmarks included in the weighting solution are: state or territory of residence (capital, rest of state), gender, age, highest education (Bachelor's degree, below), language spoken at home (English, other), dwelling tenure, and household composition.

Where possible, target proportions were taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics December 2017 Estimated Resident Population counts.

⁴ The Mapping Australia's Population site is at <http://www.monash.edu/mapping-population>

CONTEXT

2020 was a very difficult year for Australia – and the world. Major bushfires which began in August 2019 and lasted until March 2020 devastated regions of the country. Millions of acres of land were burnt, more than a billion animals were killed, 3,000 homes were destroyed, and 33 people lost their lives.

In March 2020, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic became a major problem in Australia. In that month, a National Cabinet comprising the prime minister, state premiers and chief ministers was established to manage the impact of the pandemic. A lockdown was implemented across Australia, with bans on non-essential indoor gatherings, restriction of restaurants and cafes to takeaway services, and cancellation of sporting events. International borders were closed, with non-residents banned from entering the country and those allowed to return required to self-isolate for fourteen days. A number of state and territory borders were closed by the end of the month.

As businesses laid off staff, huge lines of newly unemployed people were seen outside Centrelink offices across the country and Centrelink and myGov websites were temporarily unable to cope with demand.

While there was an easing of restrictions in most parts of Australia beginning in May, a second and more severe stage 4 lockdown was imposed in Melbourne and the Shire of Mitchell from July until October, with masks made mandatory outside homes, a curfew between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m., and a limitation on movement to within a 5 kilometre radius from homes.

The economic impact was the most extensive since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Australia's official unemployment rate increased from 5.1% in February to a twenty-two-year high of 7.5% in July. A second measure of labour market impact developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the 'effective unemployment rate,' which includes those who still had a job but were working no hours for economic reasons, saw the unemployment rate double between March and April, rising from 5.4% to 11.8%. The 'underemployment rate,' which describes the under-utilisation of the potential labour of employed people, rose from 8.6% to a peak of 13.8% in April, while youth unemployment increased from 14.9% to a peak of 20.5% in June.

In the September quarter, the Australian economy went into recession for the first time in nearly thirty years as the Gross Domestic Product shrank 7%.

Table 1: Unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted, 2020

	Unemployment rate (%)	'Effective Unemployment rate' (%)	Underemployment rate (%)	15-25 Unemployment rate* (%)	Participation rate
January	5.3		8.6	15.8	66.1
February	5.1		8.6	14.9	65.9
March	5.2	5.4	8.8	14.9	65.9
April	6.4	11.8	13.8	18.1	63.5
May	7.1	9.5	13.1	18.8	62.6
June	7.4	8.8	11.7	20.5	64.0
July	7.5	8.3	11.2	19.1	64.7
August	6.8		11.2	18.6	65.0
September	6.9		11.4	18.6	64.8
October	7.0		10.4	18.1	65.8
November	6.8		9.4	19.3	66.1

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, 17 December 2020; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Understanding unemployment and the loss of work during the COVID-19 period', 13 August 2020

*Looked for full-time work

Figure 1: Unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted, 2010-20 (percentage)



Source: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release>

POPULATION GROWTH AND THE IMMIGRATION PROGRAM

In the years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Australia had experienced population growth above the long-term average. Over the last decade, annual growth was in the range 1.4%-1.8%, an estimated 1.6% in the year to March 2019. The 2020 budget forecast population growth to be at a much lower level, 0.2% in 2020-21 and 0.4 per cent in 2021-22.

At the 2016 census, Australia's resident population was 23,401,892, an increase of 3,546,605 (17.9%) in the ten years since 2006. The resident population at June 2020 was an estimated 25,687,041, with an increase of 321,300 over the year to June 2020. The 2019 budget predicted that the population would reach almost 27 million in 2022. These predictions have now been radically revised.

Since 18 March 2020, to limit the spread of COVID-19 Australia's international borders were closed to everyone but citizens, permanent residents, their immediate family members and people granted a special exemption, in the attempt to limit the spread of COVID-19. New Zealanders were the first international travellers to return from 16 October.

The October 2020 budget reduced the projected population increase to 2022 by more than a million. For the 2019-20 financial year, population growth was expected to be around 1.2%, in part reflecting the substantial immigration intake between July 2019 and March 2020, before the implementation of travel restrictions. Between March and June, Australia experienced negative migration flows as people on temporary visas left and were not replaced – in the June quarter there was a loss of 5,887 persons, the first such loss since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The second component of population growth is natural increase, the net gain of births over deaths, which in recent years has contributed substantial but lower numbers to population growth than immigration. In the year to June 2020, Net Overseas Migration contributed 57% (184,200) of population growth, natural increase 43% (137,100).

Births are expected to decline relative to the 2019 forecast. The total fertility rate is predicted to drop from a historical low 1.69 births per woman in 2019-20 to 1.58 in 2020-21. There is expected to be a deficit on planning levels of 280,000 births by 2024.⁵

PERMANENT MIGRATION PROGRAM

The planning level for the 2020-21 permanent migration program has been kept at the 2019-20 level of 160,000. However, the majority of those who will gain a place in the permanent program are already resident in Australia on long-stay and other temporary visas.

In recent years, the migration program has been heavily weighted towards those who gain permanent residence on the basis of their skills. In the 2019-20 allocation of permanent places, 69.5% were in the Skill stream (79,600 places), 30.5% in the Family stream (77,300 places).

In the 2020-21 program, the Family stream has been boosted to almost half the places, comprising 72,300 places in the Partner category, 4,500 Parents and 500 Other Family.

Among new arrivals, a two-thirds preference for the Skill category will be retained, with preference to those who can help to create new employment. Key categories are the Business Innovation and Investment program, which will be tripled to 13,500 places, and the high skill Global Talent Independent program, with 15,000 places.

The Humanitarian program for 2019-20 was set at 18,750 places, with a minimum of 17,100 places for the offshore component of the program. With the closing of international borders in March 2020 the granting of offshore Humanitarian visas was suspended. As a result, only 13,171 resettlement visas were granted. The Humanitarian program planning level for 2020-21 has been set at 13,750.

⁵ Shane Wright, 'Baby slump', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 Sept. 2020

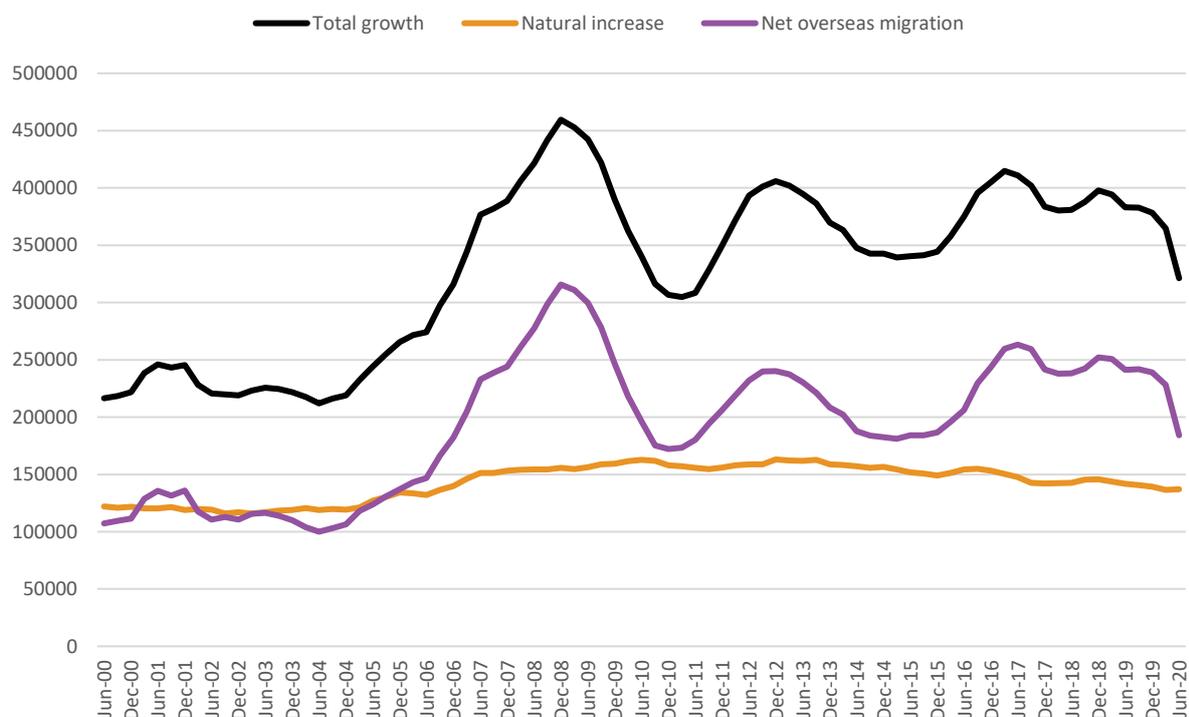
Table 2: Components of population growth, 2007-20

At 30 June	Natural increase	Net overseas migration	Growth on Previous year	Growth on Previous year
	'000	'000	'000	%
2007	151.3	232.7	376.7	1.8
2008	154.4	277.3	421.6	2.0
2009	156.4	299.8	442.5	2.1
2010	162.5	196.1	340.1	1.6
2011	155.7	180.4	308.3	1.4
2012	158.9	231.9	393.4	1.8
2013	162.0	230.3	394.7	1.7
2014	157.0	187.8	347.6	1.5
2015	151.7	184.1	340.3	1.5
2016	154.4	206.3	374.9	1.6
2017	147.6	263.4	411.0	1.7
2018	142.6	236.8	379.5	1.5
2019	141.8	241.3	383.1	1.6
2020*	137.1	184.2	321.3	1.3

*preliminary estimate

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, March quarter 2019, catalogue number 3101.0, Time Series Spreadsheets, Table 1 Population Change Summary (released 19 September 2019). Australian Bureau of Statistics, *National, state and territory population*, June 2020 (released 17 December 2020)

Figure 2: Components of annual population change, 2000–2020



Source: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/latest-release>

Table 3: Australia, Net Overseas Migration by state, quarterly, 2019-20

Quarter ended	Australia	VIC	NSW	QLD	WA	SA	TAS
Sept-2019	74,434	26,233	23,450	10,220	7,716	5,050	803
Dec-2019	42,892	13,214	14,417	5,383	6,488	2,607	1,646
March-2020	72,720	21,954	20,055	12,287	9,257	6,142	1,034
June-2020	-5,887	-1,852	-2,999	-1,014	-117	82	-16

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *National, state and territory population*, June 2020 (released 17 December 2020)

Figure 3: Australia, Net Overseas Migration by state, quarterly, 2019-20

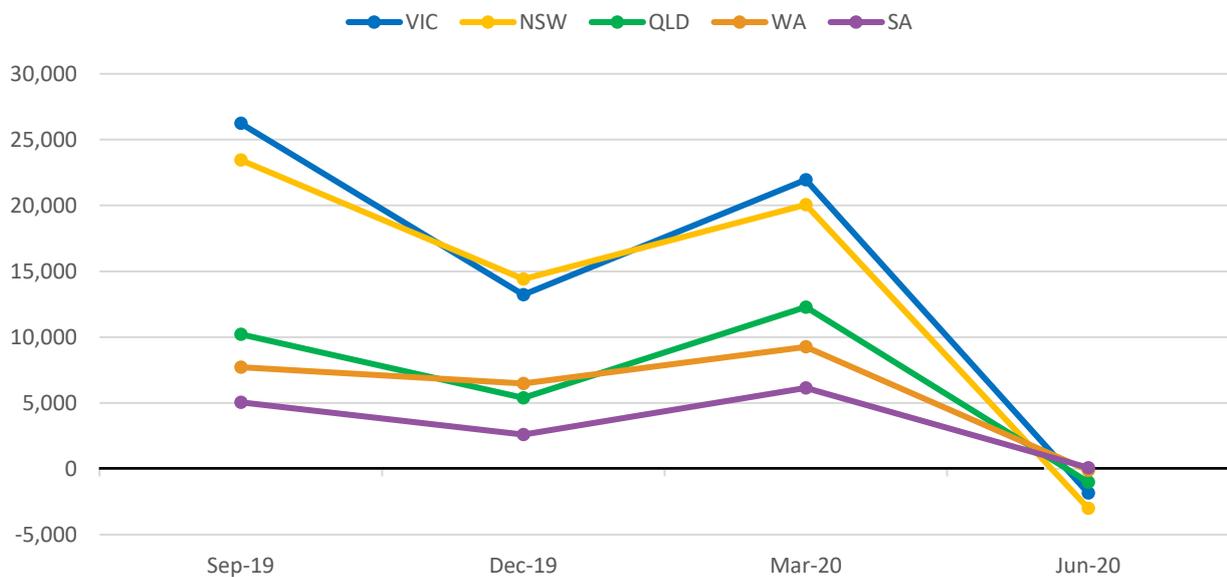
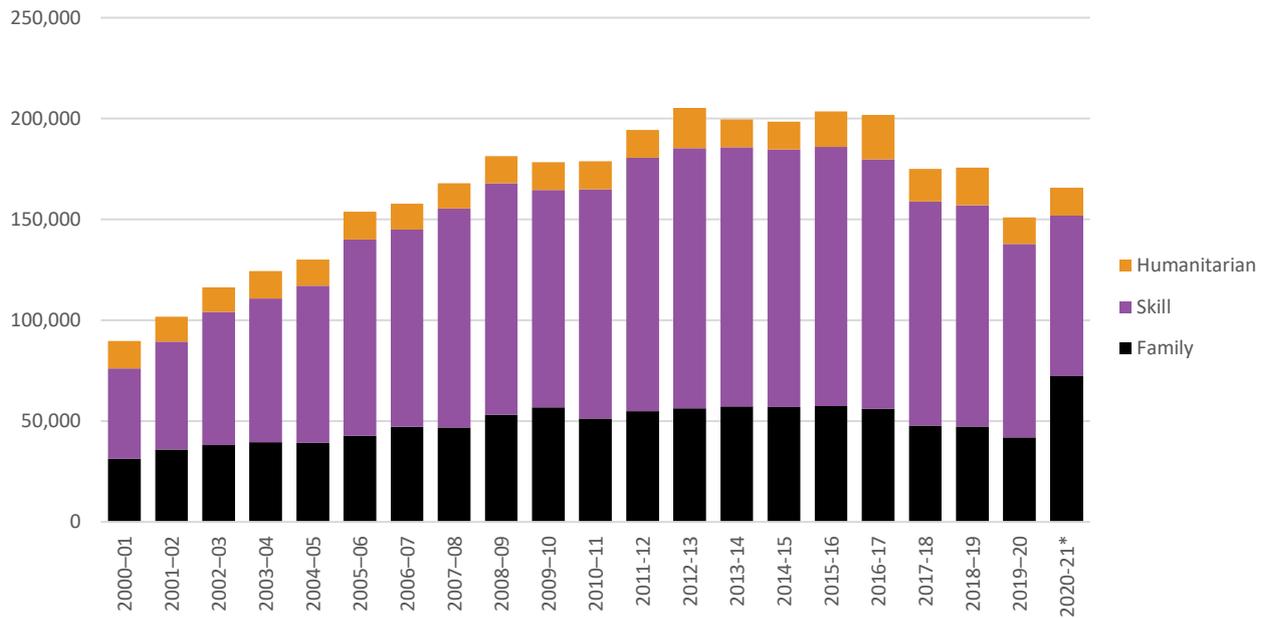


Table 4: Permanent additions to Australia’s population, by Family and Skill streams, 2012-13 to 2020-21

YEAR	FAMILY				SKILL			
	Onshore	Offshore	Total	% onshore	Onshore	Offshore	Total	% onshore
2012-13	20,708	44,681	65,389	32%	73,368	55,408	128,776	57%
2013-14	20,180	44,062	64,242	31%	75,221	53,523	128,744	58%
2014-15	20,446	40,494	60,940	34%	70,751	57,909	128,660	55%
2015-16	19,128	41,867	60,995	31%	74,126	52,631	126,774	58%
2016-17	22,975	38,057	61,032	38%	68,869	57,207	126,076	55%
2017-18	18,918	30,704	49,622	38%	55,853	51,251	107,104	52%
2018-19	20,958	26,826	47,784	44%	62,366	42,536	104,902	59%
2019-20	23,515	18,797	42,312	56%	66,133	27,080	93,213	71%
2020-21 planning level			77,300				79,600	

Sources: Department of Home Affairs BP0024 Permanent additions to Australia’s resident population, <https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/permanent-additions-to-australia-s-resident-population>. There are some inconsistencies in published and online statistics.

Figure 4: Permanent Migrant Programme by Family, Skill and Humanitarian streams, 2000-01 to 2019-20, plus planning level 2020-21



*Planning level

Source: Department of Home Affairs, Historical Migration Statistics, tables 3.1 and 4.1 (released December 2020)
<https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/2fe5e2a9-8a3d-4dcf-baec-c5147d953150>

Table 5: Humanitarian Program visa grants 2006-07 to 2019-20

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%
2017-18	7,909	6,916	14,825	1,425	16,250	91%
2018-19	9,451	7,661	17,112	1,650	18,762	91%
2019-20	6,422	5,099	11,521	1,650	13,171	87%

Source: Department of Home Affairs, Historical Migration Statistics, table 4.1 (released December 2020)

TEMPORARY 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.

In recent years temporary residents have comprised close to 10% of the total resident adult population, in excess of 2 million in June 2019. This number fell to 1.7 million in November 2020.

The difficulty of finalising visa applications of temporary residents in Australia due to COVID-19 restrictions is in part reflected in the increase in the Bridging Visa category, up from 205,616 in June 2019 to 333,516 in June 2020.

There has been a major fall in the visitor category, down from 316,469 in June 2019 to 86,748 in June 2020.

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 2020 there were 667,285 New Zealand Special Category Visa (444) holders resident in Australia, a decrease of 11,371 in the year since June 2019, with a further decrease of 11,493 to November.

Table 6: Temporary entrants in Australia, main categories, 2012-20

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
2019	553,139	142,828	135,263	205,616	316,469	678,656
2020	555,310	128,145	85,691	333,516	93,494	667,285
2020, 30 Nov	465,018	112,702	53,712	330,581	86,748	655,792

Source: Department of Home Affairs, Temporary entrants visa holders pivot table as at 30 Nov. 2020, <https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/temporary-entrants-visa-holders>

COUNTRY OF BIRTH

Australia has maintained a diverse immigration intake since 1945. In 2018-19 permanent additions to Australia's population included nationals of 1,000 or more from 29 countries.

Arrivals from India and China increased markedly over the decade to 2020; annual permanent additions to Australia's population from India increased from 23,320 to 33,310 between 2007-08 and 2017-18, with a lower 25,698 in 2019-20; from China the annual increase was from 21,063 to 25,145, down to 18,586 in 2019-20. Annual additions from the United Kingdom decreased from 29,428 to 13,654, and to 10,685.

Over the last forty years, an increased proportion of immigrants have been drawn from the Asian region. In 2019-20, of the top ten source countries, seven were in the Asian region, the exceptions being the United Kingdom, South Africa and the United States of America.

Of the estimated population in 2019, the leading overseas-born countries of birth were the United Kingdom (986,000), China (677,000), India (660,000), and New Zealand (570,000).

Table 7: Top 10 countries of birth of the overseas-born population, 2006, 2019 (30 June, estimate)

Country of birth	2006	2019	% (2019)
England	1,037,475	986,000	5.5
China	206,588	677,000	3.8
India	147,106	660,000	3.7
New Zealand	389,465	570,000	3.2
Philippines	120,540	294,000	1.6
Vietnam	159,850	263,000	1.5
South Africa	104,132	194,000	1.1
Italy	199,124	183,000	1
Malaysia	92,335	176,000	1
Sri Lanka		140,000	0.8
Top 10 countries	2,586,821	4,143,000	23.2
All overseas-born	5,782,341	7,530,057	42.2
Australia-born	14,072,946	17,836,000	

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census; ABS, Migration, Australia, 2018-19 (released 28 April 2020)

Table 8: Permanent additions to Australia's population by top ten countries of birth, 2007-08; by citizenship, 2017-18, 2019-20

Country of birth	2007-08	2017-18	2019-20
India	23,320	33,310	25,698
China	21,063	25,145	18,587
United Kingdom	29,428	13,654	10,685
Philippines	6,956	10,610	8,965
Pakistan	1,737	6,235	4,136
Vietnam	2,921	5,124	5,398
South Africa	7,472	4,235	3,743
Malaysia	5,001	3,205	2,189
Nepal	900	3,067	5,048
USA	2,963	2,782	3,303
Top 10 countries	103,772	107,367	87,752
All permanent additions	205,940	162,417	140,366

Source: Department of Home Affairs, Historical Migration Statistics, tables 3.2 and 3.3 (released December 2020)

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.

Birthplace statistics do not, however, indicate the full extent of cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, 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 by religious identification, also by language 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. It is likely that the census undercounts adherents of many faith groups.

As enumerated, the adherents of Christian faith groups remained largely constant, over 12 million between 2006 and 2016, while those indicating that they had no religion increased by 90% (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).

Table 9: Religious affiliation in Australia at the Census, 2006, 2016

Religion	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

RANKING OF ISSUES

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

Since 2011, 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 indicate issues, rather than requiring selection from a pre-determined and limited list. An open-ended approach necessarily produces a broad range of responses.

Up to 2019 there was a large measure of stability in response to this question. **In the nine surveys between 2011 and 2019, respondents have consistently given first rank to issues related to the economy, unemployment and poverty**, in the range 26%-36%, with the highpoint in 2012. Other issues which have been prominent are the impact of climate change on the environment, in the range 4%-19% (peak in 2019), quality of government 6%-15% (2014), and social issues, including family breakdown, child care, and drug use 5%-11% (2015). Three other issues reached 10% in one year: defence, national security and the threat of terrorism (2015); concern over immigration and the rate of population growth (2019); and concern over the number of asylum seekers reaching Australia (2013).

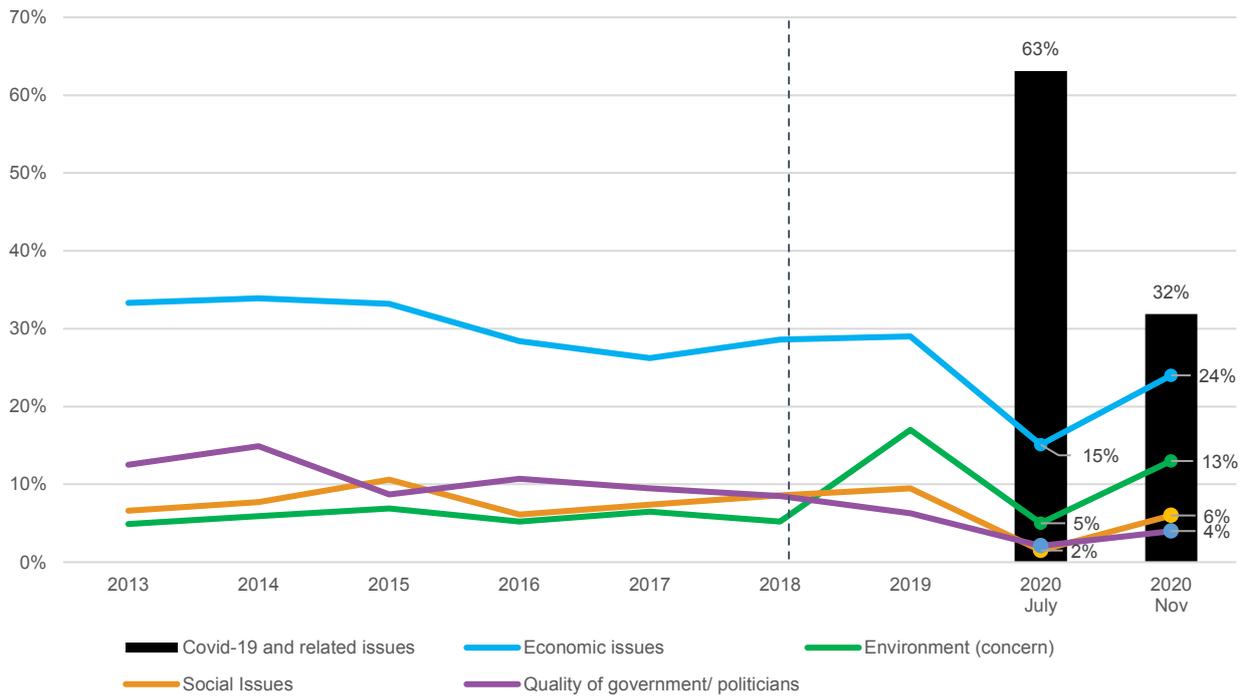
In July 2020, the impact of COVID-19 produced a dramatic change, with the pandemic dominating responses to an extent not matched over the course of the surveys by any other issue: it was selected by 63% of respondents as the 'most important problem', followed by the economy at 15% and climate change at 5%. No other issue was selected by more than 2% of respondents.

In November, there was a partial return to the pattern of previous years. COVID-19 remained the dominant issue, but it was selected by a much smaller 32%, while the economy (24%) climate change (13%), and social issues (6%) rose in importance.

Table 10: 'What do you think is the most important problem facing Australia today?', 2011-19 (percentage, RDD) 2018-2020 (percentage, LinA)

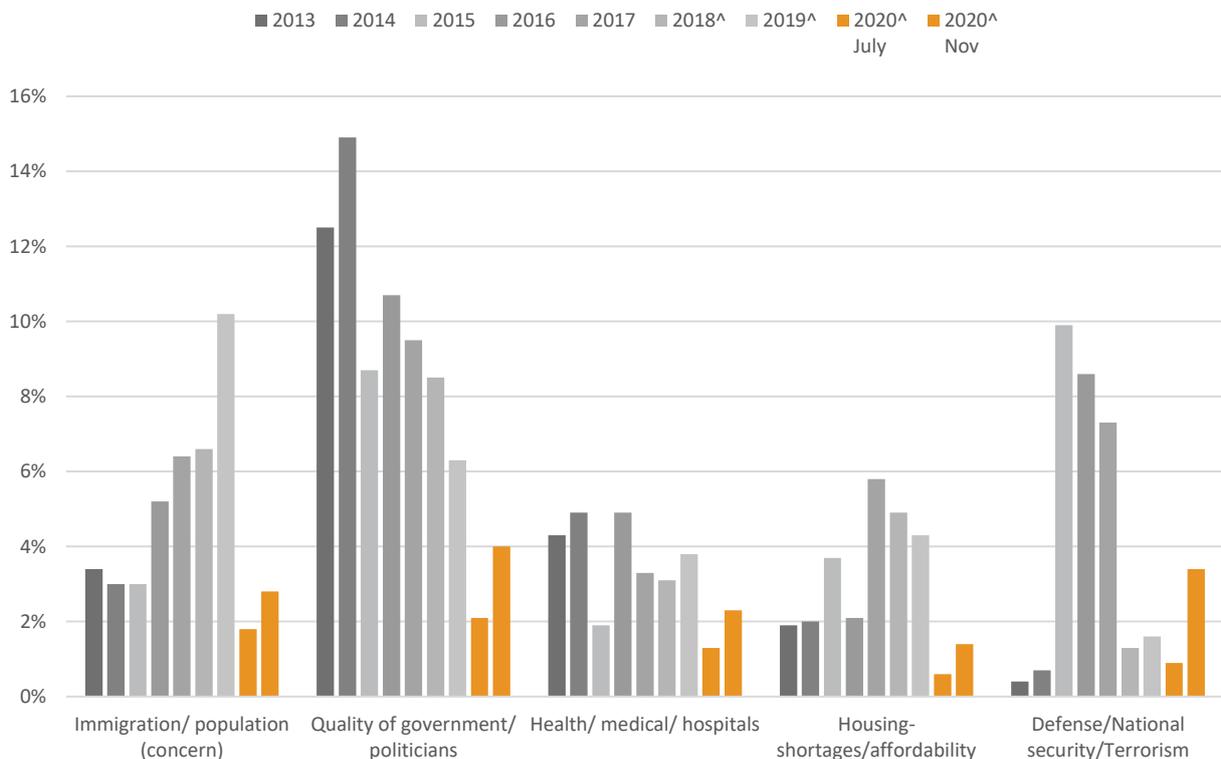
ISSUE	RDD									LinA			
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2018	2019	July 2020	Nov 2020
COVID-19, including impact on the economy												63	32
Economy/ unemployment/ poverty	26	36	33	34	33	28	26	27	28	29	29	15	24
Environment – climate change/ water shortages (concern)	11	4	5	6	7	5	6	10	19	5	17	5	13
Social issues – (family breakdown, child care, drug use, lack of personal direction)	6	5	7	8	11	6	7	8	8	9	10	2	6
Immigration/ population growth (concern)	5	4	3	3	3	5	6	7	6	7	10	2	3
Quality of government/ politicians	13	13	13	15	9	11	10	10	6	9	6	2	4
Health/ medical/ hospitals	4	3	4	5	2	5	3	4	5	3	4	1	2
Housing shortage/ affordability/ interest rates	3	2	2	2	4	2	6	4	4	5	4	1	1
Crime/ law and order	2	1	2	2	2	3	4	3	2	4	2	0	1
Education/ schools	1	2	3	4	2	4	4	2	2	1	1	0	1
Defence/ national security/ terrorism	1	1	0	1	10	9	7	1	2	1	2	1	3
Asylum seekers – too many/ refugees/ boat people/ illegal immigrants (negative comment)	4	8	10	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Asylum seekers – poor treatment, sympathy towards refugees/ boat people/ illegal immigrants	3	4	3	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Immigration/population – too low/ need more people (supportive)	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Racism	2	1	1	1	2	4	2	1	1	2	2	1	1
Environment – overreaction to climate change/ carbon tax (sceptical)	6	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Women's issues (e.g. equal pay/opportunity, violence, etc.)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Indigenous issues	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Industrial relations/ trade unions	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other/ nothing/ don't know/ decline	11	8	12	16	10	12	14	18	15	24	12	7	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N (unweighted)	2,001	2,000	1,200	1,526	1,501	1,500	2,236	1,500	1,500	2,260	2,033	3,090	2,793

Figure 5: 'What do you think is the most important problem facing Australia today?', top ranked issues, 2013-17 (RDD), 2018-2020 (LinA)



Dotted line indicates change in survey mode

Figure 6: 'What do you think is the most important problem facing Australia today?', selected problems, 2013-17 (RDD), 2018-2020 (LinA)



^ denotes LinA survey mode

Figure 7: Ranking of issues, July 2020 (LinA)

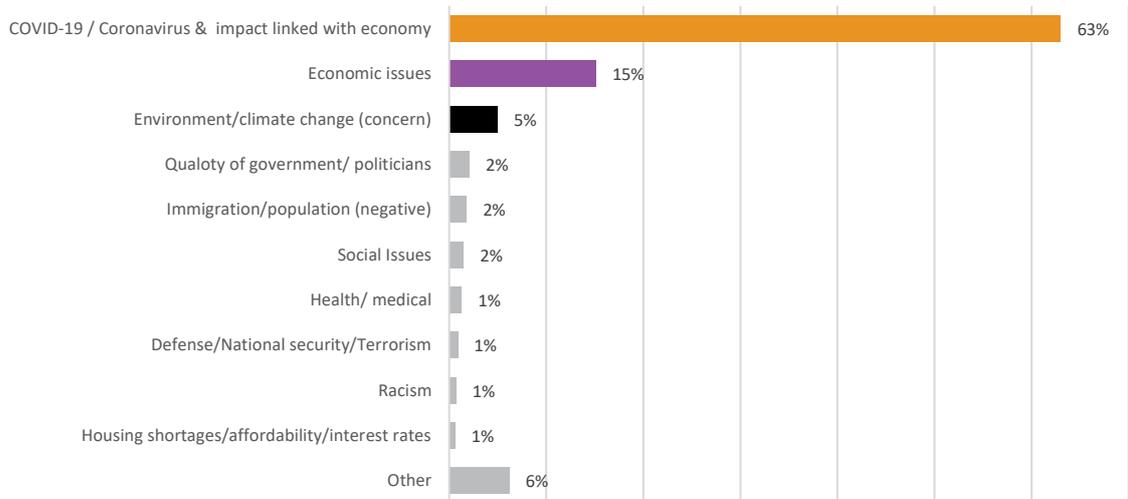
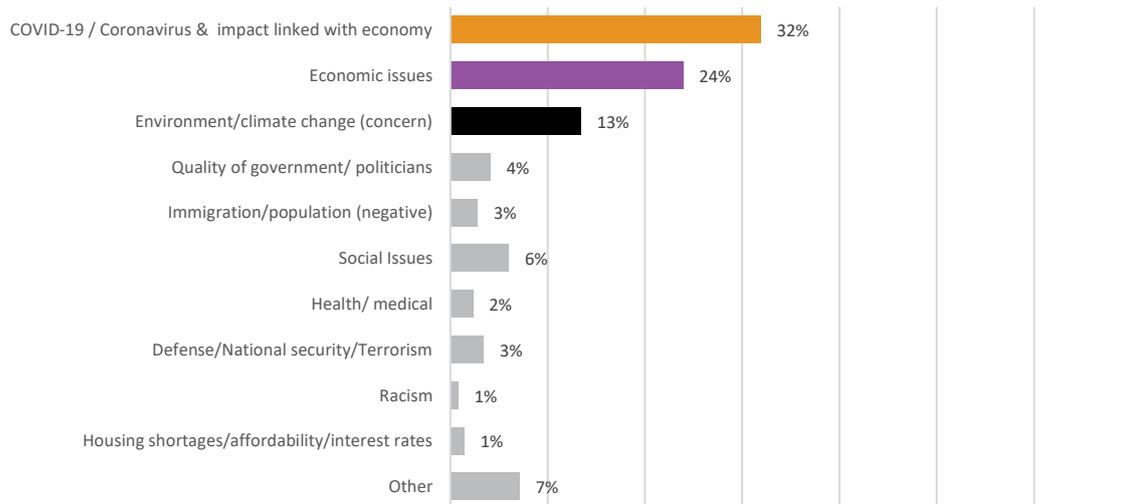


Figure 8: Ranking of issues, November 2020 (LinA)



COVID-19

Analysis of those indicating that COVID-19 is the most important problem facing Australia was undertaken by six demographic and two attitudinal variables. The demographic variables analysed were gender, state of residence, region (capital city or rest of state), age, highest level of educational attainment, and birthplace; the attitudinal variables were self-described financial situation and political alignment, indicated by response to the question 'If there was a Federal election held today, for which party would you probably vote?'

The broad findings indicate a large measure of agreement across several variables, notably region, three of the states, and birthplace. The general finding is that more concern is indicated by women than men and those over the age of 65.

The outliers for relatively high proportions concerned by the pandemic are Victorians (72%) and those over the age of 75 (70%).

Lower proportions indicating the pandemic as the most important problem are Queenslanders (55%), those aged 18-24 (52%), whose self-described financial situation is struggling to pay bills or poor (56%), and Greens (54%) and One Nation supporters (49%).

Table 11: 'What do you think is the most important problem facing Australia today?' Response: COVID-19, July 2020 (percentage, LinA)

Gender	Female	Male					
	67	59					
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia		
	72	62	55	63	63		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	63	64					
Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	52	63	63	61	64	68	70
Highest completed education	Post-graduate degree	Bachelor degree	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11	
	59	58	67	63	60	68	
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	64	64	64	56			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	66	67	54	49			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	63	67	63				

THE SCANLON– MONASH INDEX (SMI) OF SOCIAL COHESION

A nominal index of social cohesion, informed by the international literature on the subject, was developed using the 2007 national survey to provide its baseline data. The following questions were employed to construct the index for 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.⁶

The purpose of the index is to heighten awareness of shifts in opinion which may call for closer attention and analysis.

The following discussion of the 2020 SMI is limited to the survey administered on the Life in Australia panel, although data from the RDD version of the survey administered till 2019 is also provided to inform understanding of trend over time.

In a finding that seems counter-intuitive, in 2020 the SMI moved in a positive direction, up from 81.5 in 2018 and 83.7 in 2019 to 89.4 in July 2020 and 92.3 in November 2020.

The index was benchmarked at 100 on the basis of the first Scanlon Foundation survey, conducted in 2007. Since that time, the **SMI registered the highest level of volatility not between 2019 and 2020, as might have been expected, but during the Rudd and Gillard Labor governments.** Between 2009 and 2010 the Index fell from 101 to 93 and was at 89 in 2013. In the RDD version of the survey the SMI remained close to 89 in six of the seven years between 2013 and 2019.

In the 2018 and 2019 LinA versions of the survey, the SMI was lower, on average by seven index points, likely explained by a willingness to provide a more truthful response when respondents self-complete a survey, as distinct from responding to an interviewer.

In all five domains, the SMI was higher in July 2020 than in the previous year, although only higher by one index point in the domain of acceptance. Of the five domains, the domain of acceptance was at the lowest point. In July 2020 the index is higher by two points in the domains of belonging and participation, four points higher in sense of worth, with the most significant shift **in the domain of social justice, which was nineteen index points higher.** The domain of social justice measures response to four questions: views on the adequacy of financial support for people on low incomes, the gap between high and low incomes, economic opportunity, and trust in the Australian government.

In November 2020, the index recorded a significant gain in the domain of acceptance (up by 19 index points), and was close to, but marginally lower, in the other four domains.

⁶ 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 12: The Scanlon-Monash Index (SMI) of Social Cohesion, 2018-20 (LinA)

DOMAIN	2018	2019	July 2020	Change 2019-20 July	Nov 2020	Change 2020 July-Nov
1. Sense of belonging	85.0	86.0	88.3	+2.3	87.5	-0.8
2. Sense of worth	77.4	80.0	84.0	+4.0	83.0	-1.0
3. Social justice and equity	87.8	92.6	112.0	+19.4	110.5	-1.5
4. Political participation	94.6	93.0	95.4	+2.4	93.8	-1.6
5. Acceptance (rejection)	62.9	66.7	67.4	+0.7	86.6	+19.2
AVERAGE	81.5	83.7	89.4	+5.8	92.3	+2.9

Table 13: The Scanlon-Monash Index (SMI) of Social Cohesion, 2007-19 (RDD)

DOMAIN	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
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	88.9
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	90.9
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	93.1
4. Political participation	100	105.3	98.0	106.4	106.6	90.8	93.6	99.7	98.8	104.2	100.6	102.9
5. Acceptance (rejection)	100	94.4	81.5	75.3	78.6	68.8	70.9	81.6	66.6	64.1	69.3	72.1
AVERAGE	100	101.2	92.6	93.8	94.4	88.5	89.5	92.5	89.3	88.5	89.7	89.6

Figure 9: The Scanlon-Monash Index (SMI) of Social Cohesion 2007-2019 RDD (dotted line), 2018-2020 LinA (solid line) (Index points)

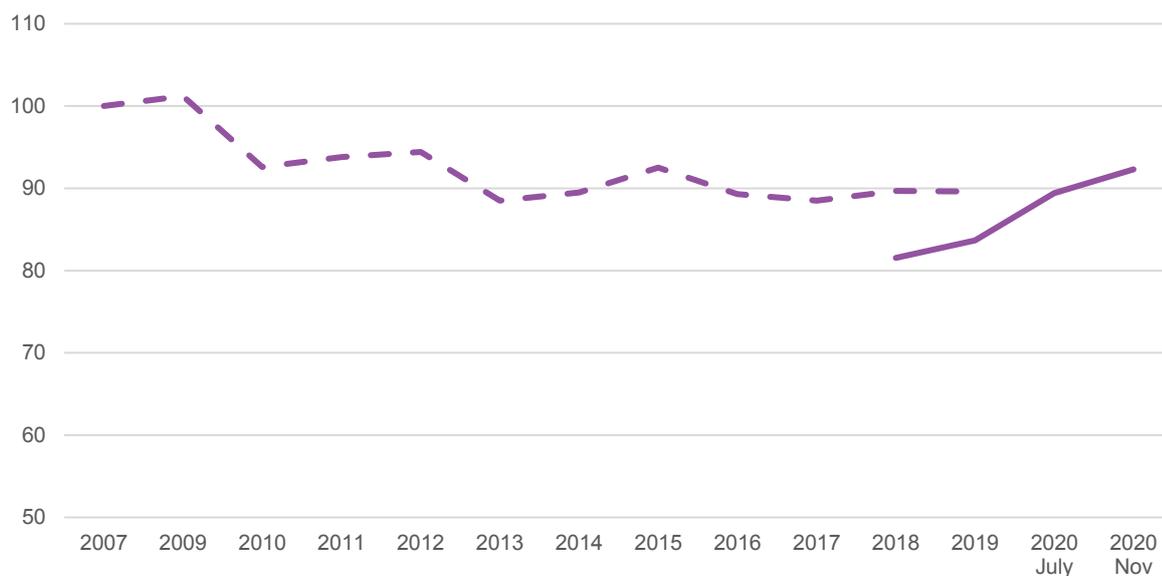
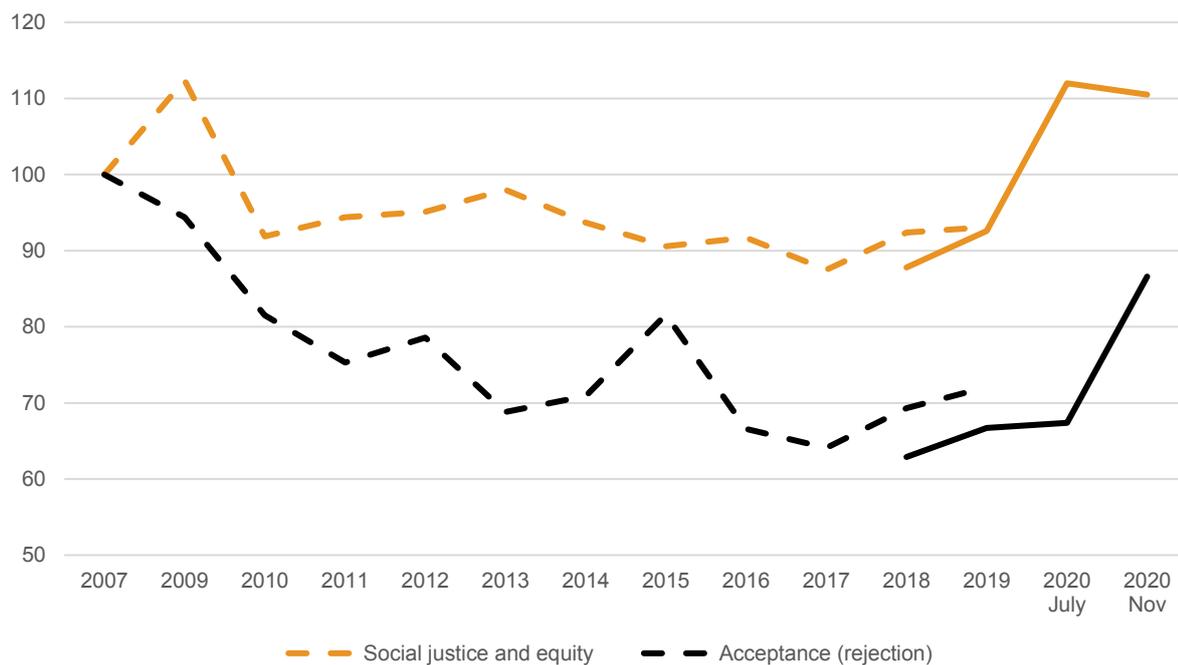


Figure 10: The Scanlon-Monash Index (SMI) of Social Cohesion, selected domains, 2007-2019 RDD (dotted line), 2018-2020 LinA (solid line) (Index points)



COMPONENTS OF THE SCANLON-MONASH INDEX

SMI 1: SENSE OF BELONGING

In 2020, general questions relating to national life and levels of personal satisfaction continued to elicit the high level of positive response that has been evident in Australian surveys over the last 20 years.

Sense of belonging ('great' and 'moderate'): 92% in July and November 2020, 90% in 2019 and 2018. The proportion indicating belonging 'to a great extent' has increased from 57% in 2018 to 61% in 2019 and is at 63% in July and 61% in November 2020.

