

MEASURING

SOCIAL INCLUSION

The Inclusive Australia
Social Inclusion
Index



THE INCLUSIVE AUSTRALIA SOCIAL INCLUSION INDEX: 2021 REPORT

PREPARED FOR INCLUSIVE AUSTRALIA

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FOREWORD

The impact of social exclusion in Australia cannot be overstated. Social exclusion costs the Australian economy \$45 billion each year, and affects 6.7 million people¹.

However, at the heart of Australia's culture are values of respect and fairness, and the majority of Australian people are not highly prejudiced.

Despite this, one in four Australians experience major discrimination based on their age, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, ability or origin.

This is why Inclusive Australia is building a cross-sector movement to change societal attitudes and behaviours towards people from different backgrounds, perspectives and circumstances.

In the recent Inclusive Australia Social Inclusion Index study, Inclusive Australia commissioned BehaviourWorks Australia at the Monash Sustainable Development Institute to gauge five key aspects of social inclusion using scientifically-informed scales.

The survey looked at:

- Individual levels of belonging and wellbeing;
- Contact and friendship with minority groups;
- Prejudicial attitudes and experiences of discrimination;
- Willingness to volunteer for social inclusion;
- Willingness to advocate for social inclusion.



Inclusive Australia has a clear strategy to shift ingrained behaviours and attitudes by:

1. Guiding the national narrative on social inclusion, enabling people individually or collectively to address discrimination and form connections with others.
2. Accelerating and amplifying the efforts of organisations and individuals who choose to be a part of the Inclusive Australia network through campaigns and advocacy.
3. Providing technical and physical platforms for collaboration, to enable us to leverage existing expertise and networks, drive convergence and collective action, and offer shared learning and measurement.
4. Developing tools to evaluate, measure, compare and improve current social inclusion activities in Australia, providing an overarching nationwide context to the issues being addressed.

We would like to thank Nicholas Faulkner, Sarah Kneebone, Liam Smith and Kun Zhao from Monash University for undertaking this important research. We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the Inclusive Australia Board in contributing guidance and expertise to these research outcomes and the Inclusive Australia movement. Furthermore, we would not have a movement without the 120 individuals who make up our alliance, and we would like to extend our thanks to every single person who has been involved to date.

Andrea Pearman, CEO, Inclusive Australia

Michael Daddo, Chair, Inclusive Australia



ADVANCING THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE A PEACEFUL, PROSPEROUS AND PROTECTED PLANET

The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, agreed by 193 countries from around the world in September 2015, set out a framework of 17 targets for social equity, economic growth and environmental protection.

Sustainable Development Goals and Social Inclusion

Four of the SDGs highlight the need for promoting equality, reducing disadvantage within and between nations and creating inclusive workplaces, communities and cities (see box). Meeting these goals in Australia requires cultural, social, attitudinal and behavioural change. Measuring these changes through the Inclusive Australia Social Inclusion Index provides us with an understanding of where we are coming from and how far we have come.

For further information about the SDGs, see

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

SDGs for Social Inclusion

- GOAL 5** Gender Equality: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- GOAL 8** Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- GOAL 10** Reduced Inequalities: Reduce inequality within and among countries
- GOAL 11** Sustainable cities and communities: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Figure 1: The Global Goals For Sustainable Development.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: MEASURING SOCIAL INCLUSION IN AUSTRALIA

The idea of the ‘fair go’ is an important part of Australia’s popular culture, yet across the country, millions of Australians do not get a ‘fair go’

Parts of Australia’s population routinely experience forms of discrimination and exclusion as they go about their daily lives. Women and cultural minorities remain underrepresented in the leadership positions of Australian organisations^{1,2}. People with disabilities continue to face discrimination from employers³. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTIQ+) people suffer from significantly higher levels of depression (and more attempted suicides) than the general population.⁴ These are just a few of many examples that indicate there is a clear need to improve social inclusion in Australia.

To facilitate progress towards social inclusion, it is important to have comprehensive and robust measurements available to track that progress. These measurements are what the Social Inclusion Index seeks to provide.

What is social inclusion?

Social inclusion is a multifaceted concept. The Inclusive Australia Social Inclusion Index focuses on five key aspects of social inclusion, using items from scientifically-tested scales to measure individuals’:

1. Sense of belonging and wellbeing;
2. Prejudicial attitudes and experiences of discrimination;
3. Amount and quality of contact with people from minority groups;
4. Willingness to volunteer in inclusion activities; and
5. Willingness to advocate for social inclusion.

These categories were determined through a process that captured the views of a panel of experts on diversity and inclusion⁵.

What is different about the Inclusive Australia Social Inclusion Index?

Most previous research on social inclusion has focussed on particular issues facing specific minority groups, such as immigrants and ethnic minorities⁶, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders^{7,8}, or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTIQ+) people⁹. Although these existing studies provide a great amount of detail on these specific inclusion contexts, they lack the integration needed to measure the progress Australia is making in social inclusion overall. Rather than measuring progress in social inclusion broadly, they focus on specific issues or minority groups. As a result, they each tell only part of Australia’s social inclusion story.

In contrast, the Inclusive Australia Social Inclusion Index provides a unique overview of Australia’s social inclusion by covering a wider array of social inclusion issues in one index – including the attitudes and experiences of racial minorities, religious minorities, LGBTIQ+ people, Aboriginal Australians, women, people with disabilities, people on low incomes, young people, and older people. It seeks to provide a ‘big picture’ view, and captures several important measures (e.g. prejudicial attitudes, experiences of discrimination, willingness to advocate for inclusion) that had not been included together in previous studies.

The index is constructed using data from five surveys of a total of over 9500 people across Australia. The demographic profile of our samples broadly reflect the demographic profile (e.g. age, gender, state) of the broader Australian population. We also include boosted samples of several minority groups, including racial and religious minorities, LGBTIQ+, people with disability, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to capture their experiences. Moreover, where possible, the survey questions come from scientifically-validated scales. This means that our data is likely to be more valid and reliable than currently-available data on social inclusion issues, which usually rely on a small number of untested survey questions.

Why develop an Index for social inclusion?

Until the development of the Social Inclusion Index, governments, NGOs, and businesses had very few tools available to measure Australia's progress towards social inclusion overall. The Inclusive Australia Social Inclusion Index provides evidence that can help track progress and help evaluate initiatives to improve social inclusion broadly in Australia.

In addition to releasing this report, we also encourage scientists and researchers to contact us about co-authoring research using the raw Social Inclusion Index data to help improve knowledge about the causes, consequences, and correlates of social inclusion. This report only scratches the surface of what it is possible to analyse using this data – collaboration with other researchers could help to fulfil its potential.

How often will the Index be updated?

This document reports on the first five waves of data collection. The first wave was collected in May 2017, and the most recent wave was collected in December 2020. We intend to continue to collect this data annually to track Australia's progress towards social inclusion.



KEY FINDINGS

1. SOCIAL INCLUSION IN AUSTRALIA DECLINED SLIGHTLY IN 2020, BUT NOT BY AS MUCH AS SOME MAY HAVE FEARED

The Inclusive Australia Social Inclusion Index score was 61 out of 100 at the end of 2020, two points lower than the previous year (see Figure 1). Although this score was the equal lowest score that has been recorded, it did not decline by as much as some may have expected given the global COVID-19 pandemic arrived in Australia during these time points. Even in Victoria, the state most affected by COVID-19 lockdowns, social inclusion declined by only two points. This finding demonstrates the resilience of social inclusion in Australia

Fig 1. Social Inclusion Index and subindex scores (out of 100) over time

	May 2017	Dec 2017	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	Dec 2020
Overall score	62	61	62	63	61
Absence of discrimination and prejudice	68	70	67	68	69
Sense of belonging and wellbeing	67	66	66	63	65
Contact between groups	59	58	59	61	57
Volunteering to help minority groups	56	54	58	61	55
Advocating for inclusion	58	57	59	62	58

2. THE DECLINE WAS PRIMARILY DRIVEN BY DECLINES IN ADVOCACY, INTERGROUP CONTACT, AND VOLUNTEERING

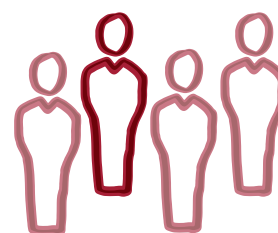
The advocacy, contact, and volunteering subscales were lower in Dec 2020 than the previous year. Some of these declines may have been a result of lockdowns and COVID-19 restrictions reducing individuals' ability and motivation to perform these behaviours.

3. MAJOR DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS REMAINED AT ELEVATED LEVELS, AND APPEARS TO HAVE INCREASED AGAINST YOUNG PEOPLE

The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who reported experiencing at least one form of major discrimination, such as being unfairly denied a job or unfairly discouraged from continuing education, increased in 2019 (from 28.6% to 52.1%), and remained very high in the most recent wave (49.7%). Similarly, we found indicative evidence that major discrimination against young people increased in 2020 (from 44.5% in 2019 to 56.8% in 2020). The reasons for these increases are unknown, but in the case of young people may have been due to impacts of COVID-19.

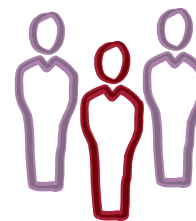
4. APPROXIMATELY ONE IN FIVE AUSTRALIANS HAD RECENTLY EXPERIENCED A FORM OF MAJOR DISCRIMINATION

Results from the most recent wave indicated that 19.8% of Australians reported having experienced a major form of discrimination within the last 2 years. This percentage is slightly lower than in 2018 and 2019 (23.0% and 23.2%, respectively), but similar to the levels recorded in 2017 (20.5%).



