Mapping Social Cohesion 2026

Technical Report

Australian National University & Social Research Centre

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Introduction

The following report provides technical information related to the administration and analysis of the Mapping Social Cohesion 2026 study.

The Social Research Centre and the Australian National University were separately contracted by the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute to administer and analyse the Mapping Social Cohesion survey. The Social Research Centre managed the survey, including its administration to the Life in Australia™ panel and had oversight of its administration to the Online Research Unit panel and through Polaron Connect.

The Australian National University conducted the analysis of the survey and the writing of the report, for all but the qualitative chapter. The Scanlon Foundation Research Institute conducted the qualitative component of the study in-house under the leadership of Trish Prentice, including the conduct of all interviews and were the sole authors of the qualitative chapter.

This report is split into five parts.

- Part A provides a summary of the Mapping Social Cohesion 2026 study. Part A was authored by the Australian National University.
- Part B describes the administration of the Mapping Social Cohesion 2026 survey and was authored by the Social Research Centre.
- Part C describes the redevelopment of the Scanlon Index of social cohesion in 2021 and that is now used in the main report to track social cohesion over time. Part C was authored by Andrew Ward, Benjamin Phillips, Wendy Heywood and Ashleigh Buttigieg from the Social Research Centre.
- Part D provides detailed results from analyses reported in the main report, including data tables with margins of error and regression results. Part D was authored by the Australian National University.
- Part E provides the Discussion Guide from the qualitative research. The Discussion Guide was created by the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute.

Further details and data are published in the Australian Data Archive. Interested researchers are able to apply to access the unit record survey data for each wave of the survey going back to 2007 (without cost). https://dataverse.ada.edu.au/dataverse/scs

Data from each wave are published in the Archive after a 12 month embargo period from the public release of the Mapping Social Cohesion report. Interested parties are also able to freely access other survey documentation from the Australian Data Archive, including data dictionaries and survey questionnaires.

For other queries, including related to data provision and analysis, please contact the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute, info@scanloninstitute.org.au.

PART A: Summary

Australian National University

Introduction

The Scanlon Foundation Research Institute's Mapping Social Cohesion series has been the pre-eminent source of information on social cohesion in Australia for almost two decades. The 2024 study is the 20th in the series, following the benchmark survey in 2007 and annual surveys since 2009 (and two in 2020, after COVID-19 hit). The 2026 study combines a nationally-representative survey of 10,020 Australians with additional targeted boost surveys of 251 mostly overseas-born Australians and 47 in-depth qualitative interviews. The targeted boost surveys and interviews provide rich information and insights and ensure the Mapping Social Cohesion study is representing the diversity and complexity of contemporary Australia.

The Mapping Social Cohesion survey

The centrepiece of the Mapping Social Cohesion 2026 was a nationally-representative survey with more than 10,000 Australian adults (aged 18 years and over). Since 2018, most survey respondents have come from the Social Research Centre's Life in Australia™ panel. The Life in Australia™ panel is a probability-based panel, meaning that people are invited at random to join (and once on the panel can be asked to complete a survey up to once a month). Like every year, panel members were invited to complete the 2026 Mapping Social Cohesion survey in the middle of the year, in June and July. Most people complete the survey through an online questionnaire (99%), though they can also complete the survey by phone.

More information on the Life in Australia™ panel and the history of the Mapping Social Cohesion survey is provided in Part B of this report.

In the current political environment, it has also been important to ensure the study is representing the diversity of political opinion in Australia today – in addition to Australia's migrant, ethnic and wider demographic and socioeconomic diversity. The Life in Australia™ panel performs well on these fronts, though there are always difficulties with panels in capturing and representing newly arrived populations (including recent immigrants), those that are less socially and politically engaged, as well as certain groups of conservative-minded people who often shy away from social surveys and political polling.

Social, demographic and political representation has been enhanced in this year's Mapping Social Cohesion study through boost surveys of key population groups. These boosts were designed so that the total pool of respondents matched the outcome of the 2025 Federal Election in who they said they voted for. In addition to 7,343 respondents from Life in Australia™, we recruited 2,677 respondents in four key population groups:

1. People who voted for the Coalition at the election,
2. People who voted for a party outside the Coalition, Labor, the Greens or an Independent,
3. People who were eligible to vote but did not vote and
4. People who are not Australian citizens and ineligible to vote.

These additional respondents were sourced through another panel provider, the Online Research Unit (ORU), the same panel used by other social surveys including ANU Poll. The ORU panel is a non-probability

The strategy proved successful. We met our targets and the voting patterns of our respondents match very well to the 2025 Federal Election. The survey is also predicting voting intentions well, with for example, approximately one-quarter of Mapping Social Cohesion survey respondents indicating a voting preference for Pauline Hanson's One Nation party, similar to what the political polls were suggesting at the time. Our estimates of social and community participation also closely match data from similar questions in the Australian Bureau of Statistics' General Social Survey 2025 (see Figure 35 in the main report).

We refer to the combined sample from Life in Australia™ and the ORU as the blended sample in the main report.

We ran a pilot study of this blended approach in 2025 as well and use the results to measure changes in social cohesion between 2025 and 2026. It is important to note though we made improvements to the design of the blended approach in 2026 that affects the comparability of the results between years. Firstly, Independent voters were included in group 2 (see above) in 2025, though in response to an over-sampling on the ORU boost, we removed Independent voters from group 2 in 2026. Secondly, groups 3 and 4 were combined into a single non-voting boost group in 2025. However, in response to an oversampling of Australian citizens who did not vote, we separated this group into two to ensure we had an adequate sample of non-Australian citizens. We did not detect any substantive effects of these tweaks on the results in preparing this year's report and are confident that the blended samples are approximately comparable between 2025 and 2026 and are giving us a good indication of changes in social cohesion over the last year.

The number of respondents to the main 2026 Mapping Social Cohesion survey are shown in Table A1 for the main demographic and socioeconomic groups used throughout this report.

Table A1 Number of Mapping Social Cohesion survey respondents, blended sample, 2026

GENDER	Female	Male	Persons			
	5,756	4,429	10,271			
AGE	65+	55-64	45-54	35-44	25-34	18-24
	3,447	1,946	1,677	1,640	1,183	378
STATE	NSW	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	
	2,914	2,772	1,905	876	1,124	
CAPITAL CITY/ REST OF STATE	Capital city	Rest of state*				
	7,163	3,108				
HIGHEST EDUCATION	Postgraduate degree	Bachelor degree	Certificate/ diploma	Year 12	Up to Year 11	
	3,075	2,563	2,725	874	900	
FINANCIAL SITUATION	Prosperous/ very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable*	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/ poor		
	1,940	4,728	2,674	929		
VOTE AT 2025 ELECTION	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation	Independent	
	2,533	2,348	900	756	520	
VOTING PREFERENCE 2026	Labor	Liberal/ National	Greens	One Nation	Independent	
	2,767	1,984	1,246	2,412	936	
WHERE BORN & FIRST LANGUAGE	Australian born	Foreign born/ English	Foreign born/ non-English			
	6,406	2,269	1,545			
HOUSEHOLD TYPE	Couple no children	Couple parent	Single parent	Group household	Live alone	
	3,420	2,765	693	286	2,279	
HOUSING TENURE	Own outright	Mortgage	Rent			
	4,228	3,363	2,258			
NEIGHBOURHOOD DISADVANTAGE	Quintile 1 (High disadvantage)	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5 (Low disadvantage)	
	1,365	1,787	2,112	2,424	2,581	

** Includes a small number of respondents who did not respond to the question. Combined with this category to avoid disclosure of the small number.*

Targeted boost surveys

As in every year since 2023, targeted boost surveys were conducted In 2026 to ensure greater representation across specific migrant groups. Respondents were recruited through Polaron Connect. Three migrant groups were targeted: people from India, the Middle East and north Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.

Respondents to the targeted boost surveys received a shorter version of the Mapping Social Cohesion questionnaire. The shortened version was designed to take approximately 10 minutes on average to complete, roughly half the length of the full questionnaire. The boost surveys were delivered in one of four different languages, English, Arabic, Punjabi and Swahili. These languages were selected as they were estimated to provide the widest coverage of the Australian population in the three targeted groups (India, the Middle East and North Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa) based on data from the 2021 Census on a) the languages that people speak at home and b) their proficiency in English (as reported by the household).

A total of 251 boost surveys were conducted and the results added to the responses of Life in Australia™ members. The boost surveys strengthen our ability to report on the wellbeing and perceived cohesion of specific migrant groups. The total number of respondents who completed a survey in 2024 are shown in Table A2 for three targeted countries or regions of origin, other overseas places and Australia.

Table A2 Number of respondents by region of birth, blended survey and targeted boost surveys, 2026

Country/region of birth	Blended survey	Targeted boost	Total
Europe, the Americas and New Zealand	*	*	2,176
Africa & the Middle East	288	137	425
East Asia & the Pacific	*	*	777
South and central Asia	345	97	457
Australia	*	*	6,406

** not disclosed due to a small number in one or more cells.*

The Mapping Social Cohesion time series

Our ability to track social cohesion and its indicators over time have been impacted by changes in the ways the Mapping Social Cohesion survey has been administered over time. The Mapping Social Cohesion survey was first administered to Life in Australia™ in 2018. Prior to Life in Australia™, the first 10 surveys in the Mapping Social Cohesion series were administered firstly to landline telephone numbers, and then to landline and mobile numbers, employing Random Digit Dialling (RDD). In 2018 and 2019, the survey was undertaken both via RDD and the Life in Australia™ panel.

Between 2020 and 2024, the survey was administered to Life in Australia™, with boost surveys of immigrant populations in 2023 and 2024. As described above, the Mapping Social Cohesion survey was administered to a blended sample of respondents from Life in Australia™ and the non-probability ORU panel in 2025 and 2026.

We can measure the effects of changes in survey administration on social cohesion indicators. The parallel administration in 2018 and 2019 of the Mapping Social Cohesion Survey via both Random Digit Dialling (RDD) and the Life in Australia™ panel provided an understanding of the impact of the data collection mode on the results. Generally speaking, Life in Australia™ members report lower levels of social cohesion than were reported through the RDD survey, likely because respondents to the largely online Life in Australia™ survey are more comfortable reporting financial stress and unhappiness than when they had to speak to a person over the telephone.

We calculate the effect of the shift to the mostly online Life in Australia™ panel by taking the average value of any given indicator in 2018 on 2019 from the RDD surveys and subtracting it from the same average from Life in Australia™ panellists. For example, if a weighted average of 60% of RDD respondents had a great sense of belonging across 2018 and 2019, compared with 50% of Life in Australia™ respondents, we estimate the mode effect or the effect of shifting to Life in Australia™ to be -10 percentage points (i.e. 50 – 60).

We can estimate the effect of shifting to the blended sample in 2025 in a similar way. Specifically, we can calculate indicators in 2025 and 2026 based just on Life in Australia™ and with the blended sample. We show this in the main report by presenting the two estimates for 2025. As can be seen, differences are generally small or non-existent. We attribute the differences that we do find to the overall more politically conservative composition of the blended sample. Given this composition is strongly aligned with the outcome of the 2025 Federal election (held less than two months prior to the survey), we believe the blended samples provide the best estimates of the true state of social cohesion in Australia.

