

CONFIDENTIAL

Australians Attitudes to Children.

The Valuing Children
Initiative Benchmark Survey:
2016



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The Valuing Children Initiative Benchmark Survey: 2016

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Client: The Valuing Children Initiative
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Research methodology

The objectives of the research were to:

- Assess and benchmark attitudes towards children in Australia.
- Assess and benchmark attitudes towards policy consideration of children's needs in Australia.

This was an online survey. The survey was in the field from 31 May to Monday 6 June 2016.

The survey fieldwork was conducted by ResearchNow. Data tables were prepared by Kate Whelan (Essential Research). Weighting was prepared by ResearchNow.

The target population for this research was the Australian population aged 18+. Participants were drawn from the ResearchNow online survey panel. The survey was hosted by ResearchNow.

The survey was completed by 1002 respondents.

This data was weighted to ABS for age, gender and location. Soft quotas were placed on age, gender and location.

The survey was designed by Essential Research (Kate Whelan) in conjunction with the client. The analysis of this data was conducted by Kate Whelan.

SPSS and Excel and were used to analyse the results. Open-ended questions were analysed manually using a code frame developed by Essential Research.

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Survey Reliability

Properly constructed sample surveys can provide results that are described as statistically reliable. The level of statistical reliability is dependent upon the sample size and (except where it is extremely small) the size of the population has no practical effect.

A survey that has 1000 respondents will provide results that are – at the 95% confidence level – subject to a sampling variation of between 2% and 3% at the total response level. Sub-samples, because of their smaller size, will exhibit larger sampling variances. The following table shows the sampling variances at the 95% confidence level for a range of sample sizes and response levels.

Sample Size	Variation where the answer is near the percentage of				
	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
100	6%	8%	9%	9%	10%
200	4%	5%	6%	7%	7%
300	3%	5%	5%	6%	6%
400	3%	4%	4%	5%	5%
500	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%
600	2%	3%	4%	4%	4%
700	2%	3%	3%	4%	4%
800	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
900	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
1000	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%

Overall the confidence level was set as 95%. In this report where variation in sub-samples is statistically significant a comment has been made.

For the purposes of simplicity, we have rounded percentages to the nearest whole number. This may result in some percentage totals being 99% or 101%.



Executive summary

About the sample

This was an online poll of n=1002 Australians aged 18+ and was conducted from late May to early June 2016. This data was weighted after quotas were placed on age, gender and location.

Issues

Although 86% rated 'looking after the interests of children' as an issue that was important to them, this placed this issue as the 9th most important out of a list of ten. The only issue that ranked lower was 'addressing climate change'.

Although those with children in their household were far more likely than those without to consider this issue important (95% compared to 79%), this figure was not significantly greater than those who rated 'looking after the interests of older Australians' as important (93% of those with children in their household).

This is supported by the finding that just over half (51%) of Australians agree that issues like jobs and the economy are more important to them than the needs of children.

Although 86% believe that 'looking after the interests of children' is important, 40% believe that the government already gives 'enough consideration' to children when making decisions. The only group that gathered a higher figure was 'parents' (45%).

Nearly half (46%) believe that governments give 'too little' consideration to children; although by comparison, even more (66%) of Australians believe that governments give 'too little consideration' to older Australians.

Describing Children

The five most commonly selected words to describe children were:

1. Spoilt (57%).
2. Fortunate (47%).
3. Lazy (45%).
4. Selfish (44%).
5. Vulnerable (38%).

The prevalence of negative descriptors (spoilt, lazy, selfish) is supported by the findings that over three-quarters (78%) of Australians agree that children today are more disrespectful than previous generations.

The fact that 'vulnerable' ranks highly is supported by the finding that less than one in five (16%) agree that Australia is a safer place today than when they grew up.

Although there is a strong prevalence of negative descriptors, very few agree with the traditional idea that children should be seen and not heard (16% agree). Likewise, just one quarter (24%) of Australians agree that too much focus is given to the needs of children, at the expense of people like themselves.



Roles in Protecting Children

It would appear that Australians generally agree with the idea that looking after children and their interests is the responsibility of the entire community, with:

- 74% agreeing that the wellbeing of children is the shared responsibility of the entire community, and;
- 72% agreeing that all Australian adults are responsible for the best interests of children, including those who are not their own.

However, an overwhelming 79% of Australians believe that parents are the most responsible for protecting and promoting the wellbeing of children in Australia today.

Over half (59%) of Australians believe that Australian society is committed to protecting and prioritising the needs of children.

Although there is majority support for the appointment of a Federal Minister for Children and Future Generations (55%), just over one quarter (26%) say they neither support nor oppose this, arguably demonstrating a lack of engagement with the issue.

The role of children

Although a very large majority (81%) of Australians agree that the best interests of children should always be considered in all decisions made by adults, participants don't necessarily agree that children can have agency in advocating for their own best interests:

- 59% agree that children are less capable than adults of saying what is best for them.
- 63% agree that a child's word is less likely to be believe than that of an adult.
- 70% of Australians agree that children belong to their parents until the age of 18.
- Just 57% of Australians agree that the opinions of children should be considered just as important as adults.
- Almost half (49%) agree that children today have too many rights.

Being a child today

Almost half (48%) of Australians believe that it is more challenging to be a child today than when they were a child. In the open-ended comments, the key reasons for this were considered to be:

1. Children are under more pressure, and have greater expectations on them than in the past.
2. There is too much access to technology.

Overall, 80% of Australians say they are concerned about the health and happiness of future generations of Australians. In the open-ended comments, the key reasons for this were considered to be:

1. Health issues, such as obesity through poor diet and a lack of exercise, but also mental health.
2. Economic issues, such as concern about fewer job opportunities, a rising cost of living and the cost of housing.

Valuing Children

Although the largest proportion (44%) believe that children today are valued 'about the same' as in the past, almost one in three (29%) believe they are more valued. Just 16% believe they are less valued.

For those that said '**about the same**', the key justifications were that 'they cannot see any change from the past' (28%) or 'children are always valued, no matter what' (27%).

For the almost one third of Australians who thought children were '**more valued**' than in the past, the key reasons were:

1. Children are listened to and respected (have more of a say in family decisions) (18%).
2. Children are given everything they want or spoilt (13%).
3. Children have more rights and legal protection than in the past (10%).
4. Children have more opportunities (10%).
5. Children are protected/over-protected by family (i.e. not allowed to play outside unsupervised) (8%).

Just 16% of Australians believe that children are '**less valued**' today than in the past, the key reasons being:

1. Parents are too busy to spend quality time with their (25%).
2. Children are not disciplined, not given boundaries and/or have bad manners (15%).
3. Children expect everything to be given to them and are spoilt (12%).
4. New generation is self-centred, rude and apathetic (7%).
5. Society has changed for the worse (5%).

The Valuing Children Initiative

For Australians in this survey, valuing children in practice meant:

1. Caring for them and looking after them.
2. Listening to them and valuing their opinions.
3. Understanding that they are 'the future'.
4. Providing them with education.
5. Respecting them.

Just 4% of Australians claim to have heard of 'The Valuing Children Initiative'. 91% said they had not heard of them, and 5% don't know.



Summary of Results

1.1 Issues of importance

Question: How important are the following issues to you personally?

	TOTAL Important	TOTAL Not Important	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important	Haven't really thought about it
Addressing Climate change.	79%	19%	41%	38%	13%	6%	2%
Management of the economy.	95%	3%	63%	32%	3%	<1%	1%
Looking after the interests of children (0-17yrs).	86%	11%	57%	29%	8%	3%	3%
Looking after the interests of older Australians.	92%	6%	59%	33%	5%	1%	2%
The quality of Australia's health system.	97%	2%	78%	19%	2%	<1%	1%
Australian jobs and protection of local industries.	95%	4%	62%	33%	3%	1%	1%
Housing affordability.	91%	7%	59%	32%	6%	1%	1%
Security and the war on terrorism.	88%	10%	55%	33%	8%	2%	1%
A quality education system.	95%	4%	71%	24%	3%	1%	1%
A fair taxation system.	95%	4%	67%	28%	3%	1%	1%

Comments

Although 86% considered it to be important, from the list of 10 items, 'looking after the interest of children' was the 9th most important issue.

By comparison, 'looking after the interests of older people' was considered to be important by 92% of Australians, and was the 6th ranked issue.

Interestingly, 'addressing climate change' (79%) was the only issue considered to be less important – an issue that will also affect children.

Differences by segments

Females (88%) were only slightly more likely than males (83%) to consider 'looking after the interests of children' as an issue that is important to them.