5. MOST AUSTRALIANS ARE NOT HIGHLY PREJUDICED, BUT A SIZEABLE MINORITY ARE

The highest levels of prejudice continue to be directed against religious minorities, racial minorities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, LGBTIQ+ people, and young people. Although prejudicial attitudes against women, people with disabilities and older people are lower on average, they are still present and problematic.



6. IDENTIFICATION WITH AUSTRALIA HAD BEEN DECLINING OVER TIME, BUT THIS TREND DID NOT CONTINUE IN 2020.

The strength with which people felt close to and identified with Australia had been slightly but consistently declining since the first wave of data collection in 2017. That trend did not continue in 2020, with identification being at similar levels in 2020 as it was in 2019.

7. AVERAGE LEVELS OF PERSONAL WELLBEING REMAINED STABLE IN 2020

Average personal wellbeing in Australia was at a similar level in December 2020 (6.7 out of 10) as it was in 2019 (6.5 out of 10). Participants indicated that working from home due to COVID-19 tended to have positive impacts on their wellbeing. It is possible that these benefits helped to offset the negative impacts of travel bans and gathering limitations on wellbeing.

8. MANY AUSTRALIANS CONTINUED TO HAVE LITTLE TO NO CONTACT WITH CERTAIN MINORITY GROUPS, AND LACK OF CONTACT WAS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER PREJUDICE



In 2020, nearly two in five Australians said they either 'never' or 'less than once per year' had contact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, or people from religious minority groups. Additionally, results continue to show that the more contact a person has with minority groups, the lower their prejudice tends to be.

9. WILLINGNESS TO VOLUNTEER TO HELP MINORITY GROUPS WAS LOWER IN 2020 THAN IN 2019

The percentage of people who were willing to volunteer reduced from 42.0% to 35.7%. Additionally, the median number of hours that people said they were willing to spend volunteering to help disadvantaged groups reduced from twelve to ten per month.



10. THE PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE CLASSIFIED INTO THE FIVE SOCIAL INCLUSION PROFILES CHANGED



In Wave 1, five profiles were identified based on peoples' attitudes and behaviours related to social inclusion: 'Allies', 'Affected activists', 'Disillusioned', 'Indifferent', and 'Contented'. The percentage of people classified as 'Contented' had been decreasing since 2017, but increased in the most recent wave.



WE IDENTIFIED FIVE PROFILES BASED ON PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES

PEOPLE ENGAGE WITH SOCIAL INCLUSION IN A VARIETY OF WAYS.

By analysing how experiences, attitudes and behaviours vary across the population, it is possible identify distinct types of individuals. Understanding these types can help governments and organisations consider what kinds of engagement might work best for different people. In the first wave of data collection (May 2017), we used a statistical tool called cluster analysis to identify five profiles based on peoples' socially-inclusive attitudes and behaviours. Each subsequent wave the new sample is then classified into the five groups based on their attitudes and behaviours.

BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDE PROFILES

Allies: Prepared to act to support social inclusion

- Allies express a strong motivation to volunteer and advocate for social inclusion.
- Allies have relatively high levels of contact with minority groups, low levels of prejudice, have high personal wellbeing and strongly identify as Australians.
- There are more university-educated people in this group compared to all other groups, with the exception of Affected Activists.



Affected Activists: Affected by exclusion and want to do something about it

- Affected Activists have a strong willingness to volunteer and advocate for social inclusion.
- Affected Activists have the lowest level of prejudice and are also most likely to have personally experienced discrimination.
- Females and university-educated people are overrepresented in this group; approximately two thirds are female, and half have a Bachelor or Post-Graduate degree.



Disillusioned: Affected by exclusion and in need of support

- Disillusioned people tend to have experienced some discrimination but have relatively low willingness to volunteer or advocate for social inclusion
- They also tend to have low personal wellbeing, and weak identification with Australia.
- People in this group tend to have relatively low household incomes compared to people in other groups.



Indifferent: Disinterested and inactive

- People in this group tend to be about average on most indicators of social inclusion.
- They tend to be only slightly willing to advocate or volunteer for social inclusion
- They also tend to express high levels of subtle prejudice and have experienced an average amount of discrimination.
- Indifferent individuals tend to have average levels of education and income.



Contented: Happy with the status quo

- Contented individuals tend to have very little personal experience of discrimination, relatively high levels of prejudice, and very low willingness to volunteer or advocate for inclusion.
- Their personal wellbeing is slightly above average, and they strongly identify as Australians.
- Over four in five people in this group identify as White/Caucasian, and three in five are aged fifty or over.

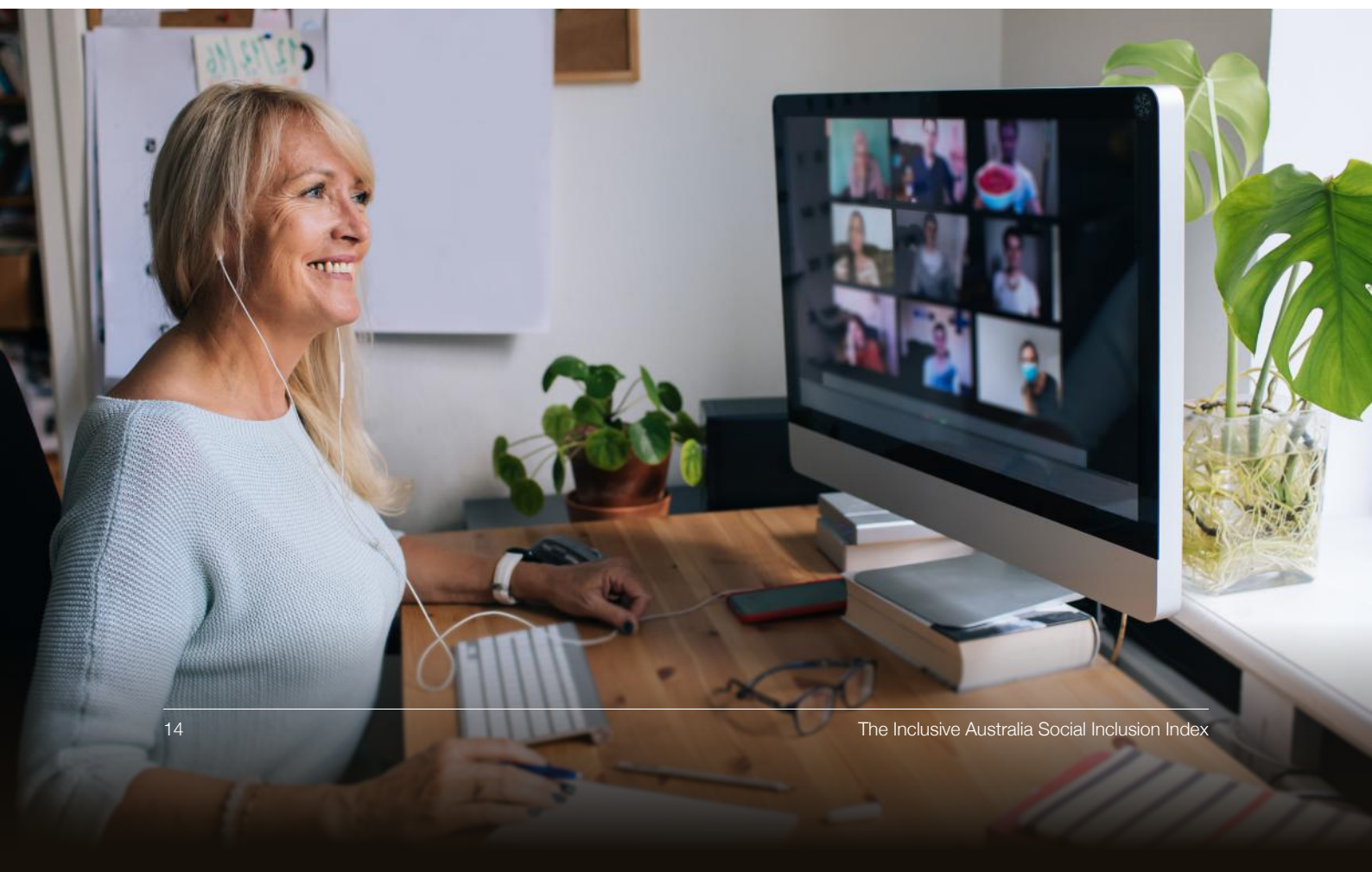
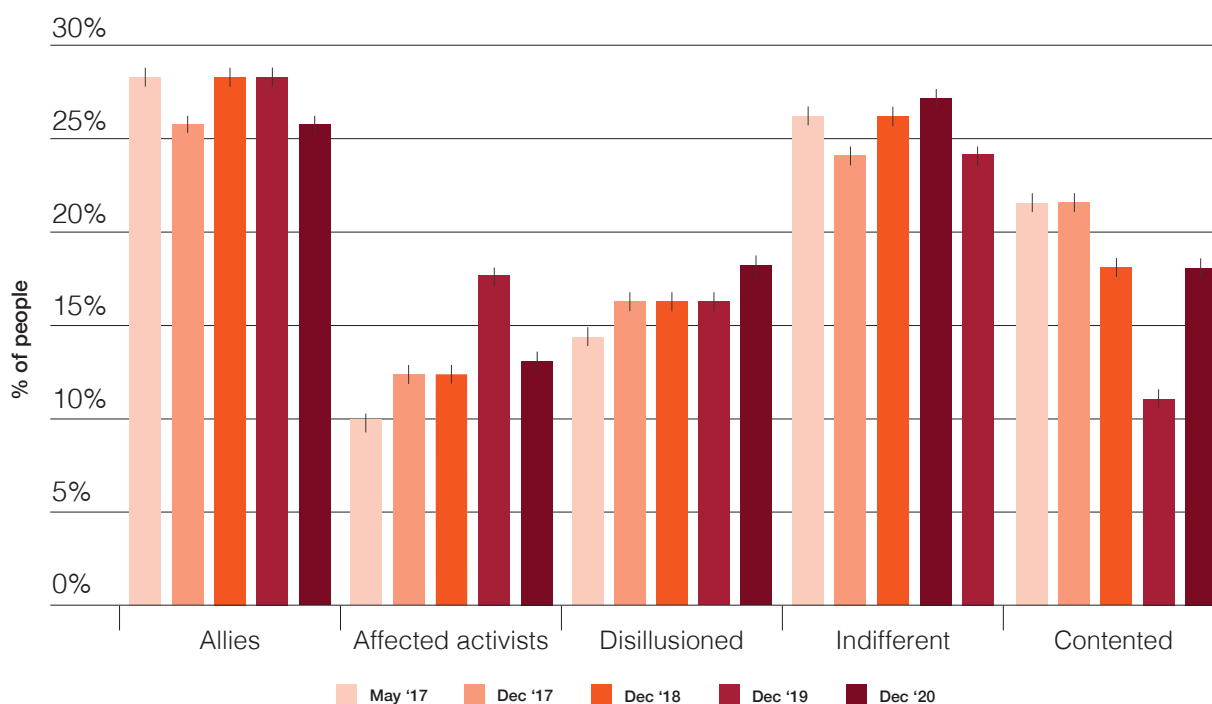


