



THE LOWY  
INSTITUTE  
POLL  
2017

ALEX OLIVER

LOWY INSTITUTE  
FOR INTERNATIONAL POLICY

UNDERSTANDING  
AUSTRALIAN  
ATTITUDES  
TO THE WORLD.

# PREFACE

This has been a remarkable year. It has upended many people's understanding of international relations; on more than one occasion I wondered whether we were living in Bizarro World. The British people voted against their interests (at least as I would define them) and elected to leave the European Union. The forces of nationalism and protectionism gained strength and influenced elections across the Western world. And the year culminated in the election of a new US president who is an unbeliever in the global liberal order of which Australia has been a stakeholder and beneficiary.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the 2017 Lowy Institute Poll finds that most Australians are disillusioned with the direction the world is taking, and many are concerned about the direction of our own nation. Terrorism and the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear program continue to cause concern to Australians.

But it is striking that despite these concerns, Australians are outward-looking and positive about global engagement. More so than their American cousins, most Australians continue to believe in the benefits of globalisation and free trade. They are positive about immigration and their optimism about the Australian economy has improved.

Before the November 2016 US election, Australians were extremely wary of the idea of a Donald Trump presidency and almost all of them would have preferred Hillary Clinton to win. However, they have swiftly come to terms with the reality of the Trump administration. Almost half of Australian adults said last year that Australia should distance itself from the United States if someone like Mr Trump were elected, but this year's Poll shows that Australians' affinity with America and Americans remains intact, and support for the US alliance is rock-solid.

Australians' pragmatism has been evident over the history of Lowy Institute polling and it is on display again in 2017. Whether we like Mr Trump or not, we take the world as we find it. That doesn't mean that we trust him, and it doesn't mean that our view of the United States is unaffected by him. However, the 2017 Poll shows that Australia's relationship with the United States is broader than the person of the president.

Australian attitudes towards China have also been characterised by pragmatism, and this year is no different. Even though perceptions of China as a military threat have increased, most Australians continue to see China as more of an economic partner than a military threat. When they think about Australia's relationships in Asia, they see China as Australia's best friend. When they think about the world, however, Australians are Anglospheric in orientation, and see our best friends as New Zealand, the

United States, and the United Kingdom. The Anglosphere is not an organising principle for Australian foreign policy, but it is certainly a theme of Australian public opinion.

Energy security has been high on the agenda in the past year. The responses to our Poll question on energy security may come as a surprise to policymakers. However, Australians' unequivocal support for renewables in this year's Poll aligns with all of our previous polling on attitudes to renewables and fossil fuels.

Further questions in the 2017 Lowy Institute Poll probe attitudes to the deployment of Australian military forces to other parts of the world, interventions in the Pacific, and the Australian aid budget. The enduring question of how to deal with asylum seekers, the status of Indonesia's democracy, and the value Australians place on their own democracy are also covered.

The Lowy Institute Poll, now in its thirteenth year, provides a comprehensive picture of Australians' attitudes to the great international issues of our time. In this respect, it serves a democratic function, one which is especially important after this most turbulent year in global affairs. I hope you find it a valuable resource.

## Dr Michael Fullilove

Executive Director  
June 2017

# CONTENTS

3	Executive summary
5	Australia and the world
5	Global and national outlook
6	Globalisation and free trade
7	Donald Trump and the US alliance
8	Australians' trust in global powers
8	Australia's best friend in the world
9	China
9	Military threat and economic partner
10	Freedom of navigation in the South China Sea
10	Safety, security and threats to Australia's vital interests
12	Energy security, renewables and climate change
12	Energy supply and renewables
13	Concern about global warming
13	Use of military forces
14	Pacific interventions
14	Democracy
14	Immigration
15	Asylum seeker policy
15	Aid budget
16	Attitudes to Indonesia
17	Feelings towards other countries
18	Tables of results
31	Notes
31	Figures
32	About the Lowy Institute Poll



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Global and national outlook

In 2017, Australians appear to be troubled about the direction the world is taking. Asked about ‘the way things are going in the world today’, 79% say they are dissatisfied. Fewer, though almost half (48%), are dissatisfied with ‘the way things are going in Australia today’. However, optimism about the national economy has risen, with 74% of Australians (up four points since 2016) optimistic about ‘Australia’s economic performance in the world over the next five years’.

## Globalisation and free trade

Most Australians (78%) believe globalisation is ‘mostly good’ for Australia, up 14 points since 2006. Two-thirds (67%) think free trade is good for both ‘[their] own standard of living’ and the ‘Australian economy’. Smaller majorities say free trade is good for ‘Australian companies’ (61%) and for ‘creating jobs in Australia’ (55%).

## Donald Trump and the US alliance

Despite earlier indications that Australians might recoil from the US alliance under President Donald Trump, support for the alliance has rebounded, with 77% (up six points since 2016) saying the alliance relationship is either ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ important for Australia’s security. Only 29% of Australians say ‘Australia should distance itself from the United States under President Donald Trump’. The number who say we should remain close to the United States under President Trump is 65% (up 14 points from last year’s 51% who said ‘Australia should remain close to the United States regardless of who is elected US President’). However, Mr Trump remains unpopular: 60% say he causes them to have an unfavourable opinion of the United States (although nine points fewer than said the same about George W. Bush in 2007). Only 50% (13 points down from 2007) say ‘US foreign policies’ cause them to have an unfavourable opinion of the United States. Few see ‘American culture’ (24%, down 17) or ‘Americans you have met’ (11%, down 9) in that negative light.

## Trust in global powers

While support for the alliance remains firm, only 20% of Australians (down 20 points since 2011) have a ‘great deal’ of trust in the United States ‘to act responsibly in the world’, and 61% overall (down 22 points) trust the United States to act responsibly. By comparison, 90% trust the United Kingdom, and 86% trust Germany and Japan. India

is trusted by 64%, China by 54%, and Indonesia 52%. Only 38% trust Russia and 12% trust North Korea.

## Australia’s best friend in the world

New Zealand is Australia’s best friend in the world by a wide margin (53%, up 21 points since 2014), with the United States and the United Kingdom tied for second place (17% each). Only 8% say China is Australia’s best friend, 2% say Japan, and 1% Indonesia.

## China

China and the United States are tied when Australians are asked which relationship is more important: 45% say the United States and 43% say China, in a statistically inseparable result. Perceptions of China as a military threat to Australia have heightened: 46% of Australians (up seven points since 2015) say it is likely that China will become a military threat to Australia in the next 20 years. However, most Australians (79%) see China as more of an economic partner than a military threat (13%). Only 34% are in favour of using Australian military forces ‘if China initiated a military conflict with one of its neighbours over disputed islands or territories’. By contrast, a majority (68%, down six points) are in favour of Australia conducting ‘maritime operations designed to ensure freedom of navigation in the region’.

## Safety

Feelings of safety remain at their lowest point in our 13-year history of polling. While most Australians (79%) say they feel ‘safe’ overall, only 20% (down four points since 2015) feel ‘very safe’, and 21% feel unsafe overall.

## Threats to Australia’s vital interests

International terrorism remains the leading threat to Australia’s vital interests in the next ten years, with 68% of Australians seeing it as a ‘critical threat’. North Korea’s nuclear program is seen by 65% as a critical threat. Perceptions of the threat posed by climate change have risen, with 57% of Australians rating it a critical threat, up 11 points since 2014. Cyberattacks are also of high concern, 55% seeing them as a critical threat. ‘The presidency of Donald Trump’ ranks equally with ‘foreign investment in Australia’ as critical threats (42% and 40%, respectively), ahead of asylum seekers coming to Australia by boat (38%). US foreign policies, China’s foreign policies, and Russia’s foreign policies are the lowest-ranked threats this year (37%, 36% and 32%, respectively).

## Energy security

Australians clearly prioritise government investment in renewables over traditional energy sources. Most of them (81%) want the government to ‘focus on renewables, even if this means we may need to invest more in infrastructure to make the system more reliable’. Only 17% say ‘the government should focus on traditional energy sources such as coal and gas, even if this means the environment may suffer to some extent’.

## Global warming

A majority of Australians (54%) say ‘global warming is a serious and pressing problem [and] we should begin taking steps now even if this involves significant costs’. This is consistent with last year’s result and has risen from a low of 36% in 2012. Few (9%) say ‘until we are sure that global warming is really a problem, we should not take any steps that would have economic costs’. Around a third (37%) say ‘the problem of global warming should be addressed, but its effects will be gradual, so we can deal with the problem gradually by taking steps that are low in cost’.

## Use of military forces

Australians are well disposed to the use of Australian military forces to prevent genocide or combat terrorism in the Middle East, but are more reluctant to become involved in conflicts in Asia. Most (61%) are in favour of ‘the use of Australian military forces to fight against violent Islamic extremist groups in Iraq and Syria’. Australians strongly support using their military forces to stop genocide (76% in favour). They are divided on sending military forces ‘if North Korea invaded South Korea’ (48% against, 45% in favour). A clear majority (58%) oppose the use of military forces ‘if China initiated a conflict with one of its neighbours over disputed islands or territories’. If ‘Russia invaded one of its neighbours’, a majority of Australians would oppose the use of Australian military forces (62% against).

## Pacific interventions

A significant majority (77%) of Australians favour the use of military forces ‘to restore law and order in a Pacific nation’. Almost all (81%) said Australia ‘should intervene to provide military and humanitarian support’ if ‘there is another major crisis in the Pacific, such as happened in the Solomon Islands in 2003’.

## Democracy

In a result largely unchanged since 2012, 60% of Australians and 52% of 18–29 year olds agree that ‘democracy is preferable to any other kind of government’. Over a third (36%) of Australians say either that ‘in some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be

preferable’ or ‘for someone like me, it doesn’t matter what kind of government we have’.

## Immigration

A majority (53%) of the population say the total number of migrants coming to Australia each year is either ‘about right’ or ‘too low’ (down eight points since 2014). Four in ten (40%) say the number is too high.

## Asylum seeker policy

On the question of where to settle asylum seekers who are currently housed in offshore processing centres on Manus Island or Nauru, Australians are divided: 48% say they ‘should never be settled in Australia’ and 45% say they should.

## Aid budget

Australians appear to be unfazed by reductions in the aid budget. This year, 73% say the current aid budget of approximately \$3.8 billion is either ‘about the right amount’ or ‘too much’. This response is almost identical to that in 2015 when the aid budget was \$5 billion (over 30% higher).

## Indonesia

Only 27% of Australians (down seven points since 2015) agree overall that ‘Indonesia is a democracy’.

## 2017 feelings thermometer

New Zealand tops the 2017 thermometer of Australians’ feelings towards other countries at 85°, followed closely by the United Kingdom (81°). France, Germany, and Japan are tied at 71°. After a five-point drop in 2016, the United States has steadied at 69°. The Solomon Islands (64°), Papua New Guinea (61°), South Korea (60°), and India (60°) are grouped closely together on the warmish side of the thermometer. The European Union, included for the first time this year, rated 62°, equal to the result for the United Nations last year. China and the Philippines are level at 59°. Feelings towards Indonesia are steady at 55° after rebounding eight points last year. Myanmar registers 54° and Israel 53°.

Russia ranks second-lowest, though steady, at 50°. North Korea holds the coldest position at 30° at the base of this year’s thermometer.

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*The 2017 Lowy Institute Poll reports the results of a nationally representative telephone survey of 1200 Australian adults, conducted on behalf of the Lowy Institute by the Social Research Centre between 1 and 21 March 2017. The maximum sampling variance (‘error margin’) is approximately +/- 2.8%.*

# AUSTRALIA AND THE WORLD

## Global and national outlook

After a momentous year in which the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union and Americans elected Donald Trump as their president, Australians are troubled about the direction the world is taking and uncertain of the direction of their own nation. When asked about ‘the way things are going in the world today’, nearly eight in ten (79%) say they are dissatisfied, indicating a deep disquiet about global affairs. Asked the same question about the situation in Australia, around half of Australian adults (48%) say they are dissatisfied with ‘the way things are going in Australia today’.