There was little difference between the ages – though those aged 31-45 (those most likely to be parents with children) were more likely to rate this issue as important (89% said it was important compared to 83% of those under 30 and 85% of those aged 46+).

Unsurprisingly, those with children in their household were far more likely than those without to consider this issue important (95% compared to 79%). By way of contrast, 93% of those without children in their household (and 93% of those with children) rated 'looking after the interests of older Australians' as important.

Those in regional areas (90%) were more likely than those in metropolitan areas (84%) to rate this as important.

Those who identify as having an Australian cultural background (87%) were more likely than those with a cultural background other than Australian (79%) to rate this as important.



1.2 Government consideration

Question: When making decisions about policies, do you believe governments in Australia give enough, too much or too little consideration to the impact on the following groups?

	Give too much consideration	Give enough consideration	Give too little consideration	Haven't really thought about it
Older Australians.	4%	26%	66%	5%
Children (0-17yrs).	5%	40%	46%	8%
Parents.	8%	45%	41%	5%
Average working adults.	2%	39%	55%	4%
People on lower incomes.	6%	24%	66%	4%
Small businesses.	5%	40%	49%	6%
Large businesses.	58%	30%	6%	6%

Comments

40% of Australians believe that the government gives 'enough consideration' to children when making decisions. This is the same figure as for 'small business' (40%) and just slightly less than for 'parents' (45%).

Nearly half (46%) believe that governments give 'too little' consideration to children, with only parents (41%) gathering a lower result. By comparison, 66% of Australians believe that governments give 'too little consideration' to older Australians.

The only group considered to be giving too much consideration by governments by a significant proportion of Australians is 'large business' (58%).

Differences by segments

Females (53%) were far more likely than males (40%) to think that governments give too little consideration to children; likewise males (45%) were more likely than females (36%) to think that governments give them 'enough' consideration.

Again, those aged 31-45 (and most likely to have children) were more likely to think that governments give children too little consideration (54%, compared to 44% of under 30's, 47% of those aged 46-60 and 39% of those aged 60+). However, by comparison over half of all aged groups thought older Australians weren't given enough consideration; 52% of those aged under 30, 66% of those aged 31-45, 70% of those aged 46-60 and 74% of those aged 60+.

Surprisingly, just 57% of those with children in their household believe the government give children too little consideration (compared to 40% of non-parents). By comparison, 66% of those with children believe that governments give too little consideration to older Australians.



1.3 Agreement with statements about children PART 1

Question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Total AGREE	Total DISAGREE	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Haven't really thought about it	Have thought about it, but I'm not sure
Governments should consider the needs of the current population rather than make decisions or policy in the interests of future generations.	43%	45%	10%	33%	37%	8%	6%	6%
I care about the needs of children, but issues like jobs and the economy are more important to me.	51%	38%	11%	40%	31%	7%	6%	5%
Children today have too many rights.	49%	41%	14%	35%	34%	7%	6%	5%
Children across Australia have fair and equal opportunities to flourish and maximise on their potential.	48%	44%	6%	42%	34%	10%	5%	3%
The opinions of children should be considered just as important as those of adults.	57%	32%	10%	47%	29%	3%	5%	5%
Too much focus is given to the needs of children, at the expense of people like myself.	24%	62%	5%	19%	49%	13%	9%	5%
The best interests of children should always be considered in all decisions made by adults.	81%	13%	26%	55%	11%	2%	4%	3%



1.4 Agreement with statements about children PART 2

Question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Total AGREE	Total DISAGREE	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Haven't really thought about it	Have thought about it, but I'm not sure
A child's word is less likely to be believed than that of another adult.	63%	28%	9%	54%	24%	4%	5%	4%
Children should be seen and not heard.	16%	77%	4%	12%	45%	32%	4%	3%
Children are more disrespectful than previous generations.	78%	16%	36%	42%	12%	4%	3%	3%
Children in Australia are highly respected by adults.	30%	55%	2%	28%	46%	9%	9%	6%
Until they reach the age of 18 years children belong to their parents or carers.	70%	23%	23%	47%	20%	3%	4%	4%
The wellbeing of children is the shared responsibility of the entire community.	74%	19%	21%	53%	15%	4%	4%	3%
All Australian adults are responsible for the best interests of children, including those who are not their own.	72%	19%	21%	51%	15%	4%	6%	4%
Australians do all they can to promote and protect the wellbeing of children.	48%	41%	6%	42%	36%	5%	5%	5%



1.5 Agreement with statements about children PART 3

Question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Total AGREE	Total DISAGREE	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Haven't really thought about it	Have thought about it, but I'm not sure
I do all I can to promote and protect the wellbeing of children.	78%	10%	25%	53%	8%	2%	9%	3%
Australia is a safer society to grow up in today than it was when I was a child.	16%	75%	3%	13%	45%	30%	4%	5%
The quality of nutrition, care and relationships, beginning in the womb and through the first few years of life, impacts on a person's future wellbeing.	89%	5%	40%	49%	4%	1%	4%	3%
Children are less capable than adults of saying what is best for them.	59%	32%	12%	47%	28%	4%	4%	5%



Comments

The below commentary highlights the differences between key segments, and those more and less likely to agree. If a segment has not been mentioned it is because the responses of the segments were not significantly different.

- ***Governments should consider the needs of the current population rather than make decisions or policy in the interests of future generations.***

Participants were split in their agreement with this statement – 43% agree, but 45% disagree.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Those aged 46-60 (45%) and 60+ (48%). ▪ Regional Australians (48%). ▪ Those from cultural background other than Australian (52%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Those aged 45 and under (39%). ▪ Those in metro areas (40%). ▪ Those with an Australian cultural background (43%).

- ***I care about the needs of children, but issues like jobs and the economy are more important to me.***

Just over half (51%) of Australians agree that issues like jobs and the economy are more important to them than the needs of children. 38% however disagree.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Males (57%). ▪ Older Australians (57% of those aged 45+). ▪ Those without children in their household (58%). ▪ Non-parents (57%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Females (46%). ▪ Younger Australians (46% of those aged under 45). ▪ Those with children in their household. (41%). ▪ Parents (47%).

- ***Children today have too many rights.***

Although almost half (49%) of Australians agree that children today have too many rights, 41% disagree.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Males (56%). ▪ Those aged 46-60 (55%) and 60+ (69%). ▪ Regional Australians (59%). ▪ Those without children in their household (58%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Females (42%). ▪ Those aged under 30 (29%) and 31-45 (41%). ▪ Those in metro areas (43%). ▪ Those with children in their household (41%).



- **Children across Australia have fair and equal opportunities to flourish and maximise on their potential.**

Again, the population of Australia is split in their response to this question; although 48% agree that children across Australia have fair and equal opportunities to flourish and maximise their potential, 44% disagree.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Males (54%). ▪ Over 45's (53%). ▪ Those with no child in their household (51%). ▪ Those with a cultural background other than Australian (62%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Females (43%). ▪ Under 45's (45%). ▪ Those with a child (45%). ▪ Those with an Australian cultural background (47%).

- **The opinions of children should be considered just as important as those of adults.**

57% of Australians agree that the opinions of children should be considered just as important as adults – however 32% disagree.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Females (63%). ▪ Those under 45 (62%). ▪ Those with children in the household (65%). ▪ Those with a cultural background other than Australian (69%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Males (51%). ▪ Those over 45 (52%). ▪ Those without children (48%). ▪ Those with an Australian cultural background (55%).

- **Too much focus is given to the needs of children, at the expense of people like myself.**

Almost one quarter (24%) of Australians agree that too much focus is given to the needs of children, at the expense of people like themselves. 62% disagree with this.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Males (32%). ▪ Over 45's (30%). ▪ Those without a child in their household (30%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Females (17%). ▪ Under 45's (20%). ▪ Those with a child (18%).

- **The best interests of children should always be considered in all decisions made by adults.**

A very large majority (81%) of Australians agree that the best interests of children should always be considered in all decisions made by adults. Just 13% disagree with this statement.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Those aged over 45 (86%). ▪ Those with children in the household (85%). ▪ Those with a cultural background other than Australian (68%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Those aged under 45 (75%). ▪ Those without children (79%). ▪ Those with an Australian cultural background (83%).



- **Children are less capable than adults of saying what is best for them**

A majority of Australians (59%) agree with this statement. 33% disagree.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Males (63%). ▪ Over 45's (68%). ▪ Those in regional areas (64%). ▪ Those without a child in their household (66%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Females (54%). ▪ Under 45's (49%). ▪ Those in metro areas (56%). ▪ Those with a child in their household (55%).

