

LOWY INSTITUTE  
**POLL**  
**2023**

RYAN NEELAM

# PREFACE

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After three years of global turmoil, Australians have caught their breath.

The World Health Organization has declared that the Covid-19 emergency is over. The Australia–China relationship has begun to thaw out after several years in the freezer. Russia remains stubbornly committed to its brutal and illegal assault on Ukraine, but the initial shock of the invasion has subsided.

The 2023 Lowy Institute Poll reveals a sober optimism on the part of Australians looking out to the world. More Australians feel safe than last year. Their belief in democracy remains strong. They remain relatively hopeful about Australia's economic outlook.

But there has been no return to factory settings. The shocks of recent years broke many underlying assumptions about the world.

In some cases, attitudes have changed dramatically. The Australia–China relationship is stabilising and the sharp decline in Australian perceptions of China has levelled out. However, the levels of trust, confidence and warmth towards China and President Xi Jinping remain strikingly low. Five years ago, more than half of Australians trusted China to act responsibly in the world. Today, that figure is only 15%.

A majority of Australians see the resumption of ministerial contact between the two countries as a positive development. However, most consider it likely that, in the future, China will pose a military threat to Australia.

It is hard to see trust in Russia recovering in the face of its ongoing aggression in Ukraine. Well into the second year of the conflict, as Ukraine prepares its counter-offensive, Australians remain overwhelmingly in favour of providing assistance to Kyiv.

One of the most consistent results in the history of the Lowy Institute Poll has been Australians' support for the US alliance. Eight in ten Australians see the alliance as important for Australia's security. They also believe that President Joe Biden has restored some measure of respect for the United States after the turbulence of the Trump years. On the other hand, three-quarters of Australians think the alliance makes it more likely Australia will be drawn into a war in Asia.

Anxieties about the prospect of war between the United States and China remain pronounced. In the event of such a conflict, more than half of Australians say Australia should remain neutral. But in a conflict over Taiwan, Australians are less ambivalent about acting in concert with the United States — even if this means sending military supplies to the government in Taipei or deploying the Royal Australian Navy to help prevent China from imposing a blockade around Taiwan.

Against a backdrop of rising tensions in Asia, Australians broadly approve of the government's plans to bolster the nation's deterrent capabilities. Two-thirds still favour Australia acquiring nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS partnership, although many think the price is too steep or have differing views on how the submarines will impact regional stability.

The world is presenting the new Labor government with many challenges. Yet, one year into his term in office, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese enjoys widespread public confidence in his handling of foreign policy.

The Lowy Institute Poll, now in its nineteenth year, remains the indispensable guide to how Australians see the world and their place in it.

**Dr Michael Fullilove AM**  
Executive Director  
June 2023

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## Trust in global powers

The vast majority of Australians continue to trust Japan (85%), the United Kingdom (84%) and France (79%) ‘somewhat’ or ‘a great deal’ to act responsibly in the world. Russia (8%) and China (15%) are once again the least trusted global powers of those surveyed. Trust in the United States (61%) has declined slightly by four points compared to 2022, while trust in India (58%) and Indonesia (51%) remains stable from last year.

## Confidence in world leaders

Australians have high levels of confidence in Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins, with 72% saying they have ‘some’ or ‘a lot’ of confidence in each leader. Echoing Australians’ declining trust in China since 2018, confidence in Chinese President Xi Jinping remains low (11%). Russian President Vladimir Putin (7%) and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un (3%) remain the least trusted of the 11 leaders included in the 2023 Poll.

## Safety and threats to Australia’s interests

Feelings of safety rebounded by ten points from last year, with 63% of the population now saying they feel ‘very safe’ or ‘safe’. ‘Cyberattacks from other countries’ now tops the list of threats worrying Australians, with seven in ten (68%) identifying it as a ‘critical threat’ to Australia in the next ten years.

More than six in ten Australians (64%) see the prospect of a military conflict between the United States and China over Taiwan as a critical threat — almost twice as many as in 2020 (35%). But against a backdrop of thawing Australia–China relations, fewer Australians see China’s foreign policy as a critical threat, down six points from last year to 59%. Only three in ten Australians (30%) now say ‘Covid-19 and other potential epidemics’ are a critical threat — a dramatic 46-point decrease from 2020.

## Security and defence policy

Half of Australians say AUKUS, the trilateral partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, will make Australia safer (49%), and a slightly lower number say it will make the region safer (46%). Similarly, half say the Quad partnership between Australia, India, Japan and the United States will make Australia (51%) and the region (50%) safer.

Two-thirds of Australians (67%) are either ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ in favour of the decision to acquire nuclear-powered submarines under AUKUS, a similar result to that in 2022 (70%). But Australians have mixed views about their impact: three in ten (28%) think the submarines will ‘deter military conflict and help ensure stability’ in the Indo-Pacific region, while two in

ten (20%) think they will ‘increase the risk of military conflict and instability’. The remainder (52%) either say the submarines will make no difference or they are not sure of their impact.

Almost half (47%) do not think the submarine program is worth the estimated cost (reported as between \$268 billion and \$368 billion). When considering the broader federal budget, 41% of Australians would increase defence spending, a fall of ten points from 2022.

A majority of Australians (57%) say they favour allowing the United States to base military forces in Australia, down six points from last year. On defence strategy, four in ten (40%) say that ‘to keep Australia safe, we should invest more in military capabilities that protect Australia close to home’. A smaller minority (26%) say we ‘should invest more in military capabilities that deter potential enemies far from our shores’, with one-third (34%) unsure about either approach.

## Assistance to Ukraine

In the second year of Russia’s war on Ukraine, Australians continue to show very high levels of support for assisting Ukraine. Almost nine in ten (87%) say they ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ support ‘keeping strict sanctions on Russia’. More than eight in ten (84%) support ‘admitting Ukrainian refugees into Australia’. Three-quarters (76%) support ‘providing military aid to Ukraine’. However, the number who ‘strongly support’ each of these measures has waned since 2022.

## Global leadership

On the trajectories of US and Chinese power, six in ten Australians (61%) believe that in ten years, China will play ‘a more important and powerful role as a world leader’. More than one-quarter (28%) think China’s position will remain ‘about the same as now’. By comparison, close to half (45%) expect the role of the United States as a world leader to stay the same as it is now. Two in ten (22%) expect the United States will play a more important and powerful role in ten years.

## United States

Eight in ten Australians (82%) see the alliance with the United States as ‘very important’ or ‘fairly important’ to Australia’s security, down five points from a record high last year. However, three-quarters of Australians (74%) think the alliance makes it more likely Australia would be drawn into a war in Asia. A smaller majority (61%) think the alliance makes Australia safer from attack or pressure from China.

Three-quarters of Australians (73%) think the United States is more respected in the world under President Joe Biden, whereas only one-quarter (24%) think the United States was more respected under President Donald Trump.

## China

A majority of Australians (56%) see the resumption of contact between Australian and Chinese ministers as either ‘very’ or

'somewhat' positive for Australia's national interests. At the same time, a larger number of Australians see China as 'more of a security threat' (52%) than those who say it is 'more of an economic partner' (44%) to Australia. However, in 2023, the number who see China as more of a security threat dropped 11 points on last year, while the number who see China as more of an economic partner increased by the same amount.

Looking to the future, a strong majority of Australians (75%) think it 'very' or 'somewhat' likely that China will become a military threat to Australia in the next 20 years, 30 points higher than in 2018 (45%). The vast majority of Australians (87%) are either 'very' or 'somewhat' concerned about China potentially opening a military base in a Pacific Island country.

### **Potential conflict**

In the event of a military conflict between China and the United States, more than half (56%) say Australia should remain neutral, an increase of five points from 2022 (51%). Four in ten (42%) say Australia should support the United States, down four points since 2022.

However, when asked how Australia should respond if China invaded Taiwan, a strong majority of Australians (80%) say they would support 'accepting Taiwanese refugees into Australia'. Similarly, three-quarters (76%) say they would support 'Australia imposing economic and diplomatic sanctions on China', two-thirds (64%) would support 'Australia sending arms and military supplies to the Taiwanese government', and six in ten (61%) say they would support 'using the Australian Navy to help prevent China from imposing a blockade around Taiwan'. The only option that was not supported by most Australians was 'sending Australian military personnel to Taiwan to help defend it from China' (42%).

### **Australia and the Pacific**

Half of Australians (49%) think that Australia's relations with Pacific Island countries are staying about the same. A quarter (26%) think they are improving, and 22% think relations are getting worse.

Australians remain overwhelmingly in favour of using aid to fund a range of objectives in Pacific Island countries. Almost all (92%) support providing aid for disaster relief. The vast majority of Australians favour providing aid 'to help prevent China from increasing its influence in the Pacific' (84%) as well as for long-term economic development (83%). Similarly, eight in ten (80%) support providing Covid-19 vaccines to Pacific Island countries, and 76% support providing climate-related aid.

### **Global economy and trade**

Despite global economic headwinds, optimism about Australia's economic performance in the next five years remains reasonably solid (62%), unchanged from 2022. A strong majority (70%) say that Australia should place a high priority on ensuring supply chains run through countries that are friendly

towards Australia, even if it means higher prices. Only three in ten (29%) say the priority should be 'keeping prices as low as possible, even if it means that supply chains run through countries that are unfriendly towards Australia'.

### **Democracy**

Three-quarters of Australians (73%) continue to see democracy as preferable to any other kind of government, a result that remains at a record high. Younger Australians are now more likely to see democracy as preferable compared to five years ago, narrowing a long-running age gap on this issue.

### **Climate change**

A majority of Australians (56%) continue to say 'global warming is a serious and pressing problem' about which 'we should begin taking steps now, even if this involves significant costs'. Only three in ten (32%) say 'the problem of global warming should be addressed, but its effects will be gradual, so we can deal with the problem gradually by taking steps that are low in cost'.

### **Indigenous Voice**

Australians are split between those who think introducing an Indigenous Voice to parliament would improve Australia's international reputation (47%) and those who think it would make no difference to Australia's reputation (44%). Very few (8%) believe it would damage Australia's reputation.

### **Immigration**

Half of Australians (53%) say the number of immigrants allowed into Australia should be 'around the same as pre-Covid levels', up seven points on 2022. A quarter (26%) say immigration should be 'lower than pre-Covid levels', a fall of seven points from 2022, while 20% say the intake should be higher.

### **Australian government performance**

Australians give the Albanese government its highest mark out of ten for 'maintaining a strong alliance with the United States' (7.1). It is also rated highly for 'presenting a good image of Australia internationally' (6.8). The government receives its lowest marks for 'managing Australia's approach to climate change' (5.3) and 'managing Australia's economy' (5.7).

Over the past 15 years, Australia has had three Labor and three Coalition prime ministers. This Poll asked Australians how they rated the foreign policy performance of each of these leaders. A large majority (83%) of Australians say Anthony Albanese is doing a 'very good' or 'reasonable' job handling foreign policy. Kevin Rudd (78%) and Julia Gillard (77%) were the next most highly ranked on this metric. A smaller majority (69%) rate Malcolm Turnbull's performance on foreign policy favourably. Australians were least positive about Scott Morrison's (46%) and Tony Abbott's (50%) handling of foreign policy.

The 2023 Lowy Institute Poll reports the results of two nationally representative online and telephone surveys conducted by the Social Research Centre in March and April 2023. See Methodology (p.45) for full details.

# GLOBAL POWERS AND WORLD LEADERS

## Trust in global powers

Each year, the Lowy Institute Poll asks about levels of trust in global powers. This year, the vast majority of Australians continue to trust Japan (85%), the United Kingdom (84%) and France (79%) 'somewhat' or 'a great deal' to act responsibly in the world.

By the same measure, Russia (8%) and China (15%) are once again the least trusted global powers of those surveyed. For China, this is a marginal increase on last year (12%) but remains

strikingly low compared to five years ago, when half of Australians (52%) expressed trust in China. Similarly, trust in Russia plummeted following its invasion of Ukraine last year, and currently sits 20 points below 2018 levels.

