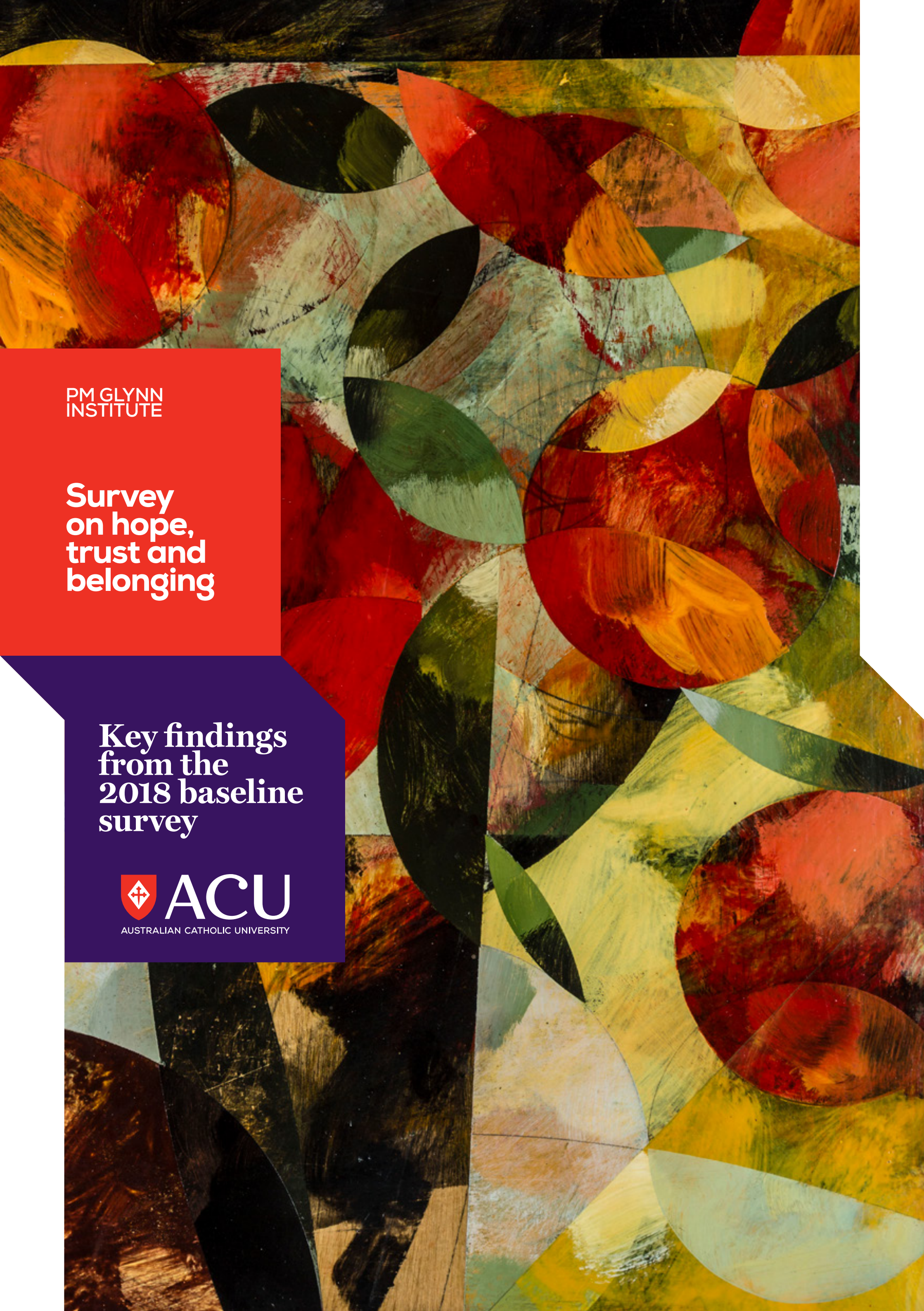

PM GLYNN INSTITUTE

Survey on hope, trust and belonging

Key findings from the 2018 baseline survey

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The PM Glynn survey on hope, trust and belonging

Key findings from the 2018 baseline survey

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PM Glynn Institute
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Preface

This paper sets out a selection of findings from the 2018 PM Glynn Survey on Hope, Trust and Belonging. The 2018 survey data provides the baseline for what is intended be a regularly recurring survey tracking changes in what Australians think about a range of important issues, and the thoughts and concerns that underlie these attitudes.