Australians are less dissatisfied, however, than their American counterparts. In the week before the 2016 US presidential election, 37% of Americans were satisfied and 62% dissatisfied with ‘the way things are going in the United States at this time’.<sup>1</sup>

For the last two years, the Lowy Institute Poll has included a question about the political preferences of the respondents to our annual Poll survey. Of the 1200 respondents to the 2017 Poll, 34% said they ‘feel closest to’ the Liberals, Nationals, or Coalition; 24% said the same about Labor, 10% about the Greens, 12% One Nation, and 4% other or independent. For the remainder, 17% were either ‘swinging’ voters, felt closest to none, or refused to respond.

On some issues, there are striking differences in attitudes between those of different political persuasions. In answer to the question about ‘the way things are going in Australia today’, Liberal/Nationals/Coalition supporters were the only political grouping in which a majority (63%) said they were ‘satisfied’ with the way things are going in Australia today. They were also the group most satisfied with ‘the way things are going in the world today’ (31% vs 13% of those supporting other political parties). One Nation voters were the least satisfied group overall, with 73% dissatisfied about the way things are going in Australia today and 92% dissatisfied about the way things are going in the world today.

Despite the level of disquiet about the direction of the nation and the world, optimism about the Australian economy has lifted for the second consecutive year after a low point in 2015. This year, 74% of the Australian people are optimistic about ‘Australia’s economic performance in the world over the next five years’. This overall optimism is up four points since 2016, although only 9% are very optimistic (unchanged over three consecutive Polls since 2015).

Fig 1: Direction of the nation and the world

- a. Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in Australia today?
- b. And turning to the situation in the world overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in the world today?

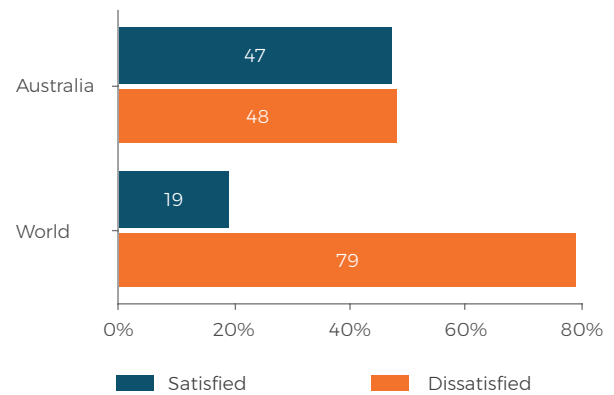
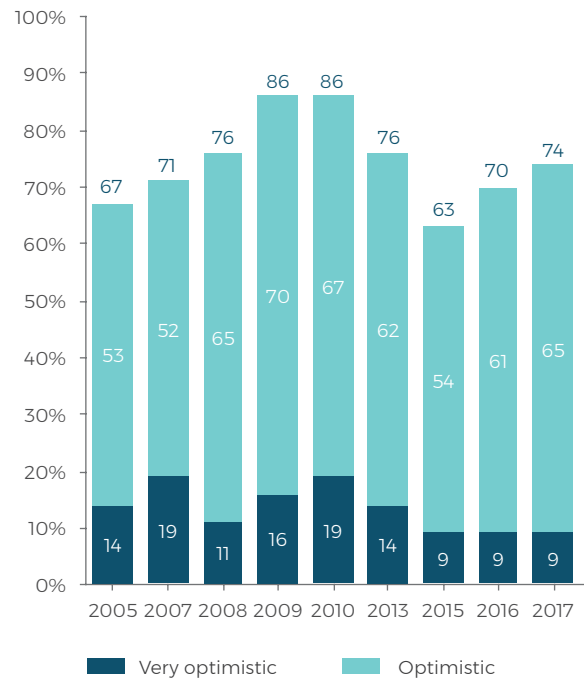


Fig 2: Economic optimism

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



## Globalisation and free trade

Despite growing debate in other countries about the impact of globalisation, Australians remain broadly positive about its benefits. Continuing a strong upward trend over more than a decade, 78% of Australians believe globalisation is ‘mostly good for Australia’, up six points since 2008 and 14 points since 2006. Even among the lowest income earners, nearly three-quarters (73%) see globalisation as ‘mostly good for Australia’.

Free trade has similarly strong support among Australians. Over two-thirds (67%) of Australian adults think free trade is good for ‘[their] own standard of living’ and for the ‘Australian economy’. A solid majority (61%) say free

trade is good for Australian companies. A slightly smaller majority of 55% say free trade is good for ‘creating jobs in Australia’. Only 35% see free trade as bad for jobs in Australia.

Australians are more positive than Americans about the benefits of globalisation and free trade: in response to the same questions asked by US think tank The Chicago Council on Global Affairs in mid-2016, 65% of Americans (13 points lower than Australians) said globalisation was ‘good’ for the United States. Smaller majorities than in Australia were positive about ‘international trade’ for the US economy and American companies, and a majority (59%) saw international trade as ‘bad’ for creating jobs in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Fig 3: Globalisation

Do you believe that globalisation, especially the increasing connections of our economy with others around the world, is mostly good or mostly bad for Australia?

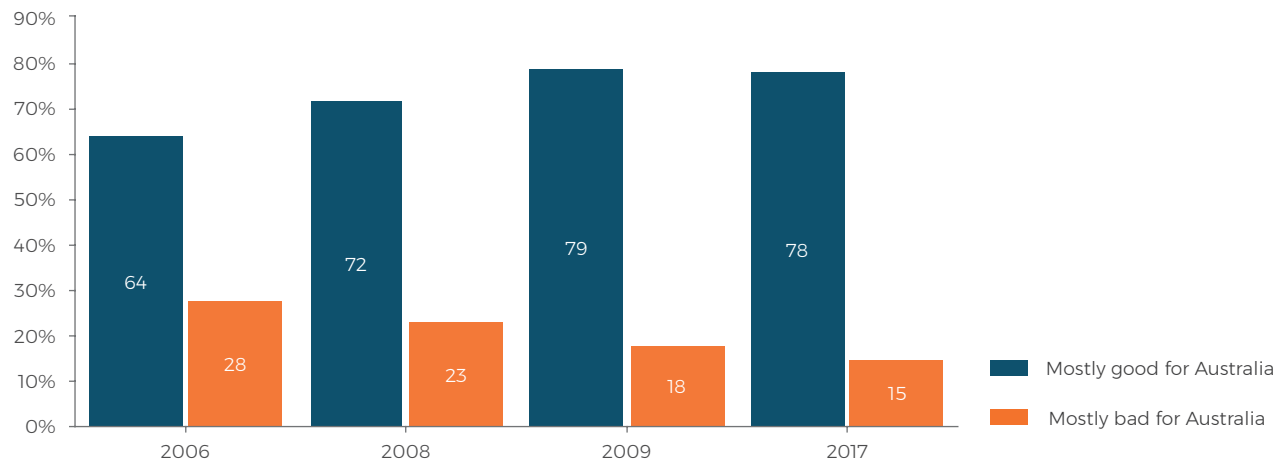
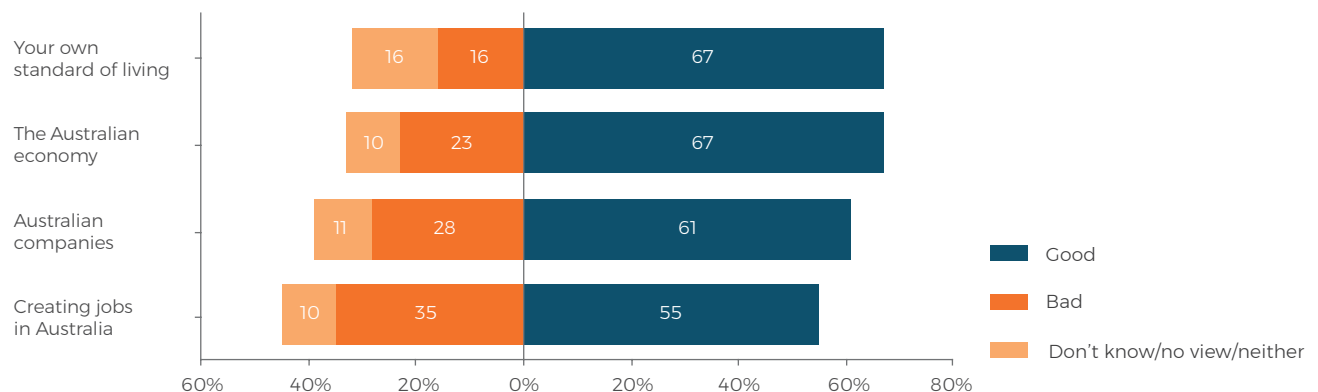


Fig 4: Free trade

Overall, do you personally think free trade is good or bad for each of the following:





## Donald Trump and the US alliance

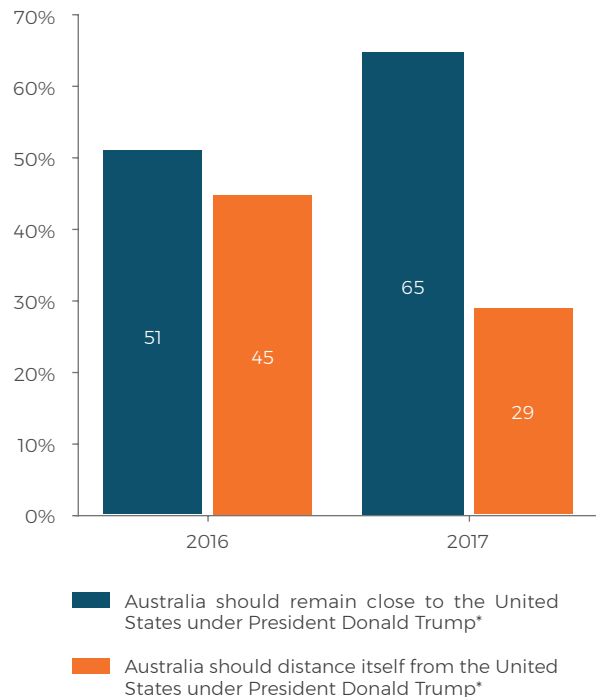
The new US president, Donald Trump, remains unpopular, particularly among younger Australian adults and women. However, our polling illustrates Australians' enduring affinity with America and their steadfast support for the ANZUS alliance.

Before the 2016 US election, our polling had indicated that Donald Trump was extremely unpopular among Australians. Only 11% preferred Mr Trump over Hillary Clinton as the next President of the United States, and 84% thought Ms Clinton would do a better job than Mr Trump of handling US foreign policy. Almost half (45%) said that 'Australia should distance itself from the United States if it elects a president like Donald Trump'. Sentiments towards the alliance plunged to their lowest level since 2007.

In 2017, any suggestions from last year's Poll that Australians might recoil from the US alliance under President Trump have reversed. Only 29% of Australian adults now say 'Australia should distance itself from the United States under President Donald Trump'. This is 16 points lower than the number last year who said 'Australia should distance itself from the United States if it elects a president like Donald Trump'. On the contrary, 65% say we should remain close to the United States under President Donald Trump (up 14 points from those who said last year that 'Australia should remain close to the United States regardless of who is elected US President'). Similarly, support for the alliance has rebounded, with 77% (up six points) saying the alliance relationship is either 'very' or 'fairly' important for Australia's security. Feelings towards the United States as measured on the Lowy Institute feelings thermometer are steady, despite the change of administration (see Table 26, page 30).