*The percentages shown on this page were calculated using December 2020 data.

The proportion of the sample classified into each of the five typology groups has remained relatively stable across waves with some notable exceptions (see Figure 2). The size of the 'Contented' group declined between 2017 and 2019, but significantly increased in 2020, returning to 2018 levels.

This shift in group classification likely reflects the changes observed in the sub-indices, presented in the Key Findings, where there has been a slight decrease in willingness to volunteer and advocate for inclusion.

Figure 2: Percentage of people in each typology group



PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION

PREJUDICIAL ATTITUDES

Prejudice refers to holding unfavourable attitudes towards a social group and its members¹⁰. When a person is highly prejudiced, he or she judges people negatively solely based on their membership of a social group (e.g. LGBTIQ+ person, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, person with a disability).

We measured prejudice towards a range of minority groups using items from a commonly-used and validated¹¹ set of survey questions. The questions ask people to indicate how much they agree or disagree with statements like ‘Most politicians care too much about racial minorities,’ ‘It is just a matter of some people not trying hard enough. If young people would only try harder they could be as well off as other Australian people’, and ‘Women are too easily offended’.¹¹

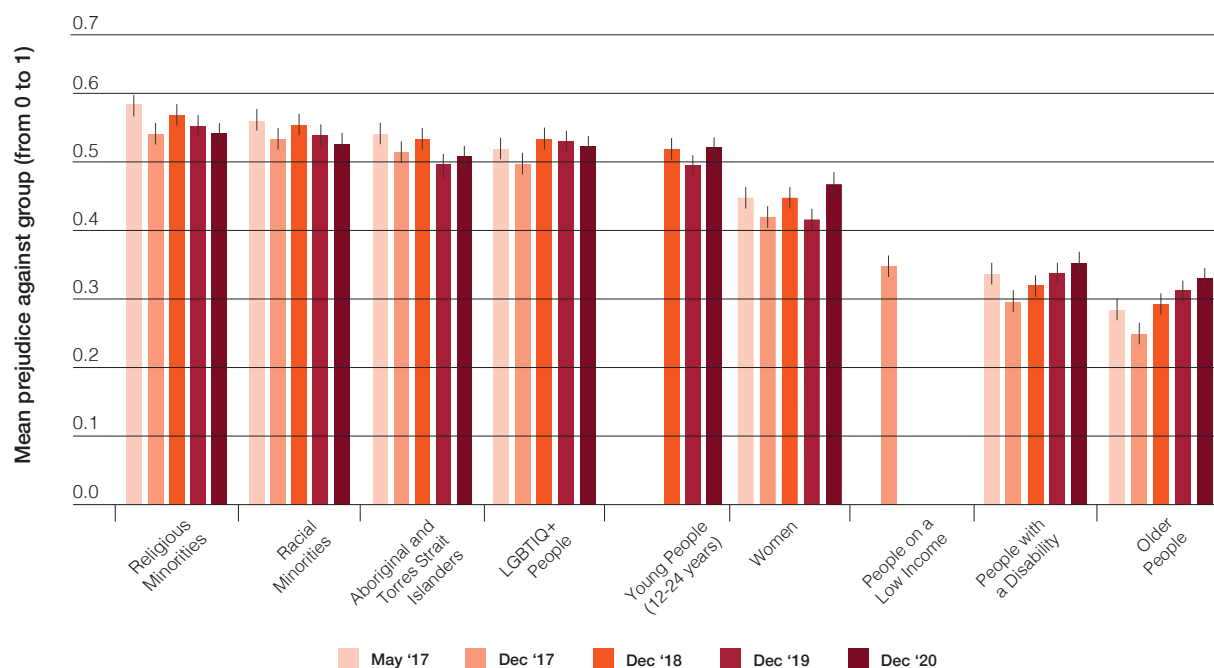
As shown in Figure 3, prejudice in Australia has been generally highest against religious minorities, racial minorities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and LGBTIQ+ people. In December 2020, approximately one in five people were highly prejudiced (meaning that, on average they ‘moderately’ or ‘strongly’ agreed with statements indicating prejudice) against racial minorities

(21%), religious minorities (19%), LGBTIQ+ people (20%), or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (21%).

One in six were highly prejudiced against young people (16%) and one in seven against women (14%). In contrast, fewer people hold highly prejudiced views against people with a disability (7%), or older people (7%) but this should not be taken to mean that these groups do not experience discrimination.

Although prejudice levels against most minority groups tend to have been consistent or trending slightly down across all waves of data, there appear to be two main exceptions to this trend. Specifically, prejudice against people with disabilities and elderly people has trended slightly higher since December 2017. However, prejudice against both of these groups remains low relative to other minorities.

Figure 3: Prejudice against selected minority groups



Note: Prejudice against young people and people on low incomes were not measured in every wave of data collection.

EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION

DISCRIMINATION IS THE ‘BEHAVIOURAL EXPRESSION OF PREJUDICE’.¹⁰

While prejudice refers to negative attitudes, discrimination refers to the ‘acting out’ of those negative attitudes. Discrimination occurs when there is ‘unequal treatment of people based on the groups or categories to which they belong’.¹²

We measured people’s experiences of two types of discrimination: major discrimination and everyday discrimination. Major discrimination includes types of serious unfair treatment, such as being unfairly denied a promotion or job, or discouraged from continuing education.^{13,14} In contrast, everyday discrimination refers to ‘more chronic, routine, and relatively minor experiences of unfair treatment’¹⁵, such as being treated with less respect and courtesy, receiving poorer service than others at restaurants or stores, or being called names.

The groups that report experiencing the most discrimination are, in rough order, young people (aged 18 to 24), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, LGBTIQ+ people, religious minorities, and people with disability. However, other groups still experience discrimination, albeit some less frequently (as shown in Figure 4 and Figure 5).

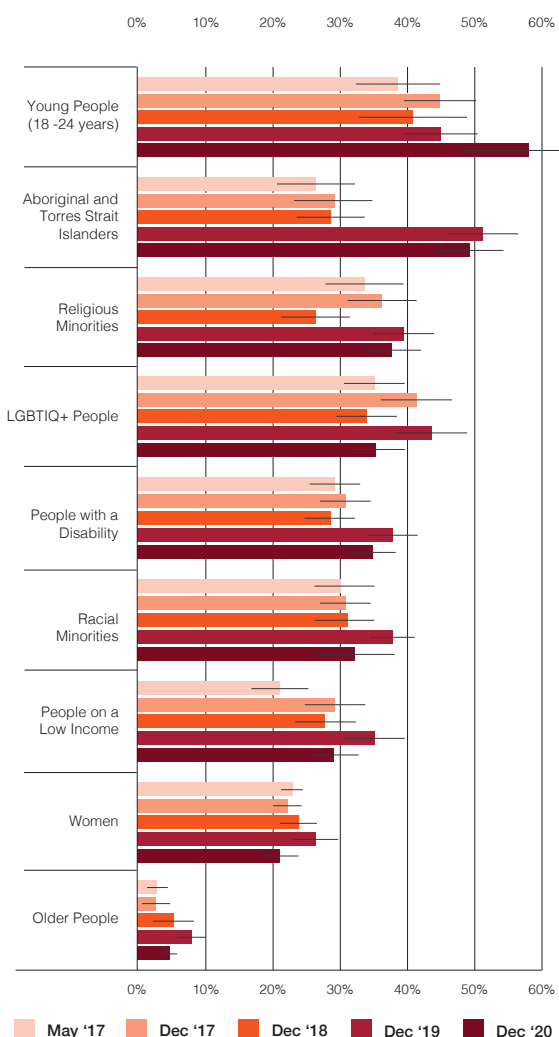
Our results show that 19.8% of Australians report having experienced a major form of discrimination in the last 2 years, and this has remained generally consistent (between 20 to 23 percent) across all waves of data collection. However, the proportion of particular minority groups experiencing a major form of discrimination has changed in recent years. In 2019, reports of major discrimination amongst both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people with a disability increased. In 2020, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who reported experiencing major forms of discrimination remained elevated. The cause of this increase is unknown, but should be investigated and monitored. When we examine trends in each of the specific types of major discrimination experienced, all types increased in 2019 and remained elevated in 2020.

