

THE LOWY  
INSTITUTE  
**POLL**  
**2015**

ALEX OLIVER

**LOWY INSTITUTE**  
FOR INTERNATIONAL POLICY

# PREFACE

The past year has been marked by an unusual intensity in the level of Australia's interactions with the world.

In July 2014, Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was shot down over eastern Ukraine, with significant loss of life, including 38 Australians. Australia took a leading role in the international response, including in the United Nations Security Council chamber. In November 2014, Australia hosted the G20 Summit in Brisbane, the largest meeting of world leaders in our history.

In response to the humanitarian crises wrought by Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, Australia joined the US-led international coalition in late 2014 to blunt Islamic State's advances in Iraq. In December 2014, two Australians were killed in a siege in Sydney by a lone gunman claiming links to Islamic State. In April 2015, two Australian citizens, Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, were executed in Indonesia for drug trafficking offences. Months of intense diplomacy by Australian officials, the prime minister and foreign minister failed to persuade Indonesia's new president, Joko Widodo, to grant clemency towards the pair. In a rare move, Australia's ambassador to Indonesia was recalled to Australia in early May, the first Australian ambassador ever to be recalled from Indonesia.

These kinds of events have significant consequences for Australian foreign policy, and it is crucial that policy-makers understand Australians' reactions to them. A decade of Lowy Institute polling has helped to achieve exactly this end.

The 2015 Lowy Institute Poll builds on the tradition established over the first ten years of our polling to find out how Australians have responded to the year's events, and how their views have changed on some of the big international issues of our time. After the Martin Place siege and Islamic State's barbaric actions in Iraq and Syria, this year's Poll finds that fewer Australians feel safe now than at any time in our history of polling, and terrorism ranks high in Australians' threat perceptions. In relation to Australia's involvement in Iraq, we find that while the majority of Australians believe our military participation will increase the risk of terrorism here, most still support Australian air strikes in Iraq and other military assistance to Iraqi security forces.

When Indonesia signalled its intention to execute Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran early this year, we commissioned a series of additional short polls from Newspoll to better understand Australian attitudes to the executions and to the death penalty generally. These polls show that Australian sentiment has mobilised against the death penalty for drug trafficking offences, but that the majority want their government to respond with quiet diplomacy rather than with harsh sanctions. After the executions, Australians' feelings towards Indonesia, which have never been warm and have at times been characterised by wariness and even fear, have fallen to their lowest point in eight years.

In a question similar to one we asked in 2010 about the foreign policy performance of the Rudd Government, we asked Australians to rate the Abbott Government on several foreign policy issues, with surprising findings. On some of its key foreign policy platforms such as asylum seekers, climate change, and economic policy, the Abbott Government received marginal or failing grades from the Australian public. But on questions of national security — which rank strongly in Australians' concerns this year — Australians marked the Government's performance more generously.

Climate change again features among our most striking findings this year. The Poll has now recorded three consecutive rises in the number of Australians who see global warming as a 'serious and pressing problem', confirming a decisive reversal of the downward trend in concern which we recorded between 2006 and 2012. In the lead-up to the United Nations climate change conference in Paris, most Australians expect their government to take a leadership role internationally on emissions reductions.

The 2015 Lowy Institute Poll, like the decade of our polling before it, is compulsory reading for those who are interested in Australia's place in the world. I hope you find it illuminating.

**Michael Fullilove**

Executive Director

June 2015

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Terrorism, security risks, and safety

Fewer than one in four (24%) Australian adults say they feel very safe. This is the lowest recorded result in our eleven-year polling history. Of eight potential risks to Australia's security in the next ten years, the highest-ranked threat is 'the emergence of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria' (69% ranking it high risk), while the risk of 'military conflict between the United States and China in Asia' is ranked lowest (20% seeing it as high risk). A clear majority (63%) say the Government's data retention policy is 'justified as part of the effort to combat terrorism and protect national security'. In separate polling in April 2015, the majority (55%) say that 'Australia's participation in military action against Islamic State in Iraq increases the risk of terrorism to Australia now', while 47% say it increases the risk of terrorism to Australia 'in the future'. Despite this, a solid majority (69%) are in favour of Australia 'conducting air strikes against Islamic State in Iraq and providing training and support to Iraqi security forces'.

## Report card on the Coalition Government

Asked to give the Coalition Government a mark out of ten for its handling of eight foreign policy issues, Australians mark the Government reasonably well for 'responding to the threat of terrorism' (5.9/10) and for 'representing Australia's interests on the UN Security Council and the G20' (6.0/10). The highest mark given is 7.1/10 for 'maintaining a strong alliance with the United States'. However, the Government receives barely average marks for 'handling the arrival of asylum seekers by boat' and for 'managing Australia's economy' (4.9/10 for each), and a failing grade of 4.0/10 for 'managing the issue of climate change'. It scores 5.3/10 for 'promoting good relations with Asian nations' and 5.4/10 for 'presenting a good image of Australia internationally'.

## Economic optimism

Sixty-three per cent of Australians are either 'optimistic' (54%) or 'very optimistic' (9%) about the nation's 'economic performance in the world over the next five years'. This is a fall of 13 points since we last asked this question in 2013, and 23 points lower than the peaks of 86% recorded in 2009 and 2010 at the height of the global

economic crisis. It is the single largest fall in optimism recorded by our Poll since 2005.

## Foreign investment in real estate

Asked their opinion about the levels of foreign investment in Australian residential real estate from six different countries and regions, 70% of Australians say the Government allows 'too much' investment from China, and 50% nominate the Middle East as a source of too much investment, with only minorities objecting to the level of investment from Japan (47% saying too much), Russia (37%), the United States (34%) and Europe (34%).

## Climate change and energy

The 2015 Poll has recorded the third successive rise in Australians' concern about global warming. Half the adult population (50%, up 5 points since 2014 and 14 points since 2012) say 'global warming is a serious and pressing problem'. A solid majority, 63%, say that in the lead-up to the 2015 UN climate change conference in Paris, 'the Australian Government should commit to significant reductions so that other countries will be encouraged to do the same'. Only 35% say the Government 'should not make significant commitments on emissions reductions ahead of other countries'. Presented with seven possible sources of energy and asked which one 'will be our primary source of electricity 10 years from now', 'solar energy' is by far the highest-ranked option, 43% expecting this to be 'our primary source of electricity 10 years from now'. Coal is selected by only 17%, while 13% think 'nuclear energy' will be our primary source of electricity 10 years from now.

## Mixed views on China

A solid majority (77%) of Australians see China as 'more of an economic partner to Australia' than a 'military threat', while only 15% see it as 'more of a military threat'. In a 9-point drop since 2014, 39% of the population think it 'likely' that 'China will become a military threat to Australia in the next 20 years'. In the event of a 'military conflict between China and Japan', 84% say Australia should remain neutral, 11% say Australia should support Japan, and 3% say we should support China.

### The United States and the alliance

The vast majority (80%) of Australians say the US alliance is either 'very' or 'fairly important' for Australia's security, with a majority (53%) seeing it as 'very important' — 17 points higher than in 2007, the lowest recorded point in our polling. At a warm 73° on the Lowy Institute thermometer, Australians' feelings towards the United States have warmed steadily since their low point of 60° in 2007. Few Australians (37%) agree that the United States is 'in decline relative to China, and so the alliance is of decreasing importance'. When asked about 'the United States and its role as a world leader in the future', the majority (61%) say that it will play 'about as important a role as world leader in the future', while 27% say it will play a less important role.

### Indonesia

Australians' feelings towards Indonesia have fallen to a cool 46° on the thermometer, the equal lowest point in our past decade of polling and 8 points lower than the peaks of 54° in 2010 and 2012. This places Indonesia on a par with Russia (45°) and Egypt (48°). Strong majorities believe that Indonesia should do more to 'help Australia combat people smuggling' (87%) and to 'combat the risk of Islamic terrorism' (85%). Most (65%) say 'Indonesia should abolish the death penalty'. Only 34% of Australians regard Indonesia as a democracy.

### The death penalty

In a separate poll in February 2015, 62% of Australians said that the executions of Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran should not proceed. In an almost identical result both before and after the executions, 69% said in February that the death penalty should not be used as a penalty for drug trafficking (71% in May). However, Australians are divided on whether the Australian Government should play an active role in the abolition of the death penalty internationally: 51% say it should, and 45% say it should not, with very similar results on this question before and after the executions. If an Australian is executed in another country, the only form of government response supported by the majority is to 'make private diplomatic protests' (59% agreed in May, down from 73% in February polling). Only a minority (42%) said in May that Australia should 'recall Australia's ambassador'.<sup>1</sup>

### Aid

A majority of Australians (53%) are in favour of the most recent Budget cuts to overseas aid, in findings from a separate poll in late May 2015. Only 35% overall oppose the reductions. In our earlier 2015 Poll survey, only 21% said that Australia's 2014-15 aid expenditure, at '5 billion dollars in aid to developing countries, or around 1.2 per cent of the Budget' is 'not enough'. On the contrary, 36% said this is 'too much', while 41% said it is 'about the right amount'.<sup>2</sup>

### World leaders

From a list of ten world leaders, US President Barack Obama is admired by the most Australians (86% saying they admire him). US presidential candidate Hillary Clinton ranks second (77% admire her), with the Pope ranking third (73% admire). Russian President Vladimir Putin attracts the highest 'don't admire' score (67%), the next highest being Indonesian President Joko Widodo (29% don't admire). India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the least well-known on our list, 66% saying they don't know him.

