

Australian Attitudes to Immigration: Coming Apart or Common Ground?

Jeremy Sammut
Monica Wilkie



A catalogue record for this
book is available from the
National Library of Australia

Australian Attitudes to Immigration: Coming Apart or Common Ground?

Jeremy Sammut & Monica Wilkie



POLICY Paper 11

Contents

Disruption in Europe, the UK, and the US.....	1
Polarisation in Australia?	2
'Postcode' Polling	2
Attitudes to Intake.....	3
Attitudes to Integration	4
Attitudes to Culture	5
Attitudes to Border Protection	5
Implications for Immigration Policy	6
Congestion.....	6
Cohesion	6
Non-Discrimination	7
Political Implications for Public Support for Immigration	7
No 'Coming Apart'... but the Political Class is 'Out of Touch'	7
Learn Lessons from Border Protection.....	8
Appendix.....	9
Endnotes.....	11



Disruption in Europe, the UK, and the US

Five changes of prime minister in the past decade have seen Australia experience an unprecedented period of political instability. Yet the leadership turmoil that has engulfed both the Liberal and Labor parties pales in comparison to the political disruption that has occurred in comparable Western nations.

In Europe, so-called 'populist insurgencies' have displaced the political establishment. The loss of electoral support for the natural governing parties in favour of populist alternatives in a range of countries — including Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the Netherlands — has been fuelled by public dissatisfaction across a range of economic and social issues. However, populist disruption in the form of support for nativist or anti-immigrant parties has been particularly fuelled by the perceived mishandling of immigration policy by European governments; especially over the 'European migration crisis' of 2015 precipitated by the influx of asylum seekers and economic migrants from the Middle-East and North Africa into European Union nations.¹

Furthermore, the perception that such immigration policies disproportionately affect the more economically and socially disadvantaged sectors of the host country, has contributed to both social polarisation and political

disruption — not only across Europe, but also in Britain and the United States.

The best known examples of disruption are the unexpected 'Leave' victory in the 2016 Brexit referendum in the UK, and Donald Trump's 2016 election victory in the US. Immigration policy — heated controversy over the free movement of migrants from European Union nations into Britain, and the flow of illegal immigration across the Mexican border into the United States — played important roles in generating support both for Brexit and for Trump. So did the emergence of a new political geography, with higher support for Brexit and Trump concentrated in the relatively economically and socially disadvantaged areas of northern England and in the mid-west states, respectively, compared to London and southern England and the east and west coasts.²

Political disruption in the UK and the US has also highlighted the growing divide in world views, aspirations, values, and attitudes to key issues between what are conventionally termed the 'elites' and the ordinary voters. The explanations for political disruption — and for the apparent polarisation that has occurred in the UK and the US over questions such as immigration — that are provided in books such as Charles Murray's *Coming Apart* and

David Goodhart's *The Road to Somewhere* is that contemporary political attitudes are increasingly a function of social characteristics. The evidence from the UK and the US suggests that political attitudes increasingly reflect where people live (inner city or in the suburbs or regions), what kind of job they have (white or blue collar), and what level of education they have attained (whether they attended university or not).³

To assess whether Australia may be in danger of experiencing the same social polarisation — and thus whether it is in danger of similar political disruption — this Policy Paper discusses the findings of specially commissioned polling that explores the attitudes of 'elites' and 'ordinary' Australians to the issue that has caused the UK and US to 'come apart': immigration.

Polarisation in Australia?

One reason Australia has not experienced political disruption on the same scale as in other Western nations is that immigration policy has hitherto not been the contentious issue it has become elsewhere.⁴ In direct contrast to the situation in Europe — and as both former prime ministers Tony Abbott and Malcolm Turnbull have both rightly argued — public support in Australia for high levels of legal immigration, as well as a generous humanitarian refugee intake, has

been predicated on the maintenance of strong border protection policies first implemented by the Howard government in the early 2000s.⁵ Public support for immigration has also been buttressed by the economic prosperity enjoyed during the unbroken 27 years of economic growth experienced since the early 1990s, which appears to have dampened and contained anti-immigration sentiment.