The percentage of young people who reported experiencing major discrimination trended higher in 2020

(56.8%) compared to previous years (44.5% in 2019).

We examined each specific type of major discrimination reported by young people overtime, and found that the most pronounced increases from 2019 to 2020 were in being ‘unfairly fired from a job or denied a promotion’ (increased from 12.2% to 18.2%) and being ‘unfairly stopped, searched, questioned, physically threatened or abused by the police’(increased from 10.6% to 18.2%).

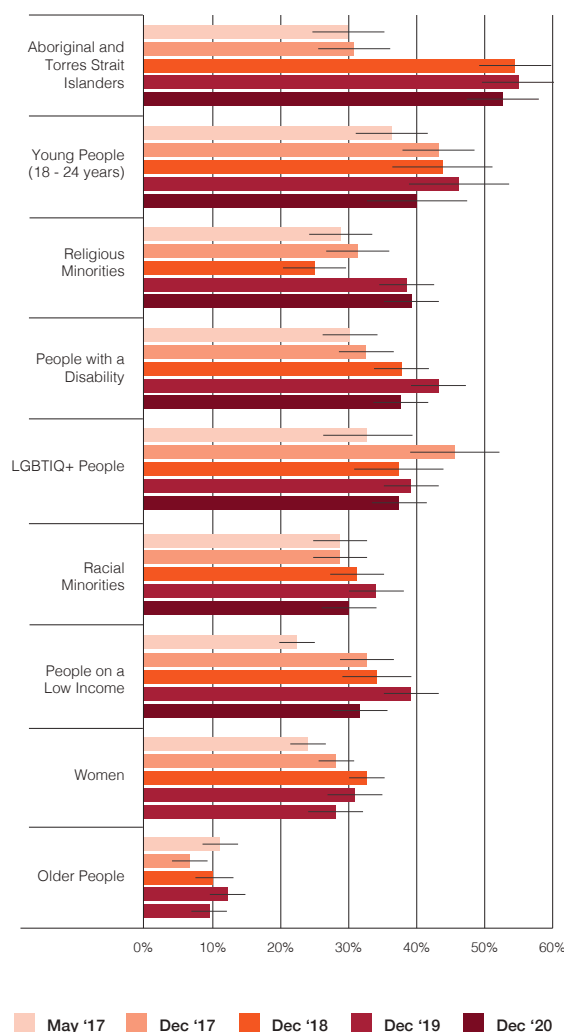
Figure 4: Percentage of people in groups who report experiencing at least one form of major discrimination in the past two years



As of December 2020, 24.7% of Australians report experiencing minor, 'everyday' forms of discrimination at least weekly, similar to findings from 2019. In contrast to levels of major discrimination, levels of everyday discrimination have seen more variation over time.

Three changes are particularly prominent. First, in December 2017, around the time of the Federal Government's Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey (which asked Australians if they thought the law should be changed to allow same-sex couples to marry), the percentage of LGBTIQ+ people who experienced everyday discrimination increased significantly (from 33.3% in May to 45.7% in December 2017). In December 2018 and December 2019, everyday discrimination faced by LGBTIQ+ people returned closer to pre-Marriage-Law-Postal-Survey levels. Second, the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders reporting that they experience a form of everyday discrimination at least weekly increased significantly, from 30.2% in December 2017 to 54.1% in December 2018, and remained high in December 2019 (54.9%) and December 2020 (51.0%). Third, in December 2019 there was a significant increase in the percentage of religious minorities experiencing everyday discrimination compared to December 2018 (from 25.6% to 37.6%), and this figure remained high in 2020 (39.8%). Given the increased for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and religious minorities have been observed for more than one wave, it is looking increasingly less likely that these are aberrations, and so they should be further investigated and addressed.

Figure 5: Percentage of people in groups who report experiencing one or more forms of everyday discrimination at least weekly.



INTERSECTIONALITY AND EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION

INTERSECTIONALITY REFERS TO HOW INDIVIDUALS CAN IDENTIFY WITH MULTIPLE INTERSECTING GROUPS AT THE SAME TIME.

For example, an individual may identify as female, LGBTIQ+, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. By surveying people from different minority groups, our study provides a unique opportunity to shed light on how intersectionality influences experiences of discrimination and personal wellbeing in Australia.

Our data shows that individuals who belong to more than one minority group tend to experience more discrimination. As shown in Figure 6, the more minority groups an individual belongs to, the more likely they are to experience both major and everyday discrimination – particularly when they belong to three or more such groups. Across all waves of data, the percentage of people who reported experiencing major discrimination was 18% among people who did not identify with any minority group, 22% among people who identified with one, 25% among people who identified with two, and 37% among people who identified with three or more minority groups. Similarly, people who belonged to more minority groups tended to have lower personal wellbeing.

Certain intersectional combinations of minority groups report more discrimination and poorer wellbeing than others. Figure 13 presents the mean scores (and 95% confidence error margins) for experiences of everyday and major discrimination, and personal wellbeing of intersected minority groups (i.e. people who identify with two minority groups). Data from all waves is included in this analysis to maximise sample size in all cells (including just one year of data results in small samples in some cells).

As seen in Figure 7, everyday discrimination was most common among Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders who identify as LGBTIQ+ (0.49) and young people with a disability (0.48). Similarly, experiences of major discrimination were most common among Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders who identify as LGBTIQ+ (0.70) and young people with a disability (0.61). Wellbeing was lowest among people on low incomes with a disability (0.49).

Figure 6: Discrimination and wellbeing by number of minority groups (all waves of data)

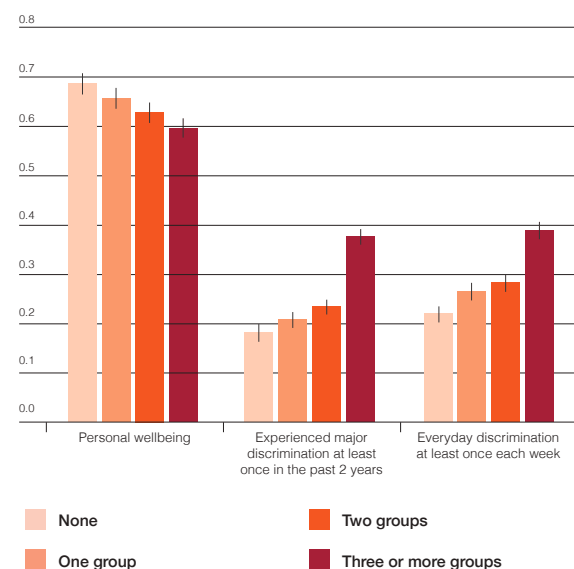


Figure 7: Personal wellbeing & experiences of discrimination by intersectional minority group membership (all waves of data)

	Religious minorities	Racial minorities	LGBTIQ+ People	Older People	People with a disability	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	People on a Low Income	Young people (18 - 24 years)
Personal Wellbeing								
Racial minorities	0.69 (0.01)							
LGBTIQ+ People	0.65 (0.03)	0.65 (0.02)						
Older people	0.71 (0.03)	0.72 (0.03)	0.68 (0.04)					
People with a disability	0.62 (0.03)	0.62 (0.03)	0.52 (0.02)	0.65 (0.02)				
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	0.7 (0.04)	0.66 (0.04)	0.62 (0.04)	0.72 (0.04)	0.59 (0.02)			
People on a Low Income	0.6 (0.02)	0.6 (0.02)	0.51 (0.02)	0.67 (0.02)	0.49 (0.01)	0.55 (0.02)		
Young people (18 - 24 years)	0.64 (0.03)	0.64 (0.02)	0.57 (0.02)	-	0.58 (0.03)	0.63 (0.03)	0.57 (0.02)	
Women	0.66 (0.01)	0.66 (0.01)	0.6 (0.01)	0.7 (0.02)	0.54 (0.01)	0.62 (0.01)	0.57 (0.01)	0.62 (0.01)
Everyday discrimination								
Racial minorities	0.31 (0.02)							
LGBTIQ+ People	0.41 (0.04)	0.38 (0.03)						
Older people	0.13 (0.02)	0.15 (0.03)	0.16 (0.03)					
People with a disability	0.37 (0.03)	0.42 (0.03)	0.41 (0.03)	0.16 (0.01)				
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	0.43 (0.05)	0.44 (0.04)	0.49 (0.04)	0.2 (0.04)	0.43 (0.03)			
People on a Low Income	0.32 (0.03)	0.31 (0.02)	0.37 (0.02)	0.14 (0.01)	0.29 (0.02)	0.34 (0.03)		
Young people (18 - 24 years)	0.39 (0.03)	0.35 (0.03)	0.4 (0.03)	-	0.48 (0.04)	0.4 (0.03)	0.4 (0.03)	
Women	0.28 (0.02)	0.28 (0.01)	0.35 (0.02)	0.12 (0.01)	0.31 (0.01)	0.35 (0.02)	0.28 (0.01)	0.34 (0.02)
Major discrimination								
Racial minorities	0.36 (0.03)							
LGBTIQ+ People	0.54 (0.07)	0.47 (0.05)						
Older people	0.05 (0.03)	0.09 (0.05)	0.12 (0.06)					
People with a disability	0.48 (0.06)	0.55 (0.05)	0.48 (0.05)	0.05 (0.02)				
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	0.57 (0.08)	0.53 (0.08)	0.7 (0.07)	0.05 (0.05)	0.46 (0.05)			
People on a Low Income	0.4 (0.05)	0.37 (0.05)	0.45 (0.05)	0.05 (0.02)	0.29 (0.03)	0.39 (0.05)		
Young people (18 - 24 years)	0.56 (0.07)	0.42 (0.05)	0.5 (0.06)	-	0.61 (0.07)	0.54 (0.07)	0.51 (0.05)	
Women	0.32 (0.03)	0.28 (0.03)	0.39 (0.03)	0.03 (0.01)	0.31 (0.03)	0.35 (0.03)	0.28 (0.02)	0.4 (0.04)

BELONGING AND WELLBEING

SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS AND BELONGING ARE IMPORTANT FOR MAXIMISING WELLBEING.