Weighting of survey results

Survey data are weighted to adjust for the chance of being sampled in the survey and to ensure the demographic and socioeconomic profile of respondents mirrors the Australian population as closely as possible.

This involves assigning each respondent a weight so that the sum of weights across a set of demographic indicators line up with benchmarks set by population and census data created by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The benchmarks included in the weighting solution are: state or territory of residence, whether lives in a capital city or elsewhere in the state, gender, age, highest education (bachelor's degree or below), language spoken at home (English or other), dwelling tenure, and household composition. More information is available in Part B of this report.

Inferring social cohesion for all of Australia

Of course, we do not survey all Australians and random errors and variation mean that we cannot be certain that survey results will be true for the whole population. We use statistics to estimate the maximum size of this potential error based on the weights used and the number of respondents in

each group. We provide margins of error in Part D of this report for the key results provided in the main report. The margins of error tell us the range in which we believe with 95 per cent confidence that the true estimate lies for the whole population.

> For example, if 50 per cent of male respondents to the survey say that people generally can be trusted (after applying weights), the margin of error of 2.2 indicates that we are 95 per cent confident that the proportion of all Australian males who trust others is within 2.2 percentage points of 50 per cent. In other words, we are 95 per cent confident that between 47.8 per cent and 52.2 per cent of all Australian males think that people generally can be trusted.

With the large size of the Mapping Social Cohesion survey, margins of error at the national level are small. Generally, they range up to 1.5 points. This means that differences in national results of two or more points across years are generally statistically significant. For example, if the proportion of people who trust the Federal Government declines from 40% in one year to 36% in the next, this will be statistically significant. Significance in this context means that the differences are likely to be real and more than just random statistical chance. It does not mean they are large or important differences.

In-depth qualitative interviews

The 2024 Mapping Social Cohesion study included 47 in-depth interviews with Australian adults. Interview participants were recruited through the Farron Research company. The number of interview participants are listed in Table A3 by participants' age, gender, state of residence, and vote in the last federal election. All interviews were conducted in English.

Ethics approval

The 2026 Mapping Social Cohesion survey (incorporating also the targeted surveys) was approved by the Australian National University Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol number 2025/152).

The in-depth qualitative interviews were also approved by the Australian National University Human Research Ethics Committee under a separate ethics protocol (Protocol number 2026/238).

Past iterations of the study were approved by the human research ethical review boards of Monash University (2007 to 2021) and the Australian National University (2022-2026).

The Scanlon Index of Social Cohesion

As every year, the 2026 Mapping Social Cohesion report publishes estimates of social cohesion based on the Scanlon Index of Social Cohesion. Developed by Professor Andrew Markus from Monash University and colleagues, the index has been used to measure social cohesion in Australia since 2007 and is now one of the most important and long-running barometers of Australia's social well-being. The Index was renamed from the Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion in 2025. This is a simplification, though we continue to recognise and celebrate the contribution of Monash University and particularly Professor Markus.

The original Scanlon Index of Social Cohesion is constructed by aggregating responses to 17 survey questions on the Mapping Social Cohesion survey. Responses are organised into the following five core measures or domains of social cohesion:

- **Belonging:** the sense of pride and belonging people have in Australia and in Australian life and culture.
- **Worth:** the degree of emotional and material well-being across society, as measured through levels of happiness and financial satisfaction.
- **Social inclusion and justice:** perceptions of economic fairness in Australian society and trust in the Federal Government.
- **Participation:** active engagement in political activities and the political process, including through voting, signing a petition, contacting Members of Parliament, and attending protests.
- **Acceptance and rejection:** attitudes to immigrant diversity, support for ethnic minorities, and experience of discrimination.

In 2021, the Social Research Centre was commissioned to re-develop the Scanlon Index of Social Cohesion. The objective was to enhance the robustness and statistical validity of the measurement of social cohesion and provide greater capacity to examine how expressed levels of cohesion vary across individuals and groups in society.

The re-developed index is comprised of an expanded set of 29 questions across the five domains of social cohesion. The new index is based on a rigorous and robust methodology, designed to build on the original index and strengthen our understanding of social cohesion. The particular areas in which the new index expands this understanding are as follows:

- The original index design measured social cohesion in the Belonging domain as the sense of pride and belonging in Australia and Australian life and culture. The new index measures belonging at national and neighbourhood levels, as well as on a personal level through individual social connectedness.
- 'Participation' in the original index design exclusively refers to political participation, or engagement in political activities and the political process. The new index combines engagement in political activities with measures of participation in social, community, religious, civic, and political groups.

The re-developed Index of Social Cohesion provides new power to examine how social cohesion varies over time and across society. However, several questions in the new index were only asked for the first time in 2021. For this reason, the original index design based on the smaller set of 17 questions continues to be used in this report to track social cohesion between 2007 and 2025.

The new index is used to track changes between 2025 and 2026. To do this, we anchor 2025 scores on the new Index against scores on the old Index. For example, if on the new index, scores declined by 3% between 2025 and 2026, we apply a 3% reduction to the 2025 score on the old Index to arrive at the 2026 score. Thus, the levels of social cohesion are set equivalent to the old Index in 2025, with proportional changes after 2025 determined by the new Index.

The survey questions used to construct the historical and new indices of social cohesion are listed in Table A4. A detailed description of the development of the new Index is provided in Part C of this report.

Table A4 Domains and items in the new and historical Scanlon Index of Social Cohesion

Domain and question	Historical index	New index
Domain 1: Sense of belonging		
To what extent do you take pride in the Australian way of life and culture?	Yes	Yes
To what extent do you have a sense of belonging in Australia?	Yes	Yes
Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?		
'In the modern world, maintaining the Australian way of life and culture is important'	Yes	No
'I feel like I belong in my neighbourhood'	No	Yes
'My neighbourhood has a strong sense of community'	No	Yes
How often do you feel isolated from others?	No	Yes
How safe do you feel at home by yourself during the day?	No	Yes
Domain 2: Sense of worth		
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your present financial situation?	Yes	Yes
To what extent do you feel that people treat you with respect?	No	Yes
Taking all things into consideration, would you say that over the last year you have been very happy, happy, unhappy, or very unhappy?	Yes	Yes
During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel the things you do in your life were worthwhile?	No	Yes
Over the last 12 months, how often is the following statement true… 'You / your household went without meals because there wasn't enough money for food'	No	Yes
Domain 3: Social inclusion and justice		
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?		
'Australia is a land of economic opportunity where in the long run, hard work brings a better life'	Yes	Yes
'In Australia today, the gap between those with high incomes and those with low incomes is too large'	Yes	No
'People living on low incomes in Australia receive enough financial support from the government'	No	Yes
'Overall, everyone in Australia has a fair chance of getting the jobs they seek'	No	Yes
'Elections are fair'	No	Yes
How often do you think the government in Canberra can be trusted to do the right thing for the Australian people?	Yes	No
How often do you think government leaders in Australia abuse their power?	No	Yes
In your opinion, how often do the courts make fair, impartial decisions based on the evidence made available to them?	No	Yes
Domain 4: Participation		

Domain and question	Historical index	New index
Please indicate which, if any, of the following you have done over the last three years or so?		
1. Voted in an election	Yes	No
2. Signed a petition	Yes	No
3. Written or spoken to a Federal or State Member of Parliament	Yes	Yes
4. Joined a boycott of a product or company	Yes	Yes
5. Attended a protest, march, or demonstration	Yes	No
6. Posted or shared anything about politics online	No	Yes
In the last 12 months, have you been actively involved in any community support groups?	No	Yes
In the last 12 months, have you been actively involved in any social or religious groups?	No	Yes
In the last 12 months, have you been actively involved in any civic or political groups?	No	Yes
In the last 4 weeks, did you help anyone (not living with you) with any of the following activities? • Providing transport or running errands • Any teaching, coaching, or practical advice • Providing any emotional support	No	Yes
Domain 5: Acceptance and rejection		
How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?		
'The relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and the wider Australian community is very important for Australia as a nation'	No	Yes
'It is important for Indigenous histories and cultures to be included in the school curriculum'	No	Yes
'Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger'	Yes	Yes
'Ethnic minorities in Australia should be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions'	Yes	Yes
Have you experienced discrimination because of your skin colour, ethnic origin, or religion over the last 12 months?	Yes	No
In three or four years, do you think that your life in Australia will be much improved, a little improved, about the same, a little worse, or much worse?	Yes	No

PART B: Survey administration

Social Research Centre

Introduction

Project background

The Scanlon Foundation Research Institute commissioned the Social Research Centre to administer the Mapping Social Cohesion Survey. The aims of the survey were to look at the Australian community's attitudes towards various aspects of social cohesion and assess changes in these attitudes over time.

The survey was conducted on the 155th wave of Life in Australia™, the Social Research Centre's probability-based online panel, along with a non-probability panel boost through the Online Research Unit (ORU).

Project overview

Key project statistics for the survey are summarised in Table B1.

Table B1 Summary of key statistics

Field	Life in Australia™ (Total)	Life in Australia™ (Online)	Life in Australia™ (Offline)	The ORU
Invited to complete survey	9,488	9,419	69	-
Total Interviews achieved	7,343	7,299	44	2,677
Average interview duration (mins)	17.4	17.4	30.8	22.7
Completion rate (%)	77.4	77.5	63.8	-
Main fieldwork start date	29-Jun-26	29-Jun-26	29-Jun-26	1-Jul-26
Main fieldwork finish date	12-Jul-26	12-Jul-26	12-Jul-26	21-Jul-26

About Life in Australia™

In 2016, the Social Research Centre established Australia's first national probability-based online panel: Life in Australia™ (Kaczmirek et al., 2019). The panel is the most methodologically rigorous online panel in Australia and is one of only a small number worldwide.[1] Members of the panel are recruited via random digit dialling (RDD) or address-based sampling (A-BS) and agreed to provide their contact details to take part in surveys on a regular basis. What separates Life in Australia™ from other online panels is the use of sampling frames for which units have known probability of selection and the fact that people cannot enrol unless invited to participate.

Ethics and quality assurance

This research was undertaken in accordance with ISO 20252:2019 Market, Opinion and Social Research Standard, The Research Society (formerly AMSRS) Code of Professional Behaviour, the Australian Privacy Principles and the Privacy (Market and Social Research) Code 2021.

The Social Research Centre is an accredited Company Partner of The Research Society with all senior staff as full members and several senior staff QPMR accredited. The Social Research Centre is also a member of

[1] Others include the Pew Research Center American Trends Panel, NORC AmeriSpeak and GESIS Panel.

the Australian Data and Insights Association (ADIA formerly known as AMSRO) and bound by the Market and Social Research Privacy Principles/Code.

As explained in Part A, the survey has been approved in every year by the human research ethics committees of Monash University (2007–2021) and the Australian National University (2022–2026).

Questionnaire design and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Monash University and the Scanlon Foundation in 2007 and is maintained and updated by the Australian National University in collaboration with the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute. The Social Research Centre performs a review role. Prior to fieldwork starting, standard operational testing procedures were applied to ensure that the script truly reflected the agreed final electronic version of the questionnaire. These included:

- programming the skips and sequencing instructions as per the final questionnaire
- rigorous checking of the questionnaire in 'practice mode' by the Social Research Centre project coordinator and the project quality supervisor, including checks of the on-screen presentation of questions and response frames on a range of devices
- randomly allocating dummy data to each field in the questionnaire and examining the resultant frequency counts to check the structural integrity of the script.

