
THE LOWY INSTITUTE POLL 2005

DATA BOOK



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Introduction and Methodology

This document contains the survey data which informs the Lowy Institute Poll report for 2005, entitled *Australians Speak 2005 – Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*. Demographic variables are excluded. Both the report and this document are available for download from the Lowy Institute's website, www.lowyinstitute.org.

The survey data below was collected in telephone interviews between the 5th and the 10th of February 2005 by UMR Research. 1000 people were surveyed, chosen to be representative of Australians aged 18 years and above. Figures displayed in the report are rounded to the nearest single digit, but responses are ranked to many decimal places and, where applicable, according to net rather than positive results. Net figures are positive less negative results.

The margin of error on the main sample (n=1000) is 3.1%, which means there is a 95% chance that the responses of Australians would fall somewhere between 3.1% less and 3.1% more than the responses of the sample. As the sample diminishes in size, results become increasingly indicative and less scientifically valid. Margins of error are given for each sample of less than 1000.

Everyday Life Impact of Foreign Policy

How much impact do you think the foreign policy decisions taken by government have on your everyday life?

	A great deal %	Some %	Not much %	None %	Unsure %
All Respondents	24	40	26	8	2

Economic Performance over the Next Five Years

Overall, how optimistic are you about Australia's economic performance in the world over the next 5 years?

	Very optimistic %	Optimistic %	Neutral %	Pessimistic %	Very pessimistic %	Unsure %
All Respondents	14	53	21	8	2	2

Australia's International Security over the Next Five Years

Overall, how optimistic are you about Australia's international security over the next five years?

	Very optimistic %	Optimistic %	Neutral %	Pessimistic %	Very pessimistic %	Unsure %
All Respondents	8	42	29	16	3	2

The National Character

I will read out a list of characteristics that describe Australia and our place in the world. Please say whether you agree or disagree with each one.

	Agree %	Disagree %	Unsure %	NET AGREE %
A good international citizen	82	16	2	66
Important in Asia	82	16	2	65
Well placed to succeed in a competitive world	79	18	3	61
Vulnerable to external threats	76	22	2	54
A follower not a leader	65	32	3	34
An influential middle-sized power	63	34	3	30
Self-interested	62	35	3	27
Assertive in foreign affairs	61	34	5	27
Frightened of offending our neighbours	56	42	2	14
Independent minded	49	48	3	@
Unimportant in global politics	37	61	2	-23

Our Friends and Neighbours

When you think about the following countries, groups or regions of the world, do you have positive or negative feelings about them?

	Positive %	Negative %	Unsure %	NET POSITIVE %
New Zealand	94	4	2	90
United Kingdom	86	11	3	75
Europe	85	11	4	75
Singapore	83	12	5	71
Japan	84	13	3	70
China	69	25	6	44
France	66	28	6	38
United Nations	65	30	5	36
Malaysia	62	32	6	30
Papua New Guinea	60	33	7	27
United States	58	39	3	19
Indonesia	52	42	6	11
Middle East	25	69	6	-43
Iran	24	68	8	-44
Iraq	23	72	5	-49

Notice Australia Takes of the Views of the United States

Thinking of how much notice Australia takes of the views of the United States in our foreign policy, on the whole do you think we take too much, too little or the right amount of notice?

	Too much %	Too little %	The right amount %	Unsure %
All Respondents	68	2	29	1

Notice Australia Takes of the Views of the United Nations

Thinking of how much notice Australia takes of the views of the United Nations in our foreign policy, on the whole do you think we take too much, too little or the right amount of notice?

	Too much %	Too little %	The right amount %	Unsure %
All Respondents	14	33	48	5

Feelings about the United States and Notice Australia Takes of the Views of the United States

Thinking of how much notice Australia takes of the views of the United States in our foreign policy, on the whole do you think we take too much, too little or the right amount of notice?

	Too much %	Too little %	The right amount %	Unsure %
Respondents with positive feelings about the United States	50	3	46	1

Base: n=577, margin of error = 4.08%%

Thinking of how much notice Australia takes of the views of the United States in our foreign policy, on the whole do you think we take too much, too little or the right amount of notice?

	Too much %	Too little %	The right amount %	Unsure %
Respondents with negative feelings about the United States	94	2	4	-

Base: n=390, margin of error = 4.96%

Goals for Australian Foreign Policy

Thinking about what Australian foreign policy should be trying to achieve, I am going to read a list of goals, and ask you to tell me how important each one is for Australia.