The survey asks people a large number of questions, exploring what they think about how society is changing, how our institutions are working, their attitude to various human rights issues, and the role of religion in a secular democracy. To better understand what shapes these attitudes, it also ask respondents about their personal circumstances and sense of connectedness, the beliefs and values that are most important to them, their goals for the future, and what causes them concern.

The result is a very rich data set, although this paper highlights just some of the main findings. It presents them in a simplified and easy-to-read format to illustrate the breadth of areas surveyed. Some of the survey's other findings are set out in a series of short brochures and discussion papers available on the Institute's website.

The second PM Glynn Survey on Hope, Trust and Belonging will be conducted at the end of 2021. Among other factors, it will be particularly interesting to see how COVID-19 has affected Australians' attitudes and values, compared to the findings from the 2018 survey. We look forward to making the results of 2021 survey, with comparisons from the 2018 results, available in the first half of 2022.

Michael Casey | Director

About the survey

The PM Glynn Survey is a biennial survey on Australian attitudes to hope, trust and belonging. It is aimed at investigating the underlying attitudes and concerns that shape responses to current political, social and ethical issues and their implications for Australian society.

The Survey has 8 major sections covering:

- Current life circumstances and life goals;
- Influences and connectedness;
- Fears and concerns;
- Beliefs and values;
- Attitudes to changes in society;
- Human rights;
- Democracy;
- Religion.

The first stage of this longitudinal tracking survey commenced in December 2018. The survey was conducted by SMR Global Pty. Ltd. under the guidance and supervision of its Principal, Dr. Michael Sexton. SMR Global Pty. Ltd. is a specialist, independent social and market research company. The fieldwork was supported by its affiliate company, Action Market Research P/L, an ISO-20252 accredited fieldwork specialist.

The survey was done in accordance with accepted public opinion survey guidelines, including the following:

- ISO-2-252 Quality Standards;
- The Australian Privacy Principles;
- The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct of the Australian Market and Social Research Society.

Survey methodology

SAMPLE SELECTION

There were 3,000 Australians aged 16 years and above who took part in the survey and were selected at random. Each respondent was given an option to complete the survey either through a telephone/mobile phone interview or an online, self-completion survey.

It is important to note that the sample was selected to be representative of the national population, matching known national population characteristics such as the following:

- Age;
- Gender;
- State and Territory populations;
- Capital city versus regional populations.

To ensure representativeness, statistical weighting was applied to address any variation in the sample from the known population parameters. Age, gender and geographic location were statistically weighted. The weighting process was as follows:

- Setting of quotas based on known national population parameters;
- A statistical analysis program called Quantum was used to generate an algorithm which weighted each individual case to adjust for over-representation or under-representation of an individual's characteristics in the raw data sample;
- The individual case weights were then applied to produce the final weighted data.

The sample was sourced from electronic white pages landline directories, purchased mobile phone number lists from a list of respected supply companies and survey panels supplied by Australia's largest survey panel providers.

The sample were screened to meet these guidelines:

- Voluntary participation;
- One respondent per household;
- All responses were provided anonymously;
- All responses treated confidentially.

SAMPLING ERROR OF ESTIMATION

The 3,000 person randomly selected sample yields a maximum error of estimation of +/- 1.8% at 95% level of confidence when generalizing the results to the national population. When generalizing the findings to the sub-sample population, the following maximum error margins at 95% level of confidence are noted:

SUB-SAMPLE SIZE	ERROR OF ESTIMATION (AT 95% LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE) (%)
50	+/- 14%
100	+/- 10%
200	+/- 7%
300	+/- 6%
400	+/- 5%
500	+/-4.5%
750	+/-3.7%
1,000	+/-3.2%
1,500	+/-2.6%
3,000	+/-1.8%

I. Profile of respondents

AGE

The largest group of respondents belong to the 35-49 years age range (25%). This age profile of the survey respondents parallels the age profile of the national population. Between 30 June 2017 and 30 June 2018, the median age of the Australian population was 37 years.[1]

Relatively older respondents, particularly those aged 65 years and above, comprise 20% of the total sample. Nationally, older Australians make up a sizable proportion of the population. In Australia, over 1 in 7 people were aged 65 years and over in 2017.[2]

TABLE 1. AGE OF RESPONDENTS

AGE (YEARS)	(N)	(%)
16-24	423	14%
25-34	546	18%
35-49	759	25%
50-64	687	23%
65 or over	585	20%
Total	**3000**	**100%**

GENDER

An almost similar proportion of males and females was observed in the survey sample (Table 2). Males were slightly younger than females. However, more than half of both genders were aged 35 years and over (Chart 1).