No formal pilot testing was undertaken in 2026. However, a soft launch was undertaken to confirm the integrity of the questionnaire. This involved initiating a small number of offline records on the first planned day of fieldwork. The interviewing team was de-briefed and top-line data reviewed.

Methodology

Sample design and size

The in-scope population for the survey was adults aged 18+ years residing in Australia. The survey was administered to a large subset of active Life in Australia™ members, who served as the primary sampling frame. A non-probability panel boost was also used to recruit additional respondents, including Coalition voters, minor party and independent voters, non-voters, people ineligible to vote in the 2025 Australian Federal Election, and non-citizens.

Life in Australia™ panellists have been recruited using a variety of probability sampling frames and survey modes. These are summarised in Table B2.

Table B2 Summary of Life in Australia™ recruitment, 2026

Year	Sampling frame	Recruitment mode(s)	Panel members profiled (n)	Recruitment Rate* %	Profile Rate %
2016	DFRDD	CATI	3,322	20.0	77.7
2018	Mobile RDD	CATI	267	12.1	69.7
2019	A-BS	CAWI / CATI	1,810	10.8	100.0
2020	A-BS	Mail push-to-web / CATI	309	6.1	100.0
2020	Mobile RDD	IVR	158	1.6	100.0
2020	Mobile RDD	SMS push-to-web	145	3.1	100.0
2021	SMS	SMS push-to-web	510	3.4	100.0
2021	A-BS	CAWI / CATI	3,715	7.7	100.0
2023	SMS	SMS push-to-web	4,164	2.6	100.0
2024	SMS	SMS push-to-web	3,267	1.8	100.0
2025	SMS	SMS push-to-web	1,969	1.36	100.0

Notes: A-BS = address-based sampling; CATI = computer-assisted telephone interviewing; CAWI = computer-assisted web interviewing; DFRDD = dual-frame (landline and mobile) RDD; IVR = interactive voice response; RDD = random digit dialling; SMS = short message service (i.e., text message).

* AAPOR RR3. See Callegaro and DiSogra (2008) for details on outcome rates for online panels; profile rates are of questionable relevance for non-CATI modes.

Dual-frame RDD (2016)

Initial recruitment in 2016 used a dual-frame random digit dialling sample design, with a 30:70 split between the landline RDD sample frame and mobile phone RDD sample frame. For the landline sample, an alternating next / last birthday method was used to randomly select respondents from households where two or more in-scope persons were present. For mobile sample, the phone answerer was the selected respondent. Only one member per household was invited to join the panel. RDD sample was supplied by SamplePages[2] Mobile and landline coverage in Australia in 2017–18 was 98% (Phillips et al., 2019), including the 1% error rate from RDD vendor checks for number working status.

[2] SamplePages selects numbers randomly from the Australian Communication and Media Authority's register of numbers, which shows all allocated (i.e., potentially in use) blocks of mobile numbers. For mobile RDD, SamplePages does not use a list-assisted approach (Brick et al., 1995); a pure RDD sample is drawn. A list-assisted approach is used for landline RDD. Before release to the Social Research Centre, sampled numbers undergo HLR/SS7 look-up to check for active status (a process sometimes called 'pulsing' or 'pinging'), with inactive numbers not being provided to the Social Research Centre. SamplePages reported a 1% false negative rate for these checks for active status.

Mobile RDD (2018)

In 2018, the panel was refreshed using only mobile RDD sample. Only online participants that were under 55 years old were recruited, in order to balance the demographics (the age profile of panel members was older than that of the Australian population). The recruitment rate (RECR) for the replenishment was 12.1%. For both the recruitment in 2016 and panel refreshment in 2018, the RDD sample was provided by SamplePages. Mobile coverage in Australia in 2017–18 was 93% (Phillips et al., 2019), again with a 1% error rate from working number look-up as part of SamplePages' processes.

Address-based sampling (2019, 2020, 2021)

Between October-December 2019, the panel was expanded. This recruitment used address-based sampling (A-BS; Link et al., 2005) with push-to-web methodology (Dillman, 2017).[3] Only online participants were recruited in order to balance the demographics (the age profile of panel members was older and more educated than that of the Australian population). The sampling frame used was the Geo-coded National Address File (G-NAF), Australia's authoritative list of addresses, and is assumed to cover all Australian addresses.[4] An 'any adult' approach to selection was applied; i.e., one adult per household with no attempt to impose a selection routine.[5] The G--NAF is an open-source file that is built and maintained by Geoscape Australia (Australian Government, 2023). Later rounds of recruitment took place in 2020 (with IVR and SMS push-to-web as described below) and 2021, the panel was expanded using the A-BS sampling frame and push-to-web and CATI methodology, as described above. Offline respondents were recruited in 2021 (a call-in number was provided). Coverage is estimated at 96.1% of addresses due to the Social Research Centre's exclusion of certain addresses that have a low probability of being residential.

Interactive voice response (2020)

Interactive voice response (IVR) push-to-web makes brief use of IVR (an automated call) to briefly describe the reason for the call; people who are interested are then sent a link to the profile survey via SMS. IVR coverage is estimated at 97%, based on 98% mobile coverage (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2022a) and the 1% working number look-up error rate referred to above.[6]

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[3] Addresses matched to telephone numbers received reminder calls; respondents who received a reminder call could join the panel via telephone, with the panel profile being collected via CATI.

[4] The homeless population in 2016 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018b) living in improvised dwellings (N = 8,200), supported accommodation (N = 21,235) and boarding houses (N = 17,503) are assumed inaccessible via address-based sampling, amounted to 0.2% of the total Australian population of all ages (N = 23,401,891) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023). The most recent official statistics on internet usage are for the 2016-17 financial year, when 86.1% of adults used the internet (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018a). Indicative of trends since then, internet usage was excluded from the 2021 Census of Population and Housing on the rationale that internet access via smartphones was effectively universal.

[5] In the interest of response maximisation, a decision was made to allow any responsible adult within the household to complete the survey rather than apply a within-household selection procedure. This decision was based on the knowledge that within-household selection methods have been found to add a layer of complexity that increases non-response (Battaglia et al., 2008). Thus, while a within-household selection method may be desired as a means of minimising coverage error, this is overshadowed by the potential to increase non-response error. The accuracy of within-household selection procedures applied to address-based sampling studies has also been questioned (Olson, Stange, & Smyth, 2014).

[6] SamplePages was the mobile RDD sample supplier.

SMS push-to-web (2020, 2021, 2023–25)

SMS push-to-web uses SMS as the mode of invitation, with respondents invited to click a link to complete the profile survey in CAWI mode. As described in footnote 4, above, no up-to-date official statistics on internet access are available, apart from those derived from Life in Australia™; the Australian Communications and Media Authority (2022b) estimates 99% internet coverage, using Life in Australia™ data; we assume that non-internet users overlapped with those without mobile phones.

In April 2021, the panel was refreshed. This recruitment used an RDD mobile sample frame with SMS invitation. Only online participants were recruited. SMS coverage is estimated at 95%, based on 96% mobile coverage (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2022a) and the 1% working number look-up error rate referred to above.[7]

In February-March 2023, February-March 2024, and February 2025, the panel was expanded using an RDD mobile sampling frame and SMS push-to-web, as described above. Coverage is as described above.

Over time some panellists have withdrawn from future participation in the panel, while others are retired due to non-response or poor-quality responses.

Sample selection

A stratified random sample was drawn from Life in Australia™ panellists on strata defined by past voting behaviour and citizenship status (Labor Party voters, Australian Greens voters, Coalition voters, minor party voters, independent voters, citizen non-voters, and non-citizens).

The methodology adopted for the non-probability panel boost was online only data collection, including invitation and multiple reminders sent via email. Four groups of respondents were targeted in the boost survey recruitment: Coalition voters, minor party voters, citizen non-voters and non-citizens. The non-probability panel boost survey was conducted concurrently with the Life in Australia™ survey.

The final sample profile along with comparison to ABS benchmarks is shown below in Table B3.

[7] SamplePages was the mobile RDD sample supplier.

Table B3 Sample profile (unweighted)

Subgroup	Online members (completed)	Offline members (completed)	Total (completed)	Benchmark[8]
Male	40.6	29.5	40.6	49.0
Female	58.4	70.5	58.5	51.0
18-24 years	2.8	0.0	2.8	11.0
25-34 years	11.4	0.0	11.3	18.8
35-44 years	16.8	0.0	16.7	17.5
45-54 years	16.9	2.3	16.8	16.2
55-64 years	18.7	11.4	18.6	14.9
65-74 years	20.9	22.7	20.9	12.0
75 years or more	12.6	63.6	12.9	9.5
Sydney	18.2	18.2	18.2	20.6
Rest of NSW	11.0	15.9	11.0	11.3
Melbourne	20.9	15.9	20.9	19.7
Rest of VIC	6.9	4.5	6.9	6.3
Brisbane	9.9	9.1	9.9	9.7
Rest of QLD	9.3	9.1	9.3	10.4
Adelaide	6.4	4.5	6.3	5.4
Rest of SA	1.8	0.0	1.8	1.6
Perth	8.4	6.8	8.4	8.1
Rest of WA	1.9	6.8	2.0	2.2
Hobart	1.3	4.5	1.3	0.9
Rest of TAS	1.2	2.3	1.2	1.2
Darwin	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.6
Rest of NT	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.3
ACT	2.2	2.3	2.2	1.7

Contact methodology

The contact methodology adopted for online Life in Australia™ members is an initial survey invitation via email and SMS (where available), followed by multiple email reminders and a reminder SMS. Up to 5 reminders in different modes (including email, SMS, and telephone) were administered within the fieldwork period. Telephone non-response of online panel members who have not yet competed the survey commences in the second week of fieldwork and consists of reminder calls encouraging completion of the online survey.

Offline members with a valid mobile telephone number were also sent a short SMS invitation that contained a link to the survey as well as the reminder SMS halfway through fieldwork.

The exact contact dates are shown below in Table B4.

[8] Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2021 ERPS).

Table B4 Summary of contact schedule

Contact type	Date	Population
Phone interviews	29-Jun-26 - 12-Jul-26	Offline only
SMS	29-Jun-26	Both
Email	29-Jun-26	Online only
SMS	30-Jun-26	Both
Email	30-Jun-26	Online only
Email	3-Jul-26	Online only
Reminder calls	7-Jul-26 - 12-Jul-26	Online only
Email	7-Jul-26	Online only

The following call procedures were implemented:

- A 4-call regime for mobile sample with an upper limit of 6 calls and a 6-call regime for landline sample, with an upper limit of 9 call attempts
- For mobile phones, capping the maximum number of unanswered call attempts to no more than four so as to avoid appearing overzealous in our attempts to achieve interviews
- Contact attempts were spread over weekday evenings (6:30 pm to 8:30 pm), weekday late afternoon/early evening (4:30 pm to 6:30 pm), Saturdays (11 am to 5 pm) and Sundays (11 am to 5 pm) (weekdays between 9 am to 4:30 pm are typically reserved for appointment management)
- Appointments were set for any time that the call centre is operational (weekdays between 9 am to 8:30 pm; weekends 11 am to 5 pm)
- 1800 number operation to address sample member queries and support the response maximisation effort and the establishment of a respondent page on our website (with responses to frequently asked questions).