*The 2015 Lowy Institute Poll reports the results of a nationally representative opinion survey by telephone of 1200 Australian adults conducted by I-view between 20 February and 8 March 2015, with supplementary polling conducted by Newspoll on 13-15 February (1211 adults), 10-12 April (1215), 1-3 May (1213) and 22-24 May 2015 (1210).*

# AUSTRALIA AND THE WORLD

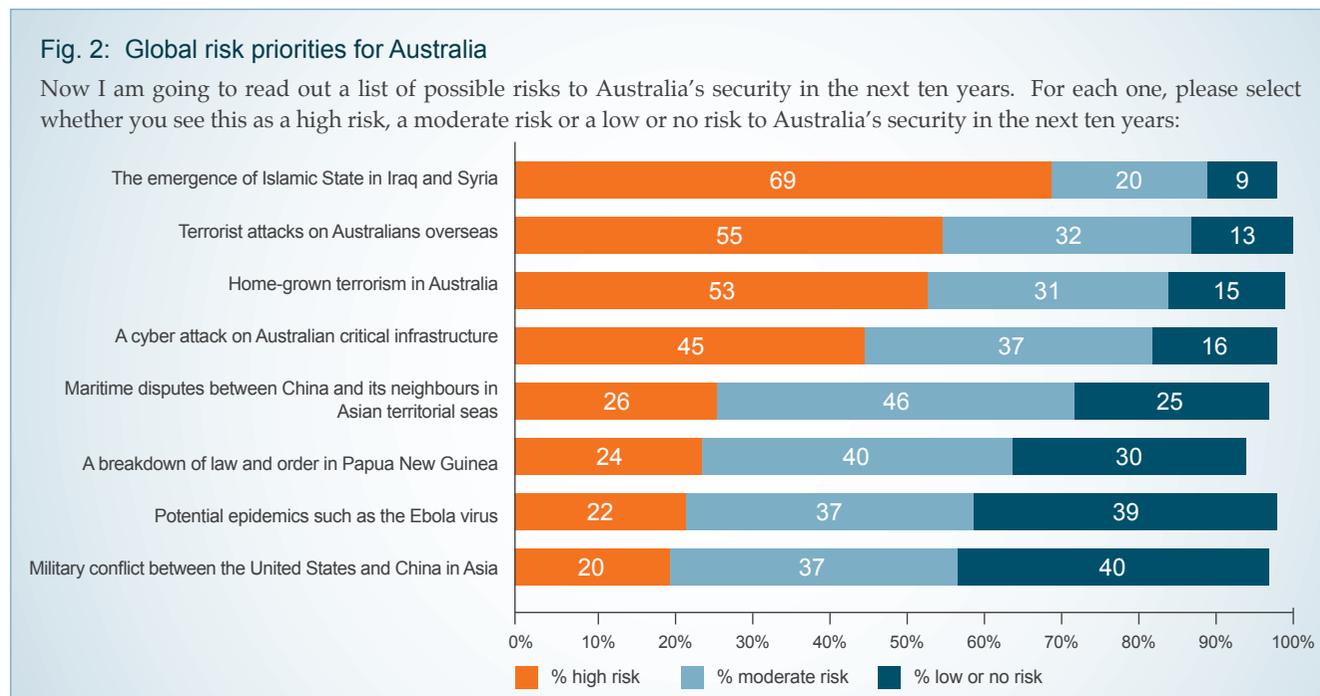
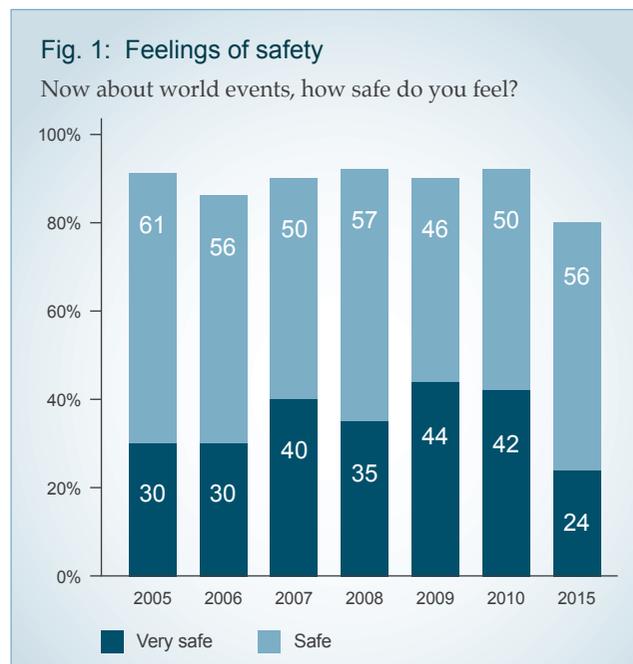
## Terrorism, security risks, and safety

This year's Lowy Institute Poll has recorded the lowest feelings of safety among Australians in our eleven-year polling history. In a tracking question first asked in 2005, fewer than one in four (24%) Australian adults say they feel 'very safe' in 2015, 18 points down from the 42% who felt very safe when we last asked the question in 2010.

The threat of terrorism appears to be the primary cause. From a list of eight potential risks to Australia's security in the next ten years, risks relating to terrorism rank one, two, and three in Australians' perceptions of risks to national security. The highest-ranked is 'the emergence of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria', with 69% of Australians rating this as a high risk to their security. 'Terrorist attacks on Australians overseas' and 'home-grown terrorism in Australia' rank second and third, with majorities (55% and 53% respectively) seeing these as high risk.

Risks of conflict in our region rank far lower in Australians' threat perceptions. The possibility of 'military conflict between the United States and China in Asia' is the lowest-ranked of all eight risks, with only 20% seeing

it as a high risk. Similarly, 'maritime disputes between China and its neighbours in Asian territorial seas' are seen as high risk by only 26% of the adult population. 'A breakdown of law and order in Papua New Guinea' (24% rating this 'high risk') and 'potential epidemics



such as the Ebola virus' (22% saying 'high risk') rank sixth and seventh of the eight possible risks. In results consistent with our 2014 findings on potential threats to Australia's vital interests, 'a cyber attack on Australian critical infrastructure' is ranked relatively highly as a risk (almost half — 45% — rating it a high risk). Younger Australians (18-29) are, however, far less wary of the cyber threat: only 26% see it as high risk, compared with 50% of those aged over 30.

### Terrorism and data retention

With the threat of terrorism featuring prominently in public perceptions, the Government's new data retention laws have the support of a clear majority of Australians. When asked about 'legislation which will require Australian telecommunications companies to retain data about communications such as phone calls, emails and internet usage, but not their content', 63% of Australians say this is 'justified as part of the effort to combat terrorism and protect national security'. Only one-third (33%) say it 'goes too far in violating citizens' privacy and is therefore not justified'.

Support is even stronger among those who see the emergence of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria as a high risk: 70% of this subgroup (of all ages) say the policy is justified. Support is also strong among those who see the prospect of terrorist attacks on Australians overseas and home-grown terrorism as high risk (71% and 74% of these subgroups saying the policy is justified, respectively).

Younger Australians (aged 18-29) are more divided on the need for data retention, with almost equal numbers supporting and opposing the legislation (50% say it is justified, while 47% say it goes too far in violating citizens' privacy).

## Military action against Islamic State

As part of the international effort to combat Islamic State, the Australian Defence Force is currently participating in air strikes against Islamic State in Iraq, and providing training and support to Iraqi security forces. In polling conducted in April 2015 for the Lowy Institute by Newspoll, we found that most Australians support this military involvement despite their awareness of the potential risks.

The majority of the population (55%) believes that 'Australia's participation in military action against Islamic State in Iraq increases the risk of terrorism to Australia now', although fewer (47%) say it 'increases the risk of terrorism to Australia in the future', and a small proportion (20%) say it 'makes Australia safer from terrorism in the future.'

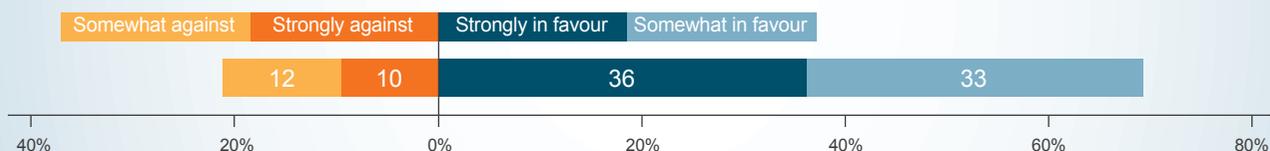
Yet despite fears of an increased risk of terrorism, the Australians who support air strikes against Islamic State and the provision of military assistance to Iraq far outnumber those who oppose it. A large majority (69%) are either strongly (36%) or somewhat (33%) in favour of this military participation. Only 22% say they are against such action.

## Report card on the Coalition Government

After more than a year in office, the Coalition Government's performance on its key policy platforms — turning back asylum seeker boats, improving the budget bottom line and reducing debt, and abolishing the carbon tax<sup>3</sup> — appears to have left Australians unimpressed.

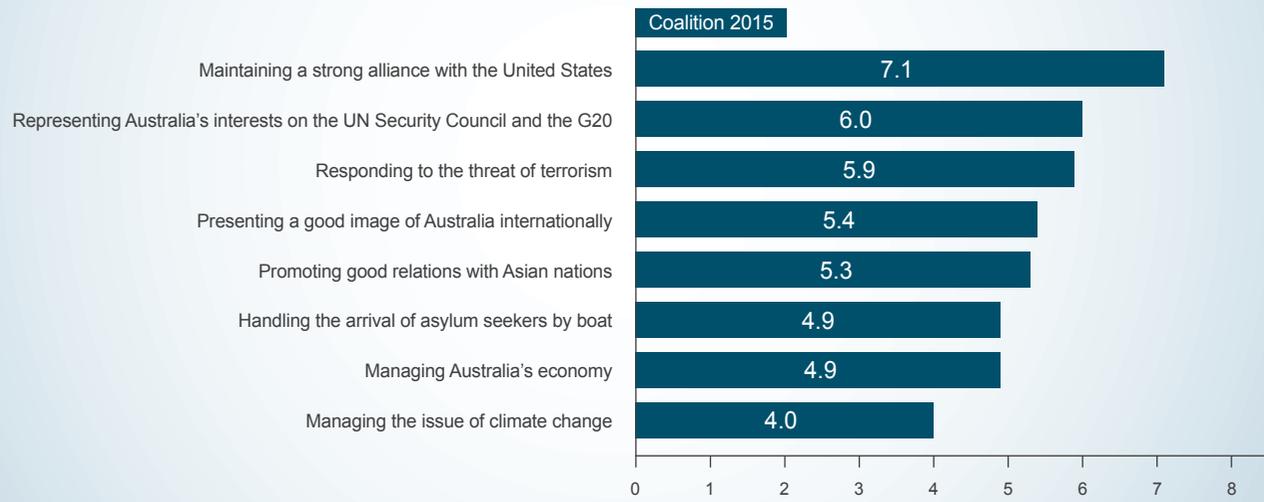
**Fig. 3: Support for action against Islamic State in Iraq**

As part of an international effort, the Australian Defence Force is currently conducting air strikes against Islamic State in Iraq, and providing training and support to Iraqi security forces. Are you personally in favour or against Australia participating in this action against Islamic State in Iraq?



**Fig. 4: Coalition Government report card**

In 2014, the Coalition Government completed its first year in office. What mark out of ten would you personally give the Coalition Government in Canberra for its performance in handling each of the following issues — with 10 meaning it has done an excellent job, 5 an average job and 1 a very poor job?



Asked to give the Coalition Government a mark out of ten for its handling of eight foreign policy issues (where ten means the government has done an ‘excellent job’, five an ‘average job’ and one ‘a very poor job’), Australian adults awarded the government a barely average mark for ‘handling the arrival of asylum seekers by boat’ (with a mean score of 4.9/10).

On ‘managing Australia’s economy’, the Coalition scored another marginal mark of 4.9/10, and it received a failing grade of 4.0/10 for ‘managing the issue of climate change’.

The Coalition’s marks were just above average for ‘promoting good relations with Asian nations’ (5.3/10) and ‘presenting a good image of Australia internationally’ (5.4/10).