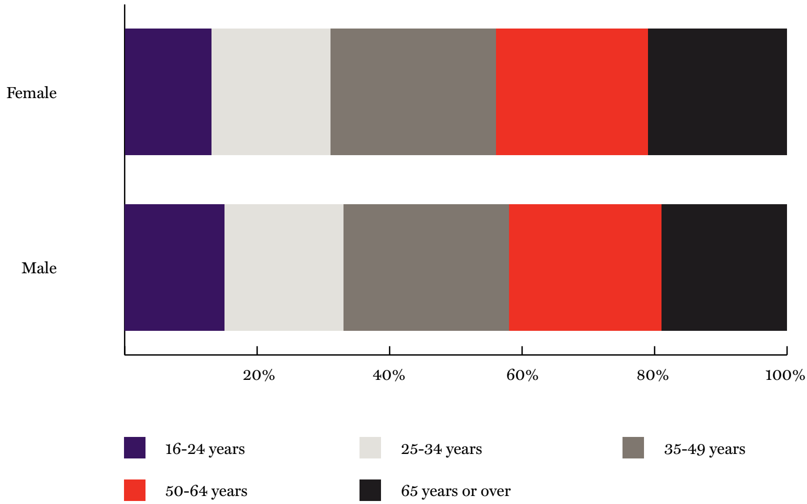
TABLE 2. GENDER OF PARTICIPANTS

AGE (YEARS)	(N)	(%)
Male	1460	49%
Female	1540	51%
Total	**3000**	**100%**

[1] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Population by age and sex, Australia, States and Territories, Australian Demographics Statistics, June 2018, https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/1CD2B1952AFC5E7ACA257298000F2E76?OpenDocument, accessed 10 October 2019.

[2] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Older Australia at a glance, September 2018, https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/older-people/older-australia-at-a-glance/contents/demographics-of-older-australians/australia-s-changing-age-and-gender-profile, accessed 10 October 2019.

CHART 1. PARTICIPANTS' AGE BY GENDER (N=3,000)



This gender profile noted in the survey sample is representative of the Australian population. Historically, there had been a negligible difference in the proportion of males and females. As at June 2018, the gender ratio at birth was 106 males per 100 females[3], which is within the natural or expected range at birth[4].

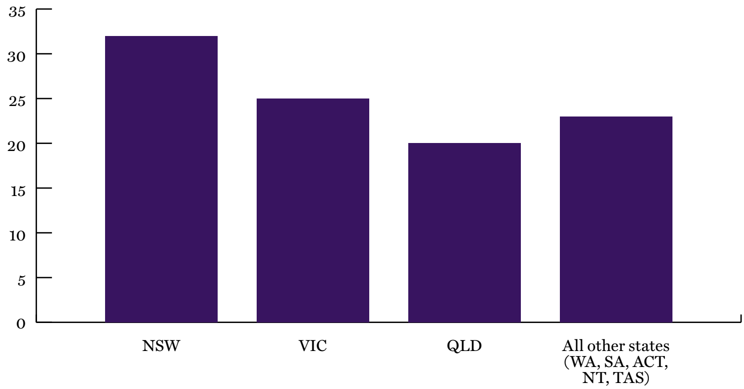
[3] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2018, https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/1CD2B1952AFC5E7ACA257298000F2E76?OpenDocument, accessed 10 October 2019.

[4] Hannah Ritchie and Max Roser (2019), "Gender Ratio". Published online at OurWorldInData.org, https://ourworldindata.org/gender-ratio, accessed 6 July 2021.

MAIN PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Mirroring the Australian population, most of the respondents resided in New South Wales (32%), Victoria (25%) and Queensland (20%) as shown in Chart 2.