Life in Australia™ members were able to request an email to complete the survey online. Interviewing was conducted in English only.

The contact methodology adopted for the ORU panel was an invitation email, followed by a reminder email sent out daily during the fieldwork period from 1st to 21st July.

Incentives

Life in Australia™ members were offered an incentive to complete the survey. The incentives offered for completing the Life in Australia™ survey had a value of $10. The incentive options were:

- Coles / Myer gift card
- Points redeemable as an electronic gift card from GiftPay
- Charitable donation to a designated charity:
  - Rural Aid
  - StreetSmart Australia
  - The Man Cave

- Djirra
- Love your Sister

All members could choose to donate the amount to a nominated charity or could opt out of receiving an incentive.

ORU panellists who completed the survey were credited with points to their loyalty accounts upon completion of the survey.

Other Life in Australia™ response maximisation procedures

Other procedures to maximise response for the survey included:

- Leaving messages on answering machines and voicemails.
- Operation of an 1800 number throughout the survey period, to help establish survey bona fides,

address sample members' queries, and encourage response.

- Provision of the Social Research Centre / Life in Australia™ website upon request.
- Focus on interviewer training and respondent liaison techniques during interviewer briefing and throughout fieldwork.

Life in Australia™ CATI fieldwork

Interviewer briefing

All interviewers and supervisors selected to work on the survey attended a two-hour briefing session, which focused on all aspects of survey administration, including:

- Survey context and background, including a detailed explanation of Life in Australia™.
- Survey procedures and sample management protocols.
- The importance of respondent liaison procedures.
- Strategies to maintain co-operation.
- Detailed examination of the survey questionnaire, with a focus on the use of pre-coded response lists and item-specific data quality issues.

After the initial briefing session, interviewers engaged in comprehensive practice interviewing. A total of 14 interviewers were briefed on the survey.

Fieldwork quality control procedures

The in-field quality monitoring techniques applied to this project included:

- Monitoring (by remote listening) of each interviewer within their first three shifts, whereby the supervisor listened in to at least 75 per cent of the interview and provided comprehensive feedback on data quality issues and respondent liaison technique.
- Validation of ten telephone surveys conducted via remote monitoring (covering the interviewers' approach and commitment-gaining skills, as well as the conduct of the

interviews).

- Field team de-briefing after the first shift and, thereafter, whenever there was important information to impart to the field team in relation to data quality, consistency of interview administration, techniques to avoid refusals, appointment-making conventions, or project performance.
- Examination of 'Other (specify)' responses.
- Monitoring of timestamps for segments of the survey and overall time taken to complete the survey.
- Monitoring of the interview-to-refusal ratio by interviewer.

Response outcomes

Completion rate

The Social Research Centre uses standard industry definitions for calculating outcome rates (American Association for Public Opinion Research, 2023; Callegaro & DiSogra, 2008). The completion rate (COMR) represents completed interviews as a proportion of all Life in Australia™ members invited to participate in this survey. The overall completion rate for the Life in Australia™ survey was 77.4% (online population = 77.5%; offline population = 63.8%).

A completion rate could not be calculated for the ORU non-probability boost survey, as the number of invited participants was not reported. The boost survey achieved 2,677 completes.

Life in Australia™ cumulative response rate

Completion rates only tell part of the story. The panellists invited to participate in this survey had to agree to participate in Life in Australia™ in the first place, then provide essential details to join the panel by completing the panel profile and finally remain in the panel until they were invited to complete this survey.

The cumulative response rate (CUMRR2) takes account of non-response at each point. It is the product of the recruitment rate (RECR), the profile rate (PROR), the retention rate (RETR) and the completion rate: CUMRR2 = RECR × PROR × RETR × COMR. The recruitment rate is the rate at which eligible individuals agree to join the panel. The profile rate is the rate at which initially consenting individuals complete the panel profile, thus joining the panel. The retention rate is the proportion of active panellists at the time of this survey out of all those who joined the panel.

Because Life in Australia™ is made up of panellists recruited at different points in time, the recruitment, profile, and retention rates shown are weighted in proportion to the composition of the panellists invited to complete this survey.

The cumulative response rate for this survey is 2.4% (see Table B5).

Table B5 Summary of panel outcome rates

Code	Name	%
RECR	Recruitment rate	6.3
PROR	Profile rate	97.5
RETR	Retention rate	50.2
COMR	Completion rate	77.4
CUMRR2	Cumulative response rate 2	2.4

Data processing and outputs

Coding

Open-ended questions and back-coding of questions with an 'Other (specify)' option was undertaken by experienced, fully briefed coders. Outputs were validated in accordance with ISO 20252 procedures, using an independent validation approach.

Data quality checks for online completes

Data quality checks for online completes consisted of checks for:

- Logic checks
- Proportion of 'don't know' and 'refused' responses
- Speeding
- Straightlining
- Verbatim responses to open-ended questions

We consider all these indicators when determining whether a respondent is removed for poor data quality. Data quality indicators other than verbatim responses are used to identify potentially problematic cases. Generally, verbatim responses are decisive, with those indicating thoughtful engagement with the survey being kept and others being removed (e.g. nonsense responses like 'asdfgh,' *non sequiturs*, swearing).

Data quality is tracked for panel members over time and those with repeated issues are retired from the Life in Australia™.

After data quality checks, 48 cases from the non-probability panel were removed due to poor quality and were not counted toward the completion rate. No cases were removed from the Life in Australia™ panel.

Weighting

Life in Australia™ panel only approach to weighting

Overview

Sample surveys are a commonly used method for drawing inferences about a population based on responses from just a subset of it. To be able to draw such inferences requires a probability sample – one in which each element of the population has a known, non-zero chance of selection. Since some units in the population may not have a chance of selection (for instance, persons without a telephone

have no chance of selection for a telephone survey) and there may be different rates of response across unit characteristics, many sample surveys yield subsets that imperfectly cover their target populations despite the best possible sample design and data collection practices (Valliant *et al.,* 2013). In such situations, weighting can reduce the extent of any biases introduced through non-coverage.

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

- Compute a base weight for each respondent as the product of three weights:

a. Their enrolment weight, accounting for the initial chances of selection and subsequent post-stratification to key demographic benchmarks

b. An adjustment for probability of selection into the sample of the specific survey.

c. Their response propensity weight, estimated from enrolment information available for both respondents and nonrespondents to the present survey.

- Adjust the base weights so that they satisfy the latest population benchmarks for several demographic characteristics.

The first step is essential in providing the statistical framework necessary for making population inferences from a sample survey. The second step accounts for the selection of the sample for the specific survey, which varies by stratum. The third step accounts for nonresponse bias and ensures that survey estimates are consistent with other sources. Each step in the weighting will now be covered in turn.

Enrolment weights

Members of Life in Australia™ were originally recruited through a national dual-frame telephone survey in 2015, and subsequent replenishment rounds conducted through a variety of mechanisms, including mobile telephone, address-based sampling, SMS and IVR (interactive voice response).Design weights for original recruits were derived as the inverse of their probability of selection, based on the approach of Best (2010), and then adjusted to reflect the population distributions for sex, location, age group, highest level of education, household internet access and telephone status. The method for adjusting the design weights was generalised regression (GREG) weighting which uses non-linear optimisation to minimise the distance between the design and adjusted weights, subject to the weights meeting the benchmarks (Deville and Särndal, 1993).

As more panellists were recruited, the method for calculating the panel weights was simplified to use a model-based approach (Valliant *et al.,* 2000; Elliott and Valliant, 2017). Such methods[9] avoid the increasingly cumbersome calculation of selection probabilities for multiple recruitment rounds involving multiple sampling frames, the increasing complexity of weighting, and the decreasing efficiency of the weights, at the same time as generating weights that align with population totals for a wide range of characteristics.

[9] So-called "superpopulation" models are equivalent to generalised regression if the inverse selection probabilities are all set to 1.

Response propensity weights

As is typical for a panel survey, not all members respond to all waves, some withdraw or are retired from the panel and new members are recruited. To limit the impact of such events on the representativeness of estimates made from respondents, enrolment weights were adjusted through the use of propensity scores (Rosenbaum and Rubin, 1983). These were calculated by means of a logistic regression model predicting the likelihood of a panel member participating in the current wave, conditional on characteristics available for both respondents and non-respondents. The model incorporates a wide range of demographic, attitudinal and behavioural characteristics collected from all panel members.

To reduce the impact of very low or very high values, the predicted probabilities were collapsed into classes (after Cochran, 1968), with propensity scores assigned as the mean probability within each class. The base weights were then calculated as the ratio of the enrolment weight to the propensity class score.

Adjusted weights

To ensure that estimates made from the dataset are representative of Australians aged 18 years or older, the base weights were adjusted using GREG weighting so that, as described above, their distribution matches external benchmarks for the key demographic parameters. The adjustment variables were determined from a number of considerations:

- Which variables are most associated with response propensity?
- Which variables are most associated with key outcome variables?

With these in mind, the characteristics used for adjustment are shown in Table B6. Benchmarks for these variables were sourced from official Australian Bureau of Statistics sources including the 2021 Census, supplemented by the latest Demographic Statistics, and the 2020-21 National Health Survey.

Large differences in weights may lead to large variances in survey estimates, and so limiting these variations can improve the precision of estimates. The use of constraints in GREG weighting aims to reduce the variance at the same time as limiting increases in the bias. The method applied is incorporated directly in the calibration process. The impact of setting bounds on the weights is assessed by comparing the weighting efficiency (Kish, 1992) of adjusted weights for different constraints. Bounded weights are generally preferred when their efficiency is close to that of the unbounded weights.

For this survey, there were 7,343 respondents aged 18+ years and the weighting efficiency was 54.43%, representing an effective base of 3,997.

Treatment of missing values

The regression weighting approach used to adjust the base weights requires that there are no missing values across the adjustment variables or values other than those for which there are reliable benchmarks. Like most surveys, however, some Life in Australia™ respondents did not provide answers to all questions commonly used for weighting.

A statistical model (Stekhoven and Buehlmann, 2012) was applied to each item with missing values to impute the most likely value for a respondent, conditional upon their other responses. Given the very low prevalence of missing values overall (generally much less than 5% for any item), the imputation process is expected to have a negligible impact on weighted estimates made from the dataset.

Precision of estimates

Estimates made from the survey should be seen as a point-in-time approximation of the underlying population. It may be that if the survey were repeated again at a different time, a slightly different subset of persons would take part and give a slightly different set of responses. To account for the natural variation that would occur through many hypothetical replications of a survey, it is common to associate a level of precision with estimates made from the one survey that we have observed. One such metric is the "margin of error" for a survey estimate, which is used to form a "confidence interval" around the estimate. An example of these concepts is contained in the following statement:

An estimated 50% of persons agreed with survey statement X, with a margin of error of ± 1.2%. This leads to a 95% confidence interval for X of 48.8% to 51.2%.

This means that if our survey were repeated many times and the weights, estimates, margins of error and confidence intervals calculated for each survey, then 95% of the confidence intervals would contain the true population value.