Slightly higher marks were awarded for ‘responding to the threat of terrorism’ (5.9/10) and ‘representing Australia’s interests on the UN Security Council and the G20’ (6.0/10). The highest mark awarded was 7.1/10 for ‘maintaining a strong alliance with the United States’.

In a similar question asked in our 2010 Poll, Australians awarded the Rudd Labor Government two below-average scores (4.2 for handling asylum seekers and 3.9 for dealing with Japanese whaling), one average score (5.0 for ‘combating climate change’) and five above-

average scores, with the highest mark of 7.2/10 given for its work in maintaining a strong US alliance.

### The economy and trade

Australians’ poor perceptions of the Coalition Government’s economic management have been accompanied by a sharp decline in optimism about the performance of the Australian economy in the world.

**Fig. 5: Economic optimism**

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

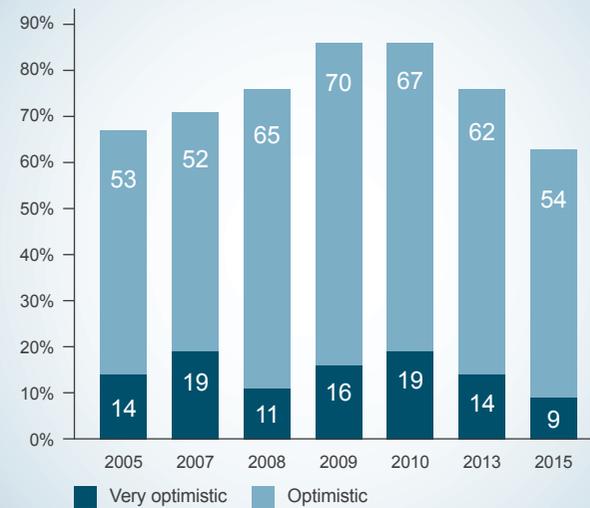
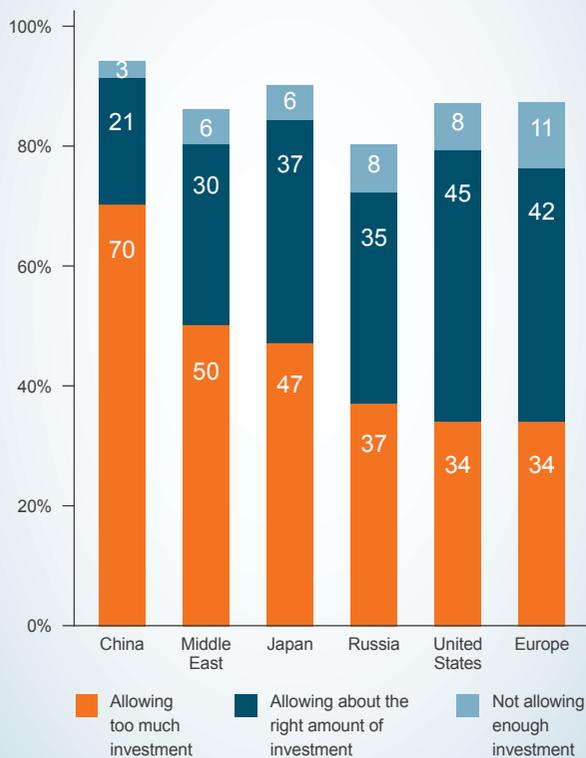


Fig. 6: Foreign investment in Australian residential real estate

Overall, do you think the Australian government is allowing too much investment, allowing about the right amount of investment, or not allowing enough investment in Australian residential real estate from: ...



In the single largest fall in optimism recorded since 2005, 63% of Australians are optimistic (54%) or very optimistic (9%) about the nation's 'economic performance in the world over the next five years'. This is a 13-point fall since this question was last asked in 2013, and 23 points lower than the highs of 86% recorded in 2009 and 2010 at the height of the global economic crisis.

### Free trade agreements

Australians have mixed views about free trade agreements such as those concluded in 2014 by the Coalition Government with Japan, Korea, and China. Less than a majority (48%) see them as good for the Australian economy, though fewer (30%) say they are bad for the economy. But regardless of the economic benefits, a solid majority (65%) say they are good for Australia's relations with those countries.

## Foreign investment in real estate

The issue of foreign investment in Australian residential real estate has caused considerable public debate. In March 2015, during fieldwork for this Poll, the Australian Treasurer announced the forced sale of a Sydney home valued at around \$40 million, purchased by a Hong Kong-based property group through an Australian company in apparent contravention of foreign investment rules.<sup>4</sup> A week earlier, the government flagged new measures to enforce rules for foreign investment in Australian real estate, following a parliamentary inquiry in 2014.<sup>5</sup>

The 2015 Lowy Institute Poll asked Australians whether the Australian Government is allowing too much foreign investment in residential real estate from six countries and regions: China, Europe, Japan, the Middle East, Russia and the United States. A substantial majority of Australians responded that the Government allows too much investment from China (70%), followed by the Middle East (50% saying too much investment). Only minorities say the Government allows too much investment from Japan (47%), Russia (37%), the United States (34%) and Europe (34%).

Our historical polling suggests that Australians may have a particular aversion to Chinese investment in residential real estate compared with other forms of Chinese investment in Australia. Over the last five years (2010-2014), Lowy Institute polls found smaller majorities (between 56% and 57%) of the population who said that the Government allows too much investment from China.

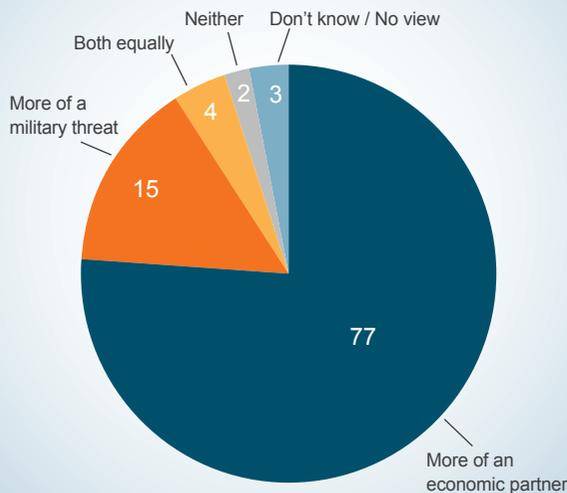
## Mixed views on China

In 2015, Australians continue to hold a mixed, perhaps even contradictory, set of views on China.

When asked whether China is 'more of an economic partner to Australia or more of a military threat to Australia', a solid majority (77%) see China as 'more of an economic partner'. Only 15% see it as 'more of a military threat'. Previous Lowy Institute polling has found that the majority of Australians see China as by far the most important economy to Australia, with 76% saying China

**Fig. 7: China: economic partner or military threat**

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



was 'the most important economy to Australia' in 2013, ahead of both the United States and Japan (16% named the United States as our most important economy in 2013, and 5% named Japan).

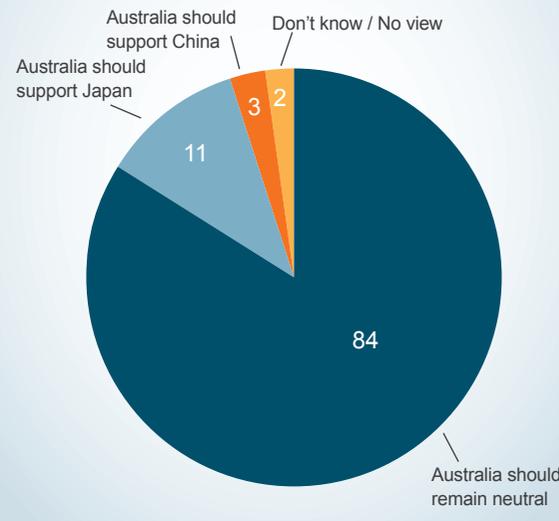
Fears that China poses a military threat appear to have eased somewhat this year, with 39% of the population believing it likely that 'China will become a military threat to Australia in the next 20 years'. In 2014, this was nine points higher at 48%.

In late 2013 and early 2014, tensions flared between China and Japan over their competing claims of sovereignty to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea.<sup>6</sup> This year, we asked Australians their views on what Australia should do 'in the event of a military conflict between China and Japan'. A very substantial 84% of Australians say 'Australia should remain neutral'. A small minority (11%) say 'Australia should support Japan', while only 3% say 'Australia should support China'.

Feelings in general towards China remain steady at a warmish 58° on the Lowy Institute 'feelings thermometer'. While a majority of Australians (61%) still believe in 2015 that 'China's aim is to dominate Asia', a larger majority (67%) agree with the more benign view that 'China's aim is to create a better life for the Chinese people'. A substantial proportion of the population (73%) agrees that 'Australia should develop closer relations

**Fig. 8: Conflict between China and Japan**

In the event of a military conflict between China and Japan, please say which one of the following statements comes closest to your own personal view: Australia should support Japan, Australia should remain neutral, or Australia should support China.



with China as it grows in influence', and a majority (52%) now disagree that 'Australia should join with other countries to limit China's influence', which was not the majority view in our 2008, 2010 and 2011 Polls (46%, 40% and 47% respectively).

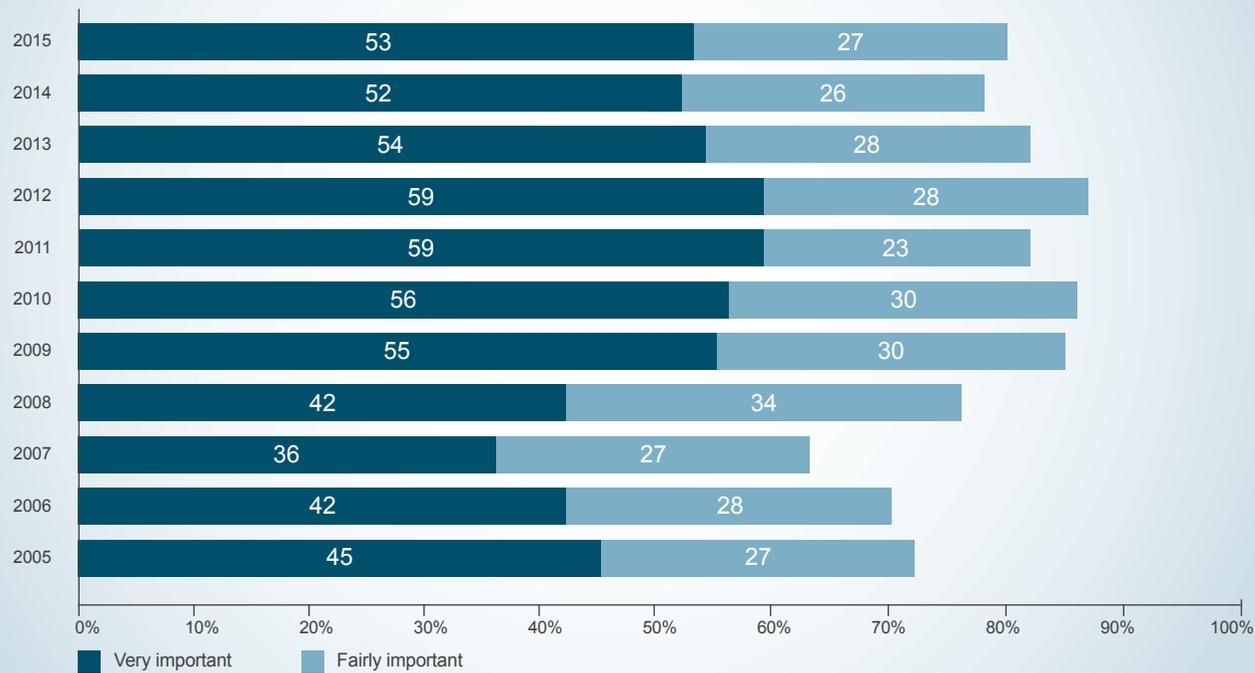
Nevertheless, 66% of Australians this year say that 'Australia should do more to resist China's military aggression in our region, even if this affects our economic relationship'. In further evidence of this wariness of China's increasing influence and assertiveness, a majority (56%) disagree that 'having China as an important global power makes the world more stable'.