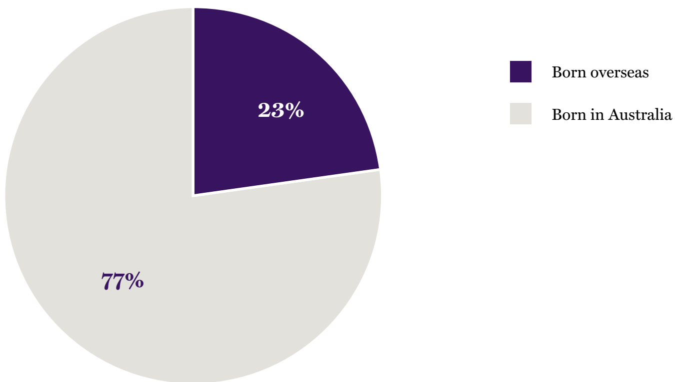
CHART 2. PARTICIPANTS' MAIN PLAN OF RESIDENCE (N=3,000)



PLACE OF BIRTH

Three quarters of the participants were born in Australia (Chart 3).

CHART 3. WHERE RESPONDENTS WERE BORN



HOUSEHOLD INCOME

More than half (55%) of the respondents reported an annual household income of less than $80,000 before tax (Table 3). Again, this is representative of the Australian population. The median gross household income in Australia in 2017-2018 was $1,701.[5] This equates to roughly $88,000 annually.

The main source of income came from paid full-time employment (Table 4). Nearly half of the respondents (47%) were employed full time. Only 15% of the respondents worked in part-time or casual paid employment.

TABLE 3. GROSS HOUSEHOLD INCOME

GROSS HOUSEHOLD INCOME	(N)	(%)
Under $50,000	992	33%
$50,000 - Under $80,000	654	22%
$80,000 - Under $120,000	591	20%
$120,000 - Under $200,000	481	16%
$200,000 or above	114	4%
Unable to estimate	167	6%
Total	**3000**	**100%**

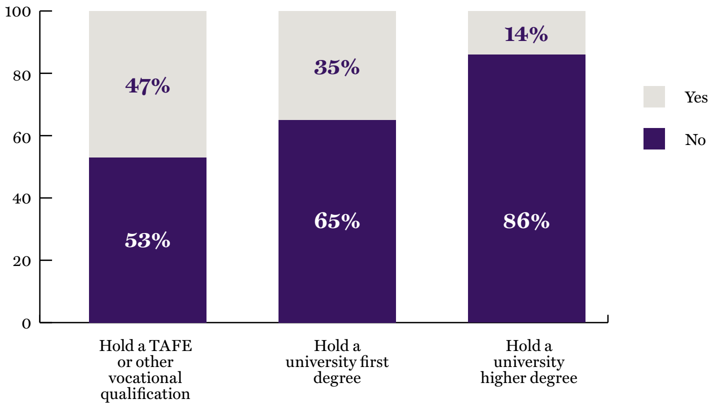
**Total may not add to exactly 100% due to rounding.*

TABLE 4. MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME

SOURCE	(%)
Paid employment - full time	47%
Paid employment - part time or casual	15%
Running a business	3%
Aged pension	12%
Some other form of government assistance	10%
Tertiary student allowance	1%
Superannuation pension	7%
Non-super investments or interest onsavings	2%
Other	3%
Total	**100%**

[5] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Household Income and Wealth, Australia, 2017-2018, https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/6523.0~2017-18~Main%20Features~Key%20Findings~1, (accessed 20 October 2019).

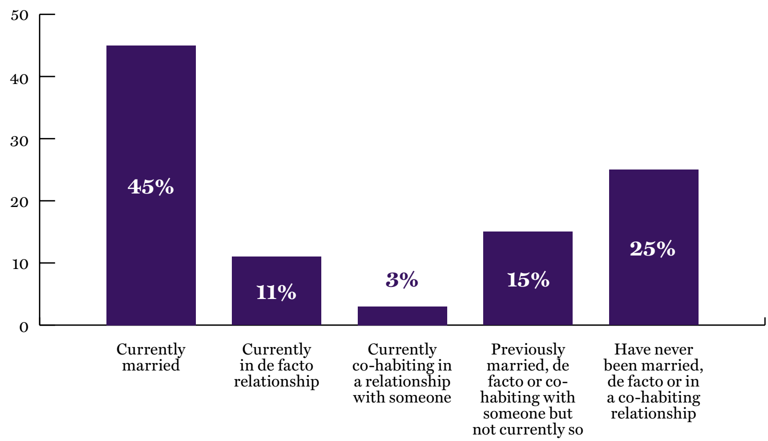
CHART 4. HIGHER EDUCATION COMPLETED BY PARTICIPANTS (N=3,000)



RELATIONSHIP STATUS

As of the time of the survey, most of the respondents reported themselves as married (45%). A quarter (25%) had never been married or in de facto or cohabiting relationship. See Chart 5.