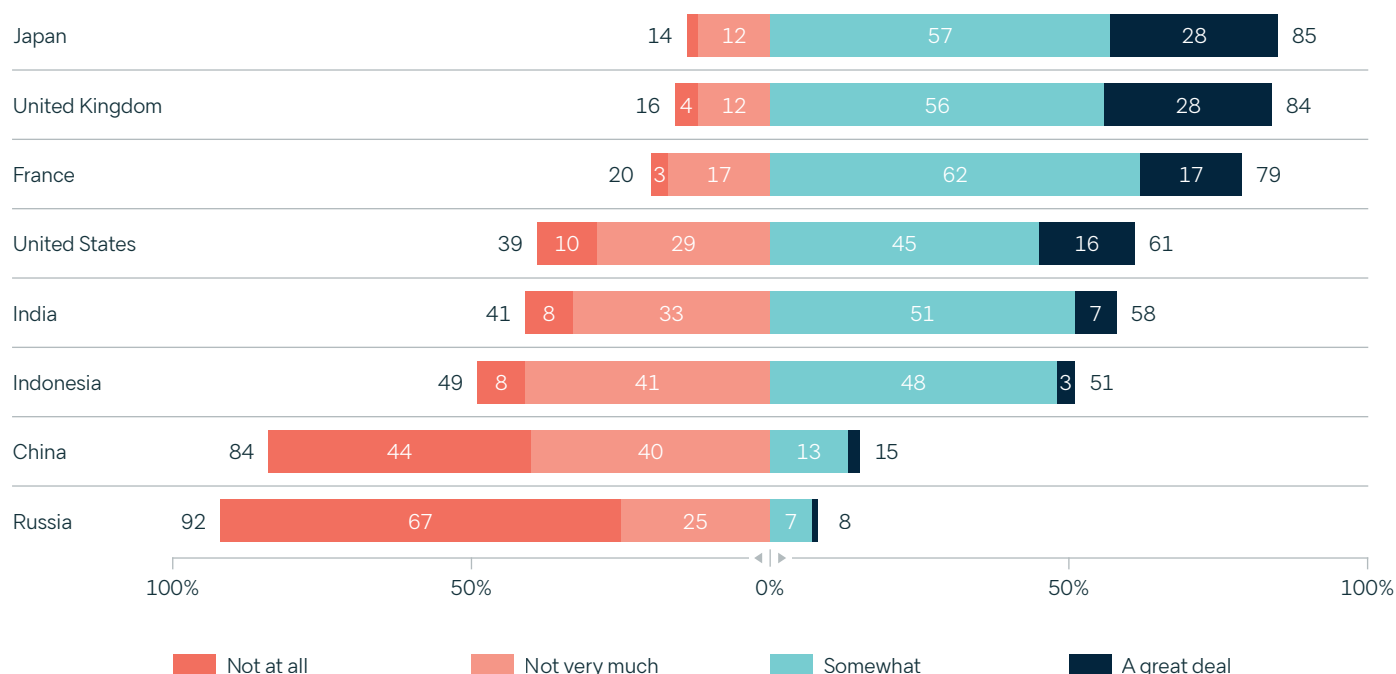
Trust in the United States (61%) has dropped by four points, compared to 2022, but is still ten points higher than in 2020 (the last year of the Trump administration).

Levels of trust in India (58%) and Indonesia (51%) remain stable on last year, having fluctuated in previous years.

**FIGURE 1**

### Trust in global powers

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



## Confidence in world leaders

Australians have the highest levels of confidence in Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (included in the Lowy Institute Poll for the first time), who captured global attention for his leadership of Ukraine in the face of Russia's invasion. Seven in ten Australians (72%) say they have either 'some' or 'a lot' of confidence in Zelenskyy, the same as in recently sworn-in New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins. More Australians express 'a lot of confidence' in Zelenskyy (31%) than they do in any of the ten other leaders listed.

French President Emmanuel Macron and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida are the next most

highly ranked leaders, with 64% of Australians saying they have 'some' or 'a lot' of confidence in each.

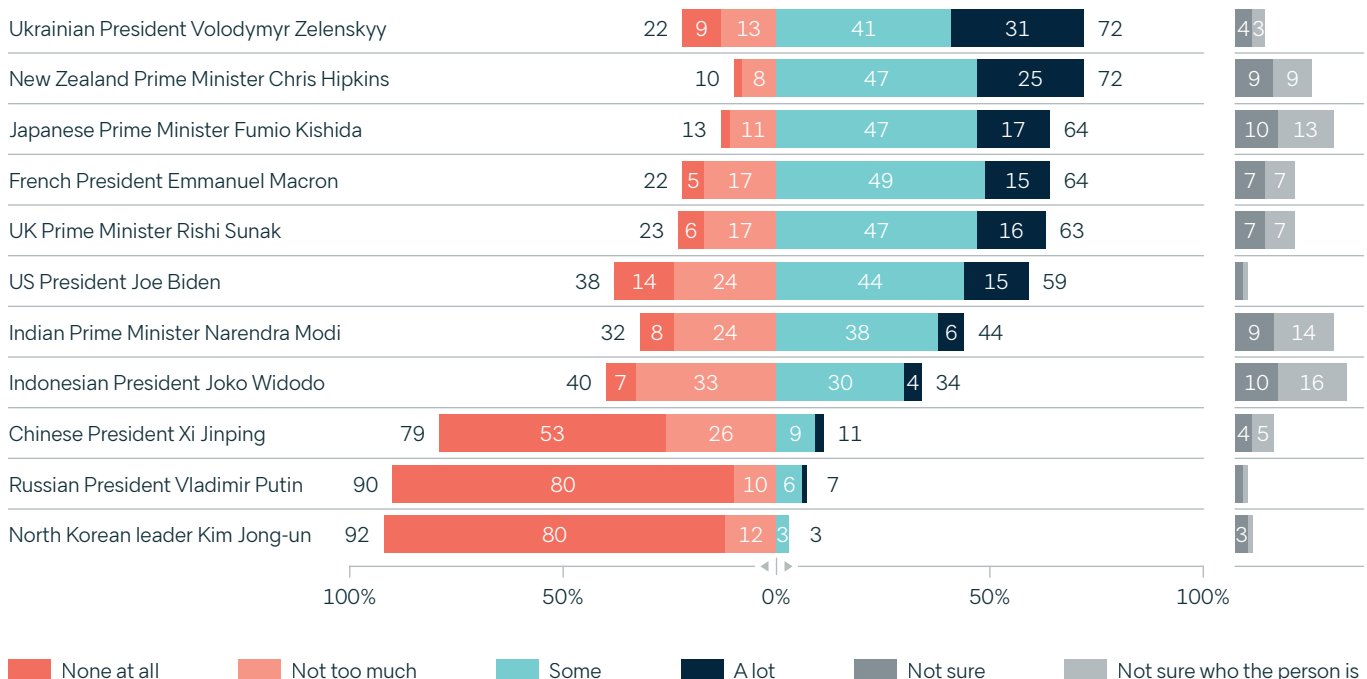
Confidence in US President Joe Biden remains steady at 59%, although this is ten points lower than 2021, the year he was inaugurated. Confidence in UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak (63%) is marginally higher than in his predecessor Boris Johnson (59% in 2022).

Echoing the decline in Australians' trust in China in recent years, confidence in Chinese President Xi Jinping remains low at 11%. The only leaders in whom Australians have less confidence are Russian President Vladimir Putin (7%) and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un (3%).

**FIGURE 2**

### Confidence in world leaders

Here is a list of political leaders. For each, please indicate how much confidence you have in the leader to do the right thing regarding world affairs — a lot of confidence, some confidence, not too much confidence or no confidence at all.



## Feelings thermometer

The ‘feelings thermometer’ rates Australians’ warmth towards other countries and territories, as well as the European Union and the United Nations, on a scale of 0° (coldest feelings) to 100° (warmest feelings), with each score reflecting the mean of responses.

Australians continue to feel warmest towards New Zealand, at 85°, followed by Japan and the United Kingdom at 75°. By contrast, Australians continue to feel cool towards China this year (33°), despite recent moves towards a stabilisation of the Australia–China relationship. This low reading has been steady since 2021 and is almost half the level of warmth felt towards China five years ago, in 2018 (58°). The only countries that Australians feel cooler towards are Russia (20°) and North Korea (16°).

Feelings towards the United States (63°) have remained largely steady for the last five years, after declining from an all-time high of 73° in 2015.

Feelings towards Indonesia (57°) have warmed incrementally over time, edging up seven degrees since the thermometer began in 2006. Meanwhile, feelings towards India (58°) have fluctuated modestly over time, and currently stand four degrees below a high of 62° in 2006.

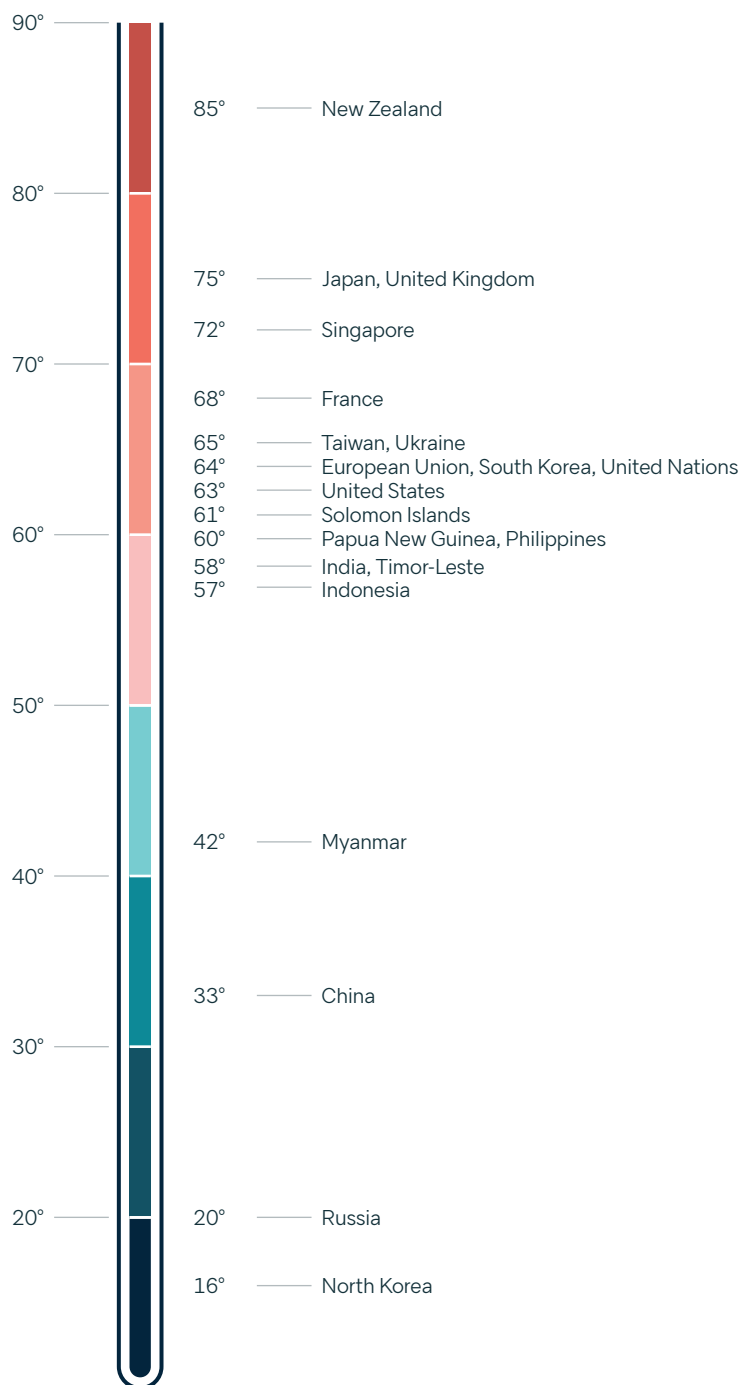
For the first time since 2017, Australians were asked how they felt about Solomon Islands. Despite public anxiety about the country signing a security pact with China in March 2022, feelings of warmth towards Solomon Islands (61°) have changed little from 2017, when it scored 64°.

Australians continue to feel cool towards China this year (33°), despite recent moves towards a stabilisation of the Australia–China relationship.

FIGURE 3

### Feelings thermometer

Please rate your feelings towards some countries and territories, with one hundred meaning a very warm, favourable feeling, zero meaning a very cold, unfavourable feeling, and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold.





## Australia's best friend in Asia

Australians are once again most likely to name Japan (44%) as 'Australia's best friend in Asia' from a list of six countries. There is an almost 30-point margin between Japan and the countries ranked next on this measure, India (16%) and Singapore (15%). The number of Australians who selected India has more than doubled since 2022.