Sense of pride in the Australian way of life and culture ('great' and 'moderate') indicated by 89% in July, 88% in November 2020, marginally higher than 87% in 2018 and 86% in 2019. Sense of pride to a 'great extent' increased from 43% to 45% to 48% between 2018 and July 2020 and was at 46% in November.

Importance of maintaining the Australian way of life and culture ('strongly agree' and 'agree') was at 89% in 2018, 87% in 2019, 89% in July and 90% November 2020. **'Strong agreement' has been stable in the range 47%-49%.** In July 2020, 11% disagreed that it was important to maintain the Australian way of life and culture, in November 9%, lower than the 13% in 2018 and 11% in 2019.

Figure 11: Sense of pride and importance in maintaining the Australian way of life, 2018-2020 (LinA)

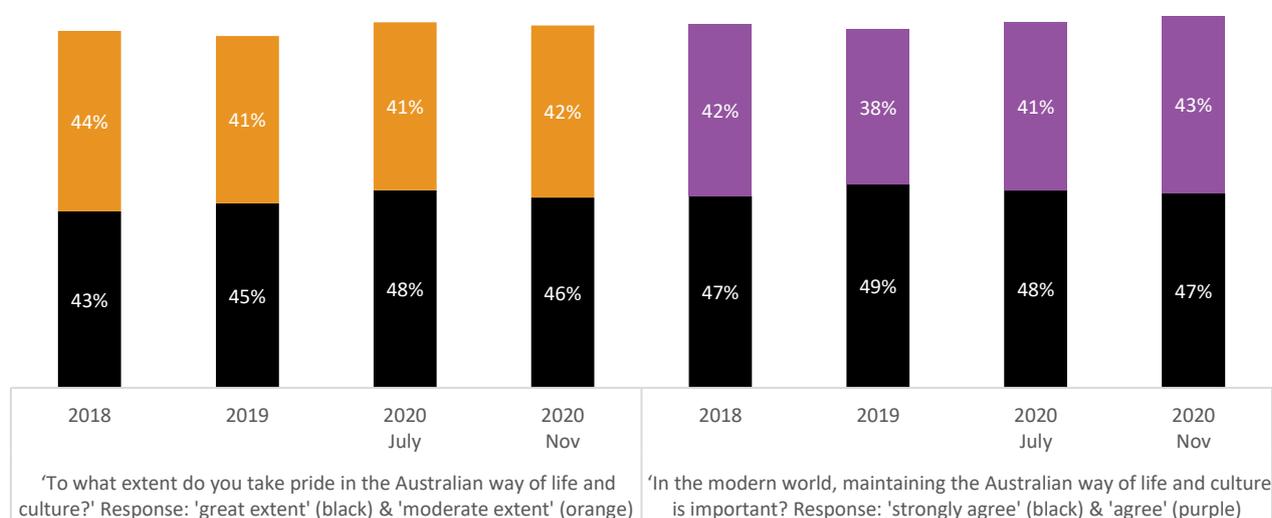
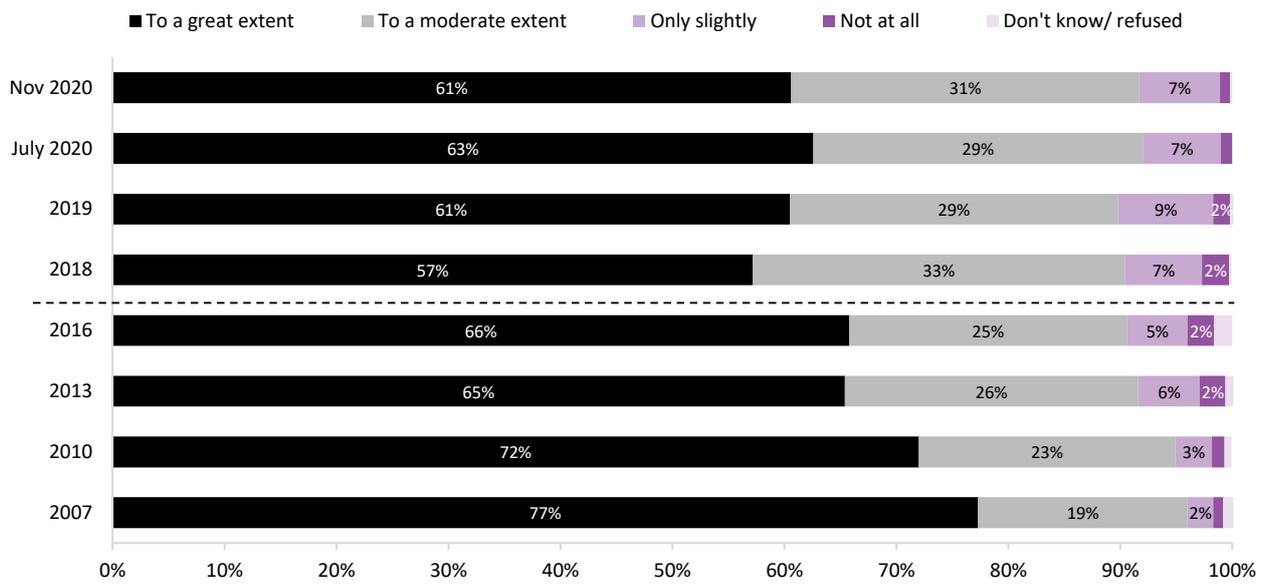


Figure 12: 'To what extent do you have a sense of belonging in Australia?', 2007-16 (RDD), 2018-20 (LinA)



Dotted line indicates change in survey mode

SMI 2: SENSE OF WORTH

There has been significant change in 2020 in indication of financial satisfaction, which increased significantly, while sense of happiness is close to the level in 2018 and 2019.

Financial satisfaction ('very satisfied' and 'satisfied'): 62% in 2018, 64% in 2019, and substantially higher 74% in July 2020 and 72% in November.

Happiness over the last year: ('very happy' and 'happy'), 79% in July and November 2020, 80% in 2019, 78% in 2018. The proportion indicating the strongest level, 'very happy', has declined marginally from 14% in 2018, 13% 2019, to 11% in July and 10% in November 2020. Unhappiness ('unhappy' and 'very unhappy') was indicated by 20% in both July and November 2020, 19% in 2019, and 22% in 2018.

Figure 13: Happiness over the last 12 months and present financial satisfaction, 2018-2020 (LinA)

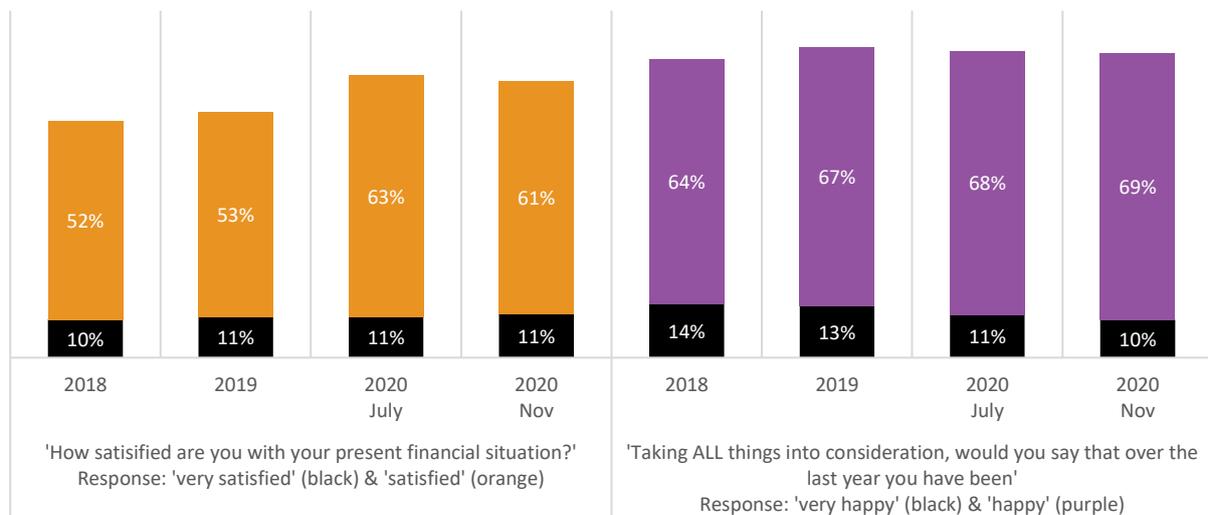
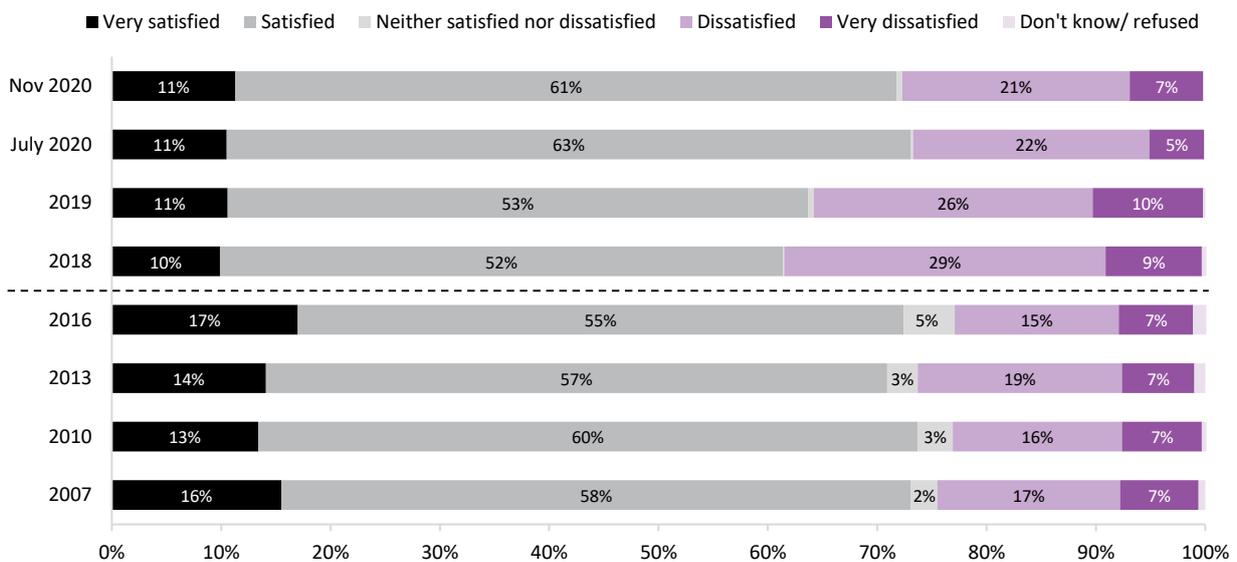


Figure 14: 'How satisfied are you with your present financial situation?', 2007-16 (RDD), 2018-20 (LinA)



Dotted line indicates change in survey mode

SMI 3: SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

The domain of **social justice and equity** registered a **significant increase between 2019 and July 2020, from 92.6 to 112 index points, and was at 110.5 in November.**

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 decreased from 21% in 2019 to 19% in 2018 and was at the same level in 2020. The proportion indicating agreement (‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’) was at 71% in 2018 and 2019, marginally higher 74% in July and at 72% in November 2020. The level of disagreement (‘strongly disagree’ or ‘disagree’) was at 29% in 2018 and 2019, marginally lower 26% in July and 27% in November 2020.

In response to the proposition that **‘in Australia today, the gap between those with high incomes and those with low incomes is too large’**, aggregated opinion was little changed. Agreement (‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’) was at 80% in 2018, marginally lower 78% in 2019 and 76% in July, 78% in November 2020. However, **the level of ‘strong agreement’ declined significantly** from 36% in 2018 to 31% in 2019 and 27% in July 2020, a decline of 9 percentage points. It rose to 35% in November.

Response to the proposition that **‘people living on low incomes in Australia receive enough financial support from the government’** obtained the **largest change** in the domain in 2020. Disagreement (‘strongly disagree’ or ‘disagree’) was at 55% in 2018, 59% in 2019, and at a **significantly lower 45% in July** and 50% in November 2020. The major change occurred at the disagree level, which decreased from 44% in 2019 to 34% in July and 35% in November 2020.

The fourth item in the domain measures trust in government. 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 were not matched or exceeded until 2020.**

Trust in government ‘almost always’ or ‘most of the time’ was at 28% in 2018, 36% in 2019, and **a much higher 54% in July and 55% in November 2020.** Trust in government ‘almost never’ was indicated by 16% in 2018, 13% in 2019, 6% in July 2020 and 8% in November. (This issue is further discussed on pages 49-51 of the report.)

Figure 15: Social justice and equity, 2018-2020 (LinA)

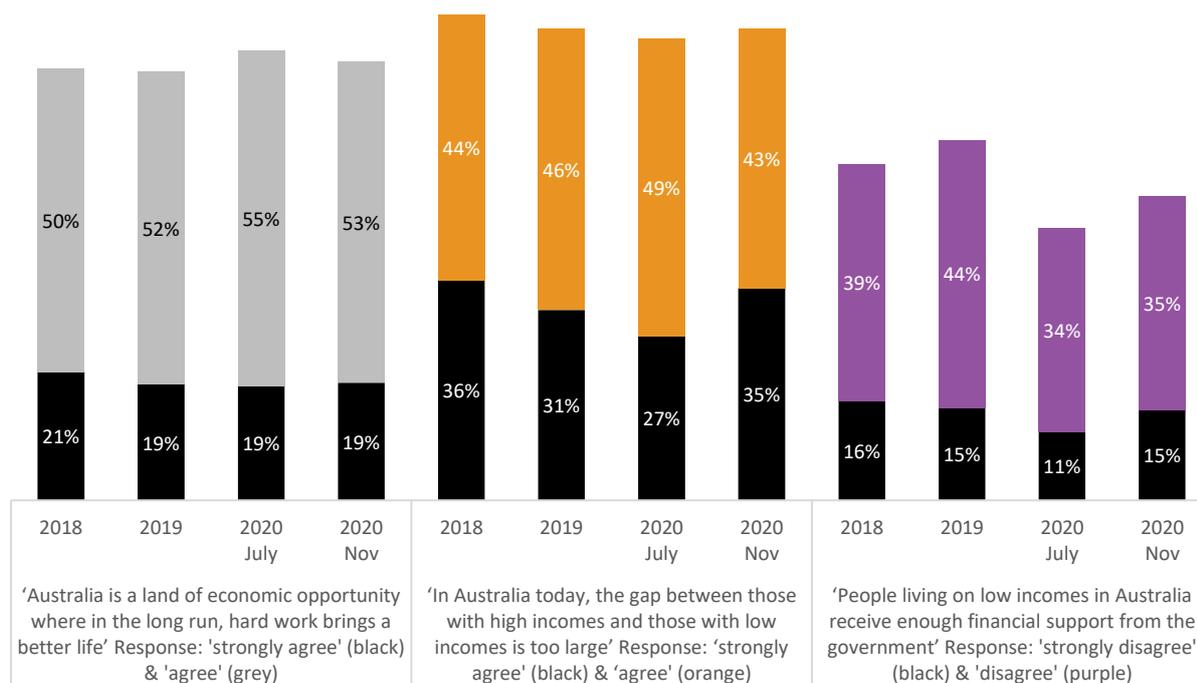
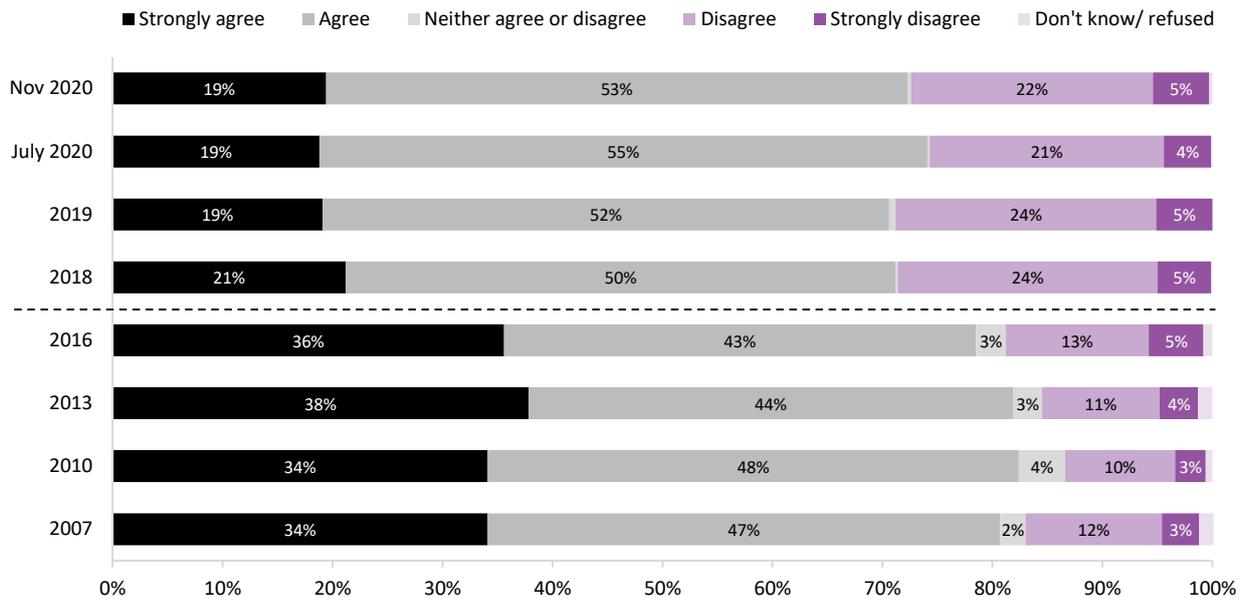
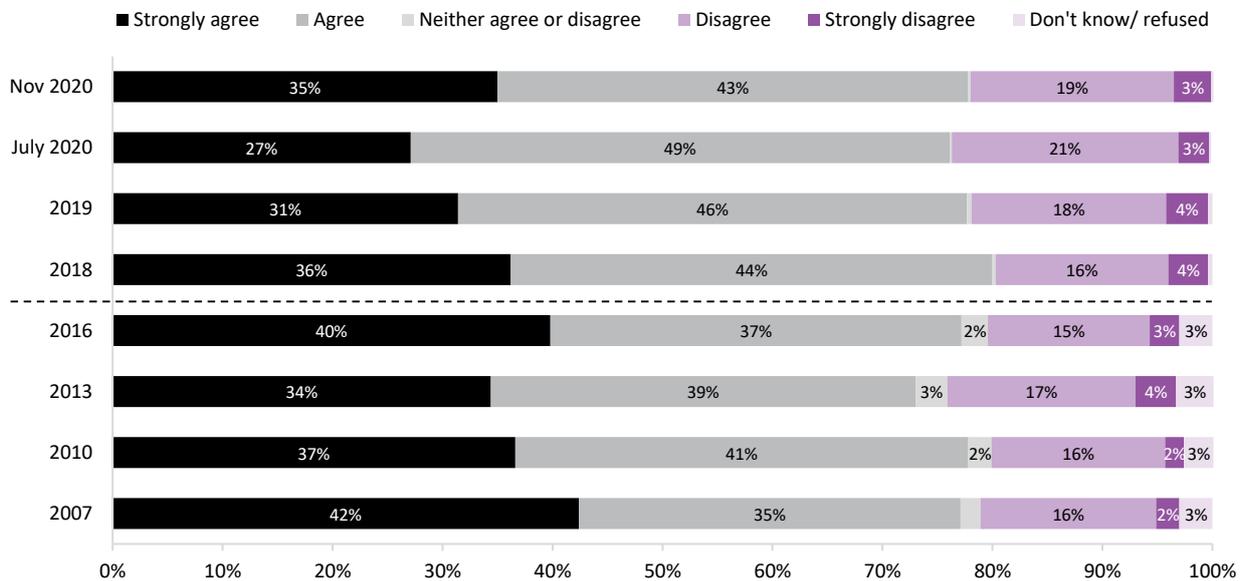


Figure 16: 'Australia is a land of economic opportunity where in the long run, hard work brings a better life', 2007-16 (RDD), 2018-20 (LinA)



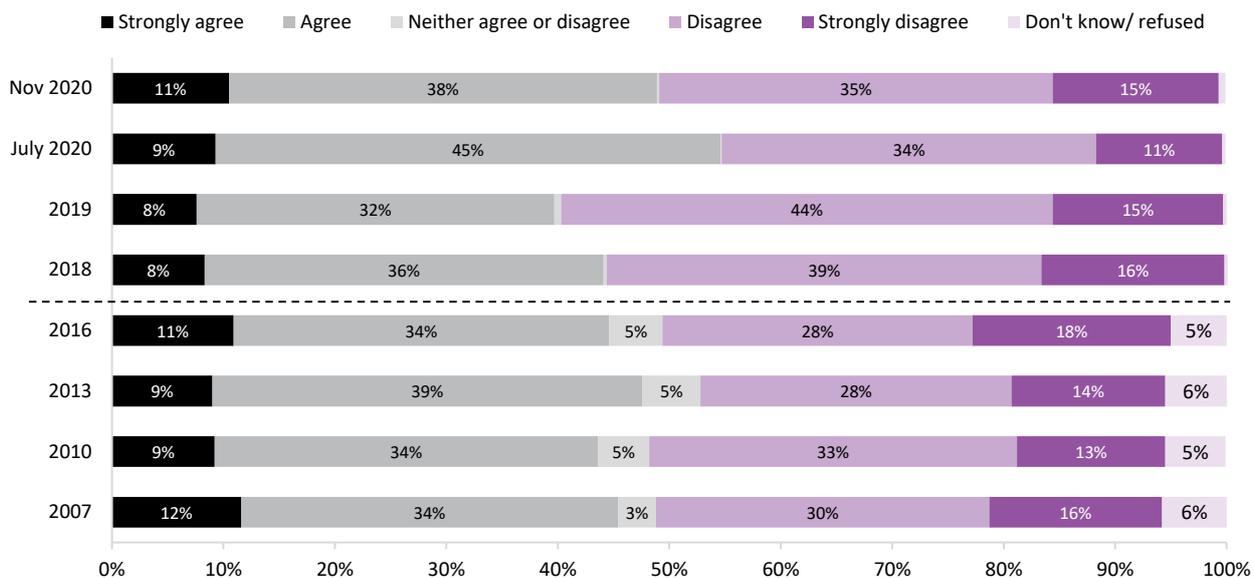
Dotted line indicates change in survey mode

Figure 17: 'In Australia today, the gap between those with high incomes and those with low incomes is too large', 2007-16 (RDD), 2018-20 (LinA)



Dotted line indicates change in survey mode

Figure 18: 'People living on low incomes in Australia receive enough financial support from the government', 2007-16 (RDD), 2018-20 (LinA)



Dotted line indicates change in survey mode

SMI 4: PARTICIPATION

In July 2020, the Index which measures participation in political activities increased to 95.4 index points, from 94.6 in 2018, 93.0 in 2019. In November it was at 93.8.

Comparing the results for 2019 and 2020, the proportion indicating that they had voted in an election over the last three years decreased from 86% to 78%. In other respects, an increase in participation was indicated, with little difference in July and November 2020: signed a petition, 49% in 2019, 55% in 2020; contacted a member of parliament, 18% in 2019, 20% in 2020; participated in a boycott of a product or company, 16% in 2019, 18% in 2020; attended a protest, march or demonstration, unchanged from 9% in 2019. 12% responded 'none of the above', 3 percentage points higher than in 2019.

Four additional forms of political activity were included in the July 2020 survey, to provide a fuller understanding of political involvement.

The findings for the additional questions are that involvement in **online political activity, posting or sharing anything online, is the third most common activity of the nine specified**, indicated by 28%.

Close to one in five (21%) respondents indicated attending a political meeting over the three years, which would include zoom and other forms of online meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic, while 13% had 'got together with others to try to resolve a local problem.' One-in-fifty respondents indicated that they had taken their involvement to the level of standing 'for election to a local or community organisation.' These additional questions in the 2020 survey provide baseline data for tracking involvement in future years

Table 14: 'Which, if any, of the following have you done over the last three years or so?', 2018-20 (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	2018	2019	July 2020	Nov 2020
Voted in an election	77	86	78*	80
Signed a petition	54	49	55*	53
Written or spoken to a federal or state member of parliament	20	18	20	21
Joined a boycott of a product or company	17	16	18	17
Attended a protest, march or demonstration	10	9	9	8
None of the above	13	9	12	13
Posted or shared anything about politics online			28	
Attended a meeting			21	
Got together with others to try to resolve a local problem			13	
Stood for election to a local or community organisation			2	
N (unweighted)	2,260	2,033	3,090	2,793

* Change between 2019 and July 2020 statistically significant at $p < .05$

Figure 19: 'Which, if any, of the following have you done over the last three years or so?', 2018-20 (LinA)

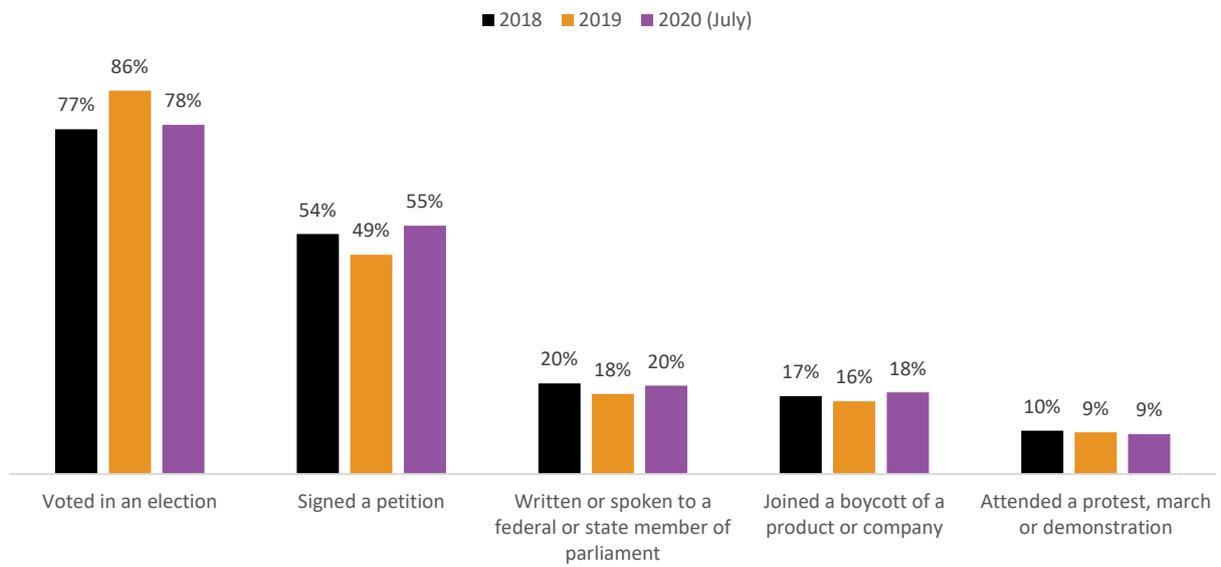


Table 15: 'Which, if any, of the following have you done over the last three years or so?', 2007-19 (percentage, RDD)

RESPONSE	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Voted in an election	85	87	83	89	88	79	82	84	86	82	82	86*
Signed a petition	55	56	54	56	54	45	48	52	48	55	52	53
Written or spoken to a federal or state member of parliament	24	27	25	25	27	23	23	23	23	23	23	24
Joined a boycott of a product or company	12	14	14	18	15	13	13	15	16	20	18	19
Attended a protest, march or demonstration	13	13	9	11	14	10	10	12	11	13	11	10
None of the above	8	7	8	6	6	12	12	9	9	10	12	8
N (unweighted)	2,012	2,019	2,021	2,001	2,000	1,200	1,526	1,501	1,500	2,236	1,500	1,500

SMI 5: ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION

The Index of acceptance and rejection in the RDD survey found significant downward movement between 2009-11, 2012-13, and 2015-16. In 2018 it was at 69 Index points, in 2019, 72 Index points, and **until November 2020 it was the lowest point for the five domains of social cohesion.**

In the LinA survey a lower Index score was obtained, 63 in 2018, 67 in 2019, and an almost identical score in July 2020. **In November, however, there was a significant increase to 86.6, the highest level since 2009.**

Reported experience of discrimination based on 'skin colour, ethnic origin or religion' recorded little change in the last three years: it was at 19% in 2018, 16% in 2019 and 18% in July 2020. **In November, a significantly lower 13% was indicated.** (Experience of discrimination is considered in more detail on pages 84-90.)

Sense of optimism about the future, in response to a question on expectations for 'life in three or four years', increased from 43% in 2018 to 45% in 2019, and further **increased to 48% in July 2020 and 53% in November.**

In response to the proposition that **'ethnic minorities should be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions'**, there has been **an increase in the level of agreement**, up from 30% in both 2018 and 2019 to 35%-36% in 2020, although agreement is still indicated by a minority.

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

Agreement ('strongly agree' or 'agree') with the proposition that **'accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger'** also recorded **positive movement**, up from 63% in 2018, 67% in 2019, to 71% in July 2020 and 74% in November.

The combined percentage of those who 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with the proposition is at 28% in July 2020 and 25% in November, significantly lower than 36% in 2018 and 32% in 2019.

Figure 20: Domain of Acceptance/Rejection, 2007-2019 RDD (dotted line), 2018-2020 LinA (solid line, Index points)

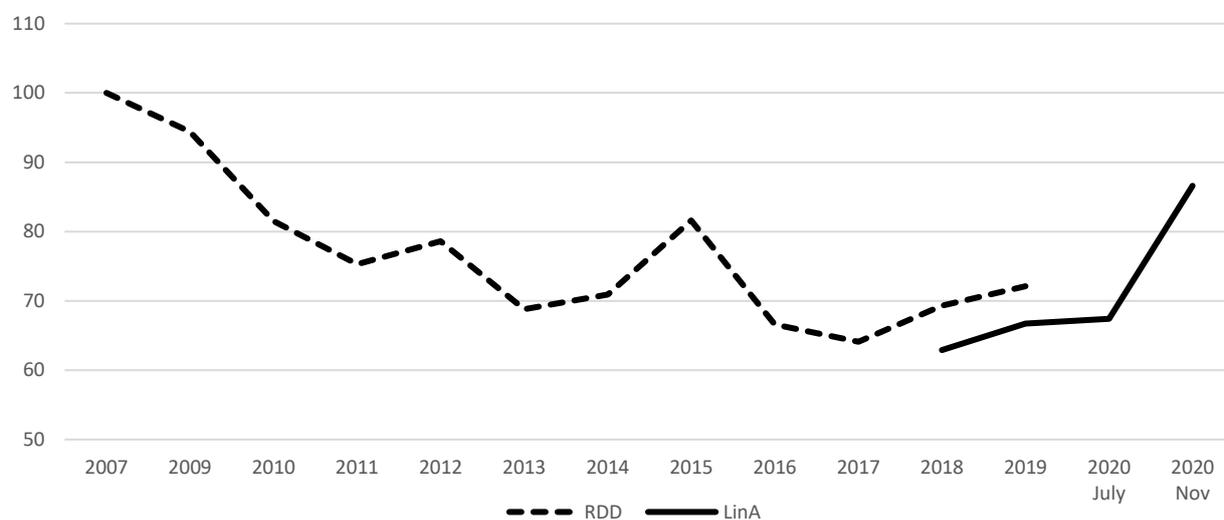


Table 16: 'In three or four years, do you think that your life in Australia will be...?', 2018-20 (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	2018	2019	July 2020	Nov 2020
Much improved	11	10	12	11
A little improved	32	36	36	42**
Sub-total improved	43	45	48	53**
The same as now	37	35	30*	33
A little worse	14	15	18	11**
Much worse	4	4	4	3
Sub-total worse	18	19	22	14**
N (unweighted)	2,260	2,033	3,090	2,793

* Change between 2019 and July 2020 statistically significant at p<.05

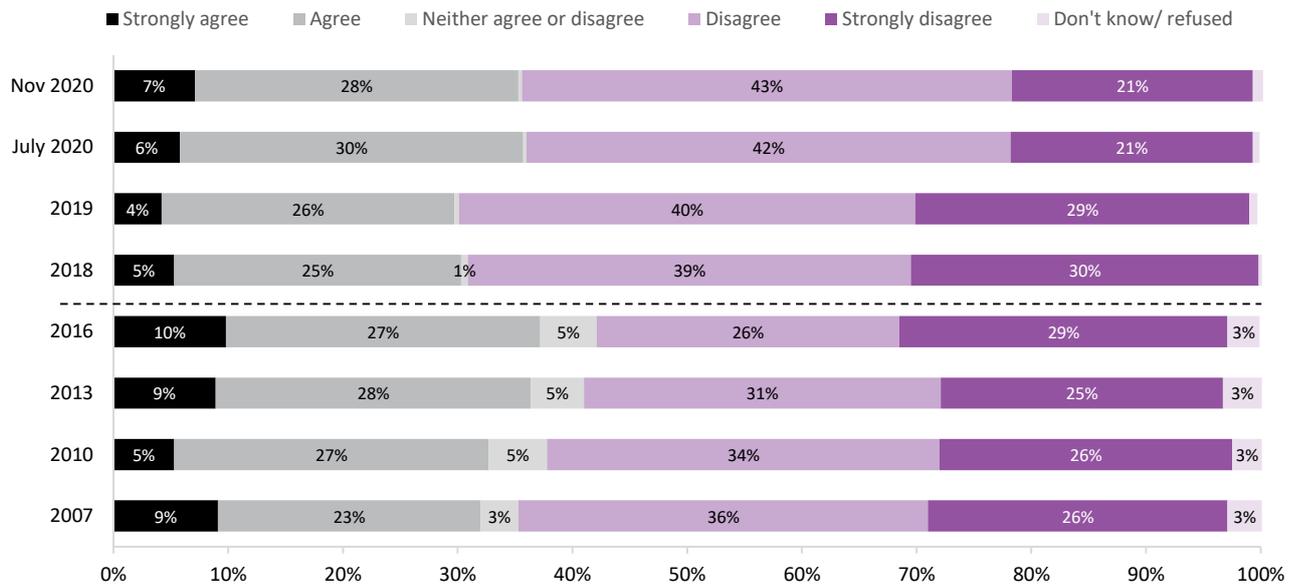
** Change between July and December 2020 statistically significant at p<.05

Table 17: 'In three or four years, do you think that your life in Australia will be...?', 2007-19 (percentage, RDD)

RESPONSE	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Much improved	24	21	18	18	16	19	16	19	17	18	20	17
A little improved	25	28	27	28	29	30	27	28	25	27	28	31
Sub-total improved	49	49	45	45	45	48	43	46	42	45	48	48
The same as now	35	33	37	33	32	31	33	36	36	31	35	34
A little worse	9	10	10	13	14	13	15	13	13	14	10	10
Much worse	2	2	3	5	4	4	4	2	5	5	5	4
Sub-total worse	11	12	13	17	19	17	19	15	18	19	14	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	1,500

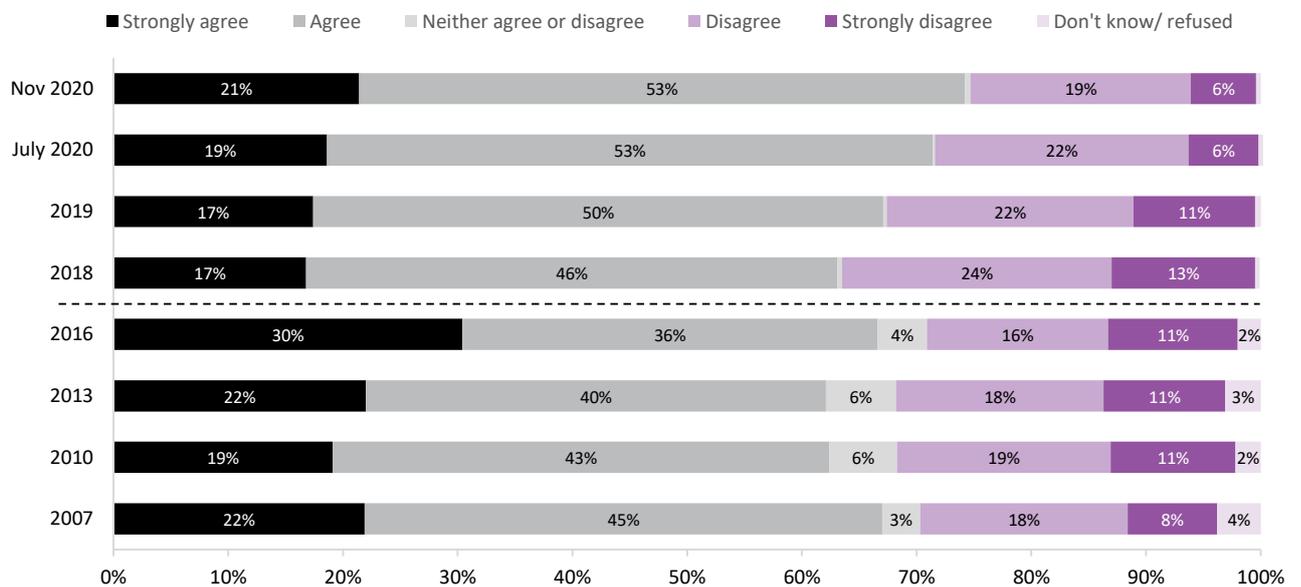
Subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

Figure 21: 'Ethnic minorities in Australia should be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions', 2007-16 (RDD), 2018-20 (LinA)



Dotted line indicates change in survey mode

Figure 22: 'Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger', 2007-16 (RDD), 2018-20 (LinA)



Dotted line indicates change in survey mode

LIFE SATISFACTION

Research into the impact of the pandemic on life satisfaction has been undertaken by several organisations and has yielded surprising findings: **a complex picture of heightened concerns, but also stability and positives.** There is evidence of volatility of opinion, with response shaped by the extent to which the pandemic was under control at the time of surveying.

An example of volatility is provided by the fortnightly survey published by The Essential Report, which found that in response to a question that asked, 'To what extent are you concerned about the threat of Covid-19 (coronavirus) in Australia?', those 'very concerned' ranged from 53% in March (with another 35% 'quite concerned') to a low of 28% 'very concerned' in June, rising to 50% in August and down to 28% in November.

Level of concern indicated is also impacted by the focus of the survey and wording of questions.

The Black Dog Institute, an Australian mental health organisation, conducted an online, non-probability survey between 27 March and 7 April. In response to a generally worded question, it found, unsurprisingly, that very few respondents indicated that 'since the outbreak, my mental health has ... improved' ('a little better', 'a lot better') – just 4%. Mental health 'unchanged' was indicated by 18%, while the largest proportion, 55%, indicated 'a little worse', and 23% 'a lot worse'.⁷

In Victoria, VicHealth conducted surveys in late May-early June and in September. At the time of the first survey the state (and the country) was emerging from lockdown, at the time of the second Victoria was in the midst of a second and more severe lockdown. Some significant shifts of opinion were recorded, although VicHealth was only able to draw on limited pre-pandemic survey data to enable benchmarking of the findings.⁸

In the VicHealth survey life satisfaction was rated on a scale from 0 to 10. The reported findings were that 'low to medium' level of life satisfaction (0 to 6 on the scale) was indicated by 49% of respondents in the first survey and 53% in the second, much higher than the 20.5% obtained in an earlier survey conducted in 2017. 'Low' and 'medium' level findings were not disaggregated in the report, so it is not possible to determine shifts at the two levels.

Subjective Wellbeing, rated out of 100, was at 65 in the first survey and 62 in the second, substantially lower than in a 2015 survey which obtained 77.

But in response to a number of other issues considered, change in 2020 was within a narrow range. **High psychological distress** was at 16% in the first 2020 survey and 17% in the second, compared with 15.4% in a pre-pandemic survey. **Alcohol consumption at the level of risk of short-term harm** was at 11% pre-pandemic, 11% and a lower 7% in the two 2020 surveys.

Financial hardship, with no pre-pandemic reference data, was indicated by 24% in the first survey, a lower 18% in the second. Indication by respondents that they **had run out of food** was at 4% pre-pandemic, 7% in the first 2020 survey and a lower 5% in the second.

Professors Nicholas Biddle and Matthew Gray and their colleagues at the Australian National University Centre for Social Research and Methods have been tracking the impact of the pandemic in a series of surveys, utilising the Social Research Centre's Life in Australia panel. **In their measure of life satisfaction, also rated on a scale from 0 to 10, their January national survey recorded satisfaction close to 7 and it remained in the range 6.6 - 7 during the year;** in August it was at 6.85, in October at 6.79, close to the January level.

In Victoria during the second lockdown, life satisfaction was at a lower 6.08 in August, 6.31 in October.⁹

⁷ Newby J., O'Moore K., Tang S., Christensen H., Faasse K., 'Acute mental health responses during the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia', *PLoS ONE*, 2020, 15(7)

⁸ VicHealth, 'Coronavirus Victorian Wellbeing Impact Study, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne', 2000; VicHealth, 'Coronavirus Victorian Wellbeing Impact Study: Follow-up survey', Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne, 2000

⁹ Nicholas Biddle, et al., 'Tracking outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic', August and October 2020, ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods

The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index, which has been conducted by Deakin University researchers, is able to provide comprehensive annual reference data from its beginning twenty years ago. The Index is based on a rigorous probability sample of 2000 respondents, administered by telephone. In 2020 it was administered between 17 April and 19 May.

In a result that was described as unexpected, its findings were either within the normal range or more positive than obtained in earlier surveys. Deakin University researcher Associate Professor Delyse Hutchinson commented that **'we really did expect to see a drop in wellbeing this year and we didn't find that at all.'**¹⁰

The Personal Wellbeing Score in 2020 registered 76.45 out of 100, higher than 74.36 in 2019 and the average (75.39) over the past 20 years.

In six Subjective Wellbeing domains – standard of living, personal health, relationships, safety, community connectedness, and future security – results in 2020 were more positive than in 2019, with **standard of living and personal safety at the highest level since the survey began in 2000.**

In response to an open-ended question included in the survey some positive experiences were noted, including greater work-life balance, more quality time with family, living more simply, having greater empathy for others, and more appreciation of quality of life.¹¹

In the Scanlon Foundation survey, two questions provided direct indication of the impact of the pandemic on life satisfaction:

- 'Taking all things into consideration, would you say that over the last year you have been ... (happy/unhappy)'
- 'How satisfied are you with your present financial situation?'

The finding of the July and November 2020 surveys is that there has been only marginal change in indication of happiness. In 2018, 78% of respondents indicated that they were 'very happy' or 'happy', in 2019, 81%, and in 2020, 80% and 79%.

With regard to financial satisfaction, there has been no change in proportion indicating that they are 'very satisfied', consistent in the range 10%-11%, but increase in the proportion 'satisfied', up from 52%-53% in 2018-19 to 63% and 61% in 2020. The combined 'dissatisfied' and 'very dissatisfied' is down significantly, from 36% in 2019 to 27% and 28% in 2020.

Statistical analysis of survey questions was undertaken to determine which questions best predicted level of happiness and financial satisfaction. Factor analysis identified eight questions.

As to be expected, three of the questions were directly related to financial circumstances:

- 'Which of the following terms best describes your financial circumstances today?'
- 'How worried are you that you will lose your job in the next year or so?' (asked of respondents in employment)
- 'Which one of these best describes your employment situation?'

¹⁰ Jewel Topsfield, 'The COVID 'reset', *The Age*, 14 Dec. 2020

¹¹ Khor, S et al., Australian Unity Wellbeing Index – Report 37: Subjective wellbeing during COVID-19, 2020, School of Psychology, Deakin University

Table 18: ‘Taking all things into consideration, would you say that over the last year you have been ... (happy/ unhappy)’ 2018-20 (percentage, LinA)

	Very happy	Happy	Sub-total: happy	Unhappy	Very unhappy	Sub-total: unhappy
2018	14	64	78	19	3	22
2019	13	67	81	16	3	19
2020 July	11	68	80	17	3	20
2020 Nov	10	69	79	17	3	20

Table 19: ‘How satisfied are you with your present financial situation?’ 2018-20 (percentage, LinA)

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Sub-total: satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Sub-total: dissatisfied
2018	10	52	61	29	9	38
2019	11	53	64	26	10	36
2020 July	11	63*	73*	22*	5*	27*
2020 Nov	11	61	72	21	7**	28

* Change between 2019 and July 2020 statistically significant at p<.05

** Change between July and December 2020 statistically significant at p<.05

The 2020 survey found a **fall in full-time employment, from 44% in 2019 to 39% in July and 38% in November; with full-time and part-time combined, the fall was from 60% to 57% (in both July and November)**, although this question does not capture the loss in hours worked, which was indicated by close to 20% of respondents in July and 16% in November.