Fig 5: Australia-US relations and Donald Trump

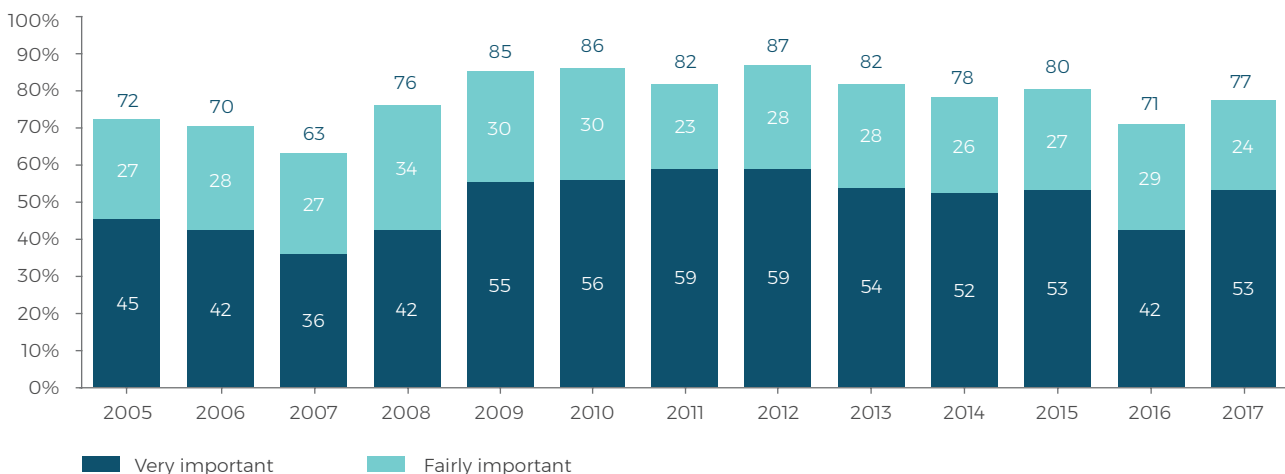
Now that Donald Trump has been elected President of the United States, which one of the following statements comes closest to your personal view:



\* In 2016, the question wording was: 'Australia should remain close to the United States regardless of who is elected US President [or] Australia should distance itself from the United States if it elects a president like Donald Trump.'

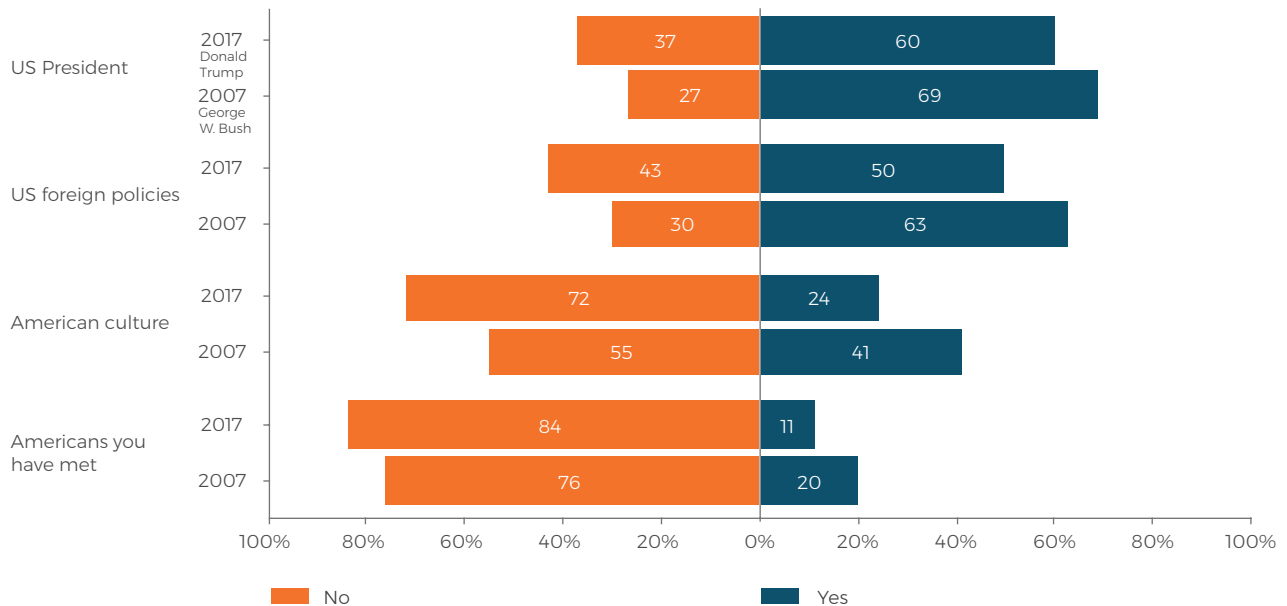
Fig 6: Importance of the US alliance

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



**Fig 7: Factors in feelings towards the United States**

Do each of the following factors cause you to have an unfavourable opinion of the United States?



Now that he is President, however, Mr Trump still elicits negative responses. Overall, six in ten Australians say Donald Trump causes them to have an unfavourable opinion of the United States, with most younger adults (70% of those under 45 years of age) and a majority of women (68%) seeing Mr Trump as a negative factor in their opinions. Yet Australians are less negative towards the Trump administration than they were about George W. Bush a decade ago. In 2007, 69% said ‘George W. Bush’ and 63% said ‘US foreign policies’ were negative factors in their opinion of the United States, while in 2017, only 60% say the same about Donald Trump and only 50% (down 13 points since 2007) say US foreign policies cause them to have an unfavourable opinion of the United States.

Australians view the United States more positively than they did a decade ago during the final years of the George W. Bush presidency in other respects as well: only 24% (down 17 points) view ‘American culture’ and 11% (down 9 points) view ‘Americans [they] have met’ as negative factors in their opinions of the United States in 2017.

### Australians’ trust in global powers

Although Australians remain generally positive about America and the US alliance, the election of Donald Trump as US president has coincided with a steep erosion in Australians’ trust of the United States. Only 20% (down 20 points since this question was last asked in 2011) have a ‘great deal’ of trust in the United States ‘to act

responsibly in the world’. Overall, 61% (down 22 points since 2011) trust the United States either ‘somewhat’ or a ‘great deal’ to act responsibly in the world. By comparison, 90% of Australians have the same level of trust in the United Kingdom, 86% trust Germany, and the same number trust Japan. The United States ranks with India (64%) in Australians’ level of trust, somewhat ahead of China (54%) and Indonesia (52%). Russia has squandered Australians’ trust over the last six years, with only 38% (down 15 points) now saying they trust Russia to act responsibly in the world. A negligible 12% trust North Korea.

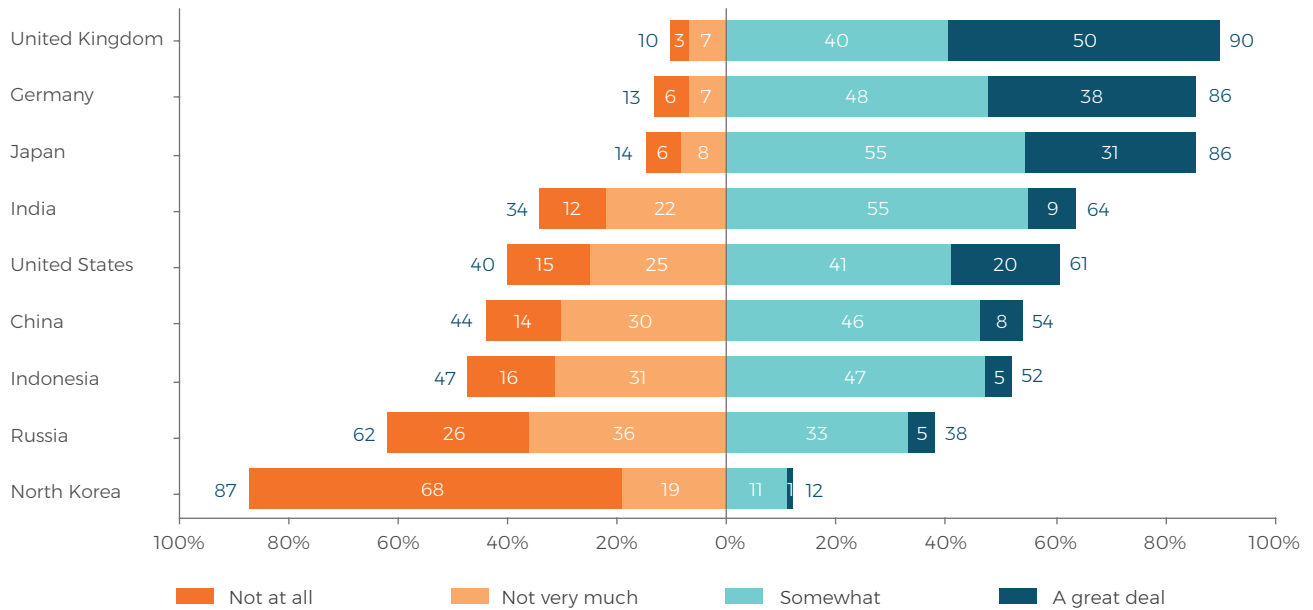
### Australia’s best friend in the world

Australians continue to lean towards the Anglosphere. New Zealand is regarded as our best friend in the world by far, with 53% (up 21 points since 2014) nominating our close neighbour as ‘Australia’s best friend’ of the six countries polled. The United States, which three years ago shared equal first place with New Zealand, has shifted to equal second place, tying with the United Kingdom as ‘best friend’ for 17% of Australians. However, the United States has halved its support among Australians in this year’s Poll. The 17% who say the United States is Australia’s best friend is down 18 points since 2014.

China, which in our 2016 Poll established a clear lead over Japan as Australia’s best friend in Asia, ranks a distant fourth, with just 8% saying China is our best friend in the world. Only 2% see Japan and 1% see Indonesia as Australia’s best friend in the world.

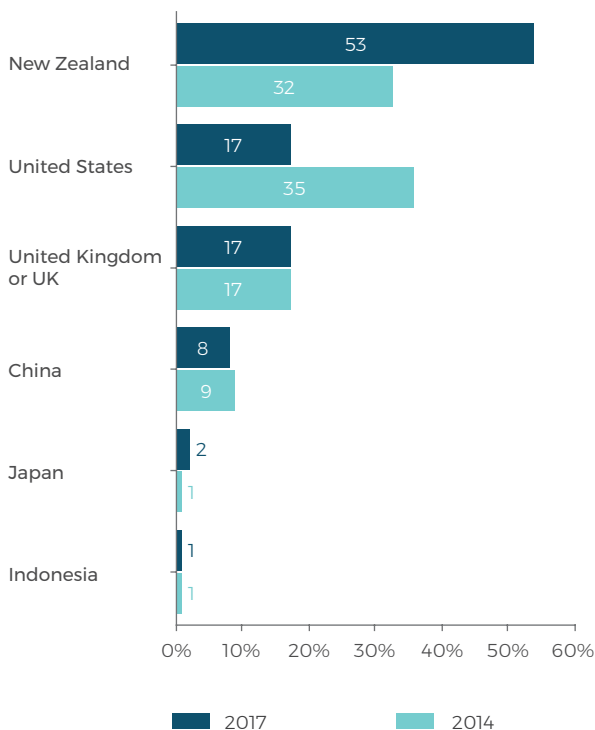
**Fig 8: Trust in global powers**

How much do you trust the following countries to act responsibly in the world?



**Fig 9: Australia's best friend in the world**

Now about Australia's relations with other countries around the world. In your personal opinion, which one of the following countries is Australia's best friend?



## China

China may not be regarded as Australia's closest friend, but Australians continue to see the relationship as vitally important. China and the United States remain tied when we ask Australians which relationship is more important to Australia in 2017: 45% say the United States and 43% say China, in a result which is statistically inseparable. As with last year's Poll, there is a deep demographic divide on the China-US question: younger Australians lean towards China, with 50% of those aged under 45 saying China is the more important relationship, and 40% saying the United States. Older Australians favour the United States, with only 38% of those aged over 45 years seeing the China relationship as more important.