	Very important %	Fairly important %	Somewhat important %	Not at all important %	Unsure %
Improving the global environment	75	16	7	2	-
Strengthening the Australian economy	75	19	5	1	-
Protecting the jobs of Australian workers	75	16	7	2	-
Combating terrorism	72	15	9	4	-
Helping to prevent nuclear proliferation	69	17	8	5	1
Promoting human rights abroad	60	25	10	4	1
Improving standards of living in poor countries	57	25	13	5	-
Controlling illegal immigration	55	23	15	6	1
Strengthening the United Nations	51	25	14	9	1
Protecting weak nations against foreign aggression	50	28	16	5	1
Promoting democracy in other countries	34	31	23	11	1

International Law

Thinking about how Australia deals with international problems, which of the following approaches do you favour more?

	Australia should rely on international law even though decisions may go against %	Australia should do whatever benefits us the most in any given situation, regardless of what international law says %	Unsure %
All Respondents	64	33	3

Feeling of Safety

Thinking about world events, how safe do you feel?

	Very safe %	Safe %	Unsafe %	Very unsafe %	Unsure %
All Respondents	30	61	7	1	1

Threats from the Outside World

How worried are you about the following potential threats from the outside world?

	Very worried %	Fairly worried %	Somewhat worried %	Not at all worried %	Unsure %
Unfriendly countries developing nuclear weapons	51	20	20	8	1
Global warming	46	24	20	9	1
International terrorism	41	22	25	12	-
International disease epidemics	36	25	25	13	1
Islamic fundamentalism	36	21	21	18	4
US foreign policies	32	25	22	18	3
World population growth	23	23	29	24	1
Illegal immigration and refugees	23	21	31	25	-
Failing countries in our region	17	29	32	17	5
China's growing power	16	19	26	38	1

Importance of ANZUS for Australia's Security

How important is our alliance relationship with the United States for Australia's security?

	Very important %	Fairly important %	Somewhat important %	Not at all important %	Unsure %
All Respondents	45	27	20	7	1

Feelings about the United States and Importance of ANZUS for Australia's Security

How important is our alliance relationship with the United States for Australia's security?

	Very important %	Fairly important %	Somewhat important %	Not at all important %	Unsure %
Respondents with positive feelings about the United States	61	25	12	1	1

Base: n=577, margin of error = 4.08%

How important is our alliance relationship with the United States for Australia's security?

	Very important %	Fairly important %	Somewhat important %	Not at all important %	Unsure %
Respondents with negative feelings about the United States	24	29	30	16	1

Base: n=390, margin of error = 4.96%

Government Aid

Thinking about the Australian Government giving aid to poor countries, which of the following statements is closest to your view?

	We should share our national wealth with people who have less than we do %	Helping to raise their living standards will make the world safer %	Aid increases Australia's influence among our neighbours %	Aid should only be given in response to emergencies like the tsunami disaster %	Unsure %
All Respondents	31	34	14	19	2

Attitudes to Papua New Guinea and to Government Aid

Thinking about the Australian Government giving aid to poor countries, which of the following statements is closest to your view?

	We should share our national wealth with people who have less than we do %	Helping to raise their living standards will make the world safer %	Aid increases Australia's influence among our neighbours %	Aid should only be given in response to emergencies like the tsunami disaster %	Unsure %
Respondents with positive feelings about Papua New Guinea	35	32	13	19	1

Base: n=599, margin of error = 4%

Thinking about the Australian Government giving aid to poor countries, which of the following statements is closest to your view?

	We should share our national wealth with people who have less than we do %	Helping to raise their living standards will make the world safer %	Aid increases Australia's influence among our neighbours %	Aid should only be given in response to emergencies like the tsunami disaster %	Unsure %
Respondents with negative feelings about Papua New Guinea	25	38	15	20	2

Base: n=332, margin of error = 5.38%

Use of Armed Force

Thinking now about how we use our military forces, should we have the right to use armed force outside Australia in the following ways?

	Yes %	No %	Unsure %
In support of United Nations or regionally endorsed peace-keeping missions	91	7	2
To prevent genocide and gross abuse of human rights on the scale of Rwanda, Kosovo or Sudan	84	14	2
If invited by a failing country in our neighbourhood to help prevent internal collapse	82	15	3
To protect Australian citizens abroad	80	17	3
To disrupt terrorist organisations that could threaten Australia	79	19	2
To prevent an unfriendly country acquiring nuclear weapons	62	34	4
To restore democracy in a country where it has been illegally overthrown	61	34	5
To establish democracy in undemocratic countries	33	62	5

Preemption

If we believed that terrorists based in another country were going to launch an attack against Australia, and if the other country could not or would not take action to stop them, should we have the right to strike directly at the terrorists?

	Yes %	No %	Unsure %
All Respondents	66	29	5

The United States, China and Taiwan

Do you agree or disagree: Australia should act in accordance with our security alliance with the United States even if it means following them to war with China over the independence of Taiwan.

	Agree %	Disagree %	Unsure %	NET AGREE %
All Respondents	21	72	7	-51

The United States, China and Taiwan and Importance of ANZUS for Australia's Security

Do you agree or disagree: Australia should act in accordance with our security alliance with the United States even if it means following them to war with China over the independence of Taiwan.