CHART 5. RELATIONSHIP STATUS (N=3,000)



**Total may not add to exactly 100% due to rounding.*

NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN

Nearly 60% of the respondents reported having at least a child, with the almost a quarter saying that they have 2 children. On the other hand, 76% reported "none" when asked about grandchildren. See Table 5.

TABLE 5. NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN (N=3000)

	CHILDREN	GRANDCHILDREN
None	42%	76%
One	15%	4%
Two	23%	4%
Three	12%	4%
Four or more	7%	13%
Total	**100%**	**100%**

**Total may not add to exactly 100% due to rounding.*

RELIGION

The largest group of respondents (48%) reported not following or practising a religion, while 25% reported themselves as 'other Christian' denomination and 18% as Catholics. Other religions reported are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6.1 RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION (N=3,000)

DENOMINATION	(%)
None- don't practice or follow religion	48%
Other Christian denomination	25%
Catholic	18%
Buddhist faith	2%
Don't know	2%
Follow another religion	2%
Islamic faith	1%
Jewish faith	1%
Hindu faith	1%
Total	**100%**

Respondents were also asked about religious observance. Twelve percent (12%) described themselves as having firm religious beliefs they practise actively. Forty-nine percent (49%) said they had religious or spiritual beliefs but were not actively religious. Forty percent (40%) described themselves as either atheist, agnostic or as a doubter.

TABLE 6.2 RELIGIOSITY

RELIGIOSITY	(%)
Actively practice religious faith	12%
A believer but not a fervent follower	49%
Doubter / Agnostic / Atheist	40%
Total	**100%**

**Total may not add to exactly 100% due to rounding.*

II. Current life circumstances and life goals

The majority (72%) of the respondents reported optimism for the future. They reported themselves as financially secure (93%), with strong relationships (90%) and good health (79%). They also felt safe in their homes and communities (87%) and felt connected with their communities (75%).

Financial security (93%), strong family ties (90%) and home ownership (82%) were most valued by the respondents. Thirty percent (30%) said they did not feel financially secure, 22% said they do not feel connected to their community, and 22% felt their best days were not ahead of them. See Table 7.

TABLE 7. LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES AND LIFE GOALS

	Describes me	Does not describe me	Can't say	Total*
My best days lie ahead	72%	22%	6%	100%
Home ownership is important to me	82%	15%	3%	100%
Financial security is important to me	93%	5%	2%	100%
I feel financially secure	67%	30%	2%	100%
I feel connected to my community	75%	22%	3%	100%
I feel safe from harm (home or community)	87%	11%	2%	100%
I'm in good health	79%	20%	1%	100%
I have strong relationships	90%	8%	2%	100%
Strong family ties are important to me	90%	9%	2%	100%

**Total may not add to exactly 100% due to rounding.*

III. Influences and connectedness

When respondents were asked about the sources of influence (past or currently) in shaping their beliefs, values, goals and conduct in life, three sources were predominant in terms of positive impact:

- Close friend or friends (95%);
- Life experiences (87%);
- One or both parents (81%).

Religious readings or beliefs were sources of positive influence for only 30% of the respondents while only 23% of respondents cited a minister of religion or a place of worship. Only 35% cited the media as a postive influence on them.

Among the sources of influence that had negative impacts on respondents' beliefs, values and conduct of life, religion or religious beliefs (11%), media (11%) and a minister of religion or place of worship (10%) were the most cited compared to other sources of negative impact.

Religion or religious beliefs (27%) and a minister of religion or place of worship (29%) also recorded the largest percentage of "can't say" responses, perhaps reflecting the high percentages who said they do not follow or practise a religion (Table 6), whereas only 7% felt this way about the media. See Table 8.