By contrast, China ranked second-lowest on the list, with only 7% seeing it as Australia's best friend

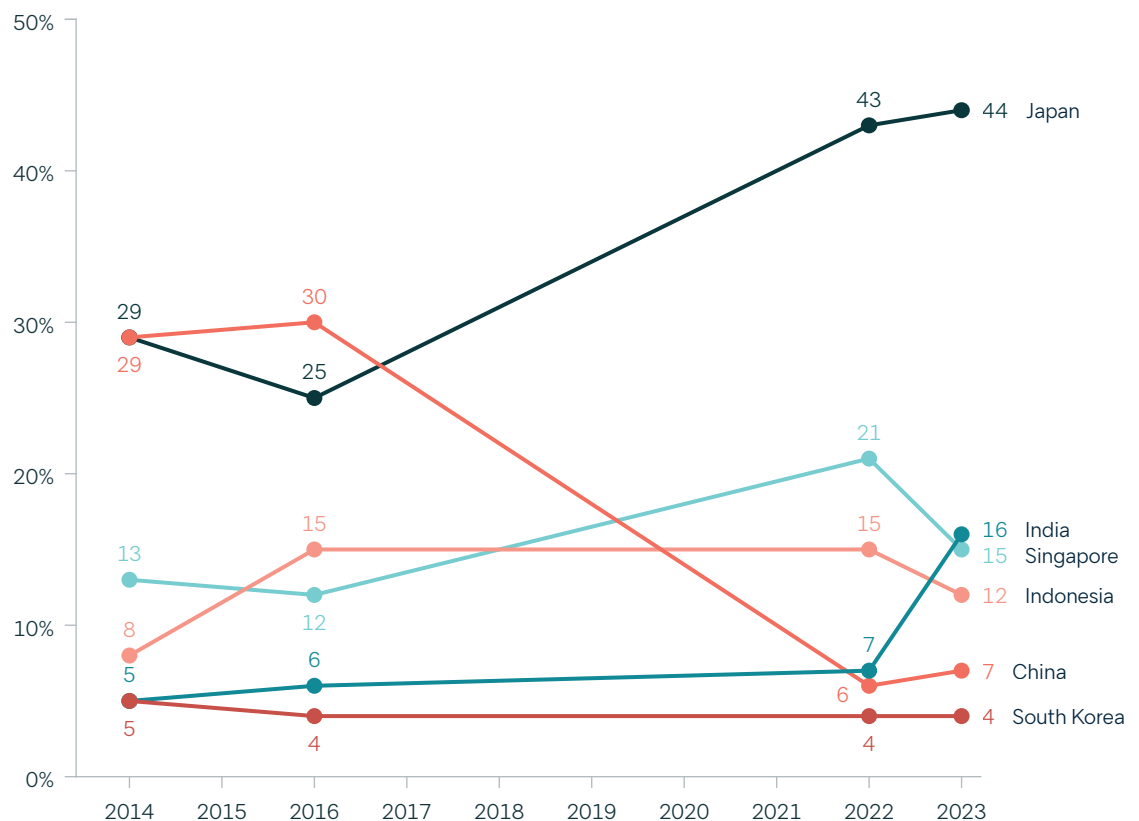
in Asia, again highlighting how attitudes towards China have changed. Less than a decade ago, Japan and China shared the title of Australia's best friend in Asia, and in 2016 China topped the list.

South Korea remains a consistent underperformer on this metric, with only 4% identifying it as Australia's best friend in Asia — despite a strong bilateral relationship, developing strategic ties and growing cultural links.

**FIGURE 4**

### Australia's best friend in Asia

Thinking about Australia's relations in Asia. In your personal opinion, which one of the following countries is Australia's best friend in Asia?



# SAFETY AND THREATS

## Feelings of safety

The Lowy Institute Poll shows that Australians feel the turmoil that has marked global affairs in recent years.

In 2020, Australians' feelings of safety fell to historic lows. As the Covid-19 pandemic swept the world, only 50% of Australians said they felt 'very safe' or 'safe', the lowest result ever recorded by the Poll. Feelings of safety improved in 2021, but then fell again in 2022, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

In 2023, feelings of safety have recovered, with 63% of the population saying they feel 'very safe' or 'safe'. While a ten-point improvement on last year, this remains significantly below the high watermark of 2010, when feelings of safety stood at 92%. Further, the number of Australians who feel 'very safe' today remains low at 6%, a mere seventh of the number who felt this way in 2010.

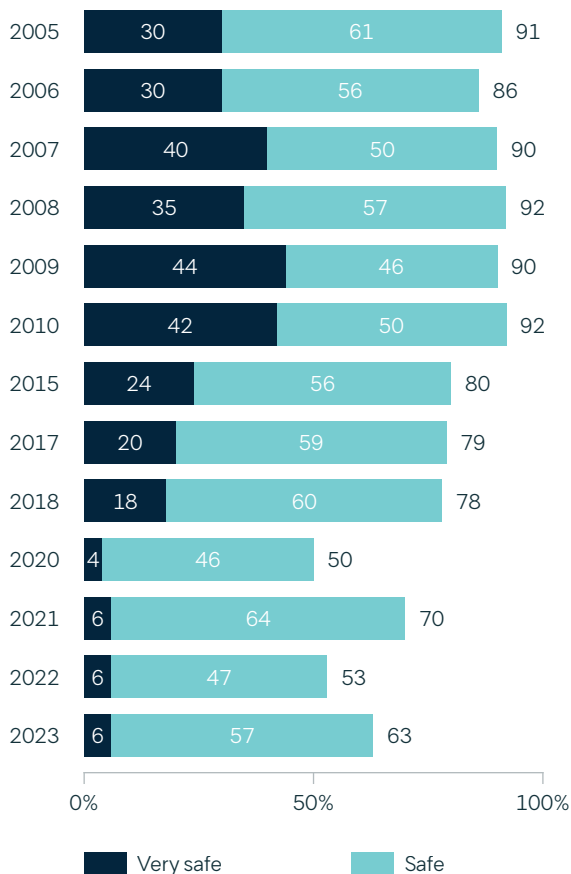
## Threats to Australia's vital interests

'Cyberattacks from other countries' now tops the list of threats worrying Australians. Seven in ten (68%) say cyberattacks are a critical threat to Australia's vital interests in the next ten years, an 11-point increase since 2018. This result comes as perceptions of other threats — including Covid-19 and Russian and Chinese foreign policies — have receded. It also follows three of the most significant corporate data breaches in Australian history: in late 2022, Optus and Medibank user data was hacked and held for ransom, with hackers releasing sensitive health records of some Medibank customers on the dark web. During fieldwork for this Poll, Latitude Financial disclosed a data breach that eventually saw some 14 million customer records compromised.

FIGURE 5

### Feelings of safety

Now about world events, how safe do you feel?



Australians remain anxious about the prospect of 'a military conflict between the United States and China over Taiwan', with more than six in ten (64%) seeing this as a critical threat in the next ten years — steady from 2022, but almost twice as high as in 2020 (35%). However, against a backdrop of thawing Australia–China relations, fewer Australians see 'China's foreign policy' as a critical threat, down six points from last year to 59%.

Despite Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine, the number who identify Russia's foreign policy as a critical threat (57%) fell 11 points from last year. At the same time, fewer Australians (49%) see 'the rise of authoritarian systems of governments around the world' as a critical threat, evident in a decline of six points from 2022.

Six in ten Australians remain concerned about the threat from 'North Korea's nuclear program' (60%) and 'climate change' (59%). Despite rising cost of living pressures, deteriorating global economic conditions, and forecasts of future economic turmoil, 'a severe downturn in the global economy' does not appear to loom larger as a threat to Aus-

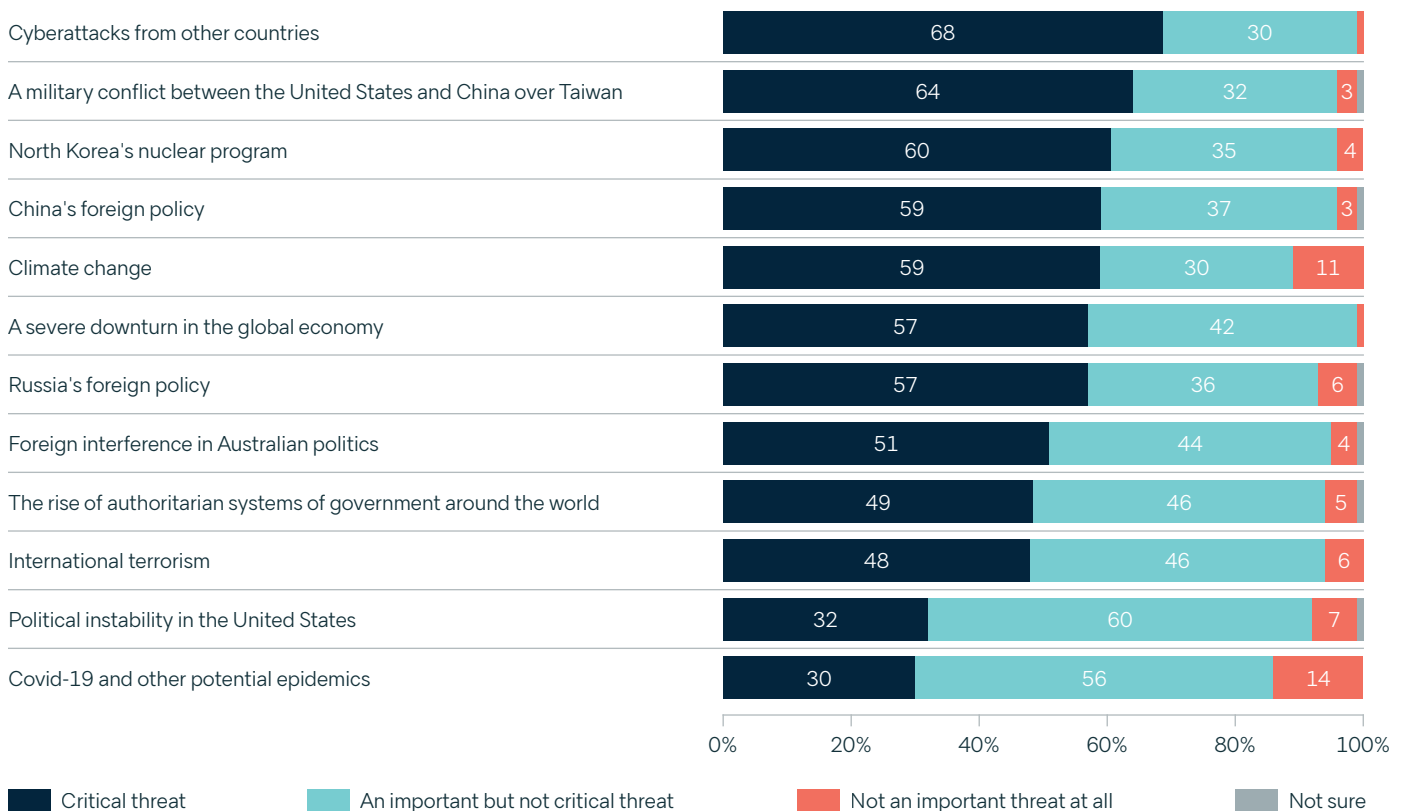
tralia's interests than it did in 2022. More than half (57%) of Australians see a severe economic downturn as a critical threat, much the same as in 2022 (55%). Levels of concern about 'foreign interference in Australian politics' also remained steady (51%).

Three years after the Covid-19 pandemic began and more than a year after the Australian government removed most public health restrictions, anxiety about 'Covid-19 and other potential epidemics' continues to fall. Only three in ten (30%) Australians now see the issue as a critical threat. This is a 12-point decrease from 2022, and a dramatic 46-point decrease from the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 (76%).