- **A child's word is less likely to be believed than that of another adult.**

A majority of Australians (63%) agree that a child's word is less likely to be believed than that of an adult. 28% disagree.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Those aged 60+ (71%). ▪ Those with an Australian cultural background (66%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Those aged 31-45 (54%). ▪ Those with a cultural background other than Australian (48%).

- **Children should be seen and not heard.**

Over three-quarters (77%) of Australians disagree with the traditional statement 'children should be seen and not heard'. Over one in 10 (16%) Australians however agree with this.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Males (21%). ▪ Those with no child in their household (19%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Females (11%). ▪ Those with children in their household (12%).

- **Children are more disrespectful than previous generations**

Over three-quarters (78%) of Australians agree that children today are more disrespectful than previous generations. Just 16% disagree.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Those aged 45+ (83%). ▪ Regional Australians (84%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Those aged under 30 (67%) and between 31-45 (77%). ▪ Those from metro areas (75%).

- **Children in Australia are highly respected by adults.**

Just over half (55%) of Australians disagree with the statement that children in Australia are highly respected by adults. However, almost one in three (30%) agree.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Males (34%). ▪ Those with a cultural background other than Australian (50%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Females (27%). ▪ Those with an Australian cultural background (27%).



- ***Until they reach the age of 18 years children belong to their parents or carers.***

70% of Australians agree that children belong to their parents until the age of 18. Just 23% disagree with this statement.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Those with a cultural background other than Australian (82%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Those with an Australian cultural background (69%).

- ***The wellbeing of children is the shared responsibility of the entire community***

74% of Australians agree that the wellbeing of children is the shared responsibility of the entire community. Almost one in five (19%) disagree with this.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents (77%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Non-parents (69%).

- ***All Australian adults are responsible for the best interests of children, including those who are not their own.***

72% of Australians agree that all Australian adults are responsible for the best interests of children, including those who are not their own. Almost one in five (19%) disagree with this.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents (76%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Non-parents (65%).

- ***Australians do all they can to promote and protect the wellbeing of children.***

Just 48% agree that Australians do all they can to promote and protect the wellbeing of children. 41% disagree.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Those with a cultural background other than Australian (63%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Those with an Australian cultural background (48%).

- ***I do all I can to promote and protect the wellbeing of children.***

Despite low numbers agreeing that Australians do all they can to promote and protect the wellbeing of children, a very large majority (78%) agree that they do all they can to promote and protect the wellbeing of children. Just 10% disagree.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Those with a child in their household (88%). ▪ Parents (85%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Those without a child (72%). ▪ Non-parents (65%).



- **Australia is a safer society to grow up in today than it was when I was a child.**

Less than one in five (16%) agree that Australia is a safer place today than when they grew up. 75% (or three quarters) disagree with this statement.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Males (19%). ▪ Those aged under 45 (19%). ▪ Those in metro areas (19%). ▪ Those with a cultural background other than Australian (31%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Females (12%). ▪ Those aged 45+ (13%). ▪ Those in regional areas (9%). ▪ Those with a cultural background other than Australian (13%).

- **The quality of nutrition, care and relationships, beginning in the womb and through the first few years of life, impacts on a person’s future wellbeing.**

Almost all (89%) of Australians agree with this statement. Just 5% disagree.

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Females (92%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Males (86%).



1.6 Responsibility for protecting children

Question: Which of the following groups do you see as being responsible for protecting and promoting the wellbeing of children in Australia today?

	Rank 1 %	Parents	Non-Parents	Male	Female
Parents.	79%	83%	80%	83%	80%
Governments.	3%	3%	3%	4%	2%
Teachers.	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Extended family.	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%
The wider community.	1%	14%	10%	1%	1%
Everyone (including people like myself).	12%	12%	13%	10%	14%
Haven't really thought about it.	4%	3%	4%	4%	2%

Comments

An overwhelming 79% of Australians believe that parents are the most responsible for protecting and promoting the wellbeing of children in Australia today.

As the results above demonstrate, there are only minor differences across the key segments.

The table below shows the results for the top three ranking position; interestingly, 'extended family' is selected at the second most important group by over half of Australians (53%). The next largest group is 'teachers' (13%).

	Rank 1 %	Rank 2 %	Rank 3 %
Parents.	79%	13%	3%
Governments.	3%	9%	14%
Teachers.	1%	15%	39%
Extended family.	1%	53%	22%
The wider community.	1%	3%	10%
Everyone (including people like myself).	12%	8%	12%
Haven't really thought about it.	4%	-	-



1.7 Describing Australian children

Question: Which of the words below would you use to describe children in Australia today? Please select all that apply.

	%		%
Spoilt	57%	Unpleasant	16%
Fortunate	47%	Unhappy	15%
Lazy	45%	Dishonest	14%
Selfish	44%	Honest	13%
Vulnerable	38%	Ignored	13%
Happy	30%	Caring	12%
Uncooperative	29%	Respected	11%
Active	27%	Mistreated	11%
Valued	24%	Well-behaved	9%
Safe	17%	Deprived	9%
Appreciated	16%	Trustworthy	8%
		None of these	4%

Comments

The five most commonly selected words to describe children were:

1. Spoilt (57%).
2. Fortunate (47%).
3. Lazy (45%).
4. Selfish (44%).
5. Vulnerable (38%).

The majority of these could be construed as negative; spoilt, lazy and selfish. Additionally, the top ranked 'positive' descriptor is 'fortunate' which reflects the negative descriptors (arguably because they are fortunate they are selfish, spoilt and lazy).

Interestingly however, a large proportion see them as 'vulnerable' (38%). This is reflected by the fact that just 17% see them as 'safe'.

Less than one in three (30%) would describe children today as happy. Less than a quarter (24%) see them as 'valued' and only 16% believe that they are appreciated.

Just 11% say that they would describe children as respected, and just 8% as trustworthy.



Differences by segments

As the tables below indicate, there were only minor differences between the key segments.

Parents		Non-Parents	
1. Spoilt (56%).		1. Spoilt (57%).	
2. Fortunate (50%).		2. Lazy (43%).	
3. Lazy (46%).		3. Selfish (42%)	
4. Selfish (46%).		4. Fortunate (41%).	
5. Vulnerable (42%).		5. Vulnerable (30%).	

Female		Male	
1. Spoilt (55%).		1. Spoilt (58%).	
2. Fortunate (45%).		2. Fortunate (49%).	
3. Lazy (45%).		3. Lazy (45%).	
4. Selfish (45%).		4. Selfish (44%).	
5. Vulnerable (33%).		5. Vulnerable (43%).	

Under 30	31- 45	46-60	60+
1. Spoilt (50%).	1. Spoilt (56%).	1. Spoilt (60%).	1. Spoilt (59%).
2. Fortunate (42%).	2. Lazy (47%).	2. Selfish (53%).	2. Fortunate (56%).
3. Lazy (40%).	3. Fortunate (46%).	3. Lazy (49%).	3. Selfish (52%).
4. Selfish (35%).	4. Selfish (38%).	4. Fortunate (42%).	4. Lazy (43%).
5. Vulnerable (35%).	5. Vulnerable (34%).	5. Vulnerable (41%).	5. Vulnerable (41%).



1.8 Being a child today

Question: In your opinion, is it easier to be a child today than it was when you were a child?

	%	18-30	31-45	46-60	60+	Male	Female
TOTAL Easier	34%	44%	35%	32%	27%	38%	31%
TOTAL More challenging	48%	28%	46%	52%	62%	44%	51%
Much easier.	21%	23%	21%	23%	18%	25%	18%
A little easier.	13%	21%	14%	9%	9%	14%	13%
About the same.	12%	18%	13%	10%	9%	12%	12%
A little more challenging.	21%	15%	25%	20%	22%	20%	21%
A lot more challenging.	27%	12%	22%	31%	40%	24%	29%
I've never really thought about it.	6%	10%	5%	6%	3%	5%	6%

Comments

Almost half (48%) of Australians believe that it is more challenging to be a child today than when they were a child.

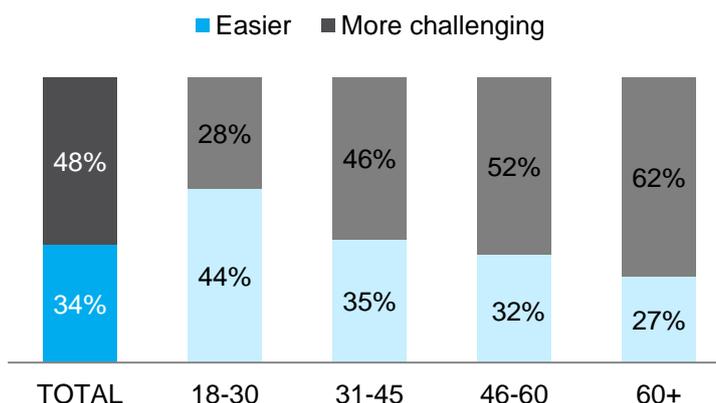
However, just over one third (34%) believe it is easier.