But despite how well-managed and orderly Australia's immigration program has been, in recent times increasing signs have emerged of waning public support amid greater debate and controversy over the size the nation's annual immigration intake. This is supported by The Lowy Institute's annual polling, which found an increase of 17 percentage points between 2014 (37%) and 2018 (54%) in the number of people answering that the current rate of immigration is 'too high'.⁶

The current debate about immigration has principally concerned the impact on urban congestion and house prices as large numbers of migrants settle mainly in major urban centres (83% of migrants live in a major urban area and 60% of all migrants settle in Sydney and Melbourne)⁷ This debate has also led to signs of an apparent breakdown of the historic bi-partisan support within the major parties for continuing immigration at current rates.⁸

'Postcode' Polling

The renewed debate about Australia's immigration program raises timely and crucial questions about the political and social cohesiveness of Australian society. As the respected political commentator and historian Paul Kelly has asked, are we in danger of experiencing the polarisation and disruption that is evident in other nations based on an anti-immigration backlash against congestion?⁹

Given that understanding and responding to community attitudes to immigration is the key to building and retaining public support for a large, legal, non-discriminatory immigration program, it is important to understand Australians' attitudes to immigration along the social fault-lines evident in comparable countries like the UK and the US.

Hence to explore whether Australians risk 'coming apart', The Centre for Independent Studies commissioned polling agency YouGov Galaxy to sample the attitudes to immigration of 1000 Australians. The sample was 500 Australians who live in the highest decile — the most affluent postcodes in metropolitan areas across Australia — and 500 Australians who live in the lowest decile — the least affluent postcodes in metropolitan areas across Australia. The postcodes were selected and defined

by the Centre for Independent Studies based on data from the 2016 census, and represent the top 10% and bottom 10% of metropolitan postcodes according to an index of income and educational status.*

Both groups were asked to give their opinion on a number of immigration-related topics covering a range of questions about the size of the immigration intake, the integration of migrants, and border protection policies. Age, gender and region quotas were applied to the sample. Following the completion of interviewing, the data was weighted by age, gender and region to reflect the latest ABS population estimates. The exact wording of the questions asked to participants (and the results) are included in Appendix A.

The major finding is that there are differences in attitudes to immigration between Australians who reside in higher income suburbs and Australians who reside in lower income suburbs. Among those living in the lowest decile areas, there is higher and stronger support for — and very healthy majorities in favour of — cutting immigration, for stricter requirements to promote integration, and for maintaining strong border protection policies.

* The 'postcodes' data was compiled as part of The Centre for Independent Studies' *Left Behind Project*. Thanks to colleagues Simon Cowan and Charles Jacobs.

The results therefore suggest — as might have been expected — that attitudes to immigration are influenced by a ‘postcode effect’ in the lowest decile metropolitan suburbs that are more likely to have more first-hand experience of immigration and to be more impacted by population pressures.

However, the most important finding of the polling is that the differences in attitudes to immigration based on postcodes are not as dramatically polarised as might have been expected. In fact, overall attitudes in the top and bottom deciles are more similar than they are different, with majority support also registered for cutting or pausing immigration until infrastructure catches up with demand, requiring migrants to learn English language and about Australian values, and maintaining strong border protection policies in the highest decile postcodes.

The polling suggests that attitudes to key immigration issues are not polarised — are not starkly different — as there is significant ‘common ground’ across both

ends of the community with respect to immigration. The lack of polarisation is best illustrated, perhaps, by the broad agreement across metropolitan postcodes with respect to maintaining strong border protection policies, given that ‘stopping the boats’ has been the most heated, controversial, and thus potentially socially divisive immigration-related issue of recent times.

The polling therefore suggests that Australia is not in danger of ‘coming apart’ — of experiencing toxic social polarisation-driven political disruption — over immigration. However, the polling does suggest that if public support for large, legal non-discriminatory immigration is to be maintained there is one crucial caveat. To retain public confidence — and thus remain politically sustainable — governments need to respond to the shared concerns registered in the polling across postcodes about the impact of immigration on urban congestion and social cohesion.