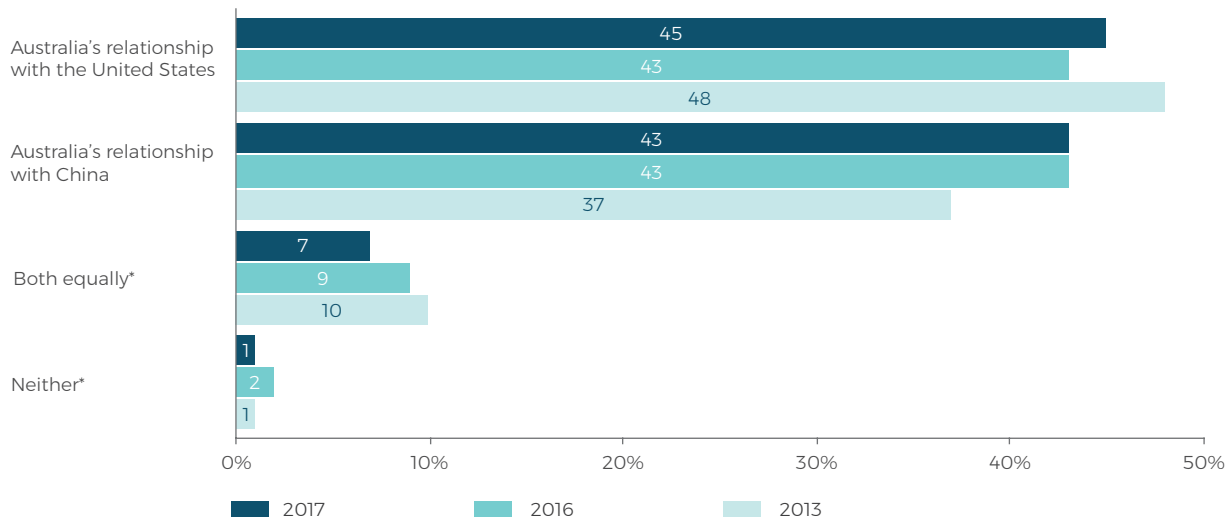
### Military threat and economic partner

With increasing political and public scrutiny of China's activities in the South China Sea, perceptions of China as a military threat to Australia have heightened again in 2017. Almost half of Australian adults (46%, up seven points since 2015) say it is likely that 'China will become a military threat to Australia in the next 20 years'. Again, attitudes to China divide Australians along demographic lines: older Australians (45 years and over) are far more likely to see China as a military threat (54%, vs 38% of those aged 18-44 years).

Despite the perception of threat, most Australians see China as more of an economic partner than a military threat, with 79% saying China is more of an economic partner and only 13% saying it is more of a military threat.

**Fig 10: Australia, the United States and China**

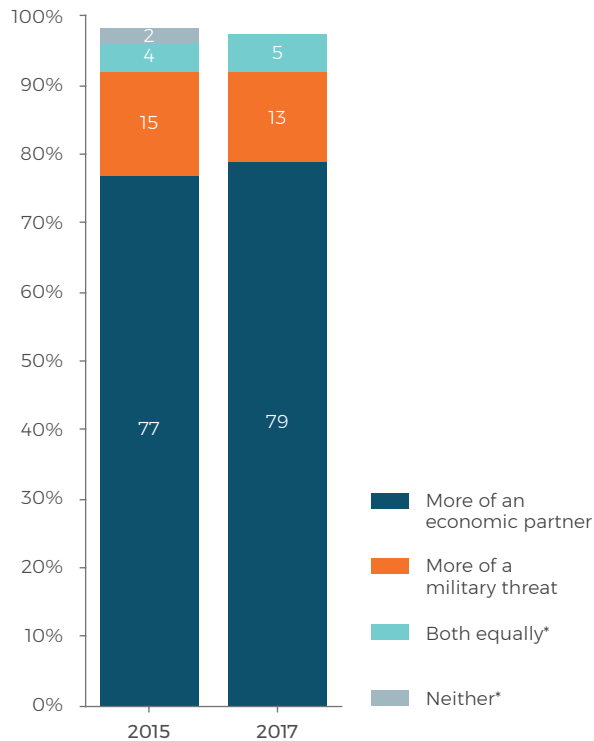
Thinking about Australia’s relationships with the United States and China. Which relationship do you think is more important to Australia?



\*Answers not read out but recorded if offered.

**Fig 11: Military threat or economic partner?**

In your own view, is China more of an economic partner to Australia or more of a military threat to Australia?



\*Answers not read out but recorded if offered.

The importance of the economic partnership may be one reason why Australians shy away from direct confrontation with China, even while being wary of its military intentions. When asked whether they would be in favour or against the use of Australian military forces ‘if China initiated a military conflict with one of its neighbours over disputed islands or territories’, only a third (34%) are in favour, with a clear majority (58%) against (see Figure 16, page 13).

**Freedom of navigation in the South China Sea**

Australians may not favour direct military action against China but their enthusiasm for conducting freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea remains firm. Although slightly fewer support them this year than last year, around seven in ten (68%, down six points since 2016) are in favour of Australia conducting ‘maritime operations designed to ensure freedom of navigation in the region’. Only 19% (unchanged) are against such operations.

**Safety, security and threats to Australia’s vital interests**

Feelings of safety this year remain at their lowest point in our 13-year history of polling, and the 12-point drop in feelings of safety which we recorded between 2010 and 2015 has not been reversed. While most Australians (79%) say they feel ‘safe’ overall, only 20% (down four points since 2015) feel ‘very safe’, and 21% feel ‘unsafe’ overall.



Since we began polling in 2005, we have asked Australians about a range of possible ‘threats to the vital interests of Australia in the next ten years’. In 2017, ‘international terrorism’ remains the leading threat to Australia’s vital interests in the next ten years, with 68% seeing it as a ‘critical threat’. ‘North Korea’s nuclear program’ joins terrorism at the head of Australians’ concerns, 65% seeing it as a critical threat in our March 2017 fieldwork, even before Pyongyang’s threat a month later that Australia was within the range of a North Korean nuclear strike after ‘blindly and zealously toeing the US line’.<sup>3</sup>

This year, perceptions of the threat posed by climate change have heightened, with 57% of Australians saying it is a critical threat to Australia’s vital interests, up 11 points since 2014. Climate change is seen by more Australians as a threat than a ‘severe downturn in the global economy’ (53% saying critical threat). ‘Cyberattacks from other countries’ continue to provoke concerns, with 55% seeing them as a critical threat.

‘The presidency of Donald Trump’ ranks equally with ‘foreign investment in Australia’ as a critical threat to Australia’s vital interests (42% and 40%, respectively), ahead of ‘asylum seekers coming to Australia by boat’ (38%). Concern about ‘US foreign policies’ has increased, with 37% (up 11 points since 2014) seeing them as a critical threat. ‘China’s foreign policies’ (36% saying critical threat) rank approximately equally with those of the United States, and both are rated a higher threat than Russia’s foreign policies (32%), which are the lowest ranked of the 11 threats included in this year’s list.

Fig 12: Feeling of safety

Now about world events, how safe do you feel?

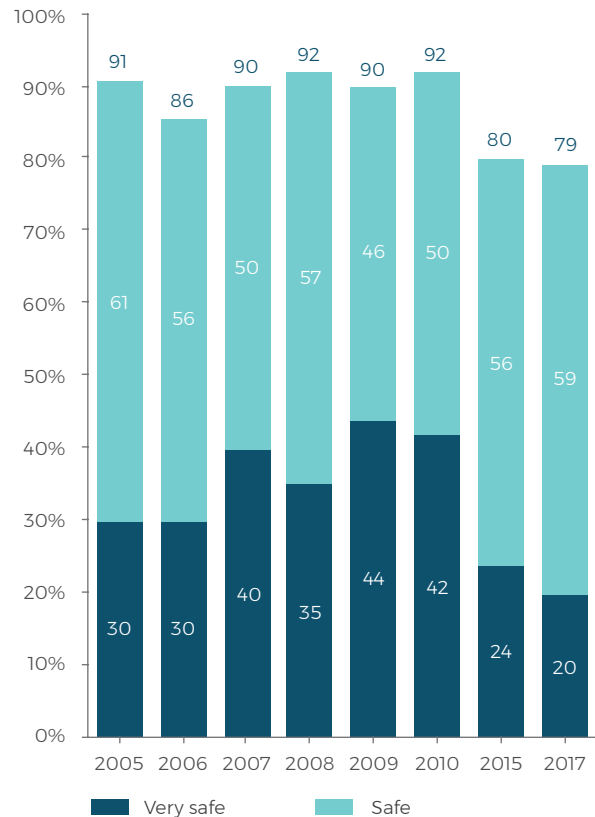
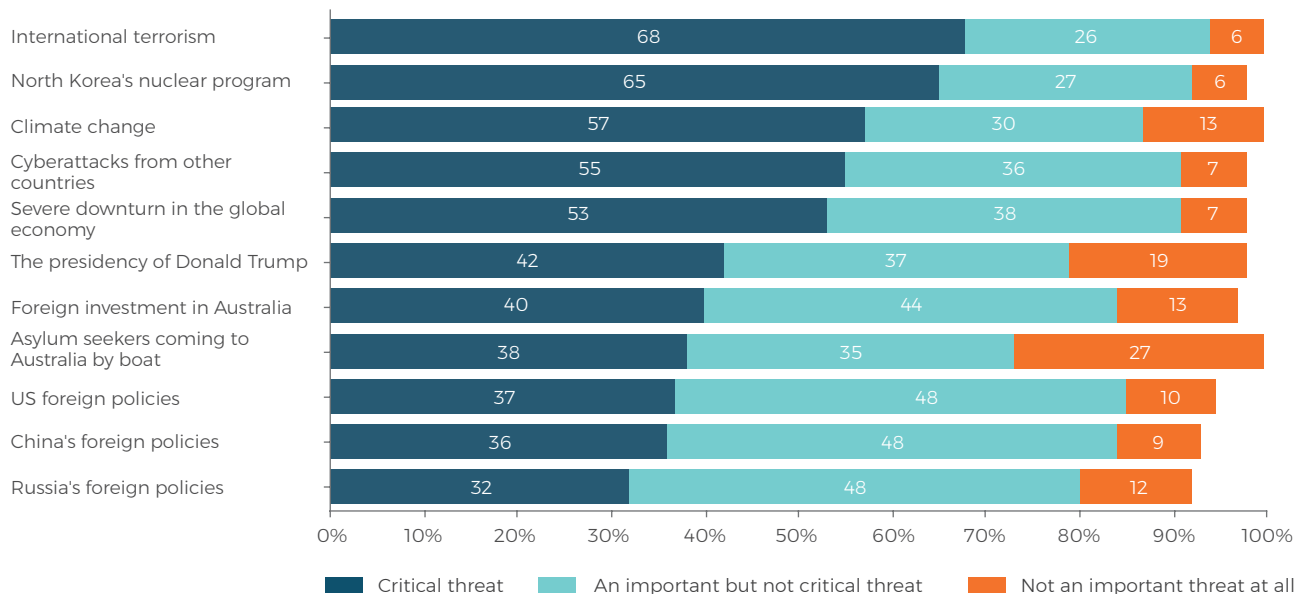


Fig 13: Threats to the vital interests of Australia

I am now going to read out a list of possible threats to the vital interests of Australia in the next ten years. For each one, please select whether you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all.



## Energy security, renewables and climate change

### Energy supply and renewables

Australians' clear preference for renewables over fossil fuels has been expressed in successive Lowy Institute Polls. In the midst of a fierce debate about Australia's energy supply and the role of renewables, an emphatic majority (81%) of Australians want the government to 'focus on renewables, even if this means we may need to invest more in infrastructure to make the system more reliable'. Fewer than one in five (17%) say 'the government should focus on traditional energy sources such as coal and gas, even if this means the environment may suffer to some extent'.