Differences by segments

The older the respondent, the more likely they were to think that it is more challenging to be a child today than when they were children; 62% of those aged 60+ say it is more challenging, compared to just 28% of those aged 18-30.

Females (51%) were also more likely than males (44%) to think that it is more challenging to be a child today.

However, those who are parents are more likely to think that it is more challenging to be a child today than non-parents (53% v. 38%) indicating that age is far more of a factor than any other variable.



1.9 Being a child today: Comments

Question: And why do you say that?

There were 944 responses to this question.

The key themes that emerged in the comments are listed below.

More challenging: 48%

Almost half of Australians believe that being a child today is more challenging than in the past.

The top five reasons for this were:

1. Expectations of children/ Societal pressure/ Peer pressure (24%).
2. Technology (Too much access, becoming dependent, too much screen time) (21%).
3. Life is more complicated now/ Life used to be simpler (14%).
4. Not as safe/Safety issues (children cannot play in the streets/walk home from school (12%).
5. Social media (11%).

1. Expectations children are under.	<p><i>So much is expected of them at a much younger age. They need to have their careers mapped out as teens or miss out on getting into uni.</i></p> <p><i>They are expected to achieve standards much higher than I was when I was young.</i></p> <p><i>Much more is expected of children today. They are expected to excel in every aspect of their lives.</i></p>
2. Technology.	<p><i>Technology has had a great impact on life today whereas when I was a child there was little, if any technology.</i></p> <p><i>Technology. Too easy to access and too easy for children to trust over the web.</i></p> <p><i>There is so much technology that stops children getting outside and learning from the environment and communicate with other people.</i></p>
3. Life is more complicated now.	<p><i>Life is so complicated now. There is no "right way" to do anything.</i></p> <p><i>Life was simple easier less influenced by bad choices.</i></p> <p><i>Life was simple you did not need much to be happy.</i></p>
4. Not as safe.	<p><i>When I was a child, children could roam the streets without worrying about being attacked by predators.</i></p> <p><i>Society is more dangerous, children are more exposed to and normalised on violence thru games, tv, internet, etc.</i></p> <p><i>The world seems to be a far more dangerous place. I grew up being able to be a child, so many these days face situations that I never did.</i></p>
5. Social media.	<p><i>Social media puts more expectations on them.</i></p> <p><i>With social media pressures expectations are higher.</i></p> <p><i>I think social media presents many threats that weren't around when I was a child.</i></p>



Easier: 34%

Just over a third of Australians believe that it is easier to be a child today than in the past

The top five reasons for this were:

1. Get everything handed to them/Handed on a silver platter/Don't have to be responsible or accountable (28%).
2. Have access to technology (electronic devices, gaming consoles) (22%).
3. More opportunities available for them (range of sports or other activities) (12%).
4. Lack of discipline/ Less discipline/ Children are disrespectful and are not punished (11%).
5. Children don't work/ Don't do chores/ Don't work hard for what they want (9%).

1. Get everything handed to them.	<p><i>They are handed everything and have no consequences.</i></p> <p><i>Kids seem to just get what they want a bit more!</i></p> <p><i>Because everything is handed to them on a silver platter. They don't have to work for anything.</i></p>
2. Have access to technology.	<p><i>Children these days have so much technology etc available for them to help them learn.</i></p> <p><i>They have all the technology to make their lives easier.</i></p> <p><i>There's a lot more advance tech out there to help with education.</i></p>
3. More opportunities available for them.	<p><i>Kids these days have a lot more opportunities and resources at their disposal.</i></p> <p><i>Children have much more opportunities to do different things. When I was a child it was limited.</i></p> <p><i>Kids today have more opportunities in education sport etc.</i></p>
4. Lack of discipline.	<p><i>Kids today get away with everything.</i></p> <p><i>Because years ago children were disciplined nowadays children get away with more.</i></p> <p><i>Because the fault of their actions fall on everyone else before themselves e.g. Parents , teachers.</i></p>
5. Children don't work/ Don't do chores.	<p><i>Kids don't feel the need to do things for themselves, be accountable or responsible.</i></p> <p><i>We had to work for everything we got and didn't have all the "mod cons" the kids have these days.</i></p> <p><i>We earned everything we got. This generation expects the world without earning anything.</i></p>



About the same: 12%

Just 12% thought that being a child today was ‘about the same’ as when they were children.

The top five reasons for this were:

1. Can't see a difference/ Seems the same (24%).
2. There are different issues for children these days/Children face different problems (21%).
3. Some aspects harder, some easier, balances out (21%).
4. Wasn't that long ago that I grew up (6%).
5. More opportunities available to them (e.g. access to healthcare) (4%).

1. Can't see a difference.	<p><i>Nothing has really changed.</i></p> <p><i>Australian values haven't really changed.</i></p> <p><i>I feel they do have opportunity today just like in my day.</i></p>
2. There are different issues for children these days.	<p><i>There are different threats to children today with the internet but I still think there were threats in different ways when I was young.</i></p> <p><i>Every age has its own set of problems, challenges and advantages. Children are adaptable.</i></p> <p><i>We had challenges back then and they have challenges these days.</i></p>
3. Some aspects harder, some easier.	<p><i>There are more opportunities and technologies these days for education, health and growth, but there is also less time and space for adventure and just being a child.</i></p> <p><i>The challenge never changes doesn't matter the time you grow up.</i></p> <p><i>Different benefits and challenges but weighs equal in the end.</i></p>
4. Wasn't that long ago that I grew up.	<p><i>I don't think there is enough of a gap for any major change to have happened.</i></p>
5. More opportunities available to them.	<p><i>I didn't have the opportunities of my children, access to healthcare that they have.</i></p>



Full Coded Data

'Challenging or much more challenging': Theme	
Expectations children are under/ Societal pressure/ Peer pressure.	24%
Technology (Too much access, becoming dependent, too much screen time).	21%
Life is more complicated now/ Life used to be simpler.	14%
Not as safe/Safety issues (children cannot play in the streets/walk home from school).	12%
Social media.	11%
Crime (Drugs, violence, grooming, terrorism).	10%
Economic situations (unemployment, less job opportunities).	10%
Lack of discipline and clear boundaries/ Not being taught respect.	8%
Access to internet (overuse, bombarded with information, seeing things before they should).	8%
Parents have less time for their kids/ Parents busy working.	6%
Access to content they shouldn't see/ Exposed to too much (on TV and online).	5%
Distractions from electronic devices/ Too much stimulation.	5%
Bullying (Cyber-bullying).	4%
Children are under pressure to grow up too quickly.	4%
Pressure to succeed academically.	4%
Demand too much/ Are not grateful for what they have.	3%
Too much choice.	3%
Education (need more funding).	3%
Rules imposed by government.	2%
Overprotective/ Coddled.	2%
Less freedom.	2%
Social isolation (not participating in conversation, looking at screen instead).	2%
More stress.	2%
Dysfunctional families/ Less family support.	1%
Not enough physical activity.	1%
Less community support.	1%
Climate change.	1%
More freedom.	1%
Other.	5%
Unsure.	5%



‘Much Easier or Easier’: Theme

Get everything handed to them/Handed on a silver platter/Don't have to be responsible or accountable.	28%
Have access to technology (electronic devices, gaming consoles).	22%
More opportunities available for them (range of sports or other activities).	12%
Lack of discipline/ Less discipline/ Children are disrespectful and are not punished.	11%
Children don't work/ Don't do chores/ Don't work hard for what they want.	9%
Have more rights/ Protect from physical abuse/ Needs of children high priority.	8%
Financially better off (Parents more financially stable, more to offer children).	7%
More resources available for them at school (Technology at school, children using computers in class).	6%
Life is much easier and more comfortable than it used to be.	6%
Children are spoilt/ Lazy/ Ungrateful.	5%
Access to the internet.	5%
Unsure.	5%

‘About the same’: Theme

Can't see a difference/ Seems the same.	24%
There are different issues for children these days/Children face different problems.	21%
Some aspects harder, some easier, balances out.	21%
Wasn't that long ago that I grew up.	6%
More opportunities available to them (e.g. access to healthcare).	4%
Children given everything.	2%
Still facing a lot of the same issues.	2%
Depends on many factors.	2%
It is always hard growing up.	2%
Children are adaptable and cope.	2%
Similar goals (education, wealth).	1%
Access to good quality education.	1%
Other.	5%
Unsure.	14%



1.10 Valuing children

Question: In your opinion, are children in Australia today valued more, less, or the same as when you were a child?