## The US alliance

The 2015 Poll reaffirms Australians' enduring support for our alliance with the United States. After a slight decline in support between 2012 and 2014, the vast majority (80%) in 2015 say that the US alliance is 'very' or 'fairly' important for Australia's security, a majority (53%) seeing it as 'very important'. This is 17 points higher than the low point in 2007 during the presidency of George W. Bush. Support for the alliance is strong regardless of gender or age.

Fig. 9: Importance of the US alliance

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



In a question first asked in 2011 to better understand attitudes towards the alliance, we presented five different arguments this year and asked Australians whether they agreed or disagreed with each. Our 2015 results reinforce our findings in 2011 that the US alliance is seen as a natural extension of our shared values and ideals, while acknowledging that the alliance allows Australia to expend less on its defence. Most Australians (77%) agree that 'Australians and Americans share many common values and ideals', and see the alliance as a 'natural extension of this'. A solid majority (70%) agree that 'without the alliance, Australia would have to spend much more money on its defence'.

The fear expressed by the majority (73%) in 2011 that the alliance 'makes it more likely that Australia will be drawn into a war in Asia that would not be in Australia's interests' has weakened significantly, only 58% agreeing this is a risk in 2015. This aligns with our findings (see page 5) that very few Australians rate the possibility of conflict in Asia between the United States and China or of maritime disputes between China and its neighbours as of high risk to our security. However, the alliance is seen as hedging against any threat from China, with the

majority of Australians (53%) agreeing that 'the alliance relationship with the United States makes Australia safer from attack or pressure from China'.

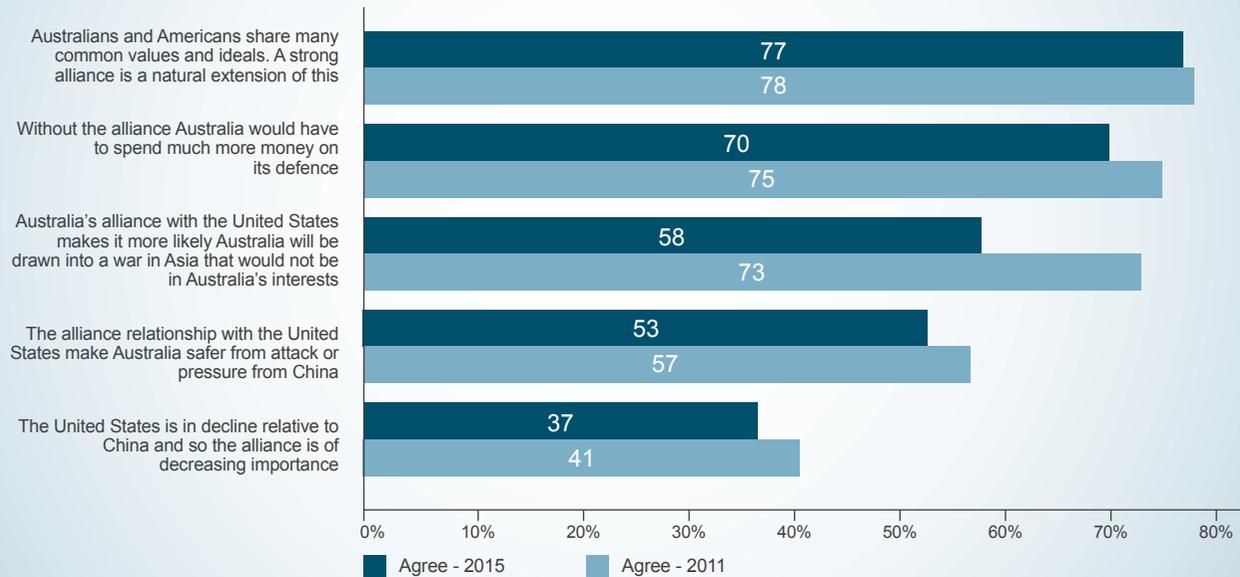
#### The United States' role as a world leader

Most Australians reject the idea that the United States is in decline. Few Australians (37%, down from 41% in 2011) agree that the 'United States is in decline relative to China, and so the alliance is of decreasing importance'. This argument finds strongest support among those aged 60 and over (47% agreeing, compared with only 33% of those under 60 years of age).

Although few Australians regard the United States as in decline relative to China, not many see its power increasing either. When asked about the role of the United States as a world leader in the future, only 10% say the United States 'will play a more important and powerful role', while 61% say it will play 'about as important a role'. Around a quarter (27%) say it will play a less important role. Perhaps surprisingly, among young Australians, 15% of 18-29 year-olds say the United States will play a more important role as a world leader in ten years' time, compared with only 8% of their elders.

Fig. 10: Attitudes to the US alliance

I am now going to read you some different arguments about the alliance relationship with the United States. For each one please tell me whether you personally agree or disagree.



## Indonesia

The Australia-Indonesia relationship has been strained by the spying furor in late 2013, when allegations were made that Australia had listened in to telephone conversations of the Indonesian president, his wife and senior Indonesian officials.<sup>7</sup> More recently, in April 2015, the executions of Australian citizens Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran for drug trafficking offences have created additional friction.

Australians' feelings towards Indonesia have now fallen to their lowest point in eight years. Even before the executions of Chan and Sukumaran, Indonesia registered a cool 46° on the Lowy Institute thermometer of feelings towards other countries. The last, and only time, sentiments towards Indonesia were this low was in 2007, after a period of discord in relations following Schappelle Corby's sentencing for drug offences and Australia's granting of asylum to Papuans in 2006. Indonesia's reading this year is eight points lower than the peaks of 54° in 2010, after the Australian visit of then president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and again in 2012. This places Indonesia, in Australians' eyes, on a par with Russia (45°) and Egypt (48°).<sup>8</sup>

The asylum seeker issue has also been a source of tension in the relationship. The vast majority of Australians (87%) believe that 'Indonesia should do more to help Australia combat people smuggling', while almost as many (85%) say that 'Indonesia should do more to combat the risk of Islamic terrorism'. Most (65%) say that 'Indonesia should abolish the death penalty'.<sup>9</sup>

A surprisingly high proportion (though a minority) of the population (42%) supports Australian navy vessels 'entering Indonesian territorial waters without permission, as part of Australia's efforts to turn back asylum seekers'. A slim majority (55%) disagree that such incursions are justified.

Australians value a personal approach to the relationship with Indonesia. A substantial majority (76%) of Australians agree that 'Australian prime ministers should work harder to develop personal relationships with their Indonesian counterparts'.

### Is Indonesia a democracy?

Australians still seem to have a poor understanding of domestic developments in Indonesia. In 2015, only one-third (34%) of Australians regard Indonesia as a democracy, almost exactly the proportion who said this

in 2013 (33%), despite the fact that Indonesia has been a parliamentary democracy for over fifteen years. After the ten-year presidency of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, elections in 2014 saw Joko Widodo elected as the new president of Indonesia. Yet when asked about President Jokowi, 42% of Australians responded that they do not know him.

### The death penalty

Lowy Institute polling both before and after the executions indicates a clear majority of Australians oppose the death penalty for drug trafficking. In separate polling in February 2015, we asked Australians about the (then) planned executions of Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran. Sixty-two per cent of Australians said that the executions should not proceed, and 69% said that the death penalty should not be used as a penalty for drug trafficking. In an almost identical result in supplementary polling in May after the executions, 71% opposed the death penalty for drug trafficking.

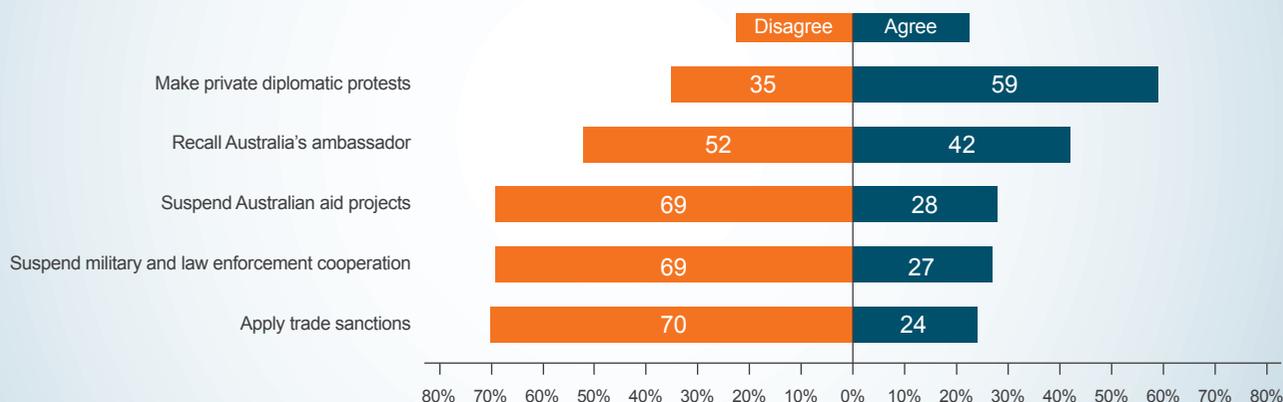
In the 2015 Lowy Institute Poll and again in our subsequent polling in May, we asked whether the ‘Australian Government should play an active role in the abolition of the death penalty internationally’, and how the government should respond if ‘an Australian is executed in another country as a result of a death penalty’. By a slight margin, more people

(51%) say the government should play an active role in the abolition of the death penalty internationally than those who say it should not (45%), with this division fairly consistent across age groups and gender. Attitudes on this question before and after the executions were very consistent.