These attitudes align with our previous findings on Australians' preference for alternative energy sources. In 2016, almost all Australians (88%) agreed that 'the use of fossil fuels is in decline around the world and Australia should invest more in alternative energy sources or risk being left behind'. In 2015, Australians expressed their high expectations of the role solar energy would play in Australia's future energy mix, with solar energy the top response by far when we asked which source 'will be our primary source of energy ten years from now' (43% nominated solar energy, with 17% selecting coal, the second-highest ranked option).

Fig 14: Renewables and energy supply

I am going to read some statements about renewable energy and energy supply. Please say which one of these statements comes closest to your own point of view:

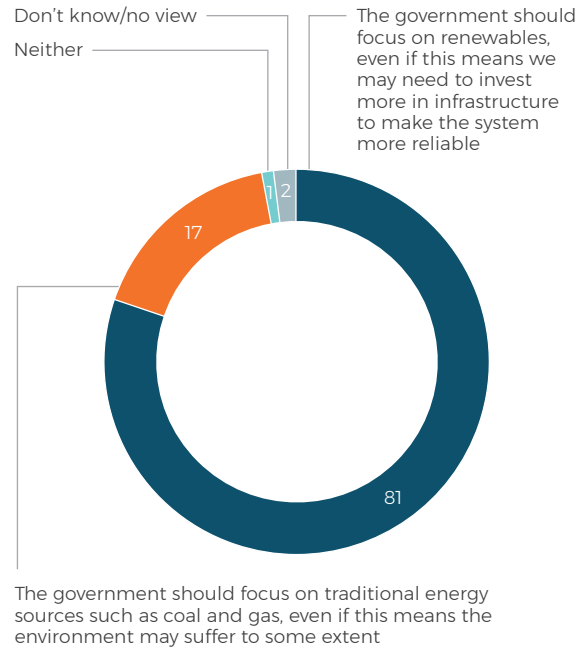
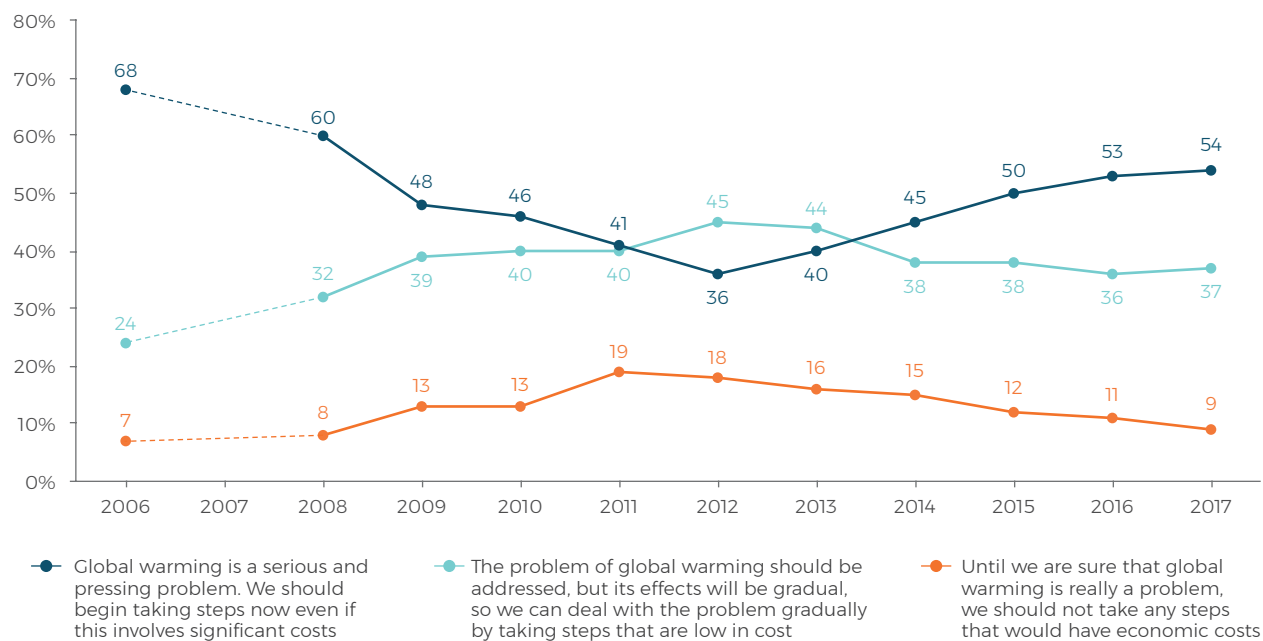


Fig 15: Global warming

Now about global warming. There is a controversy over what the countries of the world, including Australia, should do about the problem of global warming. I'm going to read you three statements. Please tell me which statement comes closest to your own point of view:



## Concern about global warming

Perceptions of the problem posed by global warming trended strongly upwards from 2012 to 2016 and have held steady this year. A majority of Australians (54%) say ‘global warming is a serious and pressing problem [and] we should begin taking steps now even if this involves significant costs’. This has risen from a low in 2012 of 36%, increasing 18 points in five years. It remains 14 points lower, however, than the peak of concern recorded in 2006 when 68% expressed this view. Only 9% (down from 19% in 2011) express the sceptical view that ‘until we are sure that global warming is really a problem, we should not take any steps that would have economic costs’. Around a third (37%) say ‘the problem of global warming should be addressed, but its effects will be gradual, so we can deal with the problem gradually by taking steps that are low in cost’.

## Use of military forces

Despite widespread disillusionment with Australia’s involvement in military conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, Australians remain well disposed to the use of the Australian Defence Force to combat terrorism in the Middle East. A majority (61%) are in favour of using Australian military forces ‘to fight against violent Islamic extremist groups in Iraq and Syria’.

The threat of genocide also provokes strong responses, with high levels of support for the use of Australian military forces ‘to stop a government from committing genocide and killing large numbers of its own people’ (76% in favour vs 20% against).

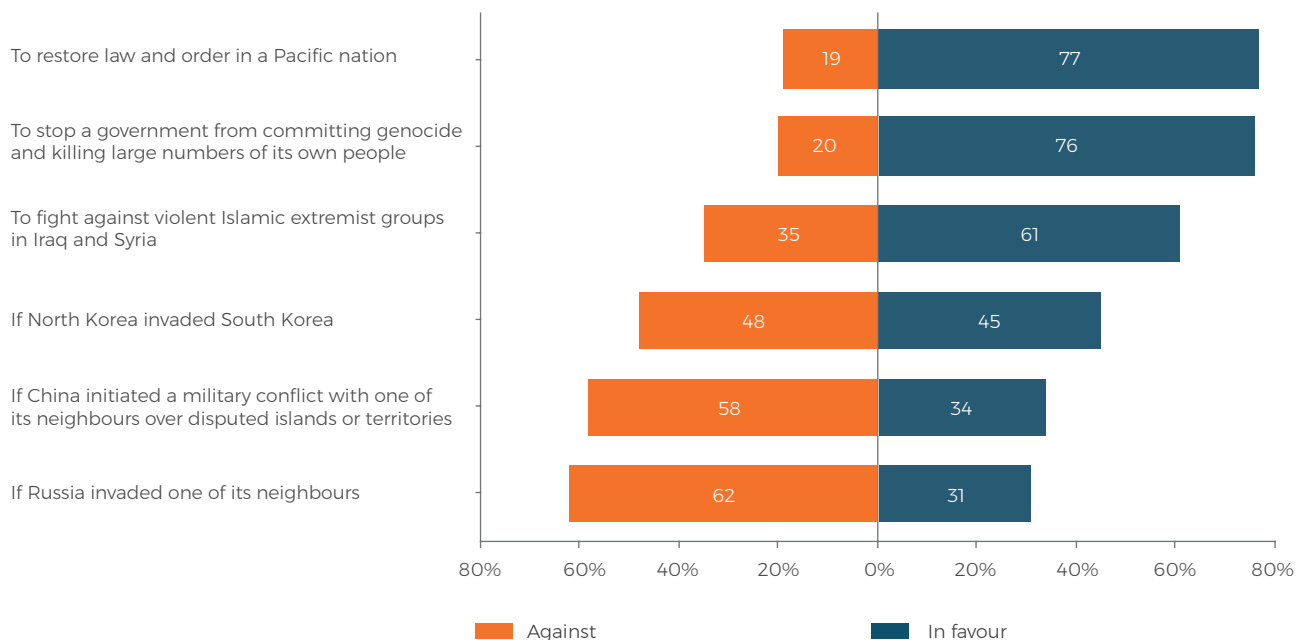
There is more reluctance, however, for Australia to become involved in conflicts in Asia. Australians are evenly divided (48% against, 45% in favour) about sending military forces ‘if North Korea invaded South Korea’.

There is even more sensitivity where China is involved: a clear majority are opposed to the use of Australian military forces ‘if China initiated a military conflict with one of its neighbours over disputed islands or territories’ (58% against vs 34% in favour). This aligns with findings from our 2015 Poll in which an outright majority (84%) of the public believed ‘Australia should remain neutral’ in a conflict between China and Japan. Freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea, by comparison, have attracted strong support in two consecutive annual Polls (see Table 14, page 24).

For remote confrontations such as ‘if Russia invaded one of its neighbours’, a majority of Australians (62% against vs 31% in favour) would oppose the use of Australian military forces.

Fig 16: Use of military forces

Now about Australian military forces. There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using Australian military forces in other parts of the world. Please give your opinion about the following situations. Would you personally be in favour or against the use of Australian military forces:



## Pacific interventions

Conflicts involving our close neighbours in the Pacific are less polarising than those further abroad in Asia. A significant majority (77%) of Australians favour the use of military forces ‘to restore law and order in a Pacific nation’. In a separate question, we asked for Australians’ views on what Australia should do ‘if there is another major crisis in the Pacific, such as happened in the Solomon Islands in 2003’. Almost all (81%) said Australia ‘should intervene to provide military and humanitarian support’, with only 11% preferring to ‘not become involved’.

## Democracy

The Lowy Institute’s polling on attitudes towards democracy has provoked considerable debate since we first asked the question in 2012. This year, in a result largely unchanged since 2012, 60% of Australians agree ‘democracy is preferable to any other kind of government’. A sizeable 36% say either that ‘in some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable’ or ‘for someone like me, it doesn’t matter what kind of government we have’.

Around half (52%) of younger Australians aged 18–29 years agree that democracy is the preferable form of government. As in previous years, the preference for democracy is stronger among older Australians, with 70% of those aged 60 years and over seeing it as preferable to any other kind of government.

## Immigration

While a majority of Australians are positive about the benefits of immigration, the current rates of immigration are more controversial. The number who are supportive of the rate of immigration — those who think it should be maintained or even increased — has fallen since 2014. In 2017, 53% of the population say the total number of migrants coming to Australia each year is either ‘about right’ or ‘too low’. While still a majority, this is down eight points since 2014 when we last asked this question. Four in ten Australians (40%) this year say ‘the total number of migrants coming to Australia each year’ is ‘too high’.

Numerous polls on attitudes to Australia’s immigration intake since the middle of last century have shown public sentiment fluctuating significantly. After a high point in opposition to immigration in the early 1990s, the number of those opposing the current levels of immigration fell steadily and has remained relatively stable since the mid-2000s.<sup>4</sup>

Although some Australians may oppose lifting the rate of immigration, our 2016 Poll found that attitudes towards immigration are generally positive. Most Australians (73%) agreed that ‘overall, immigration has a positive impact on the economy of Australia’, while majorities (72%) agreed that ‘accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger’ and that ‘immigrants strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents’.