The survey also found an **increase in the proportion in employment who are worried they will lose their job**, at a marginal level from 16% in 2019 to 18% in July 2020. This proportion was reduced to 12% in November.

Other questions obtained a decrease in the proportion of negative responses. Thus, consistent with the increase in the proportion satisfied with their present financial situation, the proportion indicating financial difficulty, so that their financial circumstances are **‘struggling’ or ‘poor’, has decreased from 12% in 2019 to 8% in July and November 2020.**

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 proportion indicating disagreement declined marginally, from 29% to 26%-27%.

The remaining four questions relate to conditions of life in the respondent’s neighbourhood, trust in government, sense of belonging in Australia, and future expectations.

Consistent with the decline in negative response, when asked if ‘living in your local area is becoming better or worse’, 16% in July and 12% in November indicated that it was worse, down from 20% in 2019.

The proportion of respondents indicating **lack of trust in government ‘to do the right thing for the Australian people’ was markedly lower in 2020, down from 63% in 2019 to 44%-46% in 2020.**

Lack of belonging in Australia was indicated by less than one-in-ten respondents, marginally lower at 8% in 2020 compared with 10% in 2019.

Finally, **pessimism ‘about Australia’s future’ was down from 36% in 2019 to 29% in July 2020 and significantly lower 24% in November.**

Consideration of **positive response finds that in 2020, over 70% of respondents were optimistic about Australia’s future, 84% in July and 88% in November indicated that in their local area conditions of life were better or unchanged, and 92% indicated sense of belonging in Australia to a ‘great’ or ‘moderate’ extent.**

At 54%-56%, a lower proportion indicated trust in government, but comparison with surveys since 2007 finds that 2020 was the first time that a majority indicated trust.

Table 20: Life satisfaction, selected questions, 2018-20 (LinA)

SURVEY QUESTION	RESPONSE	2018	2019	July 2020	Nov 2020
'Which of the following terms best describes your financial circumstances today?'	(i) 'Struggling', 'poor'				
	(ii) 'Just getting along'	12	12	8*	8
	(iii) 'Prosperous',	30	26	27	25
	'Very comfortable', 'Reasonably comfortable'	57	61	65*	67
'How worried are you that you will lose your job in the next year or so? (Those who have job)	'Very worried', 'Worried'	16	16	18	12**
'Which one of these best describes your employment situation?'	Employed, full-time, part-time	60	60	57	57
'Australia is a land of economic opportunity where in the long run, hard work brings a better life.'	'Strongly disagree', 'Disagree'	29	29	26	27
'Would you say that living in your local area is becoming better or worse, or is it unchanged?'	'Much worse', 'Worse'	22	20	16*	12**
'How often do you think the government in Canberra can be trusted to do the right thing for the Australian people?'	'Only some of the time', 'Almost never'	72	63	46*	44
'And to what extent do you have a sense of belonging in Australia?'	'Not at all', 'Only slightly'	9	10	8	8
'In general, are you optimistic or pessimistic about Australia's future?'	'Very pessimistic', 'Pessimistic'	31	36	29*	24**

* Change between 2019 and July 2020 statistically significant at p<.05

** Change between July and December 2020 statistically significant at p<.05

With regard to level of happiness and future outlook, variation across the population was considered for eight variables: gender, state, region of residence, age, educational qualification, financial status, intended vote, and birthplace. Results obtained in 2020 were compared with aggregated results for 2018-19.

As has been noted, indication of happiness was in large measure consistent with results obtained in the previous two years. Analysis by sub-categories found that when 2020 was compared with 2018-19, results were within three percentage points in 24 of the 33 sub-categories; difference above 3 percentage points was indicated only by those whose financial status was 'just getting along' (34% in 2020, 26% in 2018-19), those of non-English speaking background (23%, 16%), and those aged 75 or over, but at a very low proportion (9%, 5%).

The highest level of unhappiness was indicated by those whose financial status was indicated to be 'struggling to pay bills' or 'poor' (53%) and 'just getting along' (34%). The lowest levels were indicated by those with more affluent financial status (9% 'prosperous', 'very comfortable'; 11% 'reasonably comfortable') and those over the age of 65 (12% aged 65-74, 9% over 75).

With regard to future outlook, as noted pessimism about Australia's future was lower in 2020 (down from 36% in 2019 to 29% in 2020). Within 20 of the 33 sub-categories, pessimism is lower by at least 3 percentage points; in no sub-categories is it higher by 3 percentage points.

Level of pessimism is highest amongst supporters of One Nation (51% 2020, 63% 2018-19) and Greens (41%, 46%), those aged 18-24 (41%, 40%), those 'struggling to pay bills' or 'poor' (40%, 54%), or 'just getting along' (38%, 36%). Pessimism is below 20% only among Liberal/ National supporters (18%, 24%) and residents of Western Australia (18%, 23%).

Table 21: 'Taking ALL things into consideration, would you say that over the last year YOU have been...' Response: 'unhappy' or 'very unhappy', 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

Gender	Female	Male					
		20 (18)	20 (22)				
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	18 (20)	21 (21)	16 (22)	13 (13)	25 (20)		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	21 (21)	17 (19)					
Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	23 (35)	25 (24)	24 (23)	17 (19)	21 (20)	12 (9)	9 (5)
Highest completed education	Postgraduate degree	Bachelor degree	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11	
	20 (19)	17 (18)	20 (20)	16 (18)	22 (22)	20 (23)	
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	9 (5)	11 (11)	34 (26)	53 (56)			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	22 (25)	14 (12)	24 (29)	25 (29)			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	20 (22)	16 (17)	23 (16)				

Table 22: 'In general, are you optimistic or pessimistic about Australia's future?' Response: 'pessimistic' or 'very pessimistic' 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

Gender	Female	Male					
		27 (34)	30 (33)				
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	33 (32)	27 (34)	18 (23)	23 (27)	33 (41)		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	29 (32)	28 (35)					
Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	41 (40)	28 (31)	30 (36)	26 (32)	28 (36)	26 (33)	22 (23)
Highest completed education	Postgraduate degree	Bachelor degree	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11	
	30 (29)	28 (31)	29 (32)	25 (33)	33 (38)	26 (35)	
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	22 (23)	25 (29)	38 (36)	40 (54)			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	31 (36)	18 (24)	41 (46)	51 (63)			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	30 (36)	26 (31)	25 (26)				

DEMOCRACY

Politics in a number of western countries are characterised by rising nationalism and disenchantment with democracy. Newspaper headlines capture the mood: 'democracy under threat', '... under attack', '...undermined', '... a crisis of legitimacy'; 'the United States no longer provides a model of democracy ...'

The Centre for the Future of Democracy at the University of Cambridge has undertaken a study of global satisfaction with democracy, utilising a dataset combining 3,500 surveys with a total of 4 million respondents from the Americas, Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia, and Australasia.¹²

In 1995 the level of dissatisfaction with democracy was at 47.7%; this fell to 38.7% in 2005, which was the low point for global dissatisfaction, but since that time dissatisfaction rose by nearly 20 percentage points to 57.5% prior to the outbreak of the pandemic.

The pattern of increased dissatisfaction is not uniform, as many small, high income countries have seen increase in satisfaction, also much of Asia has avoided the trend.

Dissatisfaction has been particularly marked in the English-speaking democracies, impacted by financial crises, foreign policy failures, lack of responsiveness to public concern, corruption in public life, and the rise of populism, both a cause and a symptom of dissatisfaction. Since 1995, dissatisfaction has increased by 34 percentage points in the United States, 19 percentage points in Australia, 18 percentage points in Britain, and 10 percentage points in Canada. In contrast, dissatisfaction declined in New Zealand.

The authors comment:

Across the globe, democracy is in a state of deep malaise. In the West, growing political polarisation, economic frustration, and the rise of populist parties, have eroded the promise of democratic institutions to offer governance that is not only popularly supported, but also stable and effective. ... If confidence in democracy has been slipping, then the most likely explanation is that democratically elected governments have not been seen to succeed in addressing some of the major challenges of our era.¹³

Similar findings have been reported by other international research projects. A 2019 Pew Research Centre survey, released in February 2020, reported that across 34 countries a majority of 52% of respondents were dissatisfied with the working of democracy, including 69% in the United Kingdom, 64% in Russia, 58% in France, 57% in the United States, and lower 41% in Australia and 33% in Canada.¹⁵

Surveys conducted in 2020 have found particularly high levels of dissatisfaction in the United States. A Gallup Poll in July 2020 asked American respondents if they were 'satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in the United States at this time?' Just 13% were satisfied, 86% dissatisfied.¹⁶

A Hill-HarrisX poll, conducted 19-22 October 2020, reported that 69% of respondents did not agree that democracy in the United States was working the way it was designed. A poll in the same month conducted by the NORC Centre for Public Affairs Research obtained the finding that only 15% of registered voters agreed that their democracy was working 'extremely well' or 'very well.'¹⁷

In Australia, the 2019 Australian Election Study conducted by researchers at the Australian National University found that public trust in governments was at its lowest point in 40 years, although it remained high by international standards, with similar findings to those reported by the Pew Research Centre.

The Australian Election Study survey asks, 'On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Australia?' In 2019, 41% were not satisfied, up from 14% in 2007.

With regard to government, respondents were asked, 'In general, do you feel that the people in government are too often interested in looking after themselves, or do you feel that they can be trusted to do the right thing nearly all the time?' Just 25% indicated trust in 2019, a decline of 18% (from 43%) in 2007.

¹² R.S. Foa, Klassen, A., Slade, M., Rand, A. and R. Collins. 2020, 'The Global Satisfaction with Democracy Report 2020', Cambridge, United Kingdom: Centre for the Future of Democracy.

¹³ Foa et al., 'The Global Satisfaction with Democracy Report 2020', pp. 3, 42

¹⁵ Richard Wike and Shannon Schumacher, 'Satisfaction with democracy', Pew Research Centre, 27 Feb. 2020

¹⁶ Gallup, News, In depth: Topics A to Z, 'Satisfaction with the United States'

¹⁷ The Hill, The Poll: Two-thirds of US voters say democracy needs to be fixed, 29 Oct. 2020; AP News, Steve Peoples and Hannah Fingerhut, 'AP-NORC poll, Voters see the nation as fundamentally divided', 16 Oct. 2020

The lead researcher, Professor Ian McAllister, commented that 'I've been studying elections for 40 years, and never have I seen such poor returns for public trust in and satisfaction with democratic institutions. ... **Winning back the people's trust and satisfaction would appear to be one of the most pressing and urgent challenges** facing our political leaders and institutions.'¹⁴

On the strength of the Scanlon Foundation surveys, in 2020 Australian government have to a large extent won back trust and satisfaction.

The key to positive findings that characterise the 2020 surveys is the level of satisfaction with government. **The response to a range of questions indicates a widely held view that effective leadership is being provided in the time of crisis**, including the level of financial support to many impacted by the loss of employment. There is a substantial increase in the proportion of respondents who indicate trust in government and who endorse the view that government is working well.

Table 23: Australian democracy and government, selected questions, Australian Election Study (percentage)

	The way democracy works in Australia – not satisfied	People in government can be trusted - agree	People in government look after themselves - agree
2007	14	43	57
2010	28	37	63
2013	28	34	66
2016	40	26	74
2019	41	25	75

Source: Sarah Cameron and Ian McAllister, 'The 2019 Australian Federal Election. Results from the Australian Election Study', Canberra: The Australian National University, December 2019, p. 15

¹⁴ Stephanie Dalzell, 'Public trust in governments is at an all-time low, Australian National University finds', ABC News, 9 Dec. 2019

TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

The Scanlon Foundation surveys provide annual tracking of trust in the Australian government since 2007. Over the course of the twelve surveys **the greatest change in the level of trust occurred between 2009-10**, the period of the Rudd and Gillard governments. In the decade to 2020, the survey recorded **a consistently low level of trust in government.**

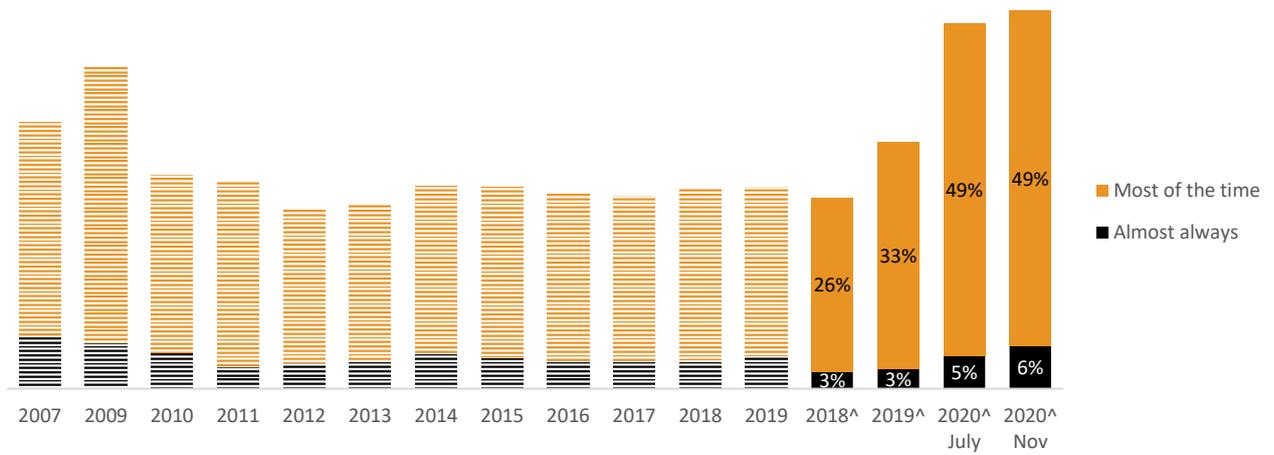
The Scanlon Foundation survey asks: **'How often do you think the government in Canberra can be trusted to do the right thing for the Australian people?'** Respondents are presented with four options: 'almost always', 'most of the time', 'only some of the time', and 'almost never.'

In 2007, the last year of the Howard government, 39% of respondents indicated the first or second response, 'almost always' or 'most of the time'.

In 2009, at the peak of popularity of the Rudd Labor government, trust in 'government to do the right thing' 'almost always' or 'most of the time' reached 48%. Indicating a widespread perception that Labor had failed to deliver on its promises, **trust collapsed to 31% in 2010 and further declined to 26% in 2012**, representing a fall of 22% since 2009. Trust remained in the range 26%-31% between 2013 and 2019 in the RDD version of the survey. In 2018 in the LinA version of the survey, trust was at 28%, in 2019 at 36%.

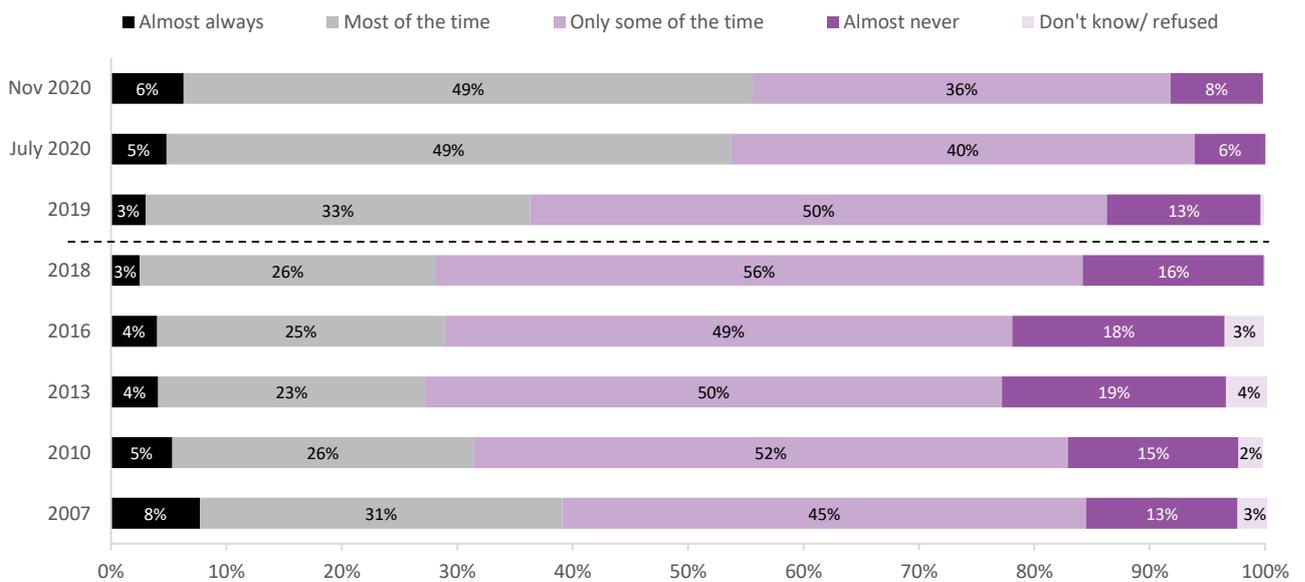
In 2020, in the context of the pandemic, trust rose to 54%, the highest proportion recorded in the surveys.

Figure 23: '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', 2007-19 (RDD), 2018-19 (LinA)



[^] denotes LinA survey mode

Figure 24: 'How often do you think the government in Canberra can be trusted to do the right thing for the Australian people?', 2007-16 (RDD), 2018-20 (LinA)



Dotted line indicates change in survey mode

In the analysis of sub-groups, results for the July 2020 survey were compared with combined data from the 2018-19 LinA surveys, aggregated to increase reliability, an approach adopted in other sections of this report.

Of the 33 sub-groups analysed, in 2020 trust is above 50% in 24, whereas in 2018-19 no sub-groups indicated trust at that level. In every sub-group trust has increased by at least 10 percentage points, and by more than 20 percentage points in nine.

There is relatively high level of trust among those aged 45-54 (59%), 65-74 (63%), and above 75 (67%); those who described their current financial circumstances as 'prosperous' or 'very comfortable' (64%).

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, a relatively low proportion indicate trust in government among those intending to vote One Nation (31%), Greens (31%), and Labor (43%), in contrast with a substantial majority of those intending to vote Liberal/ National (75%).

Relatively low level of trust is also indicated by those who are 'struggling to pay bills' or 'poor' (38%), are aged 18-24 (40%) and 25-34 (43%).

Table 24: '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', July 2020 LinA, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

Gender	Female	Male					
	54 (31)	53 (33)					
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	54 (32)	55 (32)	63 (40)	56 (28)	49 (26)		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	53 (33)	54 (30)					
Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	40 (30)	43 (29)	52 (33)	59 (33)	56 (30)	63 (31)	67 (41)
Highest completed education	Postgraduate degree	Bachelor degree	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11	
	55 (36)	56 (38)	53 (31)	47 (32)	53 (30)	58 (26)	
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	64 (48)	57 (36)	45 (26)	38 (15)			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	43 (22)	75 (49)	31 (21)	31 (9)			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	52 (30)	56 (29)	57 (38)				

Further indication of confidence in government was provided by a question in the 2020 survey which asked: 'How well is the federal government responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?' In both July and November, a **resounding 85% indicated 'very well' or 'fairly well'**, while only a small minority of 14%-15% indicated a negative assessment, 'fairly badly' or 'very badly.' **The level of trust in some state governments is at an even higher level.**

In July, indication that the state government was responding 'very well' or 'well' was above 90% in three of the smaller states: Western Australia (99%), South Australia (94%), and Queensland (92%); it was at 81% in New South Wales and a lower 65% in Victoria.

In November, the 'very well' or 'well' response was above 90% in Western Australia (98%), South Australia (93%) and New South Wales (92%), lower but still indicated by a large majority in Queensland (85%) and Victoria (78%).

With regard to government-imposed lockdown restrictions, which were a matter of public controversy, in July over 90% of respondents in the five mainland states indicated that they were 'definitely required' (in the range 73%-86%) or 'probably required' (13%-18%). Almost no respondents (0%-2%) indicated that lockdowns were 'definitely not required.' In Victoria, which was the only state to experience a lengthy second lockdown in 2020, 87% of respondents in the November survey agreed that the restrictions were required.

Figure 25: 'In your opinion, how well is the federal government responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?' July 2020 (LinA)

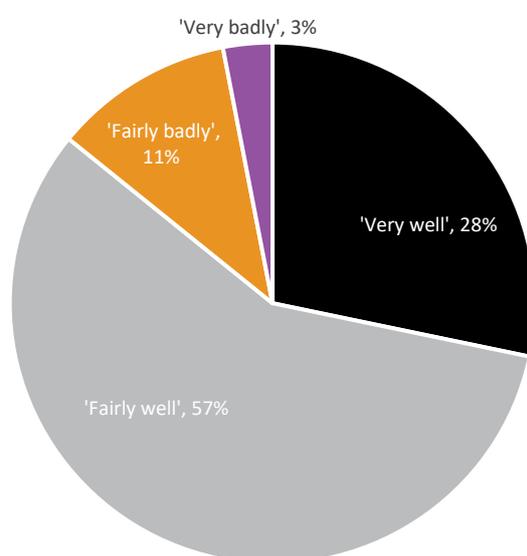


Table 25: 'In your opinion, how well is your state government responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?' (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	Victoria		New South Wales		Queensland		Western Australia		South Australia	
	July	Nov.	July	Nov.	July	Nov.	July	Nov.	July	Nov.
Very well	21	41	26	43	47	50	83	75	61	62
Fairly well	44	37	55	49	45	35	16	23	33	32
Sub-total well	65	78	81	92	92	85	99	98	94	93
Fairly badly	22	11	15	6	6	9	0	2	5	5
Very badly	13	11	4	2	2	6	1	0	1	2
Sub-total badly	35	22	19	8	8	15	1	2	6	7

Subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

Figure 26: In your opinion, how well is your state government responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?' 2020 (LinA)

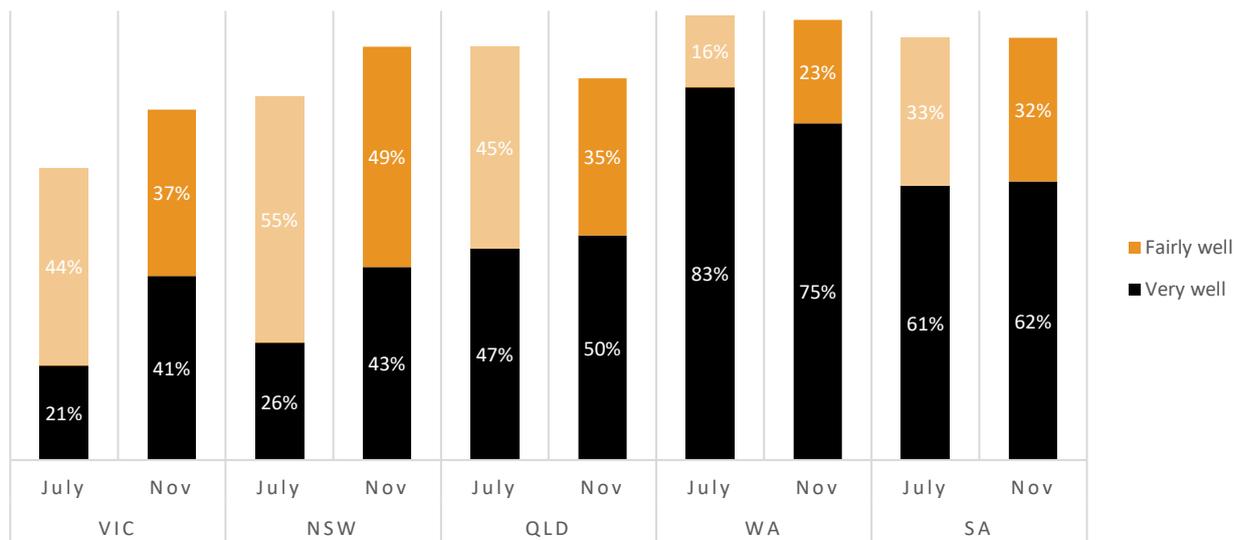


Table 26: 'Do you think that the lockdown restrictions that were imposed in March [and July in Victoria] due to the COVID-19 pandemic were required? July and November 2020 (percentage, LinA)

	VICTORIA		NEW SOUTH WALES	QUEENSLAND	WESTERN AUSTRALIA	SOUTH AUSTRALIA
	July	Nov.				
Definitely required	77	63	82	73	86	85
Probably required	16	24	14	18	13	13
Sub-total	93	87	96	91	98	98
Probably not required	5	7	3	8	2	2
Definitely not required	2	6	1	1	0	1
Sub-total	7	13	4	9	2	3

Subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

Figure 27: 'Do you think that the lockdown restrictions that were imposed in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic were required?' Victorian respondents only July 2020 (LinA, N=793)

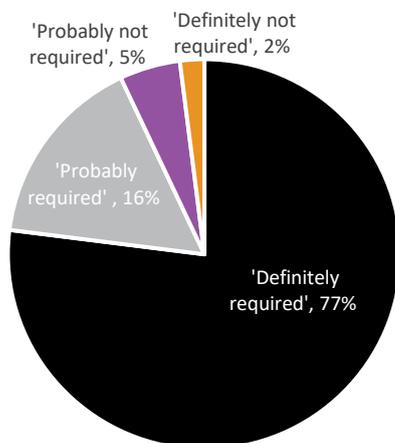
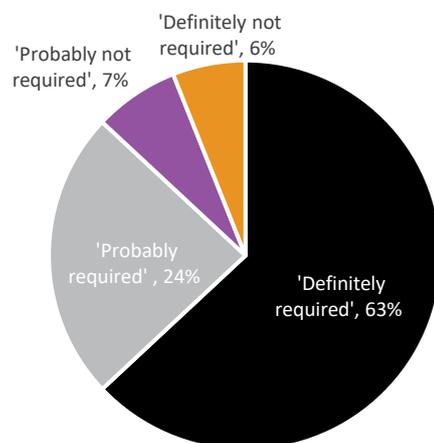


Figure 28: 'Do you think that the lockdown restrictions that were imposed in July due to the COVID-19 pandemic were required?' Victorian respondents only November 2020 (LinA, N=709)



SURVEY FINDINGS COMPARED

The findings of the Scanlon Foundation surveys on views of government response to the pandemic are consistent with other surveys that have been conducted in Australia.

The Lowy Institute poll asked for indication of confidence that the state or federal government ‘is doing a good job responding to the coronavirus outbreak.’ The survey, conducted in April, found that 82% of respondents were ‘very confident’ or ‘somewhat confident’ with the federal government response and 86% with the response of state governments.¹⁸

The fortnightly **Essential Report** poll tracked views on government response to the pandemic. In July, the time of the first Scanlon Foundation survey, just 16%-17% of respondents rated federal government response as ‘very poor’ or ‘quite poor’, in November, 14%.

The **Australian Unity Wellbeing Index**, based on surveying conducted in April-May, includes assessment of government performance. It was rated at 62.45, significantly higher than 48.75 obtained in 2019 and the average of 52.79 over the twenty years that the survey has been conducted.¹⁹

Another indication of views on government performance is provided by the **approval rating of Prime Minister Morrison**, tracked by **Newspoll** for *The Australian*. In January 2020 the Prime Minister’s approval rating was at a record low, 22% net-negative. By April there had been a turn-around of nearly 50 percentage points, to a net-positive rating of 26%. Whereas in February the leader of the Opposition, Anthony Albanese, was seen as the better option for Prime Minister (43% to 38%, 3 February), by April, Scott Morrison was preferred 53% to 29%, a lead that was maintained throughout the year, in November recording 60% to 28%.

International surveying indicates that, as in Australia, populations look for effective government action to limit the spread of infections. Former Prime Minister John Howard has made the point, obvious to many but not to all, that ‘the public, when threatened, want their leaders to defend them against the threat.’²⁰

The **Alliance of Democracies Foundation** survey, conducted in April-June 2020 in 53 countries and with 124,000 respondents, found that in Australia 86% of respondents indicated that their government was responding well to the COVID-19 pandemic. Australia ranked seventh among the 53 countries, rated ‘well’ by 86% of respondents, compared with positive rating of government at 58% in the United Kingdom, 53% in the United States, and 46% in France.²¹

A **Pew Research Centre** survey conducted between June and August in 14 countries, and with a total sample of 14,276, ranked Australia second, with 94% of respondents indicating that the government had ‘done a good job’ in dealing with the pandemic. Denmark was top ranked with 95%, the United States ranked near the bottom with 47% and the United Kingdom with 46% the lowest.²²

Table 27: Positive view of government response to the pandemic, selected countries, international surveys (percentage)

	Alliance of Democracies 20 April – 3 June	Pew Research Centre 10 June – 3 Aug.
Denmark	86	95
Australia	86	94
South Korea	86	86
Canada	84	88
Netherlands	80	87
Germany	71	88
Sweden	69	71
Belgium	60	61
UK	58	46
Italy	53	74
US	53	47
Japan	52	55
Spain	50	54
France	46	59

¹⁸ Natasha Kassam, ‘Understanding Australian Attitudes to the World’, Lowy Institute Poll 2020

¹⁹ Khor, S., Cummins, R.A., Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, M., Capic, T., Jona, C., Olsson, C.A., Hutchinson, D., ‘Australian Unity Wellbeing Index - Report 37: Subjective wellbeing during COVID-19’, 2020, Geelong: Australian Centre on Quality of Life, School of Psychology, Deakin University

²⁰ John Howard quoted in Katina Curtis, ‘Year from hell: nation needs time to heal before hustings begin’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 Dec. 2020

²¹ Alliance of Democracies, Democracy Perception Index DPI 2020

²² Kat Devlin and Aidan Connaughton, ‘Most approve of national response to COVID-19 in 14 advanced economies’, Pew Research Centre, Global Attitudes and Trends, 27 Aug. 2020

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?’

Across the four LinA surveys, concern over quality of government and politicians has declined, from 9% in 2018 to 6% in 2019 and 2% in July 2020; it was at 4% in November. This finding is in contrast with the average of 13% for the years 2010-14 and 9% for 2015-19.

Table 28: ‘What is the most important problem facing Australia today?’ Response: ‘quality of government and politicians’, 2010-19 (RDD), 2018-20 (LinA, percentage)

Survey year	RDD	LinA
2010	11	
2011	13	
2012	13	
2013	13	
2014	15	
2015	9	
2016	11	
2017	10	
2018	10	9
2019	6	6
2020 July		2
2020 November		4

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.

In 2020, a combined 69% in July and 72% in November indicated that the system works fine or needs only minor change, a significant increase from 57% in 2018 and 62% in 2019. A minority of 28%-31% (43% in 2018, 38% in 2019) opted for ‘major change’ or ‘should be replaced’.

Analysis of sub-groups finds that in 2020 support of major change or replacement of the system of government is highest among respondents who indicated that they are ‘struggling to pay bills’ or ‘poor’ (44%) and those intended vote for One Nation (53%) or Greens (47%).

The lowest proportion favouring major change is among those who are supporters of the Liberal/National parties (16%), aged 75 or older (22%), whose self-described financial circumstance is ‘prosperous’ or ‘living very comfortably’ (24%), and residents of South Australia (24%).

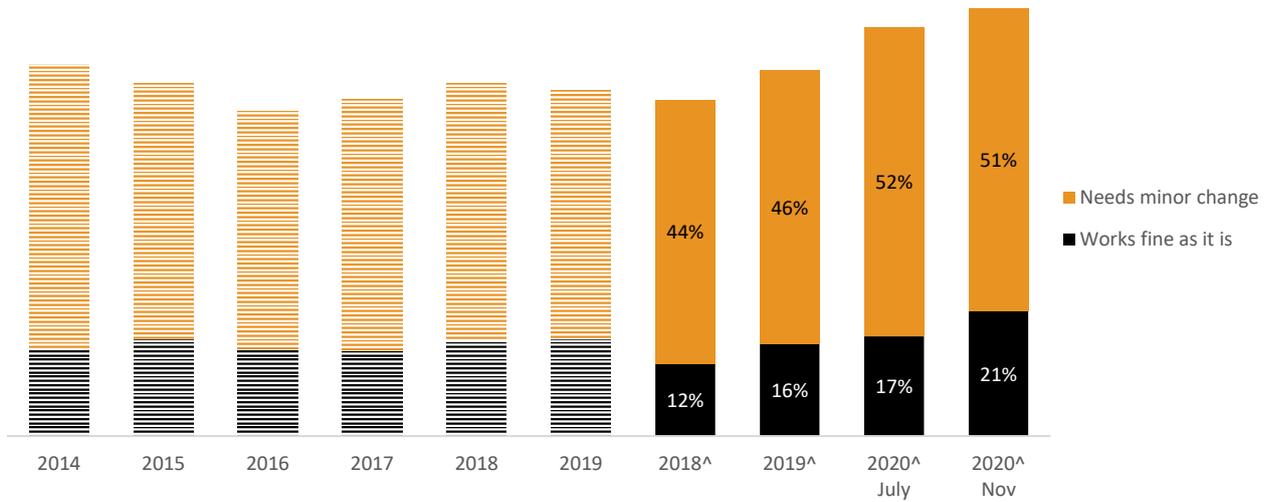
THE NON-DEMOCRATIC OPTION

The extent of support for a non-democratic system was tested by a question that asked if ‘**having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections** would be a good or bad way of governing Australia?’ In the 2018 LinA survey, 25% agreed that having a strong leader would be good, in 2019 22%, and in 2020 a marginally lower 21% in both July and November.

However, when asked if ‘having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections would be good way of governing **during the COVID-19 pandemic,**’ a substantially **higher 38% in July and 33% in November indicated agreement.**

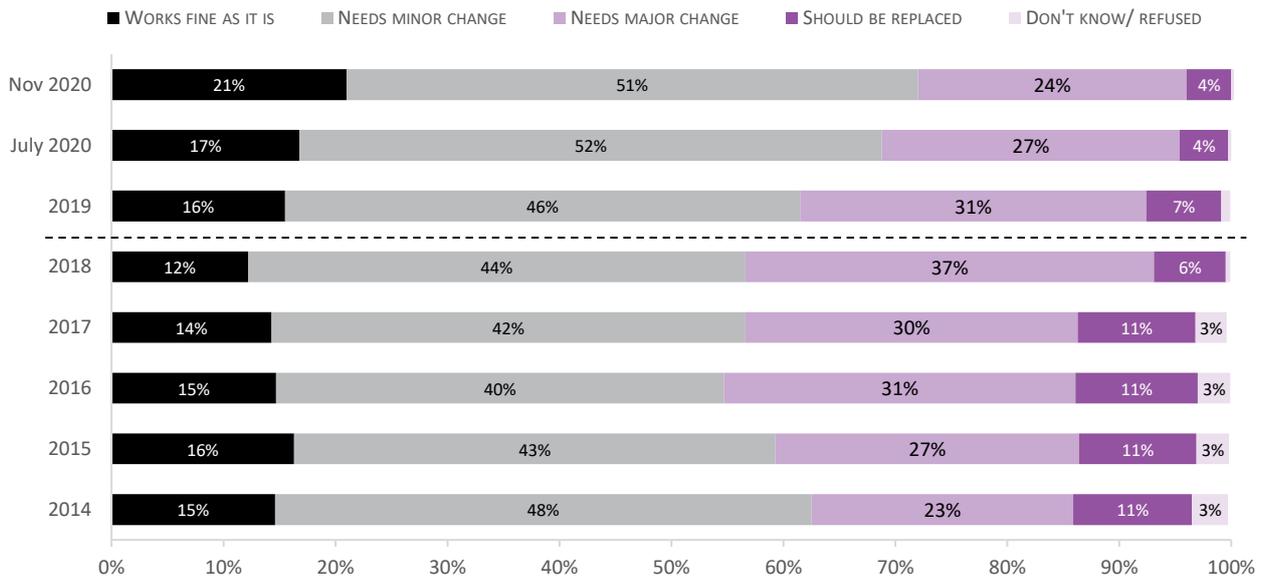
In July, ‘a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections’ was favoured in the highest proportion by 57% of those whose self-described financial status is ‘struggling to pay bills’ or ‘poor’, 54% non-English speaking background, 50% One Nation supporters, 47% aged 25-34, and 44% residents of Western Australia. It was favoured in the lowest proportion by Greens supporters at 21%.

Figure 29: '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?', 2014-19 (RDD), 2018-20 (LinA)



^ denotes LinA survey mode

Figure 30: '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?', 2014-19 (RDD), 2018-20 (LinA)



Dotted line indicates change in survey mode

Table 29: ‘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’, July 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

Gender	Female	Male					
		31 (41)	31 (39)				
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	30 (37)	30 (41)	28 (34)	24 (41)	37 (48)		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	31 (38)	30 (44)					
Age	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65-74	75+
	36 (38)	36 (44)	32 (48)	28 (42)	30 (42)	27 (36)	22 (26)
Highest completed education	Postgraduate degree	Bachelor degree	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprentice	Year 12	Up to Year 11	
	33 (36)	26 (33)	34 (41)	32 (42)	31 (38)	28 (50)	
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	24 (23)	27 (38)	39 (41)	44 (65)			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	35 (44)	16 (24)	47 (52)	53 (73)			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	31 (41)	30 (48)	31 (34)				

Table 30: ‘Would you say that during the COVID-19 pandemic, having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament would be....?’ Response: ‘Very good’, ‘fairly good’, July 2020 (percentage, LinA)

Gender	Female	Male					
		38	38				
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	41	34	44	36	37		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	39	34					
Age	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65-74	75+
	36	47	40	33	35	31	33
Highest completed education	Postgraduate degree	Bachelor degree	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprentice	Year 12	Up to Year 11	
	32	36	35	42	39	42	
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	35	34	41	57			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	36	41	21	50			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	33	35	54				

GLOBALISATION AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Australia's **openness to the world** was considered in a question first included in the 2018 survey and asked again in 2019 and 2020. Respondents are asked if 'growing economic ties between Australia and other countries, sometimes referred to as globalisation', is good or bad for the country. In the LinA version of the survey, in 2020 a **substantial majority, 72% in July and 74% in November, agreed that it was good**, although lower than 75%-76% in 2018-19. In July, 27% and in November, 24%, indicated that it was bad, compared with 22%-23% in the previous two years.

A second question first asked in July 2020 specified trade 'with the rest of the world' and asked if Australia should trade more, about the same or less. Results at a similar level to openness to the world were obtained. **A combined 70% indicated that Australia should trade 'more' (28%) or 'about the same' (42%)**, while a minority (29%) indicated that Australia should trade less.

Sub-group analysis of the result for the globalisation question was undertaken by six demographic and two attitudinal variables, with results obtained in 2020 compared with those in the previous two years. Only minor variation in the proportion with a negative view of globalisation was obtained, in the range 25%-30%, across three of the subgroups: gender, three states, and region.

A relatively high proportion of the view that growing economic ties are bad for Australia is found among One Nation supporters (44%), those whose financial situation is indicated to be 'struggling to pay bills' or 'poor' (44%), and those aged 55-64 (35%). The lowest proportion viewing such ties as bad is found among those aged 18-24 (13%), with a Bachelor's degree (16%) and those whose self-described financial situation is prosperous or very comfortable (16%).

Increased negative response above 7 percentage points over the two time periods was obtained for Queensland residents (23% 2018-19, 31% 2020), those aged 25-34 (17%, 27%), with highest education up to Year 11 (26%, 34%), and with self-described financial status 'struggling to pay bills' or 'poor' (34%, 44%).

Table 31: 'Thinking about the growing economic ties between Australia and other countries, sometimes referred to as globalisation, do you think this is very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad for Australia', 2018-2020 (percentage, RDD and LinA)

RESPONSE	RDD		LinA			
	2018	2019	2018	2019	July 2020	Nov 2020
Very good	21	20	16	12	11	13
Fairly good	51	51	61	62	60	62
Sub-total good	71	71	76	75	72	74
Fairly bad	14	13	18	18	23*	19
Very bad	9	9	4	5	4	5
Sub-total bad	23	22	23	22	27*	24
Don't know/ decline	6	8	1	3	1	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

* Change between 2019 and July 2020 statistically significant at p<.05 ; subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

Table 32: ‘In your opinion, should Australia trade more with the rest of the world, trade about the same, or trade less?’, July 2020 (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	2020
Trade more with the rest of the world (exporting more and importing more)	28
Trade about the same with the rest of the world	42
Trade less with the rest of the world (exporting less and importing less)	29
Don't know/ decline	1
Total	100

Table 33: ‘Thinking about the growing economic ties between Australia and other countries, sometimes referred to as globalisation, do you think this is very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad for Australia’. Response: ‘fairly bad’, ‘very bad’, July 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

Gender	Female	Male					
	26 (21)	28 (24)					
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	25 (22)	26 (21)	25 (22)	30 (29)	31 (23)		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	26 (21)	30 (25)					
Age	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65–74	75+
	13 (16)	27 (17)	28 (25)	31 (25)	35 (29)	27 (22)	23 (19)
Highest completed education	Postgraduate degree	Bachelor degree	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11	
	22 (18)	16 (16)	34 (28)	32 (26)	22 (18)	34 (26)	
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	16 (18)	26 (19)	33 (27)	44 (34)			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	25 (20)	26 (19)	24 (19)	44 (47)			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	30 (25)	24 (20)	21 (18)				

Additional questions considered perception of influence in the Pacific and confidence in major powers to 'follow global trade rules to ensure fair trade.'

From a list of four countries, by a large margin, **respondents expected that China would have 'the most influence in the Pacific region ten years from now': 78% of respondents indicated China**, just 10% the United States, 5% India, and 4% Japan. These findings were almost identical with those obtained in 2019.

When asked 'How much confidence do you have that [country] follows the global trade rules to ensure fair trade?', 94% indicated 'a lot of confidence' or 'some confidence' in New Zealand, 83% in the United Kingdom, 79% Japan, 43% United States, and a substantially lower 12% in China (down from 24% in 2019, when the question was asked in a different form). There was little difference in results obtained in July and November, with the exception of increased proportion indicating confidence in China (12%, 16%) and the United States (43%, 51%).

Table 34: 'Which country do you think will have the most influence in the Pacific region ten years from now?' 2019-20 (percentage, LinA)

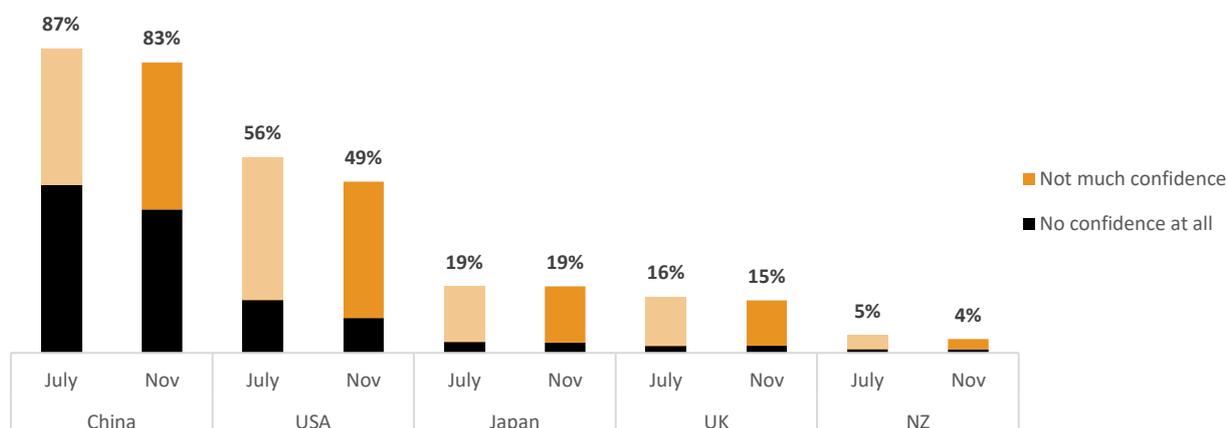
	Country with the most influence in the Pacific region ten years from now	
	2019	2020 (July)
China	76	78
United States	13	10
India	4	5
Japan	4	4
Other/ Don't know/ decline	3	3
Total	100	100

Table 35: 'How much confidence do you have that [country] follows the global trade rules to ensure fair trade?' July and November 2020 (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	China		United States		Japan		United Kingdom		New Zealand	
	July	Nov.	July	Nov.	July	Nov.	July	Nov.	July	Nov.
A lot of confidence	1	1	5	7	16	18	18	21	52	52
Some confidence	11	15	38	44	63	62	65	64	42	43
Sub-total	12	16	43	51	79	80	83	84	94	95
Not much confidence	39	42	41	39	16	16	14	13	4	3
No confidence at all	48	41	15	10	3	3	2	2	1	1
Sub-total	87	83	56	48	19	19	15	14	5	4
Don't know/ decline	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

Figure 31: 'How much confidence do you have that [country] follows the global trade rules to ensure fair trade?' Response: 'Not much confidence' and 'no confidence at all', 2020 (LinA)



IMMIGRATION

The Scanlon Foundation survey provides the only probability based annual tracking of opinion on immigration, employing consistent questionnaire structure and question wording to measure the trend of public opinion.