	%	18-30	31-45	46-60	60+	Male	Female
TOTAL More valued.	29%	30%	35%	29%	24%	30%	35%
TOTAL Less valued.	16%	10%	14%	19%	21%	10%	14%
Much more valued.	10%	8%	13%	11%	7%	8%	13%
A little more valued.	20%	21%	22%	18%	17%	21%	22%
About the same.	44%	43%	41%	43%	49%	43%	41%
A little less valued.	13%	9%	12%	14%	17%	9%	12%
A lot less valued.	3%	1%	3%	5%	4%	1%	3%
I've never really thought about it.	10%	17%	9%	9%	6%	17%	9%

Comments

Almost half (44%) of Australians believe that children are valued 'about the same' amount today as when they were children themselves.

However, 29% believe they are more valued. Just 16% believe they are less valued.

Differences by segments

Unlike the previous question regarding whether things were easier or harder for children today, there was very little difference by age segment for this question.

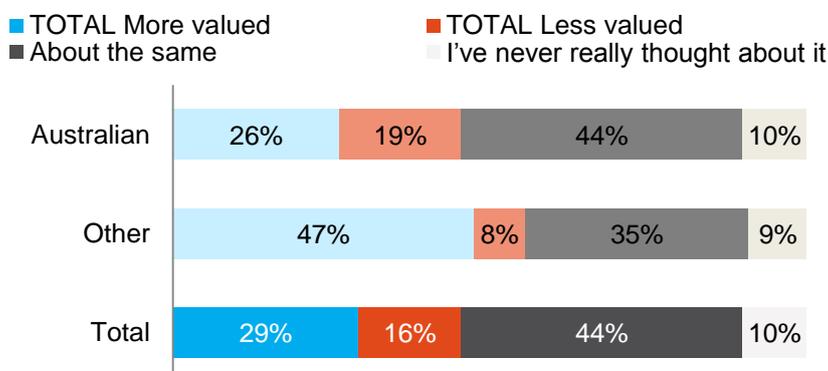
Older respondents (those aged 60+) were slightly more likely than younger respondents to believe that children are valued 'about the same' as when they were children.

There was also very little difference between the genders; however 17% of males compared to 9% of females said they'd 'never really thought about it'.

Those in metropolitan areas (31%) were slightly more likely than those in regional areas (26%) to think that children today are more valued than when they were children.

Interestingly, there was no significant difference between the responses of those with children in their household, and those without.

Those who identified as being from a cultural background other than Australian were far more likely to think that children today are more valued; 47% said they were more valued compared to just 26% of those with an Australian cultural background.



1.11 Valuing children: Comments

Question: And why do you say that?

There were 897 responses to this question.

The key themes that emerged in the comments are listed below.

About the same: 44%

Almost half of Australians believe that children are valued 'about the same' as they have been in the past.

The top two reasons for this were:

1. Cannot see any change/It is the same (28%).
2. Children are always valued no matter what generation/ Children are always loved and valued/Parents love their children (27%).

1. Cannot see any change.	<i>Nothing fundamentally has changed.</i> <i>I don't see much difference from when I was growing up.</i> <i>I don't think we value children any more or less than previous generations.</i> <i>Doesn't seem to be any increase or decrease in neglect.</i>
2. Children are always valued.	<i>Because children are always valued by their parents no matter what generation</i> <i>I think everyone values children but circumstances has made it difficult to protect them.</i> <i>Why would they be more or less valued, a child is priceless always.</i>



More valued: 29%

29% Australians believe that children are more valued than they have been in the past.

The top five reasons for this were:

1. Children are listened to and respected (have more of a say in family decisions) (18%).
2. They are given everything they want/ Spoilt (13%).
3. Children have more rights and legal protection (10%).
4. Children have more opportunities (10%).
5. Children are protected by family (not allowed to play outside unsupervised)/ Overprotective families/parents (8%).

<p>1. Children are listened to and respected.</p>	<p><i>Their opinions are listened to they have a say and are more confident.</i></p> <p><i>When I was a child, my opinion didn't count. Children these days have a voice and are listened to a lot more.</i></p> <p><i>I think people look at children more as people now, when I was a kid there was still some of the 'seen but not heard' notion.</i></p>
<p>2. They are given everything they want.</p>	<p><i>There seems to be more children these days who are treated like royalty or are spoiled.</i></p> <p><i>They get given things we did not have as a child. We made our own happiness. Kids today get most things they want.</i></p> <p><i>They are given what they want and treated very preciousy.</i></p>
<p>3. Children have more rights and legal protection.</p>	<p><i>They have more rights than we did.</i></p> <p><i>It's all about child safety and wellbeing today than I can ever remember.</i></p> <p><i>There's laws FINALLY coming in to protect children and their rights.</i></p>
<p>4. Children have more opportunities.</p>	<p><i>Greater outlets for children to achieve success.</i></p> <p><i>More opportunities given to them at school and outside of the home, better experiences and money and time given to them.</i></p> <p><i>More systems set up for kids now days more opportunities.</i></p>
<p>5. Children are protected by family.</p>	<p><i>They are treated as frail/delicate creatures.</i></p> <p><i>We over coddle them.</i></p> <p><i>Parents are over protective and shadow the kids.</i></p>



Less valued: 16%

Just 16% of Australians believe that children are less valued today than they have been in the past.

The top five reasons for this were:

1. Parents are too busy to spend quality time with their children (working, on their phone)/ Time poor (25%).
2. Children have bad manners and do not respect adults/Children are not disciplined/ Not given boundaries (15%).
3. Children expect everything to be given to them/ They don't appreciate what they have/ Spoilt/ Don't want to work (12%).
4. New generation is self-centred, rude and apathetic/ Have a bad reputation (7%).
5. Change in society (5%).

1. Parents are too busy.	<p><i>Parents don't seem to focus as much on parenting and more on social standing.</i></p> <p><i>They are left to bring themselves up a lot these days when the mother goes to work.</i></p> <p><i>Everyone too busy working to spend time with kids.</i></p>
2. Children have bad manners.	<p><i>Parents today don't give their children the right discipline.</i></p> <p><i>Kids do not respect adults like they used to.</i></p> <p><i>They are not taught good old fashioned manners, or care or respect for others.</i></p>
3. Children expect everything to be given to them.	<p><i>Children expect everything to be given to them without working for it.</i></p> <p><i>They been spoiled too much.</i></p> <p><i>Kids these days have no appreciation of hard work or what older Australians have done to make their life the way it is today.</i></p>
4. New generation is self-centred.	<p><i>Because they only see themselves and nothing else around them, community doesn't matter to them, it's them and them alone.</i></p> <p><i>Children over-rate themselves and I think people don't rate them as high.</i></p>
5. Change in society.	<p><i>Society has changed.</i></p> <p><i>Society is meaner today.</i></p> <p><i>Just the way life has become.</i></p>



Full Coded Data

'About the same': Theme	
Cannot see any change/ It is the same.	28%
Children are always valued no matter what generation/ Children are always loved and valued/Parents love their children.	27%
Depends/ Depends on the parents.	4%
Children are the future so will always be valued.	3%
Not enough time has passed/ Not old enough to notice a difference.	2%
Children are respected and listened to.	2%
Parents always try to do what is best for their children and protect their children.	1%
Children have choice and opportunities.	1%
Children given a lot these days.	1%
Parents are time poor/ Working a lot and do not have as much time to spend with their children.	1%
Unsure.	33%
Other.	5%

'More valued': Theme	
Children are listened to and respected (have more of a say in family decisions).	18%
They are given everything they want/ Spoilt.	13%
Children have more rights and legal protection.	10%
Children have more opportunities.	10%
Children are protected by family (not allowed to play outside unsupervised)/ Overprotective families/parents.	8%
Children's needs are a priority (by government and parents).	6%
Attitudes towards children are changing (value intelligence, value rights).	6%
More valued than when I was growing up/ Improved since I was a child (General statement).	4%
There is a lot of support for children (emotionally, financially).	4%
Smaller families these days so children are valued more/Less people are having children so they are valued more.	4%
Parents are more involved in their children's lives.	4%
Good quality education system.	4%
Not disciplined as much (sometimes they are disrespectful and ungrateful).	3%
Parents do more for their children (Children have less responsibilities).	1%
Other.	6%
Unsure.	15%



'Less valued': Theme	
Parents are too busy to spend quality time with their children (working, on their phone)/ Time poor.	25%
Children have bad manners and do not respect adults/Children are not disciplined/ Not given boundaries.	15%
Children expect everything to be given to them/ They don't appreciate what they have/ Spoilt/ Don't want to work.	12%
New generation is self-centred, rude and apathetic/ Have a bad reputation.	7%
Change in society.	5%
Some children are left behind by the government/ Lack of support/ Not protected/ Don't know their rights.	4%
Treated badly by family/ abused physically or emotionally.	4%
Not safe for children anymore (can't play outside, online grooming).	3%
More pressure these days (Social pressure, pressure on children to grow up quickly).	3%
Affect drugs and alcohol use by parents has on children.	3%
Adults do not respect children.	3%
Children are ignored/ Don't have a voice.	3%
Children seen as a liability or burden/ Less people wanting to have children.	2%
Some parents don't worry where their children are/ Lack of care and responsibility.	2%
People having children for the wrong reasons.	1%
Children aren't trusted.	1%
Other.	6%
Unsure.	17%



1.12 Concern about children

Question: How concerned are you for the health and happiness of future generations of Australians?