Fig 17: Value of democracy

I am going to read you three statements about democracy. Please say which one of the three statements comes closest to your own personal views about democracy:

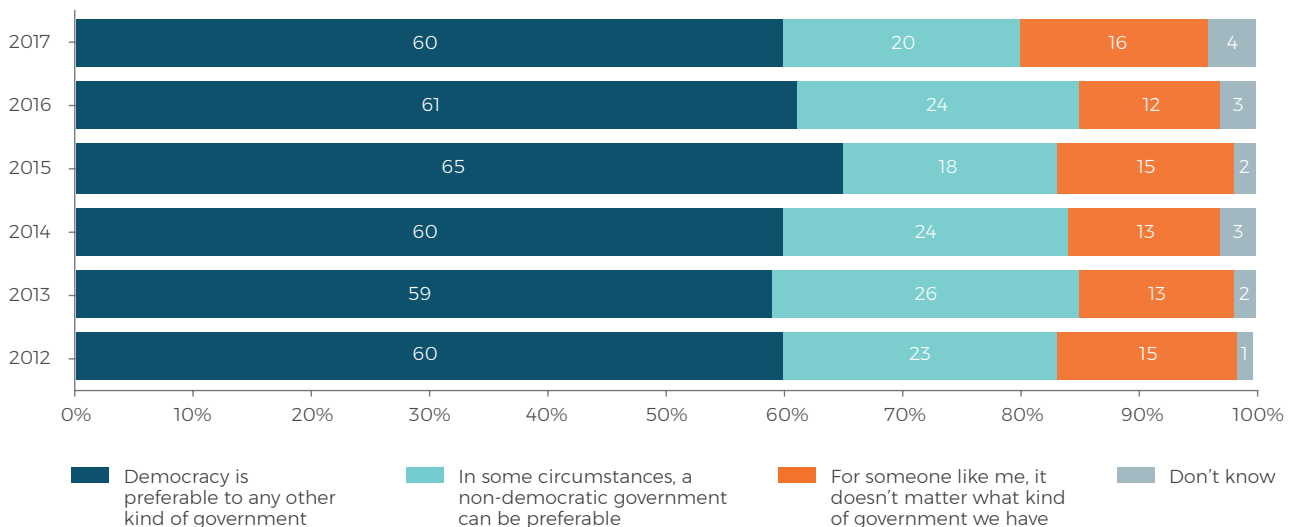




Fig 18: Rate of immigration

Thinking now about Australia’s immigration program. Do you personally think that the total number of migrants coming to Australia each year is too high, too low, or about right?

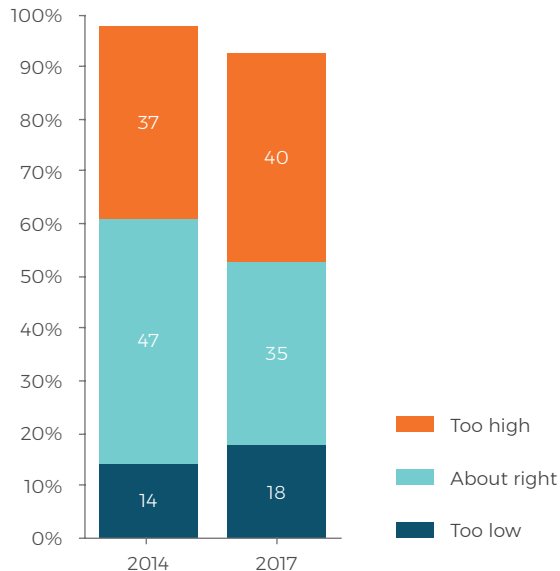
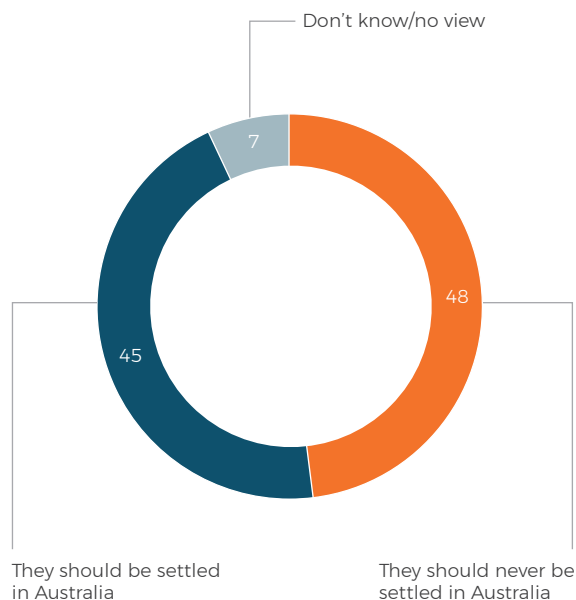


Fig 19: Asylum seekers

And now about asylum seekers currently in Nauru and Manus Island detention centres. For those asylum seekers who have been determined to be refugees, please say which one of the following statements most closely represents your own view:



## Asylum seeker policy

Australians have expressed significant levels of concern about asylum seeker arrivals in our past polling, and the majority have been supportive of offshore processing of refugee claims in places such as Papua New Guinea and Nauru. However, the issue of how to deal with refugees and asylum seekers who are currently in regional processing centres (RPCs) has become more pressing. Developments in Papua New Guinea and Nauru have caused the Australian Government to cast around for alternative places to house refugees after the Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea in 2016 decided that the Manus Island RPC was unconstitutional, and in 2015 the Nauru Government opened the gates of the Nauru RPC, allowing asylum seekers freedom of movement around the island.<sup>5</sup> The Coalition government reached an agreement with the United States in 2016 to resettle a number of the refugees in RPCs in America, an agreement which was cast in doubt with the advent of the Trump administration, but which has now been affirmed.<sup>6</sup>

This year, we asked Australians whether asylum seekers who have been determined to be refugees ‘should be settled in Australia’ or ‘should never be settled in Australia’.

Australians are almost evenly divided on the question of where asylum seekers should be settled: 48% say asylum seekers currently in RPCs on Nauru and Manus Island ‘should never be settled in Australia’, while 45% say they ‘should be settled in Australia’. Younger Australians (18–29 year olds) are the only age group in which a majority (56%) say the asylum seekers ‘should be settled in Australia’. More men (53%) than women (43%) oppose settling asylum seekers in Australia.

In the context of heated debate about offshore processing, Australians’ support for continuing to process refugees’ claims offshore in places such as Nauru has waned somewhat. In a short poll we conducted in June 2016, 54% of Australians agreed that ‘asylum seekers should be processed offshore in places such as Nauru, before deciding whether they should be settled in Australia’, down five points since 2014. A sizeable 42% disagreed.

## Aid budget

Once again, Australians appear to be largely unconcerned by reductions in the amount the Australian Government gives in overseas aid. Between 2014 and 2016, Australia’s aid budget was cut from \$5 billion to \$4 billion, and now sits at approximately \$3.8 billion per annum. When we asked Australians in May 2015 about the first major budget cut of \$1 billion, a majority (53%) were in favour, with 35% against.<sup>7</sup> In our March fieldwork two months earlier, before the budget cut was announced, 77% of

Australians had said the aid budget of \$5 billion was either ‘too much’ or ‘about the right amount’. Only 21% said it was ‘not enough’.

Even though the aid budget is now around 25% smaller than it was in 2015, Australians have given almost identical responses to the same question this year: 73% say the current aid budget of approximately \$3.8 billion is either ‘too much’ or ‘about the right amount’. Just 22% say the budget is ‘not enough’.

Our polling in the past has found that Australians dramatically overestimate how much money the federal government spends on foreign aid, guessing on average in 2011 that 16% of the budget is spent on aid, when the actual amount at that time was 1.3%. On average, Australians said in 2011 that 12% of the federal budget should be spent on foreign aid.<sup>8</sup>

The aid budget in 2017 is around 0.8% of the federal budget.

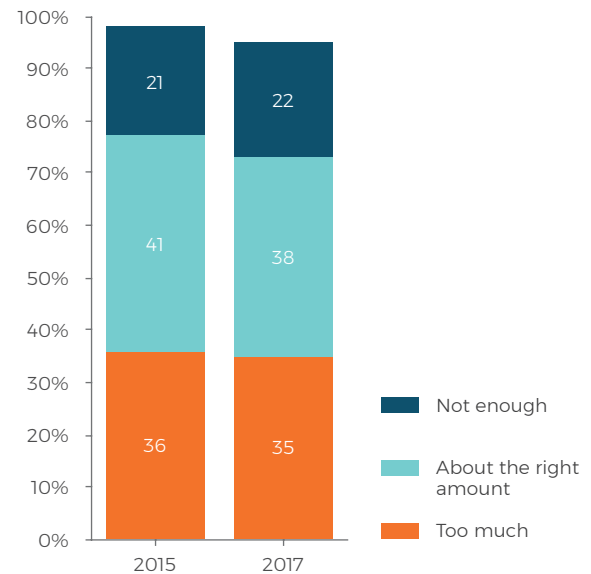
### Attitudes to Indonesia

Indonesia embarked on a process of transition and democratisation after the end of the Suharto regime late last century. In 2017, however, only 27% of Australians agree that ‘Indonesia is a democracy’, most of them ‘somewhat’ agreeing as opposed to ‘strongly’ agreeing (22% vs 5%). This is a seven-point fall since the question was last asked in 2015, when 34% of Australians held this view, one year after the 2014 election of President Joko Widodo.

One explanation for this may be Australians’ continuing lack of awareness about Indonesia. When asked a decade ago to name Indonesia’s leader, only 20% of Australians could do so. When asked whether they admired Indonesia’s President Joko Widodo among a

Fig 20: Aid budget

Thinking now about the aid the Australian Government provides to developing countries. Currently the government provides approximately \$3.8 billion dollars in aid to developing countries, or around 0.8 per cent of the Budget.<sup>^</sup> Do you think this is:



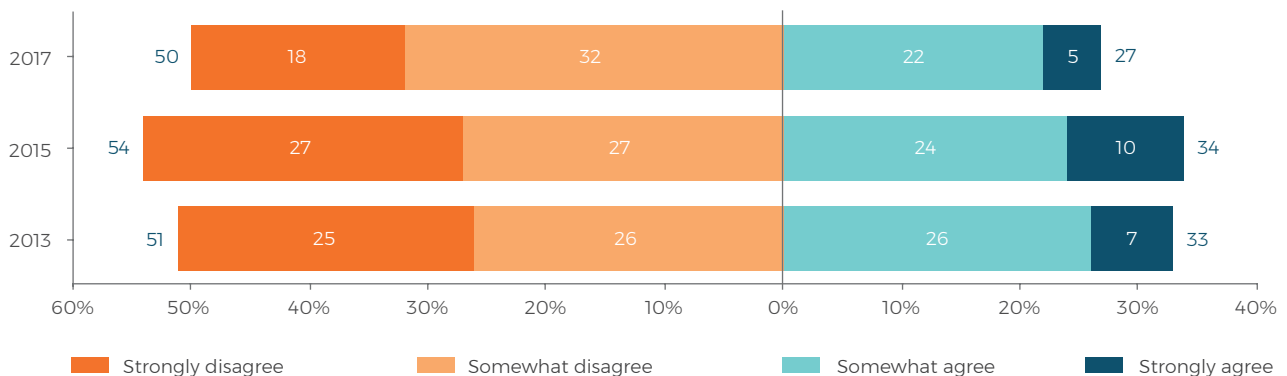
<sup>^</sup>In 2015 the wording was: ‘five billion dollars in aid ... or around 1.2 per cent of the Budget’.

number of other world leaders in our 2015 Poll, nearly half (47%) of Australians were unable to answer.

Notwithstanding this lack of familiarity, almost all Australians said in our 2016 Poll that our relationship with Indonesia is important.