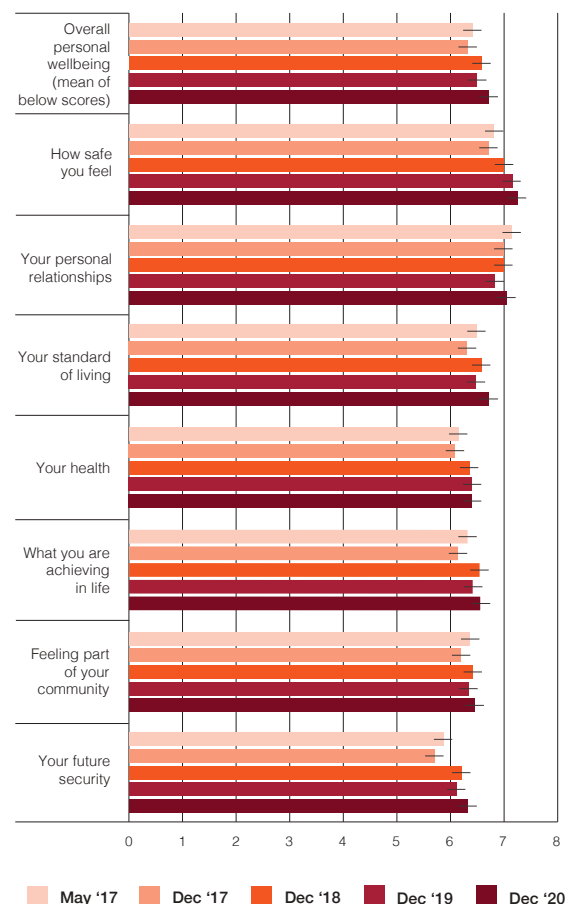
Previous research shows that having strong social networks and a strong sense of social identity (through belonging to groups) is associated with better health, reduced levels of depression and anxiety, and improved overall wellbeing^{16,17}.

Personal Wellbeing

Our results indicate that people in Australia rated their overall personal wellbeing as 6.7/10¹ on average in December 2020. People were most satisfied with how safe they felt and their personal relationships, and least satisfied with their future security (see Figure 8). Australians' overall personal wellbeing was about the same in December 2020 as December 2019.

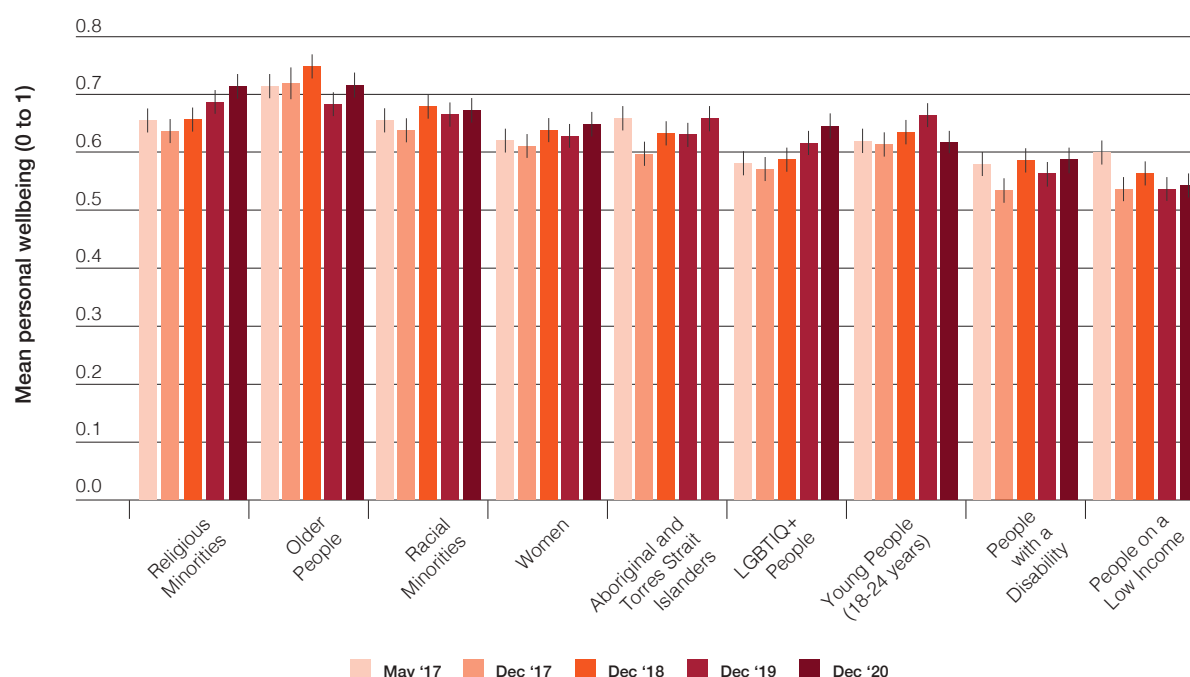
There were also some notable differences in personal wellbeing across different minority groups. In December 2020, as in previous years, levels of personal wellbeing were highest amongst religious minorities and older people, and lowest among people with disabilities and people on low incomes (see Figure 9). Over time, wellbeing has been generally consistent for most groups. Although there have occasionally been year-to-year variations, these have generally been quite small in magnitude.

Figure 8: Reported levels of satisfaction with aspects of life (out of 10)



¹Although comparable, the average personal wellbeing scores we measured were lower than those typically measured by other Australian surveys^{18,19}. We speculate that this difference may be because respondents answered questions about other aspects of social inclusion (e.g. prejudice and discrimination) prior to responding to the personal wellbeing items. We have kept this question ordering consistent across waves to ensure that patterns are comparable over time.

Figure 9: Levels of personal wellbeing across minority groups



Identification with local communities, Australia, and all humanity.

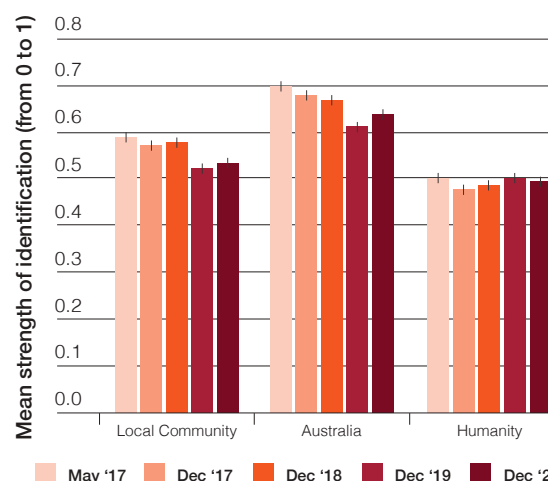
Building a strong sense of social identification with Australia and other groups is an important part of promoting a socially inclusive society. People who identify with a group care about and feel a sense of connection with other members of that group. They are also more likely to act in ways that benefit and promote those groups. We used items from a scientifically-tested measure to investigate how strongly people identified with their local community, with Australia as a whole, and with all of humanity²⁰.

Our results indicate that people in Australia tend to identify most strongly with Australia, followed by their local communities, and all humanity (see Figure 10). It is encouraging that average levels of identification with Australia are high, given that this indicates most people feel a sense of connection and belonging to Australia. However, the relatively lower levels of identification with all humanity may represent an opportunity for improvement. Previous research has shown that individuals who strongly identify with all humanity care more than others about issues that affect people who are different to themselves^{20,21}. Given Australia's diverse population, such care may be beneficial for making Australia more socially inclusive.

Identification with all humanity did not significantly change across the five waves of data collection.