Respondents to the survey are asked: 'What do you think the number of immigrants accepted into Australia at present. Would you say it has been too high, about right or too low?'

The survey has found shift in opinion within a narrow range: those responding 'too high' have been a minority, from a low of 34% to a high of 47% in the interviewer administered (RDD) survey between 2007-19, in the range 41%-44% (2018-19) in the self-completion mode (LinA).

In 2020 the question was asked in a slightly modified form, to reflect the halt to the immigration program due to the pandemic. In response to the question worded 'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia in recent years?', **a relatively low proportion indicated that it had been 'too high', 38% in July and a lower 34% in November.**

In past reports on the Scanlon Foundation survey, it has been argued that **two key factors determine shifts in opinion on the immigration intake: the condition of the labour market, particularly the level of unemployment, and the political prominence of immigration issues.**

This interpretation explains the high point of negative response, the 47% who indicated that the immigration intake was 'too high' in 2010, an increase of ten percentage points from 37% in 2009. This shift occurred in the context of economic concerns in the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis and the politicisation of immigration and population targets during the 2010 election campaign.

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 0.854 ($p < 0.0001$), although the predicted correlation is not found in the current context.

In 2020 there has been a significant increase in unemployment, but with the closing of the borders as a result of government response to the pandemic it was difficult for political groups concerned with immigration to argue that the current economic problems were caused by immigration – and as the findings indicate, **even when respondents were questioned with reference to immigration in 'recent years', there was no heightened negative sentiment towards immigration.**

A second question in the survey asked: 'How well do you think governments are managing population growth?' In 2020 there was a minor change in wording, with respondents asked: 'how well do you think governments **have managed** population growth?'

In 2018 and 2019 the majority response was negative, with 59% and 57% indicating that governments were managing population growth 'very badly' or 'badly.' **But in July 2020, when respondents reflected on past government management of population growth, the proportion with negative assessment fell significantly to 37%.**

Table 36: 2018-19: 'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia at present? Would you say it is...', 2020: 'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia in recent years? Would you say it has been ...' (percentage, LiNA)

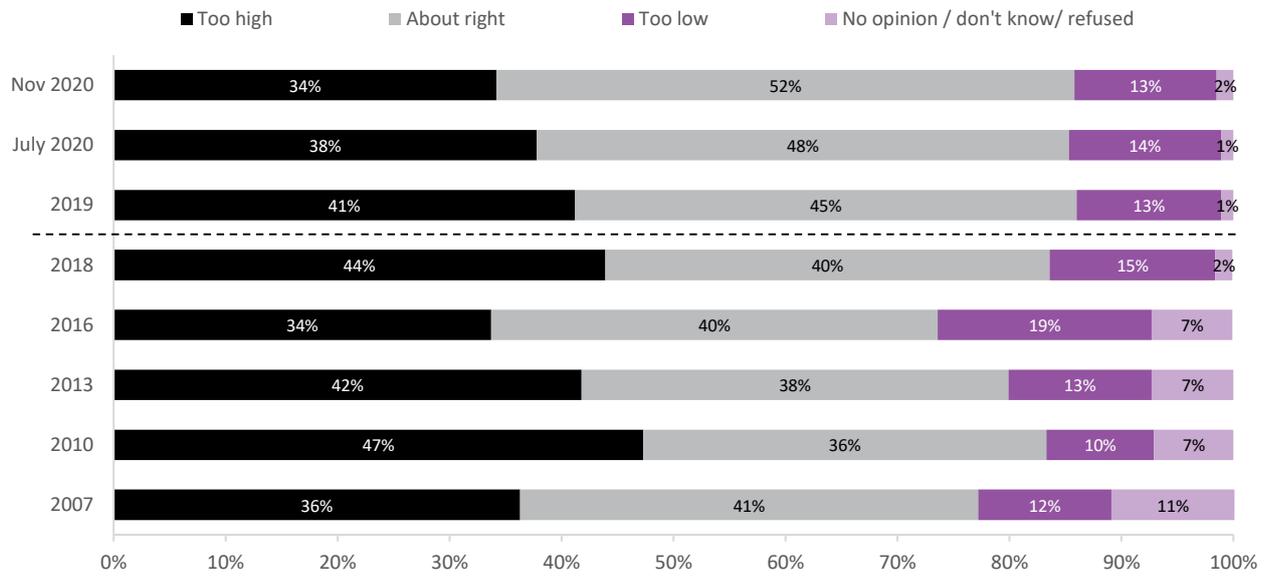
Survey year	Too high	About right	Too low	About right + too low	No opinion/ Don't know
2018	44	40	15	55	2
2019	41	45	13	58	1
2020 July	38	48	14	61	1
2020 Nov.	34**	52**	13	64	2

** Change between July and December 2020 statistically significant at $p < .05$

Table 37: 'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia at present? Would you say it is...' 2007-19 (percentage, RDD)

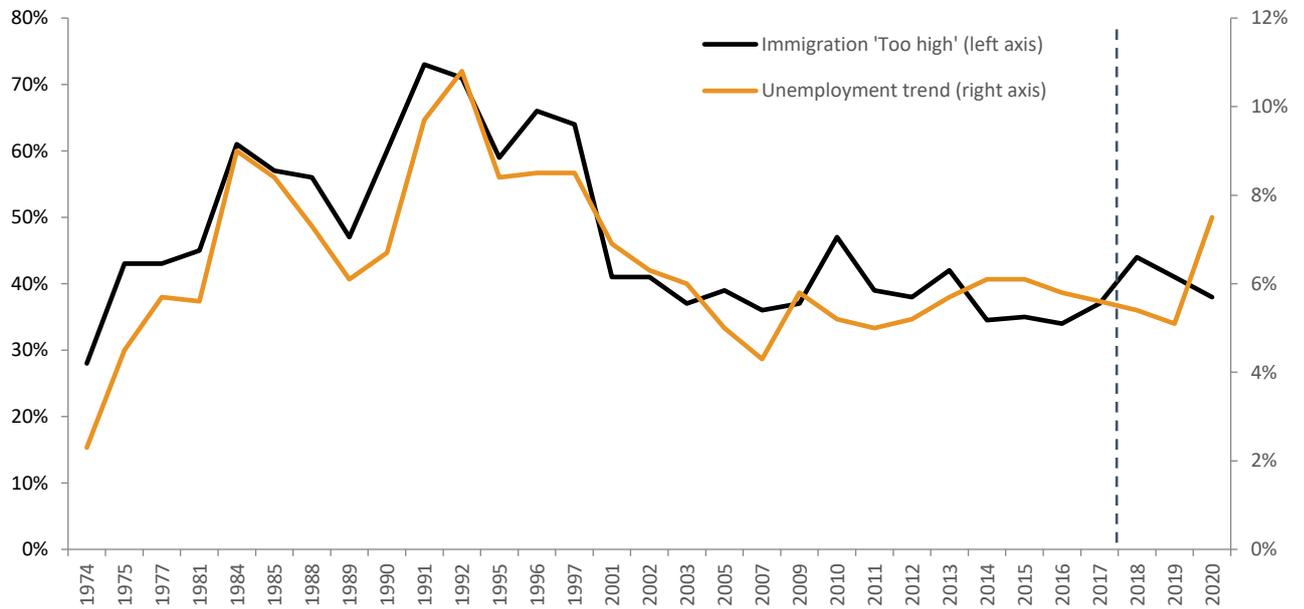
Survey year	Too high	About right	Too low	About right + too low	No opinion/ Don't know
2007	36	41	12	53	11
2009	37	46	10	55	7
2010	47	36	10	46	7
2011	39	40	14	55	7
2012	38	42	14	56	7
2013	42	38	13	51	7
2014	35	42	17	58	8
2015	35	41	19	60	5
2016	34	40	19	59	7
2017	37	40	16	56	7
2018	43	35	17	52	5
2019	41	38	15	53	6

Figure 32: 2007-19: 'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia at present? Would you say it is...', 2020: 'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia in recent years? Would you say it has been ...', 2007-16 (RDD), 2018-20 (LinA)



Dotted line indicates change in survey mode

Figure 33: Time series, trend of unemployment and view that immigration is 'too high', 1974-20



Dotted line indicates change in survey mode

POPULATION SEGMENTS

Attitudes within sub-groups of the population were analysed with reference to six demographic and two attitudinal variables. The demographic variables analysed, as in other sections of this report, were gender, state of residence, region (capital city or rest of state), age, highest level of educational attainment, and birthplace; the attitudinal variables were self-described financial situation and political alignment, indicated by response to the question: ‘If there was a Federal election held today, for which party would you probably vote?’

The analysis found that in 2020 majority agreement that the immigration intake was ‘too high’ in recent years is obtained in only four sub-groups: One Nation supporters (84% 2020, 83% 2018-19), those with education up to Year 11 level (65%, 70%), those aged 55-66 (50%, 51%), and 65-74 (50%, 64%).

The lowest level of agreement that the immigration intake was ‘too high’ in recent years is among Greens supporters (14% 2020, 12% 2018-19), those aged 18-24 (16%, 18%) and 25-34 (25%, 24%) with a postgraduate (26%, 27%) or Bachelor’s degree (21%, 27%), with self-described financial situation as ‘prosperous’ or ‘very comfortable’ (28%, 35%), and of non-English speaking background (29%, 33%).

The politics of immigration is simplest to navigate for the Greens and One Nation parties, with almost no change in the level of response between 2018-19 and 2020. On the one hand, among Greens supporters there is little demand for a cut in immigration, on the other for One Nation the call for a cut to immigration is a major issue and serves to define the party. Opinion is more divided among Coalition supporters with 45% (54% in 2018-19) supporting the view that the immigration intake has been ‘too high’, 54% that it has been ‘about right’ or ‘too low’, less divided among Labor supporters in 2020, with 30% (38%) of the view that immigration has been ‘too high’, 70% that it has been ‘about right’ or ‘too low’.

Table 38: 2018-19: ‘What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia at present? Would you say it is...?’ 2020: ‘What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia in recent years? Would you say it has been ...?’ Response: ‘too high’, July 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

Gender	Female	Male					
	35 (43)	41 (43)					
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	35 (41)	39 (45)	31 (44)	39 (45)	43 (42)		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	34 (40)	45 (49)					
Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	16 (18)	25 (24)	31 (43)	46 (51)	50 (51)	50 (64)	48 (56)
Highest completed education	Postgraduate degree	Bachelor degree	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11	
	26 (27)	21 (27)	38 (40)	48 (51)	29 (34)	65 (70)	
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	28 (35)	35 (42)	46 (43)	48 (51)			
Intended vote	Greens	Labor	Liberal/ National	One Nation			
	14 (12)	30 (38)	45 (54)	84 (83)			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	41 (48)	36 (34)	29 (33)				

THE IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION

Four questions in the 2020 survey further explored attitudes to immigration, to determine if there was heightened negativity compared to recent years. The questions asked whether immigrants benefited Australia by introducing new ideas, whether they had a positive impact on the economy, and in negative terms whether they took jobs away and failed to integrate.

Consistent with the pattern of opinion throughout the report, there is no evidence of heightened negative sentiment in 2020 when the impact of immigration is considered. There is no indication that heightened economic concerns lead to heightened negativity.

In 2020 only a minority, 30% in July and 28% in November, agree that 'immigrants take jobs away', a lower proportion than 34% in 2018 and 35% in 2019.

Disagreement with the proposition that 'immigrants are generally good for the economy' is at 18% in July, 16% in November, down from 25% in 2018 and 23% in 2019. An identical 18% and 16% disagree with the proposition that 'immigrants improve Australian society by bringing new ideas and cultures', down from 23% in 2018 and 20% in 2019.

Conversely, with reference to positive responses, 82% in July and 83% in November agree that 'immigrants improve Australian society by bringing new ideas and cultures' (76% in 2018, 78% in 2019), 81% and 83% (74% in 2018, 76% in 2019) agree that 'immigrants are generally good for the economy', and 70% and 71% (64% 2018, 64% 2019) disagree with the proposition that 'immigrants take jobs away.'

Majority concern is obtained only in response to the proposition that 'too many immigrants are not adopting Australian values', with agreement indicated by 60% in both July and December, although this proportion is lower than the 67% obtained in 2019 when the question was previously asked.

Further tracking of opinion in 2020 in the context of results obtained in 2018 and 2019 was undertaken by examining the **correlation of attitudes** of the substantial minority of survey respondents who indicate agreement with the view that in recent years the immigration intake was 'too high.' **Again, a consistent finding is that in 2020 fewer respondents indicate negative views.**

Thus, of those who considered the intake of immigration to be 'too high' in recent years, in 2019 61% agreed that 'immigrants take jobs away', in 2020 a lower 56% and 58%; in 2019 47% who viewed the immigration intake as 'too high' disagreed that 'immigrants are ...good for the economy', in 2020 a substantially lower 38%.

In November, among those who view the intake as 'about right' or 'too low,' only 5% disagree with the proposition that 'immigrants are generally good for the Australian economy' and with the proposition that 'immigrants improve Australian society by bringing new ideas and cultures', both responses almost identical with 2019, and marginally lower than 2018.

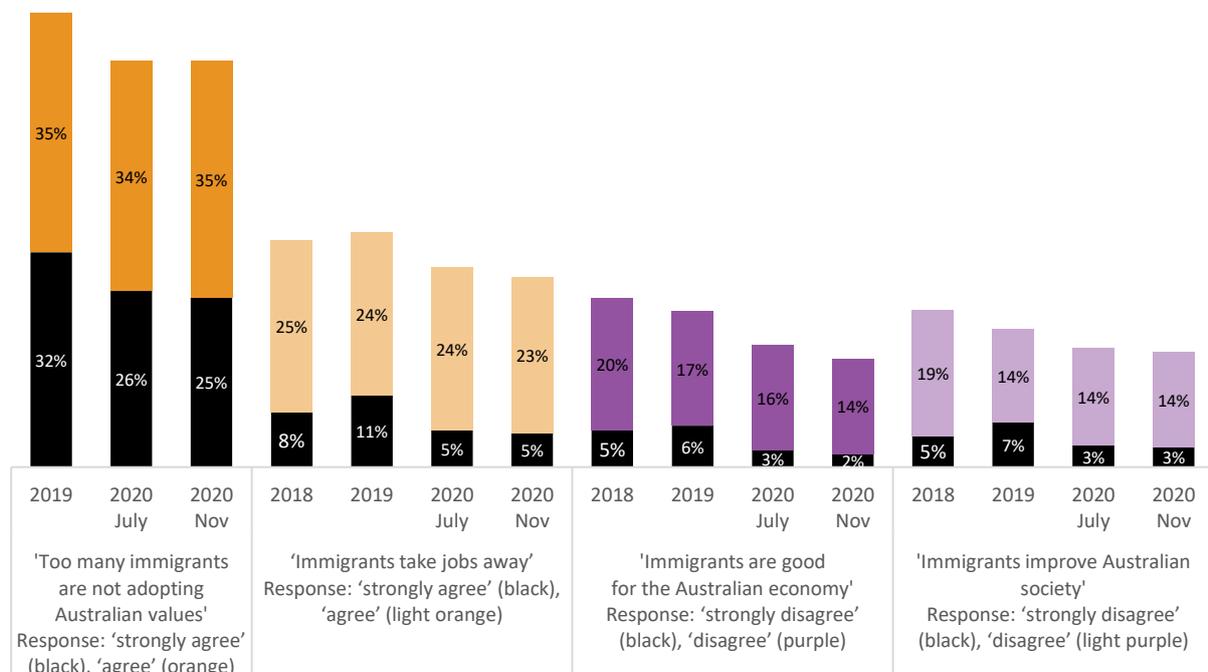
Among those who view the intake as 'about right' or 'too low,' in 2019 51% agreed that 'too many immigrants are not adopting Australia values, in July 2020 42%, in November 45%.

Table 39: The impact of 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', 2018-2020 (percentage, LinA)

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'			
	2018	2019	2020 July	2020 Nov.	2018	2019	2020 July	2020 Nov.	2018	2019	2020 July	2020 Nov.
'Immigrants take jobs away' ('strongly agree', 'agree')	34	35	30	28	58	61	56	58	14	17	14	12
'Immigrants are generally good for the Australian economy' ('strongly disagree', 'disagree')	25	23	18	16	47	47	38	38	8	6	5	5
'Immigrants improve Australian society by bringing new ideas and cultures' ('strongly disagree', 'disagree')	23	20	18	16	45	41	39	38	6	6	4	5
'Too many immigrants are not adopting Australian values' ('strongly agree', 'agree')	n/a	67	60	60	n/a	90	89	90	n/a	51	42	45
N (unweighted)	2,260	2,033	3,090	2,793				950				1,805

n/a – question not asked in 2018

Figure 34: The impact of immigration, selected questions, 2018-20 (LinA)



MULTICULTURALISM

The Scanlon Foundation surveys find a consistently high level of endorsement of multiculturalism. The finding for 2020 is consistent with past years, with a marginal increase in the proportion favourable to multiculturalism.

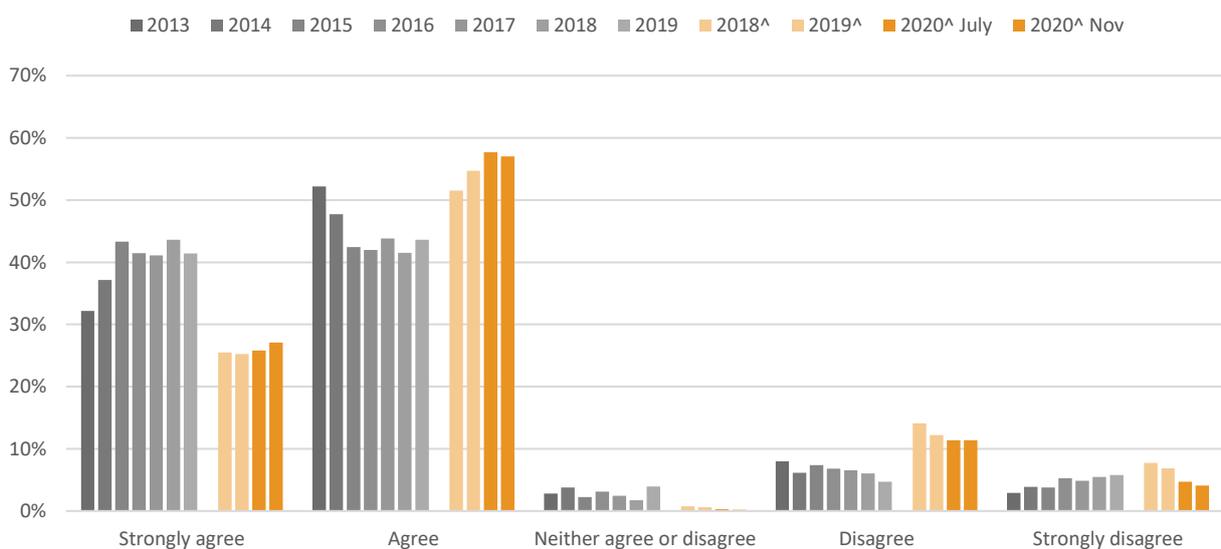
Since 2013, the Scanlon Foundation surveys have asked for response to the proposition that ‘multiculturalism has been good for Australia.’ Agreement in the RDD version of the survey was consistently in the range 83%-86%. This very high level of agreement was also obtained in the self-completion (LinA) version of the survey, although a lower proportion indicated ‘strong agreement’. With ‘strong agreement’ and ‘agreement’ combined, agreement was at 77% in 2018, 80% in 2019, and a higher 84% in both July and November 2020.

It is unusual to find such a high level of positive response – at or above 80% – to any question that deals with a government policy that has been the subject of controversy; for example, in July 2020, an almost 20 percentage points lower (61%) viewed the immigration intake of recent years as ‘about right’ or ‘too low’, and the same proportion agreed that government had managed population growth ‘very well’ or ‘fairly well’.

In 2020, as in past years, the strongest level of agreement with the value of multiculturalism is found among Greens (97% in 2020, 96% in 2018-19) and Labor supporters (91%, 84%); those aged 18-24 (96%, 91%) and 25-34 (90%, 87%); with a Bachelor’s degree (94%, 88%); and of non-English speaking background (90%, 88%).

There are few sub-groups in which there are relatively high levels of disagreement. By a large margin, the highest proportion indicating disagreement is among One Nation supporters, although lower in 2020 (56%, 2020, 65%, 2018-19), with smaller proportions among those with education to Year 11 (30%, 36%), aged 75 and above (26%, 17%), with Trade or Apprentice qualifications (23%, 26%) and whose financial status is ‘struggling to pay bills’ or ‘poor’ (22%, 31%).

Figure 35: ‘Multiculturalism has been good for Australia’, 2013-19 (RDD), 2018-2020 (LinA)



^ denotes LinA survey mode

Table 40: 'Multiculturalism has been good for Australia' 2018-20 (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	2018	2019	2020 July	2020 Nov.
Strongly agree	26	25	26	27
Agree	52	55	58	57
Sub-total agree	77	80	84*	84
Neither agree nor disagree	1	1	0	0
Disagree	14	12	11	11
Strongly disagree	8	7	5	4
Sub-total disagree	22	19	16	15
N (unweighted)	2,260	2,033	3,090	2,793

* Change between 2019 and July 2020 statistically significant at $p < .05$

Table 41: 'Multiculturalism has been good for Australia', 2013-19 RDD (percentage, RDD)

RESPONSE	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Strongly agree	32	37	43	41	41	44	41
Agree	52	48	42	42	44	42	44
Sub-total agree	84	85	86	83	85	85	85
Neither agree nor disagree	3	4	2	3	2	2	4*
Disagree	8	6	7	7	7	6	5
Strongly disagree	3	4	4	5	5	6	6
Sub-total disagree	11	10	11	12	12	12	11
N (unweighted)	1,200	1,526	1,501	1,500	2,236	1,500	1,500

Subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

Table 42: 'Multiculturalism has been good for Australia', Response: 'strongly agree' or 'agree' July 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

Gender	Female	Male					
	86 (80)	81 (76)					
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	86 (82)	83 (79)	89 (75)	85 (77)	77 (72)		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	86 (81)	79 (73)					
Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	96 (91)	90 (87)	87 (78)	82 (76)	79 (74)	75 (63)	73 (77)
Highest completed education	Postgraduate degree	Bachelor degree	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11	
	89 (88)	94 (88)	83 (76)	77 (74)	90 (86)	69 (61)	
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	87 (88)	84 (78)	82 (79)	78 (67)			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	91 (84)	79 (75)	97 (96)	44 (35)			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	81 (74)	84 (82)	90 (88)				

Table 43: 'Multiculturalism has been good for Australia', Response: 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree', July 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

Gender	Female	Male					
	14 (18)	18 (23)					
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	14 (17)	16 (20)	11 (25)	15 (20)	22 (27)		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	14 (18)	21 (26)					
Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	4 (9)	10 (13)	12 (21)	18 (23)	20 (26)	23 (36)	26 (17)
Highest completed education	Postgraduate degree	Bachelor degree	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11	
	11 (12)	6 (10)	16 (23)	23 (26)	10 (14)	30 (36)	
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	13 (12)	16 (21)	17 (20)	22 (31)			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	9 (15)	20 (24)	3 (4)	56 (65)			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	18 (24)	15 (17)	10 (12)				

TWO-WAY CHANGE

The Scanlon Foundation surveys have sought to establish the meaning to be attached to the very high level of endorsement of multiculturalism. The survey findings support the interpretation that the endorsement of multiculturalism occurs in a context in which there is the expectation of two-way change, requiring adaptation to change both by Australians and immigrants. This continues to be the pattern of response in 2020.

In 2020 the majority, although in smaller proportion than in 2019, endorse the proposition that **‘too many immigrants are not adopting Australian values’**: 67% in 2019, 60% in July and November 2020.

An additional consistent finding is that support for multiculturalism does not extend to provision of government assistance to ethnic minorities ‘to maintain customs and traditions,’ with a similar distribution of response ranging from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’ to that obtained by the question on adoption of Australian values; 69% of respondents in 2019 agreed that government should not provide this form of assistance to ethnic minorities, 63% in July 2020 and 64% in November.

These findings mirror those obtained in earlier surveys. The 2015-18 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.

Whilst the majority support the notion that Australians need to make adaptations to immigrants, that they ‘should do more to learn’ about immigrant customs and cultures, the surveys also find agreement with the view that too many immigrants are not ‘adopting Australian values.’

Table 44: Views on immigrant integration, selected questions, 2019-20 (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	‘Too many immigrants are not adopting Australian values’			‘Ethnic minorities should [not] be given government assistance to maintain customs and traditions’		
	2019	2020 July	2020 Nov.	2019	2020 July	2020 Nov.
Strongly agree	32	26*	25	29	21*	21
Agree	35	34	35	40	42	43
Sub-total agree	67	60*	60	69	63*	64
Neither agree/ disagree	1	1	1	0	0	0
Disagree	26	32*	32	26	30*	28
Strongly disagree	5	6	7	4	6	7
Sub-total disagree	31	39*	39	30	36*	35
Don’t know/ decline	1	1	1	1	1	1

* Change between 2019 and July 2020 statistically significant at p<.05; subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

Figure 36: Views on immigrant integration, selected questions, July 2020 (LinA)

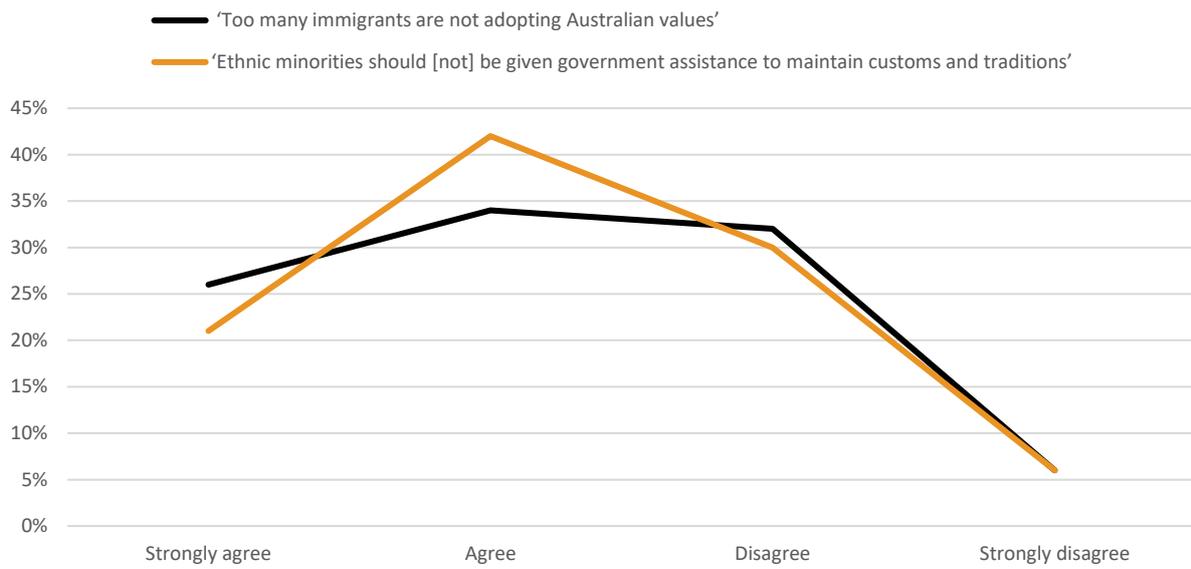
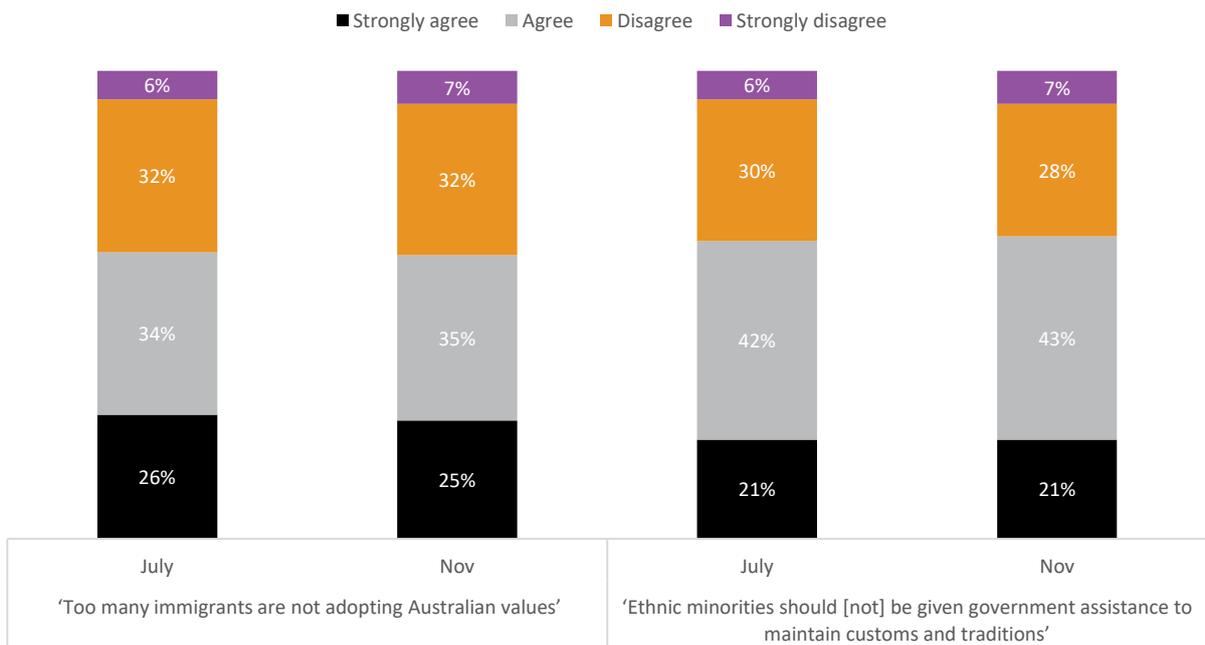


Figure 37: Views on immigrant integration, selected questions, 2020 (LinA)



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 RDD surveys conducted between 2007-2019.

Trust was lower in the LinA surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019, with 42%-43% indicating that 'most people can be trusted,' 56%-57% that you 'can't be too careful'.

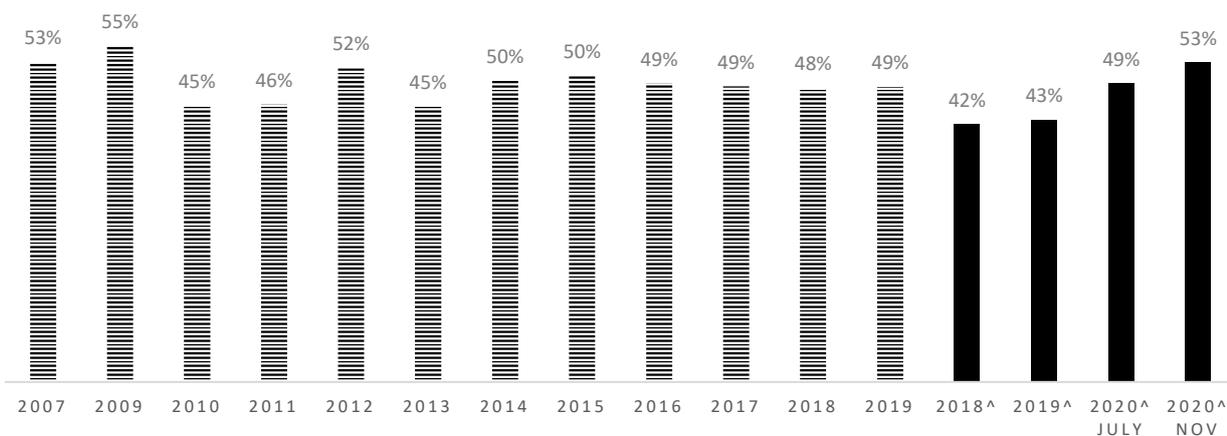
In 2020 indication that 'most people can be trusted' was higher, in July up by 6% to 49%, in November by a further 4 percentage points to 53%.

Comparison of the combined data for the 2018-19 survey and the 2020 LinA survey by six demographic and two attitudinal variables finds that trust in 2020 is consistently higher, with the exception of marginally lower indication among those aged 25-34 (44% in 2020, 47% in 2018-19) and those whose self-described financial status is 'just getting along' (38%, 39%).

The lowest level of agreement that 'most people can be trusted' is among supporters of One Nation (28% in 2020, 23% in 2018-19), whose self-described financial situation is 'struggling to pay bills' or 'poor' (29%, 28%) and whose highest level of education is up to Year 11 (36%, 26%).

The highest-level of agreement that 'most people can be trusted' is among supporters of the Greens (68%, 61%), those who indicate that their financial situation is 'prosperous' or 'very comfortable' (60%, 58%) and those with a post-graduate qualification (63%, 60%).

Figure 38: 'Most people can be trusted', 2007-19 (RDD), 2018-20 (LinA)



^ denotes LinA survey mode

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’, July 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

Gender	Female	Male					
	47 (41)	52 (45)					
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	52 (42)	50 (47)	49 (41)	50 (42)	45 (40)		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	50 (45)	48 (39)					
Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	44 (41)	44 (47)	52 (40)	52 (44)	48 (40)	53 (41)	54 (46)
Highest completed education	Postgraduate degree	Bachelor degree	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11	
	63 (60)	55 (55)	49 (36)	45 (43)	49 (47)	36 (26)	
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	60 (58)	55 (45)	38 (39)	29 (28)			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	49 (43)	50 (42)	68 (61)	28 (23)			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	48 (41)	57 (43)	48 (47)				

VOLUNTARY WORK

Participation in voluntary work has shown only minor variation over the course of 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.’

This is a question that obtains significantly different response in the telephone administered and self-administered survey. In the RDD version, an average 45% of respondents indicated that they participate in voluntary work, in the LinA version a significantly lower proportion, over ten percentage points lower.

Indication of voluntary work is in the category of questions that are susceptible to Social Desirability Bias, where there is a risk of respondents overstating their contribution to communal life when asked by an interviewer. **In the July 2020 survey, 34% of LinA respondents indicated that they had done unpaid voluntary work in the last twelve months, specified as before the pandemic, almost the same proportion as in 2018 and 2019 (33%-34%).**

A follow-on question asks respondents for frequency of participation in voluntary work, with again significant variation by mode of survey administration. Of the sub-group who indicate that they volunteer, in the RDD version an average 70% do so ‘at least once a week’ or ‘at least once a month.’ In the three years of LinA surveying this was indicated by 61%, 57% and a much higher 72% in July 2020.

Table 46: 2018-19: ‘... Have you done any unpaid voluntary work of this kind* in the last 12 months?’ and ‘How often did you participate in this sort of voluntary activity?’ Response: ‘at least once a week’ or ‘at least once a month.’ 2020: ‘Before the COVID-19 pandemic ...’, (percentage, LinA)

	2018	2019	2020 (July)
Volunteered in the last 12 months	34	33	34
Frequency: Once a month or more (those who volunteer)	61	57	72

*... 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.’

An additional question in the 2020 survey asked respondents if they had volunteered during the pandemic. In the July survey, 16% of respondents indicated that they had volunteered. This is much lower than volunteering during the ‘the last 12 months,’ a result influenced by the shorter time frame considered – the previous four to five months – as well as the enforced isolation and health concerns of people during the government required lockdown.

DISCRIMINATORY ATTITUDES

Since 2015, the Scanlon Foundation survey has tested the extent of support for immigration restriction. Respondents have been 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 surveys there has been a large measure of consistency in the rejection of this form of discrimination in immigrant selection.

For both modes of surveying (RDD and LinA), strong support for discrimination (‘strongly agree’) on the basis of race or ethnicity was indicated by a small minority, in the range 5%-8% and a lower 4% in July and November 2020.

Strong support (‘strongly agree’) for discrimination on the basis of religion was at a marginally higher level, in the range 8%-11% for both modes of surveying, a lower 6% in July 2020 and 7% in November.

In July and November 2020, with ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ responses combined, **support for discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity is at 17%-18%, compared with a higher 22% in 2018 and 23% in 2019;** on the basis of religion, support for discrimination is at 23%-24%, compared with 29% in both 2018 and 2019.

POPULATION SEGMENTS

Analysis of support for discrimination in immigrant selection was undertaken by nine variables: 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. As in other sections on this report, the results for July 2020 were compared with the aggregated results for 2018 and 2019 LinA surveys.

Agreement with **discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity** is at or above 25% among those aged 75 or older (25% 2020, 33% 2018-19) and with highest level of education up to Year 11 (27%, 35%) or at the Trade/ Apprentice level (28%, 26%). Agreement is also at a relatively high level among those ‘struggling to pay bills’ or ‘poor’ (30%, 28%).

Agreement with **discrimination on the basis of religion** is consistently at a higher level than on the basis of race or ethnicity, above 30% for three of the sub-groups: those with highest level of educational up to Year 11 (33% 2020, 41% 2018-19) or at the Trade/ Apprentice level (34%, 34%), as well as those who indicated that they are ‘poor’ or ‘struggling to pay bills’ (32%, 35%).

Table 47: '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?' 2015-19 RDD, 2018-2020 LinA (percentage)

RESPONSE	RDD				LinA			
	2015	2017	2018	2019	2018	2019	2020 July	2020 Nov
Strongly agree	7	8	7	5*	8	8	4*	4
Agree	12	8	8	10	13	15	13	14
Sub-total agree	19	16	15	15	22	23	17*	18
Neither agree nor disagree	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	1
Disagree	36	32	32	32	43	41	44	40
Strongly disagree	41	48	49	49	35	36	38	41
Sub-total disagree	77	80	81	81	78	77	82*	81

* Change between 2019 and July 2020 statistically significant at p<.05

Table 48: '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?' 2015-19 RDD, 2018-2020 LinA (percentage)

RESPONSE	RDD				LinA			
	2015	2017	2018	2019	2018	2019	2020 July	2020 Nov.
Strongly agree	9	9	8	8	11	11	6*	7
Agree	12	11	9	10	17	18	16	17
Sub-total agree	20	20	18	17	29	29	23*	24
Neither agree nor disagree	2	3	2	1	0	0	0	0
Disagree	38	33	35	30	39	40	43	39**
Strongly disagree	39	41	43	49*	32	30	34*	37
Sub-total disagree	76	74	78	79	71	70	76*	76

* Change between 2019 and July 2020 statistically significant at p<.05

** Change between July and December 2020 statistically significant at p<.05

Subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

Table 49: ‘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, 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

		REJECT ON BASIS OF RACE OR ETHNICITY	REJECT ON BASIS OF RELIGION
		‘Strongly agree’ + ‘agree’	‘Strongly agree’ + ‘agree’
GENDER	Male	21 (25)	27 (32)
	Female	14 (20)	18 (26)
STATE	VIC	16 (19)	19 (25)
	NSW	18 (22)	24 (30)
	WA	12 (30)	20 (37)
	SA	17 (21)	23 (24)
	QLD	21 (22)	29 (30)
REGION	Capital city	16 (21)	22 (28)
	Rest of state	20 (25)	25 (32)
AGE	18-24	11 (17)	16 (22)
	25-34	12 (15)	20 (21)
	35-44	15 (17)	19 (28)
	45-54	19 (24)	26 (33)
	55-64	19 (23)	27 (32)
	65-74	22 (35)	24 (38)
	75+	25 (33)	24 (31)
EDUCATION	BA or higher	10 (14)	15 (21)
	Diploma/Technical Certificate	16 (21)	22 (30)
	Trade/Apprenticeship	28 (26)	34 (34)
	Year 12	15 (19)	18 (25)
	Up to Year 11	27 (35)	33 (41)
FINANCIAL SITUATION	Prosperous/very comfortable	17 (18)	18 (26)
	Reasonably comfortable	15 (24)	22 (31)
	Just getting along	18 (18)	24 (24)
	Struggling to pay bills/poor	30 (28)	32 (35)
CITIZENSHIP	Australian	18 (23)	24 (30)
	Other	15 (14)	16 (19)
RELIGION	Catholic	21 (27)	25 (31)
	Anglican	22 (29)	24 (35)
	Other Christian	19 (21)	25 (30)
	Other religions	14 (23)	17 (20)
	No religion	13 (17)	21 (27)
BACKGROUND	Born in Australia	18 (24)	24 (30)
	(3rd Gen Australian)	20 (25)	26 (31)
	Overseas-ESB	14 (14)	19 (23)
	Overseas- NESB	17 (21)	20 (28)

IMPACT OF LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT

For understanding of attitudes towards immigration and cultural diversity, a final variable considered was the impact of loss of employment: the attitudes of the 28% of survey respondents who indicated that they had lost their jobs and not found other employment or were working no hours or reduced hours. **The objective of the analysis was to determine if there is indication of heightened negative attitudes within this segment.**

In response to some questions a substantial difference is evident. Thus, when asked ‘how satisfied are you with your present financial situation?’, a **substantially lower 58%** (although still a majority) of those whose employment was impacted indicated satisfaction, **compared with 82% of those working the same hours as before the pandemic – a difference of 24 percentage points.**

Asked if they are ‘optimistic or pessimistic about Australia’s future,’ again a substantial difference was indicated: 35% of those impacted indicated that they were pessimistic, compared with 26% of those working the same hours.

But in response to the statement that ‘people on low incomes receive enough financial support from the government’, 55% of those impacted indicated agreement, only marginally lower than the 58% of those working the same hours.

While there are substantial differences with regard to a range of financial issues, **there is little indication that those whose employment was impacted had substantially heightened negative attitude to Australia’s openness to the world, immigration and multiculturalism – there is difference, but typically in the range 2-7 percentage points.**

In response to the proposition that it should be possible to reject immigrants on the basis of their race or ethnicity, agreement was indicated by only 19% of those impacted, 15% less impacted; agreement with rejection on the basis of religion was indicated by 26% those impacted, 21% less impacted.

Globalisation, described as ‘the growing economic ties between Australia and other countries,’ was seen as ‘fairly bad’ or ‘very bad’ by 33% of those impacted, 26% less impacted.

The number of immigrants accepted in recent years was seen as too high by 38% of those impacted, 33% less impacted.

Agreement with the statement that ‘immigrants take jobs away’ finds a difference of 6%; 32% of those impacted agree, 26% less impacted.

The statement that ‘immigrants are generally good for Australia’s economy’ finds disagreement at 17% among those impacted, 18% less impacted.

The proposition that ‘multiculturalism has been good for Australia’ finds disagreement at 13% among those impacted, 15% less impacted. When asked if ‘someone who was born outside of Australia is just as likely to be a good citizen as someone born in Australia’ just 9% of those impacted disagreed, the same proportion as those less impacted.

There was only minor difference in negative ‘feelings towards’ immigrants from China (51% impacted, 47% less impacted) or Sudan (50%, 49%), with the largest difference in negative sentiment towards persons of the Muslim faith, a difference of 9 percentage points (43%, 34%).