	%	18-30	31-45	46-60	60+	Male	Female
TOTAL Concerned.	80%	79%	82%	79%	79%	75%	84%
TOTAL Not very concerned.	14%	11%	12%	15%	16%	18%	9%
Very concerned.	31%	29%	30%	32%	33%	26%	35%
Somewhat concerned.	49%	50%	51%	47%	47%	49%	49%
Not very concerned.	12%	10%	11%	13%	14%	16%	8%
Not at all concerned.	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
I've never really thought about it .	7%	10%	6%	6%	5%	7%	6%

Comments

Overall, 80% of Australians say they are concerned about the health and happiness of future generations of Australians.

Just 14% said that they are not very concerned.

Differences by segments

Females (84%) were far more likely than males (74%) to be concerned about future generations.

There were no significant differences between the age segments.

There were also no significant differences by other segments, such as location, cultural background or education.

Those with children in their household (84%) were also more likely than those without children (75%) to be concerned about future generations.



1.13 Concern about children: Comments

Question: And why do you say that?

There were 935 responses to this question. The key themes that emerged in the comments are listed below.

Concerned: 80%

80% of Australians say that they are concerned about the health and happiness of future generations of Australians.

The top five reasons for this were:

1. Health issues (fast food instead of healthy food, not enough exercise, less active-lazy, mental health, wellbeing) (19%).
2. Economic issues (Less job opportunities, less production, rising cost of living, housing costs, tax system is unfair) (15%).
3. The children are the future/ Need to be looked after and their needs are a priority (11%).
4. Crime (drugs, violence, terrorism, online grooming, child exploitation) (10%).
5. Climate change/ Environmental concerns/ Pollution (10%).

Key Comments

The amount of sugar in everything. And lack of physical activity.

More and more people seem to suffer from depression especially the younger generation.

1. Health issues.

Children don't seem to be as active, there is also a change in diets, pollution and living conditions to previous generations.

There is a massive decline of production and work in Australia.

2. Economic issues.

Too much housing stress.

We are building a larger debt that will be passed on to future generations.

Because children is our future.

3. The children are the future.

Because it is our future and how our country may be ran later.

The future is important. There's no point worrying about today if there's no tomorrow.

Because a lot more kids are on drugs and alcohol a lot more than when we were growing up.

4. Crime.

Sexual predators are everywhere, there is no knowing where safe zones are.

Because we live in a world that is becoming more dangerous by the day.

Climate change poses a huge risk to everyone on the planet, humans and animals.

5. Climate change.

The future for the environment and economy due to the greed of the capitalist system is very dire.

I am extremely concerned about climate change, which will affect today's children disproportionately as they will have to live with effects of more unpredictable weather, fewer resources and economic impacts.



Not concerned: 14%

Just 14% of Australians say that they are not concerned about the health and happiness of future generations of Australians.

The top five reasons for this were:

1. Things will turn out alright/ Things have a way of working themselves out/ She'll be right (15%).
2. Have good resources and opportunities (12%).
3. Don't have much to complain about/ Things are fine/ Isn't much of a problem (9%).
4. Lucky compared to other countries (8%).
5. People should be responsible for their own health and happiness (7%).

Key Comments

1.	Things will turn out alright.	<i>People throughout the generations have always expressed concerns about the future; but things just seem to carry-on.</i>
2.	Good resources and opportunities.	<i>So many opportunities and better physical health and awareness of mental health.</i>
3.	Don't have much to complain about.	<i>I don't think there any major issues that will affect the future generations.</i>
4.	Lucky compared to other countries.	<i>Australia is an amazingly privileged country in comparison to many other places in the world.</i>
5.	People should be responsible for their own health and happiness.	<i>You are responsible for your own health and happiness.</i>



Full Coded Data

'Concerned': Theme	
Health issues (fast food instead of healthy food, not enough exercise, less active-lazy, mental health, wellbeing).	19%
Economic issues (Less job opportunities, less production, rising cost of living, housing costs, tax system is unfair).	15%
The children are the future/ Need to be looked after and their needs are a priority.	11%
Crime (drugs, violence, terrorism, online grooming, child exploitation).	10%
Climate change/ Environmental concerns/ Pollution.	10%
Life is more complicated/difficult/ Future looks harder than in the past/ Wrong track/ Getting worse - General comment.	9%
Other.	6%
Reduced funding from government for core services (health, education, police, and welfare).	5%
Not safe anymore (children can't walk home/play outside).	4%
Given too much and don't work hard/ Children do as they please/ Spoilt/ Materialistic.	4%
Political instability/ Do not trust the government's choices/policies.	4%
Inequality/ Increasing gap between rich and poor.	3%
Reliant on technology and the internet.	3%
Overpopulated/ Immigration.	3%
Children under a lot of pressure (social pressure, academic pressure, pressure to grow up quickly, social media).	3%
People are self-centred and greedy, people don't look out for each other.	3%
Education (schools overcrowded, lack of funding, lower quality education).	3%
Not disciplined/ Not respectful/ Children not taught boundaries.	3%
Government is short sighted/ Not making meaningful change/ More interested in re-election than making improvements.	2%
Less family time due to time poor parents (working too much or spending too much time on technology).	2%
Uncertainty of the future.	2%
Unsure.	11%



'Not concerned': Theme	
Things will turn out alright/ Things have a way of working themselves out/ She'll be right.	15%
Have good resources and opportunities.	12%
Don't have much to complain about/ Things are fine/ Isn't much of a problem.	9%
Lucky compared to other countries.	8%
People should be responsible for their own health and happiness.	7%
Won't be around to care.	6%
Do not have children.	5%
Not my problem.	5%
Children are supported and looked after.	5%
Should be focusing on the present.	3%
Technological improvements are making things better.	2%
Worried about future generations (effects of climate change, economic issues).	2%
Children are already given a lot/ Have things handed to them/ Don't have to look after themselves.	2%
Each generation is different/ Face different issues/ Each generation treated differently.	2%
Won't impact me.	1%
Other.	8%
Unsure.	14%



1.14 Level of commitment to protecting and prioritising children

Question: In your opinion how committed is Australian society to protecting and prioritising the needs of children?

	%	18-30	31-45	46-60	60+	Male	Female
TOTAL committed.	59%	61%	57%	58%	61%	56%	60%
TOTAL not committed.	24%	15%	25%	28%	28%	28%	22%
Very committed.	8%	5%	9%	10%	5%	7%	8%
Committed.	51%	55%	47%	47%	56%	49%	53%
Not very committed.	23%	15%	23%	26%	28%	26%	21%
Not at all committed.	1%	<1%	2%	2%	<1%	2%	1%
Not sure.	17%	24%	19%	14%	11%	16%	17%

Comments

Over half (59%) of Australians believe that Australian society is committed to protecting and prioritising the needs of children.

However, almost one-quarter (24%) say Australian society is not committed to protecting and prioritising the needs of children. A further 17% say they are 'not sure'.

Differences by segments

There were no significant differences between the genders or between the different age segments.

There were also no significant differences based on location, the presence of children in the home or education.

Those who identify with a cultural background other than Australian (65%) were more likely than those with an Australian cultural background (57%) to think that Australian society is committed to protecting and prioritising the needs of children.



1.15 Level of support for a Minister for Children and Future Generations

Question: Would you support or oppose the appointment of a Federal Minister for Children and Future Generations to ensure that their rights and needs are at the forefront of considerations?