Attitudes to Intake

Question 1 assessed the attitudes of 500 Australians living in the most affluent metropolitan suburbs and 500 Australians living in the least affluent metropolitan suburbs to the current immigration intake. Participants were asked whether they thought the number of people migrating to Australia each year was:

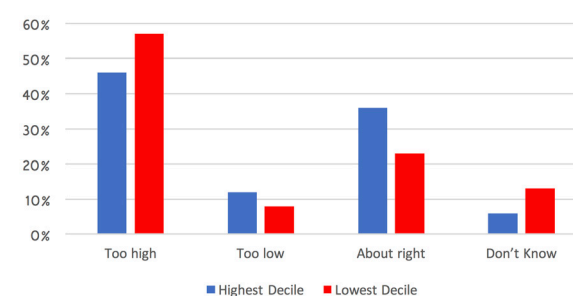
- Too high
- Too low
- About right
- Don’t know

A breakdown of the results by highest and lowest decile suburbs is presented in Figure 1.

A notable finding here was that attitudes to the current intake were different among residents in the least affluent and the most affluent suburbs. In the lowest decile metropolitan postcodes, 57% believe the current levels of immigration are too high, just 23% believe they are about right and only 8% believe they are too low. However, in highest decile postcodes, just under half in total believe current immigration levels are either about right (36%) or too low (12%). Yet almost the same number in the most affluent suburbs believe current levels are too high (46%).

The results show that people in the least affluent suburbs are more likely to believe immigration is too high, compared to those who live in more affluent

Figure 1: Attitudes to immigration levels



Source: CIS/YouGov Galaxy Poll

suburbs. Yet this ‘postcode effect’ does not necessarily suggest Australia is ‘coming apart’ over immigration. The important — and perhaps surprising — finding is that just under half of residents in the most affluent suburbs also agreed with the majority of those in the least affluent suburbs that immigration was too high.

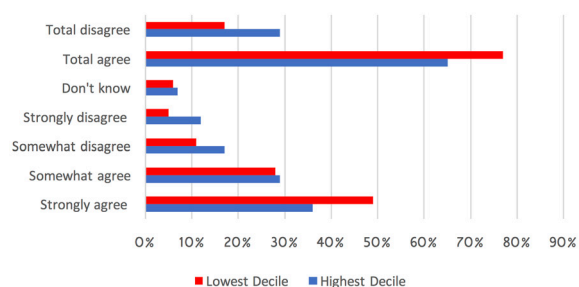
The conclusion that there is much common ground over immigration is further supported by the findings of Question 2. Though support was higher and stronger in the lowest income postcodes compared to the highest income postcodes, there was broad agreement that Australia should “cut or pause the current rate of immigration until infrastructure such as roads, public transport, schools and housing catches up with current demand.”

As Figure 2 shows, a clear majority in both the most affluent (65%) and the least affluent (77%) postcodes supported an immigration cut or pause in relation to the specific issue of congestion. An overwhelming majority, regardless of postcode, therefore supported relieving population pressures on struggling infrastructure by cutting or pausing immigration.

The similarity of attitudes to immigration was further demonstrated by the results of Question 3. This question probed attitudes to the policy proposal that has been canvassed by the federal government: settling migrants in regional areas as a means of alleviating population pressures and congestion in urban area.

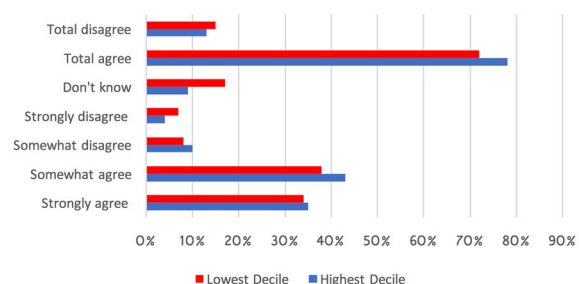
As Figure 3 shows, there is widespread support in our cities for 'giving priority' to migrants who agree to settle and work in regional areas in both the most affluent postcodes (78%) and the least affluent postcodes (72%).

Figure 2: Attitudes to immigration pause or cut



Source: CIS/YouGov Galaxy Poll

Figure 3: Attitudes to settling migrants in regional areas



Source: CIS/YouGov Galaxy Poll

Attitudes to Integration

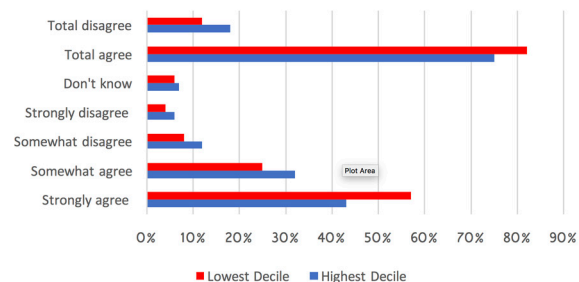
The next set of questions probed attitudes towards the integration of migrants.