Table 50: Immigration and cultural diversity, selected question, negative response, by hours of work and employment, July 2020 (percentage, LinA)

QUESTION AND RESPONSE	Hours of work unchanged	Lost job, working reduced or no hours
‘Number of immigrants accepted into Australia in recent years.’ (Too high)	33	38
‘Immigrants take jobs away.’ (Agree)	26	32
‘Immigrants are generally good for Australia’s economy.’ (Disagree)	18	17
‘Multiculturalism has been good for Australia.’ (Disagree)	15	13
‘...It should be possible to reject on the basis of race or ethnicity.’ (Agree)	15	19
‘...It should be possible to reject on the basis of religion.’ (Agree)	21	26
‘Someone born outside Australia is just as likely to be a good citizen as someone born in Australia’ (Disagree)	9	9
‘Would you say your feelings ... towards’ immigrants from China are ...?’ (Negative)	47	51
‘Would you say your feelings ... towards’ immigrants from Sudan are ...?’ (Negative)	49	50
Attitude towards Muslims (Negative)	34	43

A DIVERSE IMMIGRATION INTAKE

Further insight into the level 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% across the interviewer administered surveys (RDD). Agreement was in the same range in the self-administered surveys (LinA), 83% in 2018, 67% in 2019 (67%), but **higher 71% in July 2020 and 74% in November**.

Less than one-third (26%-30%) of respondents in the RDD version of the survey have disagreed with ‘accepting immigrants from many different countries’, a marginally higher proportion (32%-36%) in 2018-19 LinA surveys, but **a lower 28% in 2020 July and 25% in November**. ‘Strong disagreement’ was at 11%-13% in the 2018 and 2019 LinA surveys, a statistically significant lower 6% in both 2020 surveys.

Table 51: ‘Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger’, 2018-20 (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	2018	2019	2020 July	2020 Nov.
Strongly agree	17	17	19	21
Agree	46	50	53	53
Sub-total agree	63	67	71*	74
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0	0	1
Disagree	24	22	22	19**
Strongly disagree	13	11	6*	6
Sub-total disagree	36	32	28*	25**
N (unweighted)	2,260	2,033	3,090	2,793

* Change between 2019 and July 2020 statistically significant at p<.05

** Change between July and December 2020 statistically significant at p<.05

Subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

Table 52: ‘Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger’, 2007-19 (percentage, RDD)

RESPONSE	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Strongly agree	22	25	19	24	26	22	26	27	30	26	29	30
Agree	45	43	43	40	39	40	41	40	36	37	37	38
Sub-total agree	67	68	62	64	65	62	68	67	67	63	66	68
Neither agree nor disagree	3	3	6	6	6	6	5	4	4	5	3	4
Disagree	18	18	19	16	15	18	16	17	16	16	17	15
Strongly disagree	8	9	11	11	11	11	10	9	11	13	13	12
Sub-total disagree	26	27	30	27	26	29	26	27	27	30	30	28
N (unweighted)	2,012	2,019	2,021	2,001	2,000	1,200	1,526	1,501	1,500	2,236	1,500	1,500

NATIONALITY

The 2020 Scanlon Foundation surveys also tested **attitudes towards specific national groups.**

With regard to ten specified national groups, the July survey asked: 'Would you say your feelings are positive, negative, or neutral?'

Negative response ('very negative' or 'somewhat negative') was at 6%-7% towards British, Italians, and Germans; a higher 18% towards Americans; close to 30% towards Indians (28%) and Ethiopians (35%); and **above 40% towards Lebanese (42%), Chinese (47%), Iraqis (49%) and Sudanese (49%).**

In the November survey, attitudes to seven groups were asked. Similar results were obtained, with the exception of marginally lower negative sentiment towards Chinese (47% in July, 44% in November), and marginally higher negative towards Indians (28%, 33%) and Lebanese (42%, 45%), substantially higher towards Sudanese (49%, 56%).

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 views held by a minority. **But a key issue explored in the analysis of the 2020 survey is the extent of change in opinion that has occurred in the context of the pandemic.**

Attitudes to national groups were previously considered in the Scanlon Foundation survey between 2010-12. It is not possible to compare these earlier results directly with the 2020 findings as earlier surveys were interviewer administered (RDD).

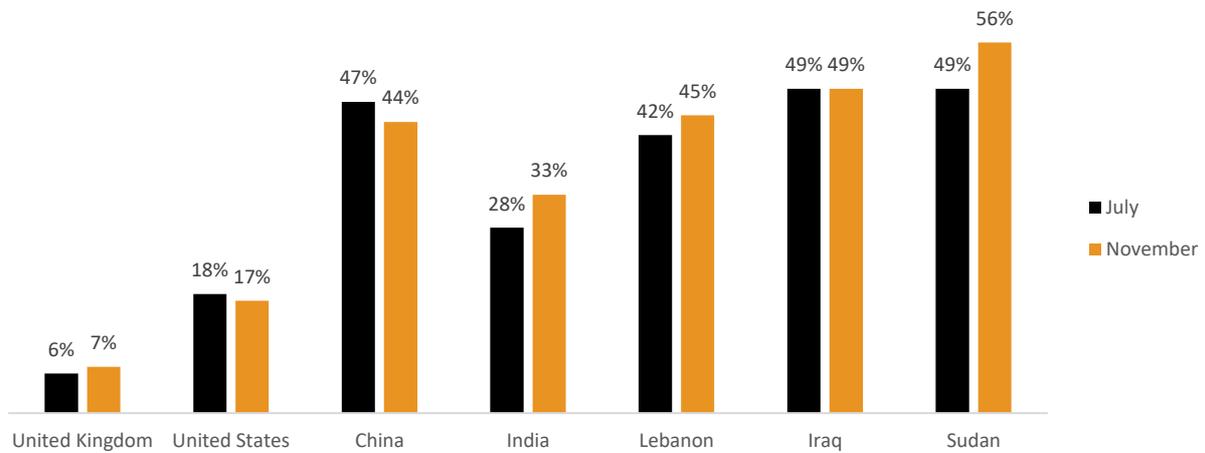
The Scanlon Foundation surveys have found that for this form of question the self-completion survey (LinA) consistently obtains higher negative results. But whereas for other national groups the increase between 2010-12 and 2020 was close to a factor of 2, for example from 3% to 6% for the United Kingdom and Italy, from 15% to 28% for India, and from 22% to 49% for Iraq, the increase for immigrants born in China was by a factor of 3.6, up from 13% in 2013 to 47% in July 2020, indicating heightened negative sentiment towards Chinese nationals in 2020.

Table 53: 'Would you say your feelings are positive, negative, or neutral towards [national group]?' Response: 'very negative' and 'somewhat negative', 2010-13 RDD, July and November 2020 LinA (percentage)

	RDD		LinA	
	2010-12	2013	2020 July	2020 Nov.
United Kingdom	3	3	6	7
United States	n/a	n/a	18	17
Italy	3	3	6	n/a
Germany	3	3	7	n/a
China	11	13	47	44
India	15	15	28	33*
Lebanon	23	27	42	45
Iraq	24	22	49	49
Sudan	n/a	n/a	49	56*
Ethiopia	12	16	35	n/a

*Change between July and November 2020 statistically significant at $p < .05$;
n/a indicates that the question was not asked

Figure 39: 'Would you say your feelings are positive, negative, or neutral towards [national group]?' Response: 'very negative' and 'somewhat negative', July and November 2020 (LinA)



FAITH GROUPS

The 2020 surveys asked respondents for their attitude to six faith groups. As in past years, and by a substantial margin, **the highest negative response was towards Muslims, at 37% (July), 35% (November)**. This compares with negative attitude at 4%-5% towards the Buddhist faith, 9% Jewish, 11%-12% Christian, 12% Hindu, and 13%-14% Sikh.

Attitudes to three of the faith groups – Christian, Buddhist and Muslim – have been considered in the LinA version of the Scanlon Foundation surveys since 2017, towards Hindus since 2019, and provide insight into the trend of opinion in 2020.

In 2020, the proportion indicating negative views has not changed significantly: for the four faiths for whom comparative data is available, the negative proportion is marginally lower for the Buddhist (6% 2019, 4% November 2020), Christian (14%, 12%), and Muslim (40%, 35%), marginally higher for the Hindu faith (10%, 12%).

Long-run indication of attitudes is provided by the RDD version of the survey, which included the question on faith groups between 2010-19. For this form of question there is significant variation by mode of survey administration, with much higher negative obtained towards the Muslim faith in the self-completion (LinA) version: prior to 2020 in the range 21%-25% RDD, 39%-41% LinA.

Although not providing data which can be directly compared with the 2020 LinA survey, the long-run findings are significant for understanding trend of opinion, supporting the finding of the LinA survey that **while negative sentiment to the Muslim faith is at a relatively high level, there has been no increase. Rather, there is some indication of a lessening of negative sentiment** (25% 2016, 21% 2019), consistent with the trend of the LinA findings (40% 2019, 35% November 2020).

Table 54: ‘Is your personal attitude positive, negative or neutral towards ... [faith group]?’, Response: ‘very negative’ and ‘somewhat negative’, 2017-20 LinA (percentage)

FAITH GROUP	2017	2018	2019	2020 July	2020 Nov.
Buddhist	6	7	6	5	4
Jewish	--	--	--	9	9
Christian	12	12	14	11*	12
Hindu	--	--	10	12	12
Sikh	--	--	--	13	14
Muslim	41	39	40	37	35

* Change between 2019 and July 2020 statistically significant at $p < .05$

Table 55: 'Is your personal attitude positive, negative or neutral towards Muslims?', 2018-20 (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	2018	2019	2020 July	2020 Nov
Very positive	6	5	6	5
Somewhat positive	12	13	13	16**
Sub-total positive	17	18	19	21
Neutral	44	41	43	44
Somewhat negative	22	24	25	23
Very negative	17	17	13*	12
Sub-total negative	39	40	37	35
Don't know/decline	0	1	0	0
N (unweighted)	2,260	2,033	3,090	2,793

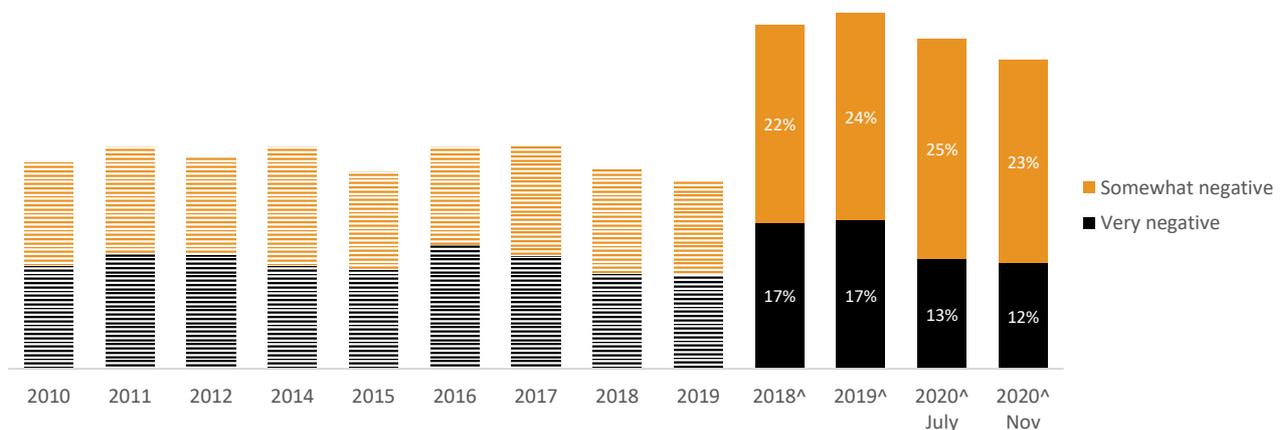
* Change between 2019 and July 2020 statistically significant at p<.05

** Change between July and December 2020 statistically significant at p<.05; subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

Table 56: 'Is your personal attitude positive, negative or neutral towards Muslims?', 2010-19 (percentage, RDD)

RESPONSE	2010	2011	2012	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Very positive	9	10	11	10	10	10	9	10	12
Somewhat positive	23	20	24	18	18	20	19	17	22
Sub-total positive	32	30	35	28	28	30	28	27	33
Neutral	42	43	40	44	47	42	44	48	44
Somewhat negative	12	12	11	13	11	11	12	12	11
Very negative	12	13	13	12	11	14	13	11	11
Sub-total negative	24	25	24	25	22	25	25	23	21
Don't know/decline	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	2
N (unweighted)	2,021	2,001	2,000	1,526	1,501	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500

Figure 40: 'Is your personal attitude positive, negative or neutral towards Muslims?', 2010-19 RDD, 2018-20 LinA



^ denotes LinA survey mode

EXPERIENCE OF DISCRIMINATION

A question posed in the Scanlon Foundation surveys asks respondents if they have experienced discrimination over the previous twelve months ‘because of your skin colour, ethnic origin or religion.’

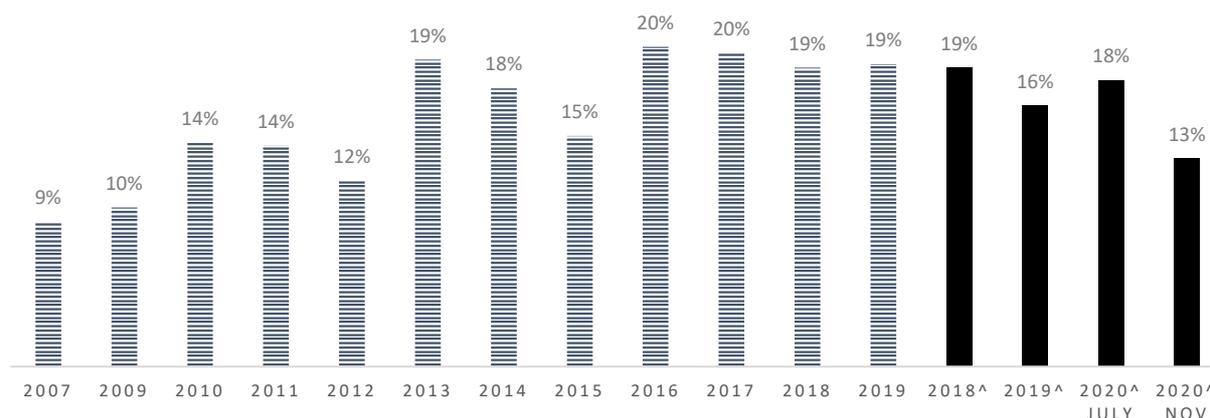
There was a large measure of consistency in reported experience of discrimination in the RDD and LinA versions of the Scanlon Foundation survey; in the RDD version between 2013-19 it was in the range 18%-20%, with the exception of 15% in 2015, in the LinA version it was 19% in 2018 and 16% in 2019.

In July 2020, 18% of respondents indicated experience of discrimination, which is close to the average of the previous three years, in November a substantially lower 13%. The lower proportion in November is consistent across states, age groups, and among those born in Australia and of non-English speaking background, but not those of non-English speaking background.

Reported experience of discrimination was indicated in July by 18% of respondents born in New South Wales, a much lower 12% in November; the relative proportions for Victoria were 15% and 13%; Queensland 24% and 16%; Western Australia 20% and 14%. In South Australia there was marginal increase, up from 13% to 14%.

Analysis by age group finds that the reported experience of discrimination for the LinA surveys was highest among those aged 18-44. In July 2020, it was close to the level of the previous two year, at 23%-24% among those aged 18-44, 16%-18% aged 45-64, 9% aged 65-74, and 2% aged 75 or older. In November there was a lower proportion indicating experience of discrimination in all age groups, with the exception of those aged 75 or above, where the proportion was consistent at a very low 2%.

Figure 41: ‘Have you experienced discrimination in the last twelve months because of your skin colour, ethnic origin or religion?’ Response: ‘yes’, 2007-19 RDD, 2018-2020 LinA



[^] denotes LinA survey mode

Figure 42: Reported experience of discrimination by age, 2007-13 and 2014-19 RDD , 2018-20 (July) LinA

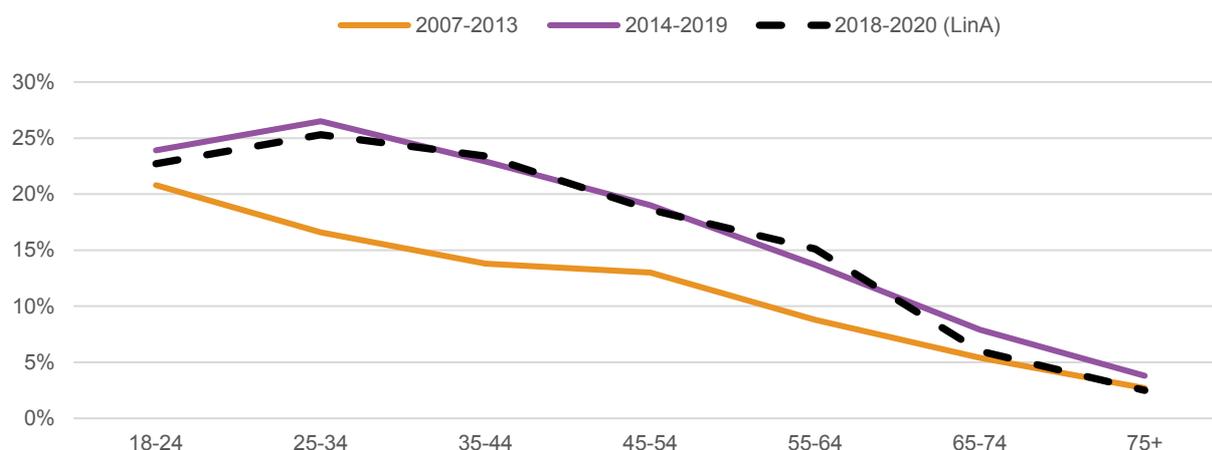


Table 57: ‘Have you experienced discrimination in the last twelve months because of your skin colour, ethnic origin or religion?’ Response: ‘yes’ by age, 2018-20 (percentage, LinA)

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	AVERAGE
2018	25	27	26	21	15	3	3	18.8
2019	20	26	20	18	15	4	2	16.3
2020 July	23	24	24	18	16	9	2	18.0
2020 November	16	17	20	12	9	6	2	13.1
AVERAGE	21	23.5	22.5	17.3	13.8	5.5	2.3	16.6
N = July/ Nov. 2020 (unweighted)	106/ 89	390/ 331	476/ 432	511/ 458	631/ 566	630/ 603	319/ 292	3,090/ 2,793

Consistent with the pattern of previous surveys, **in 2020 those of a non-English speaking background reported the highest experience of discrimination**: 32% in July, compared to 14% of those born in Australia and 15% of those born overseas in English speaking countries. In November, the proportion indicating experience of discrimination was lower by 5 percentage points among those born in Australia, 3 points lower among those born in an English-speaking country, but only 1 point among those born in an non-English speaking country.

The average for the four LinA surveys conducted between 2018-20 finds reported experience of discrimination for Australia-born at 12.1%, 16.5% for those of English-speaking background, and a much higher 31% for those of non-English speaking background.

The results for the July 2020 survey were compared with the aggregated results for the 2018 and 2019 LinA surveys to analyse the pattern of reported experience of discrimination by eight variables: gender, state, region, age, highest educational attainment, self-reported financial situation, and intended vote.

Reported experience of discrimination was relatively high among those whose self-described financial status is ‘struggling to pay bills’ or ‘poor’ (38% in 2020, 28% in 2018-19) and One Nation supporters (35%, 22%), more than double the proportion among those who indicated that they were ‘prosperous’ or ‘very comfortable’ (13%, 11%), supporters of the Liberal/ National (14%, 13%) and Greens (13%, 15%) parties, those born in Australia (14%, 13%), aged 65 and over (under 10%), and residents of South Australia (13%, 11%).

Analysis of July 2020 results by religious identification indicates that **a relatively high proportion of those of Muslim (42%), Hindu (36%), and Buddhist (34%) faiths report experience of discrimination**, but this finding is based on a sample too small to be statistically reliable. However, analysis of combined data for the years 2018-20 (LinA) confirms this pattern: 55% of Muslims reported discrimination, 37% Hindu, and 31% Buddhist.

Table 58: Reported experience of discrimination by birthplace, 2018-20 (percentage, LinA)

BIRTHPLACE	2018	2019	2020 July	2020 Nov	Average
Australia	13	13	14	9	12.1
English-speaking background	23	15	15	12	16.5
Non-English-speaking background	35	26	32	31	31.0

Table 59: Reported experience of discrimination by birthplace, 2013-19 (percentage, RDD)

BIRTHPLACE	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Average
Australia	16	16	12	17	15	17	17	15.7
English-speaking background	16	11	11	19	21	20	11	15.6
Non-English-speaking background	28	29	22	26	34	25	29	27.6

Table 60: Reported experience of discrimination, July 2020, 2019 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

Gender	Female	Male					
	17 (16)	19 (20)					
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	15 (20)	18 (17)	20 (22)	13 (11)	24 (18)		
Region	Capital	Rest of state					
	20 (20)	15 (12)					
Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	23 (23)	24 (26)	24 (23)	18 (19)	16 (14)	9 (4)	2 (3)
Highest completed education	Postgraduate degree	Bachelor degree	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11	
	23 (27)	19 (24)	20 (19)	14 (11)	19 (18)	12 (10)	
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	13 (11)	15 (15)	21 (20)	38 (28)			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	19 (14)	14 (13)	13 (15)	35 (22)			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	14 (13)	15 (23)	32 (35)				

NATIONAL GROUPS

Analysis by region and country of birth finds substantial variation in the reported experience of discrimination.

In July 2020, experience of discrimination was indicated by 12% of respondents born in the United Kingdom or Ireland, 14% Australia, and a significantly higher 39% Asia.

The relatively high proportion of respondents born in an Asian country indicating experience of discrimination is consistent with negative experiences indicated in response to a number of questions in 2020, but **comparison with findings obtained in 2018-19 indicates consistency rather than heightened experience of discrimination: in 2018-19 it was indicated by 41% of respondents born in an Asian country, in July 2020 by 39%.**

In July 2020, those who indicated experience of discrimination were asked if they had ‘experienced discrimination more often, about the same as before, or less often ... since the COVID-19 pandemic began in Australia.’ Responses were evenly divided: 22% indicated more, 22% less, and 55% about the same. However, when the data was disaggregated by region, the **highest proportion at 39% indicating increased experience of discrimination was by respondents born in an Asian country**, compared to 14% born in Australia.

When asked to indicate contexts in which discrimination was experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, a higher proportion of respondents specified a location and hence experience of discrimination, than in response to a generally worded question (‘Have you experienced discrimination ...’).

This finding indicates that the general question on experience of discrimination may understate the actual extent: 14% of Australia-born indicated experience of discrimination in response to the general question, 19% when responding to a question that specified a number of locations; the relative proportions are 12% and 17% for the United Kingdom and Ireland, and 39% and 47% for Asia.

Discrimination was often experienced in what seem to be casual encounters. Of respondents born in an Asian country, 29% indicated experience of discrimination when shopping, 19% on public transport, and 16% on the street, **but also in formal contexts**, at work (19%) and applying for work (16%).

The pattern of these findings is consistent with those obtained by previous Scanlon Foundation surveys, although in these earlier surveys Asian born respondents did not indicate the highest level of discrimination. Thus, the non-probability Australia@2015 survey, which was available in twenty languages and was completed by over 10,000 respondents, found reported discrimination at the highest level indicated by respondents born in Africa (54%) and New Zealand (50%), compared with the Middle East (32%) and Asia (32%), including 39% born in India and 39% born in China.

Table 61: Reported experience of discrimination by country of birth and region, and place where discrimination was experienced, July 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

	Country of birth		
	Australia	UK and Ireland	Asia
Experienced discrimination: general question (2018-19 in brackets)	14 (13)	12 (19)	39 (41)
Experienced discrimination: at a specific location	19	17	47
Variance	5	5	9
N (unweighted)	2156	283	263

Figure 43: Reported experience of discrimination by country of birth and region, and place where discrimination was experienced, July 2020 (LinA)

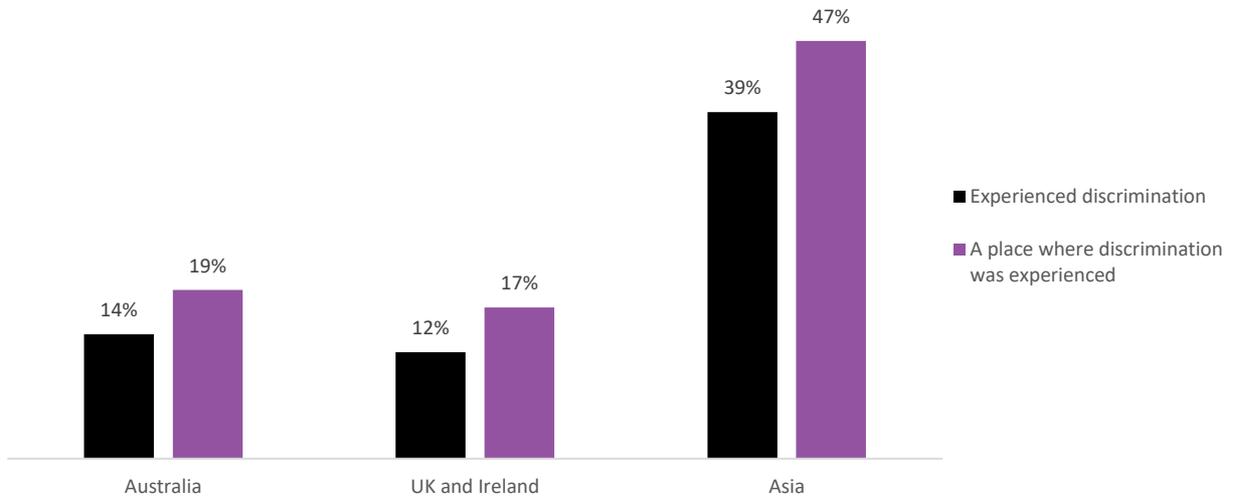
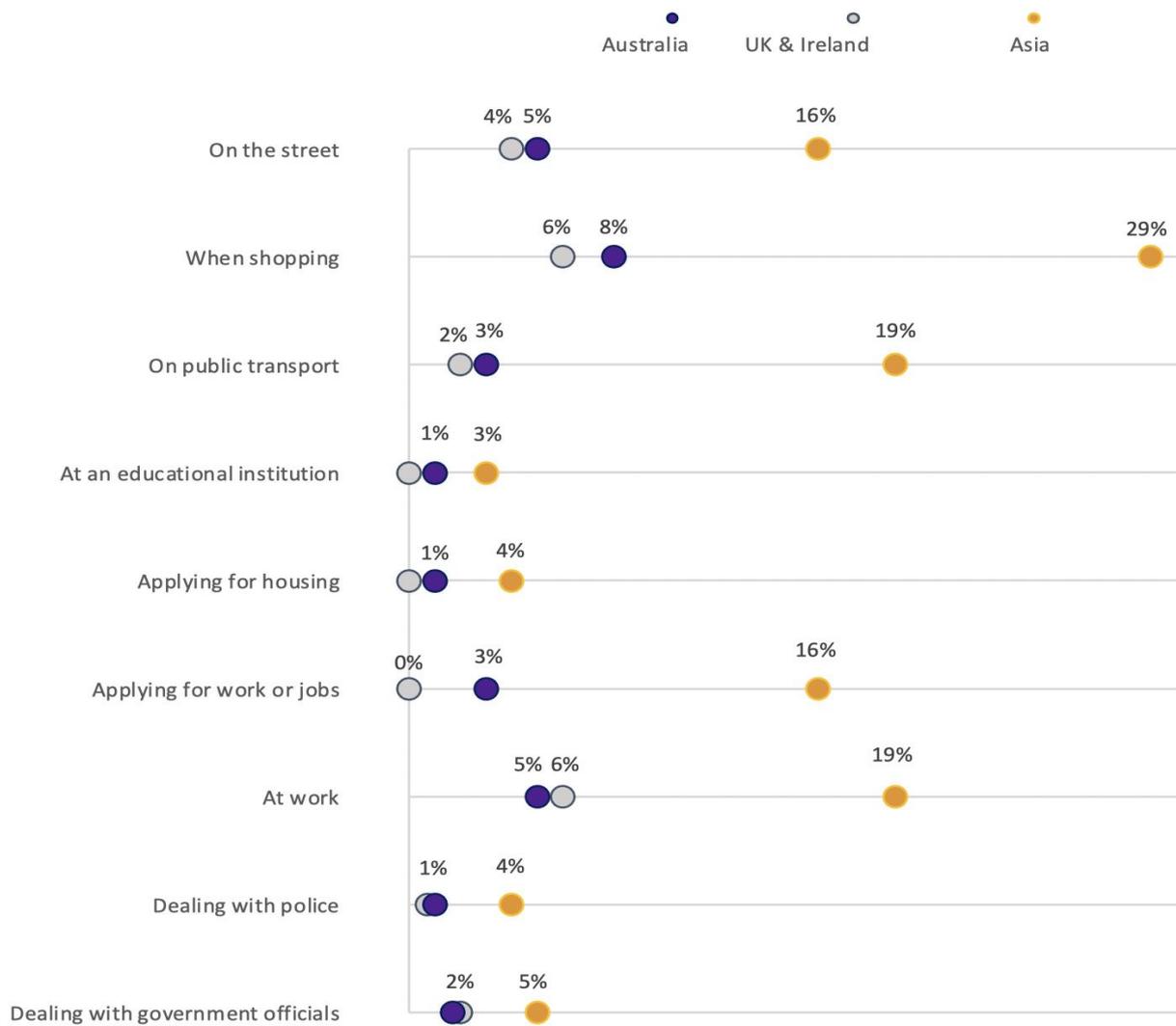


Figure 44: Places where discrimination was experienced during COVID-19 by country of birth and region, July 2020 (percentage, LinA)



When respondents were asked if they were concerned ‘about discrimination experienced by your friends and/or members of your local community ... during the COVID-19 pandemic...?’, 32% indicated concern, a higher proportion than those who reported personal experience of discrimination. Again, **the highest proportion at 55% was indicated by those born in an Asian country.** This compares with indication of concern by 19% born in the United Kingdom and Ireland, and 30% by those born in Australia.

In response to a question that asked respondents to indicate their view of **racism in Australia**, the highest proportion of the view that it was ‘**a very big problem**’ or ‘**a fairly big problem**’ was indicated by those born in an Asian country, in July by 59%, compared with 36% born in Australia, and 35% in the United Kingdom.

In a notable finding, while reported experience of discrimination declined between the July and November surveys, **the proportion that perceived racism to be a problem in Australia was in large measure constant**, although those who indicated that it was a ‘very big problem’ declined marginally, those indicating that it was a ‘fairly big problem’ increased marginally.

Table 62: ‘During the COVID-19 pandemic, how concerned are you about discrimination experienced by your friends and/or members of your local community?’ July 2020 (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	Australia	UK and Ireland	Asia	Total
‘Very concerned’	7	5	16	9
‘Somewhat concerned’	22	13	40	23
Total concerned	30	19	55	32

Table 63: ‘How big a problem is racism in Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic?’ July and November 2020 (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	Australia		UK and Ireland		Asia		Total	
	July	Nov.	July	Nov.	July	Nov.	July	Nov.
‘Very big problem’	8	5	5	3	13	12	8	6
‘Fairly big problem’	29	31	29	32	47	43	31	33
Total problem	36	37	35	35	59	55	39	39

Subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

CHINESE AUSTRALIANS

To further the understanding of experience of Chinese Australians, a small survey comprising seven questions was conducted between 25 May-10 June for the Scanlon Foundation by Bastion Insights, an organisation with track record of surveying the Chinese population in Australia. The survey was completed by 500 respondents, conducted in Simplified Chinese on a non-probability panel established by Bastion on the WeChat online platform. **The findings are consistent with the relatively high levels of reported discrimination experienced by Asian born respondents in the Scanlon Foundation national surveys.**

In response to a question that asked, ‘have you experienced any form of discrimination because of your appearance, ethnicity or national origin over the last 12 months?’, 27% responded yes and a further 20% declined to answer. This high proportion not answering was interpreted by Bastion as a cultural reluctance to draw attention to themselves by a people who seek to avoid confrontation and emphasise harmony over conflict. As a consequence, **experience of discrimination is likely to be under-reported by Chinese Australians.**

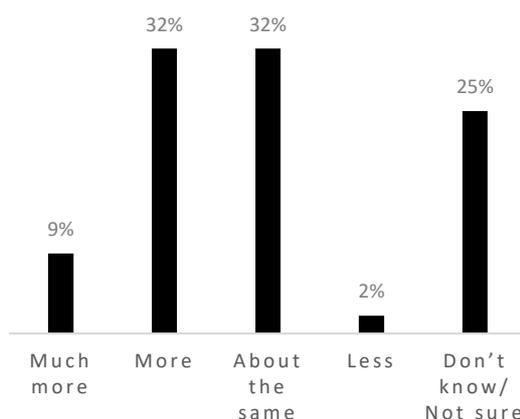
A supplementary question asked respondents to indicate locations where discrimination was experienced during the COVID-19 crisis. The top ranked locations were ‘when shopping’ (24%), on the street (20%), and on public transport (17%). **For this form of question which asked for indication of location, a much higher 52% of respondents indicated experience of discrimination. This proportion is close to the 47% indicated by respondents born in an Asian country when asked to indicate location in the July Scanlon Foundation survey.**

Asked concerning their experiences, 39% of Chinese born respondents agreed with the statement that ‘I feel conscious / nervous in public, particularly when I’m alone,’ 25% that ‘I feel like others were specifically avoiding me / judging me / subtly giving me looks,’ 15% that ‘I was made to feel like I did not belong,’ 15% that ‘I was not offered a job,’ 13% that ‘I lost my job’, and 9% that I was verbally abused.’

Respondents in the Bastion Insights survey were asked if they had experienced ‘more, less or about the same extent of discrimination as before the crisis in Australia?’ Excluding those who indicated that they had no experience of discrimination, **41% indicated ‘much more’ or ‘more’ during the COVID-19 pandemic, a similar proportion to the 39% of Asian born respondents in the July Scanlon Foundation survey;** 32% indicated ‘about the same’, and 2% ‘less’, but a high 25% indicated that they did not know or were unsure, possibly a further indication of desire to avoid confrontation, to offend.

When asked to indicate their opinion on the problem of ‘racism in Australia during the Covid-19 crisis’, 59% of respondents indicated that it was ‘a very big problem’ or ‘a fairly big problem,’ the same proportion that was obtained in the July Scanlon Foundation survey for Asian born respondents.

Figure 45: ‘During the COVID-19 crisis, have you experienced more, less or about the same extent of discrimination as before the crisis in Australia? Respondent born in China, May-June 2020



Source: Bastion Insights

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a powerful tool that enables individuals and groups with a specific agenda to mobilise opinion. Social media enhances the capacity of individuals or groups to articulate their concerns, to link with like-minded people across local, state, and international boundaries, to develop strategy, to provide a platform for leaders, to recruit supporters, to fundraise.

A concern much discussed in recent years is the use of social media to target minorities and spread hate. Indicative of the level of concern, a United Nations Human Rights forum in 2020 was held to discuss the ‘scourge of hate speech’ in social media, contributing to ‘discrimination, hostility and violence around the world.’²³

The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres commented in May 2020 that ‘anti-foreigner sentiment has surged online and in the streets. Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories have spread, and COVID-19-related anti-Muslim attacks have occurred. Migrants and refugees have been vilified as a source of the virus.’²⁴

Former President Obama argued in the context of the 2020 American presidential election that social media ‘turbocharged’ the threat of misinformation which is ‘the single biggest threat to our democracy.’ **If people are unable ‘to distinguish what’s true from what’s false then ... by definition our democracy doesn’t work.’**²⁵

The issue has been belatedly recognised by the operators of social media platforms. Facebook has developed detailed ‘community standards’ which aim to make the platform ‘a safe place’ and disallow ‘expression that threatens people’ which has the ‘potential to intimidate, exclude or silence’. Despite the evolving changes to its guidelines, in the view of critics it has taken too long to develop appropriate standards and enforcement is still inadequate.

²³ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner, ‘UN minorities forum to tackle explosion of hate speech in social media’, Geneva, 17 Nov. 2020; ‘UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech,’ Sept. 2020

²⁴ United Nations Secretary-General, ‘Appeal to address and counter COVID-19 hate speech’, 8 May 2020

²⁵ ‘The Atlantic Daily: Our Interview with Barack Obama’, *The Atlantic*, 16 Nov. 2020; BBC News, ‘Barack Obama: One election won’t stop US ‘truth decay’’, 15 Nov. 2020

REACH OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Market research indicates that in 2020, 85% of the Australian population over the age of 13 have active social media accounts and Australians spend on average one hour 39 minutes per day on social media.²⁶

The most popular social media platforms in Australia in January 2020 were Facebook, with 16 million monthly active Australian users, YouTube with 15 million unique Australian visitors per month, Instagram with 9 million users, and Twitter, of particular relevance in the political context, with 5.3 million users.

Facebook demographics in Australia show that its largest number of users is in the 25-39 age group (6.1 million), followed by 40-55 (4.1 million) and 18-25 (3.5 million).

RACIST CONTENT ONLINE

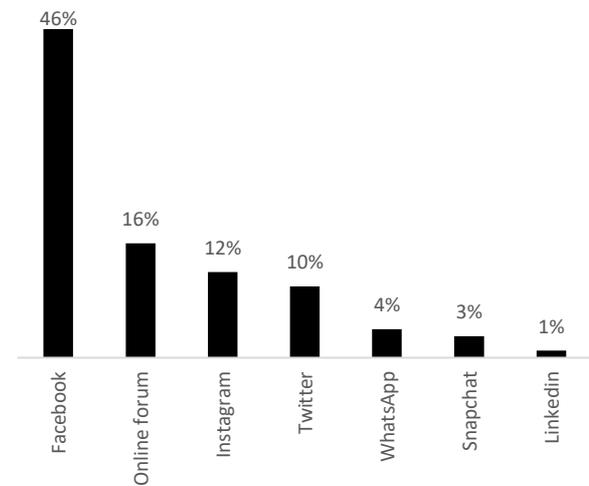
Of the members of the Life in Australia panel, 73% access social media on an average weekday, 77% women, 70% men. The highest proportion, at 86%-88%, are aged 18-34, 75%-79% aged 35-54, 68% aged 55-64, 56% aged 65-74, and 43% over the age of 75. 52% of panel members access social media for more than half an hour a day, including 21% who spend more than two hours online.

The July 2020 Scanlon Foundation survey tested the exposure to hate speech of its respondents, who were asked: **'In the last three months, have you personally seen racist content on any of the following...?'** Seven platforms were specified: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, WhatsApp, and an online discussion forum. Respondents also had the response option 'I have not seen racist content.'

A majority, 55%, indicated that they had seen racist content in the last three months, 45% that they had not. The proportions differ significantly by age group: of **those aged 18-24, 73% had seen racist content, 71% aged 25-34, compared with a smaller but substantial 40% aged 65-74 and 24% aged 75 or over.**

Of the platforms specified, by far the largest proportion, 46%, had seen racist content on Facebook, 16% on online forum, 12% on Instagram, and 10% on Twitter.

Figure 46: In the last three months, have you personally seen racist content on any of the following? Response: Yes, July 2020 (LinA)



In a finding that again serves to highlight the exposure to racist content on Facebook, a substantial majority of 64% in the age group 18-24 had seen such content on the site in the last three months, compared with much lower proportions on other platforms; of those aged 18-24, 33% had seen racist content on Instagram, 29% on Twitter, and 21% on an online forum.

Analysis by gender finds that a higher proportion of women than men indicate that they had seen racist content on Facebook, 51% compared with 43%, also on Instagram (15%, 9%), whereas higher proportions of men than women indicate seeing racist content on Twitter (12% men, 8% women) and an online forum (17%, 15%).

Analysis combining age and gender finds that 74% of women aged 18-24 had seen racist content on Facebook, 67% aged 25-34, and 60% 35-44; the respective proportions for men were 54%, 56% and 43%.

²⁶ <https://www.socialmedianews.com.au/social-media-statistics-australia-january-2020/>

Table 64: 'In the last three months, have you personally seen racist content on any of the following?' Response: Yes, by age and gender, July 2020 (percentage, LinA)

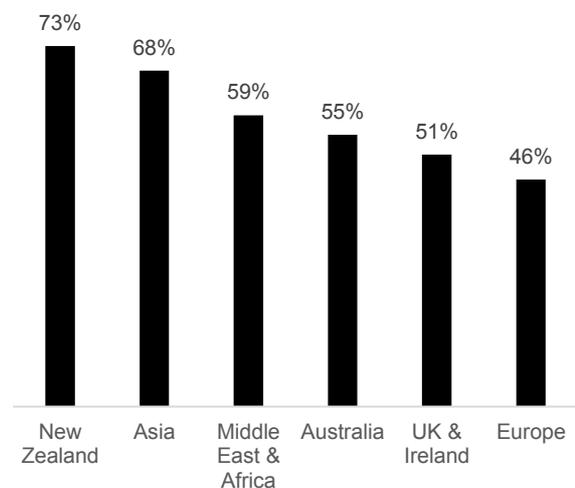
AGE	Facebook		Online forum		Instagram		Twitter		N (unweighted)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
18-24	74	54	23	18	41	26	27	30	55	50
25-34	67	56	22	26	29	19	12	15	238	149
35-44	60	43	17	14	16	7	6	13	284	191
45-54	47	43	13	19	5	8	8	13	293	217
55-64	41	40	11	16	5	4	4	8	335	296
65-74	30	30	10	11	1	2	2	4	336	292
75+	10	17	8	14	0	0	1	3	163	156

Analysis by country or region of birth is limited by the small sample in some cases and the findings can only be seen as broadly indicative; 73% respondents born in New Zealand had seen racist content online in the last three months, 68% born in Asia, 59% Middle East and Africa, 55% Australia, 51% UK and Ireland, 46% Europe.

With analysis narrowed to Facebook, racist content was seen by 64% born in New Zealand, 58% Asia, 46% Middle East and Africa, 45% Australia, 41% UK and Ireland, 35% Europe.

Analysis of online discussion forums finds that racism was seen by 24% born in Asia, 24% New Zealand, 17% UK and Ireland, 16% Middle East and Africa, 15% Australia, and 8% Europe.

Figure 47: 'In the last three months, have you personally seen racist content online?' Response: Yes, by country or region of birth, July 2020 (LinA)



RESPONSE TO RACISM ONLINE

To gauge response to racism online, respondents who had seen racism were asked: **‘Thinking about the most recent time that you saw racist content online, how did you respond?’** The response options were:

- I took no action.
- I reported it to the website/platform operator.
- I reported it to a community organisation.
- I reported it to the police or the government.
- I wrote a comment in response on the website/platform.
- I shared the content with family and/or people I know (friends, colleagues).
- Other (Please specify).

A majority of those who has seen racism online, 54%, indicated that they took no action. When action was taken, it was most often in the form of a report to the website operator, indicated by 21% of respondents; 18% wrote a comment on the website; 11% shared the racist content with family or friends; 3% reported it to a community organisation; and just 1% reported to police or government.

Analysis by age and gender found that:

- Women were more likely than men to act: 51%, compared with 42%.
- Those in the younger age group were more likely to make a report to the website operator; 33%-37% aged 18-34 made a report, compared with 4%-9% aged above 54; a further common action, the writing of a comment on the website, found only minor variation by age or gender, with this action indicated by 18% of men and women.

Analysis by country of birth found that:

- The lowest proportion indicating that they acted in response to racist content were born in the United Kingdom or Ireland (34%), compared with 46%-50% born in Australia, New Zealand, Europe, Middle East or Africa, and the highest at 57% among those born in an Asian country.
- Of those born in an Asian country, the most common response was to share the racist content with family or friends (20%); Asian-born were also most likely to report the content to a community organisation, although only a small minority did so (14%), the next largest group to report to a community organisation were respondents born in the Middle East and Africa (9%).
- Only respondents born in Asia indicated that they reported racist comment to police or government, and then only a very small minority (3%) did so.