Another often-reported metric is the "relative standard error" of an estimate, which expresses the precision of an estimate as a proportion of the estimate itself. Ideally, the ratio of the precision[10] to the estimate should be small (much less than 25%), indicating that the amount of uncertainty is small relative to the estimate.

Estimates with RSEs greater than 25% should be used with caution and those with RSEs greater than 50% should be considered too unreliable for general use.

For this survey, the margins of error and relative standard errors for a range of estimates are shown in Table B7. These may be used to compare the uncertainty of estimates derived from the survey – an estimate with a margin of error of ± 1.2% may be reported with considerably more confidence than an estimate with a margin of error of ± 12%, for example.

[10] Specifically, the estimate's standard error.

Table B6 Characteristics used for adjusting base weights, with benchmark totals and data sources

Category	Benchmark Target (#)	Benchmark Target (%)	Source
Number of adults in the household			(B)
One	3,503,072	16.1	
Three or more	6,283,750	28.8	
Two	12,004,751	55.1	
Age group by Highest education			(A)
18-24 years	2,503,809	11.5	
25-34 years x Bachelor or above	1,799,842	8.3	
25-34 years x Below Bachelor	2,290,039	10.5	
35-44 years x Bachelor or above	1,714,112	7.9	
35-44 years x Below Bachelor	2,217,335	10.2	
45-54 years x Bachelor or above	1,089,681	5.0	
45-54 years x Below Bachelor	2,248,032	10.3	
55-64 years x Bachelor or above	773,839	3.6	
55-64 years x Below Bachelor	2,316,630	10.6	
65+ years x Bachelor or above	854,283	3.9	
65+ years x Below Bachelor	3,983,971	18.3	
Gender			(A)
Man or male	10,717,575	49.2	
Woman or female	11,073,998	50.8	
Language other than English spoken at home			(A)
No	16,543,607	75.9	
Yes	5,247,966	24.1	
Geographic location			(A)
Capital city	14,613,795	67.1	
Rest of state	7,177,778	32.9	
State or territory of residence			(A)
ACT	384,802	1.8	
NSW	6,788,905	31.2	
NT	201,017	0.9	
QLD	4,444,846	20.4	
SA	1,524,057	7.0	
TAS	463,150	2.1	
VIC	5,598,052	25.7	
WA	2,386,744	11.0	

Sources:

(A) Census 2021 with ERP updates
(B) National Health Survey, 2020-21

Table 7 Margin of error (MoE) and relative standard error (RSE) of estimates

Proportion of respondents in an item category	RSE (%)	MoE (%)
0-5%	12.0	0.5
5-10%	5.4	0.8
10-25%	3.3	1.0
25-35%	2.1	1.2
35-50%	1.6	1.2
50-75%	1.0	1.2
75-100%	0.4	0.7

Life in Australia™ and non-probability blended panels approach to weighting

The 2026 Mapping Social Cohesion survey consisted of two components that were combined for weighting purposes:

- A random (probability) sample of Australians aged 18+ years old from Life in Australia™.
- A convenience (non-probability) sample of conservative voters, minor party voters, citizen non-voters, and non-citizens aged 18 years and older was used to support extended reporting and analysis.

The usual approach to weighting random (probability) samples is a two-step process that aims to reduce biases caused by non-coverage and non-response and to align weighted sample estimates with external data about the target population (Kalton and Flores-Cervantes, 2003). First, base weights are calculated to account for each respondent's initial chance of selection and for the survey's response rate. Next, the base weights are adjusted to align respondents with the population on key socio-demographic characteristics. Refer to Särndal *et al*. (1992) for detailed information about model-assisted survey sampling and estimation, and to Valliant *et al.* (2018) for a contemporary treatment of weighting and estimation for sample surveys.

The convenience (non-probability) sample used a non-random mechanism to recruit participants to the survey, which means that the design-based approach just described does not apply. Refer to Elliott and Valliant (2017) for a discussion and further references about the challenges of making inferences from non-random samples. There are several methods for weighting such samples and making estimates from them, however (refer to Valliant, 2020). One of these methods, and that used here, is "quasi-randomisation" which requires a reference sample chosen at random from the target population. This reference sample is used to estimate pseudo-selection probabilities for the convenience sample, to adjust for selection bias. For this survey, the reference sample were the probability cases from Life in Australia™.

The combined sample then had two base weights – a probability-based one for Life in Australia™ cases and an estimated one for convenience cases. To derive the adjusted weights, consideration then had to be given to the characteristics on which to align the base weights with the population. The choice of characteristics was guided by two factors:

- Which characteristics are most different between the probability and convenience samples?

- Which characteristics are most associated with the survey's key questionnaire items?

With these factors in mind, the set of characteristics used to adjust the weights are those shown in Table 1, including past voting behaviour. The table also includes the corresponding population counts and percentages, obtained from Census 2021 TableBuilder (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021), the National Health Survey (ABS, 2022), and the 2025 federal election results (AEC, 2025). These population figures were adjusted to align with the latest Estimated Resident Population (ERP) estimates (ABS, June 2025), ensuring that all counts represent the Australian population aged 18 years and over.

The method used to adjust the base weights was regression calibration (Deville *et a*l., 1993), implemented in R (R Core Team, 2023) using the *survey* package (Lumley, 2021). For more information on weighting of sample surveys, refer to Valliant *et al.* (2018).

Table 8 Characteristics used for adjusting base weights, with population distribution and data sources

Category	Benchmark Target (#)	Benchmark Target (%)	Source
Number of adults in the household			(B)
One	3,503,072	16.08	
Two or More	18,288,501	83.92	
Age group by Highest education			(A)
18-24 years	2,503,809	11.49	
25-34 years x Bachelor or above	1,799,842	8.26	
25-34 years x Below Bachelor	2,290,039	10.51	
35-44 years x Bachelor or above	1,714,112	7.87	
35-44 years x Below Bachelor	2,217,335	10.18	
45-54 years x Bachelor or above	1,089,681	5	
45-54 years x Below Bachelor	2,248,032	10.32	
55-64 years x Bachelor or above	773,839	3.55	
55-64 years x Below Bachelor	2,316,630	10.63	
65+ years x Bachelor or above	854283	3.92	
65+ years x Below Bachelor	3,983,971	18.28	
Gender			(A)
Man or male	11,073,998	50.82	
Woman or female	10,717,575	49.18	
Language other than English spoken at home			(A)
Yes	5,247,966	24.08	
No	16,543,607	75.92	
Geographic location			(A)
Capital city	14,613,795	67.06	
Rest of state	7,177,778	32.94	
State or territory of residence			(A)
NSW	6,788,905	31.15	
VIC	5,598,052	25.69	
QLD	4,444,846	20.4	
SA	1,524,057	6.99	
WA	2,386,744	10.95	
TAS	463,150	2.13	
NT	201,017	0.92	
ACT	384,802	1.77	
2025 Federal Election Vote			(C)
Liberal-National Coalition	5,017,966	23.03	
Australian Labor Party	5,450,333	25.01	
The Greens	1,923,933	8.83	
Other party	3,376,308	15.49	
Non-voter	6,023,033	27.64	

Sources:

(A) Census 2021 with ERP updates
(B) National Health Survey, 2020-21
(C) AEC 2025

Note that there were small numbers of 'Don't know', 'Refused' or 'Other' responses to some items. Since there were no corresponding categories in Census TableBuilder, such values were imputed using a statistical model (Stekhoven and Buehlmann, 2012). Given the very low prevalence of these responses, the imputation process is expected to have a negligible impact on estimates made using the weights.

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PART C: Redevelopment of the Scanlon Index of social cohesion

Social Research Centre

Introduction

The Social Research Centre (SRC) was contracted to redevelop the Scanlon-Monash Index (SMI). The SMI is a major product of the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute and Monash University's Mapping Social Cohesion Surveys, which have been fielded in Australia since 2007 and annually since 2009 (Scanlon Foundation Research Institute 2021). These surveys provide an important and widely read source of information on social cohesion, immigration and population issues. A prime objective of the surveys is to further the understanding of the social impact of Australia's increasingly diverse immigration program.

The aim of redevelopment was to develop robust individual-level index scores that follow widely accepted means of psychometric scale construction.

This report summarises a quantitative assessment of items measuring aspects of social cohesion, based on responses obtained from two rounds of online surveys. This represented the final stage in the redevelopment of a questionnaire suitable for measuring social cohesion across the Australian adult population and followed a literature review and cognitive testing of selections from a bank of items. Details of these previous stages are available separately so findings will not be described in detail here.

The Scanlon-Monash Index

The original SMI was developed based on a literature review of measures of social cohesion (Markus & Dharmalingam 2007) and was organised around five domains:

1. Belonging – shared values, identification with Australia, trust.
2. Social justice and equity – evaluation of national priorities.
3. Participation – voluntary work, political and co-operative involvement.
4. Acceptance (and rejection), legitimacy – experience of discrimination, attitudes towards minorities, newcomers.
5. Worth – life satisfaction and happiness, future expectations.

In 2009, exploratory factor analysis was undertaken of both the 2007 and 2009 data, guiding the assignment of items to indices (Markus & Arnup 2009). The SMI was developed in the second wave of the Mapping Social Cohesion Surveys. The aim of the index was to 'heighten awareness of shifts in opinion which may call for closer attention and analysis' (Markus & Arnup 2009:42). The scaling procedure adopted was based on the weighted proportions of respondents who gave certain answers.

An earlier attempt to develop an individual-level scale by the SRC in 2019 indicated that the existing items did not form a suitable basis for a scale.

Development of candidate items

The initial step in index development was to review extended descriptions of scale domains and sub-domains provided by the client to ensure that the SRC understand

the rationale for the indexes. The full list of domains and sub-domains as originally specified was as follows:

1 . Belonging

a. National, including identification with Australia

b. Local / community, including identification with one's local community, quality of life, social networks in one's neighbourhood, safety

2. Worth

a. Ability to contribute, has a voice[11]

b. Feels respected and valued

c. Financial situation

d. Life satisfaction

3. Social justice and equity

a. Economic, including perception of economic opportunity, availability of support for people on low incomes, perception of wealth inequality

b. Institutional, including trust in government and other institutions, belief in the beneficence of government, access to services, perception of corruption, fair elections, rule of law

4. Participation

a. Political participation

b. Social participation, including charitable donations, involvement with civil society organisations

c. Isolation[12]

5. Acceptance and rejection

a. Acceptance of cultural diversity including Indigenous Australians and diversity with respect to sexuality, experience of discrimination

b. Future of life in Australia[13] (i.e. positive or negative expectations)

The SRC then, in conjunction with the client, searched for existing items. The sources of items included the following:

- Existing SMI items
- Other Mapping Social Cohesion Survey items, other than SMI items
- ACT General Health Survey

[11] No items are included on the final index from this sub-domain.
[12] Isolation was changed from the Participation to the Belonging domain in Round 2 of testing based on its empirical relationships with other items.
[13] Future of life in Australia was dropped based on its empirical relationships with other items.