Fig 21: Indonesian democracy

Now a question about Indonesia. Do you personally agree or disagree that Indonesia is a democracy? And is that strongly or somewhat?



## Feelings towards other countries

This year, as in all of the last 12 Polls, an English-speaking nation has topped the Lowy Institute 'feelings thermometer'. The thermometer measures Australians' feelings towards a range of other countries on a scale of 0° in temperature (coldest feelings) to 100° (warmest feelings). A limited sample of countries is selected each year, and most countries are rotated in and out of the sample. Eighteen countries were included this year.

The Anglosphere nations of New Zealand and the United Kingdom — which this year are also two of Australia's 'best friends in the world' — take first and second place on the thermometer (New Zealand at 85° and the United Kingdom at 81°). France, Germany, and Japan tie in equal third place at 71°.

Following a record drop of five points last year, the United States sits at a steady 69°. This is a statistically equivalent reading to the 70° it recorded in 2011, despite the steep 22-point fall over the same period in the level of Australians' trust in the United States to act responsibly in the world (see Table 9, page 21).

Australians feel some warmth for the Solomon Islands, which recorded 64° this year, consistent with its 63° reading in 2014.

This year we asked Australians for the first time how they feel about the European Union, following the United Kingdom's 'Brexit' decision last year. At a warm 62°, feelings towards the European Union match exactly those towards the United Nations, which recorded the same temperature in last year's Poll.

Papua New Guinea (61°), South Korea (60°), and India (60°) sit in a relatively warm spot on the thermometer, with China close behind at 59°. The Philippines makes its thermometer debut this year, level with China at 59°.

Feelings towards Indonesia, though still lukewarm, have rebounded since the executions in 2015 of two Australian citizens. At 55°, feelings towards Indonesia are nine points higher than the 46° reading recorded in early 2015, when Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran were awaiting execution.

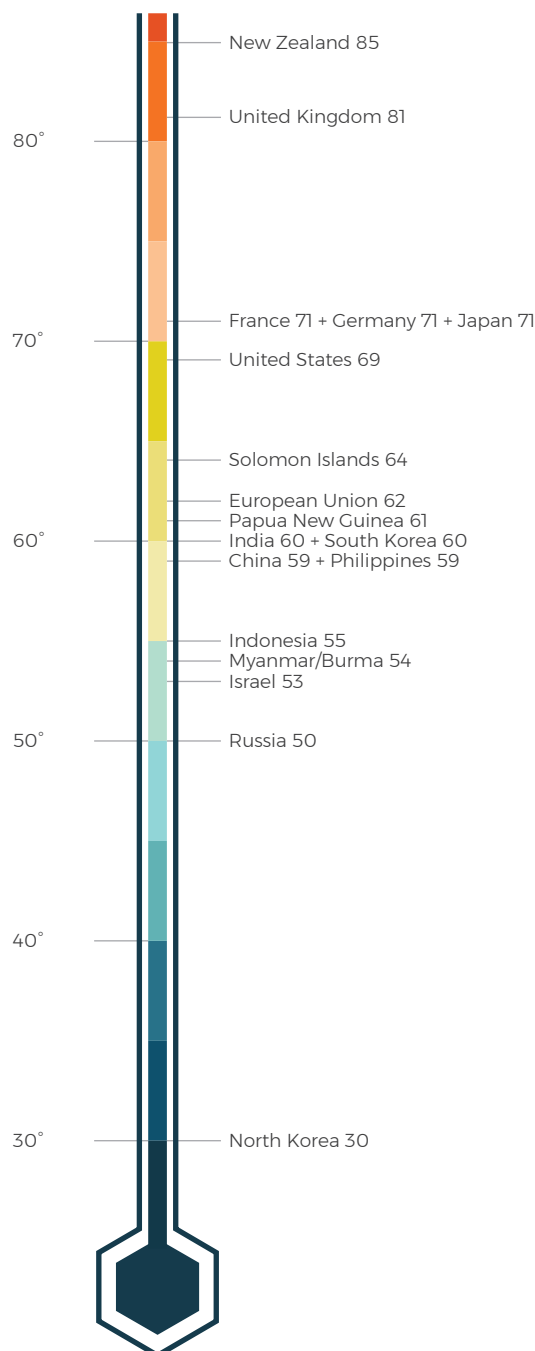
Myanmar registers a cooler 54°, although still on the warm side of the thermometer, together with Israel at 53°.

Russia sits steady at 50° on the 2017 thermometer. This is consistent with last year's 52° reading, which was itself a sharp increase of seven points on Russia's all-time low of 45° in 2015 after the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17.

Russia's ranking is the second coolest among the 18 countries included in this year's thermometer. Only one country elicits a colder response from Australians: North Korea (30°) sits at the base of the thermometer as it has done each time it has been included, although it was joined there by Iraq in 2006 and 2011.

Fig 22: Feelings thermometer

Please rate your feelings towards some countries, with one hundred meaning a very warm, favourable feeling, zero meaning a very cold, unfavourable feeling, and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from zero to one hundred: the higher the number the more favourable your feelings are towards that country. If you have no opinion or have never heard of that country, please say so.



# TABLES OF RESULTS

Please note that totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Each response option has been rounded individually and grouped responses (e.g. those who 'somewhat agree' plus 'strongly agree') have not been rounded at the group level. Responses of 'don't know', 'no view', 'none' and similar were recorded if given by respondents, but not offered. Throughout the tables an '\*\*' represents a response given by less than 0.5% of people.

## Direction of the world

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Table 1: Turning to the situation in the world overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in the world today?

	2017
Satisfied	19%
Dissatisfied	79%
Neither/don't know/no view	2%

## Direction of the nation

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Table 2: Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in Australia today?

	2017
Satisfied	47%
Dissatisfied	48%
Neither/don't know/no view	4%



## Economic optimism

Table 3: Now about Australia's economic performance in the world. Overall, how optimistic are you about Australia's economic performance in the world over the next five years?

	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010	2013	2015	2016	2017
Very optimistic	14%	19%	11%	16%	19%	14%	9%	9%	9%
Optimistic	53%	52%	65%	70%	67%	62%	54%	61%	65%
<b>Total: optimistic</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>74%</b>
Pessimistic	8%	9%	19%	11%	10%	15%	29%	25%	20%
Very pessimistic	2%	2%	4%	2%	3%	6%	5%	5%	4%
<b>Total: pessimistic</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>24%</b>
Neutral <sup>†</sup>	21%	17%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know/no view	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	3%	3%	1%	3%

<sup>†</sup>A 'neutral' option was included in 2005 and 2007.

## Globalisation

Table 4: Now on globalisation. Do you believe that globalisation, especially the increasing connections of our economy with others around the world, is mostly good or mostly bad for Australia?

	2006	2008	2009	2017
Mostly good for Australia	64%	72%	79%	78%
Mostly bad for Australia	28%	23%	18%	15%
Don't know/no view	8%	6%	4%	8%

## Free trade

Table 5: Overall, do you personally think free trade is good or bad for each of the following:

	Your own standard of living	The Australian economy	Australian companies	Creating jobs in Australia
Good	67%	67%	61%	55%
Bad	16%	23%	28%	35%
Neither/don't know/no view	16%	10%	11%	10%

## Donald Trump

**Table 6: Now that Donald Trump has been elected President of the United States, which one of the following statements comes closest to your personal view:**

	2016 <sup>†</sup>	2017
Australia should remain close to the United States under President Donald Trump	51%	65%
Australia should distance itself from the United States under President Donald Trump	45%	29%
Neither/don't know/no view	4%	6%

<sup>†</sup>In 2016, the question was worded: 'If a person like Donald Trump were elected President of the United States, which one of the following statements comes closest to your personal view: Australia should remain close to the United States regardless of who is elected US President [or] Australia should distance itself from the United States if it elects a president like Donald Trump.'

## US alliance

**Table 7: And now about Australia's alliance relationship with the United States. How important is our alliance relationship with the United States for Australia's security?**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Very important	45%	42%	36%	42%	55%	56%	59%	59%	54%	52%	53%	42%	53%
Fairly important	27%	28%	27%	34%	30%	30%	23%	28%	28%	26%	27%	29%	24%
Total: very and fairly important	72%	70%	63%	76%	85%	86%	82%	87%	82%	78%	80%	71%	77%
Somewhat important	20%	22%	27%	20%	12%	12%	15%	12%	16%	17%	16%	22%	18%
Not at all important	7%	8%	9%	4%	2%	2%	3%	1%	3%	4%	4%	7%	4%
Don't know/no view	1%	1%	1%	-	*	*	*	*	*	*	1%	1%	1%

## Factors in feelings towards the United States

**Table 8: Do each of the following factors cause you to have an unfavourable opinion of the United States?**

	US President		US foreign policies		American culture		Americans you have met	
	2007 George W. Bush	2017 Donald Trump	2007	2017	2007	2017	2007	2017
Yes	69%	60%	63%	50%	41%	24%	20%	11%
No	27%	37%	30%	43%	55%	72%	76%	84%
Don't know/refused	4%	4%	7%	7%	4%	4%	4%	6%

## Trust in global powers

Table 9: How much do you trust the following countries to act responsibly in the world?

2017 (ranked by total who trust 'somewhat' and 'a great deal')

	A great deal	Somewhat	Total: a great deal and somewhat	Not very much	Not at all	Total: not very much and not at all	Don't know
United Kingdom	50%	40%	90%	7%	3%	10%	*
Germany	38%	48%	86%	7%	6%	13%	1%
Japan	31%	55%	86%	8%	6%	14%	1%
India	9%	55%	64%	22%	12%	34%	2%
United States	20%	41%	61%	25%	15%	40%	*
China	8%	46%	54%	30%	14%	44%	1%
Indonesia	5%	47%	52%	31%	16%	47%	1%
Russia	5%	33%	38%	36%	26%	62%	1%
North Korea	1%	11%	12%	19%	68%	87%	2%

	A great deal					Total: somewhat and a great deal (ranked by 2017 %)				
	2006	2008	2009	2011	2017	2006	2008	2009	2011	2017
United Kingdom	-	-	-	-	50%	-	-	-	-	90%
Germany	-	-	-	-	38%	-	-	-	-	86%
Japan	19%	15%	33%	30%	31%	73%	68%	81%	83%	86%
India	9%	8%	10%	7%	9%	68%	55%	61%	61%	64%
United States	19%	24%	39%	40%	20%	60%	69%	83%	83%	61%
China	7%	7%	7%	12%	8%	60%	47%	59%	60%	54%
Indonesia	-	-	6%	5%	5%	-	-	45%	46%	52%
Russia	-	7%	7%	7%	5%	-	53%	59%	53%	38%
North Korea	-	-	-	-	1%	-	-	-	-	12%

## Australia's best friend in the world

Table 10: Now about Australia's relations with other countries around the world. In your personal opinion, which one of the following countries is Australia's best friend?

	2014~	2017
New Zealand	32%	53%
United States	35%	17%
United Kingdom/UK	17%	17%
China	9%	8%
Japan	1%	2%
Indonesia	1%	1%
None/don't know	5%	2%

~This question was first asked on behalf of the Lowy Institute by Newspoll in its omnibus survey on 2-4 May 2014 (sample: 1207 respondents).<sup>9</sup>

## China and the United States

Table 11: Thinking about Australia's relationships with the United States and China. Which relationship do you think is more important to Australia?

	2013	2016	2017
Australia's relationship with the United States	48%	43%	45%
Australia's relationship with China	37%	43%	43%
Both equally <sup>#</sup>	10%	9%	7%
Neither <sup>#</sup>	1%	2%	1%
Don't know/not sure	4%	2%	3%

<sup>#</sup>Answers not read out but recorded if offered.

## China military threat

Table 12: Now about China. Do you think it is likely or unlikely that China will become a military threat to Australia in the next 20 years?