FIGURE 6

### Threats to Australia's vital interests

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



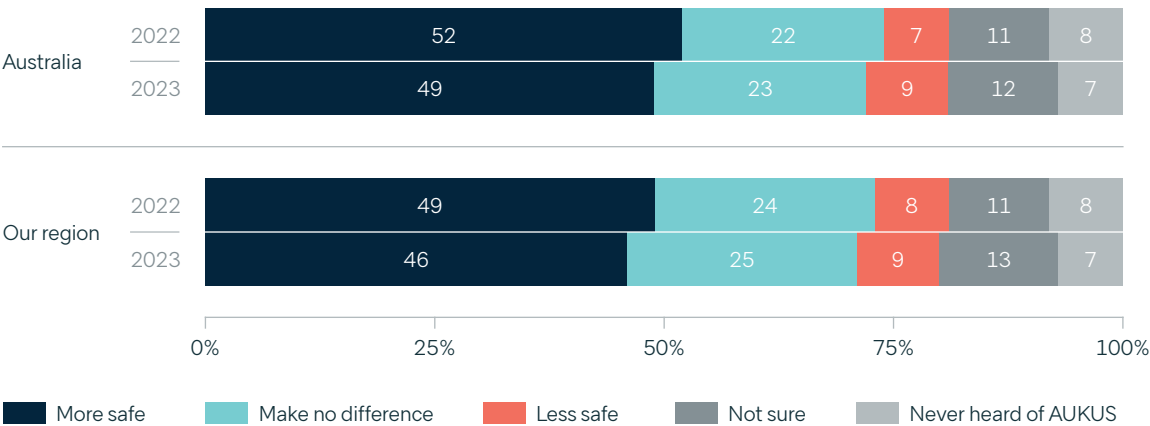
# SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

This year has seen major developments in Australia's defence policy. On 14 March, just as fieldwork for this Poll commenced, the prime ministers of Australia and the United Kingdom and the president of the United States (AUKUS leaders) met in San Diego to announce the details of their plan for

Australia to acquire nuclear-powered submarines. On 24 April, after the vast majority of fieldwork for this poll had been completed, the Australian government released a public version of the Defence Strategic Review, a major report on Australia's defence posture and structure.

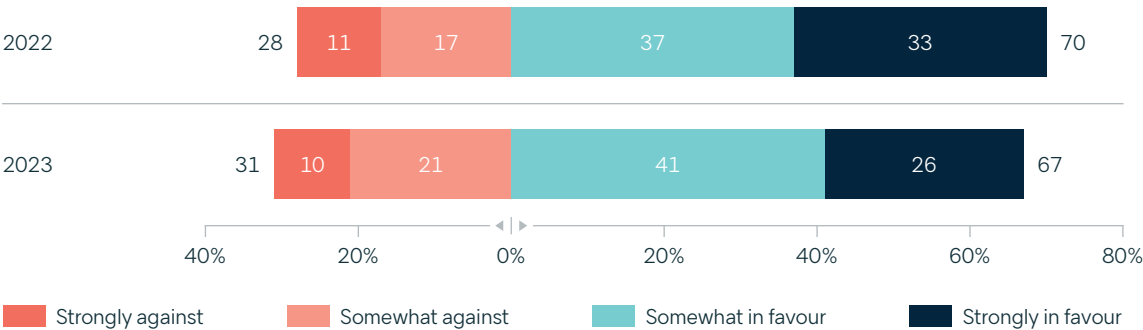
**FIGURE 7**  
**AUKUS**

Thinking now about Australia's partnerships in the world. Do you think AUKUS, the security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, will make Australia/our region more safe, less safe or make no difference?



**FIGURE 8**  
**Acquiring nuclear-powered submarines**

Now a question about submarines that are powered by nuclear energy, but do not have nuclear weapons. Are you in favour or against Australia acquiring nuclear-powered submarines?



## AUKUS and nuclear-powered submarines

Regarding the AUKUS trilateral partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, around half of Australians think it will make Australia (49%) and the region (46%) safer. These opinions remain largely unchanged from last year. Notably, the number of Australians who have not heard of AUKUS or are not sure if it will make Australia or the region safer also did not shift significantly from 2022, despite heavy media coverage of AUKUS during fieldwork for this Poll.

Two-thirds of Australians (67%) are either 'strongly' or 'somewhat' in favour of the decision to acquire nuclear-powered submarines under AUKUS, a similar result to that in 2022 (70%). However, in 2023, the proportion of Australians who say they 'strongly' favour the submarine acquisition dropped by seven points to 26%.

Although the AUKUS submarine program enjoys bipartisan political support in Australia, more Australians who lean towards the Liberal-National Coalition (86%) than those who lean towards the Labor Party (65%) are in favour of acquiring the submarines.<sup>1</sup>

In April 2023, in a separate survey conducted one month after the San Diego announcement, we asked Australians further questions about the AUKUS submarine program. Australians have mixed feelings about the impact that the nuclear-powered submarines will have on the likelihood of conflict in the region. Three in ten (28%) think the submarines will deter military conflict and help ensure stability in the Indo-Pacific region, while two in ten (20%) think they will increase the risk of military conflict and instability. Around half either say the submarines will make no difference (32%) or are not sure of their impact (20%).

In the April survey, we also asked Australians whether they think the estimated cost of the program, widely reported as between \$268 billion and \$368 billion, is worth paying for the additional capability nuclear-powered submarines provide. Almost half (47%) say they do not think the capability is worth the cost, while one-quarter (27%) say it is worth it. The same number (27%) are not sure.

FIGURE 9

### Nuclear-powered submarines and regional stability

The Australian government recently announced that Australia will acquire a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. These submarines will be powered by nuclear energy but will not carry nuclear weapons. Do you think Australia's acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines under AUKUS will:

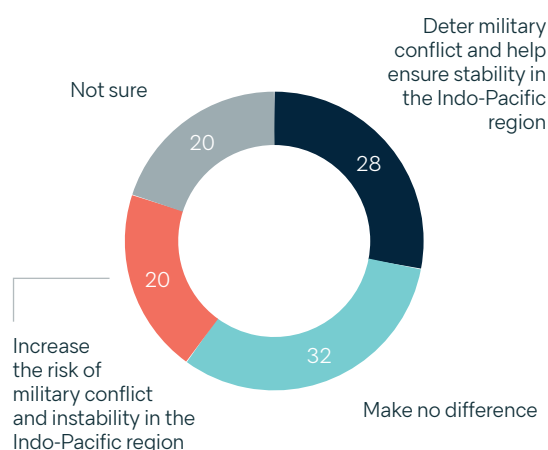
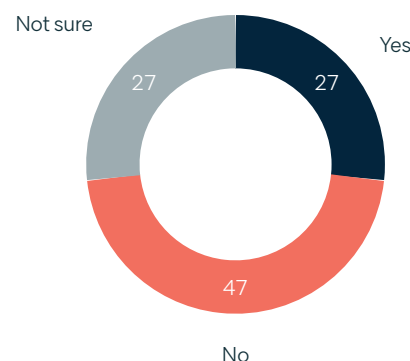


FIGURE 10

### Nuclear-powered submarines – cost

Over the next 30 years, the total cost of the program is estimated to be between \$268 billion and \$368 billion. Do you think it's worth paying this cost for the additional capability nuclear-powered submarines provide, or not?



<sup>1</sup> Political party allegiance is based on a question that asked respondents which party they 'feel closest to'.

Defence strategy

In the same April 2023 survey, which concluded two days after the public release of the Defence Strategic Review, we asked Australians about where the country’s defence capabilities should be focused. Four in ten (40%) say that to keep Australia safe, we should invest more in military capabilities that protect Australia close to home. A quarter (26%) believe we should invest more in military capabilities that deter potential enemies far from our shores. A significant number (34%) are unsure.

The Quad

In May 2023, the leaders of Australia, India, Japan and the United States convened on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Hiroshima for the third annual Quad Leaders’ Summit. The Lowy Institute Poll, which went into the field almost three months before that meeting, found that half of Australians think the Quad will make both Australia (51%) and the region (50%) safer. Very few believe it will make Australia (4%) or the region (5%) less safe. These opinions remain unchanged from last year.

FIGURE 11

Defence strategy

Now thinking about Australia’s defence. Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

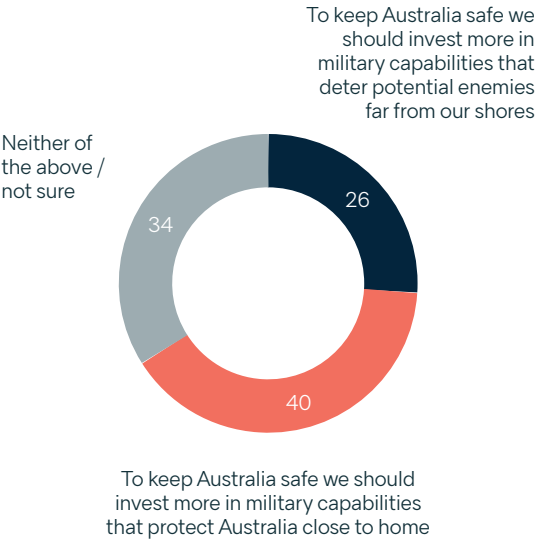
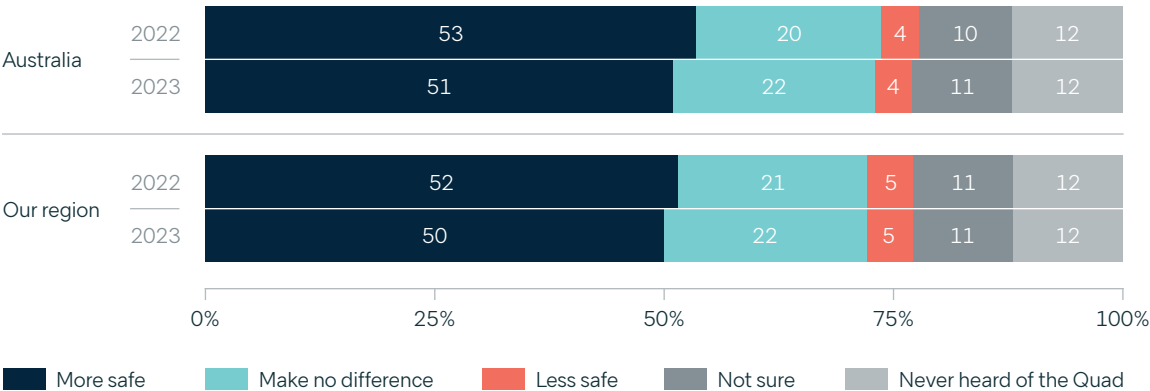


FIGURE 12

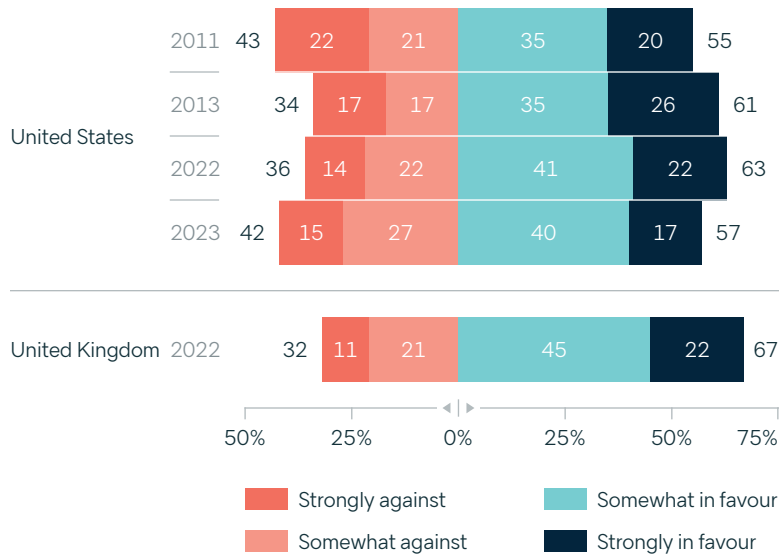
The Quad

Now a question about ‘the Quad’, the partnership between Australia, India, Japan and the United States. Do you think ‘the Quad’ will make Australia/our region more safe, less safe or make no difference?



**FIGURE 13****Foreign military based in Australia**

Are you personally in favour of or against Australia allowing the United States to base military forces here in Australia?<sup>2</sup>

**US military in Australia**

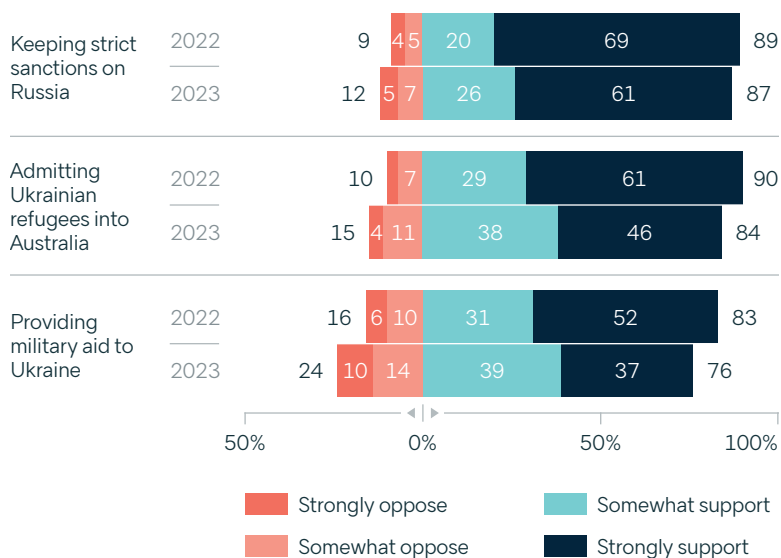
In 2011, former Prime Minister Julia Gillard and former US President Barack Obama announced the rotation of US marines through Darwin, a deployment that has continued and expanded since then. In April 2023, as part of the AUKUS submarine decision, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and US President Joe Biden announced that one UK and up to four US nuclear-powered submarines would rotate through the HMAS Stirling naval base in Western Australia.