Although support for a more active and formal approach to facilitating integration was higher and stronger in the lowest income areas compared to the highest income areas, again there was much common ground regardless of postcodes, and broad agreement in favour of the approach.

Figure 4 shows that three quarters of Australians in the most affluent postcodes (75%) and four in five in the least affluent postcodes (82%) believe the government should "require migrants to attend a course about Australian values before granting them permanent residence."

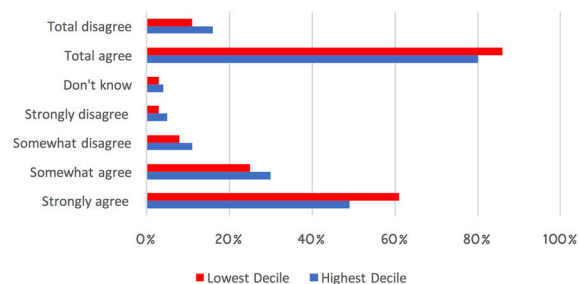
There is even greater support, again regardless of postcodes, for requiring migrants to attain proficiency in English. Figure 5 shows that 80% of Australians in the most affluent postcodes and 86% in the least affluent postcodes agree that, "the government should require migrants to reach a minimum standard of English language proficiency before granting them permanent residence."

Figure 4: Attitudes to Teaching Values



Source: CIS/YouGov Galaxy Poll

Figure 5: Attitudes to Learning English



Source: CIS/YouGov Galaxy Poll

Attitudes to Culture

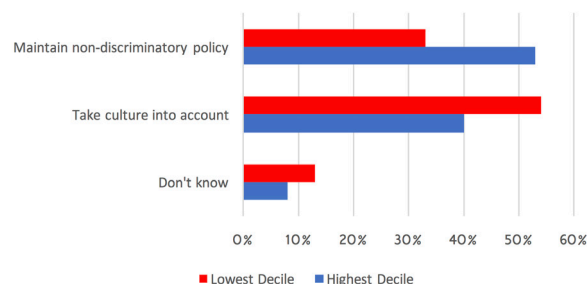
However, the polling revealed significant differences in attitudes to whether cultural difference should be taken into account in selecting migrants, as Figure 6 shows.

In the lowest decile postcodes, 54% believe “the Australian government should take the cultural or religious backgrounds of prospective migrants into account before granting permanent residence.”

In the highest decile postcodes, 40% agree with taking culture or religion into account before granting residence, and the majority supported maintaining the present non-discriminatory policy; in the lowest decile only one-third of residents support this (33%).

Hence the aspect of immigration where the postcode effect was most pronounced across the polling was regarding attitudes to Australia’s non-discriminatory immigration policy, with majority support for taking cultural and religious backgrounds into account when selecting migrants in lowest income areas. By contrast, the majority in the most affluent areas supported retaining a non-discriminatory approach.

Figure 6: Attitudes to culture



Source: CIS/YouGov Galaxy Poll

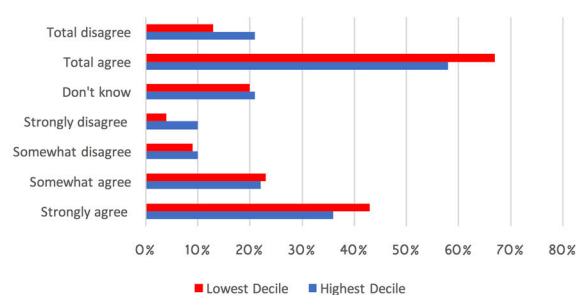
Attitudes to Border Protection

Participants were also asked whether they agreed that “the border protection policies introduced by the federal government in 2013 should remain in place.”

Figure 7 shows that here, too, there was higher and stronger support for maintaining the status quo in border protection in the lowest decile postcodes than in the highest decile postcodes.