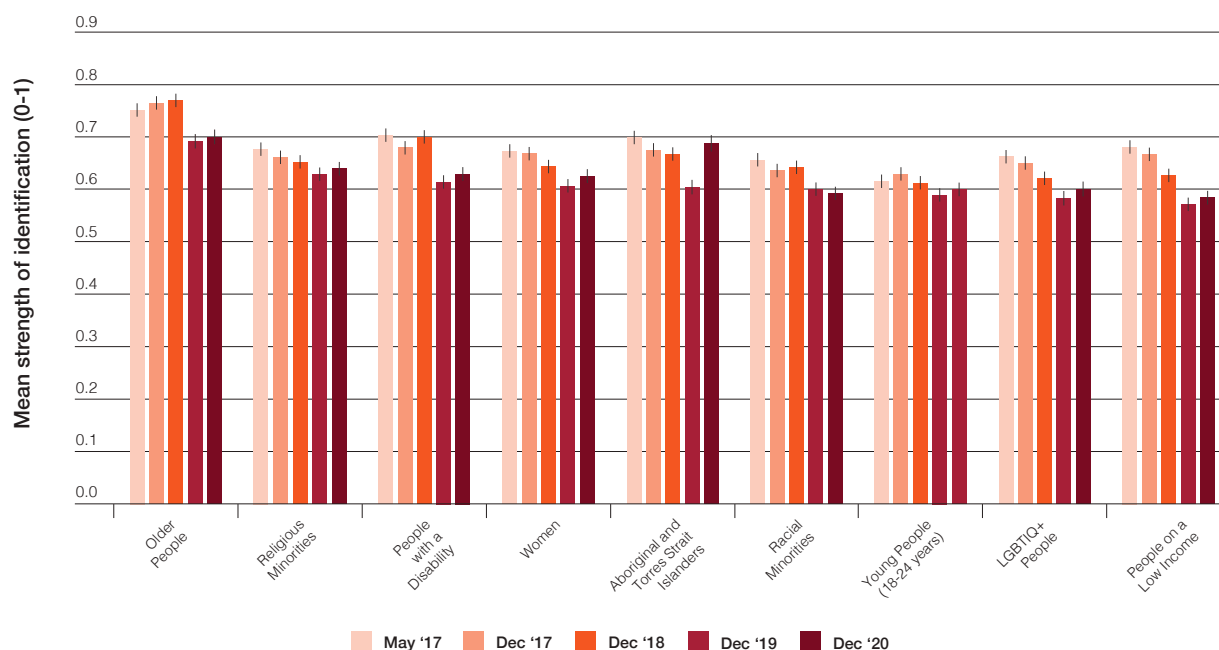
However, identification with Australia had been trending downwards each wave until 2020. Previous research has observed that communities often become stronger and closer when responding to emergencies. For example, during Hurricane Katrina, people in New Orleans reached out more to others in their local communities.²² The finding that the downward trend in identification with Australia was effectively paused during 2020 may be due to the shared experience of being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 10: Average strength of identification with local community, Australia, and all humanity



While generally consistent, there were some differences in identification with Australia across minority groups. In December 2020, identification with Australia was strongest amongst older people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and lowest among people on low incomes (see Figure 11). As shown in Figure 11, identification with Australia amongst most minority groups had been trending slightly downwards overtime, but in 2020 these declines seem to have stabilised (i.e. the strength of identification in 2020 was similar or slightly higher than in 2019).

Figure 11. Average strength of identification as Australian across minority groups





Impacts of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic arrived in Australia in January 2020. Given the impact that the pandemic had on individuals' daily lives, we included three new questions in the December 2020 wave to ask individuals about how they believed the pandemic had affected them and their country.

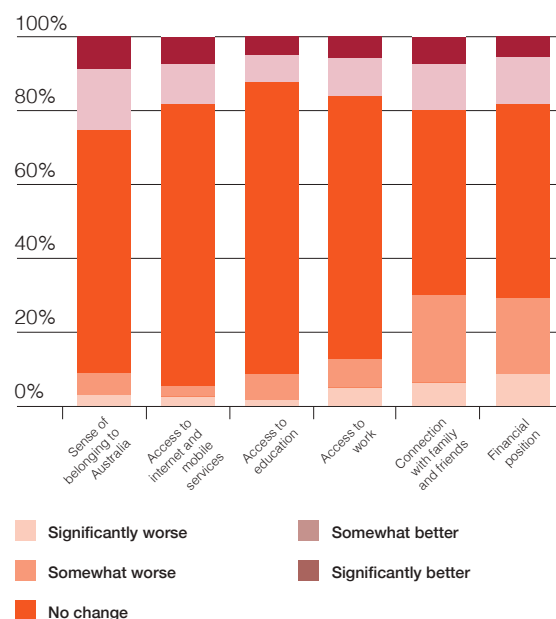
The first question asked participants whether various policies implemented to suppress transmission of the virus had negative, positive, or no impact on their lives. As shown in Figure 12, travel bans and gathering limits had the largest negative impacts on wellbeing, with 41.5% and 36.2% of respondents saying these policies negatively impacted their wellbeing, respectively. In contrast, working from home had a net positive impact on wellbeing, with 25.3% of respondents stating the working from home positively impacted their wellbeing (only 8.5% said it harmed their wellbeing).

Figure 12: Beliefs about how COVID-19 suppression policies affected personal wellbeing



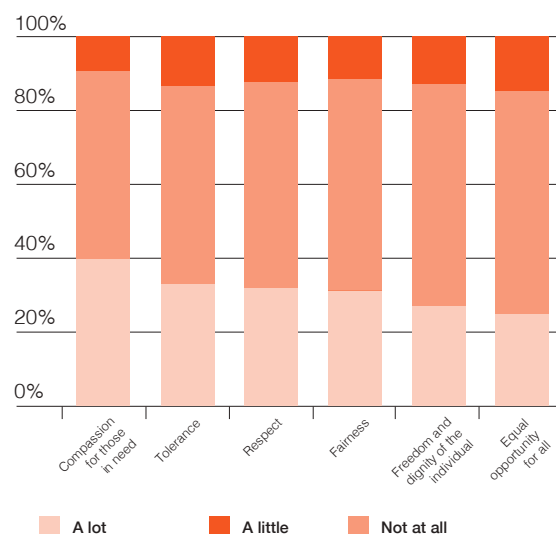
We also asked if COVID-19 had made various outcomes better or worse for respondents. As shown in Figure 13, COVID-19 was considered to have had net-positive impacts on respondents' sense of belonging to Australia (24.5% better vs 8.4% worse), and their access to internet and mobile services (18.5% better vs 5.6% worse). In contrast, COVID-19 was considered to have had a net negative impact on respondents' financial positions (19.3% better vs 29.3% worse), and connection to family and friends (20.3% better vs 29.8% worse).

Figure 13: Beliefs about whether COVID-19 made various outcomes better or worse



Finally, we asked participants to indicate the extent to which they believed Australians had demonstrated several values during the pandemic (see Figure 14). None of the values we asked about were considered to have been demonstrated 'a lot' by a majority of participants. 'Compassion for those in need' was considered by 40.9% of respondents to have been demonstrated 'a lot'. Just 26.7% and 27.6% of participants considered 'equal opportunity for all' and 'freedom and dignity of the individual' to have been demonstrated 'a lot' by Australians during the pandemic.

Figure 14: Beliefs about the extent to which Australians demonstrated various values during the pandemic





CONTACT

CONTACT BETWEEN PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT GROUPS IS IMPORTANT FOR BUILDING SOCIAL INCLUSION.

Research shows that contact between people from diverse groups reduces prejudice and increases empathy for other groups.^{23–25} Understanding where there is limited contact between groups could help identify potential areas to improve social inclusion. We asked people about the amount and quality of contact they have with members of several minority groups.

CONTACT WITH MINORITY GROUPS

Results reveal that many Australians do not have much contact with people who belong to certain minority groups, and contact declined in 2020. In December 2020, one in four people said they ‘never’ had contact with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. Similarly, one in four ‘never’ had contact with religious minorities, and one in five ‘never’ had contact with LGBTIQ+ people. The average amount of contact people had with religious minorities, racial minorities, LGBTIQ+ people, people with a disability, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders was significantly lower in 2020 compared to 2019.

Our data again showed that when people did have contact with minority group members, they most often found the experience to be a pleasant one. As shown in Figure 16, the percentage of people reporting contact as being ‘very often’ or ‘always’ pleasant varied from 42 to 62 percent depending on which group the person interacts with. Moreover, we found that the more contact people had

with minority groups, the more they tended to perceive the contact as being pleasant, and the less they tended to express prejudice against those groups.

Figure 16: Frequency that contact with selected minority groups is experienced as pleasant (2020 data)

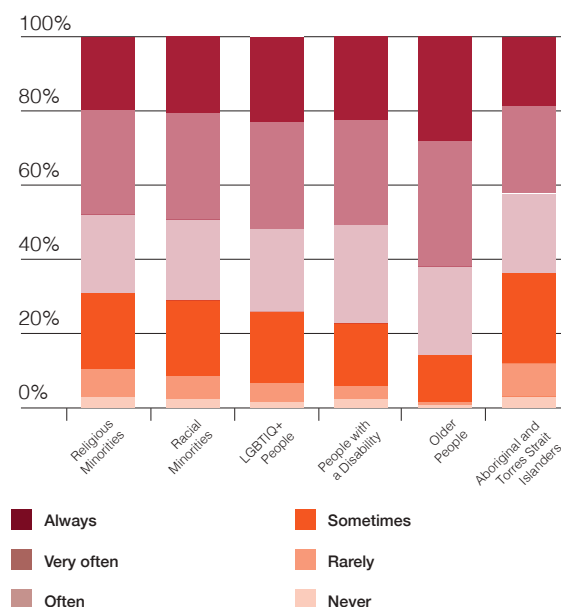
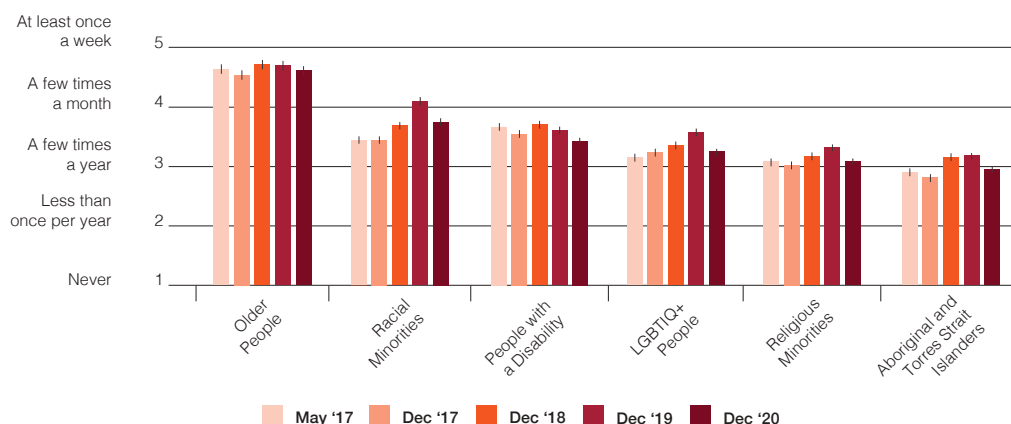