This year, over half of Australians (57%) say they are either 'strongly' or 'somewhat' in favour of allowing the United States to base military forces in Australia, down six points from 2022 (63%).

<sup>2</sup> In 2022, the United Kingdom was also included in this question.

**FIGURE 14****Australia's response to the war in Ukraine**

Thinking about Russia's invasion of Ukraine, would you support or oppose Australia:

**Australia's support for Ukraine**

In the second year of Russia's war on Ukraine, Kyiv is preparing a counter-offensive. Amid debate among observers on whether the West can sustain momentum in its support for Ukraine, Australians continue to show strikingly high levels of support for assisting Ukraine.

Almost nine in ten (87%) say they 'strongly' or 'somewhat' support 'keeping strict sanctions on Russia', steady from 2022 (89%). Around eight in ten (84%) support 'admitting Ukrainian refugees into Australia'. Three-quarters (76%) support 'providing military aid to Ukraine'.

While overall levels of support for these response measures remain very high, the number who 'strongly support' each measure waned — by 15 points each for admitting Ukrainian refugees and providing military aid to Ukraine, and by eight points for keeping strict sanctions on Russia.

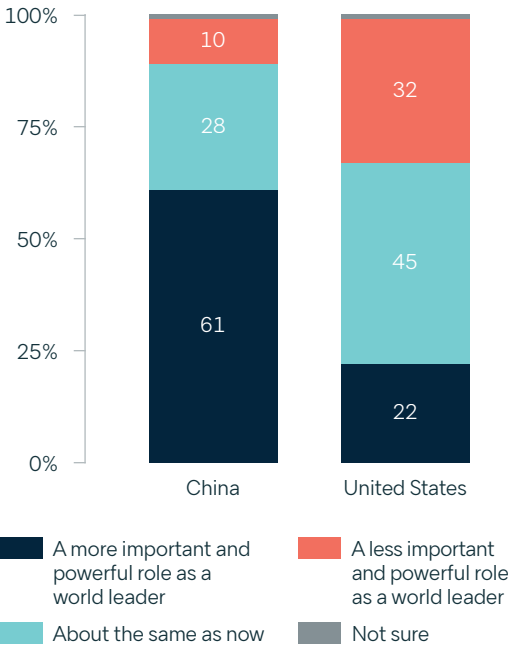
# RELATIONS IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

## Future roles of the United States and China

When it comes to global power and influence, the United States has long been the world leader, but China's power is clearly growing. For the first time, the Lowy Institute Poll asked Australians what they think about the trajectories of US and Chinese power over the next decade.

Most Australians think China's role will continue to grow. Six in ten (61%) believe that in ten years, China will play 'a more important and powerful role as a world leader'. More than a quarter (28%) think China's position will remain 'about the same as now', while only one in ten (10%) expect China to play a 'less important and powerful' role.

**FIGURE 15**  
**Future roles of the United States and China**  
Now a question about the role and influence of countries as world leaders in the future. Ten years from now, do you think the United States/China will play...



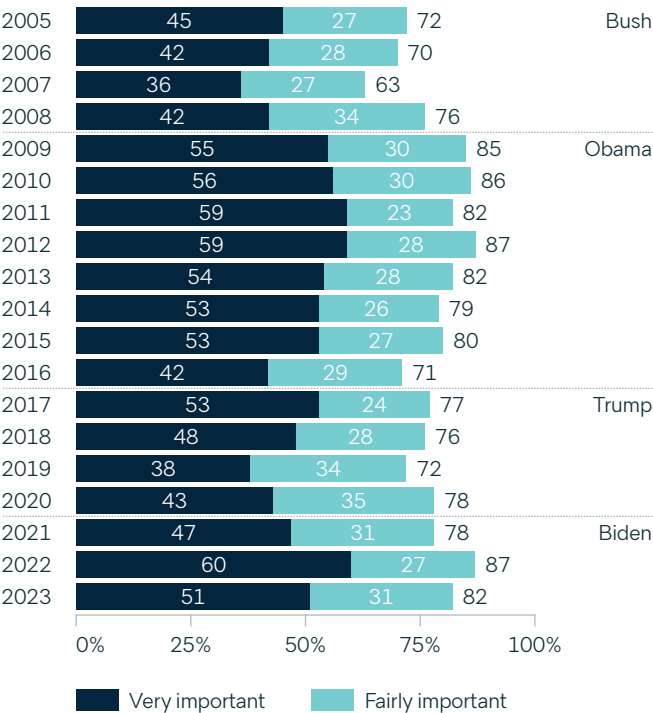
By comparison, close to half of Australians (45%) expect the role and influence of the United States as a world leader to stay the same as it is now, while two in ten (22%) expect the United States to become more important and powerful. One-third (32%) of Australians think the United States will play a less important and powerful role as a world leader.

## United States

### The US alliance

In 2023, the vast majority of Australians (82%) see the alliance between Australia and the United States as 'very important' or 'fairly important' to Australia's security, down five points from a record high last year of 87%.

**FIGURE 16**  
**US alliance: importance to Australia's security**  
How important is our alliance relationship with the United States for Australia's security?

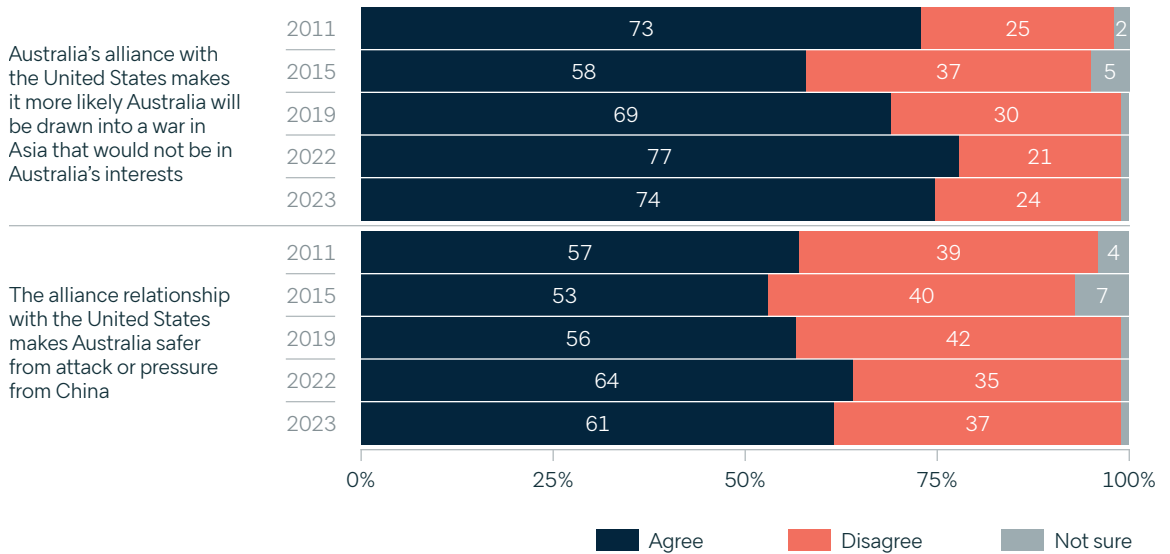




**FIGURE 17**

**US alliance: effect**

Here are some different arguments about the alliance relationship with the United States. For each one, please indicate whether you personally agree or disagree.



High levels of public support for Australia's alliance with the United States have been a consistent feature over 19 years of Lowy Institute polling. However, during this period, Australians' support for the alliance has tended to be even higher during Democratic than Republican administrations.

At the same time, three-quarters of Australians (74%) think the alliance makes it more likely Australia will be drawn into a war in Asia. Six in ten (61%) think the alliance makes Australia safer from attack or pressure from China.

**Respect for the United States**

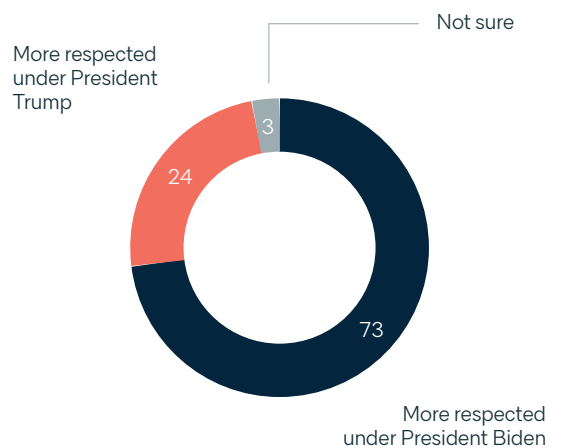
US President Joe Biden has announced his intention to contest the US presidential election in 2024. At time of writing, his controversial predecessor, Donald Trump, appears to be the front-runner to receive the Republican nomination, despite facing a range of ongoing legal cases.

Three-quarters (73%) of Australians think the United States is more respected in the world under President Biden, whereas only one-quarter (24%) think the United States was more respected under President Trump.

**FIGURE 18**

**Respect for the United States**

In your opinion, is the United States more respected in the world under President Joe Biden, or was it more respected under former President Donald Trump?



## China

### Australia–China relations

The last five years have been a difficult period in Australia's relations with China. Australian governments have been more public and forthright in voicing their concerns about the Chinese government's intentions and behaviour in the region. China has sought to punish Australia for perceived transgressions, including through a range of measures blocking trade. For much of this period, high-level contact between the two countries was frozen.

The past 12 months, however, have seen a stabilisation of the relationship. Following the Albanese government coming to power, ministerial contact between the Chinese and Australian governments has resumed. In the months prior to this Poll being conducted, Australian and Chinese leaders and their foreign, trade and defence ministers had met in person or virtually for the first time in years. In more recent months, Chinese restrictions on some Australian products have eased and there have been signs of progress on other trade blockages.

FIGURE 19

### Australia–China ministerial contact

Over the last 12 months, there has been a resumption of high-level ministerial contact between the Australian and Chinese governments. In your opinion, what impact will this have on Australia's national interests?

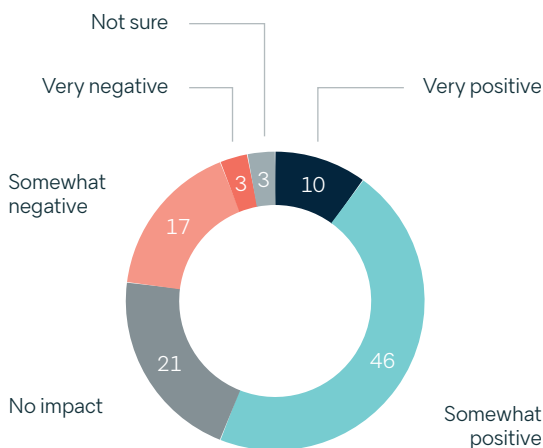
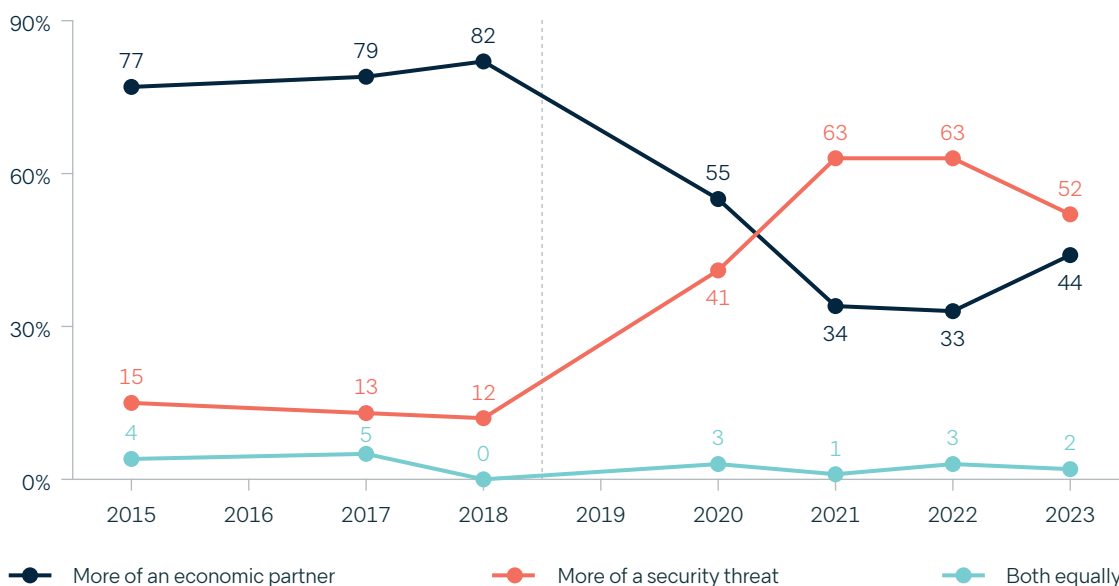


FIGURE 20

### China: economic partner or security threat

Thinking now about Australia and China. In your own view, is China more of an economic partner or more of a security threat to Australia?<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> In 2015, 2017 and 2018, the question asked if China was 'more of a military threat'.

