

De-coding Australian opinion: Australians and cultural diversity

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OBJECTIVE OF THE PRESENTATION

- The numbers
- Beyond the numbers
- Understanding the shape + the drivers of Australian opinion + opinion within sub-groups

IMPORTANCE OF ACCURATELY ESTABLISHING PUBLIC OPINION

- Not much important at all
- Newspaper copy, cheap headlines – generated by reporters with little or no understanding of survey numbers/ reliability

OR

- Impact/ or potential impact on behaviour
- Impact of political decisions, positioning of parties
- Impacts on shifts in government policy

THE SCALON FOUNDATION SURVEYS

Scanlon Foundation surveys 2007-2017

	National	Local	Experimental
2007	2,000	1,500	
2009	2,000		
2010	2,000	1,800	
2011	2,000		
2012	2,000	2,000	
2013	1,200	2,500	2,300
2014	1,500		1,070
2015	1,500		10,548 (20 languages) +50 focus groups
2016	1,500		
2017	2,290		2,200 +412
Total	17,900	7,800	16,530

EXPERIMENTAL SURVEYS

- Deepen knowledge of the impact of
- **SURVEY INSTRUMENT**
 - Question wording
 - Question context – preamble/ statement/ question order
- **MODE OF SURVEYING**
 - Interviewer administered/ Self administered
 - Social desirability bias
- **SAMPLING METHODOLOGY**
 - Probability sample
 - Non-probability sample

KEY SCANLON FOUNDATION FINDINGS

THE NUMBERS

- Current immigration policy (negative **~40%**)
- Diverse intake (negative **~30%**)
- Attitude to specific national groups (negative **5%-25% ++**)
- Attitude to faith groups (negative **5%-25% ++**)
- Multicultural policy (negative **10%-15%++**)
- Meaning of support for multiculturalism = integration
- Funding to ethnic groups for cultural maintenance (negative **~60% +**)

DEGREE OF CONFIDENCE

CONFIDENCE 1: TREND OF OPINION

- Claims made about trend on the basis of one survey – imagining what opinion was before/ last year/ last few years
- Measuring **trend** requires
 - **Sequence of surveys**
 - **Consistent survey instrument/ questions**
 - **Consistent mode of surveying**
- On immigration and cultural diversity –only Scanlon Foundation undertakes annual surveys
- Accurate measurement of trend, but understating the numbers/ range is a different issue

CONFIDENCE 2: VARIANCE ACROSS THE POPULATION

- AGE
- EDUCATION
- FINANCIAL STATUS

+ KEY PREDICTOR =

- **POLITICAL ALIGNMENT**

- Mainstream = Liberal (-), Labor (+)
- Left = Greens
- Right = Independent/ minor parties – One Nation

Cultural diversity (acceptance/ rejection) scale – in 2016 report

- 9 questions, select using Factor Analysis
 - Current refugee intake; immigration intake; asylum seekers; integration; multiculturalism
- Item loadings in the range .526 to .763
- Moderate to strong correlation with high reliability (Cronbach's alpha .850)
- 2016 survey, 1112 respondents

Distribution of scores – very low scores (2016)

	%		%
Support independent/ minor party	26	Support Greens	0
Education to Year 11	23	Non-English speaking background	3
Age 65-74	22	BA or higher	4
Age 75+	22	Prosperous/ Very comfortable	4
		Age 18-24	7
		Age 25-34	7
		Age 35-44	8

Distribution of scores – very high scores (2016)

	%		%
Support Greens	67	Support independent/ minor party	6
Aged 18-24	46	Struggling to pay bills/ poor	6
BA or higher	36	Education to Year 11	7
		Aged 75+	8

CONFIDENCE 3: THE BALANCE OF PUBLIC OPINION, GETTING THE NUMBERS RIGHT

- Calibrating the extremes
- **Calibrating the centre**
- **Calibrating the issues on which the Centre moves**

Views on cultural diversity, nine questions

STRONG NEGATIVE	MIDDLE	STRONG POSITIVE
10%-12%	64%-67%	20%-22%

Multiculturalism (2015-16)

3 point scale

NEGATIVE	MIDDLE	POSITIVE
11%-12%	3%	83%-86%

5 point scale

STRONG NEGATIVE	MIDDLE	STRONG POSITIVE
5%	10%	45%

← 35% →

MEANING OF MULTICULTURALISM FOR THE CENTRE

- Two way process
- Immigrants required to adapt to Australian ways/ values
- Established community adapts to immigrants

- Only a minority supports assimilation (20%-30%)
- Only a minority supports a return to a discriminatory (race/ religion) immigration policy
- BUT only a minority supports government programs in support of cultural maintenance
- DRIVER – negative attitudes towards Muslims = perceived lack of integration; value conflict; fear of terrorism

Muslims (2015-16)

3 point scale

NEGATIVE	MIDDLE	POSITIVE
22%-26%	42%-47%	28%-30%

5 point scale

STRONG NEGATIVE	MIDDLE	STRONG POSITIVE
15% ←	55%	20% → 10%



MONASH
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FUTURE CONCERNS:
THE CENTRE MAY SHIFT NEGATIVE

DRIVERS OF NEGATIVE CHANGE

- Loss of trust in Australian democracy
- Repeated failure the outcome of party politics

- Perceptions of Muslim Australians = x integration
- Impact of minor events – Christmas, Anzac, Courts, respect
- Impact of major events – international/ national terror

- Ongoing economic change
- GDP growth / individuals-groups left behind