Figure 15: Average frequency of contact with people from minority groups

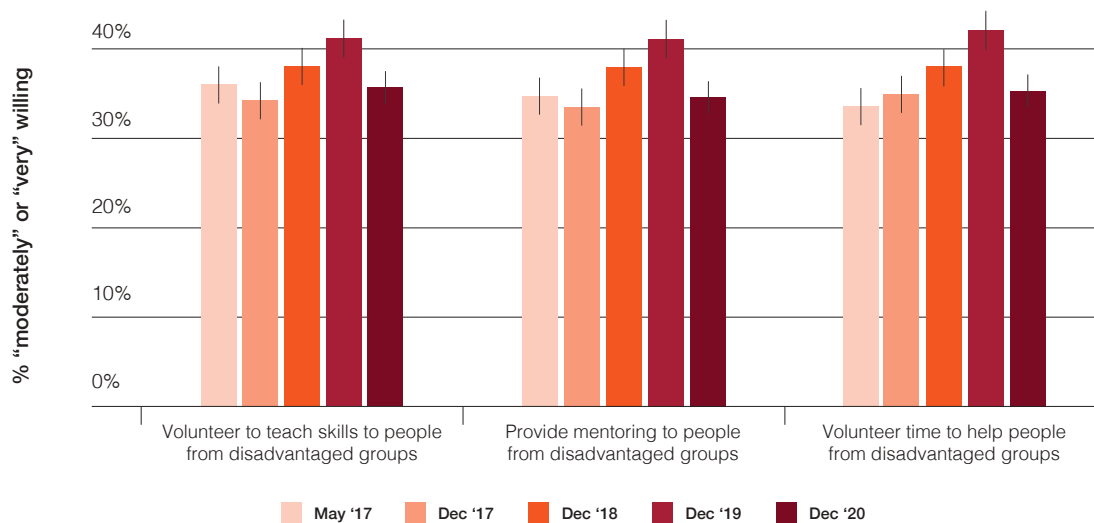


VOLUNTEERING TO HELP

OVERALL, OUR RESULTS INDICATE THAT A LITTLE OVER ONE THIRD OF AUSTRALIANS ARE WILLING TO VOLUNTEER TO ASSIST DISADVANTAGED GROUPS.

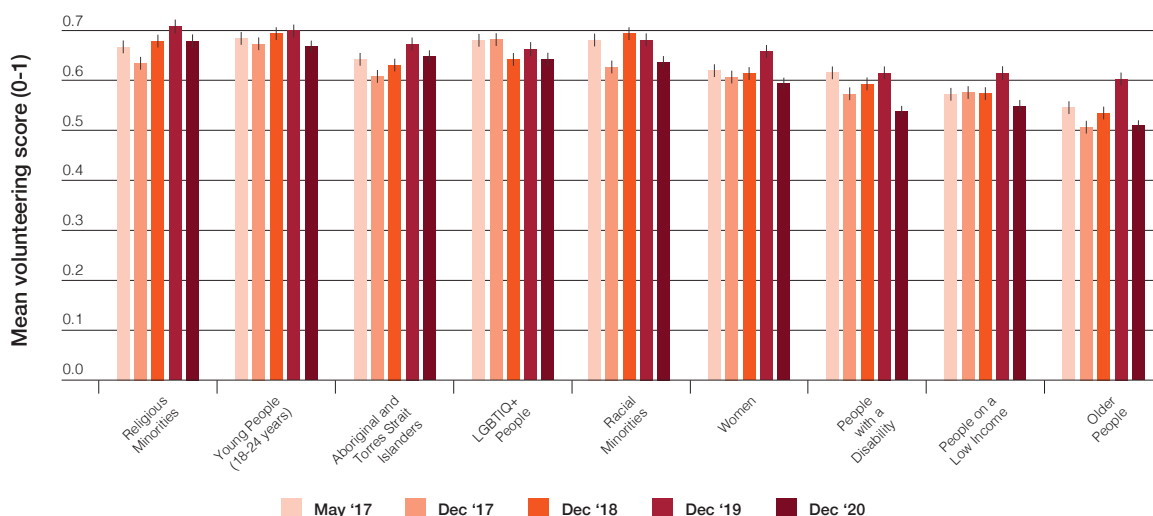
Figure 15 shows that Australians' willingness to volunteer significantly decreased in December 2020 compared to December 2019, from a mean of .61 to .55 on a scale ranging from 0 to 1. As of December 2020, the median number of hours that people say they are willing to volunteer to help disadvantaged groups was 10 hours per month (down from 12 hours in December 2019).

Figure 17: Australians' willingness to volunteer to help disadvantaged groups



As shown in Figure 18, the average index score for volunteering across different minority groups was highest among religious minorities and young people and lowest among people on low incomes and older people. It declined for all groups in 2020 relative to 2019.

Figure 18: Average willingness to volunteer across minority groups



ADVOCATING FOR INCLUSION

Providing vocal support for social inclusion helps to place it on the political agenda, demonstrates to society that prejudice is not acceptable, and can help amplify voices from minority groups. Our results show that Australians are willing to do some forms of advocacy more than others

The majority of respondents said they would be willing to say something if they saw discrimination occurring (52.5% 'moderately' or 'very' willing) and to listen to and validate people who claim to be victims of discrimination (52.8% 'moderately' or 'very' willing). In contrast, Australians were less willing to participate in political activities to ensure that all people in Australia are treated equally regardless of the groups to which they belong. For example, relatively fewer people were 'moderately' or 'very' willing to participate in activities such as helping to organise a demonstration (19.4%), share information on social media (33.9%) or

donate money (34.7%). When asked about how frequently they performed any of the advocacy behaviours shown in Figure 19, the median response was 'A few times a year', but 20.1% of respondents said they did them at least once per week.

Willingness to say something when they saw discrimination occurring, and to listen to people who claim to be victims of discrimination was significantly lower in December 2020 than in December 2019. In contrast, willingness to engage in other forms of advocacy remained stable (see Figure 19).

Figure 19: Willingness to take actions to 'ensure that all people in Australia – regardless of race, gender, age, sexuality, disability, class, or religion – are treated equally'

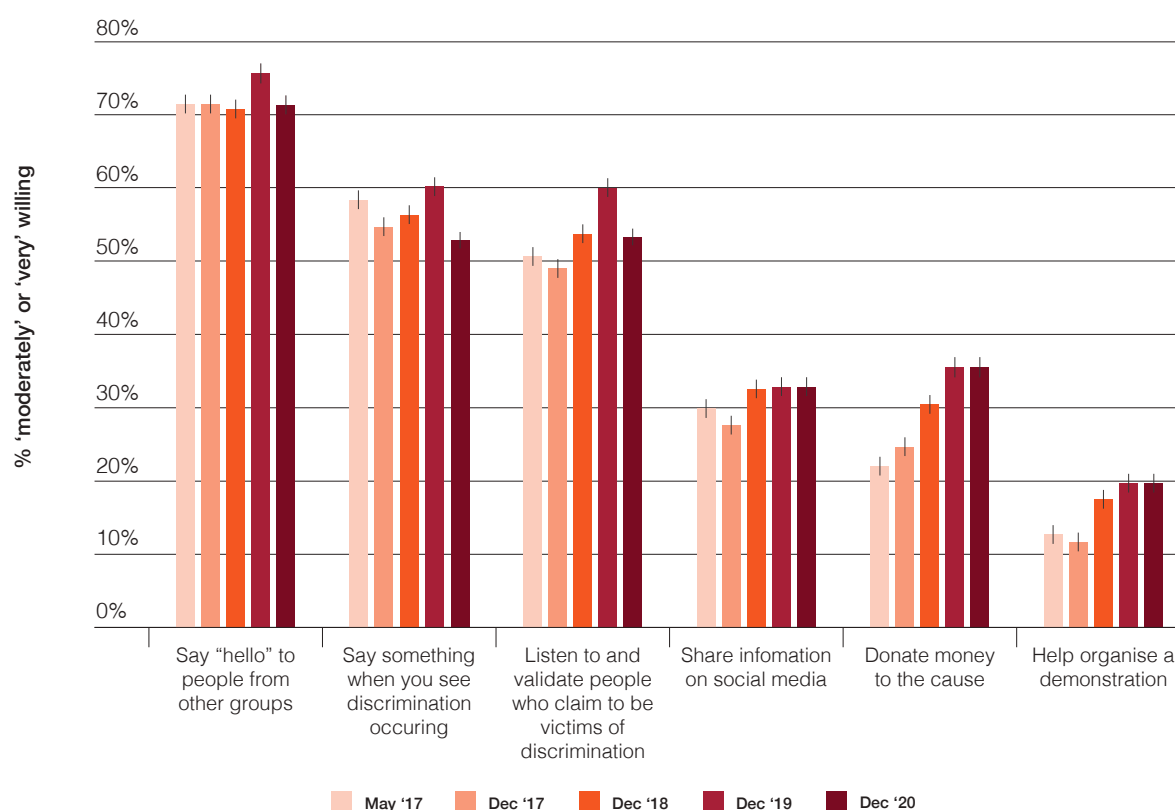
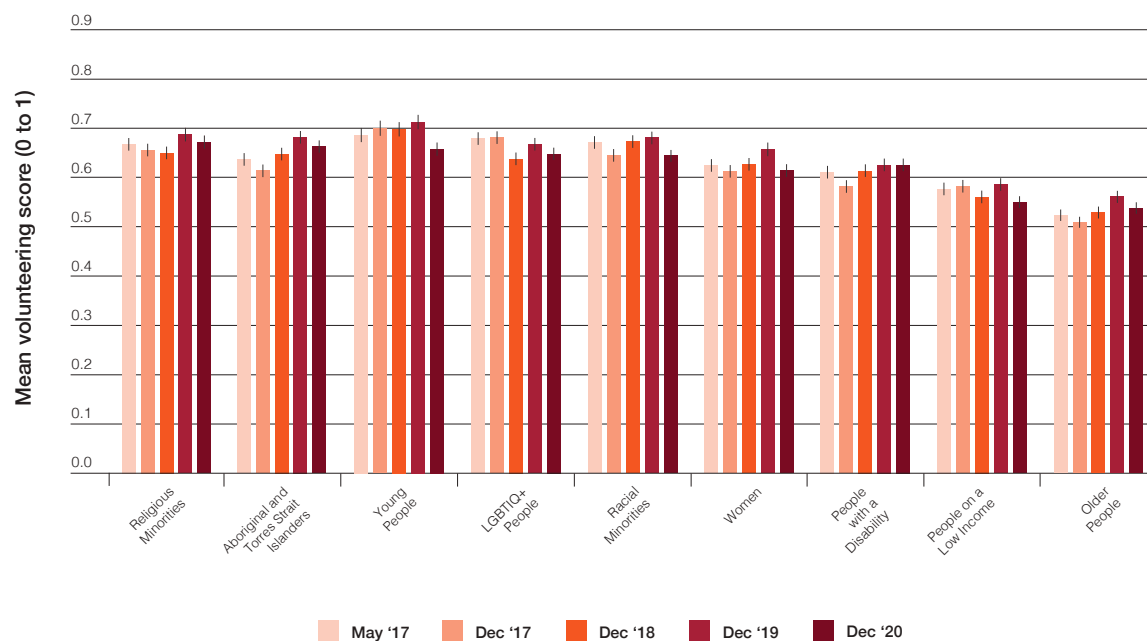