Australians were asked what they thought of the relative improvement in relations. More than half (56%) say the resumption of ministerial contact is either 'very' or 'somewhat' positive for Australia's national interests. The remainder are split between those who say it will have 'no impact' (21%) and those who say it will have either a 'very negative' or 'somewhat negative' impact (20%) on Australia's national interests.

### China: economic partner or security threat?

The improved atmosphere in the bilateral relationship coincides with a shift in the way Australians view China. The Lowy Institute Poll tracks whether Australians see China as more of an economic partner or as more of a security threat to Australia. This year, the number who see China as more of a security threat is down 11 points from 2022 to a bare majority (52%). Correspondingly, the number who see China as more of an economic partner (44%) is up 11 points from last year.

Nonetheless, the fact remains that about half of Australians continue to see China as more of a security threat than as an economic partner — in contrast with the situation just three years ago. In 2020, the dominant view was that China was more of an economic partner (55%), while only 41% saw it as more of a security threat.

Moreover, when they look to the future, a strong majority (75%) of Australians continue to believe it is 'very' or 'somewhat' likely that China will become a *military* threat to Australia in the next 20 years — unchanged from 2022 (75%), and significantly higher than in 2018 (45%).

### Chinese military base in the Pacific

The vast majority of Australians (87%) say they are 'very concerned' or 'somewhat concerned' about China potentially opening a military base in a Pacific Island country. While the overall result is the same as for a similar question asked in 2022 (88%), the number who say they are 'very concerned' fell by 18 points.

In a different question posed in 2019, a smaller majority of Australians (55%) said China opening a military base in a Pacific Island country would pose a critical threat to Australia's vital interests in the next ten years.

FIGURE 21

### China as a military threat

Do you think it is likely or unlikely that China will become a military threat to Australia in the next 20 years?

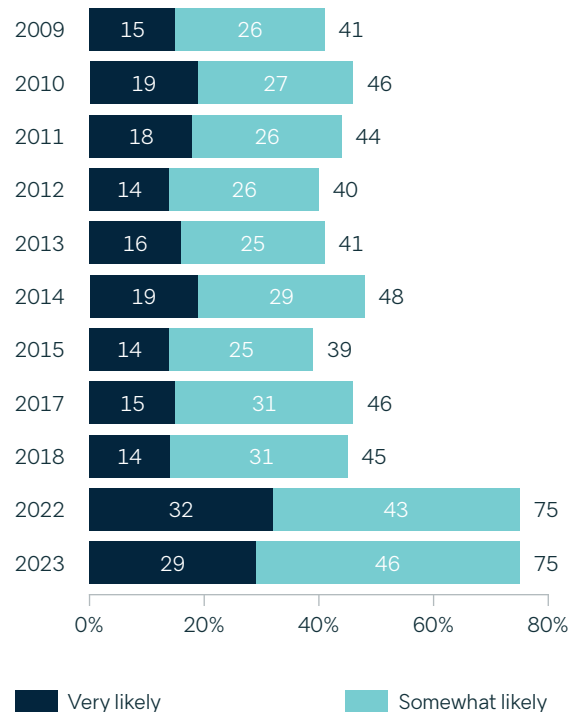
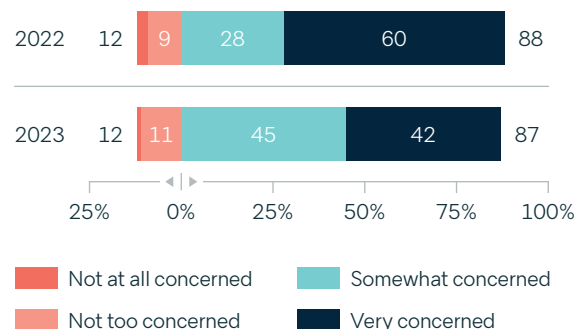


FIGURE 22

### Potential Chinese military base in the Pacific

To what extent are you concerned or not concerned about China potentially opening a military base in a Pacific Island country?



Potential conflict

In the event of a military conflict between China and the United States, more than half of Australians (56%) say Australia should remain neutral, an increase of five points from 2022. Four in ten (42%) say Australia should support the United States, down four points on 2022.

It is interesting, however, to compare this to views on a potential Chinese invasion of Taiwan, which many experts see as the most likely trigger for a conflict between the United States and China. Australia’s response to such a scenario has also been the subject of growing debate among commentators.

For the first time, we asked Australians if they would support a range of responses, acting together with the United States, if China invaded Taiwan. The vast majority (80%) would support ‘accepting Taiwanese refugees into Australia’. A similarly strong majority (76%) say they would support ‘Australia imposing economic and diplomatic sanctions on China’.

Two-thirds (64%) would support ‘Australia sending arms and military supplies to the Taiwanese government’. Six in ten (61%) would support ‘using the Australian Navy to help prevent China from imposing a blockade around Taiwan’. The only option not supported by a majority is ‘sending Australian military personnel to Taiwan to help defend it from China’ (42%).<sup>4</sup>

4 Polling by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs in the United States in August 2022 found that in the event of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan, a majority of Americans would support imposing diplomatic and economic sanctions on China (76%), accepting Taiwanese refugees into the United States (67%), sending additional arms and military supplies to the Taiwanese government (65%), and using the US Navy to prevent Beijing from imposing a blockade against Taiwan (62%). Four in ten (40%) would support sending US troops to Taiwan’s defence.

FIGURE 23  
Potential military conflict between China and the United States

In the event of a military conflict between China and the United States, please indicate which one of the following statements comes closest to your own personal view.

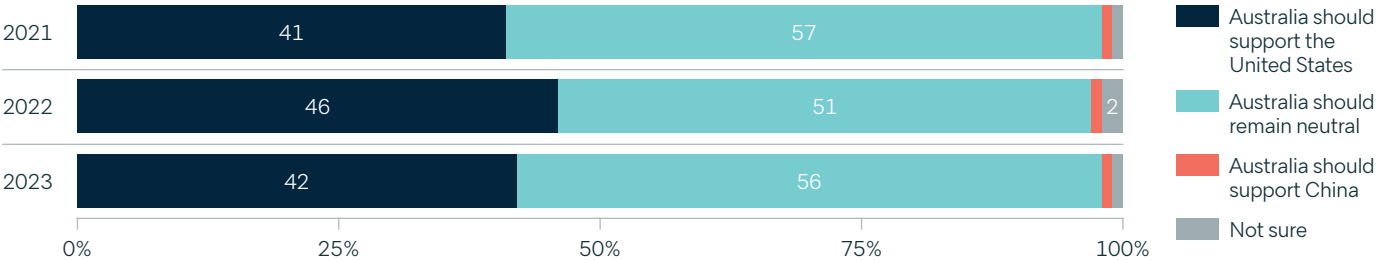
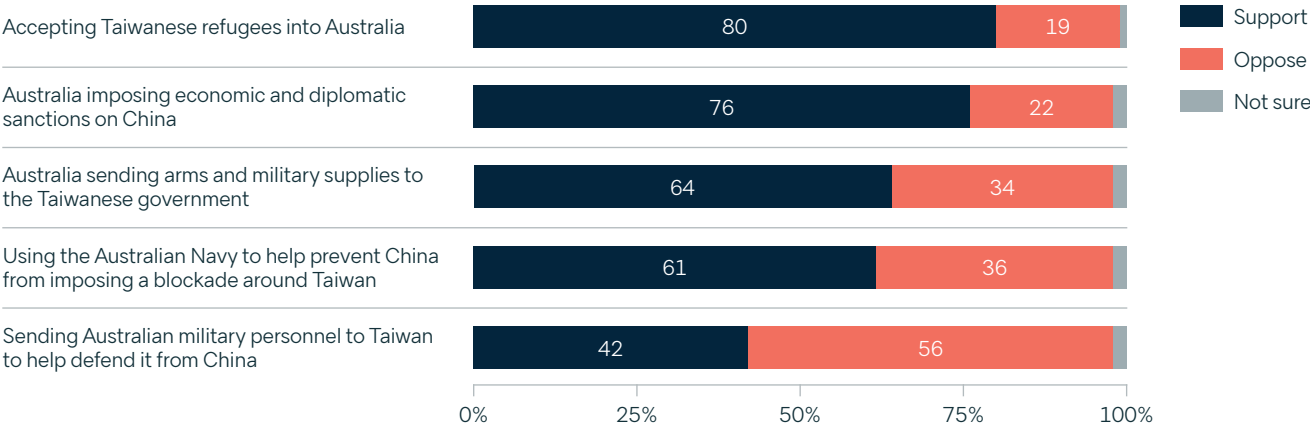


FIGURE 24  
Potential conflict over Taiwan

If China were to invade Taiwan, would you support or oppose Australia, acting together with the United States, taking the following actions:



## Australia and the Pacific

When the Albanese government assumed office in May 2022, it placed a high priority on improving relations with Pacific Island countries. In a new question this year, Australians were asked about the state of the country's ties with its Pacific neighbours. Half (49%) think that Australia's relations with Pacific Island countries are 'staying about the same', with the remainder roughly divided between those who think relations are improving (26%) and those who think relations are worsening (22%).

Australians remain overwhelmingly in favour of using aid to fund a range of objectives in Pacific Island countries. Almost all (92%) support providing aid for disaster relief, unchanged from 2022.

The vast majority of Australians favour providing aid 'to help prevent China from increasing its influence in the Pacific' (84%) as well as providing aid to the Pacific for 'long-term economic development' (83%), both steady on last year. Similarly, eight in ten (80%) support providing Covid-19 vaccines to Pacific Island countries, although this fell six points from last year. Support for climate-related aid to the Pacific remains steady at 76%.

FIGURE 25

### Australian relations with Pacific Island countries

Now a question about the Pacific Islands. In your opinion, are Australia's relations with Pacific Island countries improving, worsening or staying about the same?