Australians’ strong preference, ‘if an Australian is executed in another country as a result of a death penalty’, is for the issue to be addressed by quiet diplomacy. In a question asked both in our 2015 Poll in February/March and again a few days after the executions of Chan and Sukumaran and following the recall of Australia’s ambassador to Jakarta in May, we asked Australians how the government should respond. The results for both polls were very similar. The only option gaining majority support is for the government to ‘make private diplomatic protests’ (59% in agreement in May). Only a minority (42% in May) agree that the government should recall Australia’s ambassador, and even then, most believe the period of disruption should be short: 51% nominated a period of ‘about one to four months only’ when asked for how long Australia should suspend normal diplomatic relations with Indonesia. There was scant support either before or after the executions for suspending Australian aid projects (28% agreeing in May) or suspending military and law enforcement cooperation (27%). The least supported action was for applying trade sanctions (24%).

Fig. 11: Government responses to the execution of Australians overseas — Newspoll 1-3 May

The following is a list of possible ways for the Australian government to respond if an Australian citizen is executed in another country as a result of a death penalty. Do you personally agree or disagree that the Australian government should ...?



## Climate change and energy

The 2015 Poll has recorded the third consecutive rise in Australians' concern about global warming. In a tracking question asked since 2006, half the adult population (50%, up 5 points since 2014 and 14 points since 2012) now say 'global warming is a serious and pressing problem. We should begin taking steps now even if this involves significant costs', though the number remains considerably lower than the peak of concern recorded in 2006 when 68% expressed this view. Only 1 in 8 (12%) say 'until we are sure that global warming is really a problem, we should not take any steps that would have economic costs'.

### Australia's role in UN climate negotiations

In the lead-up to the 2015 UN climate change conference in Paris, we sought Australians' views on the approach the Australian Government should take in international climate negotiations. A solid majority (63%) say 'the Australian Government should commit to significant reductions so that other countries will be encouraged to do the same', with significantly more women (70%) than men (56%) favouring this approach. Support is also stronger among 18-29 year-olds,

Fig. 13: Approach to UN climate negotiations

In the lead-up to the 2015 UN climate change conference in Paris 2015, which one of the following two statements most closely represents your own view of the approach the Australian government should take in international climate negotiations?

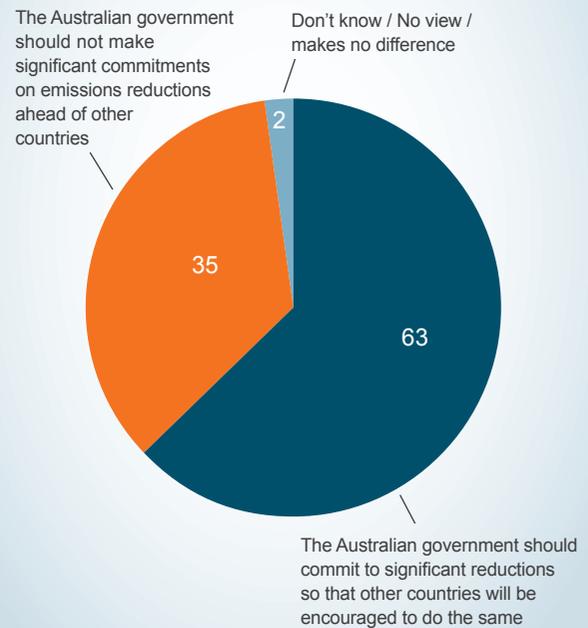


Fig 12: Global warming

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



with 70% advocating a significant commitment from government on emissions reductions. The opposing proposition, that ‘the Australian Government should not make significant commitments on emissions reductions ahead of other countries’ is accepted by only 35% of the population.

### Australia’s primary source of electricity in ten years’ time

Australians have high expectations of the role solar energy will play in Australia’s future energy mix. When presented with seven possible sources of energy and asked ‘which one of these energy sources do you think will be our primary source of electricity ten years from now’, ‘solar energy’ is by far the highest-ranked option, with 43% of the adult population saying that this ‘will be our primary source of electricity 10 years from now’. By contrast, ‘coal’ is selected by only 17%.

Despite the fact that Australia currently has no nuclear power plants, a significant 13% of the population believes ‘nuclear energy’ will be our primary source of electricity 10 years from now, higher than for ‘natural gas’ (10%), ‘wind’ (7%), and ‘hydroelectric power’ (6%).

These expectations contrast starkly with Australia’s current energy-generation mix. Coal currently accounts for over 60% of Australia’s electricity generation, followed by gas at 21% and hydroelectricity at 7%. Solar energy accounts for less than 2% of electricity generation in Australia.<sup>10</sup>

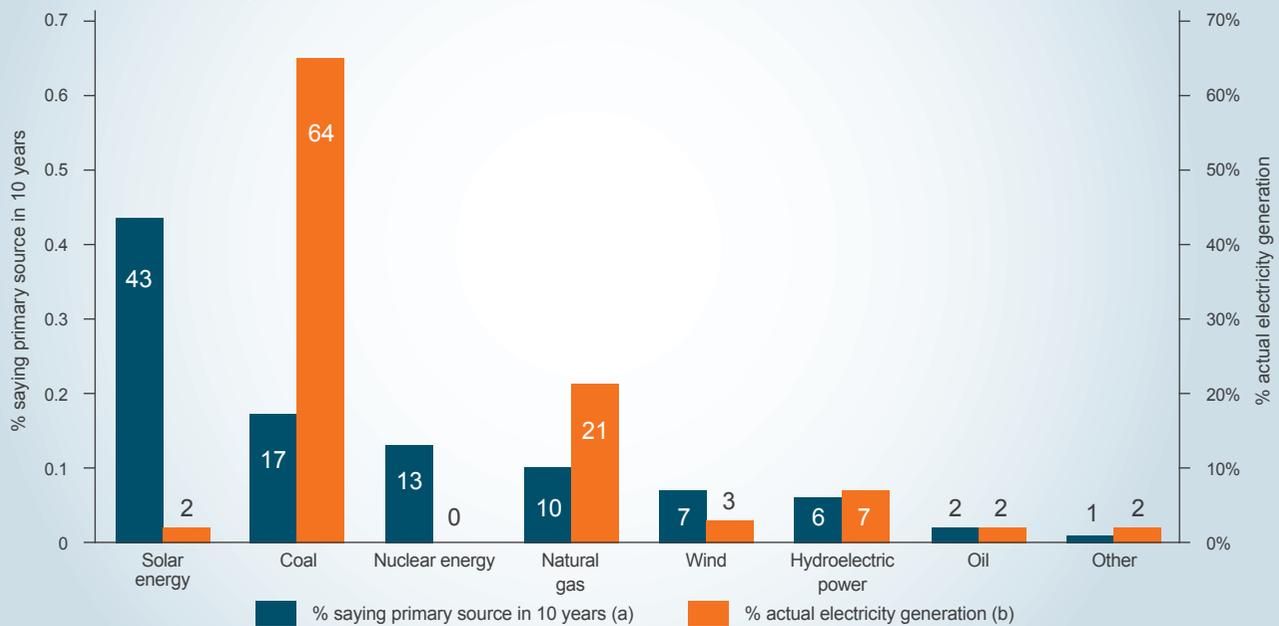
### Australia’s aid program

Our 2015 polling suggests that few Australian adults see the government’s current aid budget as inadequate, despite the significant reductions to Australia’s overseas aid both in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 Budgets.<sup>11</sup>

In a short poll following this year’s May Budget, we found that a majority of Australians (53%) are in favour of the most recent reductions to overseas aid. While nearly one in five express strong opposition to the reductions (19% ‘strongly against’ the reductions), only 35% overall oppose the reductions. In our earlier 2015 Poll survey, only 21% said that Australia’s 2014-15 aid

**Fig 14: Australia’s primary source of electricity ten years from now**

Which one of these energy sources do you think will be our primary source of electricity ten years from now?



Sources: (a) 2015 Lowy Institute Poll (b) Bureau of Resources and Energy Economics, 2014

expenditure, at '5 billion dollars in aid to developing countries, or around 1.2 per cent of the Budget' is 'not enough'. On the contrary, 36% said this is 'too much', while 41% said it is 'about the right amount'.

Younger Australians are far more inclined to be critical of the level of the aid budget. Among 18-29 year-olds, only 33% support the most recent budget cuts; 42% — still not a majority — oppose the cuts. 34% said the 2014/15 aid budget is 'not enough', compared with 17% of those aged over 30.

## Papua New Guinea

The largest recipient of Australian aid in 2015/16 will be our close neighbour and former colony Papua New Guinea (PNG), with an estimated aid expenditure of around \$554m. Indonesia, our second largest aid recipient in 2015/16, will receive \$366m. Australia is PNG's largest aid donor.

In 2015, the year of the 40th anniversary of PNG's independence, Australians seem to have a strong sense of obligation to PNG and some understanding of its importance to Australia. The vast majority (82%) agree that 'stability in PNG is important to our national interest', and 77% say 'Australia has a moral obligation to help PNG'. Yet despite Australia's significant aid program in PNG, Australians are divided on its impact: 38% agree that 'Australian aid to PNG has little impact on life in PNG', while 42% disagree, and a relatively high 20% say they either don't know or have no view on the impact of Australian aid on life in PNG.

While PNG's economy is forecast to be one of the world's fastest-growing economies in 2015, only a minority of Australians (37%) agree that 'PNG has strong economic prospects'.<sup>12</sup>

Australians aged over 45 appear to have stronger feelings about PNG: 90% agree that PNG's stability is in our national interest, and 82% say that Australia has a moral obligation to help PNG.

## Attitudes to democracy

Australians' views on democracy, and particularly those of younger Australians, have been among the most striking findings of our last four years of polling. In 2015, 65% of the voting-age population say that 'democracy is preferable to any other kind of government' (up from between 59-60% over the preceding three years). There has been a corresponding drop (from 24% in 2014 to 18% this year) in the proportion of the population who believe that 'in some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable'.

As in past years, only a minority (49%) of 18-29 year-old Australians express a preference for democracy, although fewer this year see a non-democratic government as an alternative, with 23% (down 10 points) saying 'in some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable'. A quarter of this age group (26%) say 'it doesn't matter what kind of government we have'.

## Feelings towards other countries

Every Lowy Institute Poll since 2005 has included our annual 'feelings thermometer', which measures Australians' feelings towards a range of other countries on a scale of 0° in temperature (coldest feelings) to 100° (warmest feelings).