Table 65: ‘Thinking about the most recent time that you saw racist content online, how did you respond?’ By country or region of birth, multiple response option, July 2020 (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	Australia	New Zealand	UK and Ireland	Europe	Middle East and Africa	Asia
Took no action	54	52	66	53	50	43
Reported to website operator	22	35	11	13	6	18
Reported to community organisation	2	2	1	0	9	14
Reported to police or government	0	0	0	0	0	3
Wrote a comment on website/platform	17	23	15	26	35	19
Shared with family/ people I know	9	3	12	14	15	20
N (unweighted)	1,059	49	124	66	27	170

GENERATIONS

In discussion of the impact of the pandemic, it has been argued that youth disproportionately bear the economic cost and the Scanlon Foundation survey finds evidence that this occurs. The following analysis focuses on responses from the July 2020 survey. The November findings, obtained at a time when concern about the future had eased, are presented where substantial change in opinion occurred.

Analysis of the level of unemployment or under-employment reported in the July survey finds that among those aged 18-24, 18% lost their jobs; this compares with 6% aged 25-34 who lost their jobs and 4% aged 45-54.

In July, just 42% of respondents (47% in November) aged 18-24 indicate that they were working the same hours as before the pandemic, compared with 64%-72% (74%-77% in November) of those aged 25-64.

The survey registers heightened negative response to some questions on economic circumstances and future outlook for Australia among those aged 18-24.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND LIFE EXPECTATION

Of those aged 18-24, a minority of 44% agree (56% disagree) that people living on low incomes receive 'enough financial support from the government,' compared to 57%-60% aged 25-54. Agreement is lower in November among those aged 25-54, in the range 48%-52%, marginally higher among the 18-24 year old.

A majority indicate that they are satisfied with their present financial situation, in a narrow range from 68% to 71% aged 18-54 in July, marginally lower in November.

The statement that Australia is a 'land of economic opportunity where in the long run hard work brings a better life' obtains disagreement at 39% among those aged 18-24, compared with 27% aged 25-34 and in the range 20%-26% aged 45-74.

When asked if they are optimistic or pessimistic about Australia's future, in July 58% aged 18-24 are optimistic (a higher 68% in November), compared with 70%-73% optimistic among those aged 25-74, 70%-77% in November.

However, when asked if they expect their lives to be **improved in three or four years, the highest agreement is among those aged 18-24** at 70% in July, 84% in November, compared with 63% (69% November) aged 25-34, 56% (60%) aged 35-44, and 31% (42%) aged 55-64. Among the older age groups, a high proportion expect their lives to be unchanged.

Table 66: Social justice and future expectations, selected questions by age, July 2020, November 2020 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

QUESTION	RESPONSE	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Total
'People living on low incomes receive enough financial support from the government'	Strongly Agree	5	11	12	11	8	7	7	9
	Agree	39	46	48	47	44	45	48	45
	Sub-total agree	44 (48)	57 (48)	60 (52)	58 (48)	52 (47)	52 (47)	56 (52)	55 (49)
'How satisfied are you with your present financial situation?'	Very satisfied	7	11	10	9	10	13	16	11
	Satisfied	61	58	58	62	65	71	73	63
	Sub-total satisfied	68 (65)	69 (65)	68 (69)	71 (68)	75 (74)	84 (82)	90 (89)	73 (72)
'Taking all things into consideration, would you say that over the last year you have been (happy/ unhappy)'	Very happy	9	11	12	7	10	15	20	11
	Happy	68	63	64	75	68	73	71	68
	Sub-total happy	76 (64)	74 (70)	76 (79)	81 (82)	79 (81)	87 (89)	91 (92)	79 (79)
'In general, are you optimistic or pessimistic about Australia's future?'	Very optimistic	1	4	6	5	5	6	8	5
	Optimistic	58	67	63	68	65	67	69	65
	Sub-total optimistic	58 (68)	72 (70)	70 (77)	73 (77)	70 (75)	73 (77)	77 (84)	70 (75)
'In three or four years, do you think that your life in Australia will be...?'	Much improved	10	17	20	10	8	5	4	12
	A little improved	60	46	36	38	24	23	19	36
	Sub-total improved	70 (84)	63 (69)	56 (60)	48 (50)	31 (42)	28 (30)	23 (30)	48 (53)
N (unweighted)		106	390	476	511	631	630	319	3,090

Subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

Figure 48: Social justice and future expectations, selected questions by age, positive response, July 2020 (LinA)

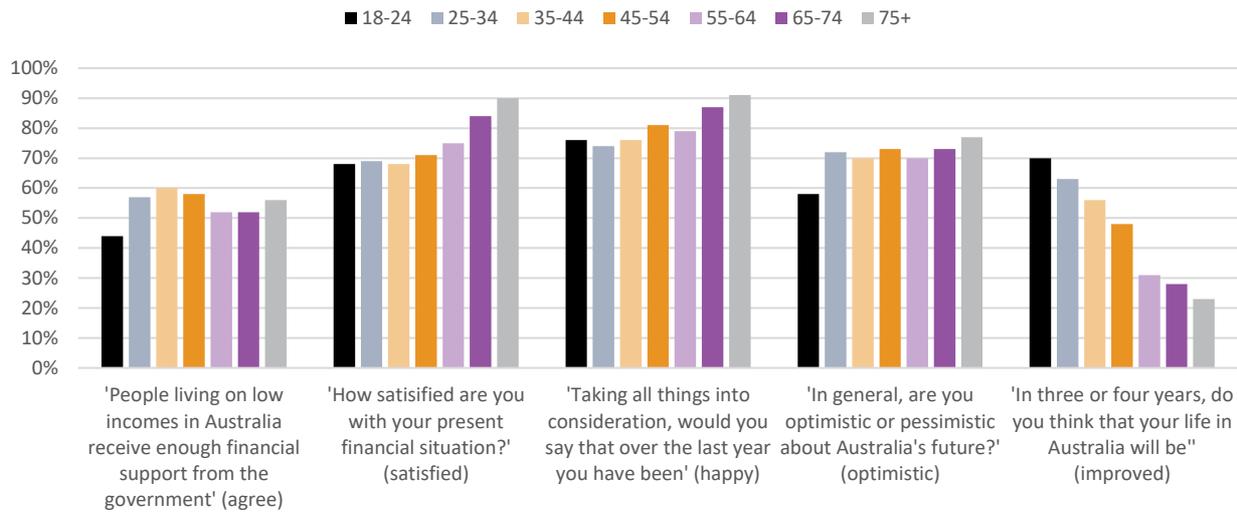


Figure 49: Social justice and future expectations, selected questions, aged 18-24, positive response, 2018-2019 (dotted line), July 2020 (solid line) (LinA)

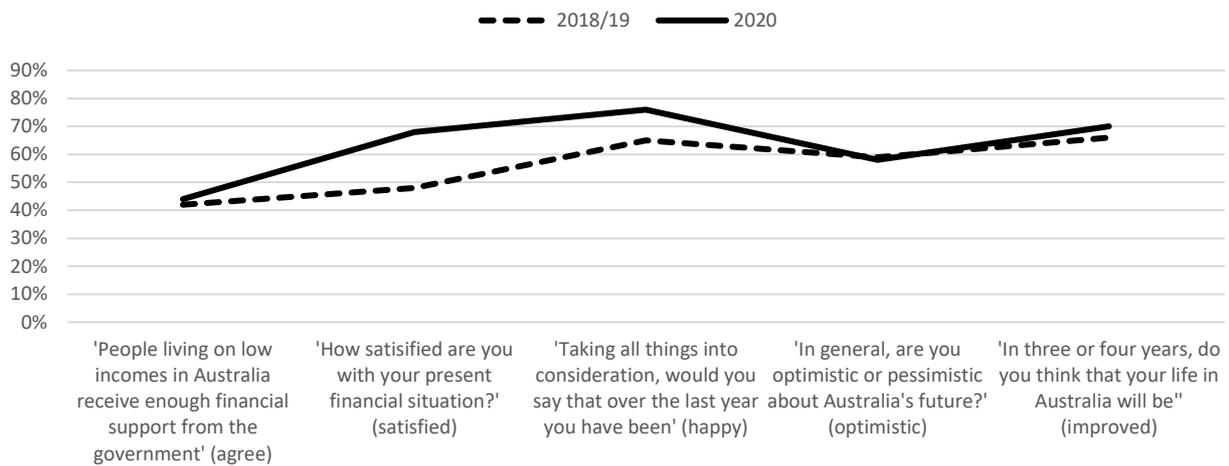


Figure 50: Social justice and future expectations, selected questions, aged 45-54, positive response, 2018-2019 (dotted line), July 2020 (solid line) (LinA)



GOVERNMENT

With regard to questions on government, there was a **relatively low level of trust in the federal government ‘to do the right thing for the Australian people’ among those aged 18-24 (40% July, 47% November) and aged 25-34 (43%, 51%),** compared with those aged 45-54 (59%, 56%). Trust is highest among those aged 65 and above, in the range 63%-67%. However, trust between 2018-19 and July 2020 increased in all age groups, although by the **smallest margin among those aged 18-24 – by 9 percentage points, compared with 14 points aged 25-34, 19 points aged 35-44, and 27 points aged 45-54.**

With regard to the working of government, in July 2020, of those aged 18-24 a majority (63%) considered that it ‘works fine’ or needs only ‘minor change’, the same proportion as those aged 25-34, lower than the 68%-73% indicated by respondents in the other age groups. Just 5% of those aged 25-34 indicated the strongest negative assessment of the system of government, that it should be replaced.

With regard to government response to the pandemic, the majority consider that the response has been well-managed, although in lower proportion in the younger age groups – in July, 67% aged 18-24, 77% aged 25-34, 84%-89% aged 35-54, and 90%-96% aged above 55. **Little change was recorded in November, except in the 18-24 age group, where positive view of government response increased from 67% to 81%.**

In response to a question on lockdown restrictions, a higher proportion were positive. In July, 89% of respondents aged 18-24 agreed that the restrictions were required, in the range 92%-97% in other age groups. **Almost no one, less than 2%, indicated that the restrictions were ‘definitely not required’.**

When asked if they considered that it would be good to have government run by a ‘strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament,’ just 2%-6% indicated that it would be ‘very good’, in the range 14%-30% ‘very good’ or ‘fairly good,’ with the highest percentage in the 25-44 age groups. There was change in November in the 18-24 age group, an increase from 19% to 29% of those who were favourable to a ‘strong leader.’

Table 67: ‘How often do you think the government in Canberra can be trusted to do the right thing for the Australian people?’ By age, July 2020, November 2020 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Total
Almost always	1	2	3	6	6	10	8	5
Most of the time	39	41	49	54	50	53	58	49
Sub-total	40 (47)	43 (51)	52 (50)	59 (56)	56 (57)	63 (66)	67 (69)	54 (56)

Subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

Figure 51: Trust in government ‘almost always’ and ‘most of the time.’ By age, 2018-19, July 2020 (percentage, LinA)

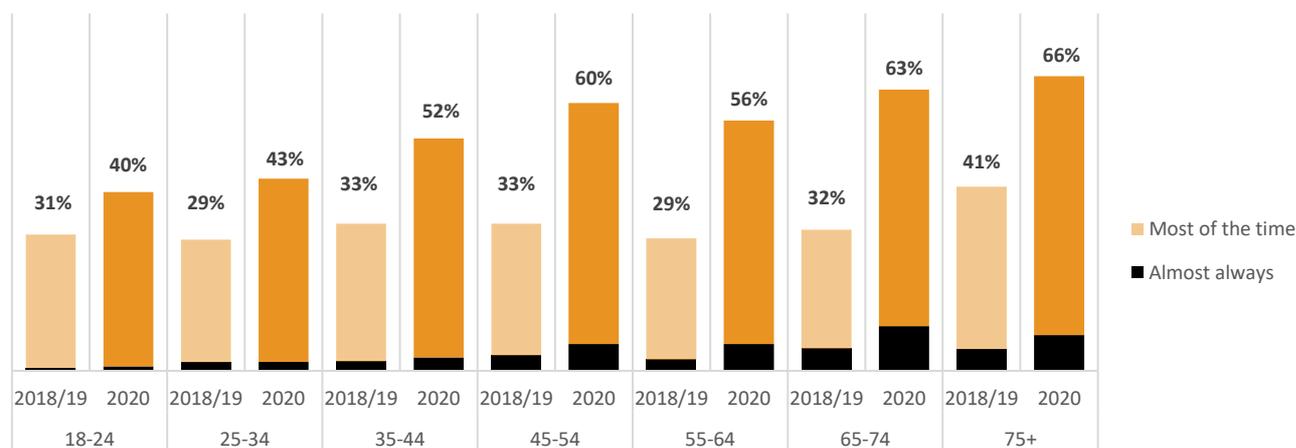


Table 68: 'In your opinion, how well is the federal government responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?', July 2020, November 2020 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Total
Very well	11	17	21	31	36	44	49	28
Well	55	60	63	59	54	51	47	57
Sub-total well	67 (81)	77 (79)	84 (82)	89 (85)	90 (85)	95 (90)	96 (94)	85 (85)
Fairly badly	29	18	11	8	8	5	3	11
Very badly	5	5	5	2	2	0	0	3
Sub-total badly	33 (19)	22 (21)	16 (17)	10 (14)	10 (14)	5 (9)	3 (6)	14 (15)

Table 69: 'Do you think that the lockdown restrictions that were imposed in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic were required?' July 2020, (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Total
Definitely required	78	82	77	74	79	84	81	79
Probably required	11	15	18	18	15	12	17	15
Sub-total required	89	97	96	92	94	96	97	94
Probably not required	10	3	2	5	5	3	2	4
Definitely not required	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	1
Sub-total not required	11	3	4	7	6	4	2	5

Table 70: 'Would you say that during the COVID-19 pandemic, having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament would be ...' July 2020, November 2020 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Total
Very good	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	3
Fairly good	16	27	25	13	12	9	14	18
Sub-total good	19 (29)	30 (28)	27 (28)	16 (20)	17 (15)	14 (11)	18 (16)	21 (21)
Fairly bad	41	31	31	29	30	27	27	30
Very bad	38	38	41	55	52	59	54	47
Sub-total bad	79 (71)	68 (70)	71 (70)	84 (79)	82 (85)	85 (88)	81 (84)	78 (78)

Subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

NATIONAL IDENTITY

A large majority of the 18-24 age group indicate identification with Australia and the Australian way of life, although at a lower level than for other age groups; difference is especially marked at the strongest level of agreement, in findings that are consistent with the pattern of response in past years.

Thus 77% (75% in 2018-19) aged 18-24 agree that they take pride in the Australian way of life and culture, 73% (73%) agree that it is important to maintain the Australian way of life and culture, and a higher proportion at 86% (84%) indicate a sense of belonging in Australia. The 18-24 and 25-34 age groups are closest in the proportions indicating a positive response, but **a higher proportion (90% or above) indicate a positive response among those aged 35 or above.**

Difference is more marked at the level of strongest agreement; for example, 'strong agreement' with the proposition that 'in the modern world, maintaining the Australian way of life and culture is important' is indicated by 19% (21% 2018-19) aged 18-24, 33% (32%) aged 25-34, 41% (43%) aged 35-44, and in the range 61%-67% (61%-70%) among those aged 55 or above.

Table 71: National identity, selected questions by age, July 2020 (percentage, LinA)

QUESTION	RESPONSE	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Total
'To what extent do you take pride in the Australian way of life and culture?'	To a great extent	22	33	46	52	55	63	71	48
	To a moderate extent	55	48	44	39	38	32	24	41
	Sub-total	77	81	90	91	93	95	95	89
'To what extent do you have a sense of belonging in Australia?'	To a great extent	39	49	53	68	74	80	86	63
	To a moderate extent	47	36	36	27	23	17	13	29
	Sub-total	86	84	90	95	97	98	98	92
'In the modern world, maintaining the Australian way of life and culture is important'	Strongly Agree	19	33	41	55	61	64	67	48
	Agree	54	47	47	38	33	31	30	41
	Sub-total	73	80	88	94	94	95	97	89

Subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

Figure 52: National identity, selected questions by age, July 2020 (LinA)

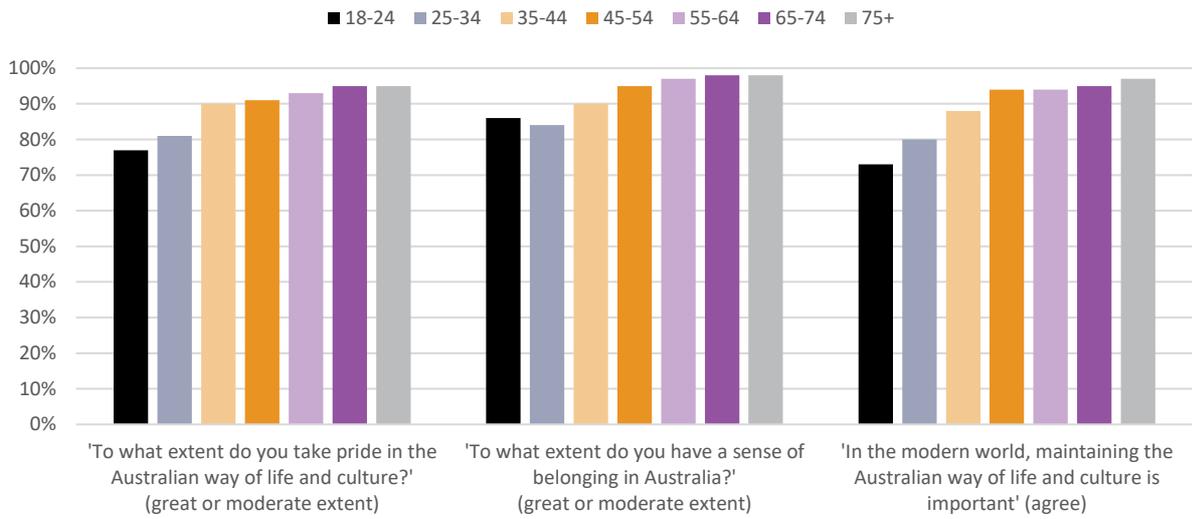
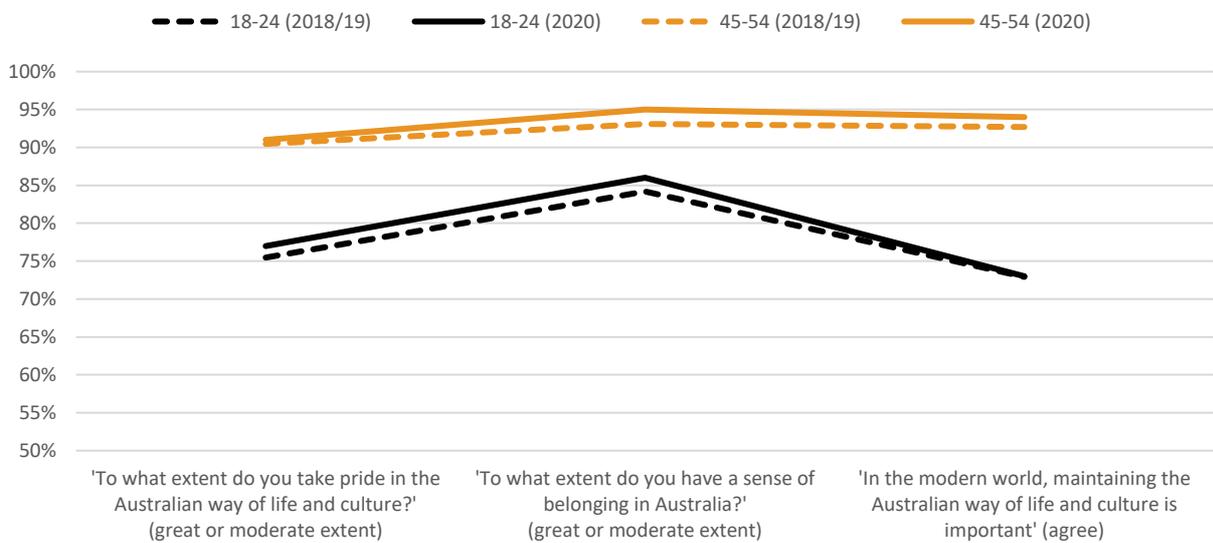


Figure 53: National identity, selected questions by age, 2018-19 (dotted line), July 2020 (solid line) (LinA)



IMMIGRATION AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

With regard to issues of immigration, multiculturalism and ethnic diversity, past Scanlon Foundation surveys have found that the younger age groups are the most positive, and **this finding remains a feature of the 2020 survey. For nearly all questions the highest level of positive response is among those aged 18-24**, then decreased positive response by age, with the lowest positive among those over the age of 65. **Relatively higher concerns over their financial welfare among those aged 18-24 have not led to heightened concerns about immigration and cultural diversity.**

The statement that ‘accepting immigrants from many countries makes Australia stronger’ finds a high level of agreement across all age groups, in the range 62%-68% among those aged 45 or above, but at a higher 84% among those aged 18-24 and 80% aged 25-34.

The highest proportion indicating disagreement with discrimination in immigrant selection policy on the basis of race or ethnicity is among those aged 18-24 (89%), then 25-34 (87%), with lower levels among those aged 45 or above (74%-81%). A lower proportion, but still a large majority, disagree with discrimination on the basis of religion, in the range 72%-75% among those aged 45 or above, compared with 84% aged 18-24 and 79%-80% aged 25-44.

With regard to questions on cultural diversity, the proposition that ‘**multiculturalism has been good for Australia**’ finds almost unanimous agreement at 96% among those aged 18-24, 90% aged 25-34, compared with 75% aged 65-74. The proposition that ‘**too many immigrants are not adopting Australia values**’ finds majority disagreement (62%) only among those aged 18-24, with disagreement in the range 44%-48% aged 25-44, and a much lower 24%-29% aged 55 and over.

Table 72: Immigration and cultural diversity, selected questions, positive response by age, July 2020 (percentage, LinA)

QUESTION	RESPONSE	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Total
‘...number of immigrants accepted into Australia in recent years’	Too high	17	25	31	46	50	50	48	38
	Strongly agree	21	24	24	10	14	13	14	18
‘Immigrants are generally good for Australia’s economy’	Agree	66	55	58	69	64	68	70	63
	Sub-total agree	88	79	82	79	78	82	83	81
	Strongly agree	2	7	7	4	6	4	5	5
‘Immigrants take jobs away’	Agree	16	24	22	27	28	25	24	24
	Sub-total agree	18	31	29	31	34	29	29	30
	Strongly agree	28	26	24	12	13	13	11	19
‘Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger’	Agree	56	54	51	56	53	49	51	53
	Sub-total agree	84	80	75	68	66	62	63	71
	Strongly disagree	53	54	44	28	34	24	25	38
‘...when a family or individual applies to migrate to Australia it should be possible for them to be rejected on the basis of their race or ethnicity’	Disagree	35	33	40	52	46	53	49	43
	Sub-total disagree	89	87	84	81	80	78	74	89
	Strongly disagree	44	45	41	24	28	23	29	44
‘...when a family or individual applies to migrate to Australia it should be possible for them to be rejected on the basis of their religion’	Disagree	39	34	39	49	44	52	46	39
	Sub-total disagree	84	79	80	73	72	75	75	76
	Strongly Agree	45	35	32	16	20	15	19	26
‘Multiculturalism has been good for Australia’	Agree	51	55	56	65	59	61	54	58
	Sub-total agree	96	90	87	82	79	75	73	84
	Strongly disagree	14	10	7	3	5	4	1	6
‘Too many immigrants are not adopting Australian values’	Disagree	48	38	37	31	24	23	23	32
	Sub-total disagree	62	48	44	34	29	27	24	39

Subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

Figure 54: Immigration and cultural diversity, selected questions, positive response by age, July 2020 (LinA)

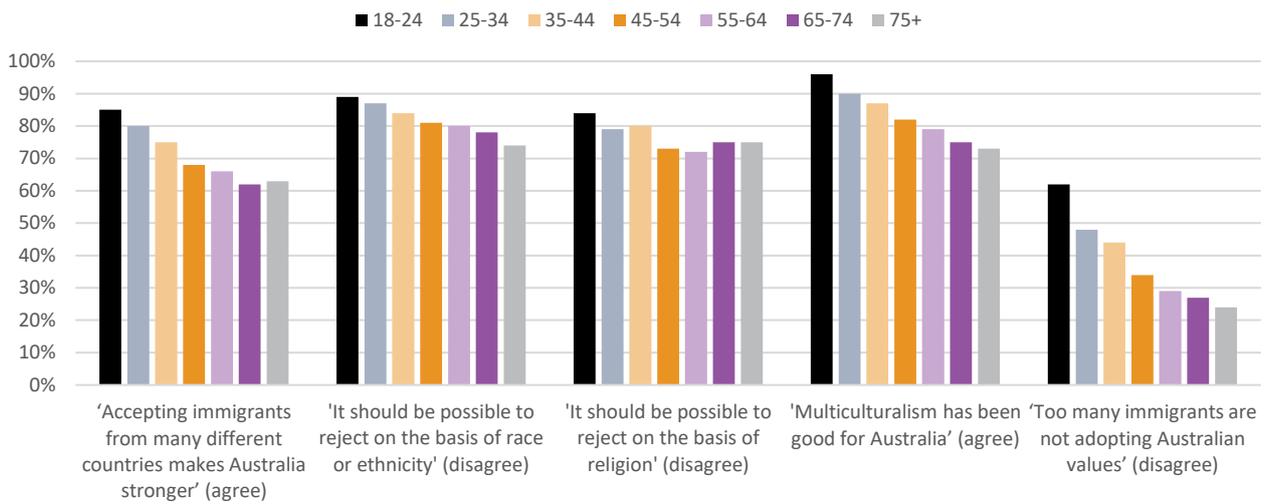


Figure 55: Immigration and cultural diversity, selected questions, positive response aged 18-24, 2018-19 (dotted line), July 2020 (solid line) (LinA)

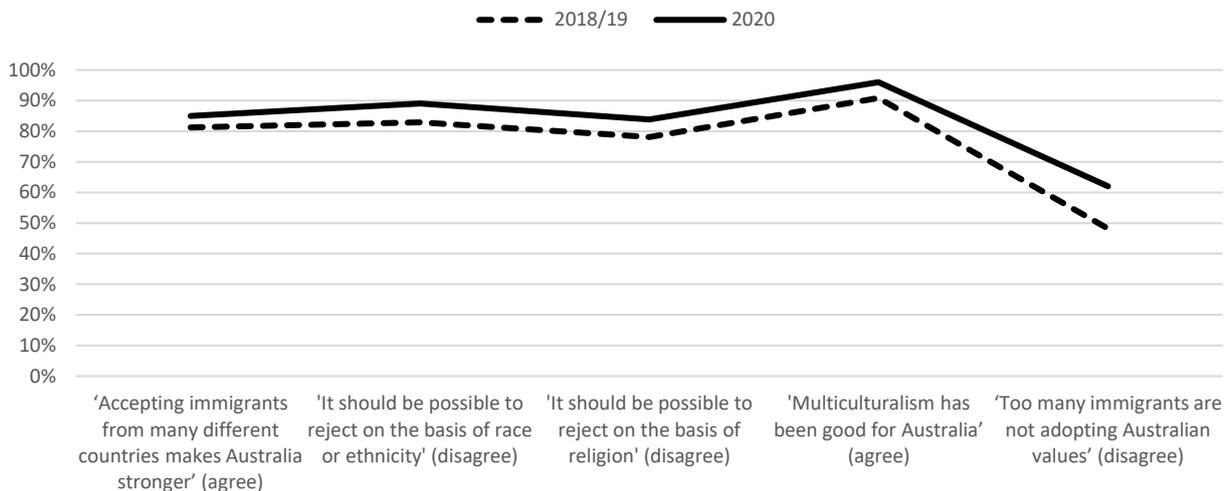
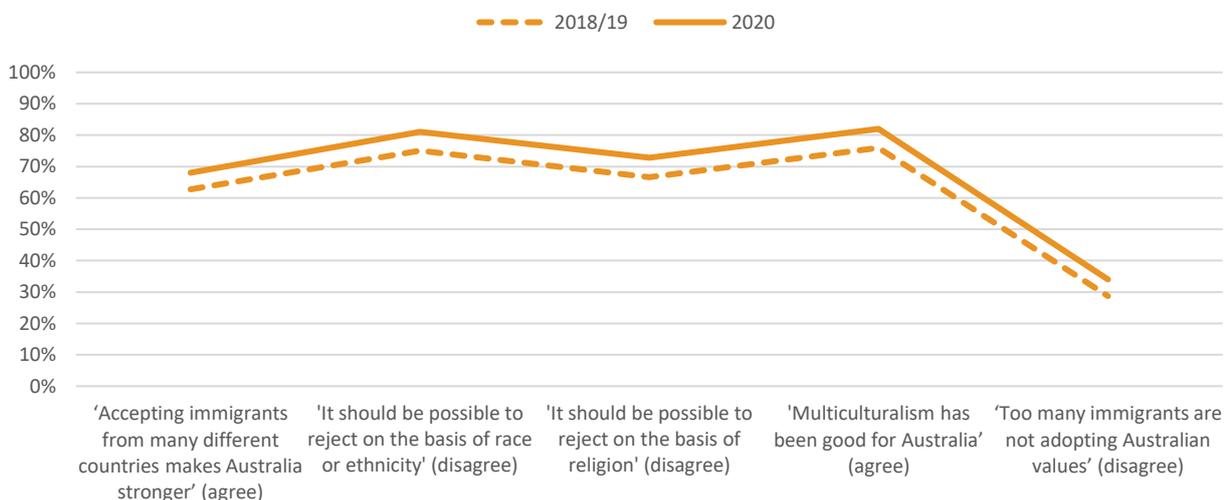


Figure 56: Immigration and cultural diversity, selected questions, positive response aged 45-54, 2018-19 (dotted line), July 2020 (solid line) (LinA)



MINORITIES

With regard to **attitude towards minority faith and national groups, again the most positive attitudes are in the younger age groups.**

As has been discussed earlier in this report, attitudes to six faith groups (Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh and Muslim) were considered in the 2020 Scanlon Foundation surveys.

When given five response options, 'strong negative', 'somewhat negative', 'neutral', 'somewhat positive', and 'strong positive', the largest proportion (41%-55%) select neutral. Significant variation by age is evident only in response to Christians and Muslims.

With regard to attitude towards those of Christian faith, the younger age groups are more negative, in July, 18% aged 18-24, 17% aged 25-34, compared with 4%-6% aged 65 and over. In November, a higher proportion of the younger age groups were more negative towards Christians, 28% of those aged 18-24, 21% aged 25-34.

This general finding likely reflects the religious identification of respondents, with 72%-83% of those over the age of 65 indicating that they are Christian, compared to 32% aged 18-24. A majority (55%) aged 18-24 indicate that they have no religion, compared with 37% aged 35-44, 29% aged 45-64, 23% aged 65-74, and 14% aged 75 or above.

With regard to Muslims, a lower proportion of young respondents indicate a negative attitude than among those over the age of 45: 25% aged 18-24, 39%-44% aged 45-74, and 49% aged 75 and over. There was minor change in these proportions in the November survey, with lower negative response among those aged over 24.

Consideration of negative attitude towards immigrants from Middle-Eastern and Asian countries finds that the lowest proportion with negative views are again within the young age groups. Thus, of those aged 18-24, 66% are positive and 31% negative towards immigrants from Sudan; among those aged 45-54 the proportions are almost even, 46% positive, 50% negative, and among older age groups negative views are held by the majority, for example among those aged 55-64, 37% are positive, 60% negative.

There is a similar distribution of attitudes towards immigrants from China; among those aged 18-24, 65% are positive, 33% negative, an almost even division (48%, 49%) among those aged 45-54, and majority negative among older age groups, although a smaller proportion are negative than towards Sudanese, in the range 50%-53%. The pattern of response is similar in the July and November surveys, although lower negative response is indicated by those over the age of 45.

Table 73: 'Is your personal attitude positive, negative or neutral towards...?' Response: 'very negative', 'somewhat negative', July and November 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

FAITH GROUP		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Total
Christians	July	18 (26)	17 (21)	12 (14)	7 (7)	10 (8)	6 (10)	4 (4)	11 (13)
	November	28	21	12	6	8	4	4	12
Muslims	July	25 (21)	29 (34)	35 (42)	39 (43)	44 (47)	43 (49)	49 (44)	37 (40)
	November	25	27	31	34	42	42	48	35

Table 74: 'What is your religion, even if you are not currently practising?' July 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

FAITH	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Average
Christian	32 (38)	35 (32)	44 (48)	63 (66)	66 (69)	72 (72)	83 (74)	54 (55)
No religion	55 (53)	52 (52)	37 (40)	29 (27)	29 (25)	23 (21)	14 (16)	35 (35)

Table 75: Attitudes towards immigrants from Sudan, July 2020, November 2020 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Average
Very positive	14	12	9	6	6	6	5	8
Somewhat positive	52	46	38	41	31	33	30	39
Sub-total positive	66 (65)	58 (50)	47 (39)	46 (35)	37 (31)	38 (33)	35 (29)	47 (40)
Neutral	2	2	3	3	3	6	4	3
Somewhat negative	24	28	29	30	41	33	40	32
Very negative	7	10	20	20	19	22	20	17
Sub-total negative	31 (28)	38 (48)	49 (58)	50 (60)	60 (67)	56 (60)	60 (64)	49 (56)

Table 76: Attitudes towards immigrants from China, July 2020, November 2020 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Average
Very positive	12	11	10	6	7	6	6	8
Somewhat positive	53	42	43	41	38	37	39	41
Sub-total positive	65 (64)	52 (55)	52 (51)	48 (55)	45 (47)	43 (51)	45 (48)	50 (53)
Neutral	1	1	2	2	2	4	4	2
Somewhat negative	24	27	29	33	32	35	30	30
Very negative	10	18	17	16	21	16	20	17
Sub-total negative	33 (33)	45 (43)	45 (48)	49 (42)	53 (50)	51 (44)	50 (48)	47 (44)

Subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

Figure 57: Negative ('very negative' or 'somewhat negative') attitudes towards immigrants from UK, China, Sudan, Iraq, Lebanon, July 2020 (LinA)

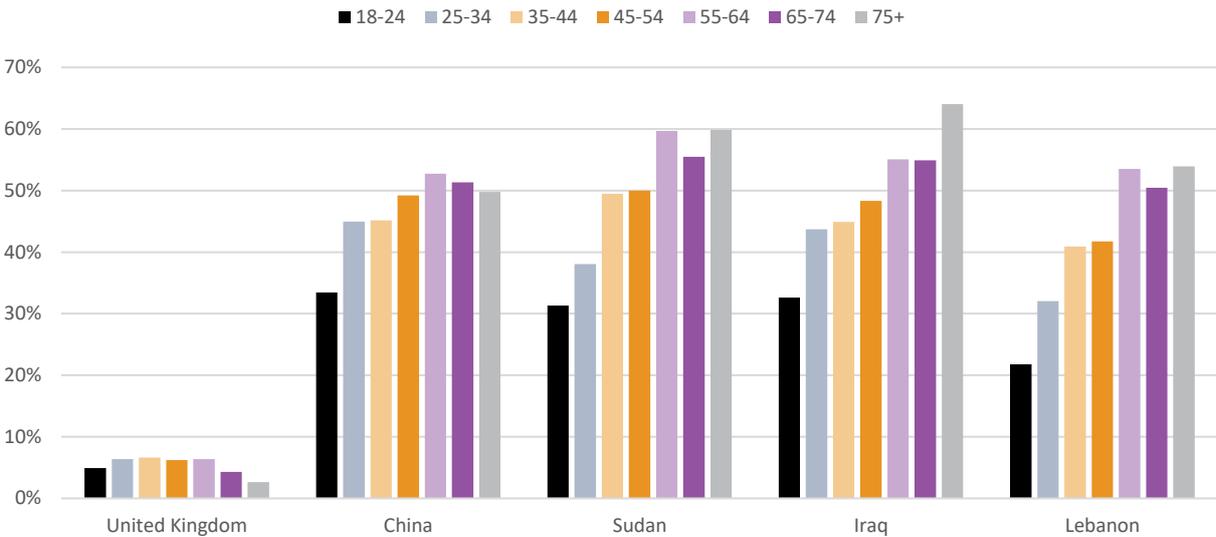
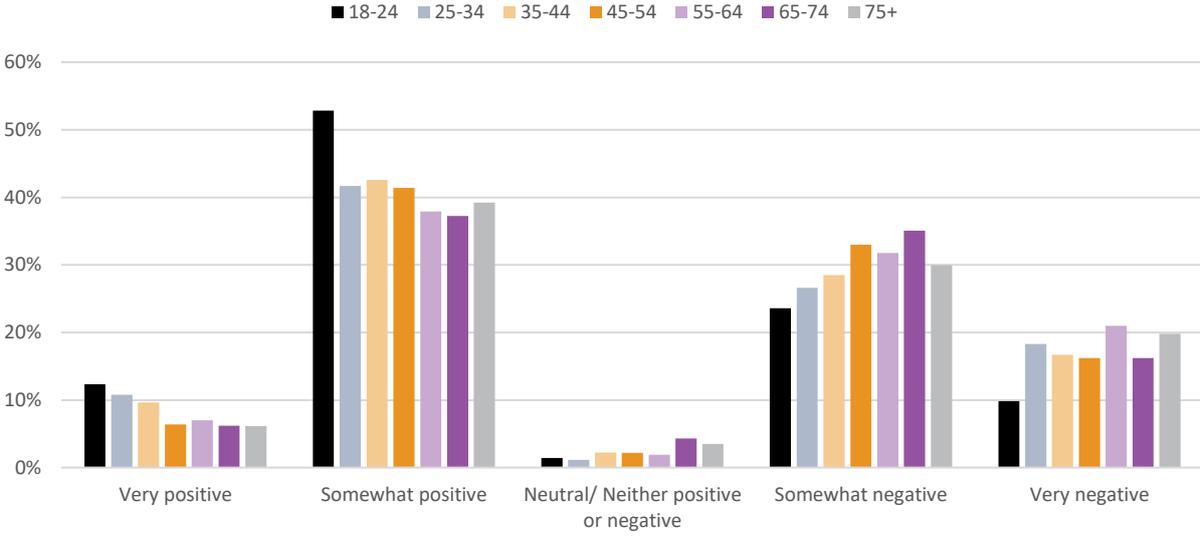


Figure 58: Attitudes towards immigrants from China by age, July 2020 (LinA)



A summary indication of attitudes to immigration, multiculturalism and cultural diversity is provided by averaging positive responses to ten survey questions. The **average positive response is 73% among those aged 18-24, 65% aged 25-34, 57% aged 45-54, 53% aged 65-74, and 52% aged 75 or above.**

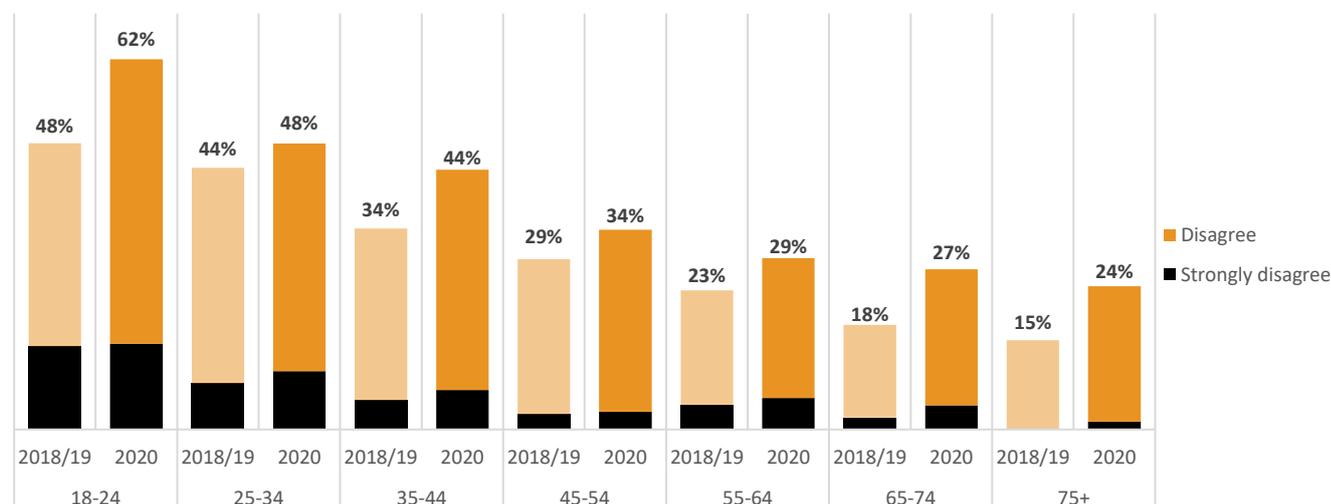
The greatest variation by age is in response to questions on government assistance for cultural maintenance (range from 71% to 23% positive), immigrant adoption of Australian values (62% to 24%), and attitude to immigrants from Iraq (65% to 29%).

Table 77: Attitudes to immigration, multiculturalism and cultural and religious diversity, selected questions by age, positive response, July 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

QUESTION AND RESPONSE	18-24	25-34	45-54	65-74	75+
'Immigration from many different countries makes Australia stronger' (agree)	84 (81)	80 (80)	68 (63)	62 (51)	63 (49)
'Ethnic minorities in Australia should be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions' (agree)	71 (59)	50 (43)	28 (21)	18 (22)	23 (19)
'Multiculturalism has been good for Australia' (agree)	96 (91)	90 (87)	82 (76)	75 (63)	73 (77)
'Someone who was born outside of Australia is just as likely to be a good citizen as someone born in Australia' (agree)*	90	92	89	90	90
'Too many immigrants are not adopting Australian values' (disagree)**	62 (48)	48 (44)	34 (29)	27 (18)	24 (15)
Attitude to Muslims (positive)	21 (20)	23 (17)	21 (15)	20 (21)	22 (21)
Attitude to immigrants from Iraq (positive)*	65	53	48	38	29
Attitude to immigrants from China (positive)*	65	52	48	43	45
Reject on the basis of race or ethnicity (disagree)	89 (83)	87 (85)	81 (75)	78 (65)	74 (64)
Reject on the basis of religion (disagree)	84 (78)	79 (78)	73 (67)	75 (58)	75 (68)
AVERAGE	72.7	65.4	57.2	52.6	51.8

* not asked in 2018-19; ** asked in 2019 (not in 2018)

Figure 59: 'Too many immigrants are not adopting Australian values,' 'strongly disagree' or 'disagree' by age, 2018-19, July 2020 (LinA)



NEIGHBOURHOOD

The 2020 Scanlon Foundation surveys included five questions concerning neighbourhood life; **in July it found a higher proportion of positive responses to four questions, marginally more negative to one, and further heightened positive responses in November.**

In July, 86% of respondents (87% in November) indicated agreement that people were 'willing to help their neighbours', compared with 81% in 2019.

In July and November, 84% agreed that in the local area 'people from different national or ethnic groups get on well together', 78% in 2019.

In response to a question that asked if 'living in your local area is becoming better, worse, or unchanged?', in July 84% and in November 88% indicated better or unchanged, up from 80% in 2019 and 78% in 2018.

Concern over becoming a victim of crime in the local area increased between 2010 and 2016 (from 26% to 36%), then stabilised. It was at 34% in 2019, substantially lower by 8 percentage points to 26% in July and November 2020. 74% indicated that they were 'not very worried' or 'not at all worried' about becoming a victim of crime.

The one area to record heightened negative response in July concerned sense of safety walking alone at night. Since 2009 an average close to 64% of respondents have indicated that they felt safe walking alone at night, 63% in 2019, **a lower 59% in July 2020**, but close to the long-term average at 66% in November.

The Scanlon Foundation survey has also obtained indication of state level difference; surveys before 2020 found that of the mainland states Victorians have consistently indicated the highest proportion concerned about crime and safety walking alone at night.

In July 2020, in response to sense of safety when walking alone at night, 45% of Victorian respondents indicated that they felt 'very unsafe' or 'a bit unsafe,' 9 percentage points higher than New South Wales (36%), 7 percentage points higher than Queensland (38%), and 10 percentage points higher than South Australia (35%), although at the same level as Western Australia (45%).

In November, there was a substantial decline in three of the states in the proportion indicating concern when walking alone at night, down by 8 percentage points in Victoria, 7 percentage points in Western Australia and New South Wales.