But these results also show there is no ‘coming apart’ with respect to attitudes towards the most heated, controversial and potentially divisive immigration-related question of the last 25 years: a clear majority in both the least (67%) and most (58%) affluent suburbs supported the strong border protection policies that since 2013 have ‘stopped the boats’.

Figure 7: Attitudes to Strong Border Protection



Source: CIS/YouGov Galaxy Poll

Implications for Immigration Policy

Congestion

The results indicated that, with respect to immigration levels, there is greater support for current intake among Australians who reside in higher income postcodes and less support among Australians who reside in low income postcodes. But rather than revealing social polarisation, the results suggest that attitudes to immigration levels are more similar than different. Hence, a near-majority in the highest decile postcodes (46%) and a majority in the lowest decile postcodes (57%) believe that current levels of immigration are 'too high'.

But more importantly, the overwhelming majority — 65% in the highest decile and 77% in the lowest — believe that immigration should be cut or paused until critical infrastructure has caught up. This concern about a growing population's impact on infrastructure is consistent with the Lowy Institute's 2014 polling which found of those respondents who believed the current number of migrants was 'too high', an overwhelming majority (72%) stated the reason as: "Australia's cities are already too crowded."¹⁰

The polling showed that there is a 'postcodes effect' with regards to how strongly people support an immigration cut. Nearly half of those in the least affluent (49%) postcodes strongly agreed with an immigration pause or cut compared with 36% in the most affluent postcodes.

The explanation for this may be that immigration impacts differently on high- vs low-decile postcodes because migrants mostly settle in the less affluent — but more affordable — suburbs in metropolitan areas. Residents in the least affluent postcodes are more likely to be impacted by population pressures on public transport and public schools, and hence feel more strongly about the need to allow infrastructure to catch up with demand. Yet more than one-third of those in the most affluent suburbs also strongly agree, suggesting that immigration-related congestion is an important issue for those residents.

The attitudes to immigration revealed here have important implications for Australia's immigration policy. They suggest that for a large immigration program to continue to be politically sustainable, governments must address areas of common concern across the broad base of metropolitan voters — especially in relation to transport, congestion and the housing market.

Cohesion

Since the end of World War II, Australia has become one of the most successful immigrant nations in the world, with a proud and enviable record of

harmoniously integrating migrants, irrespective of background. Since the formal end of the White Australia Policy in the early 1970s, Australia has been committed to a racially non-discriminatory immigration policy. However, the success of our immigration program has been founded on a commitment to promoting immigration by those willing and able to support the core national values at the heart of the Australian way of life, such as rule of law, respect for the individual, and parliamentary democracy.¹¹

Historically, the expectation that migrants should integrate into, and participate fully in, Australian society is one of the key pillars on which public support for a large, legal immigration program has rested.¹² This is reflected by the polling conducted for this paper, which again suggests that on the question of integration, there is much common ground between Australians regardless of postcodes.

Importantly, the results also indicate there is widespread support for a more active and formal approach to facilitate integration: 75% of those in the most affluent postcodes and 82% of those in the least affluent believe migrants should learn about Australian values. Moreover, a clear majority — 80% from the highest and 86% from the lowest decile postcodes — believe migrants should have a minimum standard of English. Australian National University's 2015 polling had similar findings, with 95.8% of respondents believing respect for Australian political institutions and laws was very or fairly important and 92% believing that an ability to speak English is very or fairly important.¹³ The 2017 Scanlon's *Mapping Social Cohesion* National Report found that almost two out of three respondents (in the range of 60%- 66%) agreed with the proposition that "People who come to this country should change their behaviour to be more like Australians."¹⁴

The notion that a more assertive approach should be taken to facilitate integration has been proposed by policymakers who recognise that Australia's substantial immigration program carries the risk that migrants will find it easier to not have to integrate.¹⁵ The larger the intake, the easier it is for migrants to live, work, and play exclusively within their larger migrant communities, and therefore greater are the potential risks of long-term social fragmentation.¹⁶ Nevertheless, some see mandatory measures to teach common values and English-proficiency as controversial, and at odds with official policies promoting multiculturalism.¹⁷

On these issues, the polling again suggests there is a 'postcode effect' with more people strongly agreeing with values education and English-standards for migrants in lowest income areas (57% and 61%

respectively) compared to highest income areas (43% and 49%).