Figure 20 shows that the average index score for advocacy across minority groups was highest among religious minorities and lowest among elderly people and people on low incomes. Willingness to advocate for inclusion was generally stable across minority groups, with only slight declines for some groups.

Figure 20: Average willingness to take actions to ensure that all people in Australia are treated equally



CONCLUSION

At the end of a year where the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted many Australians' lives, social inclusion has proven remarkably resilient. Although the overall Inclusive Australia Social Inclusion Index score observed in December 2020 was at an equal low point (61 out of 100, equal to December 2017), it did not set a new low, and declined by only 2 points from the previous year. Despite this resilience, our findings again show that Australia still has a lot of room for improvement when it comes to maximising social inclusion.

There are still substantial challenges that Australia must overcome to ensure that all Australians feel included. These challenges include reducing discrimination (particularly against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who have been reporting elevated levels for the last two to three years, and young people who reported heightened discrimination in 2020), rebuilding willingness to advocate and volunteer after COVID-19, creating more opportunities and desire for intergroup contact, and building minority groups' sense of wellbeing.

Our data shows that there are five distinct types of people in the community when it comes social inclusion. Each of these groups have distinct characteristics and needs. Our research not only provides data to support this audience segmentation, it also quantifies the sizes of these groups and tracks the change in group size over time. In 2020, we saw an increase in the size of the 'Contented' group. The increase in size of this group could be the result of downward trends in intergroup contact and willingness to volunteer and advocate, each of which were made more difficult by the COVID-19 suppression policies. In future years, it will be important to actively rebuild and strengthen levels of contact, given that much research (including our own) shows that contact is critical for reducing prejudice and improving social inclusion.

The results from five rounds of data collection show that although the overall level of social inclusion has remained largely consistent, there have been a range of changes in sub-indicators. These include changes that neatly coincide with major events, such as contact and volunteering declining during the COVID-19 pandemic, and greater levels of everyday discrimination being reported by LGBTIQ+ people around the time of the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey.

Inclusive Australia will use these findings to guide its efforts to make Australia a more inclusive nation and encourages other organisations to use our data to help target their efforts to improve social inclusion. Measuring progress is critical for evaluation, and the Inclusive Australia Social Inclusion Index provides a unique set of data that helps to achieve this goal.



METHODOLOGY

Sampling

BehaviourWorks Australia at Monash University, as part of Inclusive Australia, drafted a survey that was administered online to 1862 people in the Australian community in May 2017, 2000 people in December 2017, 1713 people in December 2018, 1912 people in December 2019, and 1990 people in December 2020. Quota-random sampling was used to collect a sample (nWave 1 = 1200, nWave 2 = 1432, nWave 3 = 1200, nWave 4 = 1255, nWave 5 = 1194) that reflected key demographic characteristics of the Australian population (age, gender, state).

Table 1 shows how the Inclusive Australia Social Inclusion Index samples compare to Australian census statistics. Additionally, at each wave, boosted samples of selected minority groups (including racial minorities, religious minorities, LGBTIQ+, people with disability, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups) were collected with the goal to collect at least 267 people from each of these groups. We selected this number because statistical power calculations indicated that this sample size would provide a margin of error of approximately +/- 5% for each minority group for expected proportions on many binary outcome variables.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of nationally representative samples

	2016 Census	Wave 1 May 2017	Wave 2 Dec 2017	Wave 3 Dec 2018	Wave 4 Dec 2019	Wave 5 Dec 2020
Sex						
Male	49.3%	49.2%	49.5%	49.5%	48.8%	44.0%
Female	50.7%	50.8%	50.3%	49.8%	51.2%	55.9%
Indeterminate/intersex	n/a	0.0%		0.7%	0.0%	0.1%
Age						
18 - 29	20.9%	20.7%	19.9%	22.0%	22.5%	10.3%
30 - 39	17.9%	19.8%	19.4%	20.2%	18.6%	19.8%
40 - 49	17.4%	20.5%	18.4%	19.8%	19.3%	22.9%
50 -59	16.4%	16.7%	20.4%	15.8%	16.6%	20.7%
60+	27.4%	22.3%	21.9%	22.3%	23.1%	26.3%
Mean age (of all people over 18)	47.3	46.0	45.1	45.1	45.6	51.1
State						
New South Wales	32.0%	33.3%	33.8%	33.9%	33.6%	32.4%
Victoria	25.3%	25.6%	27.2%	25.5%	25.3%	26.7%
Queensland	20.1%	18.1%	16.7%	17.2%	17.0%	17.8%
South Australia	7.2%	9.1%	8.3%	8.7%	8.8%	10.1%
Western Australia	10.6%	9.4%	9.8%	9.7%	10.6%	9.1%
Tasmania	2.2%	2.3%	2.6%	2.6%	2.9%	2.8%
Northern Territory	1.0%	0.8%	0.5%	0.8%	0.2%	0.3%
Australian Capital Territory	1.7%	1.4%	1.0%	1.7%	1.7%	0.8%
Other Territories	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Note: ^ In Wave 5, an error by the market research panel resulted in the demographic profiles not being as closely aligned to census statistics as in previous waves. To ensure error this did not impact the index findings, we checked results using rim weighting²⁶, and found no substantial impact on the overall index scores and subscores. The Overall index score using weighting was identical to one decimal place (61.1), and sub-scores were all within approximately one point of the unweighted findings. As such, we report unweighted results for consistency with other waves.

Notes on Interpretation

For all analyses in this report, the nationally representative samples were used for producing estimates of the Australian population overall, while the full samples including boosts were used when examining differences between minority groups.

Throughout the report, whenever ‘significant’ differences are mentioned, these differences were statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level (two-sided). Error bars shown on charts in this report represent 95% confidence intervals.

Index Construction

We followed OECD guidelines for index construction when developing the Inclusive Australia Social Inclusion Index²⁷

The Inclusive Australia Social Inclusion Index and sub-indices were computed using the measures described in Table 2.

Table 2: Measures used in the Inclusive Australia Social Inclusion Index

Index	Measures used in calculating score
Inclusive Australia Social Inclusion Index	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The average score of each of the five sub-indices below, each of which are standardised on a 0 to 100 scale.
Sub-indices:	
Absence of prejudice and discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Blatant and subtle prejudice towards several distinct minority groups (e.g. agreement with statements like ‘Women are too easily offended’)¹¹Frequency of experiencing ‘everyday discrimination’ (e.g. ‘People act as if they think you are not smart.’)¹⁵Frequency of experiencing ‘major discrimination’ (e.g. ‘unfairly stopped, searched, questioned, physically threatened or abused by the police’)^{13,14}
Belonging and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Average satisfaction with several domains of life (e.g. health, standard of living)¹⁸Strength of identification with Australia (e.g. ‘How close do you feel to each of the following groups? – Australians’)²⁰
Contact and friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Quantity of contact with a range of minority groups²⁸Quality of contact (i.e. contact was experienced as pleasant)²⁸
Volunteering to help	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Willingness to volunteer to help minority groups
Advocating for inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Willingness to intervene to directly help victims of discrimination (e.g. ‘Say something when you see discrimination occurring’)Willingness to take political actions to ensure equality (e.g. ‘Help organise a demonstration’)²⁹

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