TABLE 8. INFLUENCES AND CONNECTEDNESS

	Positive impact (big or small impact)	No impact	Negative Impact	Can't say	Total*
One or both parents	81%	11%	6%	2%	100%
Spouse or partner	61%	12%	5%	23%	100%
Any other family member	67%	24%	4%	5%	100%
Teachers/lecturers	52%	36%	4%	7%	100%
Minister of religion/ place of worship	23%	39%	10%	29%	100%
Close friend/friends	95%	22%	2%	4%	100%
Religious readings/ beliefs	30%	32%	11%	27%	100%
Media	35%	47%	11%	7%	100%
Life experiences	87%	6%	4%	2%	100%
Community group, sports	45%	36%	3%	16%	100%

**Total may not add to exactly 100% due to rounding.*

IV. Fears and concerns

Eighty percent (80%) of respondents were concerned about the number of people affected by mental health and suicides, considering these issues as real or serious concerns. The other issues considered serious were the risks associated with online content for kids and teens (71%) and the risk of terrorist attacks (70%).

TABLE 9. FEARS AND CONCERNS (N=3000)

	A serious or real concern for me	Not a serious or real concern for me	Total*
Human impact on global warming	69%	31%	100%
The risk of terrorist attacks	70%	30%	100%
Online content risks for kids and teens	71%	29%	100%
Political correctness undermining free speech	67%	33%	100%
Technology reducing face to face engagement	62%	38%	100%
Mental health issues and suicides	80%	20%	100%
Fake news	62%	38%	100%

**Total may not add to exactly 100% due to rounding.*

V. Beliefs and values

The values that were very important to over 60% of the respondents were:

- Friendship, trust and family values (87%);
- Equality, fairness and inclusion (73%);
- Freedom, rights and absence of restrictions (70%);
- Order, security and structure (62%).

Responsibility and self-sacrifice were considered very important by only 47% of respondents, but recorded the highest support in the “somewhat important” category. Christian values and leading a moral life were regarded as “not important” by 36% of respondents.

TABLE 10. BELIEFS AND VALUES (N=3000)

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Total*
Friendship, trust, family values	87%	12%	2%	100%
Shared values, working together	52%	43%	4%	100%
Christian values, a moral life	27%	37%	36%	100%
Responsibility, self-sacrifice	47%	47%	6%	100%
Giving, caring, helping	54%	41%	4%	100%
Order, security, structure	62%	34%	4%	100%
Freedom, rights, no restrictions	70%	27%	3%	100%
Equality, fairness, inclusion	73%	23%	3%	100%

**Total may not add to exactly 100% due to rounding.*

VI. Human rights

Four human rights issues were supported by more than 60% of the respondents:

- Freedom to express opinions on any issue without being intimated or bullied (84%);
- Protecting the rights of people to exercise freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and to be able to act according to their conscience and religious beliefs without being intimidated or penalised (74%);
- Protecting people from racial or religious vilification (69%)
- Giving Indigenous Australians the Constitutional right to have a say on laws that directly affect their communities (61%).

TABLE 11. PERCEPTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES (N=3000)

	Support	Oppose	Neutral	Total*
Protecting rights of ordinary Australians to freely express their opinions on any issue, without being bullied or intimated	84%	2%	15%	100%
Protecting the rights of people to exercise freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and to be able to act according to their conscience and religious beliefs without being intimidated or penalised.	70%	7%	23%	100%
Protecting the rights of parents to say no to their school teaching radical gender theory such as teaching young children that they can choose their own gender, if that goes against the parents' beliefs.	53%	19%	27%	100%
Treating those who contribute less to society through disadvantage equally to those who are more advantaged and contribute more.	55%	9%	36%	100%
Protecting the rights of terminally ill people to receive high quality palliative care and pain control, in preference to legalising assisted suicide or a "right to die".	59%	17%	24%	100%
Giving children the right to seek treatment and surgery to change their gender with or without parental consent.	20%	28%	52%	100%

TABLE 11. PERCEPTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES (N=3000) (CONT)

	Support	Oppose	Neutral	Total*
Protecting people from racial or religious vilification.	69%	7%	24%	100%
Protecting the rights of people not to be forced by law to act against their beliefs.	51%	13%	36%	100%
Protecting people from discrimination, and from the views of others that they find offensive, even if it means restricting the rights of others.	54%	14%	32%	100%
Giving Indigenous Australians the Constitutional right to have a say on laws that directly affect Indigenous communities.	61%	12%	27%	100%