- Asian Barometer Survey (Wave 4)
- Australian Reconciliation Barometer
- Civic Engagement Supplement to the U.S. Current Population Survey (2013)
- General Social Survey (2019)
- European Social Survey (Waves 5, 7, 9)
- Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (Kessler et al. 2002)
- UCLA Loneliness Scale (Hughes et al. 2008; Russell 2996)
- U.S. General Social Survey
- VicHealth Community Indicators Survey
- World Values Survey (Wave 6)

Questions were re-worded where necessary, particularly when wording was not appropriate to the contemporary Australian environment. Greater deference was given to item wording from Australian sources, particularly the General Social Survey and Mapping Social Cohesion Surveys.

These were supplemented, where needed, by items written by the client or the SRC, although this was generally a last resort when no suitable items were identified. To the greatest extent possible, new items were written in a similar fashion to other items in order to integrate them as seamlessly as possible.

The aim of item development was to ensure that sufficient numbers of items were asked that there was a critical mass for each domain and sub-domain.

Cognitive testing

Cognitive testing was next undertaken to gain an understanding of how people understand, mentally process and respond to questionnaire items, with a special emphasis on potential breakdowns in this process. In March 2021, the SRC undertook cognitive testing of a selection of survey items. Fourteen items were identified for testing from the survey as well as some exploratory testing of the term 'Social Cohesion'. Each question was reviewed for *comprehension* ('do I understand the question?'), *judgement* ('can I easily make a judgement about what response to give?'), *retrieval* ('can I remember the information required to give an answer?') and *response* ('do I feel inclined to give an accurate and honest response?').

In total, eight cognitive interviews were completed with 'general community' participants from across Australia. The survey was tested in an 'online' format to mirror the dominant mode of the 2021 Mapping Social Cohesion survey. 'Online' testing involved participants reading the questions from an online draft version shared through the moderator's screen.

Recruitment was conducted through SRC's dedicated qualitative participant database. Each participant received $85 to reimburse them for their time. For this research, participants were purposively recruited, with an aim to obtaining an even spread across ages, gender, educational level, employment status, locations (metro and regional) and cultural and linguistic background. Table C1 provides an overview of some key sample demographics.

Table C1 Sample demographics

Characteristic	Value	No of participants
Gender	Male	4
	Female	4
Age	18-24 years	2
	25-34 years	2
	35-54 years	2
	55+	2
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	Yes	4
	No	4
Location (State)	NSW	3
	Queensland	2
	WA	1
	Victoria	2
Highest Educational level	Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	2
	Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Associate Degree	3
	Undergraduate Degree	3
Employment Status	Not working, not looking for work	1
	Studying	1
	Looking for work; studying	1
	Part time or casual employment	1
	Full time employment	4

Scale validation

Scale validation took place in two rounds: an initial round to cull poorly performing items and a second round to confirm the final placement of items.

At the outset, there were 133 items across 5 domains of social cohesion:

1. Acceptance and rejection (24 items);

2. Belonging (21 items);

3. Participation (50 items);

4. Social justice and equity (20 items); and

5. Worth (18 items).

The aim of the assessment was to arrive at a reduced set of items that can be used to score respondents on each of these domains as well as to generate an overall score for social cohesion. The assessment applied statistical methods to the survey data to achieve this aim:

- Exploratory factor analysis was used to confirm and refine the theoretical themes into which items were organised and to identify items that did not align as well as others; and

- The Rasch measurement model (Wright and Masters, 1982; Bond and Fox, 2001) was used to identify items that were answered unpredictably by respondents or that did not contribute usefully to measuring the underlying social cohesion construct and its aspects.

Data collection

Data were collected in two rounds via an online non-probability panel. A total of 300 panellists aged 18 years and older took part in each round of data collection. Round 1 included a total of 133 items and took place between 27 – 29 April 2021. Round 2 included a total of 76 items and took place between 24 – 26 May 2021. Final questionnaires for Round 1 and Round 2 can be found in Appendix C and Appendix D, respectively.

Statistical assessment

Following each round of data collection, responses were analysed through the use of factor analysis and the Rasch measurement model. Results from Round 1 of collection were used to produce a reduced questionnaire for Round 2, after which a final instrument was developed for administration on Life in Australia™ in July 2021. This section briefly outlines the analytical approach for each round and summarises the results of the analyses.

Tables of item frequencies are too voluminous to include in this report, but a summary of respondents for each item along with the mean and standard deviation[14] of response categories is shown in Table 8.

Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis examines correlations between item responses to identify items that are related through their response patterns. It is a data reduction technique that seeks to represent a large number of items by a smaller number of factors. It is a long-standing, widely used technique and no further details about it are provided here. To explore the social cohesion construct and its separate themes, correlations between item responses were calculated and factor loadings were produced for a range of solutions.

Ideally, loadings for an item should be high (closer to 1) for a single factor and low (closer to 0) for all the others. We chose a rotation (the oblique 'promax') that maximised the number of items that met this idealised situation.

[14] Rating scales are ordered categories rather than absolute numbers so means and standard deviations are merely indicative.

Rasch analysis[15]

The Rasch model is a tool for constructing measures from rating scale responses and for evaluating how well questionnaire items contribute to an underlying trait (or construct) and how consistently respondents answer the items. Since the model is less well known than factor analysis, some details about it and the outputs it generates are provided here.

The model assumes that there exists an underlying quantitative trait for which persons can experience something to a small or a large degree. On this assumption, a set of items is developed and administered so as to measure each person's position on the construct.

The model uses observed patterns of response to estimate the probability that a person at a given position on the construct will select a particular category for an item. This probability is directly related to the difference between a person's position on the construct and the item's position. A person's position can be most accurately pinpointed when there is a mix of items, ones that are relatively easy for them to endorse (agree with, for example) and ones that are harder for them to endorse. In the same way, an item's position is measured most accurately when it attracts a range of responses (some people agree with it, for instance, and others disagree).

A good measurement instrument is one which contains some items that are easier to endorse, some items that are harder to endorse, and a predictable progression in between. The Rasch model provides a number of statistics summarising how well items and persons meet this progression. Items or persons that deviate significantly from our expectation are evidence of items that measure different constructs or of persons that answer questions in unexpected ways. Both of these are undesirable and degrade the quality of derived measures.

While some amount of statistical noise in response patterns is to be expected for real-world data, including items with *excessive* variation will reduce the quality of measures derived from the items. Items answered very predictably by respondents (as manifested by low mean square errors) can be seen as redundant. Although low variation does not adversely affect the quality of measures, it is suggestive of items whose responses can be predicted very easily and so may not contribute usefully to measurement.

Scale summaries

Finally, the combined performance of items for each theme, as well as overall, were assessed through three summary statistics – Cronbach's alpha, the person separation index, and the item separation index. These metrics summarise the joint performance of a set of items, rather than of individual items, and are indicative of the usefulness of scale scores.

We see from the alpha and item separation metrics that the overall social cohesion scale as well as

[15] Summarised in Linacre (2017) as follows: "Rasch analysis is a method for obtaining objective, fundamental, additive measures (qualified by standard errors and quality-control fit statistics) from stochastic observations of ordered category responses. Georg Rasch, a Danish mathematician, formulated this approach in 1953 to analyse responses to a series of reading tests (Rasch G, *Probabilistic Models for Some Intelligence and Attainment Tests*, Chicago: MESA Press, 1992, with Foreword and Afterword by B.D. Wright)."

each of the sub-scales were all adequately measured by the items administered at each round. The precision of person scores, summarised by the person separation, fell below the desirable threshold for Round 2 but this is to be expected given that the total items fell from 133 to 76. The precision was lowest in Round 2 for the Participation theme – although it had 24 items, many of these were on a Yes/No scale, which gave little opportunity to discriminate between respondents.

Removal of items at each round

Following factor and Rasch analysis of responses to each round, items were considered for removal from the instrument using the following criteria:

- Cross-loading in the factor analysis, where an item was flagged for omission if it loaded highly across more than one factor;
- Misfit in the Rasch model, where an item was flagged if it had very high mean square errors (suggestive of considerable unpredictability in person responses);
- Redundancy in the Rasch model, where an item was flagged if it had very low mean square errors (suggestive of high predictability in person responses);
- Cronbach alpha, where an item was flagged if its omission would improve the alpha value for a scale; and
- Other considerations (face validity, approximately equal numbers of items across domains, better or worse question wording, etc).

Final set of items

Through the analyses and considerations described above, the final set of items are shown in the Table C2. It should be noted the items to be administered on the July wave of Life in Australia™ differ slightly. Following testing, changes were made to items *q02_d* and *q80_d* to capture participation in organisations at a more general level (community support groups, social or religious groups and civic or political groups). Mid-points were also re-added to rating scales for items that appeared in the previous SMI. The final set of items administered on Life in Australia™ are shown in Table C3.

Table C2 Final set of items following index redevelopment

ID	Domains and items	Sub-domain
	Acceptance and Rejection	
ar4_a	AR4. The relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and the wider Australian community is very important for Australia as a nation	Acceptance of cultural diversity
ar4_c	AR4. It is important for Indigenous histories and cultures to be included in the school curriculum	Acceptance of cultural diversity
c10_a	C10. We should do more to learn about the customs and heritage of different ethnic and cultural groups in this country	Acceptance of cultural diversity
c2_a	C2. Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger	Acceptance of cultural diversity
c2_b	C2. Ethnic minorities in Australia SHOULD be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions	Acceptance of cultural diversity
	Belonging	
bl1_a	BL1. I feel like I belong in my neighbourhood	Local / community
bl1_b	BL1. My neighbourhood has a strong sense of community	Local / community
bl4_b	BL4. At home by yourself during the day	Local / community
c7	C7. To what extent do you take pride in the Australian way of life and culture?	National
c8	C8. And to what extent do you have a sense of belonging in Australia? Would you say…	National
p3_c	P3. How often do you feel isolated from others?	Isolation
	Participation	
b4_3	B4. Written or spoken to a Federal or State Member of Parliament	Political participation
b4_5	B4. Joined a boycott of a product or company	Political participation
b4_10	B4. Posted or shared anything about politics online	Political participation
q02_d	Q02. Craft or practical hobby group	Social participation
q80_d	Q80. Any teaching, coaching or practical advice	Social participation
	Social Justice and Equity	
a1_b	A1. People living on low incomes in Australia receive enough financial support from the government	Economic
a1_d	A1. Australia is a land of economic opportunity where in the long run, hard work brings a better life	Economic
d28	D28. In your opinion, how often do the courts make fair, impartial decisions based on the evidence made available to them? Would you say…	Institutional

g6_b	G6. Overall, everyone in Australia has a fair chance of getting the jobs they seek	Economic
q112	Q112. How often do you think government leaders in Australia abuse their power?	Institutional
q228e_b	Q228E. Election officials are fair	Institutional
	Worth	
a5	A5. Now a question about your own financial circumstances. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your present financial situation?	Financial situation
d22	D22. To what extent do you feel that people treat you with respect?	Feels respected and valued
e2	E2. Taking ALL things into consideration, would you say that over the last year YOU have been...?	Life satisfaction
w2	W2. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel…the things you do in your life were worthwhile?	Life satisfaction
w3_b	W3. Went without meals	Financial situation