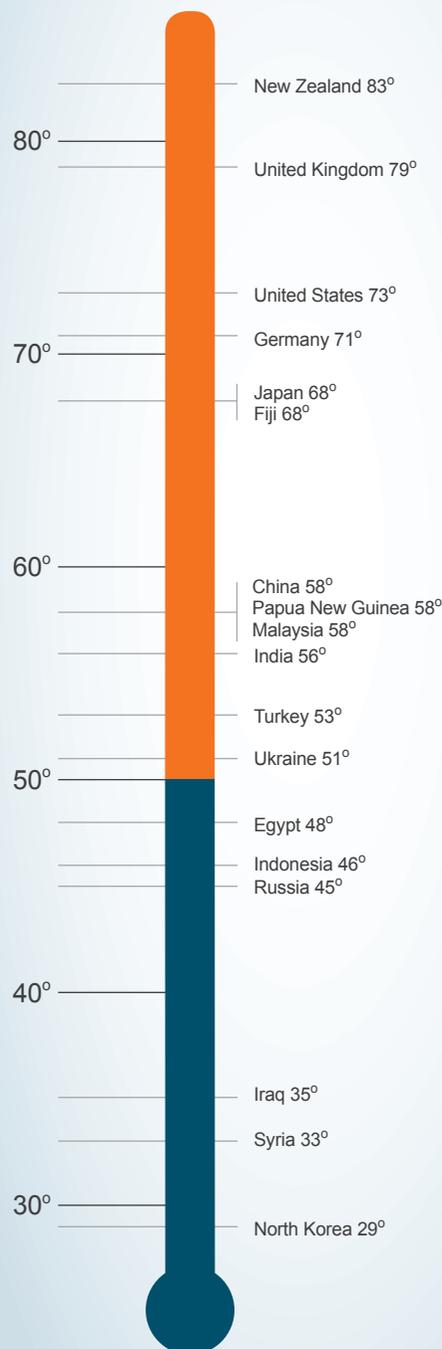
In 2015, Australians' coldest rankings are given to North Korea (29°), Syria (33°, down 6 points since 2012) and Iraq (35°). Following the February 2015 release of Australian journalist Peter Grete after more than a year's imprisonment in Egypt, Australians' sentiments towards Egypt have cooled a significant 8 points from 2012 to a cool 48° this year.

At 46°, feelings towards Indonesia have fallen to their lowest point in eight years of polling. This puts Indonesia on the same level as Russia (45°, down 10° since last on our thermometer in 2010) and Egypt (48°).

Feelings towards our largest neighbours in the region are steady. Feelings towards China (58°), India (56°) and Malaysia (58°) are on the lukewarm side, while Japan at 68° is more warmly regarded.

**Fig. 15: Feelings thermometer**

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



Among our near neighbours in the Pacific, Papua New Guinea's ranking remains lukewarm at 58°, having cooled over the last three years from a high of 64° in 2012. Fiji enjoys a warmer spot at 68°.

At a warm 73°, Australians' feelings towards our security partner, the United States, have been warming steadily since their low point of 60° in 2007. Australians see the relationship between the two countries as one of firm friendship. In a short poll in 2014, when we asked Australians to choose 'Australia's best friend' from a list of six countries in the world, the United States ranked highest with New Zealand (with 35% and 32% of the population respectively choosing them as 'Australia's best friend'), followed by the United Kingdom (17%) and China (9%). Japan and Indonesia were chosen by only 1% each.<sup>13</sup>

Australians' warmth towards the United Kingdom has been a consistent feature of Lowy Institute polling, with the UK (Great Britain) scoring a very warm 79° in 2015. When asked about the relationship between Australia and the UK in our short 2014 poll, the vast majority (82%) saw it as an important relationship for Australia, two-thirds (67%) of whom ascribed that importance to the 'strong historical and cultural ties between the two countries'. Only 26% said it is important because 'the UK is still a major economic and strategic power'. The 'great sporting rivalry between the two countries' was seen by only 5% of Australians in 2014 as the reason they think the relationship between the UK and Australia is important.

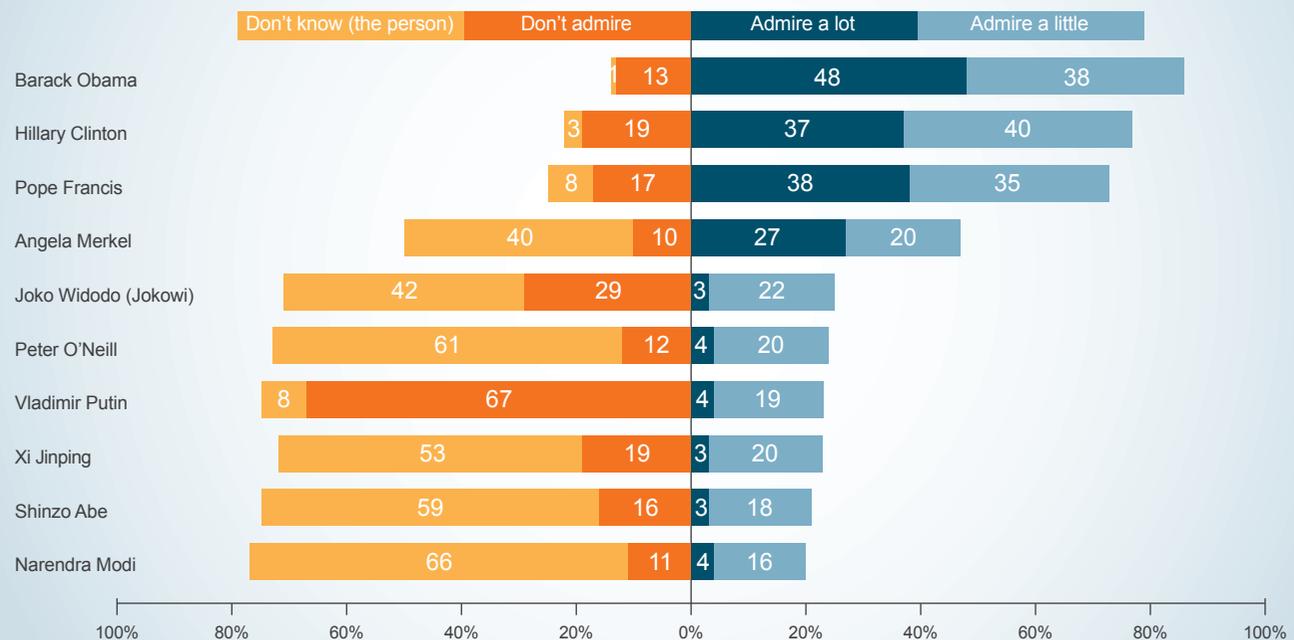
This year, as on every other occasion it has been included, New Zealand tops the thermometer at a consistently warm 83°.

## World leaders

In 2015, we repeated a question first asked in 2014 seeking the views of Australians on a range of world leaders. This year's list of ten leaders included four from the 2014 list: US President Barack Obama, former Secretary of State and now presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, German Chancellor Angela Merkel,

Fig. 16: World leaders

Now some questions about world leaders. For each of the following leaders, please say whether you personally admire them a lot, admire them a little or you don't admire them.



and Chinese President Xi Jinping. Also included this year were the new Indonesian President Joko Widodo, PNG's Prime Minister Peter O'Neill, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, India's new Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and the Pope.

The most admired leader this year is again Barack Obama, admired by 86% of Australians. Next comes Hillary Clinton (admired by 77%, though down 4 points this year). Pope Francis ranked third at 73%.

Last year, high proportions of Australians answered 'don't know' in their responses about a number of leaders included in this question. This year, we adjusted the question slightly to divide those who 'don't know the person' by name from those who have no view on them as leaders.

This year, Angela Merkel is admired by just under half the adult population (47%), but another 40% don't know her, despite her well-publicised visit and speeches in Australia at the time of the G20 meetings in Brisbane.

More Australians 'don't admire' Indonesian President Jokowi (29%) than 'admire' him (25%), though 42% don't know of him.

PNG's Prime Minister Peter O'Neill has a very low profile in Australia, with 61% of Australians saying they don't know of him (while 24% say they admire him).

Last year, a very substantial 64% responded 'don't know' when asked about their admiration for China's President Xi Jinping. This year that number dropped to 58% (53% saying they don't know of him), while 23% admire him and 19% don't admire him.

There is a similar lack of knowledge in Australia about the Japanese and Indian leaders. Shinzo Abe is not known by 59% of Australians, and 66% don't know of Narendra Modi, while they are each admired by around 20% of the population.

Australians are unequivocal in their lack of admiration for Vladimir Putin, who of all the leaders on the list attracted the highest proportion of Australians (67%) saying they 'don't admire' him.

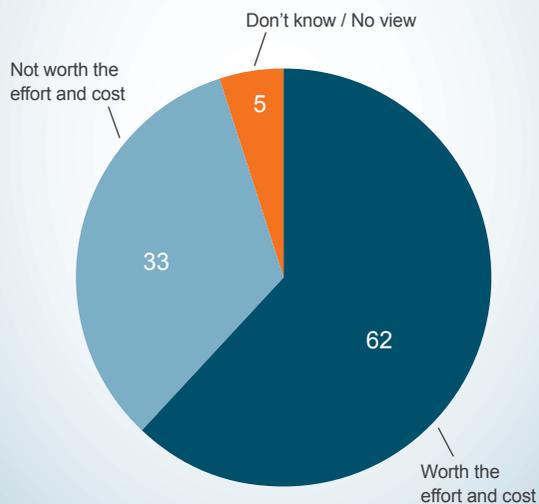
## The UN Security Council and G20

Finally, key elements of Australia's multilateral diplomacy have the strong support of Australians. Australia held a temporary seat on the United Nations Security Council in 2013-14, and was President of the G20 in 2014.

In 2015, nearly two-thirds of the adult population (62%) say that the kind of role Australia played in the UN Security Council and as the host of the G20 leaders' meetings in Brisbane was worth the effort and cost. Only a third (33%) regard it as not worth the effort and cost.

Fig. 17: Australia's role in the UN Security Council and the G20

Now about Australia's role in international organisations. In 2013 to 2014, Australia held a temporary seat on the United Nations Security Council and hosted the G20 leaders meetings in Brisbane. On balance, do you personally think that this kind of role for Australia is worth the effort and cost, or not worth the effort and cost?



# TABLES OF RESULTS

Please note that totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Each response option has been rounded individually and grouped responses (e.g. those who 'somewhat agree' plus 'strongly agree') have not been rounded at the group level. Responses of 'don't know', 'no view', 'none' and similar were recorded if given by respondents, but not offered. Throughout the tables an '\*' represents a response given by less than 0.5% of people. Unless otherwise indicated, all 2015 results are from the 2015 Lowy Institute Poll conducted on 20 February – 8 March 2015 (LI Poll).

## Feeling of safety

Table 1: Now about world events, how safe do you feel?