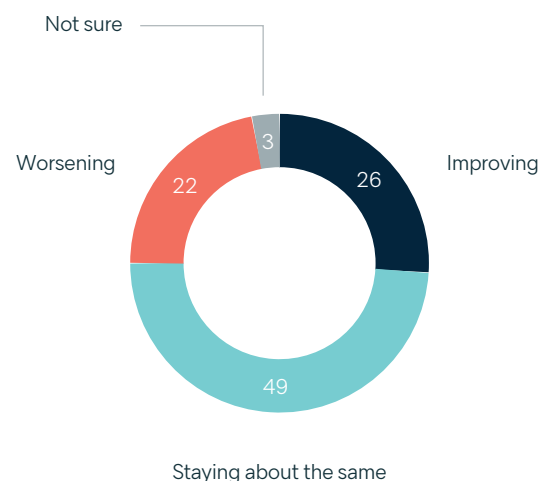
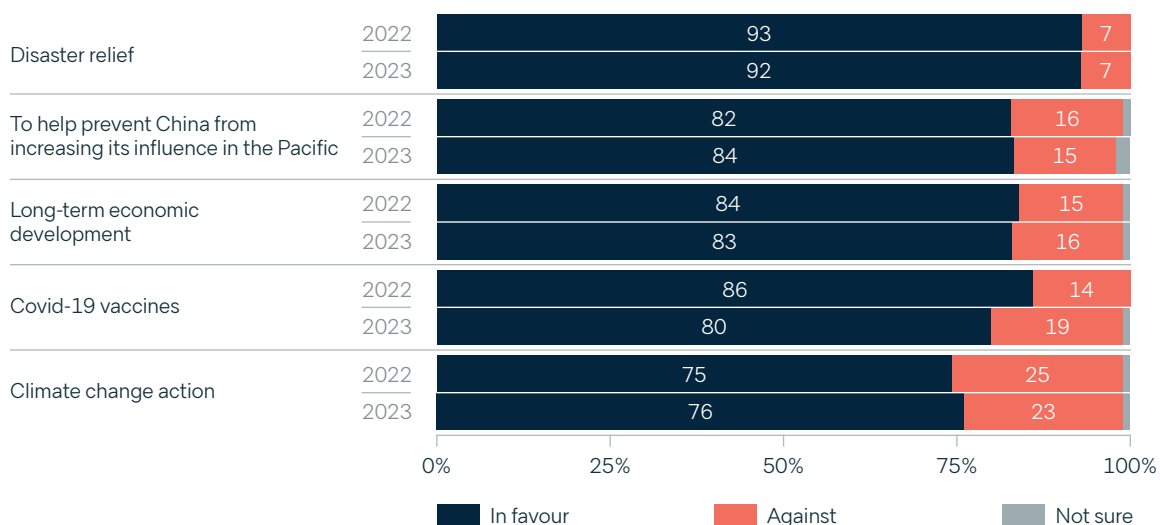


FIGURE 26

### Foreign aid to the Pacific

Thinking specifically about foreign aid to Pacific Island nations. Would you personally be in favour of or against Australia providing aid for the following purpose:



# ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND TRADE

## Economic optimism

Despite global economic headwinds including persistent inflation, optimism about Australia's economic performance in the next five years remains reasonably solid (62%), unchanged from 2022. While this is 17 points lower than optimism in 2021 (79%), when there were high hopes for a post-Covid global economic recovery, it is ten points higher than the record low registered at the outset of the pandemic in 2020.

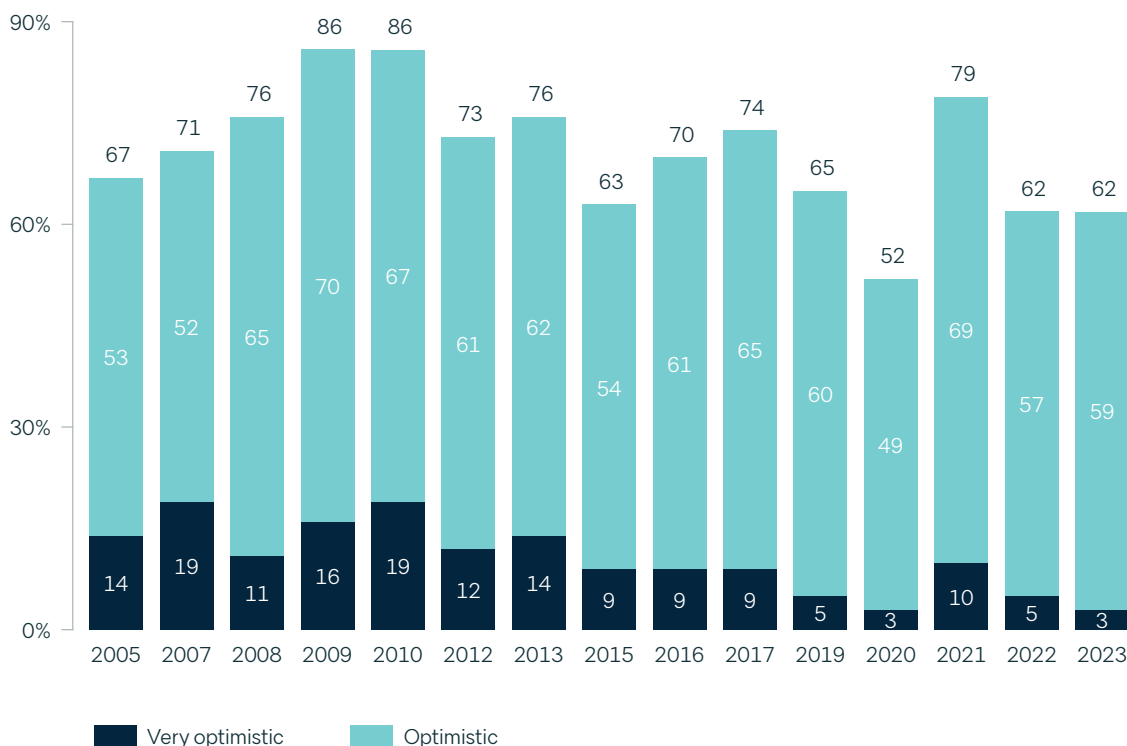
This relatively stable outlook on Australia's economic prospects mirrors Australians' perceptions of the global economy. In 2023, the number of Australians who see 'a severe downturn in the global economy' as a critical threat (57%) has not increased substantially from 2022 (see p.11).

However, when it comes to the strength of optimism people feel, barely any Australians are now 'very optimistic' about the economy (3%), in contrast to the 19% who said they were very optimistic in 2010.

FIGURE 27

### Economic optimism

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



Despite global economic headwinds, optimism about Australia's economic performance in the next five years remains reasonably solid

Looking across age groups in the Australian community, there is a difference in opinion on this issue between those at the opposite ends of the age spectrum. While 68% of those aged 60 years and over are optimistic about Australia's economic performance in the next five years, only 55% of those aged 18–29 feel this way.

## Supply chains

In recent months, senior US officials have outlined a strategy to improve the resilience of critical supply chains by sourcing goods mainly from friendly countries. US Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen referred to this as 'friendshoring' and cast it as, among other things, a response to the 'over-concentration of the production of critical goods inside China'.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Chinese trade restrictions on Australia, and rising US–China tensions, the idea of friendshoring supply chains also appears to resonate with Australians.

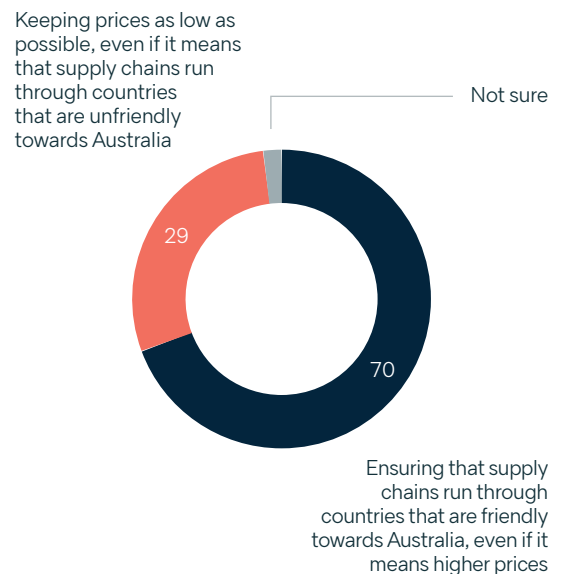
A strong majority (70%) say that Australia should place a high priority on ensuring supply chains run through countries that are friendly towards Australia, even if it means higher prices. Only three in ten (29%) say the priority should be 'keeping prices as low as possible, even if it means that supply chains run through countries that are unfriendly towards Australia'.<sup>5</sup>

However, opinions differ by age. People aged 45 and over are more likely to prioritise 'friendshoring' (79%) than people aged under 45 (59%). Conversely, more people aged under 45 place a priority on keeping prices as low as possible (40%) compared to those aged 45 and over (19%).

**FIGURE 28**

### Supply chains

Now thinking about global trade and the supply chains through which Australia sources goods from other countries. In your opinion, which of the following should be a higher priority for Australia?



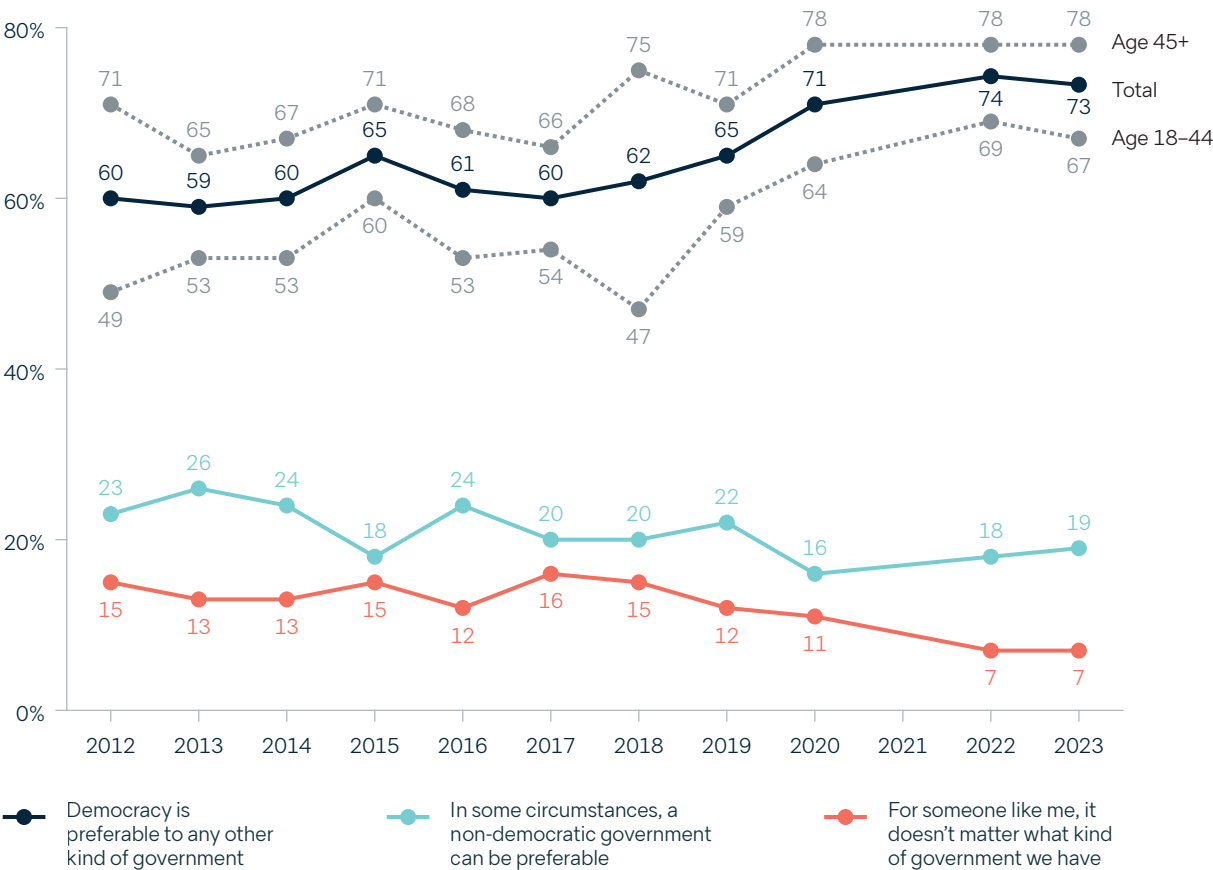
<sup>5</sup> Lowy Institute Poll results on this issue are almost identical to those from polling conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs in the United States in November 2022. Asked a similar question, seven in ten Americans (69%) say the United States should prioritise ensuring supply chains run through friendly countries, even if this means higher prices. Only three in ten (29%) say the United States should prioritise keeping prices as low as possible, even if it means supply chains run through unfriendly countries.

# SOCIETAL ISSUES

FIGURE 29

## Democracy

Below are some statements about democracy. Please indicate which one of the three statements comes closest to your own personal views about democracy.



## Democracy

Three-quarters of Australians (73%) continue to see democracy as preferable to any other kind of government, unchanged from a record high last year (74%). One in five (19%) say that ‘in some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable’.

Younger Australians are now more likely to see democracy as preferable compared to five years

ago, narrowing a long-running age gap on this issue. In 2018, there was a 28-point difference between the percentage of Australians aged under 45 who saw democracy as preferable (47%) and the percentage of those aged 45 and older who said the same (75%). In 2023, that generational difference in views has reduced to 11 points — 67% of that younger age group now see democracy as preferable, compared to 78% of those aged 45 and older.