Table C3 Final set of items for administration on Life in Australia™

ID	Domains and items	Sub-domain
	Acceptance and Rejection	
ar4_a	AR4. The relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and the wider Australian community is very important for Australia as a nation	Acceptance of cultural diversity
ar4_c	AR4. It is important for Indigenous histories and cultures to be included in the school curriculum	Acceptance of cultural diversity
c10_a	C10. We should do more to learn about the customs and heritage of different ethnic and cultural groups in this country	Acceptance of cultural diversity
c2_a	C2. Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger	Acceptance of cultural diversity
c2_b	C2. Ethnic minorities in Australia SHOULD be given Australian government assistance to maintain their customs and traditions	Acceptance of cultural diversity
	Belonging	
f2_e	BL1. I feel like I belong in my neighbourhood	Local / community
f2_f	BL1. My neighbourhood has a strong sense of community	Local / community
bl4_b	BL4. At home by yourself during the day	Local / community
c7	C7. To what extent do you take pride in the Australian way of life and culture?	National
c8	C8. And to what extent do you have a sense of belonging in Australia? Would you say…	National
p3	P3. How often do you feel isolated from others?	Isolation
	Participation	
b4_3	B4. Written or spoken to a Federal or State Member of Parliament	Political participation
b4_5	B4. Joined a boycott of a product or company	Political participation
b4_10	B4. Posted or shared anything about politics online	Political participation
q01a (updated)	Q01a. In the last 12 months, have you been actively involved in any community support groups, such as… ▪ Service clubs, including Rotary, Lions, the Masons and the RSL ▪ Welfare organisation ▪ Education and training group ▪ Parenting / children / youth group ▪ Health promotion and support group ▪ State Emergency Services and rural or country fire services	Social participation

q02a (updated)	Q02a. In the last 12 months have you actively been included in any social or religious groups? ▪ Sport or physical recreation group ▪ Arts or heritage group ▪ Religious or spiritual group or organisation ▪ Craft or hobby group ▪ Adult education group ▪ Ethnic / multicultural club	Social participation
q03a (updated)	Q03a. In the last 12 months, have you been actively involved in any civic or political groups ▪ Trade union, professional / technical association ▪ Political party ▪ Environmental or animal welfare group ▪ Human and civil rights group ▪ Body corporate or tenants' association ▪ Consumer organisation	Social participation
q80 (updated)	Q80. In the last 4 weeks, did you help anyone [not living with you] with any of the following activities: • Providing transport or running errands • Any teaching, coaching or practical advice • Providing any emotional support	Social participation
	Social Justice and Equity	
a1_b	A1. People living on low incomes in Australia receive enough financial support from the government	Economic
a1_d	A1. Australia is a land of economic opportunity where in the long run, hard work brings a better life	Economic
d28	D28. In your opinion, how often do the courts make fair, impartial decisions based on the evidence made available to them? Would you say…	Institutional
g6	G6. Overall, everyone in Australia has a fair chance of getting the jobs they seek	Economic
q112	Q112. How often do you think government leaders in Australia abuse their power?	Institutional
q228e	Q228E. Elections are fair	Institutional
	Worth	
a5	A5. Now a question about your own financial circumstances. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your present financial situation?	Financial situation
d22	D22. To what extent do you feel that people treat you with respect?	Feels respected and valued
e2	E2. Taking ALL things into consideration, would you say that over the last year YOU have been...?	Life satisfaction
w2	W2. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel…the things you do in your life were worthwhile?	Life satisfaction

w3_b (updated)	W3. Over the last 12 months, how often is the following statement true of you / your household… You / your household went without meals because there wasn't enough money for food	Financial situation

Implementation on Life in Australia™

The final set of items was administered on Life in Australia™ in July 2021, and responses were collected from almost 3,600 persons.

All items performed well according to the Rasch model diagnostics. There was a fall in the precision of domain scores compared to Round 1, but this is to be expected given the aim of deriving an abbreviated instrument that minimises respondent burden.

Domain scores have been scaled so they cover the range 0-100 for each respondent, where 0 is the theoretical minimum score a respondent can achieve for these items and 100 is the theoretical maximum score[16]. This means that the average score for each domain will be on a different scale from the existing SMI values.

Summary

This section has summarised the analysis of responses from two rounds of online surveys to assess the measurement properties of a bank of items related to social cohesion. The original set of 133 items from Round 1 was reduced to 76 items for administration in Round 2, following which 29 items remained for the main data collection on Life in Australia™ in July 2021.

Decisions on the exclusion of items was made on the basis of several considerations:

- Cross-loading in the factor analysis;
- Misfit or redundancy in the Rasch model;
- Cronbach alpha; and
- Discussion between the client and SRC where multiple similar items were deemed suitable for inclusion.

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[16] To be assigned to the extreme scores, a respondent must (1) answer all items in a domain, and (2) select the extreme rating for all items (lowest rating for minimum score and highest rating for maximum score).

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PART D: Detailed results from Mapping Social Cohesion 2026

Australian National University

Table D1 'There has been a lot of discussion recently about social cohesion in Australia. To what extent are the following important for living in a cohesive society?' Weighted % of adults who say to a great extent by current voting preference (95% margins of error), 2026

	Voting preference in 2026			
	Labor	Coalition	One Nation	Greens
	Weighted % of adults (95% margin of error)			
Everyone has the opportunity to be happy and have a good life	55 (2.7)	49 (2.9)	46 (2.5)	60 (4.1)
People are safe and communities are protected from harm	52 (2.7)	45 (2.9)	43 (2.5)	57 (4.1)
People respect others despite their different beliefs and ideas	50 (2.7)	41 (2.8)	31 (2.3)	54 (4.1)
Everyone feels they belong and has a place in society	45 (2.7)	38 (2.8)	29 (2.3)	50 (4)
Everyone has the opportunity to have a say on government decisions	41 (2.6)	33 (2.7)	30 (2.2)	45 (4)
People participate in their communities	23 (2.2)	21 (2.3)	16 (1.8)	24 (3.2)
People agree with each other on big social issues	12 (1.7)	13 (1.9)	12 (1.6)	10 (2.2)
People come from similar cultural backgrounds	7 (1.3)	9 (1.5)	15 (1.7)	7 (1.8)

Notes: voting preference is based on who respondents said they would vote for if an election were held today. Table provides estimates and margins of error from Figure 2 of the main report.

Table D2 Belief that social cohesion is declining and pessimism in Australia's future by sociodemographic characteristics, Weighted % of adults (95% margins of error), 2026

	% believes social cohesion has declined in the last 3-4 years	% pessimistic or very pessimistic about Australia's future
Gender		
Male	64 (1.9)	47 (1.9)
Female	57 (1.8)	48 (1.8)
Age		
18-24	49 (5.6)	45 (5.5)
25-34	52 (3.6)	51 (3.6)
35-44	54 (3.0)	48 (3.0)
45-54	63 (3.0)	49 (3.1)
55-64	69 (2.5)	49 (2.7)
65+	71 (2.0)	45 (2.2)
Household		
Live alone	60 (2.7)	50 (2.7)
Couple no children	67 (2.1)	46 (2.1)
Couple parent family	59 (2.4)	47 (2.4)
Single parent family	55 (5.3)	53 (5.2)
Place of birth & first language		
Australia	65 (2.0)	52 (2.1)
Overseas & English	61 (2.3)	45 (2.3)
Overseas & non-English	42 (2.8)	35 (2.8)
Post-school qualifications		
Certification II or less	57 (1.7)	52 (1.7)
Certificate III/IV or Diploma	63 (2.7)	50 (2.8)
University degree	60 (3.3)	42 (3.2)
Housing tenure		
Own outright	69 (2.8)	47 (2.8)
Mortgage	59 (2.2)	47 (2.2)
Rent	51 (1.9)	50 (1.9)
Voting preference		
Labor	51 (2.7)	25 (2.4)
Coalition	57 (3.0)	42 (2.9)
Greens	61 (4.0)	53 (4.0)
One Nation	73 (2.4)	68 (2.4)
Region		
Capital city	59 (2.5)	47 (2.5)
Rest of state	63 (2.5)	50 (2.6)
State		
NSW	60 (4.5)	47 (4.4)
Victoria	63 (3.9)	51 (4.0)
Queensland	60 (1.3)	48 (1.3)
South Australia	58 (1.6)	48 (1.6)
Western Australia	58 (2.3)	45 (2.4)
Total	60 (1.3)	48 (1.3)

Notes: Some categories, e.g. Tasmania, not shown due to small sample sizes and wide ranges of uncertainty. Voting is based on who people said they would vote for if there were an election today. Table provides estimates and margins of error from Figure 4 of the main report.

Table D3 'How often do you think the government in Canberra can be trusted to do the right thing for the Australian people?' Weighted % of adults who say almost always or most of the time (95% margin of error), 2025 and 2026

	2025	2026
Gender		
Male	38 (1.7)	32 (1.8)
Female	36 (1.6)	30 (1.7)
Age		
18-24	45 (4.8)	41 (5.5)
25-34	36 (3.1)	31 (3.3)
35-44	36 (2.6)	30 (2.7)
45-54	34 (2.7)	29 (2.8)
55-64	36 (2.5)	29 (2.4)
65+	37 (2.1)	31 (2.0)
Household		
Live alone	34 (2.3)	28 (2.4)
Couple no children	38 (2.0)	32 (2.0)
Couple parent family	39 (2.2)	32 (2.3)
Single parent family	27 (4.0)	24 (4.4)
Place of birth & first language		
Australia	35 (1.9)	28 (2.0)
Overseas & English	37 (2.0)	32 (2.1)
Overseas & non-English	44 (2.4)	42 (2.5)
Post-school qualifications		
Certification II or less	33 (1.4)	28 (1.5)
Certificate III/IV or Diploma	34 (2.7)	27 (2.6)
University degree	44 (3.3)	39 (3.3)
Housing tenure		
Own outright	39 (2.4)	32 (2.6)
Mortgage	38 (1.9)	33 (2.0)
Rent	34 (1.8)	28 (1.9)
Voting preference 2026		
Labor	62 (2.7)	62 (2.7)
Coalition	34 (2.6)	29 (2.8)
Greens	31 (3.6)	29 (3.6)
Independent	30 (3.0)	29 (4.2)
One Nation	17 (2.4)	8 (1.5)
Region		
Capital city	39 (2.2)	32 (2.3)
Rest of state	33 (2.3)	29 (2.3)
State		
NSW	40 (3.7)	33 (4.2)
Victoria	35 (3.8)	29 (3.8)
Queensland	32 (1.2)	27 (1.2)
South Australia	31 (1.4)	30 (1.5)
Western Australia	41 (2.0)	35 (2.1)
Total	37 (1.2)	31 (1.2)

Notes: Some categories, e.g. Tasmania, not shown due to small sample sizes and wide ranges of uncertainty. Voting is based on who people said they would vote for if there were an election today. Table provides estimates and margins of error from Figure 10 of the main report.