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017
Very likely	15%	19%	18%	14%	16%	19%	14%	15%
Somewhat likely	26%	27%	26%	26%	25%	29%	25%	31%
<b>Total likely</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>46%</b>
Somewhat unlikely	38%	36%	35%	39%	36%	32%	33%	34%
Very unlikely	19%	16%	20%	19%	18%	18%	23%	16%
<b>Total unlikely</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Don't know/no view	3%	2%	1%	3%	4%	2%	5%	5%

## China – economic partner or military threat?

Table 13: In your own view, is China:

	2015	2017
More of an economic partner to Australia	77%	79%
More of a military threat to Australia	15%	13%
Both equally <sup>#</sup>	4%	5%
Neither <sup>#</sup>	2%	*
Don't know/no view	3%	3%

<sup>#</sup>Answers not read out but recorded if offered.

## Freedom of navigation operations

Table 14: In response to China's increasing military activities in the South China Sea, the United States has been conducting maritime operations designed to ensure freedom of navigation in the region. Are you personally in favour or against Australia conducting similar operations in an effort to ensure freedom of navigation in the South China Sea?

	2016	2017
In favour	74%	68%
Against	20%	19%
Neither/don't know/no view	6%	13%

## Feeling of safety

Table 15: Now about world events, how safe do you feel?

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2015	2017
Very safe	30%	30%	40%	35%	44%	42%	24%	20%
Safe	61%	56%	50%	57%	46%	50%	56%	59%
Total: safe	91%	86%	90%	92%	90%	92%	80%	79%
Unsafe	7%	10%	8%	8%	7%	5%	16%	16%
Very unsafe	1%	3%	1%	1%	2%	2%	3%	5%
Total: unsafe	8%	13%	9%	9%	9%	7%	19%	21%
Don't know/no view	1%	*	1%	*	1%	1%	1%	1%



## Threats to the vital interests of Australia

Table 16: I am now going to read out a list of possible threats to the vital interests of Australia in the next ten years. For each one, please select whether you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all.

2017 (ranked by % saying 'a critical threat')

	Critical threat	An important but not critical threat	Total: critical and important threat	Not an important threat at all	Don't know
International terrorism	68%	26%	94%	6%	*
North Korea's nuclear program	65%	27%	92%	6%	2%
Climate change	57%	30%	87%	13%	*
Cyberattacks from other countries	55%	36%	91%	7%	2%
A severe downturn in the global economy	53%	38%	91%	7%	3%
The presidency of Donald Trump	42%	37%	79%	19%	2%
Foreign investment in Australia	40%	44%	84%	13%	3%
Asylum seekers coming to Australia by boat	38%	35%	73%	27%	1%
US foreign policies	37%	48%	85%	10%	5%
China's foreign policies	36%	48%	84%	9%	8%
Russia's foreign policies	32%	48%	80%	12%	9%

Percentage saying 'a critical threat' (ranked by 2017 %)

	2006	2008	2009	2014	2017
International terrorism	73%	66%	68%	65%	68%
North Korea's nuclear program	-	-	-	-	65%
Climate change ['global warming' in 2006-09]	68%	66%	52%	46%	57%
Cyberattacks from other countries	-	-	-	51%	55%
A severe downturn in the global economy	-	-	-	-	53%
The presidency of Donald Trump	-	-	-	-	42%
Foreign investment in Australia	-	-	-	43%	40%
Asylum seekers coming to Australia by boat	-	-	-	48%	38%
US foreign policies	-	-	-	26%	37%
China's foreign policies	-	-	-	-	36%
Russia's foreign policies	-	-	-	-	32%

## Renewables and energy supply

Table 17: I am going to read some statements about renewable energy and energy supply. Please say which one of these statements comes closest to your own point of view:

	2017
The government should focus on renewables, even if this means we may need to invest more in infrastructure to make the system more reliable	81%
The government should focus on traditional energy sources such as coal and gas, even if this means the environment may suffer to some extent	17%
Neither#	1%
Don't know/no view	2%

#Answer not read out but recorded if offered.

## Climate change

Table 18: Now about global warming. There is a controversy over what the countries of the world, including Australia, should do about the problem of global warming. I'm going to read you three statements. Please tell me which statement comes closest to your own point of view:

	2006	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Global warming is a serious and pressing problem. We should begin taking steps now even if this involves significant costs	68%	60%	48%	46%	41%	36%	40%	45%	50%	53%	54%
The problem of global warming should be addressed, but its effects will be gradual, so we can deal with the problem gradually by taking steps that are low in cost	24%	32%	39%	40%	40%	45%	44%	38%	38%	36%	37%
Until we are sure that global warming is really a problem, we should not take any steps that would have economic costs	7%	8%	13%	13%	19%	18%	16%	15%	12%	11%	9%
Don't know/refused	1%	*	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	*	*	*

## Use of military forces

Table 19: Now about Australian military forces. There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using Australian military forces in other parts of the world. Please give your opinion about the following situations. Would you personally be in favour or against the use of Australian military forces:

	In favour	Against	Don't know/no view /neither
To restore law and order in a Pacific nation	77%	19%	5%
To stop a government from committing genocide and killing large numbers of its own people	76%	20%	4%
To fight against violent Islamic extremist groups in Iraq and Syria	61%	35%	5%
If North Korea invaded South Korea	45%	48%	7%
If China initiated a military conflict with one of its neighbours over disputed islands or territories	34%	58%	9%
If Russia invaded one of its neighbours	31%	62%	8%

## Pacific interventions

Table 20: Now about the Pacific region. If there is another major crisis in the Pacific, such as happened in the Solomon Islands in 2003, do you personally think Australia should:

	2017
Intervene to provide military and humanitarian support	81%
Not become involved	11%
Don't know/no view	8%

## Democracy

Table 21: Now a question about democracy. I am going to read you three statements about democracy. Please say which one of the three statements comes closest to your own personal views about democracy:

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government	60%	59%	60%	65%	61%	60%
In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable	23%	26%	24%	18%	24%	20%
For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have	15%	13%	13%	15%	12%	16%
Don't know	1%	2%	3%	2%	3%	4%

## Immigration

Table 22: Thinking now about Australia's immigration program. Do you personally think that the total number of migrants coming to Australia each year is too high, too low, or about right?

	2014	2017
Too high	37%	40%
About right	47%	35%
Too low	14%	18%
Total: about right and too low	61%	53%
Don't know/no view	3%	7%

## Asylum seeker policy

Table 23: And now about asylum seekers currently in Nauru and Manus Island detention centres. For those asylum seekers who have been determined to be refugees, please say which one of the following statements most closely represents your own view:

	2017
They should never be settled in Australia	48%
They should be settled in Australia	45%
Don't know/no view	7%

## Aid budget

Table 24: Thinking now about the aid the Australian Government provides to developing countries. Currently the government provides approximately \$3.8 billion dollars in aid to developing countries, or around 0.8 per cent of the Budget. Do you think this is:

	2015 <sup>††</sup>	2017
Too much	36%	35%
About the right amount	41%	38%
<b>Total: too much and about the right amount</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>73%</b>
Not enough	21%	22%
Don't know/no view	2%	6%

<sup>††</sup>The 2015 Poll asked the same question about 'five billion dollars in aid ... or around 1.2 per cent of the Budget'.

## Indonesian democracy

Table 25: Now a question about Indonesia. Do you personally agree or disagree that Indonesia is a democracy?

	2013	2015	2017
Strongly agree	7%	10%	5%
Somewhat agree	26%	24%	22%
<b>Total: agree</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>27%</b>
Somewhat disagree	26%	27%	32%
Strongly disagree	25%	27%	18%
<b>Total: disagree</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Don't know/no view	16%	12%	22%

## Feelings towards other countries

Table 26: Please rate your feelings towards some countries, with one hundred meaning a very warm, favourable feeling, zero meaning a very cold, unfavourable feeling, and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from zero to one hundred: the higher the number the more favourable your feelings are towards that country. If you have no opinion or have never heard of that country, please say so.<sup>a</sup>

Country	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
New Zealand	-	81	-	83	84	85	85	-	84	83	-	85
United Kingdom/Britain <sup>b</sup>	74	75	77	-	-	79	-	77	-	79	-	81
France	-	-	69	-	70	-	-	-	71	-	-	71
Germany	-	-	-	68	-	-	-	70	-	71	72	71
Japan	64	63	64	66	64	67	70	65	67	68	70	71
United States/USA	62	60	64	67	68	70	71	70	71	73	68	69
Solomon Islands	-	-	-	-	-	61	-	-	63	-	-	64
European Union	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	62
Papua New Guinea	63	57	60	-	62	--	64	60	59	58	63	61
South Korea	56	-	50	53	-	57	61	-	59	-	-	60
India	62	55	57	56	55	56	58	55	57	56	59	60
China	61	56	56	53	54	53	59	54	60	58	58	59
Philippines	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	59
Indonesia	50	47	50	49	54	51	54	53	52	46	54	55
Myanmar/Burma	-	-	-	46	-	-	50	50	50	-	55	54
Israel	55	50	-	-	49	-	-	53	51	-	-	53
Russia	-	-	55	-	55	-	-	-	-	45	52	50
North Korea	43	-	-	30	37	34	33	31	29	29	26	30

<sup>a</sup> In 2006, this question asked respondents about their feelings towards 'countries *and* peoples'.

<sup>b</sup> Until 2015, asked as 'Great Britain'; in 2015, asked as 'United Kingdom (Great Britain)'.



## NOTES

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## FIGURES

	Page
1 Direction of the nation and the world	5
2 Economic optimism	5
3 Globalisation	6
4 Free trade	6
5 Australia-US relations and Donald Trump	7
6 Importance of the US alliance	7
7 Factors in feelings towards the United States	8
8 Trust in global powers	9
9 Australia's best friend in the world	9
10 Australia, the United States and China	10
11 Military threat or economic partner?	10
12 Feeling of safety	11
13 Threats to the vital interests of Australia	11
14 Renewables and energy supply	12
15 Global warming	12
16 Use of military forces	13
17 Value of democracy	14
18 Rate of immigration	15
19 Asylum seekers	15
20 Aid budget	16
21 Indonesian democracy	16
22 Feelings thermometer	17

# ABOUT THE LOWY INSTITUTE POLL

The 2017 Lowy Institute Poll reports the results of our annual nationally representative telephone opinion survey, conducted this year between 1 and 21 March 2017 with a sample size of 1200 Australian adults.

A number of the questions in the Poll were first asked in previous Lowy Institute Polls, or have been adapted from questions asked in those years. Repeating questions in successive years allows us to compare public opinion on a single issue over time, building trend data on important international policy issues.

Some of our questions this year are identical to or closely adapted from questions asked previously by other survey organisations, which allows for the comparison of public opinion internationally.

The order of questions in the questionnaire was different from the order presented in this report.

## Methodology

For this year's annual Poll fieldwork, the Social Research Centre conducted a total of 1200 interviews by fixed and mobile telephone, with a sample designed to be nationally representative of all Australians 18 years and older. Quotas were set for each state and territory, with broad age-group and gender quotas. Interviewers continued making calls until each quota was filled. Within each geographic area, telephone numbers were randomly selected from regularly updated active residential and mobile phone number databases.

To ensure the sample included those people who tend to spend a lot of time away from home, a system of call backs and appointments was incorporated.

The results were then weighted to reflect the demographic profile of the Australian population aged 18 years and over, using data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

These weights were used in the production of all the tables for this report. On a truly random sample of 1200 the maximum sampling variance (or 'margin of error') is 2.8%, which means there is a 95% chance that responses from the sample fall within a range of 2.8% either side of the notional collective response of the whole population. Since these samples were stratified (by state/territory, age-group and sex), the error figure is a guide only. Where the results for a sub-sample are reported, the margin of error is greater.

## Acknowledgements

Several of the questions in this year's Poll were modelled on those developed by other polling organisations, including The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Pew Research Center, and Gallup.

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