	Agree %	Disagree %	Unsure %	NET AGREE %
Respondents who think the US alliance is very important	35	57	8	-22

Base: n=454, margin of error = 4.6%

International Trade

Please say whether you are in favour or not in favour each of the following approaches to international trade.

	Favour %	Do not favour %	Unsure %	NET FAVOUR %
We should try to negotiate international agreements that open other countries' markets to our exports, in return for their goods coming in to Australia	88	9	3	78
We should restrict the goods and services we import from overseas so that they don't sell more cheaply than Australian goods and services	62	35	3	26
We should allow entry in to Australia of the goods and services we import regardless of what other countries do because we benefit from having them available at the cheapest prices	37	60	3	-23

International Trade and the USFTA

*(Those respondents who think the free trade agreement with the United States is **bad** for Australia) Please say whether you are in favour or not in favour each of the following approaches to international trade.*

	Favour %	Do not favour %	Unsure %	NET FAVOUR %
We should try to negotiate international agreements that open other countries' markets to our exports, in return for their goods coming in to Australia	83	15	2	68
We should restrict the goods and services we import from overseas so that they don't sell more cheaply than Australian goods and services	65	33	2	32
We should allow entry in to Australia of the goods and services we import regardless of what other countries do because we benefit from having them available at the cheapest prices	25	73	2	-48

Base: n=315, margin of error = 5.52%

Globalisation

How has globalisation affected your life? For each of the following, do you think globalisation has had a good effect overall, or a bad effect overall?

	Good %	Bad %	No effect %	Unsure %	NET GOOD %
Your standard of living	66	16	16	2	50
Australia's economy	69	18	9	4	50
Australia's culture	57	33	8	2	25
Australia's political independence	46	39	12	3	7
Job security for Australia's workers	39	49	9	3	-9
The environment	30	57	10	3	-26

United States Free Trade Agreement

On balance, do you think the free trade agreement we have signed with the United States is good or bad for Australia or would it make no difference?

	Good	Bad	No Difference	Unsure	NET GOOD FOR AUSTRALIA
	%	%	%	%	%
All Respondents	34	32	24	10	2

Potential China Free Trade Agreement

We are in the early stages of negotiating a free trade agreement with China. On balance, do you think signing a free trade agreement with China would be good or bad for Australia or would it make no difference?

	Good	Bad	No Difference	Unsure	NET GOOD FOR AUSTRALIA
	%	%	%	%	%
All Respondents	51	20	17	12	30

Promoting Democracy in the Middle East

Should Australia play an active role in efforts to promote democracy in the Middle East?

	Yes %	No %	Unsure %
All Respondents	52	43	5

Australia's Military Involvement in the Iraq War

At the start of the Iraq War did you support or oppose Australia's military involvement?

	Support %	Oppose %	Unsure %
All Respondents	43	54	3

Supporting Australia's Actions in the Iraq War

You said you supported Australia's actions. What was the main reason?

	To remove Saddam Hussein %	To democratise Iraq %	Because of the threat of weapons of mass destruction %	Because of our alliance with the United States %	To fight terrorism %	Unsure %
Respondents who supported Australia's military involvement at the start of the Iraq War	31	12	17	9	29	2

Base: n=428, margin of error = 4.74%

Australia's Continued Military Involvement in Iraq

Should Australia continue to be involved militarily in Iraq?

	Yes %	No %	Unsure %
All Respondents	46	51	3

The Iraq War and Australia's Continued Military Involvement in Iraq

Should Australia continue to be involved militarily in Iraq?

	Yes %	No %	Unsure %
Respondents who supported Australia's military involvement at the start of the Iraq War	78	21	1

Base: n=428, margin of error = 4.74%

Should Australia continue to be involved militarily in Iraq?

	Yes %	No %	Unsure %
Respondents who opposed Australia's military involvement at the start of the Iraq War	21	76	3

Base: n=542, margin of error = 4.21%

Reasons for Australia’s Continued Military Involvement in Iraq

You said Australia should continue to be involved militarily in Iraq. What is the main reason?

	Because we should not 'cut and run' %	Because it is in our interests to see a stable democracy in Iraq %	Because we owe it to the United States %	To fight terrorism %	Unsure %
Respondents who said Australia should continue to be involved militarily in Iraq.	37	40	4	17	2

Base: n=463, margin of error = 4.55%

Reasons against Australia’s Continued Military Involvement in Iraq

You said Australia **should not** continue to be involved militarily in Iraq. What is the main reason?

	Because we should never have been involved in Iraq in the first place %	Because we have done our bit already %	Because the dangers are getting greater %	Because the post-war strategy turned out to be wrong %	Unsure %
Respondents who said Australia should not continue to be involved militarily in Iraq.	58	16	9	16	1

Base: n=507, margin of error = 4.35%