However, the polling does not suggest Australians are in danger of coming apart on the issue of integration. The vast majority of Australians regardless of postcode appear to believe social cohesion should be promoted by fostering the cultural integration of migrants, who should be expected to share in the common values and language of all Australians. Hence the vast majority of Australians, regardless of postcode, supported requiring migrants to learn English and about Australian values to foster integration; even though their first-hand experiences of immigration are likely to be different, based on where they live.

Support among Australians for a stronger approach to requiring integration may reflect awareness of the pitfalls of the European experience: of the situation in countries such as France, Germany, and in Nordic nations that confront serious social fragmentation due to the failure to integrate large, migrant (mostly Muslim) communities. Such support could also feasibly reflect concerns about Islamic terrorism, especially of the 'homegrown' variety, or possibly the national debate sparked by crime and other social problems in the Sudanese refugee community in Victoria. Support for English requirements could equally reflect the common sense view that speaking English is necessary to secure employment and avoid the need for migrants to rely on welfare.

Non-discrimination

Although there are more similarities than differences in attitudes towards immigration in the highest and lowest income postcodes, there is one area in which we see the greatest difference in attitudes — a certain 'coming apart'.

The polling shows a significant difference in attitudes to the question of culture in relation to the selection of migrants: 54% of those from the least affluent postcodes, compared to 40% in the most affluent postcodes, believe that cultural or religious backgrounds should be considered before migrants are granted permanent residence.

This postcode effect suggests those more likely to live near, and have greater firsthand experience of, concentrations of migrant population, take cultural questions more seriously — to the point of giving greater priority to concerns about social cohesion at the expense of the principle of non-discrimination. In the lowest decile, only 33% of respondents favoured non-discrimination over cultural and religious elements.

These results suggest that the highest levels of concern about integration — and hence willingness to take cultural factors into account in migrant selection — are in the least affluent suburbs, which are also the places most likely to have greater experience of immigration.

The evident support for dispensing with the principle of non-discrimination should focus attention on the underlying and deeper concern with integration, particularly in view of the not insignificant 40% support in the most affluent areas for taking the cultural and religious background of migrants into account. Given the ramifications,¹⁸ there is good reason to think that the best response to these results would be to take a more active approach to promoting integration of migrants to address these concerns, and not risk greater polarisation and diminishing support for a non-discriminatory approach to immigration.

Political Implications for Public Support for Immigration

No 'Coming Apart'... but the Political Class is 'out of touch'

Australia has been fortunate to avoid the kind of socially polarising political disruption that has occurred in Europe, the UK and the US. While this can be attributed to a number of social, economic, and political factors, a major factor has been the superior management of immigration policy. Due to strong and effective border protection policies, Australia has not lost control of its borders, and thus not lost control of immigration policy. Australia has not therefore

suffered from the disruptive political consequences of immigration policy failures that have occurred in countries that have lost control of their borders, because public confidence in Australia's immigration program has been retained.

Nevertheless, immigration has become a more contentious issue in recent times, and this has raised the prospect of whether polarisation and disruption could happen here too. The risk of social breakdown over immigration is demonstrated in Scanlon's *Mapping Social Cohesion* National Report. Scanlon found that from 2015-2017, of the respondents who

answered that immigration levels were too high, a near majority (49.6%) described their financial situation as “Struggling to pay bills / poor.”¹⁹

This supports the thesis that those who experience the greatest impact from immigration are more likely to have reservations and that if the government doesn’t address key concerns, social polarisation might widen. However, the polling results discussed in this paper suggest that social polarisation over attitudes to immigration is unlikely. This is because, at both ends of the metropolitan social spectrum by postcodes, the polling reveals significant common ground between the most affluent and least affluent suburbs with regards to key immigration questions ranging from intake and congestion, to integration and border protection.

Metropolitan Australia thus does not appear to be in danger of suffering the kind of ‘coming apart’ witnessed over immigration in other countries, where toxic social polarisation has driven political disruption, and where populists have represented the views of ordinary voters opposed to the establishment.