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

## Global risk priorities for Australia

Table 2: Now I am going to read out a list of possible risks to Australia's security in the next ten years. For each one, please select whether you see this as a high risk, a moderate risk or a low or no risk to Australia's security in the next ten years:

		2015				
		High risk	Moderate risk	<b>Total: High or moderate risk</b>	Low or no risk	Don't know/no view
<i>Ranked by % saying 'high risk'</i>						
1.	The emergence of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria	69%	20%	<b>89%</b>	9%	2%
2.	Terrorist attacks on Australians overseas	55%	32%	<b>87%</b>	13%	1%
3.	Home-grown terrorism in Australia	53%	31%	<b>84%</b>	15%	1%
4.	A cyber attack on Australian critical infrastructure	45%	37%	<b>82%</b>	16%	3%
5.	Maritime disputes between China and its neighbours in Asian territorial seas	26%	46%	<b>72%</b>	25%	3%
6.	A breakdown of law and order in Papua New Guinea	24%	40%	<b>64%</b>	30%	6%
7.	Potential epidemics such as the Ebola virus	22%	37%	<b>59%</b>	39%	2%
8.	Military conflict between the United States and China in Asia	20%	37%	<b>57%</b>	40%	4%

## Data retention legislation

**Table 3:** Thinking now about national security and telecommunications data. As part of the effort to combat terrorism and protect national security, the Australian Government is introducing legislation which will require Australian telecommunications companies to retain data about communications such as phone calls, emails and internet usage, but not their content. Do you personally think this:

	2015
Is justified as part of the effort to combat terrorism and protect national security	63%
Goes too far in violating citizens' privacy and is therefore not justified	33%
Don't know/no view	4%

## Military action against Islamic State in Iraq

The following two questions (tables 4 and 5 below) were asked on behalf of the Lowy Institute by Newspoll in its omnibus survey on 10-12 April 2015 (sample: 1215).

**Table 4:** Thinking now about the organisation called Islamic State, also known as ISIL. As part of an international effort, the Australian Defence Force is currently conducting air strikes against Islamic State in Iraq, and providing training and support to Iraqi security forces. Are you personally in favour or against Australia participating in this action against Islamic State in Iraq? IF IN FAVOUR – Is that strongly in favour or somewhat in favour? IF AGAINST – Is that strongly against or somewhat against?

	Newspoll 10-12 April 2015
Strongly in favour	36%
Somewhat in favour	33%
<b>Total: in favour</b>	<b>69%</b>
Somewhat against	12%
Strongly against	10%
<b>Total: against</b>	<b>22%</b>
Neither/Don't know	10%

**Table 5:** Now a question about terrorism and Australia's participation in military action against Islamic State. Do you personally think Australia's participation in military action against Islamic State in Iraq ... (a) increases the risk of terrorism to Australia now, makes Australia safer from terrorism now, or makes no difference? ... (b) increases the risk of terrorism to Australia in the future, makes Australia safer from terrorism in the future, or makes no difference?

	Now	In the future
Increases the risk of terrorism to Australia	55%	47%
Makes no difference	32%	29%
Makes Australia safer from terrorism	9%	20%
Don't know/no view	4%	4%

## Coalition Government report card

**Table 6:** In 2014, the Coalition Government completed its first year in office. What mark out of ten would you personally give the Coalition Government in Canberra for its performance in handling each of the following issues – with 10 meaning it has done an excellent job, 5 an average job and 1 a very poor job?

	(Mean)
Maintaining a strong alliance with the United States	7.1
Representing Australia's interests on the UN Security Council and the G20	6.0
Responding to the threat of terrorism	5.9
Presenting a good image of Australia internationally	5.4
Promoting good relations with Asian nations	5.3
Handling the arrival of asylum seekers by boat	4.9
Managing Australia's economy	4.9
Managing the issue of climate change	4.0

## Economic optimism

**Table 7:** Overall, how optimistic are you about Australia's economic performance in the world over the next five years?

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

<sup>#</sup> In 2005 and 2007 a 'neutral' option was included.

## Free trade agreements

**Table 8:** In 2014, Australia signed free trade agreements with Japan, Korea and China. On balance, do you personally think these kinds of free trade agreements are good or bad for ... (a) the Australian economy ... (b) Australia's relations with those countries, or do they make no difference?

	The Australian economy	Australia's relations with those countries
Good	48%	65%
Bad	30%	10%
Make no difference	16%	22%
Don't know	6%	4%

## Foreign investment in Australian residential real estate

**Table 9:** Thinking now about foreign investment in Australian residential real estate. Overall, do you think the Australian Government is allowing too much investment, allowing about the right amount of investment, or not allowing enough investment in Australian residential real estate from:

	China	Middle East	Japan	Russia	United States	Europe
Allowing too much investment	70%	50%	47%	37%	34%	34%
Allowing about the right amount of investment	21%	30%	37%	35%	45%	42%
Not allowing enough investment	3%	6%	6%	8%	8%	11%
Don't know/no view	6%	15%	11%	21%	13%	13%

## China as a military threat

**Table 10:** Do you think it is likely or unlikely that China will become a military threat to Australia in the next 20 years? IF LIKELY — Is that very likely or somewhat likely? IF UNLIKELY — Is that very unlikely or somewhat unlikely?

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

## China: economic partner or military threat?

**Table 11:** In your own view, is China more of an economic partner to Australia or more of a military threat to Australia?

	2015
More of an economic partner	77%
More of a military threat	15%
Both equally*	4%
Neither*	2%
Don't know/no view*	3%

\*Answer not offered to respondents, but recorded where volunteered.

## Conflict between China and Japan

**Table 12:** In the event of a military conflict between China and Japan, please say which one of the following statements comes closest to your own personal view: Australia should support Japan, Australia should remain neutral, or Australia should support China.

	2015
Australia should support Japan	11%
Australia should remain neutral	84%
Australia should support China	3%
Don't know/no view	2%

## Attitudes to China

**Table 13:** Now a few more questions about China. Please say whether you personally agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Australia should develop closer relations with China as it grows in influence	China's aim is to create a better life for the Chinese people	Australia should do more to resist China's military aggression in our region, even if this affects our economic relationship	China's aim is to dominate Asia				Australia should join with other countries to limit China's influence				Having China as an important global power makes the world more stable
	2015 %	2015 %	2015 %	2008 %	2010 %	2011 %	2015 %	2008 %	2010 %	2011 %	2015 %	2015 %
Agree %	73	67	66	60	69	65	61	51	55	50	43	35
Disagree %	23	29	27	34	27	30	32	46	40	47	52	56
Neither/ don't know/ no view %	4	4	6	6	4	5	7	3	4	3	6	9

## Importance of the US alliance

**Table 14:** And now about Australia's alliance relationship with the United States. How important is our alliance relationship with the United States for Australia's security?

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

## Attitudes to the US alliance

**Table 15:** I am now going to read you some different arguments about the alliance relationship with the United States. For each one please tell me whether you personally agree or disagree.

	Australians and Americans share many common values and ideals. A strong alliance is a natural extension of this		Without the alliance Australia would have to spend much more money on its defence		Australia's alliance with the United States makes it more likely Australia will be drawn into a war in Asia that would not be in Australia's interests		The alliance relationship with the United States makes Australia safer from attack or pressure from China		The United States is in decline relative to China and so the alliance is of decreasing importance	
	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015
Agree	78%	77%	75%	70%	73%	58%	57%	53%	41%	37%
Disagree	21%	20%	25%	25%	25%	37%	39%	40%	54%	55%
Neither/don't know/no view	1%	3%	1%	5%	2%	5%	4%	7%	5%	9%

## Role of the United States as a world leader

**Table 16:** Now about the role of the United States and its role as a world leader in the future. In ten years' time from now, do you personally think it will play a more important and powerful role as a world leader, about as important a role as a world leader, or a less important role as a world leader as it does now?

	2015
A more important and powerful role	10%
About as important a role	61%
A less important role	27%
Don't know/no view	2%

## Attitudes to Indonesia

**Table 17:** Thinking about the relationship between Australia and Indonesia: please say whether you personally agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Indonesia should do more to help Australia combat people smuggling	Indonesia should do more to combat the risk of Islamic terrorism	Australian prime ministers should work harder to develop personal relationships with their Indonesian counterparts	Indonesia should abolish the death penalty	Australian navy vessels are justified in entering Indonesian territorial waters without permission, as part of Australia's efforts to turn back asylum seekers
Agree	87%	85%	76%	65%	42%
Disagree	11%	9%	20%	31%	55%
Neither/don't know/no view	2%	7%	4%	5%	3%

## Is Indonesia a democracy?

**Table 18:** Now a question about Indonesia. Do you personally agree or disagree that Indonesia is a democracy? And is that strongly or somewhat?

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

## The death penalty

'Newspoll' in the tables below indicates questions asked on behalf of the Lowy Institute by Newspoll in its omnibus surveys on 13-15 February 2015 (sample: 1211) and 1-3 May 2015 (sample: 1213).

**Table 19:** Around the world, some countries do have a death penalty for drug trafficking, while other countries do not. In general, do you think the death penalty should or should not be used as a penalty for drug trafficking?

	Newspoll 3-15 Feb 2015	Newspoll 1-3 May 2015
Should not be used as a penalty for drug trafficking	69%	71%
Should be used as a penalty for drug trafficking	26%	25%
Don't know	6%	4%

**Table 20:** While many countries, including Australia, have abolished the death penalty, many others still apply the death penalty for certain offences. Do you personally think the Australian Government should or should not play an active role in pushing for the abolition of the death penalty internationally?

	LI Poll 2015	Newspoll 1-3 May 2015
Should play an active role	51%	51%
Should not play an active role	47%	45%
Don't know/no view	3%	3%

**Table 21:** The following is a list of possible ways for the Australian Government to respond if an Australian citizen is executed in another country as a result of a death penalty. Do you personally agree or disagree that the Australian Government should ... ?

	Make private diplomatic protests		Recall Australia's ambassador		Suspend Australian aid projects		Suspend military and law enforcement cooperation		Apply trade sanctions	
	LI Poll 2015	Newspoll 1-3 May 2015	LI Poll 2015	Newspoll 1-3 May 2015	LI Poll 2015	Newspoll 1-3 May 2015	LI Poll 2015	Newspoll 1-3 May 2015	LI Poll 2015	Newspoll 1-3 May 2015
Agree	73%	59%	33%	42%	28%	28%	29%	27%	37%	24%
Disagree	24%	35%	60%	52%	68%	69%	65%	69%	57%	70%
Neither/don't know/no view	3%	5%	6%	7%	4%	4%	6%	5%	7%	7%

**Table 22:** Following these executions, the Australian Government has said it will recall Australia's Ambassador to Indonesia. In your personal view, for how long should Australia suspend normal diplomatic relations with Indonesia?

	Newspoll 1-3 May 2015
For about one to four months only	51%
For about five to eight months	10%
For about nine to twelve months	12%
For more than a year	12%
None of these/other/don't know/no view	14%

## Climate change and concern about global warming

**Table 23:** Now about global warming. There is a controversy over what the countries of the world, including Australia, should do about the problem of global warming. I'm going to read you three statements. Please tell me which statement comes closest to your own point of view.