With regard to concern at becoming a victim of crime, decline was indicated in all states, in Victoria down from 39% in 2019 to 32% in July, Western Australian from 43% to 31%, Queensland from 36% to 26%, New South Wales from 28% to 23%, and in South Australia from 31% to 21%. There was only marginal change in November, with further decline in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.

In the analysis of sub-groups, results for the July 2020 survey were compared with combined data from the 2018-19 LinA surveys. **Concern at becoming a victim of crime was lower in almost all of the 33 sub-groups considered, with the exception of 4 sub-groups.** A standout finding was the level of concern indicated by those 'struggling to pay bills' or 'poor', indicated by 51% of respondents in 2020, 50% in 2018-19; concern above 35% was only indicated by one other sub-group, those of non-English speaking background (40% in 2020, 42% in 2018-19); it was at 34% among those 'just getting along' financially, those whose highest level of education was to Year 11, and aged 25-34.

The lowest level of concern was indicated by those whose financial situation was 'prosperous' or 'very comfortable' (16% in 2020, 19% in 2018-19), the only sub-group to register concern below 20%.

Table 78: Selected questions concerning neighbourhood, 2010-17 RDD, 2018-20 LinA (percentage)

QUESTION AND RESPONSE - POSITIVE	2010	2012	2014	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 July	2020 Nov.
'People in your local area are willing to help their neighbours.' ('Strongly agree', 'agree')	83	84	84	81	83	81	81	86*	87
'Your local area... is a place where people from different national or ethnic groups get on well together.' ('Strongly agree', 'agree')	75	72	79	74	76	76	78	84*	84
'How safe do you feel walking alone at night in your local area?' ('Very safe', 'safe')	65	65	68	64	66	60	63	59	66**
'...how worried are you about becoming a victim of crime in your local area.' ('Not very worried', 'not at all worried')	73	73	70	64	64	66	66	74*	74
'Is living in your local area becoming better, worse or unchanged?' ('Much better', 'Better', 'Unchanged')	NA	NA	82	83	81	78	80	84*	88

QUESTION AND RESPONSE - NEGATIVE	2010	2012	2014	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 July	2020 Nov.
'People in your local area are willing to help their neighbours.' ('Strongly disagree', 'disagree')	13	11	12	14	13	18	19	13*	13
'Your local area is a place where people from different national or ethnic groups get on well together.' ('Strongly disagree', 'disagree')	7	9	10	11	12	21	18	14*	14
'How safe do you feel walking alone at night in your local area?' ('Very unsafe', 'a bit unsafe')	30	28	26	28	29	38	34	39*	34**
'...how worried are you about becoming a victim of crime in your local area.' ('Very worried', 'fairly worried')	26	26	30	36	35	34	34	26*	26
'Is living in your local area becoming better, worse or unchanged.' ('Much worse', 'worse')	NA	NA	16	15	18	22	20	16*	12**

* Change between 2019 and July 2020 statistically significant at p<.05
 ** Change between July and December 2020 statistically significant at p<.05

Figure 60: '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' or 'fairly worried', July 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

Gender	Female	Male					
	28 (37)	25 (30)					
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	32 (40)	23 (29)	31 (41)	21 (33)	26 (32)		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	28 (35)	22 (31)					
Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	31 (34)	34 (32)	25 (35)	26 (31)	23 (34)	20 (43)	22 (28)
Highest completed education	Postgraduate degree	Bachelor degree	Diploma/ Technical Certificate	Trade/ Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11	
	24 (30)	22 (29)	21 (34)	31 (24)	28 (33)	34 (45)	
Financial situation	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ Poor			
	16 (19)	22 (31)	34 (38)	51 (50)			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation			
	26 (34)	26 (33)	21 (21)	32 (48)			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	23 (32)	21 (29)	40 (42)				

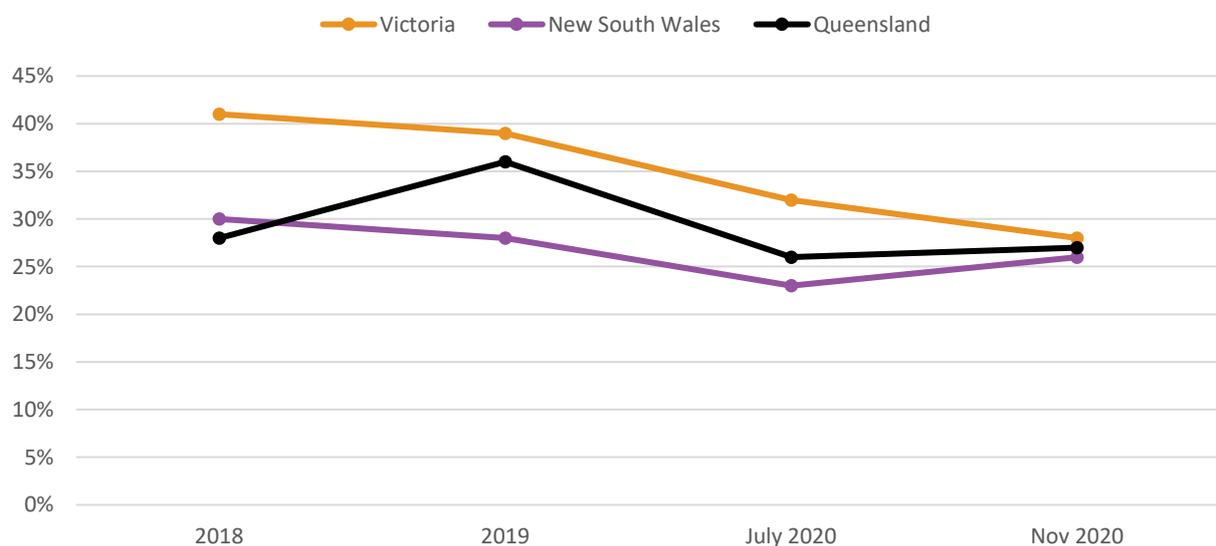
Table 79: ‘How safe do you feel walking alone at night in your local area?’ Response: ‘very unsafe’ and ‘a bit unsafe’ by state, 2018-20 (LinA)

	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland
2018-19	47	33	39	37	34
2019	38	29	36	29	38
2020 July	45	36	45	35	38
2020 November	37	29	38	33	37

Table 80: ‘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’ by state, 2018-2020 LinA (percentage, LinA)

	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland
2018	41	30	39	34	28
2019	39	28	43	31	36
2020 July	32	23	31	21	26
2020 November	28	26	29	17	27

Figure 61: ‘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, 2018-20 (LinA)



POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION

A key question explored in this report is whether the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been greater in some segments of the population. One approach to this question is to explore attitudes among supporters of different political parties. Past Scanlon Foundation surveys have indicated the pattern of differentiation among the supporters of political parties. To what extent has this pattern been maintained in 2020?

For this analysis, political identification is established by a question that asks those respondents who are Australian citizens (88% of the July sample, 91% November): 'If there was a Federal election held today, for which party would you probably vote?' As in the analysis by age group, the main focus is on the findings of the July survey.

The four largest groups, the focus of the following analysis, are Liberal/ National, 39% of respondents in July (38% in November), Labor 30% (30%), Greens 11% (12%), and One Nation 4% (4%).

THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM FACING AUSTRALIA TODAY

In response to the open-ended question 'what do you think is the most important problem facing Australia today?', there is agreement among the supporters of the four parties. **The COVID-19 pandemic dominates, displacing the economy as the first ranked issue in the July survey**, although selected by a larger proportion of supporters of the two major parties, 68% Liberal/ National, 66% Labor, and a lower proportion of Greens 54% and One Nation at 49%. There is also agreement that the second ranked issue is the economy, selected within a narrow range of 13%-16%.

Consistent with the findings of the 2018-19 surveys, a relatively high proportion of Greens and One Nation supporters indicate a further issue (second or third ranked) that is very important to them: among Greens supporters, 20% (31% in 2018-19) select the environment, among One Nation, 10% (23% in 2018-19) select immigration and population issues.

In November, the COVID-19 pandemic declined in importance, but it remained the first ranked issue for the two major parties. For Liberal/National supporters the economy is of almost equal importance with the COVID-19 pandemic (35% pandemic, 30% economy), for Labor the pandemic is of greater relative significance (33% pandemic, 22% economy).

In contrast, for Greens supporters in November the environment is clearly first ranked (45%, 24% pandemic), for One Nation the economy is first ranked (33%, 11% pandemic), while immigration and population issues are indicated by 12%.

Table 81: 'What do you think is the most important problem facing Australia today?', July 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

PROBLEM	Greens	Labor	Liberal/ National	One Nation
COVID-19, including impact on the economy (N/a in 2018/19)	54	66	68	49
Economy/ unemployment/ poverty	13 (18)	15 (32)	16 (31)	14 (19)
Environment – climate change/ water shortages (concern)	20 (31)	6 (14)	1 (5)	1 (6)
Government, quality of politicians	4 (11)	2 (5)	1 (7)	6 (11)
Social issues – (family breakdown, childcare, drug use, lack of personal direction)	0 (8)	1 (8)	3 (11)	2 (8)
Immigration/ population growth (negative)	1 (1)	1 (5)	1 (12)	10 (23)

Table 82: 'What do you think is the most important problem facing Australia today?', November 2020 (LinA)

PROBLEM	Greens	Labor	Liberal/ National	One Nation
COVID-19, including impact on the economy (NA in 2018/19)	24	33	35	11
Economy/ unemployment/ poverty	12	22	30	33
Environment – climate change/ water shortages (concern)	45	18	4	0
Government, quality of politicians	4	5	2	5
Social issues – (family breakdown, childcare, drug use, lack of personal direction)	5	4	7	7
Immigration/ population growth (negative)	1	2	4	12
Defence, national security	0	2	5	6

GOVERNANCE AND POLITICS

As discussed earlier in the report, a key 2020 finding is the increased level of trust in government. This is indicated by positive response to the question ‘How often do you think the government in Canberra can be trusted to do the right thing for the Australian people,’ which increased from 36% in 2019 to 54% in July 2020 and 56% in November.

Increased trust in government was indicated by supporters of all four political parties, although not at a uniform level. As to be expected, the highest level of trust is among supporters of the Liberal/ National party, the current party of government.

Among supporters of the Liberal/ National coalition increase in trust was by 26 percentage points (to 75% in July), Labor 21 points (to 43%), and a lower 10 points Greens (to 31% July). One Nation increased by 22 points, from a low 9% to 31%, with trust at the same level as indicated by Greens supporters. In November trust was little changed from July, within 3 percentage points of the July level for the four parties.

With regard to the working of the political system, there was again an increase in positive response, but by a smaller proportion. In response to a question that asked, ‘Would you say that the system of government we have in Australia works fine, needs minor change, needs major change, or should be replaced,’ a majority has supported minor or no change, in 2019 indicated by 62% of all survey respondents, in July 2020 by 69% and in November by 72%.

The increase was not uniform among supporters of the different parties; 8 percentage points by Liberal/ National supporters (to 84% in July, 86% in November), 10 points by Labor (to 65%, 71%), 21 points by One Nation (to 47%, 49%), and by a low 4 points Greens (to 52%, 53%).

A question on preference for a non-democratic form of government, asked in terms of whether government by a ‘strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament’ would be a good way to govern Australia,’ found that **a substantial majority of supporters of each of the four political parties indicated that it would be ‘very bad’ or ‘bad’:** in 2018, 73%, in 2019 76%, in 2020 78% in both July and November. The negative view of the strong leader is held by 77%-78% Liberal/ National and Labor supporters, a higher 88% Greens supporters, and a lower 62% One Nation supporters, with little change when analysed by supporters of the four parties from 2018-19.

However, when asked for opinion on the desirability of rule by a strong leader without recourse to parliament **in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, a lower proportion viewed it in negative terms:** 61% in July and 66% in November. In this context it was viewed negatively in July by 57% Liberal/ National supporters, 63% Labor, 76% Greens, and a lower 50% One Nation.

A series of questions on direct political involvement over the last three years, not specifically in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, found highest level of involvement by Greens supporters, with Labor and One Nation supporters close on a number of indicators, and the lowest level indicated by Liberal/ National supporters. The pattern of response was similar to that in 2018-19.

In July 2020, 38% of Greens supporters indicated that they had joined a boycott of a product or company, compared with 22% Labour, 18% One Nation, and 10% Liberal/ National.

Close to a quarter (27%) of Greens supporters had attended a protest, march or demonstration, compared with 11% Labor, 6% One Nation, and just 3% Liberal/ National.

Of the forms of political activity here considered, the highest level of involvement was the signing of a petition, indicated by 74% Greens, 65% One Nation, 61% Labor, and 48% Liberal/ National.

Table 83: Political system, questions by intended vote, July 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

QUESTION AND RESPONSE	Greens	Labor	Liberal/ National	One Nation
‘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’	31 (21)	43 (22)	75 (49)	31 (9)
‘Would you say that the system of government we have in Australia ...?’ Response: ‘works fine’, ‘needs minor change’	52 (48)	65 (55)	84 (76)	47 (26)
Way of governing Australia: ‘having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament’ Response: ‘very bad’, ‘fairly bad’	88 (89)	78 (76)	77 (74)	62 (65)

Figure 62: Political system, questions by intended vote, July 2020 (LinA)

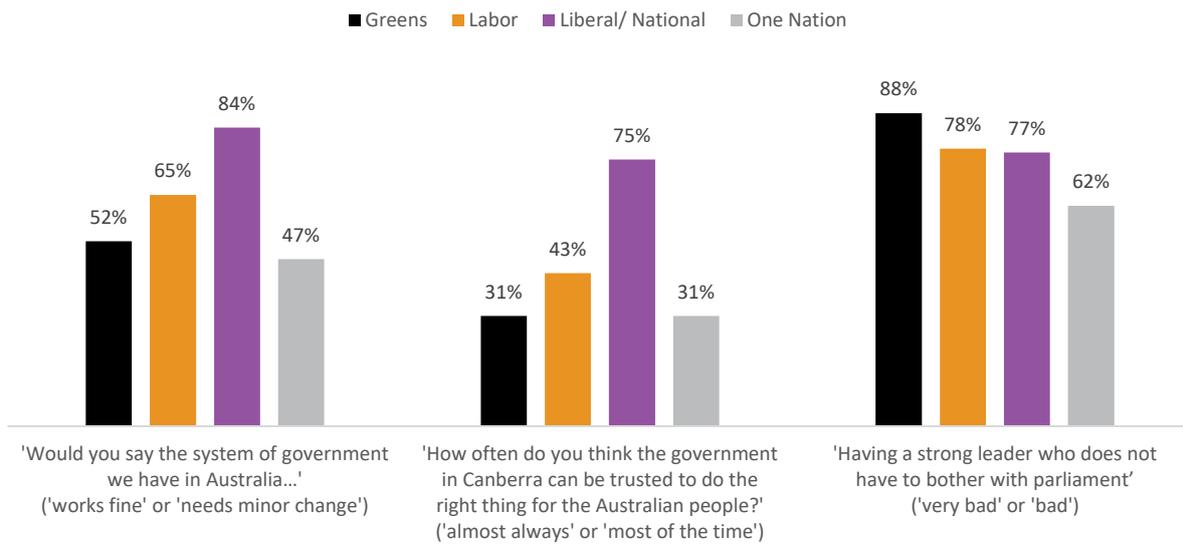


Table 84: 'Would you say that during the COVID-19 pandemic, having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament would be ...', July 2020, November 2020 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	Greens	Labor	Liberal/ National	One Nation
Very good	4	8	12	14
Fairly good	17	28	29	36
Sub-total good	21 (23)	36 (35)	41 (35)	50 (37)
Fairly bad	35	34	30	28
Very bad	42	30	27	22
Sub-total bad	76 (75)	63 (65)	57 (65)	50 (63)

Subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

Table 85: Different forms of political action over the last three years by intended vote, July 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

QUESTION AND RESPONSE	Greens	Labor	Liberal/ National	One Nation
Signed a petition	74 (76)	61 (56)	48 (42)	65 (62)
Written or spoken to a member of parliament	25 (23)	21 (18)	19 (21)	20 (25)
Joined a boycott of a product or company	38 (38)	22 (15)	10 (9)	18 (20)
Attended a protest, march or demonstration	27 (25)	11 (9)	3 (5)	6 (12)
Got together with others to try to resolve a local problem*	17	13	14	10
Posted or shared anything about politics online*	42	32	20	43
Average	37	27	19	27

*Not asked in 2018-19

POLITICS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PANDEMIC

Questions on government response to the COVID-19 pandemic find a high level of agreement among supporters of the four political parties. The extent of differentiation by political alignment which is found in response to many issues considered in the survey is markedly lower when government in the time of crisis is considered.

Asked in July how well the federal government was responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, as to be expected, supporters of the Liberal/ National party – the party in government – were most positive, with 95% indicating that it was responding ‘very well’ or ‘well’. But **supporters of other parties were not far behind, with a large majority endorsing government response:** 81% Labor, 81% One Nation, and 77% Greens.

In similar high proportions, state government response to the pandemic was viewed positively by 85% Labor supporters, 82% Liberal/ National, 81% Greens, and 77% One Nation.

The highest level of positive response was obtained by a question in the July survey that **asked if the lockdown restrictions imposed in March were required. Above 90% indicate that they were required**, with responses skewed toward the strongest response option, ‘definitely required;’ 91% of One Nation supporters agree that the lockdown restrictions were required, with 58% indicating ‘definitely required’. **Agreement was in the range 95%-97% among supporters of the other parties**, with the ‘definitely required’ option selected in the range 78%-86%.

There was only minor difference in the findings of the July and November surveys. The major difference was in opinion of the federal government response, which in November was viewed as positive by a large majority, but down from 77% to 71% among Greens supporters and from 81% to 68% One Nation. Labor and Liberal/ National remained almost unchanged, at 83% and 95% respectively.

Assessment of performance of state governments, which were high in July were even higher in November, viewed positively by 88% (81% in July) Greens supporters, 95% (85%) Labor, 86% (82%) Liberal/ National, with only One Nation supporters slightly lower, 72% (77%).

Table 86: 'In your opinion, how well is the federal government responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?', July 2020, November 2020 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	Greens	Labor	Liberal/ National	One Nation
Very well	16	16	46	25
Well	62	65	49	56
Sub-total well	77 (71)	81 (83)	95 (95)	81 (68)
Fairly badly	19	14	5	14
Very badly	3	5	0	6
Sub-total badly	22 (28)	19 (17)	5 (5)	19 (32)

Table 87: 'In your opinion, how well is your state government responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?', July 2020, November 2020 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	Greens	Labor	Liberal/ National	One Nation
Very well	33	36	44	30
Well	47	49	38	47
Sub-total well	81 (88)	85 (95)	82 (86)	77 (72)
Fairly badly	16	10	12	13
Very badly	3	5	5	9
Sub-total badly	19 (12)	15 (5)	18 (14)	23 (28)

Table 88: 'Do you think that the lockdown restrictions that were imposed in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic were required?', July 2020 (percentage, LinA)

RESPONSE	Greens	Labor	Liberal/ National	One Nation
Definitely required	83	86	78	58
Probably	14	11	17	33
Sub-total required	97	97	95	91
Probably not	3	3	4	6
Definitely not	0	1	1	3
Sub-total not required	3	4	5	9

Subtotals may not sum exactly due to rounding

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Several questions considered social justice issues. In 2020, as in the previous two surveys, Liberal/ National supporters were least critical of the level of welfare provision and most positive in their view of their own financial situation and future expectations. **Greens supporters are the most critical of welfare and level of inequality, with Labor and One Nation close in response to several questions.**

The largest change in opinion was obtained in response to the proposition that ‘people living on low incomes receive enough financial support from the government’ with disagreement lower by 18 percentage points among Labor supporters, 13 points Liberal/ National, 15 points One Nation, but only lower by 2 percentage points Greens.

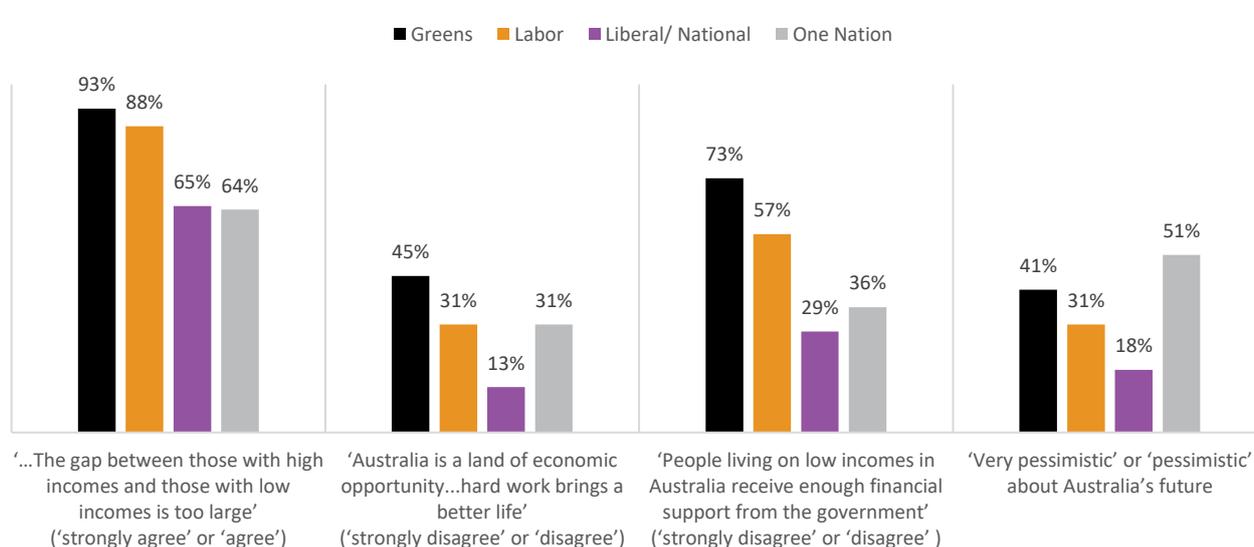
Yet the high level of disagreement (73%) by Greens supporters with the level of financial support to people on low incomes does not appear to be driven by their own circumstances, for satisfaction with their own financial situation is indicated by only 27% of Greens supporters, down from 44% in 2018-19. Dissatisfaction with financial circumstances in July is lower for all four groupings, 16 percentage points lower to 28% among Labor supporters, 7 points lower (to 21%) among Liberal/ National, and 7 points lower (to 31%) among One Nation.

As in the earlier surveys, the highest level of pessimism about Australia’s future is indicated by One Nation supporters (51%) and Greens (41%). Pessimism is consistently lower among supporters of all four parties in July 2020 than in 2018-19 and is further lower in November.

Table 89: Social justice, selected questions by intended vote, July 2020, November 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

QUESTION AND RESPONSE		Greens	Labor	Liberal/ National	One Nation
‘In Australia today, the gap between those with high incomes and those with low incomes is too large’ Response: ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’	July	93 (93)	88 (87)	65 (71)	64 (74)
	November	91	90	65	75
‘Australia is a land of economic opportunity where in the long run hard work brings a better life’ Response: ‘strongly disagree’ or ‘disagree’	July	45 (46)	31 (35)	13 (14)	31 (38)
	November	54	30	13	32
‘People living on low incomes in Australia receive enough financial support from the government’ Response: ‘strongly disagree’ or ‘disagree’	July	73 (75)	57 (75)	29 (42)	36 (51)
	November	78	64	32	40
‘How satisfied are you with your present financial situation?’ Response: ‘very dissatisfied’ or ‘dissatisfied’	July	27 (44)	28 (44)	21 (28)	31 (38)
	November	41	28	18	31
‘Are you optimistic or pessimistic about Australia’s future?’ Response: ‘very pessimistic’ or ‘pessimistic’	July	41 (46)	31 (36)	18 (24)	51 (63)
	November	39	21	15	48

Figure 63: Social justice, selected questions by intended vote, July 2020 (LinA)



IDENTIFICATION WITH THE AUSTRALIAN WAY OF LIFE

Identification with the Australian way of life is at a high positive level across the four political groupings, with only marginal change in 2020.

Comparison of results obtained in 2018-19 and July 2020 finds that pride in the Australian way of life was indicated by 66% of Greens supporters in 2018-19, a higher 74% in 2020; the respective proportions were 85% and 87% Labor, 95% and 95% Liberal/ National, and 90% and 86% One Nation.

With reference to maintaining the Australian way of life, 67% of Greens supporters in 2018-19 and the same proportion in July 2020 agreed that it was important, respectively 88% and 85% Labor, 97% and 96% Liberal/ National, and 97% and 99% One Nation.

Only among Greens supporters is there a minority indicating reserve in reference to the Australian way of life: in July 2020, 26% responded that they have pride in the Australian way 'only slightly' or 'not at all', compared with 4% Liberal/ National, 13% Labor, and 14% One Nation.

Disagreement in July 2020 with the importance of maintaining the Australian way of life was indicated by 33% of Greens supporters, 14% Labor, 4% Liberal/ National, and just 1% One Nation.

With regard to the strongest positive response, the largest proportion who 'strongly agree' with the importance of maintaining the Australian way of life is among One Nation supporters (73%), followed by Liberal (61%), Labor (40%), and a much lower proportion of Greens (18%).

Figure 64: 'In the modern world, maintaining the Australian way of life and culture is important', July 2020 (LinA)

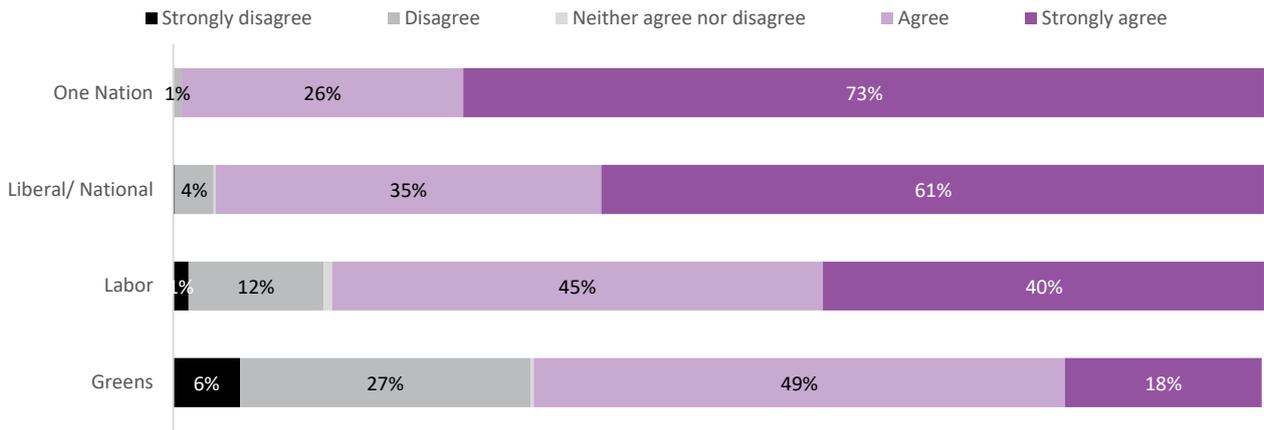


Figure 65: 'To what extent do you take pride in the Australian way of life', 2018-19 and July 2020 (LinA)

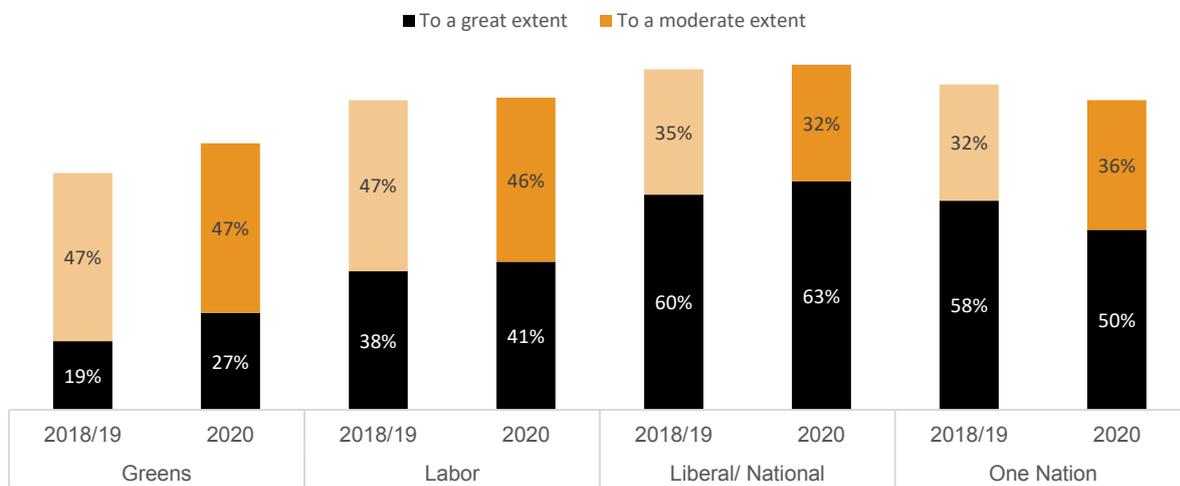
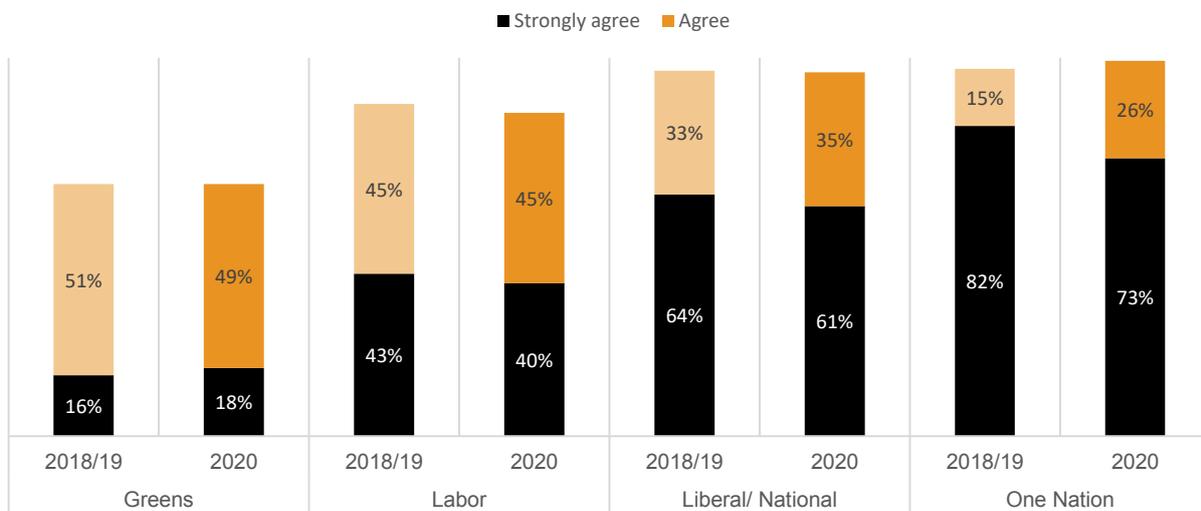


Figure 66: 'In the modern world, maintaining the Australian way of life and culture is important', 2018-19 and July 2020 (LinA)



IMMIGRATION AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Questions on immigration and cultural diversity yield the sharpest differentiation between party supporters. When these issues are considered, Greens and One Nation are at opposite ends of the spectrum, while Labor is closer to the Greens than to Liberal/ National supporters. **However, the pattern of past years is maintained in 2020, with no indication of heightened xenophobia among the supporters of any of the four parties.**

With regard to the **immigration intake in recent years**, in 2020, 86% (87%, 2018-19) of Greens supporters consider that it was 'about right' or 'too low', 70% (61%) Labor, 54% (45%) Liberal/ National, and 17% (17%) One Nation.

The proposition that '**multiculturalism** has been good for Australia' finds 97% agreement (96%, 2018-19) among Greens supporters, 97% (84%) Labor, 79% (75%) Liberal, and 44% (35%) One Nation.

Agreement ('strongly agree' or 'agree') with the proposition that immigration from many different countries '**makes Australia stronger**' is at 92% (93% 2018-19) among Greens supporters, 80% (71%) Labor, 64% (55%) Liberal/ National, and 31% (26%) One Nation.

63% (54%) of Greens supporters agree with **government assistance to ethnic groups** for cultural maintenance, 46% (33%) Labor, 23% (21%) Liberal, and just 2% (5%) One Nation.

A substantial majority (70%, 74%, 2018-19) of Greens supporters disagree with the view that '**too many immigrants are not adopting Australian values**', a bare majority of (53%, 35%) of Labor supporters, and less than one in four (23%, 15%) Liberal/ National, and 6% (6%) One Nation.

With **positive response to these five questions averaged**, comparison between the 2018-19 and July 2020 surveys finds little change among Greens and One Nation supporters. Among Greens supporters, the average positive response in 2018-19 was 81%, in 2020 81%; among One Nation supporters, 18% 2018-19, 20% 2020.

A higher positive average was obtained among Liberal/ National supporters, more positive by 7 percentage points (42%, 49%), and Labor 12 points (57%, 69%).

The pattern of differentiation is consistent across the broad range of questions in the survey.

To take two more examples, in 2020, just 5% of Greens supporters agree that it should be possible when selecting immigrants to **discriminate based on race or ethnicity**, 7% that it should be possible to discriminate **based on religion**; agreement among Labor supporters ranges from 12%-17%, among Liberal from 22%-27%, and more than double that level among One Nation, 43%-65%.

Asked for attitudes in 2020 towards **immigrants from China**, a relatively high 27% of Greens supporters indicated that they were negative, but much lower than 40% Labor, 56% Liberal, and 63% One Nation; negative attitude towards immigrants from Sudan was indicated by 21% of Greens, 38% Labor, 61% Liberal, and 83% One Nation.

Table 90: Attitude to immigration, multiculturalism and cultural and religious diversity, selected questions by intended vote, July 2020, 2018-19 in brackets (percentage, LinA)

QUESTION AND RESPONSE	Greens	Labor	Liberal/ National	One Nation
'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia in recent years?' ('About right', 'too low')	86 (87)	70 (61)	54 (45)	17 (17)
'Multiculturalism has been good for Australia,' ('strongly agree', 'agree')	97 (96)	97 (84)	79 (75)	44 (35)
'Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger,' ('strongly agree', 'agree')	92 (93)	80 (71)	64 (55)	31 (26)
'Ethnic minorities in Australia should be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions,' ('strongly agree', 'agree')	63 (54)	46 (33)	23 (21)	2 (5)
'Too many immigrants are not adopting Australian values,' ('strongly disagree', 'disagree')	70 (74)	53 (35)	23 (15)	6 (6)
AVERAGE	81 (81)	69 (57)	49 (42)	20 (18)

*In 2018-19 the question of immigration intake worded 'What do you think if the number of immigrants accepted into Australia at present'

Figure 67: Attitudes to immigration, multiculturalism and cultural and religious diversity, selected questions by intended vote, July 2020 (LinA)

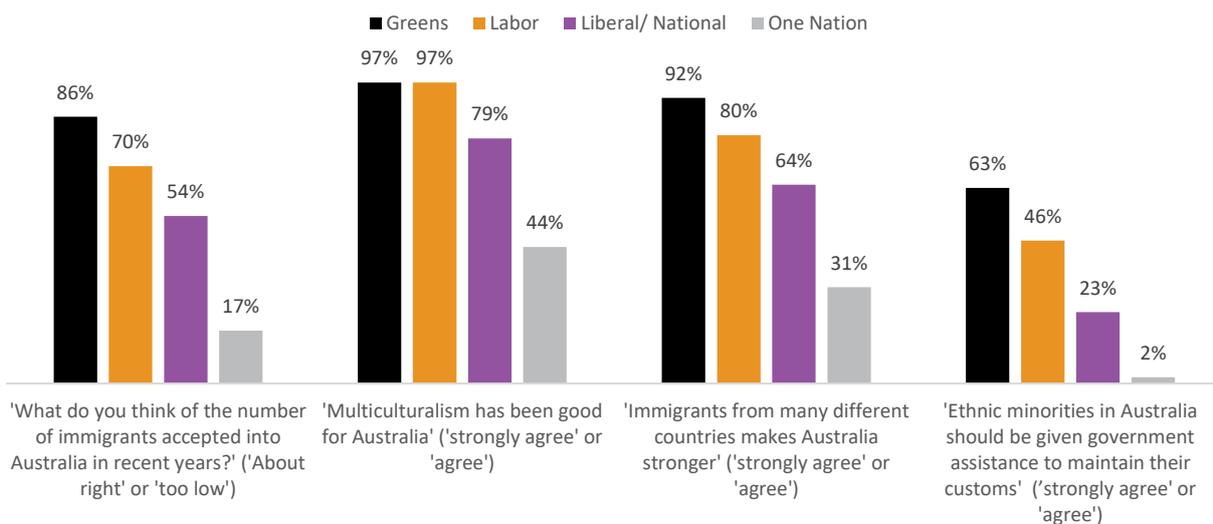


Figure 68: 'Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger', July 2020 (LinA)

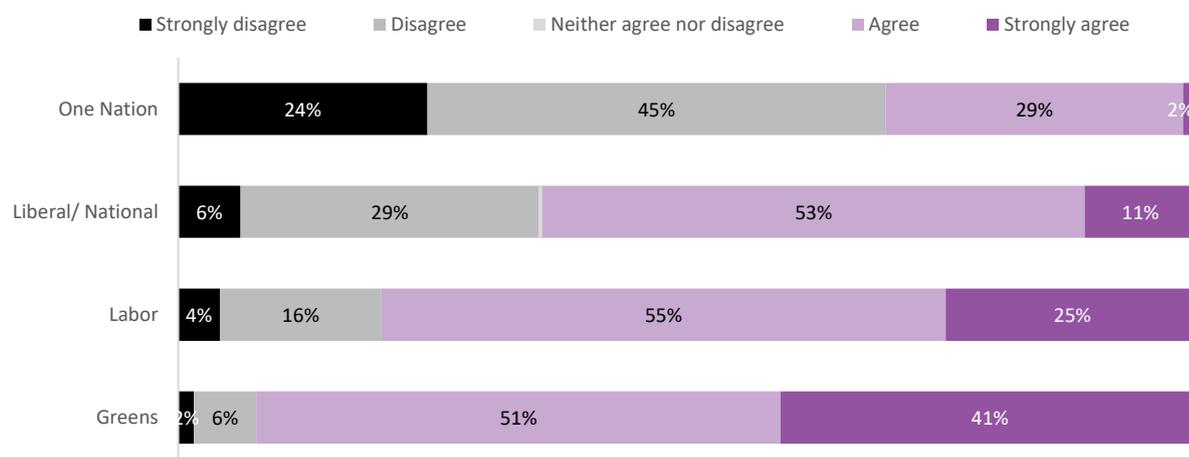


Figure 69: 'Too many immigrants are not adopting Australian values', July 2020 (LinA)

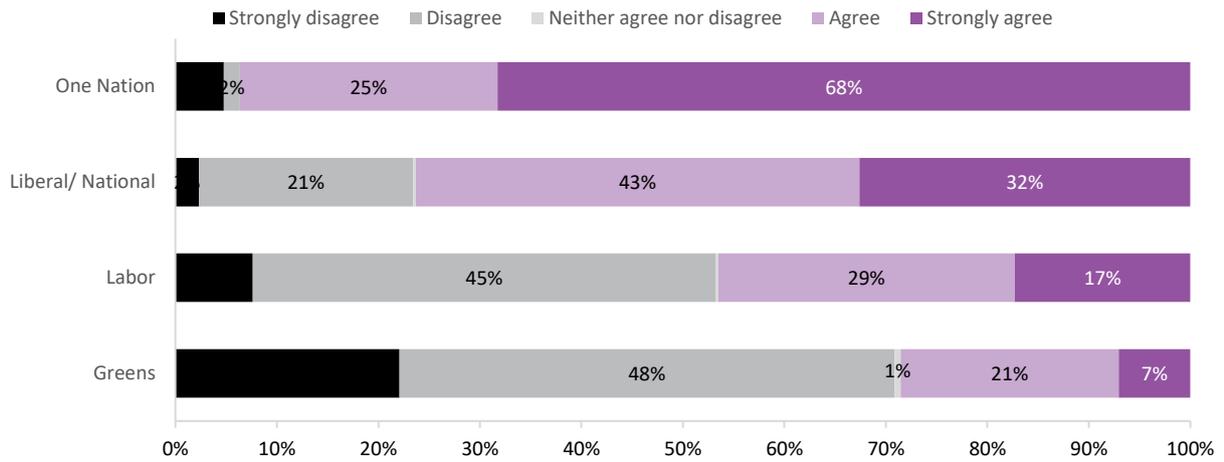


Figure 70: 'Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger', 2018-19 and July 2020 (LinA)

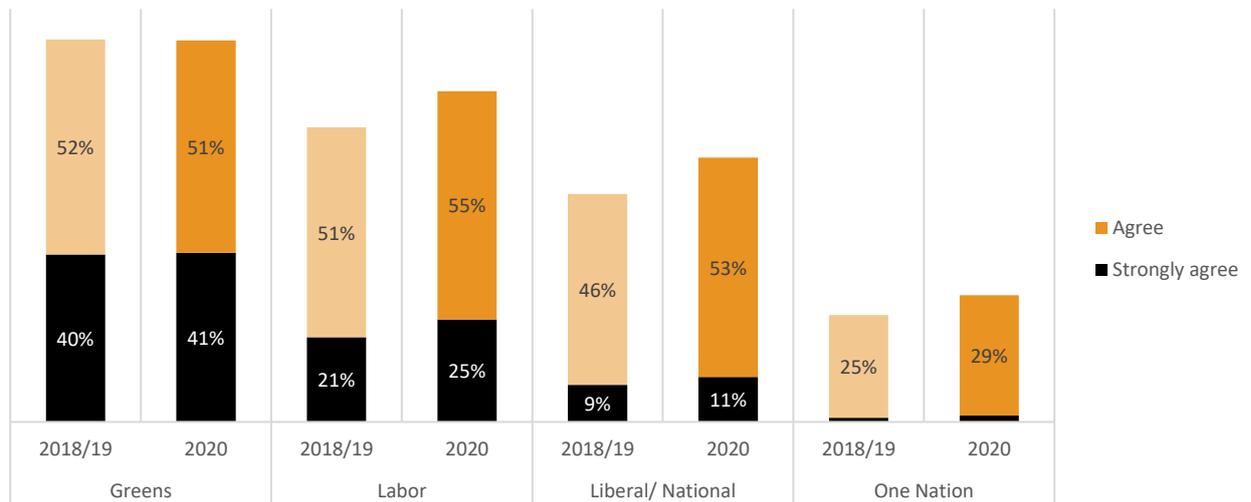


Figure 71: 'Ethnic minorities in Australia should be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions', 2018-19 and July 2020 (LinA)

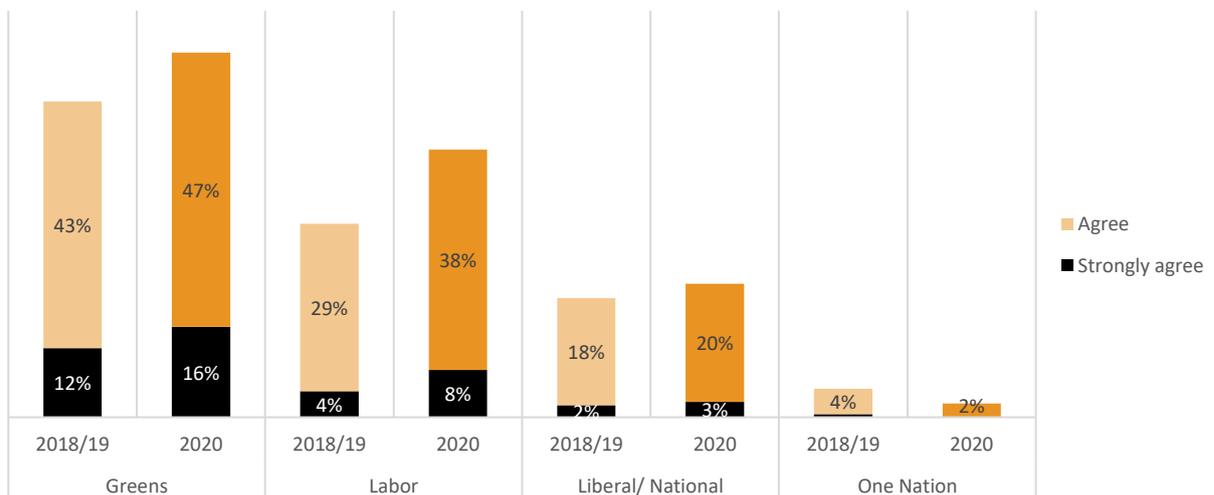


Figure 72: 'Too many immigrants are not adopting Australian values', 2018-19 and July 2020 (LinA)

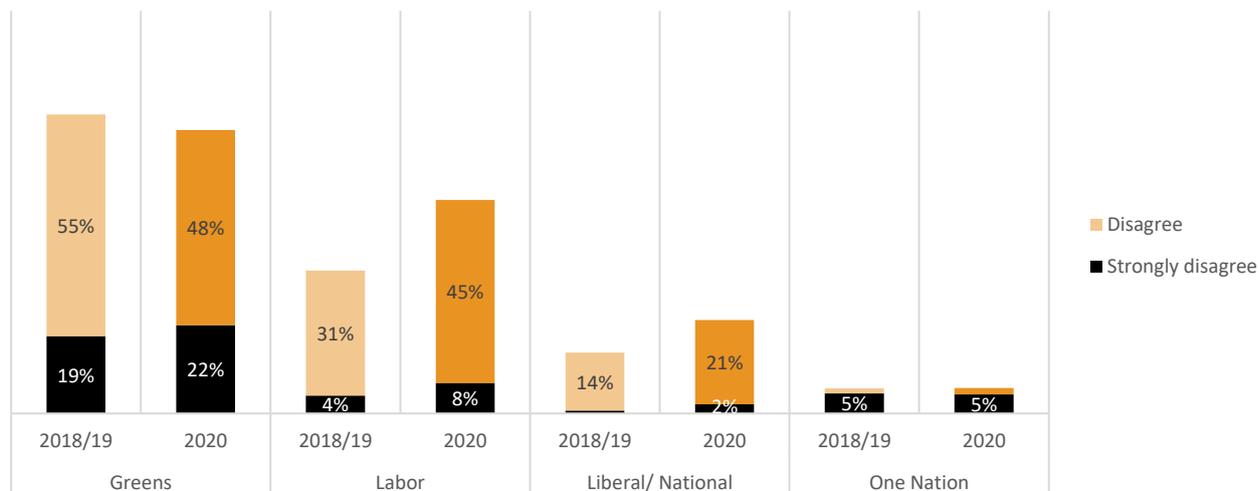
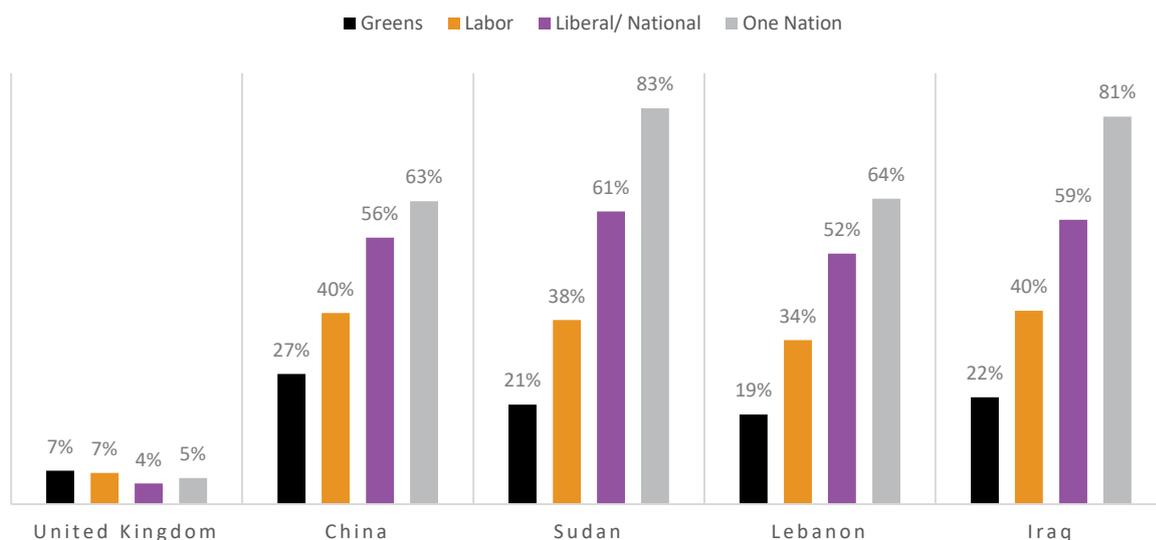


Figure 73: Negative attitudes towards specified immigrant groups, July 2020 (LinA)



COMMONALITY AND DIVERGENCE

The broad range of questions in the Scanlon Foundation surveys have found a consistent pattern of differentiation in attitudes among supporters of the four political parties considered in this analysis. **While questions on government response to the COVID-19 pandemic have seen narrowing of divergence, the pattern of differentiation remains when issues of social justice, national identification, and immigration and cultural diversity are considered.** The key finding is that the results obtained in 2020 remain consistent with previous years, with a marginal lessening of negative views. **There is no indication of heightened xenophobia in any of the four parties.**

As in past years, supporters of the two major parties, **Labor and Liberal**, indicate a high level of belonging and pride in the Australian way of life. Labor supporters are more concerned than Liberal over social justice issues and indicate higher levels of support for immigration and cultural diversity.