	%	18-30	31-45	46-60	60+	Male	Female
TOTAL Support.	55%	58%	59%	55%	48%	50%	61%
TOTAL Oppose.	9%	3%	5%	12%	15%	13%	5%
Strongly support.	19%	21%	25%	16%	14%	15%	23%
Support.	36%	37%	34%	39%	34%	35%	37%
Neither support nor oppose.	26%	21%	25%	26%	30%	28%	23%
Oppose.	6%	2%	3%	7%	11%	8%	3%
Strongly oppose.	3%	1%	2%	5%	4%	4%	2%
Not sure.	10%	17%	11%	7%	7%	10%	11%

Comments

Although a majority (55%) of Australians support the appointment of a Federal Minister for Children and Future Generations, just over one quarter (26%) say they neither support nor oppose this.

Just 9% oppose it.

Differences by segments

Females (61%) were significantly more likely than males (50%) to support the appointment of this minister.

Those aged 60+ were also less likely to support this appointment; just 48% support it compared to the average of 55%. 15% of those aged 60+ opposed the appointment of this minister, compared to the average of 9% and an average of 4% for those aged 45 and under.

Those in metropolitan areas (57%) were slightly more likely to support this than those in regional areas (52%).

Those with children in their household (64%) were also far more likely than those without children (49%) to support this appointment. Likewise parents (including those whose children don't live with them) were more likely than non-parents to support this (58% v. 50%).

The higher the respondents education level, the more likely they were to support this appointment; 60% of those with at least a Bachelor degree support this compared to 56% with a trade certificate or diploma, and just 49% of those with only a high school education.

Those who identify with a cultural background other than Australian (66%) were more likely than those who identify as Australian (55%) to support this.



1.16 Attitude towards children

Question: From the scale below, please select the scale point that best describes how you feel about children:

	TOTAL Positive	TOTAL Negative	Very positive	Positive	Indifferent	Negative	Very negative	I've never thought about it
Your own children (parents only, n=590).	94%	2%	68%	26%	4%	2%	<1%	<1%
All Australian children*.	53%	9%	14%	39%	22%	7%	2%	16%

Comments

Parents have an overwhelmingly positive view of their children; 94% would describe their feelings towards their own children as 'very positive'.

However, parents have a significantly less favourable view of 'all Australian children'; although 65% would describe their feelings as positive, 8% said they had negative feelings and 25% said they were indifferent.

Just over half (53%) of Australians say they have a positive view of all Australian children.

*Note: this question was asked separately in the weekly Essential Report. Results were collected the week prior to the 4th of July 2016. The sample size is n=1000.



1.17 The meaning of valuing children

Question: Most Australians say that they value children. In practice, what does valuing children actually mean to you?

There were 984 responses to this question.

1. Care for them/Look after them (20%).

For one in five Australians, valuing children simply meant 'taking care of them', and meeting their emotional and physical needs, while setting them up for the future. Children who are valued are educated and nurtured to become strong, functioning and successful adults.

2. Listening to them/Letting them share their opinions/Take their opinions seriously (15%).

A significant number of Australians believe that valuing children means 'listening to them' and taking what they say on board. For participants in this survey that means more than simply allowing children to speak, it means acting on what they say and including their opinions in any decision making.

3. They are the future of our country (13%).

For a large number of participants children should be valued simply because 'they are the future'. These participants appeared to justify *why* children should be valued, rather than articulate *how* you value children.

4. Provide education (12%).

Educating children – particularly in 'life skills' – was considered to be crucial to valuing children. Children should be educated and nurtured to become the best version of themselves, and to be valuable members of society.

5. Respecting them (12%).

Respecting children was linked to valuing them – respecting that they are individuals, that their opinions are valued and that they should be protected and cherished.

Example comments per theme

- Care for them/look after them.

Caring and supporting them, to point them in the 'right' direction, to teach them independence.

Providing care (physical and psychological), education, and encouragement.

Ensuring that they are cared for and are given the opportunity to succeed.

- Listening to them/ Letting them share their opinions/ Take their opinions seriously.

Listening to what they have to say and acting accordingly.

Listening to them; respecting their opinions; allowing them the freedom to grow intellectually by making their own choices and, when I feel those choices are mistaken, reasoning with them rather than imposing my will or putting them down.

Listening to and including them in decision making.



- They are the future of our country.

They are the only future we have...The only reason for our existence.

They are the future, if they are not nurtured rite there is no hope for the race of man.

They are the future of this country and the ones who will be running it.

- Provide education

Educating them in life.

Teach and train them correctly and love them.

Supporting their education and ability to grow as a human.

- Respecting them

Respecting and protecting them.

I think it means to respect, love and cherish them.

Respecting them as an individual.

Respecting their rights and opinions.



Full Coded Data

'Concerned': Theme	
Care for them/ Look after them.	20%
Listening to them/ Letting them share their opinions/ Take their opinions seriously.	15%
They are the future of our country.	13%
Provide education.	12%
Respecting them.	12%
Nurturing them/ Supporting them.	11%
Give them opportunities to succeed/ Help them achieve their potential.	10%
Giving guidance/ Mentoring them/ Teach them right from wrong.	10%
Protect them/ Give them rights/ Prevent harm/ Keep them safe.	9%
Loving them/ The love you receive from a child.	9%
Setting boundaries and teaching them to respect people & have manners/ Discipline.	8%
Provide a safe environment/ Keep them safe.	8%
Help them be productive members of society/ Value their input in society.	5%
Provide healthcare (physical and mental wellbeing).	5%
Spending time and making an effort with them.	4%
Put them first/ The parent should put their child's needs before theirs.	4%
Let them be themselves/ Encourage them to be honest to themselves/ Encourage their individuality.	4%
Make them happy.	3%
Appreciating them.	3%
Teach them responsibility/accountability.	3%
Teach them to be kind/caring/Sharing.	3%
Providing necessities (food, water, shelter, clothes, housing).	2%
Treating them equally/ Treat them like a human being.	2%
Talking to them/ involve them in conversations.	2%
Encouraging them/ motivating them.	2%
Raise them to be confident/ resilient/ self-respect.	2%
Understand them.	1%
You do your best for them.	1%
Teach them to be honest/trustworthy/honourable.	1%
Teach them to respect the environment/ Recycle/ Do your part to reduce climate change.	1%
Teach them social skills.	1%
Other.	3%
Unsure.	11%

1.18 Knowledge of 'The Valuing Of Children Initiative'

Question: Have you heard of 'The Valuing Children Initiative'?

	%
Yes.	4%
No.	91%
Don't know.	5%

Comments

Just 4% of Australians claim to have heard of 'The Valuing Children Initiative'.

91% said they had not heard of them, and 5% don't know.

Demographics

Region	
Permanent, full-time	33%
Permanent, part-time	10%
Self-employed	8%
Casual (30+ hours)	2%
Casual (>30 hours)	6%
Contract	1%
Retired	21%
Home duties	8%
Unemployed and looking for work	6%
Unemployed and not looking for work	2%
Other	4%

Age	
18-25	14%
26-30	9%
31-35	9%
36-40	9%
41-45	9%
46-50	9%
51-55	8%
56-60	8%
61-65	7%
66-70	5%
70-75	4%
75+	8%

Region	
Sydney	20%
Regional NSW	12%
Melbourne	19%
Regional VIC	6%
Brisbane	10%
Regional QLD	10%
Adelaide	6%
Regional SA	2%
Darwin	1%
Regional NT	<1%
Perth	8%
Regional WA	2%
Hobart	1%
Regional TAS	1%
ACT	2%

Age	
Year 11 or below	13%
Year 12 or equivalent	17%
Trade certificate or apprenticeship	11%
Diploma, certificate etc.	23%
Bachelor or Honours degree	23%
Post-graduate qualifications	11%
I'd rather not say	2%

Marital Status	
Married	49%
De Facto or Partnered	16%
Divorced or Separated	10%
Single	19%
Widowed	4%
I'd rather not say	2%

Gender	
Male	49%
Female	51%
Other	-

Household	
Person living alone	15%
Single person with children	5%
Couple only	33%
Couple with children	32%
Group/share household	9%
Other	5%

Children	
Biological parent	59%
Adoptive parent	2%
Step-parent (or someone who lives with a partner with a child)	6%
Guardian to a dependent child	2%
Professional who works with children.	5%
None of these	34%



Cultural Background	
Australian	76%
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3%
European	22%
Asian	9%
Middle Eastern	2%
African	1%
North American	1%
South American	1%
Other	4%
I'd rather not say	1%