Table D4 Indicators of institutional trust by voting preference, 2024–2026

	Voting preference in 2026			
	Labor	Coalition	Greens	One Nation
Trust government all/most of the time				
2024	54 (3.4)	35 (3.9)	25 (4.3)	17 (2.7)
2025	61 (2.6)	36 (2.9)	31 (3.5)	18 (2.4)
2026	62 (2.7)	29 (2.9)	29 (3.6)	9 (1.6)
Believes the system of government in Australia needs major change or to be replaced				
2024	29 (3.1)	36 (4.0)	52 (4.9)	62 (3.4)
2025	22 (2.3)	40 (2.9)	44 (3.9)	63 (3.0)
2026	21 (2.3)	41 (3.0)	47 (4.0)	73 (2.4)
Takes pride in the Australian way of life and culture to a great extent				
2024	74 (3.2)	67 (4.0)	61 (4.8)	45 (3.5)
2025	80 (2.3)	62 (2.9)	68 (3.7)	40 (3.0)
2026	81 (2.2)	63 (3.0)	63 (3.9)	35 (2.6)
Agrees that accepting immigrants from many different countries has made Australia stronger				
2024	17 (2.7)	23 (3.5)	38 (4.8)	49 (3.5)
2025	14 (2.0)	27 (2.6)	32 (3.7)	52 (3.1)
2026	16 (2.1)	29 (2.8)	34 (3.8)	64 (2.6)
Agrees that immigrants can make just as good a citizen as the Australia-born				
2024	66 (3.2)	57 (4.1)	53 (4.9)	40 (3.4)
2025	65 (2.6)	55 (2.9)	55 (3.9)	38 (3.0)
2026	68 (2.6)	57 (3.0)	54 (4.0)	32 (2.6)

Notes: Voting is based on who people said they would vote for in 2026 if there were an election today if they completed the 2026 survey, otherwise who they voted for in the 2025 Federal election (if they completed the 2025 survey) or who they voted for in the 2022 election (if they only completed the 2024 survey). Table provides estimates and margins of error from Figure 11 of the main report.

Table D5 Mixed effects regression results predicting institutional trust by voting preference in 2026, financial stress and social media use, 2025 and 2026

	Coefficient	Robust standard error	p-value	95% confidence interval Lower	Upper
Voting preference (ref. Labor)					
Coalition	-10.51	1.25	<0.001	-12.96	-8.06
Greens	-8.19	1.51	<0.001	-11.16	-5.23
Independent	-11.34	1.67	<0.001	-14.62	-8.06
One Nation	-28.68	1.34	<0.001	-31.31	-26.06
Other	-9.99	2.04	<0.001	-14	-5.99
Voting preference x social media use (ref. everyday)					
Labor x weekly	1.79	0.8	0.030	0.22	3.35
Labor x less than weekly	1.24	0.71	0.080	-0.14	2.63
Coalition x weekly	-0.48	1.06	0.650	-2.55	1.6
Coalition x less than weekly	-2.03	0.92	0.030	-3.82	-0.23
Greens x weekly	-3.14	1.34	0.020	-5.77	-0.51
Greens x less than weekly	-2.8	1.53	0.070	-5.81	0.2
Independent x weekly	1.76	1.34	0.190	-0.88	4.4
Independent x less than weekly	0.71	1.33	0.590	-1.89	3.31
One Nation x weekly	-0.53	1.04	0.610	-2.56	1.5
One Nation x less than weekly	0.19	1.04	0.860	-1.84	2.22
Other x weekly	-3.74	1.92	0.050	-7.51	0.03
Other x less than weekly	-3.11	1.57	0.050	-6.19	-0.02
Voting preference x social media use x year (ref. 2026)					
Labor x daily x 2024	-3.94	0.97	<0.001	-5.83	-2.04
Labor x weekly x 2025	-0.67	0.81	0.410	-2.27	0.92
Labor x weekly x 2024	-4.58	1.49	<0.001	-7.5	-1.66
Labor x weekly x 2025	-2.53	1.15	0.030	-4.78	-0.27
Labor x less than weekly x 2024	-3.97	1.07	<0.001	-6.06	-1.88
Labor x less than weekly	-0.44	1	0.660	-2.4	1.53
Coalition x daily x 2024	1.56	1.3	0.230	-0.99	4.12
Coalition x weekly x 2025	2.65	1.14	0.020	0.4	4.89
Coalition x weekly x 2024	1.71	2.02	0.400	-2.25	5.67
Coalition x weekly x 2025	1.43	1.67	0.390	-1.84	4.7
Coalition x less than weekly x 2024	3.91	1.31	<0.001	1.33	6.48
Coalition x less than weekly x 2025	3.72	1.28	<0.001	1.21	6.23
Greens x daily x 2024	-3.9	1.67	0.020	-7.18	-0.62
Greens x weekly x 2025	-1.06	1.27	0.400	-3.54	1.42
Greens x weekly x 2024	0.95	2.16	0.660	-3.28	5.19
Greens x weekly x 2025	1.56	1.95	0.420	-2.26	5.37
Greens x less than weekly x 2024	-0.56	2.37	0.810	-5.2	4.08
Greens x less than weekly	3	2.17	0.170	-1.24	7.25
Independent x daily x 2024	0.46	1.53	0.770	-2.54	3.46
Independent x weekly x 2025	1.57	1.47	0.280	-1.3	4.44

Independent x weekly x 2024	1.25	2.17	0.560	-3	5.5
Independent x weekly x 2025	-1.55	2.03	0.450	-5.53	2.43
Independent x less than weekly x 2024	1.88	2.06	0.360	-2.17	5.92
Independent x less than weekly	2.62	1.71	0.130	-0.72	5.96
One Nation x daily x 2024	6.58	1.24	<0.001	4.16	9.01
One Nation x weekly x 2025	7.39	1.16	<0.001	5.13	9.66
One Nation x weekly x 2024	7.28	1.77	<0.001	3.8	10.76
One Nation x weekly x 2025	7.39	1.58	<0.001	4.3	10.48
One Nation x less than weekly x 2024	6.12	1.53	<0.001	3.12	9.13
One Nation x less than weekly	7.05	1.45	<0.001	4.22	9.89
Other x daily x 2024	-2.86	2.31	0.220	-7.4	1.67
Other x weekly x 2025	0.55	1.98	0.780	-3.34	4.43
Other x weekly x 2024	-1.03	3.33	0.760	-7.56	5.51
Other x weekly x 2025	-0.18	2.84	0.950	-5.74	5.39
Other x less than weekly x 2024	-1.36	2.74	0.620	-6.72	4.01
Other x less than weekly	3.49	2.11	0.100	-0.65	7.62
Voting preference x financial stress					
Labor	-16.65	1.7	<0.001	-19.97	-13.32
Coalition	-15.39	2.11	<0.001	-19.52	-11.26
Greens	-16.43	2.33	<0.001	-20.98	-11.87
Independent	-17.02	3.07	<0.001	-23.04	-11.01
One Nation	-10.61	1.97	<0.001	-14.48	-6.75
Other	-23.89	3.45	<0.001	-30.66	-17.13
Voting preference x year (ref. 2026) x financial stress					
Labor x 2024	1.76	2.03	0.390	-2.22	5.74
Labor x 2025	2.82	1.82	0.120	-0.75	6.38
Coalition x 2024	0.55	2.78	0.840	-4.9	6.01
Coalition x 2025	-0.53	2.55	0.840	-5.54	4.47
Greens x 2024	0.9	3.08	0.770	-5.15	6.94
Greens x 2025	2.69	2.45	0.270	-2.11	7.49
Independent x 2024	-1.61	3.44	0.640	-8.35	5.12
Independent x 2025	3.09	2.84	0.280	-2.48	8.66
One Nation x 2024	-0.07	2.34	0.980	-4.66	4.51
One Nation x 2025	-4.53	2.18	0.040	-8.79	-0.26
Other x 2024	5.37	4.01	0.180	-2.5	13.23
Other x 2025	2.99	3.4	0.380	-3.66	9.65
Age group (ref. 18-24 years)					
25-34 years	-2.17	0.82	0.010	-3.78	-0.57
35-44 years	-1.04	0.84	0.220	-2.67	0.6
45-54 years	0.29	0.87	0.740	-1.41	1.99
55-64 years	2.2	0.86	0.010	0.51	3.89
65-74 years	2.4	0.88	0.010	0.67	4.13
75 or more years	4.57	0.96	<0.001	2.68	6.46
NA	7.04	1.05	<0.001	4.98	9.1
Highest education (ref. University degree)					
Certificate/diploma	-1.44	0.41	<0.001	-2.24	-0.64

Year 12	0.1	0.61	0.870	-1.1	1.3
Year 11 or below	-2.89	0.62	<0.001	-4.09	-1.68
NA	-4	1.09	<0.001	-6.14	-1.86
City of residence (ref. Sydney)					
Melbourne	-2.43	0.64	<0.001	-3.68	-1.17
Brisbane	-1.53	0.81	0.060	-3.13	0.06
Adelaide	-0.14	0.88	0.870	-1.87	1.58
Perth	1.21	0.83	0.140	-0.41	2.83
Other	-0.86	0.56	0.120	-1.96	0.24
Gender (ref. male)					
Woman or female	-2.21	0.41	<0.001	-3.02	-1.4
Non-binary	-1.21	1.81	0.500	-4.75	2.33
Married or co-habiting (ref. single)	0.51	0.33	0.120	-0.13	1.14
Period of immigrant arrival (ref. Australia-born)					
Prior to 1973	-0.78	0.7	0.260	-2.16	0.59
1973–1995	-1.27	0.73	0.080	-2.7	0.15
1996–2009	0.37	0.75	0.620	-1.1	1.85
2010 onwards	4.24	0.64	<0.001	2.99	5.5
Phone survey (ref. online)	-2.17	2.64	0.410	-7.35	3.01
Non-probability panel (ref. probability)	-3.96	0.5	<0.001	-4.95	-2.97
Intercept	72.56	1.11	<0.001	70.39	74.73
Variance of random effects	178.09	4.56		169.37	187.26
Residual variance	68.59	1.8		65.14	72.21
Individuals	9,910				
Observations	20,486				
Wald χ^2	80,553	p <0.001			

Notes: regression results are used as the basis for the modelled estimates in Figure 12 and Table D6. The model is run on pooled data from 2024, 2025 and 2026 and includes a random effect for individual respondents. Trust in institutions is calculated from respondents' trust in the Federal Government, elections, the system of Government, the courts and political leaders in Australia. See Figure 11 and note 48 of the main report for the wording of these questions.

Table D6 Modelled estimates of institutional trust by voting preference in 2026, financial stress and social media use, 2025 and 2026

		Voting preference			
		Labor	Coalition	Greens	One Nation
Financially prosperous					
	2025	68 (1.3)	61 (1.9)	60 (2.1)	47 (1.9)
	2026	69 (1.2)	58 (1.5)	60 (2.0)	41 (1.8)
High financial stress					
	2025	59 (1.6)	49 (2.3)	50 (2.0)	37 (1.9)
	2026	58 (1.6)	47 (2.0)	48 (2.0)	33 (1.6)
Use social media daily					
	2025	63 (0.9)	55 (1.3)	55 (1.4)	42 (1.3)
	2026	63 (0.9)	53 (1.2)	55 (1.4)	37 (1.2)
Uses social media less than weekly					
	2025	65 (1.7)	54 (1.9)	56 (2.9)	42 (2.6)
	2026	64 (1.3)	51 (1.7)	52 (2.9)	37 (1.8)

Notes: Trust in institutions is calculated from respondents' trust in the Federal Government, elections, the system of Government, the courts and political leaders in Australia. See Figure 11 and note 48 of the main report for the wording of these questions. This table provides estimates and margins of error from Figure 12 of the main report. Results are based on the regression model reported in Table D5.