Greens supporters are distinctive in their emphasis on environmental issues, but in what may seem to be a contradiction are also the strongest supporters of population growth through immigration. Greens supporters are most open to cultural diversity and have among their number a minority less concerned for maintenance of the Australian way of life, although a large majority of close to 65% agree that it is important. Greens are strongest in their support of government action on social justice issues.

One Nation supporters are the most pessimistic about Australia's future and critical (but less so in 2020) of the workings of Australian democracy. They are distinguished by the high proportion indicating the strongest level of identification with the Australian way of life. A relatively high proportion of One Nation supporters are also distinguished by their level of concern over immigration and population issues, and their willingness to support discriminatory policies based on race and religion.

BALANCE OF AUSTRALIAN OPINION

This section seeks to further explore the extent of change in public opinion that has occurred in 2020 by considering the balance of 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 whether the balance has changed in the context of the pandemic. The focus is on LinA surveys conducted between 2018-20, with further context provided by the RDD surveys conducted between 2015-19.

There is, however, no simple or definitive basis to determine the balance of opinion: answers are dependent on the specific questions and issues considered.

The range of questions in the Scanlon Foundation surveys provide scope to consider a number of perspectives. The following analysis considers eight questions that dealt with immigration and cultural diversity, 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 eight questions are:

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

STRONG NEGATIVE AND STRONG POSITIVE

The Scanlon Foundation surveys have found that irrespective of survey mode **the proportion holding strong negative views on issues of immigration and cultural diversity are in a small minority, in the range 1%-17%** since 2015 for seven of the eight questions here considered.

The proportion with strong positive views for these questions is in the range 5%-49%.

With reference to the impact of mode of surveying, there is only minor variation in strong negative views, indicating that the proportion of the population with strong negative views is constant irrespective of survey mode; those with strong negative opinions are not reticent to indicate them to an interviewer or to disclose them when completing an online survey.

There is, however, **some variation by survey mode in the proportion indicating strong positive views.** This may be a function of what is known in surveying as Social Desirability Bias. In conversation with an interviewer, respondents may overstate their positive values, which are more truthfully indicated in a self-completion survey.

The pattern of response to the eight questions considered finds three groupings.

[A] **Low strong negative** (RDD range 2%-9%, LinA 1%-11%), **high strong positive** (RDD 41%-49%, LinA 25%-41%) in response to questions on neighbourhood, multiculturalism and immigrant selection on the basis of race, ethnicity or religion.

[B] **Low strong negative** (RDD range 9%-14%, LinA 6%-17%), **mid-range strong positive** (RDD 9%-30%, LinA 5%-21%) in response to questions on the value of a diverse immigration intake, and attitudes to those of the Muslim faith.

[C] **high strong negative** (RDD range 25%-29%, LinA 21%-30%), **low strong positive** (RDD range 9%-13%, LinA 4%-7%), obtained in response to general statements in favour of integration, based on a concern that many immigrants are not integrating into Australia life. Thus, when presented with the proposition that 'ethnic minorities should be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions', the proportion with strong negative views is greater than the proportion with strong positive.

CHANGE IN 2020

The 2020 Scanlon Foundation surveys find a lower level of strong negative sentiment. Strong positive sentiment is either constant or marginally higher.

Thus, in the LinA surveys, strong negative view of multicultural policy was indicated by 7% of respondents in 2019, 4%-5% in 2020; strong agreement with discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity was at 8% in 2019, 4% in July and November 2020; strong disagreement with the view that a diverse immigration intake 'makes Australia stronger' was at 11% in 2019, 6% in July and November 2020; strong negative view of Muslims was at 17% in 2019, 13% in July and 12% in November 2020; and strong negative view of government assistance to ethnic minorities was at 29% in 2019, 21% in July and November 2020.

Strong positive views on multicultural policy were at 25% in 2019, 26% in July 2020 and 27% in November; strong disagreement with discrimination in immigrant selection on the basis of religion increased from 30% in 2019 to 34% in July 2020 and 37% in November; strong agreement with the value of a diverse immigration intake increased from 17% in 2019 to 19% in July 2020 and 21% in November. Strong positive attitudes to those of the Buddhist and Muslim faiths remained at the 2019 level.

Table 91: Immigration and cultural diversity, selected questions, 2015-19 (percentage, RDD)

QUESTION AND RESPONSE	Survey	Strong negative	Negative	Neither	Positive	Strong positive
'Ethnic minorities in Australia should be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions' ('strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree')	2019	25	27	4	28	13
	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')	2019	11	11	44	22	12
	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')	2019	1	3	43	25	25
	2018	1	2	50	24	21
	2017	2	2	44	26	22
	2016	3	3	43	27	22
	2015	2	3	45	27	22
'Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger' ('strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree')	2019	12	15	3	38	29
	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')	2019	5	10	1	32	49
	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')	2019	8	10	1	30	49
	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')	2019	6	5	4	44	41
	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')	2019	2	8	2	50	26
	2018	4	8	3	49	25
	2017	3	9	3	51	25
	2016	3	8	5	51	24
	2015	2	7	3	55	23

Table 92: Immigration and cultural diversity, selected questions, 2018-2020 (percentage, LinA)

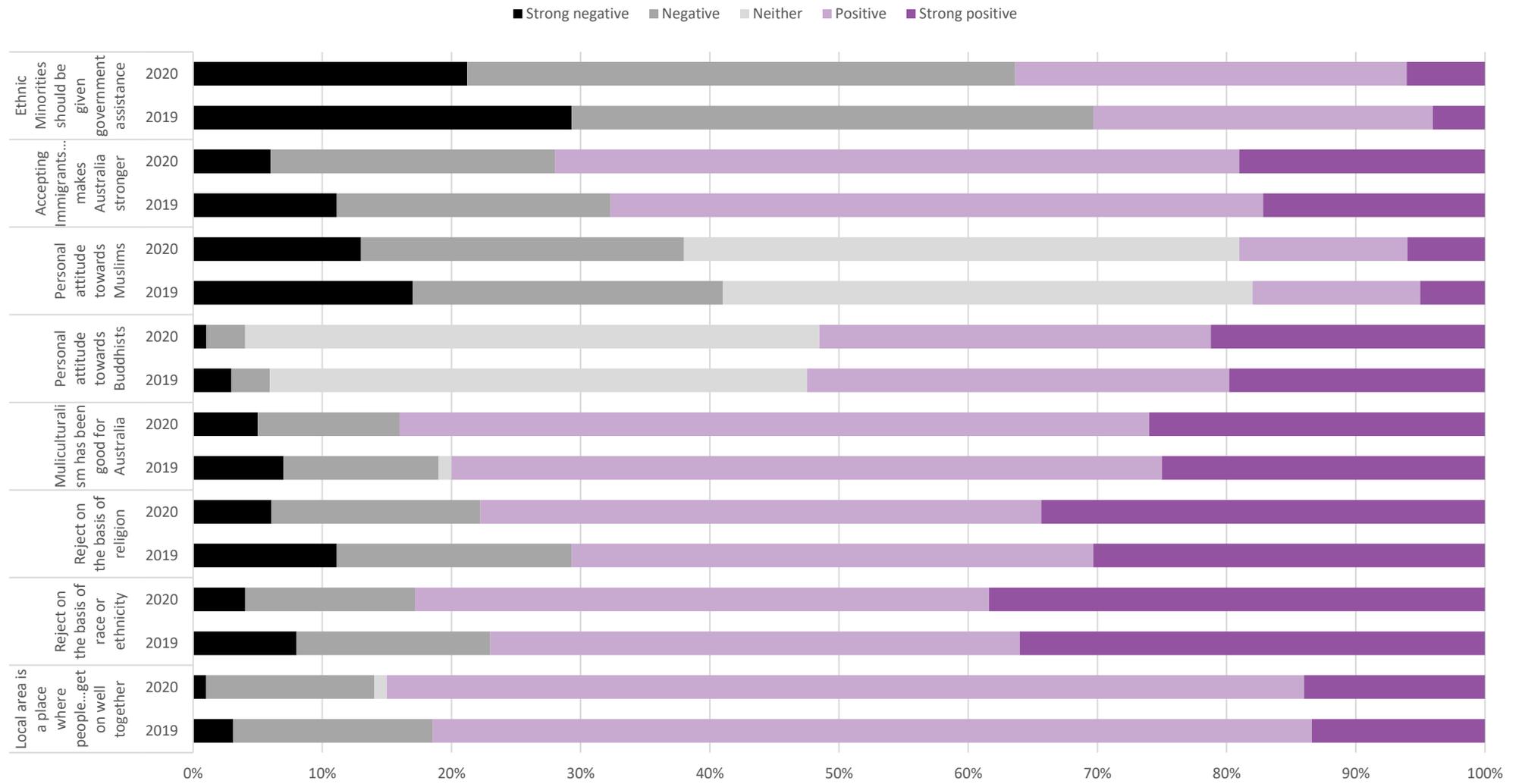
QUESTION AND RESPONSE	Survey	Strong negative	Negative	Neither	Positive	Strong positive
'Ethnic minorities in Australia should be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions' ('strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree')	2020-Nov	21	43	0	28	7
	2020-July	21	42	0	30	6
	2019	29	40	0	26	4
	2018	30	39	1	25	5
Personal attitude towards Muslims ('very negative' to 'very positive')	2020-Nov	12	23	44	16	5
	2020-July	13	25	43	13	6
	2019	17	24	41	13	5
	2018	17	22	44	12	5
Personal attitude towards Buddhists ('very negative' to 'very positive')	2020-Nov	2	3	42	33	20
	2020-July	1	3	44	30	21
	2019	3	3	42	33	20
	2018	2	5	46	28	19
'Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger' ('strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree')	2020-Nov	6	19	1	53	21
	2020-July	6	22	0	53	19
	2019	11	21	0	50	17
	2018	13	24	0	46	17
'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')	2020-Nov	4	14	0	40	41
	2020-July	4	13	0	44	38
	2019	8	15	0	41	36
	2018	8	13	0	42	35
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')	2020-Nov	7	17	0	39	37
	2020-July	6	16	0	43	34
	2019	11	18	0	40	30
	2018	11	17	0	39	32
'Multiculturalism has been good for Australia' ('strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree')	2020-Nov	4	11	0	57	27
	2020-July	5	11	0	58	26
	2019	7	12	1	55	25
	2018	8	14	1	52	25
'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')	2020-Nov	2	11	0	70	14
	2020-July	1	13	1	71	14
	2019	3	15	0	66	13
	2018	4	18	0	65	11

Orange: High strong negative/ low strong positive

Yellow: Low strong negative/mid-range strong positive

Green: Low strong negative/high strong positive

Figure 74: Immigration and cultural diversity, selected questions, 2019 and 2020 (percentage, LinA)*



*Excludes 'Don't know' and 'Decline to answer'

COPING WITH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: SIX PROFILES

CO-AUTHORED BY DR EMMANUEL GRUZMAN*

To this point, the analysis presented has been concerned with findings at the population level for specific questions, grouped thematically, and findings disaggregated by a range of demographic and attitudinal variables.

This final section adopts a different approach, to identify commonality of attitudes within segments of the population. To this end, a cluster analysis has been undertaken, based on attitudes to government response to the pandemic.

Cluster analysis is a multivariate technique that groups individuals into clusters so that **the attitudes of those in the same cluster are more similar to one another than to those in other clusters**. This technique makes it possible to determine (a) the extent to which commonality of attitudes can be identified within segments (or clusters) of the population; (b) the characteristics that define those segments; and (c) the proportion of the population that comprise each segment. The analysis clarifies the way in which views of government response to the COVID-19 pandemic are related to underlying social and political values.

The cluster analysis also clarifies **the complex overlapping attitudes between segments of the population**. The discussion of attitudes by political alignment has established that at the aggregate level there is a clear demarcation between the supporters of political parties. But analysis at the aggregate level necessarily fails to make clear the extent to which attitudes of some party supporters overlap with supporters of other parties: for example, those with xenophobic attitudes or optimists are present in all parties, but in differing proportions, as the cluster analysis indicates.

The cluster analysis employed eight questions from the July survey to provide a perspective on patterns in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The eight questions were:

1. 'In your opinion, how well is the federal government responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?'
2. 'Would you say that during the COVID-19 pandemic, having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament would be ... (good/bad).'
3. 'Do you think that the lockdown restrictions that were imposed in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic were required?'
4. 'How satisfied are you with your present financial situation?'
5. 'People living on low incomes in Australia receive enough financial support from the government.'
6. 'In general, are you optimistic or pessimistic about Australia's future?'
7. 'Would you say your feelings are positive, negative or neutral towards immigrants from China?'
8. 'In your opinion, how big of a problem is racism in Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic?'

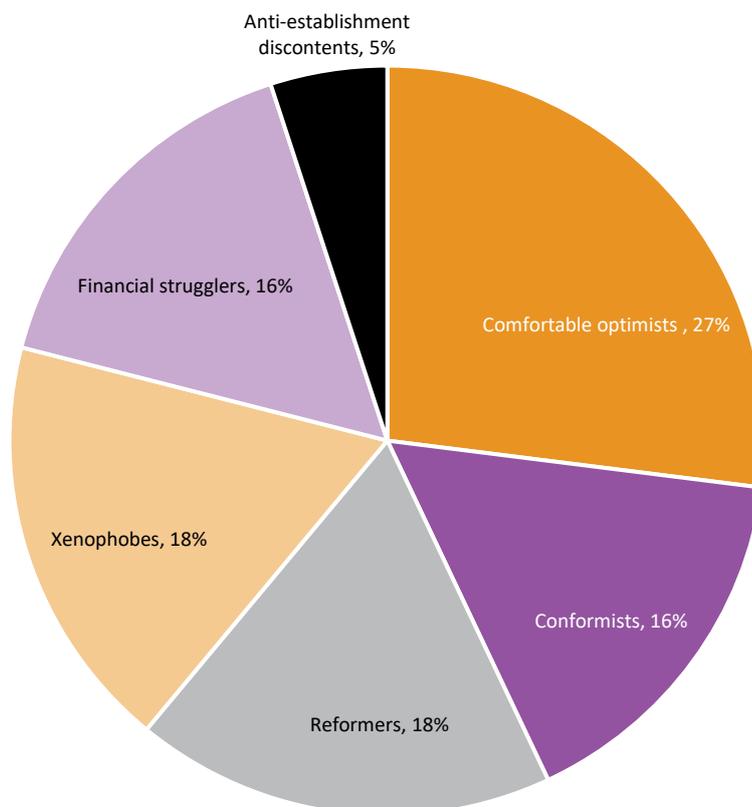
* The statistical analysis in this section was undertaken by Dr Emmanuel Gruzman. The methodology is further discussed in the Appendix below.

Based on similarity of responses to these questions, individuals were grouped into six different clusters.

1. **Comfortable optimists** (comprising 27% of the sample, n=803)
2. **Conformists** (16%, n=462)
3. **Reformers** (18%, n=537)
4. **Xenophobes** (18%, n=537)
5. **Financial strugglers** (16%, n=459)
6. **Anti-establishment discontents** (5%, n=144)

The following discussion describes the demographic and attitudinal characteristics of the six clusters, drawing on the full range of questions included in the survey, with responses to a selection of questions presented in Table 93, below.

Figure 75: Six clusters, relative proportions, July 2020 (LinA)



1: COMFORTABLE OPTIMISTS

The largest grouping which profiles individuals who are financially comfortable, optimistic, and have a very strong sense of belonging in Australia. They indicate the strongest endorsement of government response to the pandemic. Comprise 27% of survey respondents.

- Four-fifths (81%) are 35 years of age or over, includes the highest proportion (29%) who are retired.
- Relatively high proportion (73%) born in Australia, and highest proportion (59%) with a spouse born in Australia.
- Highest proportion financially affluent (84% 'prosperous' or 'living comfortably').
- The cluster scoring the highest on how well federal government is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic (97%). Three-quarters (73%) think that the government in Canberra 'can be trusted to do the right thing for the Australian people.'
- Four-fifths (79%) do not think that racism in Australia is a big problem during the COVID-19 pandemic and more than one quarter (29%) consider that the pandemic has 'brought people from different backgrounds closer together.'
- Nine in ten agree that Australia is a land of economic opportunity where in the long run, hard work brings a better life, and a similar proportion (91%) were happy over the last year.
- More than four-fifths (85%) agree that people on low incomes receive enough support from the government.
- Almost nine in ten (88%) are optimistic about Australia's future.
- Almost all (95%) take pride in the 'Australian way of life and culture.'
- Three-fifths (59%) support the Liberal/National parties, one-quarter (26%) Labor.

2: CONFORMISTS

Attracted to rule by a strong leader during a period of crisis. Strong endorsement of government response to the pandemic, high level of trust in government. Comprise 16% of survey respondents.

- Lowest proportion (57%) born in Australia, one-third (34%) are from a non-English speaking background; one-fifth are not Australian citizens, three-quarters live in a capital city.
- Cluster with second highest score on how well the federal (95%) and their state government (93%) are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- All agree that during the COVID-19 pandemic, having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections would be good, and the second highest proportion (64%) who consider that the government in Canberra can be 'trusted to do the right thing for the Australian people.'
- Four-fifths (82%) agree that Australia is a land of economic opportunity where in the long run, hard work brings a better life, and close to nine in ten (87%) were happy over the last year.
- Three-quarters think that the number of immigrants accepted into Australia in recent years was 'about right' or 'too low.'
- One-third think that the COVID-19 pandemic brought people from different cultural backgrounds closer together.
- More than four-fifths think that in several years their life in Australia will be improved.
- More than two-fifths (44%) support the Liberal/National parties, one-third Labor.

3: REFORMERS

View racism as a problem during the COVID-19 pandemic, supporters of multiculturalism, discontented with the current social order, relatively low trust in government. Comprise 18% of survey respondents.

- Highest proportion (34%) with a university degree, over-representation of those aged 18-34 (46%) and female (58%), who do not have a spouse (32%), and are students (13%).
- Relatively few who are financially 'prosperous' or 'very comfortable', one-third 'just getting along'.
- Close to three-quarters (72%) think that the government in Canberra can only be trusted 'some of the time' or 'almost never' to do the right thing for the Australian people and a relatively high proportion (34%) think that the federal government is responding badly to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Half (49%) disagree that Australia is a land of economic opportunity where in the long run, hard work brings a better life, and close to one-third (30%) were unhappy over the last year.
- Over four-fifths (83%) disagree that people with low incomes receive enough support from the government.
- Very few (6%) have negative feelings towards immigrants from China, and almost all (96%) agree that 'multiculturalism has been good for Australia'.
- The highest proportion (46%) of the view that the COVID-19 pandemic pushed people from different cultural backgrounds further apart.
- Over one-quarter (28%), the highest proportion among the clusters, disagree that it is important in the modern world to maintain the Australian way of life and culture, and one-quarter (25%) have only slight or no pride 'in the Australian way of life and culture.'
- Half (49%) are pessimistic about Australia's future.
- Half (50%) support the Labor party, more than one-quarter (29%) Greens, both highest proportions.

4: XENOPHOBES

Negative towards immigration, attracted to rule by a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections. Comprise 18% of survey respondents.

- Very few (3%) under the age of 25, close to half (45%) aged 25-44, highest proportion with a spouse.
- One-quarter do not speak English as their first language, one-fifth are not Australian citizens.
- All agree that during the COVID-19 pandemic, having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections would be good.
- Positive view, of federal (92%) and state (88%) government response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- More than four-fifths (84%) agree that Australia is a land of economic opportunity where in the long run, hard work brings a better life, and were happy (82%) over the last year.
- Close to three-fifths (57%) think that the number of immigrants accepted into Australia is too high, almost the highest proportion for this question, and the highest proportion (82%) of the view that 'too many immigrants are not adopting Australian values.'
- Almost uniformly negative in feeling towards immigrants from China.
- Almost all (96%) agree that 'maintaining the Australian way of life is important' and take pride (94%) in 'the Australian way of life and culture.'
- Of the six clusters, third ranked in terms of happiness over the last year (82%) and optimism about Australia's future (73%).
- Half (52%) support the Liberal/National parties, almost double the proportion (28%) who support Labor.

5: FINANCIAL STRUGGLERS

Least satisfied with their present financial situation and level of government support, lowest proportion in the workforce. Comprise 16% of survey respondents.

- Relatively even spread across the age groups, most (55%) aged 35-64, one-quarter are retired.
- Only one-fifth have a university degree, highest proportion (34%) with diploma/ certificate educational level.
- Cluster that is least satisfied with their present financial situation: more than half (53%) describe their financial situation as 'just getting along', 'struggling to pay bills' or 'poor'.
- Only half are employed, one in ten (11%) unemployed and one-quarter (24%) retired.
- Two-fifths (38%) disagree that Australia is a land of economic opportunity where in the long run, hard work brings a better life, and one-third (33%), the highest proportion, were unhappy over the last year.
- One-third (35%) think that in several years their life in Australia will be worse and four-fifths (82%) disagree that people with low incomes receive enough support from the government.
- One-quarter (26%) think their state government is responding badly to the COVID-19 pandemic, and one-fifth (21%) view the response of the federal government negatively. Three-fifths (61%) think that the government in Canberra can only be trusted 'some of the time' or 'almost never' to do the right thing for the Australian people.
- More than half (53%) think that the number of immigrants accepted into Australia in recent years has been too high. Close to three-quarters (72%) agree that too many immigrants are not adopting Australian values.
- Close to nine in ten (88%) have negative feelings towards immigrants from China.
- A high proportion agree that maintaining the Australian way of life and culture is important (89%).
- Close to half (47%) are pessimistic about Australia's future.
- Almost the same proportion support the Labor (39%) and Liberal/National parties (36%).

6: ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT DISCONTENTS

View restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic as not required, negative attitudes across a broad range of issues including trust in government, immigration and multiculturalism. Comprise 5% of survey respondents.

- Disproportionately male (70%), relatively high proportion aged 18-24 (16%) and 45-54 years (22%), relatively high proportion of Queenslanders.
- Lowest educational attainment, two-fifths (41%) do not have a post-school qualification.
- A relatively high proportion (17%) are financially 'struggling to pay bills' or 'poor', although a substantial proportion (18%) indicate that they are 'prosperous' or living 'very comfortably.'
- Cluster with by far the highest proportion (97%) of the view that restrictions imposed in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic were not required; highest proportion who view the federal (44%) and their state government (54%) response negatively.
- Two-thirds (66%) trust the government in Canberra 'almost never' or 'only some of the time, two-fifths (42%) agree that it would be good during the pandemic to have a strong leader who does not have to deal with parliament and elections.
- Over two-fifths (43%, the second highest proportion) disagree that Australia is a land of economic opportunity.
- More than one-quarter (29%) expect that in three or four years their life in Australia will be worse, the same proportion were unhappy over the last year. Half are pessimistic about Australia's future.
- Three-fifths (58%) think that the number of immigrants accepted into Australia in recent years has been too high and two-fifths (41%) disagree that multiculturalism has been good for Australia. These are the highest proportions among the clusters. Close to three-quarters (72%) agree that too many immigrants are not adopting Australian values.
- The highest proportion (30%) indicating that living in their local area is becoming worse.
- More than two-fifths (44%) support the Liberal/National parties, less than one-fifth (16%) support Labor. The highest proportion indicating support for One Nation (13%) or failure to vote (22%).

Figure 76: Political alignment by clusters, July 2020 (LinA)

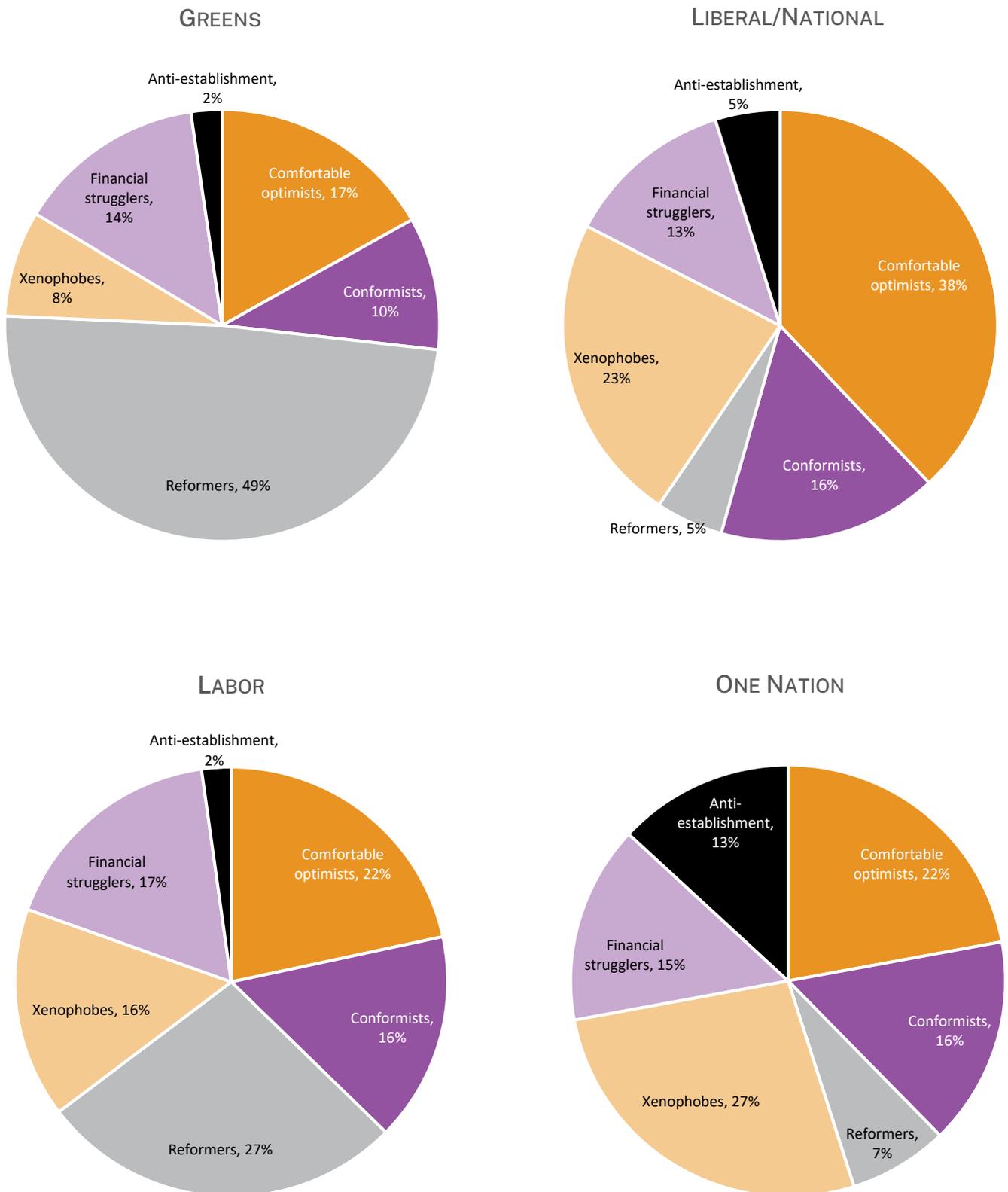


Table 93: Six clusters: selected questions, negative response, July 2020 (LinA, percentage)

QUESTION AND RESPONSE	Comfortable optimists (27%)	Conformists (16%)	Reformers (18%)	Xenophobes (18%)	Financial strugglers (16%)	Anti-establishment (5%)
'Do you think that the lockdown restrictions that were imposed in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic were required?' (Not required)	0	3	0	0	0	97
'In your opinion, how well is the federal government responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?' (Badly)	3	5	34	8	21	44
'How often do you think the government in Canberra can be trusted to do the right thing for the Australian people?' (Only some of the time, almost never)	27	36	72	41	61	66
'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia in recent years?' (Too high)	36	26	15	57	53	58
'In the modern world, maintaining the Australian way of life and culture is important' (Disagree)	7	6	28	4	11	14
'To what extent do you take pride in the Australian way of life and culture?' (Only slightly, not at all)	5	5	25	6	15	20
'How satisfied are you with your present financial situation?' (Dissatisfied)	6	24	29	26	59	37
'People living on low incomes in Australia receive enough financial support from the government' (Disagree)	15	34	83	31	82	49
'Australia is a land of economic opportunity where in the long run, hard work brings a better life' (Disagree)	10	18	49	16	38	43
'In three or four years, do you think that your life in Australia will be ...?' (Worse)	18	15	22	22	35	29
'In general, are you optimistic or pessimistic about Australia's future?' (Pessimistic)	12	16	49	27	47	50

APPENDIX: CLUSTER ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

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Cluster analysis is a multivariate technique based on mathematical properties that groups individuals into clusters so that those in the same cluster are more similar to one another than to those in other clusters.²⁷ This method makes it possible to analyse how attitudes and experiences vary across society and to identify different types of individuals.

For this report six profiles (clusters) that reacted differently to the COVID-19 pandemic were identified comprising 95% of participants in the July survey sample:

1. Reformers (18% of the sample, n=537)
2. Xenophobes (18%, n=537)
3. Conformists (16%, n=462)
4. Financial strugglers (16%, n=459)
5. Comfortable optimists (27%, n=803)
6. Anti-establishment discontents (5%, n=144)

The survey data was examined for attitudinal items that measure how individuals reacted to the COVID-19 pandemic. Twelve items were identified that ranged from concerns about lockdown restrictions, government response, racism, financial situation, optimism, and attitudes towards China (see Table A1).

Multicollinearity can negatively impact cluster analysis. To test for this, items were analysed using a polychoric correlation matrix, Measures of Sampling Adequacy (MSA), and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The items showed weak to moderate correlations, none of the twelve items correlated more than 0.55 on the polychoric correlation matrix. One item measured less than 0.5 on the Measures of Sampling Adequacy and therefore qualified to be part of the cluster analysis without being included in the Exploratory Factor Analysis. The item is (CV_9): 'Would you say that during the COVID-19 pandemic, having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament would be ... (good/bad).'

The Exploratory Factor Analysis showed that of the remaining eleven items, four loaded with other items on the same factor with coefficient values more than 0.4 (see Table). Items with the highest coefficient values in Factors 1 and 3 were retained, other items higher than 0.4 were rejected. In Factors 2 and 4 the decision was to retain items A5 'How satisfied are you with your present financial situation?' and c24_g 'Feelings towards immigrants from China' although they had slightly lower coefficient values. Overall, eight items were retained; the seven non-strikethrough items in Table A1 and the one mentioned above measuring less than 0.5 for the Measures of Sampling Adequacy.

²⁷ The methods used for cluster analysis are based on the following: Everitt, B. S., Landau, S., Morven, L., & Stahl, D., *Cluster analysis* (5th ed., 2011), London, Wiley.; Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E., *Multivariate data analysis* (8th ed., 2019), Hampshire, England: Cengage, pp. 189-256; Lorenzo-Seva, U., & Ferrando, P. J., 'POLYMAT-C: A comprehensive SPSS program for computing the polychoric correlation matrix', *Behavior Research Methods*, 47, 2015, pp. 884-889. doi:10.3758/s13428-014-0511-x; Sarstedt, M., & Mooi, E., *A concise guide to market research: The process, data, and methods using IBM SPSS statistics* (3rd ed., 2019), Berlin, Germany: Springer, pp. 301-354

A hierarchical followed by a non-hierarchical cluster analysis was undertaken. The hierarchical procedure²⁸ can be undertaken on ordinal variables, as is the case in this analysis, and has the advantage that it allows examination of a range of cluster solutions that can then be further analysed by the non-hierarchical procedure to determine the final cluster solution. Hierarchical cluster analysis is best undertaken on datasets with less than 1,000 cases, while the non-hierarchical procedure can be used for larger datasets. The survey dataset comprises of 3,090 cases, thus for the hierarchical analysis a random sample was selected with less than 1,000 cases. The agglomeration schedule was checked for outliers and none were identified. Based on an analysis of the agglomeration schedule, dendrogram and the Variance Ratio Criterion (VRC) of F-values, the six clusters solution was selected to be further tested for stability, then profiled, and finally validated.

To test the stability of the six-cluster solution, a non-hierarchical K-Means clusters analysis was undertaken on the random sample using the cluster seeds from the hierarchical analysis. The non-hierarchical six-cluster solution was then cross-tabulated with the hierarchical six-cluster solution. A stable solution is considered when cross-tabulation shows that between 80% and 90% of cases are assigned to the same clusters across both procedures, a very stable solution is more than 90%.

The cross-tabulation showed that 82% of the cases were assigned to the six clusters across both procedures, indicating a stable solution. Using the cluster seeds of the hierarchical analysis in the non-hierarchical analysis on the entire dataset improved the stability with 87% of the cases assigned to the six clusters across both procedures, indicating a solution closer to the very stable threshold.

The non-hierarchical six-cluster solution was profiled based on the entire dataset. Profiling makes it possible to verify that each of the six clusters cross-tabulated with the eight items exhibit distinctive profiles that react to the COVID-19 pandemic in different ways. To best profile the six clusters the items were first mean-centred around 0.²⁹ Figure A1 shows that each of the six clusters have distinctive different means on some items compared to other clusters. For example, Cluster 1 has the lowest mean for item A1bC while Cluster 5 has the highest, and the former has the highest mean for D15C while the latter has the lowest.

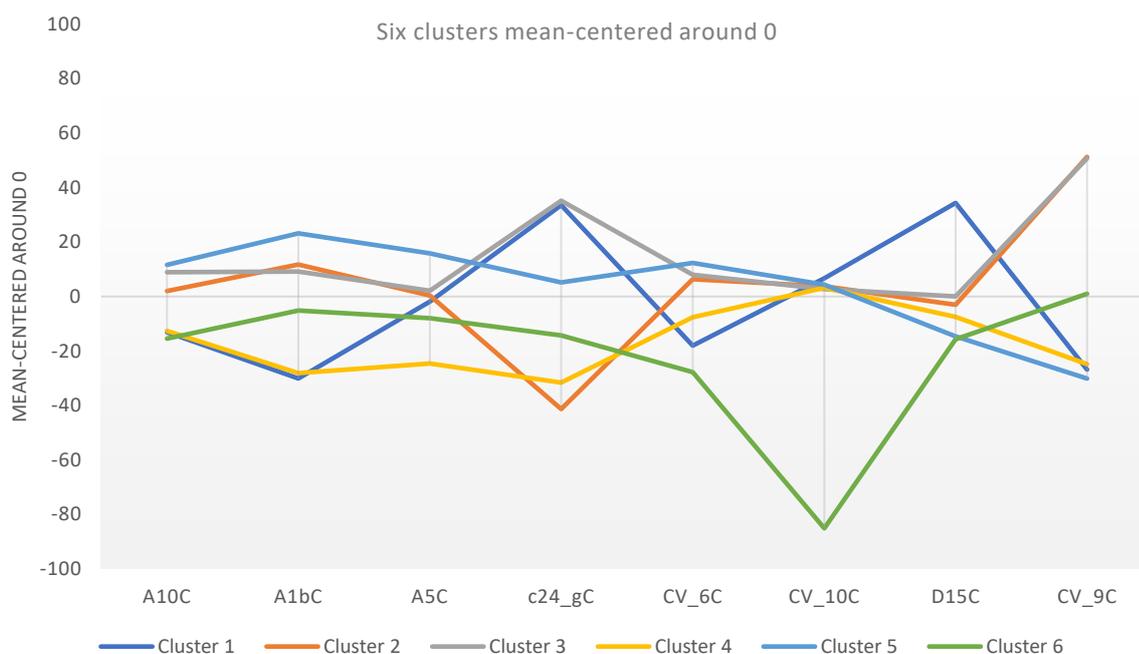
²⁸ Using Ward's method and Squared Euclidean distance measure

²⁹ For example, $A10C = A10 - \text{Mean}(A10)$

Table A1: Eleven items loading on four factors, seven of those were retained for cluster analysis

ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX	1	2	3	4
D15. In your opinion, how big of a problem is racism in Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic?	0.820			
During the COVID-19 pandemic, how concerned are you about discrimination experienced by your friends and/or members of your local community?	0.596			
CV_10. Do you think that the lockdown restrictions that were imposed in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic were required?	0.259			
Taking ALL things into consideration, would you say that over the last year YOU have been		0.661		
A5. How satisfied are you with your present financial situation?		0.606		
CV_6. In your opinion, how well is the federal government responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?		0.400		
A10. In general, are you optimistic or pessimistic about Australia's future?			0.644	
In three or four years, do you think that your life in Australia will be			0.511	
A1b. People living on low incomes in Australia receive enough financial support from the government			0.323	
Confidence that China follows the global trade rules to ensure fair trade				0.618
C24_g. Feelings towards immigrants from China				0.613

Figure A1: Non-hierarchical six cluster solution cross-tabulated by the eight items mean-centred around 0



Cluster 6 is a relatively small cluster representing only 5% of the population and is about five times smaller than the largest Cluster 5 with 27%. A decision was made to keep Cluster 6 because it clearly has a very low mean on item CV_10C that stands out and that represents a small but distinct profile that is very strongly opposed to the lockdown restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The six-cluster solution was validated by confirming that the differences between clusters are significant. A One-Way ANOVA of the eight items with the six-cluster solution as Factor further indicates that all the items' means differ significantly (see Table A2).

The six-cluster solution was further validated with items not included in the cluster analysis. For example, as shown in Figure 1, Clusters 2 and 3 have the highest means for item CV_9C: 'Would you say that during the COVID-19 pandemic, having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament would be ... (good/bad).' It can then be predicted that Clusters 2 and 3 will also have higher means for item B9_2: 'Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections would be ... (good/bad way of governing Australia).' The prediction was validated by cross-tabulating the six cluster solution with item B9_2 showing that 50% of Clusters 2 and 3 think that it would be a good way of governing Australia, compared to the third highest proportion of 27% for Cluster 6. Finally, a chi-square test for independence indicated a significant association between the six cluster solution and item B9_2 with a large effect, $\chi^2(15, N = 2932) = 883.85, p < .001, V = .32$.

Table A2: One-Way ANOVA of eight items with the six-cluster solution indicating that all the items' means differ significantly

Item	Mean square	F	Sig.	Item	Mean square	F	Sig.
A10	77.235	85.194	.000	CV_10	244.346	1260.906	.000
CV_6	107.921	127.747	.000	A1b	310.533	285.440	.000
A5	109.566	109.051	.000	C24_g	578.379	742.664	.000
D15	193.656	155.242	.000	CV_9	888.005	1864.046	.000

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The Scanlon Foundation Research Institute exists as a bridge between academic insight and public thought, to support the advancement of Australia as a welcoming, prosperous and cohesive nation. The body is an initiative of the Scanlon Foundation and furthers its belief that Australia's future prosperity, underpinned by continued population growth, will depend on our ability to maintain, foster and support social cohesion in our communities amidst ever-growing cultural diversity.



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.