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

## Approach to UN climate negotiations

**Table 24:** In the lead-up to the 2015 UN climate change conference in Paris, which one of the following two statements most closely represents your own view of the approach the Australian Government should take in international climate negotiations?

	2015
The Australian Government should commit to significant reductions so that other countries will be encouraged to do the same	63%
The Australian Government should not make significant commitments on emissions reductions ahead of other countries	35%
Don't know/no view/makes no difference/don't care/don't believe in climate change	2%

## Australia's primary source of electricity in ten years' time

**Table 25:** Now I'm going to read you a list of various sources of energy used to generate electricity. Which one of these energy sources do you think will be our primary source of electricity 10 years from now?

	2015
Solar energy	43%
Coal	17%
Nuclear energy	13%
Natural gas	10%
Wind	7%
Hydroelectric power	6%
Oil	2%
Other	1%
Don't know	2%

## Australia's aid program

**Table 26:** Thinking now about the aid the Australian Government provides to developing countries. Currently the government provides approximately five billion dollars in aid to developing countries, or around 1.2 (one point two) per cent of the Budget. Do you think this is too much, about the right amount, or not enough?

	2015
Too much	36%
About the right amount	41%
Not enough	21%
Don't know/no view	2%

## Attitudes to Papua New Guinea

**Table 27:** Now a question about Papua New Guinea. Please say whether you personally agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Stability in Papua New Guinea is important to Australia's national interest	Australia has a moral obligation to help Papua New Guinea	Australian aid to Papua New Guinea has little impact on life in Papua New Guinea	Papua New Guinea has strong economic prospects	PNG is taking asylum seekers on Manus Island because it wants to help Australia
Agree	82%	77%	38%	37%	32%
Disagree	13%	19%	42%	46%	58%
Don't know/no view	5%	4%	20%	17%	10%

## Democracy

**Table 28:** Now a question about democracy. I am going to read you three statements about democracy. Please say which one of the three statements comes closest to your own personal views about democracy:

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

Table 29: Views of 18-29 year-olds on democracy (Sample: 260 respondents)

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government	39%	48%	42%	49%
In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable	37%	27%	33%	23%
For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have	23%	21%	19%	26%
Don't know	1%	5%	7%	3%

## Feelings towards other countries

Table 30: Please rate your feelings towards some countries, with one hundred meaning a very warm, favourable feeling, zero meaning a very cold, unfavourable feeling, and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from zero to one hundred: the higher the number the more favourable your feelings are toward that country. If you have no opinion or have never heard of that country, please say so.<sup>a</sup>

Country	2006 Mean <sup>o</sup>	2007 Mean <sup>o</sup>	2008 Mean <sup>o</sup>	2009 Mean <sup>o</sup>	2010 Mean <sup>o</sup>	2011 Mean <sup>o</sup>	2012 Mean <sup>o</sup>	2013 Mean <sup>o</sup>	2014 Mean <sup>o</sup>	2015 Mean <sup>o</sup>
New Zealand		81		83	84	85	85		84	<b>83</b>
United Kingdom (Great Britain) <sup>b</sup>	74	75	77			79		77		<b>79</b>
United States	62	60	64	67	68	70	71	70	71	<b>73</b>
Germany				68				70		<b>71</b>
Japan	64	63	64	66	64	67	70	65	67	<b>68</b>
Fiji			67	63		66	68	64	68	<b>68</b>
China	61	56	56	53	54	53	59	54	60	<b>58</b>
Papua New Guinea	63	57	60		62		64	60	59	<b>58</b>
Malaysia	58	58			60		60	58		<b>58</b>
India	62	55	57	56	55	56	58	55	57	<b>56</b>
Turkey										<b>53</b>
Ukraine										<b>51</b>
Egypt						52	56			<b>48</b>
Indonesia	50	47	50	49	54	51	54	53	52	<b>46</b>
Russia			55		55					<b>45</b>
Iraq	44	36	37		40	35				<b>35</b>
Syria							39			<b>33</b>
North Korea	43			30	37	34	33	31	29	<b>29</b>

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

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

## World leaders

**Table 31:** Now some questions about world leaders. For each of the following leaders, please say whether you personally admire them a lot, admire them a little or you don't admire them.

Ranked by 'total admire'	Admire a lot		Admire a little		Total admire		Don't admire		Don't know (the person) – 2015 only		Don't know/ no view	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Barack Obama	49%	48%	38%	38%	<b>87%</b>	<b>86%</b>	12%	13%		1%	1%	1%
Hillary Clinton	41%	37%	40%	40%	<b>81%</b>	<b>77%</b>	16%	19%		3%	3%	2%
Pope Francis		38%		35%		<b>73%</b>		17%		8%		2%
Angela Merkel	22%	27%	22%	20%	<b>44%</b>	<b>47%</b>	12%	10%		40%	44%	3%
Joko Widodo (Jokowi)		3%		22%		<b>25%</b>		29%		42%		5%
Peter O'Neill		4%		20%		<b>24%</b>		12%		61%		4%
Vladimir Putin		4%		19%		<b>23%</b>		67%		8%		2%
Xi Jinping	2%	3%	15%	20%	<b>17%</b>	<b>23%</b>	19%	19%		53%	64%	5%
Shinzo Abe		3%		18%		<b>21%</b>		16%		59%		4%
Narendra Modi		4%		16%		<b>20%</b>		11%		66%		4%

## Australia's role in the UN Security Council and the G20

**Table 32:** Now about Australia's role in international organisations. In 2013 to 2014, Australia held a temporary seat on the United Nations Security Council and hosted the G20 leaders meetings' in Brisbane. On balance, do you personally think that this kind of role for Australia is worth the effort and cost, or not worth the effort and cost?

	2015
Worth the effort and cost	62%
Not worth the effort and cost	33%
Don't know/no view	5%

# NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> After the Government recalled the Ambassador. See results tables at p 26.
- <sup>2</sup> See question wording at p 28.
- <sup>3</sup> “Our Plan. Real Solutions for All Australians,” Liberal Party of Australia, January 2013, [http://lpa.webcontent.s3.amazonaws.com/realsolutions/LPA%20Policy%20Booklet%20210x210\\_pages.pdf](http://lpa.webcontent.s3.amazonaws.com/realsolutions/LPA%20Policy%20Booklet%20210x210_pages.pdf).
- <sup>4</sup> “Joe Hockey orders sale of \$39m Sydney mansion he says was bought in breach of foreign investment rules,” Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 4 March, 2015, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-03/hockey-orders-sale-of-39-million-dollar-sydney-mansion/62781166>.
- <sup>5</sup> “Foreign real estate buyers to pay fees of at least \$5000 under foreign investment review system”, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 25 February, 2015, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-02-25/foreign-real-estate-buyers-to-pay-fees-up-to-10000-dollars/6260748>; The Hon. Joe Hockey MP, Transcripts, “Joint doorstep interview, Kogarah New South Wales,” 25 February, 2015, <http://www.joehockey.com/media/transcripts/details.aspx?s=711>; The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, *Report on Foreign Investment in Residential Real Estate*, (Canberra: The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, November 2014), [http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/House/Economics/Foreign\\_investment\\_in\\_real\\_estate/Tabled\\_Reports](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Economics/Foreign_investment_in_real_estate/Tabled_Reports).
- <sup>6</sup> “How uninhabited islands soured China-Japan ties,” *BBC*, 10 November 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-11341139>; Justin McCurry and Tania Branigan, “Obama says US will defend Japan in island dispute with China,” *The Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/24/obama-in-japan-backs-status-quo-in-island-dispute-with-china>.
- <sup>7</sup> Niniek Karmini and Rod McGuirk, “Indonesia says it’s ‘downgraded’ Aussie relations,” *Associated Press*, 20 November, 2013, <http://www.bigstory.ap.org/article/indonesia-says-australia-will-stop-wiretapping>.
- <sup>8</sup> See p 29.
- <sup>9</sup> See p 25.
- <sup>10</sup> Australian Government, Bureau of Resources and Energy Economics, “Energy in Australia 2014,” <http://www.industry.gov.au/industry/Office-of-the-Chief-Economist/Publications/Documents/energy-in-aust/bree-energynaustralia-2014.pdf>, 45.
- <sup>11</sup> Matthew Dornan, “The same, the bad, and the ugly: country allocations in the 2015/16 budget,” *Devpolicyblog*, 12 May 2015, <http://devpolicy.org/the-same-the-bad-and-the-ugly-country-allocations-in-the-2015-16-budget/>.
- <sup>12</sup> “Gauging Growth in 2015,” *The Economist*, 15 January, 2015, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2015/01/daily-chart>; The Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2015 Update forecasts that gross domestic product growth will rise to a near record high 15.0% in 2015 and slow to 5.0% in 2016, driven by exports of liquefied natural gas (LNG) through Papua New Guinea’s (PNG) new pipeline. Asian Development Bank, “Asian development outlook 2015. Financing Asia’s future growth,” Asian Development Outlook, 2015, <http://www.adb.org/countries/papua-new-guinea/economy>.
- <sup>13</sup> “Lowy Institute Australia-UK Poll 2014,” *Lowy Institute for International Policy*, 16 June, 2014, <http://www.lowyinstitute.org/Australia-UKPoll>.

# ABOUT THE LOWY INSTITUTE POLL

The Lowy Institute Poll reports the results of our annual nationally representative telephone opinion survey, conducted this year by market research company I-view, with supplementary polling commissioned by the Lowy Institute and conducted by Newspoll. For the annual survey, I-view surveyed 1200 Australian adults between 20 February and 8 March 2015. Four supplementary polls were conducted by Newspoll on 13-15 February (1211 adults), 10-12 April (1215 adults), 1-3 May (1213 adults) and 22-24 May (1210 adults).

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

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

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

## Methodology

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

For the supplementary polls conducted by Newspoll, survey interviews were conducted by telephone. Quotas were set for each capital city and non-capital city area, and for statistical groups within each of these areas. All states excepting Northern Territory were included. Household telephone numbers were randomly selected within each area.

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

For both I-view and Newspoll surveys, the results were weighted to reflect the demographic profile of the Australian population aged 18 years and over, using data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

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

## Acknowledgements

Several of the questions in this year's Poll were modelled on those asked by other polling organisations, including the Council on Foreign Relations, Transatlantic Trends and Pew Research Center. Other questions this year drew from work of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, and polling on energy sources by Bisconti Research for the Nuclear Energy Institute.

The fieldwork for the Lowy Institute Poll was managed by market research company I-view. Fieldwork for the supplementary Newspoll surveys was managed by John Davis and Peter Collingridge at Newspoll. Sol Lebovic, Research Consultant, provided technical support, reviewed the questionnaire and helped interpret the data. The surveys were funded entirely by the Lowy Institute for International Policy.

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