Income	
Negative income	2%
No income	5%
Less than \$30,999	18%
\$31,000 to \$45,999	13%
\$46,000 to \$60,999	14%
\$61,000 to \$75,999	9%
\$76,000 - \$100,999	14%
\$101,000 - \$120,999	11%
\$121,000 +	13%



Appendix A: Survey

1. Are you: **SR**
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other

2. What is your age? **SR**
 - a. 18-25
 - b. 26-30
 - c. 31-35
 - d. 36-40
 - e. 41-45
 - f. 46-50
 - g. 51-55
 - h. 56-60
 - i. 61-65
 - j. 66-70
 - k. 70-75
 - l. 75+

3. Where do you live? **SR**
 - a. Sydney
 - b. Regional NSW
 - c. Melbourne
 - d. Regional VIC
 - e. Brisbane
 - f. Regional QLD
 - g. Adelaide
 - h. Regional SA
 - i. Darwin
 - j. Regional NT
 - k. Perth
 - l. Regional WA
 - m. Hobart
 - n. Regional TAS
 - o. ACT
 - p. Other [**EXCLUDE**]

4. Do any of the following describe you? Please select all that apply. **MR [ALL QUALIFY]**
 - a. I am a biological parent
 - b. I am an adoptive parent
 - c. I am a step-parent (or someone who lives with a partner with a child)
 - d. I am a guardian to a dependent child
 - e. I am a professional who works with children.
 - f. None of these [**EXCLUSIVE OPTION**]



How important are the following issues to you personally? **SR PER ROW, ROTATE LIST**

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important	Haven't really thought about it
5. Addressing Climate change					
6. Management of the economy					
7. Looking after the interests of children (0-17yrs)					
8. Looking after the interests of older Australians					
9. A quality of Australia's health system					
10. Australian jobs and protection of local industries					
11. Housing affordability					
12. Security and the war on terrorism					
13. A quality education system					
14. A fair taxation system					

When making decisions about policies, do you believe governments in Australia give enough, too much or too little consideration to the impact on the following groups? **SR PER ROW, ROTATE LIST**

	Give too much consideration	Give enough consideration	Give too little consideration	Haven't really thought about it
15. Older Australians				
16. Children (0-17yrs)				
17. Parents				
18. Average working adults				
19. People on lower incomes				
20. Small businesses				
21. Large businesses				



Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? **SR PER ROW, ROTATE LIST (split across screens as necessary)**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Haven't really thought about it	Have thought about it, but I'm not sure
22. Governments should consider the needs of the current population rather than make decisions or policy in the interests of future generations.						
23. I care about the needs of children, but issues like jobs and the economy are more important to me.						
24. Children today have too many rights.						
25. Children across Australia have fair and equal opportunities to flourish and maximise on their potential.						
26. The opinions of children should be considered just as important as those of adults.						
27. Too much focus is given to the needs of children, at the expense of people like myself.						
28. The best interests of children should always be considered in all decisions made by adults.						
29. Children are less capable than adults of saying what is best for them.						
30. A child's word is less likely to be believed than that of another adult.						
31. Children should be seen and not heard.						
32. Children are more disrespectful than previous generations						
33. Children in Australia are highly respected by adults.						
34. Until they reach the age of 18 years children belong to their parents or carers.						
35. The wellbeing of children is the shared responsibility of the entire community						
36. All Australian adults are responsible for the best interests of children, including those who are not their own.						
37. Australians do all they can to promote and protect the wellbeing of children.						
38. I do all I can to promote and protect the wellbeing of children.						
39. Australia is a safer society to grow up in today than it was when I was a child						
40. The quality of nutrition, care and relationships, beginning in the womb and through the first few years of life, impacts on a person's future wellbeing.						



41. Which of the following groups do you see as being responsible for protecting and promoting the wellbeing of children in Australia today? **Please rank in order of 1 = most responsibility to 6 = least responsibility [RANK ORDER 1 – 7, MUST RANK ALL (A thru F), ROTATE A thru F, CODE G. IS EXCLUSIVE]**

- a. Parents
- b. Governments
- c. Teachers
- d. Extended family
- e. The wider community
- f. Everyone (including people like myself)
- g. Haven't really thought about it **[EXCLUSIVE OPTION]**

42. Which of the words below would you use to describe children in Australia today? *Please select all that apply.* **MR, ROTATE LIST**

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| a. Fortunate | l. Spoilt |
| b. Safe | m. Vulnerable |
| c. Valued | n. Mistreated |
| d. Honest | o. Dishonest |
| e. Active | p. Lazy |
| f. Respected | q. Ignored |
| g. Appreciated | r. Deprived |
| h. Caring | s. Selfish |
| i. Happy | t. Unhappy |
| j. Trustworthy | u. Uncooperative |
| k. Well-behaved | v. Unpleasant |
| | w. None of these [EXCLUSIVE OPTION] |

43. In your opinion, is it easier to be a child today than it was when you were a child? **SR**

- a. Much easier
- b. A little easier
- c. About the same
- d. A little more challenging
- e. A lot more challenging
- f. I've never really thought about it **[SKIP Q44]**

44. And why do you say that? **[OE]**

45. In your opinion, are children in Australia today valued more, less, or the same as when you were a child? **SR**

- g. Much more valued
- h. A little more valued
- i. About the same
- j. A little less valued
- k. A lot less valued
- l. I've never really thought about it **[SKIP Q46]**

46. And why do you say that? **[OE]**



47. How concerned are you for the health and happiness of future generations of Australians? **SR**
- a. Very concerned
 - b. Somewhat concerned
 - c. Not very concerned
 - d. Not at all concerned
 - e. I've never really thought about it [**SKIP Q48**]

48. And why do you say that? [**OE**]

49. In your opinion how committed is Australian society to protecting and prioritising the needs of children? **SR**

- a. Very committed
- b. Committed
- c. Not very committed
- d. Not at all committed
- e. Not sure

50. Would you support or oppose the appointment of a federal Minister for Children and Future Generations to ensure that their rights and needs are at the forefront of considerations? **SR**

- a. Strongly support
- b. Support
- c. Neither support nor oppose
- d. Oppose
- e. Strongly oppose
- f. Not sure

51. From the scale below, please select the scale point that best describes how you feel about children:
SR PER ROW

	Very positive	Positive	Indifferent	Negative	Very negative	I've never thought about it
Your own children						
All Australian children [DISPLAY ONLY IF 4 = a thru d]						

52. Most Australians say that they value children. In practice, what does valuing children actually mean to you? **OE**



53. Have you heard of 'The Valuing Children Initiative'? **SR**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

54. If you have any final comments you would like to make on any issues raised in this survey please feel free to do so below. [**OE, NOT COMPULSORY**]

55. Are you: **SR**

- a. Married
- b. De Facto or Partnered
- c. Divorced or Separated
- d. Single
- e. Widowed
- f. I'd rather not say

56. Which of the following best describes your employment status? **SR**

- a. Permanent, full-time
- b. Permanent, part-time
- c. Self-employed
- d. Casual (30+ hours per week)
- e. Casual (less than 30 hours per week)
- f. Contract
- g. Retired
- h. Home duties
- i. Unemployed and looking for work
- j. Unemployed and not looking for work
- k. Other

57. What is the composition of your current household? **SR**

- a. Person living alone
- b. Single person with children
- c. Couple only
- d. Couple with children
- e. Group/share household
- f. Other

58. What is the total net annual income from all sources – including pensions and allowances – your family receives? **SR**

Please note; if you live in a group/share household please answer for yourself only

- a. Negative income
- b. No income
- c. Less than \$30,999 (less than \$595 per week)
- d. \$31,000 to \$45,999 (\$596 - \$883 per week)
- e. \$46,000 to \$60,999 (\$884 - \$1172 per week)
- f. \$61,000 to \$75,999 (\$1173 - \$1460 per week)
- g. \$76,000 - \$100,999 (\$1461 - \$1941 per week)
- h. \$101,000 - \$120,999 (\$1942 - \$2325 per week)
- i. \$121,000 + (\$2326+ per week)



59. What is the highest level of education you have attained? **SR**

- a. Year 11 or below
- b. Year 12 or equivalent
- c. Trade certificate or apprenticeship
- d. Diploma, certificate etc.
- e. Bachelor or Honours degree
- f. Post-graduate qualifications
- g. I'd rather not say

60. What cultural backgrounds do you identify with? Please select all that apply to you. **SR**

- a. Australian
- b. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- a. European
- b. Asian
- c. Middle Eastern
- d. African
- e. North American
- f. South American
- g. Other
- h. I'd rather not say

[END SURVEY]



Essential.

RESEARCH