However, this doesn’t mean there are not potentially disruptive political implications arising from the polling results reported here. But rather than confronting the new politics of polarised disruption, Australia seems to face a rather old-fashioned political problem in relation to immigration: politicians failing to respect and represent public opinion — particularly in relation to the apparent support by both major parties for maintaining the current size of the immigration intake.

This is to say that the main message employed to deflect the debate about migrant numbers — which is that population growth is good for economic growth — may be insufficient to satisfy those who are suffering the ‘quality of life’ consequences such as choked roads and overcrowded public transport;²⁰ particularly when it is uncertain if, and when, efforts to clear infrastructure backlogs will deliver substantial relief from congestion.²¹

The immigration program will struggle to remain politically sustainable without public support. For immigration policy to ignore public opinion is to invite popular disenchantment with ‘out of touch’ politicians, and is to court some degree of possible political disruption.

Learn lessons from Border Protection

Given these political realities, the most appropriate political response would be for policy makers to learn from, and apply the lessons taught by, border protection: that responding to public concerns about immigration is the way to build support and confidence in a large, legal and non-discriminatory immigration program.

The polling results reported here dispute the suggestion that addressing concerns about immigration would itself be socially polarising or electorally damaging. Adjusting immigration policy would not amount to pandering to one section of the community among the ‘base’ (or to the ‘fringe’ views and worse) of ordinary voters. Our findings do not support the idea that so-called controversial policies — infrastructure-linked intake cuts, strict English and values requirements for migrants, and strong border protection measures — do not reflect the mainstream of public opinion. Instead, the polling suggests that policymakers who respond to concerns about immigration would be occupying the centre or ‘common ground’ by taking action to address the intake and integration issues that are of apparent common concern to a majority of voters in both elite and ordinary suburbs.

All supporters of a large, legal and non-discriminatory immigration program should be pleased about the lack of social polarisation over attitudes to immigration revealed here. This should make it easier, politically, for the political establishment to keep opportunistic populists at bay and prevent public discontent with immigration from leading to disruption. For what polling suggests is that measures that better manage the impact of immigration — be it pausing immigration until infrastructure catches up, or busting congestion, or settling migrants in the regions, or actively promoting integration — would enjoy broad-based public support. In turn, this would also build crucial public support and confidence in the immigration program.

Appendix

Figure 1: Thinking about the current size of Australia's immigration intake, do you think the number of people migrating to Australia each year is currently:

	Highest Decile	Lowest Decile
Too high	46%	57%
Too low	12%	8%
About right	36%	23%
Don't know	6%	13%

Figure 2: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The current rate of immigration should be cut or paused until infrastructure such as roads, public transport, schools and housing catches up with current demand:

	Highest Decile	Lowest Decile
Strongly agree	36%	49%
Somewhat agree	29%	28%
Somewhat disagree	17%	11%
Strongly disagree	12%	5%
Don't know	7%	6%
Net: Total agree	65%	77%
Net: Total disagree	29%	17%

Figure 3: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Migrants who agree to settle and work in regional areas should be given priority over those who are not willing to settle and work in regional areas:

	Highest Decile	Lowest Decile
Strongly agree	35%	34%
Somewhat agree	43%	38%
Somewhat disagree	10%	8%
Strongly disagree	4%	7%
Don't know	9%	13%
Net: Total agree	78%	72%
Net: Total disagree	13%	15%

Figure 4: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The Government should require migrants to attend a course about Australian values before granting them permanent residence:

	Highest Decile	Lowest Decile
Strongly agree	43%	57%
Somewhat agree	32%	25%
Somewhat disagree	12%	8%
Strongly disagree	6%	4%
Don't know	7%	6%
Net: Total agree	75%	82%
Net: Total disagree	18%	12%

Figure 5: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The Government should require migrants to reach a minimum standard of English language proficiency before granting them permanent residence:

	Highest Decile	Lowest Decile
Strongly agree	49%	61%
Somewhat agree	30%	25%
Somewhat disagree	11%	8%
Strongly disagree	5%	3%
Don't know	4%	3%
Net: Total agree	80%	86%
Net: Total disagree	16%	11%

Figure 6: Which is closer to your own view?