**Total may not add to exactly 100% due to rounding.*

VIII. Democracy and institutions

WORKING WELL

Although a sizable number of respondents were unsure (ranging from 31% to 41% of the total respondents), nearly 50% of respondents viewed Australia's system of democracy as "working well" along with charity groups, the public education system and big business:

- Australia's system of democracy (49%)
- Charity groups (49%)
- Public education system (44%)
- Big business (44%)

NOT WORKING WELL

The highest responses recorded for "not working well" were:

- Banks and other financial institutions (40%)
- The welfare system (37%)
- Police, justice and courts (31%)

MIXED FEELINGS

At least a third of respondents had mixed feelings about how well Australia's institutions were working, with approximately half the sample expressing this view about religious communities and unions:

- Other religious communities (51%)
- Unions (50%)
- Christian churches (47%)

TABLE 12. VIEWS ON DEMOCRACY AND INSTITUTIONS (N=3000)

	Working well	Unsure/ Mixed	Not working well	Total*
Australia's system of democracy	49%	33%	18%	100%
Police, justice and courts systems in Australia	36%	33%	31%	100%
The Australian welfare system	27%	36%	37%	100%
Public health and public hospital system	40%	31%	29%	100%
Australia's public education system	44%	35%	21%	100%
Big business in Australia generally	44%	41%	15%	100%
The main charity groups in Australia	49%	41%	10%	100%
Banks and other financial institutions	27%	34%	40%	100%
Media (TV, newspapers, radio)	32%	43%	25%	100%
Christian churches	25%	47%	28%	100%
Other religious communities	20%	51%	29%	100%
Unions	24%	50%	26%	100%

**Total may not add to exactly 100% due to rounding.*

IX. Influences that challenge hope, trust and belonging

The highest responses about factors having a negative impact on Australian society were recorded for:

- Illicit drug use and alcohol abuse (92%)
- Family breakdowns, domestic disharmony (92%)
- Institutional wrong-doing (87%)
- Lack of strong leadership (87%)

The majority of respondents thought that all factors listed had at least some level of negative impact on society. The lowest percentages for negative impact were for the decline of volunteering (75%), complacency (75%) political populism (74%), and the decline of the role of religion (51%). But they were also the factors recording the highest percentages of respondents saying they had no negative impact on society:

- Decline in the role of religion (49%)
- Political populism (26%)
- Decline in volunteering (25%)
- Complacency about the need to protect the good things in Australian society (25%).

TABLE 13. INFLUENCES THAT CHALLENGE HOPE, TRUST AND BELONGING

	Some level of negative impact	No negative impact	Total
Illicit drug use and alcohol abuse	92%	8%	100%
Family breakdowns, domestic disharmony	92%	8%	100%
Decline of volunteering and lower community participation	75%	25%	100%
Social medial influences	82%	18%	100%
Political populism	74%	26%	100%

TABLE 13. INFLUENCES THAT CHALLENGE HOPE, TRUST AND BELONGING (CONT)

	Some level of negative impact	No negative impact	Total
Being complacent about the need to protect the good things about Australian society	75%	25%	100%
Political correctness stifling debate	79%	21%	100%
Growing rich-poor divide	84%	16%	100%
Lack of strong leadership	87%	13%	100%
Decline in the role of religion in Australian society	51%	49%	100%
Self-interest ahead of the common good	83%	17%	100%
Institutional wrong-doing and cover-ups	87%	13%	100%

X. The direction of Australian society

When asked to assess the direction of Australian society compared to a decade ago, 55% percent of respondents did not have a favourable view, saying that Australian society is heading in the wrong direction. Only 12% said that things are better, while nearly a quarter noted "no change" from 10 years ago.

TABLE 14. TAKING ALL THINGS INTO ACCOUNT, DO YOU FEEL THAT AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY IS NOW A BETTER SOCIETY OR NOT COMPARED WITH 10 YEARS AGO? (N=3000)

	Do you feel that Australian society is now a better society or not compared to 10 years ago?
Better now, heading in the right direction	12%
No change	24%
Worse now, heading in the wrong direction	55%
Can't say	9%
Total	**100%**

The PM Glynn Institute was established by Australian Catholic University (ACU) in 2016 as a public policy think tank to analyse issues of concern to the Catholic Church and the wider Australian community. Its focus is public policy for the common good.

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