	Highest Decile	Lowest Decile
The Australian government should take the cultural or religious backgrounds of prospective migrants into account before granting permanent residence	40%	54%
The Australian government should maintain a non-discriminatory immigration policy	53%	33%
Don't know	8%	13%

Figure 7: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Regardless of whether the Coalition or Labor wins the next federal election, the border protection policies introduced by the Federal Government in 2013 should remain in place:

	Highest Decile	Lowest Decile
Strongly agree	36%	43%
Somewhat agree	22%	23%
Somewhat disagree	10%	9%
Strongly disagree	10%	4%
Don't know	21%	20%
Net: Total agree	58%	67%
Net: Total disagree	21%	13%

Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.smh.com.au/national/turnbull-s-sound-advice-for-europe-on-immigration-20180427-p4zc1r.html>
- 2 <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-36616028>; <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/final-electoral-college-map-trump-clinton-2016-11?r=US&IR=T>
- 3 Charles Murray, *Coming Apart: The State of White America, 1960-2010*, New York: Crown Forum/Random House, 2012; David Goodheart, *The Road to Somewhere: The New Tribes Shaping British Politics*, London: Penguin Book, 2017
- 4 https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/australias-tough-border-policies-are-necessary/2016/08/22/61d94f3e-6710-11e6-96c0-37533479f3f5_story.html?utm_term=.3c00b1bad0ed
- 5 <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/transcript-tony-abbotts-controversial-speech-at-the-margaret-thatcher-lecture-20151028-gkkg6p.html>; <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/border-control-is-key-to-a-successful-multicultural-nation-turnbull-20180424-p4zbb1.html>
- 6 <https://lowyinstitutepoll.lowyinstitute.org/immigration-and-refugees/>
- 7 <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/tablebuilder>
- 8 <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/tony-abbotts-fivepoint-plan-for-the-winnable-next-election-will-infuriate-malcolm-turnbull-20170223-gujkft.html>
- 9 <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/columnists/paul-kelly/next-populist-showdown-is-all-about-immigration/news-story/2bd84bdb6c3c5be77c3e67683d8dab3a>
- 10 This question was not repeated in the 2017 poll. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/lowy-institute-poll-2014>
- 11 A point made strongly — to the surprise of the author — here: <https://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2018/february/1517403600/james-button/dutton-s-dark-victory>
- 12 For this background, see Jeremy Sammut, 'The Long Demise of the White Australia Policy', *Quadrant*, November 2005.
- 13 <http://csrcm.cass.anu.edu.au/research/publications/australian-attitudes-towards-national-identity>
- 14 https://www.monash.edu/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1189188/mapping-social-cohesion-national-report-2017.pdf
- 15 <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/integration-is-key-to-australias-successful-migrant-story/news-story/ce040fc85fb02d75f92c59070af06207>
- 16 <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/immigration/alan-tudge-puts-english-tests-for-migrants-back-in-frame/news-story/0cd4ade4c9c4ddeabdf5edce42db4ab1>
- 17 <https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/...tests-are.../860cd866b56a07fca34df26fa459adfd>
- 18 <https://www.news.com.au/national/politics/while-all-muslims-are-not-terrorists-certainly-all-terrorists-these-days-are-muslims-senator-anning-said/news-story/c0753644cfccdda0394619e6f9dc01b5>
- 19 <https://www.monash.edu/mapping-population/public-opinion/social-cohesion-report>
- 20 <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/linking-infrastructure-with-migration-the-solution-to-congestion/news-story/ab87493b400864976031666711a905e4>
- 21 <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/inquirer/pain-of-building-for-growth-is-the-price-of-major-cities-success/news-story/9fb1c0d8005eca0e94df11073ce17206>

About the Authors



Jeremy Sammut

Dr Jeremy Sammut is a Senior Research Fellow and Director of the Culture, Prosperity and Civil Society Program at The Centre for Independent Studies.



Monica Wilkie

Monica Wilkie is a policy analyst in the Culture, Prosperity & Civil Society Program at The Centre for Independent Studies.



POLICY Paper 11 (PP11) • ISSN: 2209-2447 • ISBN: 978-1-925744-28-6

Published November 2018 by The Centre for Independent Studies Limited. Views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Centre's staff, advisors, directors or officers.

© The Centre for Independent Studies (ABN 15 001 495 012)

This publication is available from The Centre for Independent Studies. Visit www.cis.org.au.