## Climate change

In March 2023, during fieldwork for this Poll, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change completed its Sixth Assessment Report, synthesising years of global scientific knowledge on climate change. The landmark report concludes that the world is likely to exceed 1.5 degrees of warming in the near term; adverse impacts and cascading risks will escalate as the planet warms; and the window of opportunity to forestall the worst impacts of climate change is rapidly closing.

In the same month, after fieldwork for this Poll had concluded, the Australian parliament passed a key part of the government's climate policy, the Safeguard Mechanism Amendment Bill. This followed a federal election last year in which a number of independent candidates were elected on platforms championing stronger action on climate change.

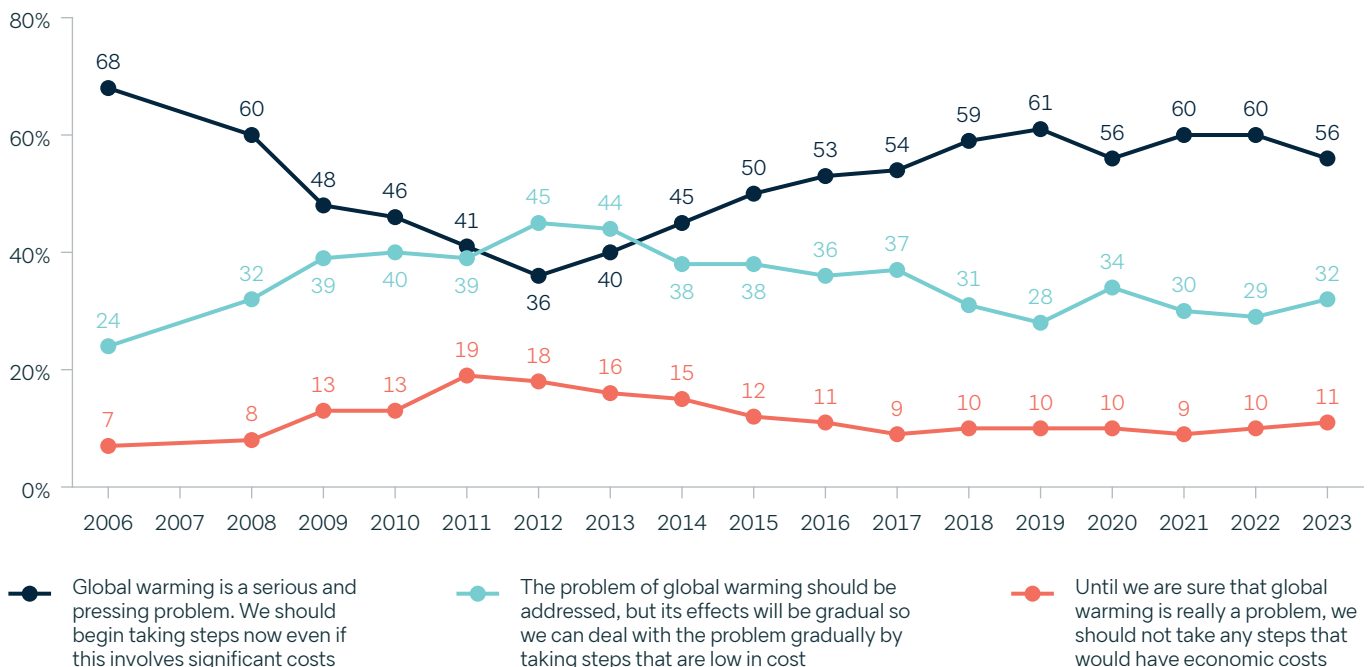
A majority of Australians (56%) continue to say 'global warming is a serious and pressing problem' about which 'we should begin taking steps now, even if this involves significant costs', slightly down by four points from 2022. Three in ten (32%) say 'the problem of global warming should be addressed, but its effects will be gradual, so we can deal with the problem gradually by taking steps that are low in cost'. The remainder (11%) believe 'until we are sure that global warming is really a problem, we should not take any steps that would have economic costs'.

There is a significant gap between how younger and older Australians respond to this question. Those aged under 30 are far more likely to see global warming as a serious and pressing problem requiring immediate action (72%), compared to a bare majority (53%) of those aged 30 and older who say the same.

**FIGURE 30**

### Climate change

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. Please indicate which of the following three statements comes closest to your own point of view.



## Indigenous Voice

In late 2023, Australians will vote in a referendum on whether to alter the Australian Constitution to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. The Voice would be an independent body that would give advice to the Australian parliament and government on matters that affect the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

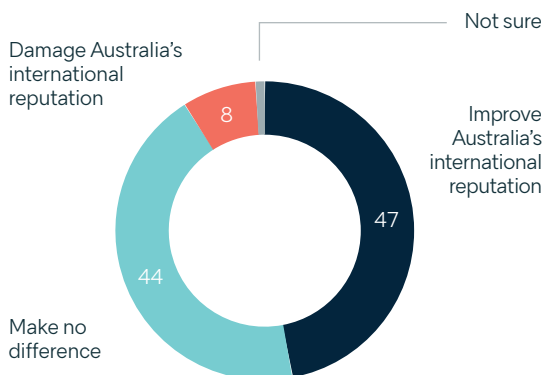
In this year's Poll, we asked if introducing the proposed Voice would have an impact on Australia's international reputation. Australians are almost evenly divided, with 47% saying that a Voice would improve Australia's reputation, while 44% say it would make no difference. Very few (8%) believe it would damage Australia's reputation.

After polling concluded, Opposition leader Peter Dutton formally announced he would oppose the government's proposal to establish a Voice. There is a stark divide in opinion along political party lines on the Voice's potential impact on Australia's reputation. 62% of those who lean towards the Labor Party think the Voice would improve Australia's international reputation. Of those who lean towards the Liberal or National parties, only 25% say the Voice would improve Australia's reputation, while 61% say it would make no difference.<sup>6</sup>

FIGURE 31

### Indigenous Voice

Now a question about Australia's international reputation and the proposed Indigenous Voice to parliament. Do you think introducing the Indigenous Voice to parliament would:



## Immigration

Australia's Covid-19 restrictions saw a significant drop in the country's annual migrant intake. The easing of those restrictions raised questions about the structure of Australia's immigration program. In September 2022, the government announced a comprehensive review of Australia's migration system. That review delivered its findings to the government in March 2023, and was released publicly in April after fieldwork for this Poll had been completed.

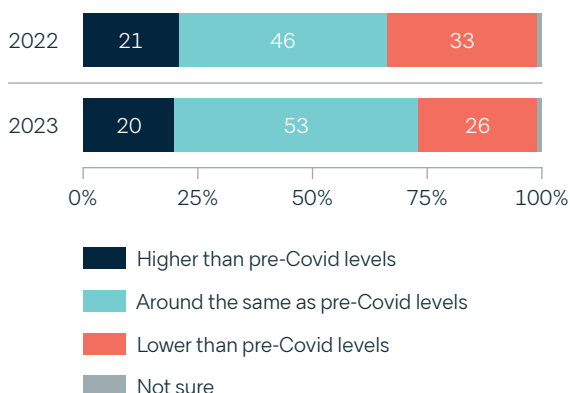
In response to a question on immigration in this year's Poll, a slim majority of Australians (53%) say the number of immigrants allowed into Australia should return to pre-Covid levels. This represents a rise of seven points on 2022. A quarter (26%) say immigration should be 'lower than pre-Covid levels', a fall of seven points from 2022, while 20% say it should be 'higher than pre-Covid levels'.

Australians born overseas do not express significantly higher levels of support for increasing immigration (22%) than those born in Australia (18%). As with the broader population, about half of overseas-born Australians (55%) say immigration levels should be 'around the same as pre-Covid levels'.

FIGURE 32

### Immigration after Covid-19

Thinking now about the pause in Australia's immigration during the pandemic. Now that borders have reopened, over the next 12 months, do you think the number of immigrants allowed into Australia should be:



<sup>6</sup> Political party allegiance is based on a question that asked respondents which party they 'feel closest to'.

# AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

## Budget priorities

This year, Australians were asked whether they think the government should increase, decrease, or keep spending the same for a range of budget priorities. As in previous years, most Australians support an increase in spending on health (85%) and education (73%). Across all other areas, the 2023 survey shows a drop, to varying degrees, in the number of Australians who believe spending should be increased.

The largest shift in opinion relates to defence spending. In 2022, 51% of Australians supported an increase in defence spending, a 20-point rise on the last time the question about budget priorities

was asked in 2019. This year, however, support for increasing defence spending has fallen ten points to 41%. An almost equal number of Australians (39%) think defence spending should remain about the same, while 20% think it should be decreased.

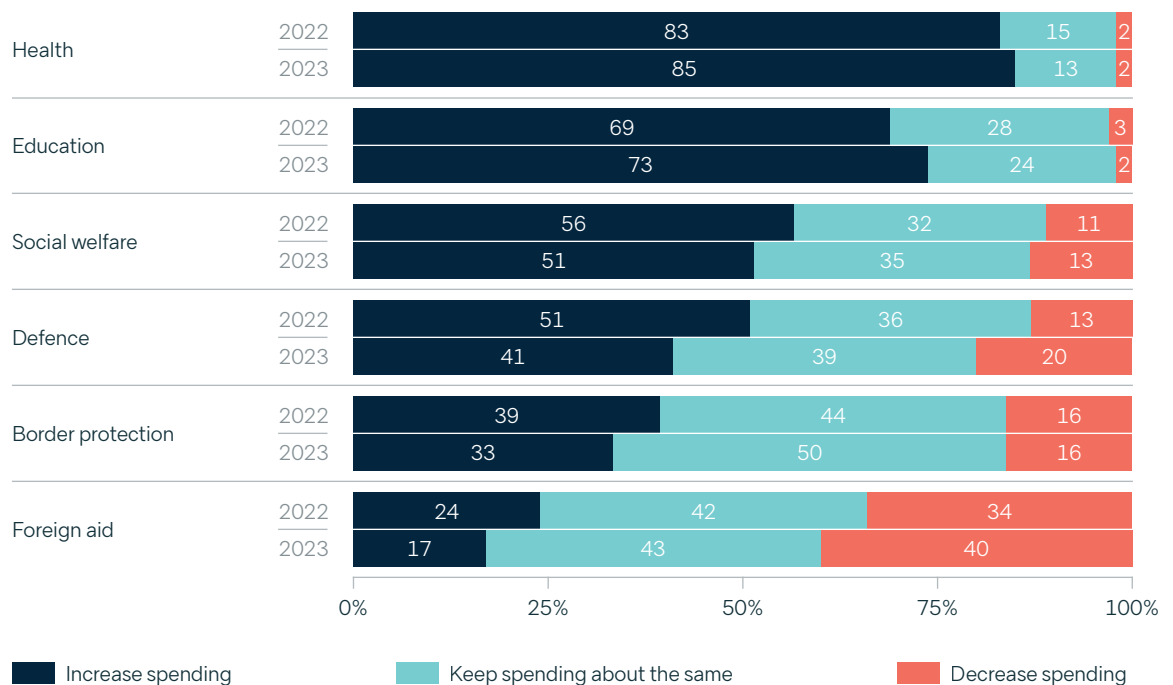
In 2023, most Australians would keep foreign aid spending the same (43%). However, in a seven-point drop from last year, only 17% now support an increase in foreign aid spending. And more than double this number would reduce the aid budget (40%), a rise of six points on last year.

Support for increasing social welfare declined five points to 51% in 2023. Support for increasing spending on border protection dropped six points to 33%.

**FIGURE 33**

### Budget priorities

Now about the federal budget. If you were making up the budget for the federal government this year, would you personally increase spending, decrease spending or keep spending about the same for:



## Labor government report card

Almost one year into the Labor government's term, Australians were asked to give it a score out of ten for its handling of a number of issues.<sup>7</sup> Australians give the government its highest mark for 'maintaining a strong alliance with the United States' (7.1 out of 10). This comes at a time when an overwhelming majority of Australians see the alliance as important to Australia's security (see p.16). The government is also rated highly for 'presenting a good image of Australia internationally' (6.8).

The Labor government receives its lowest mark for 'managing Australia's approach to climate change' (5.3). On this issue, the majority of Australians have seen global warming as a 'serious and pressing

problem' since 2015 (see p.25). The government receives its next lowest mark for 'managing Australia's economy' (5.7).

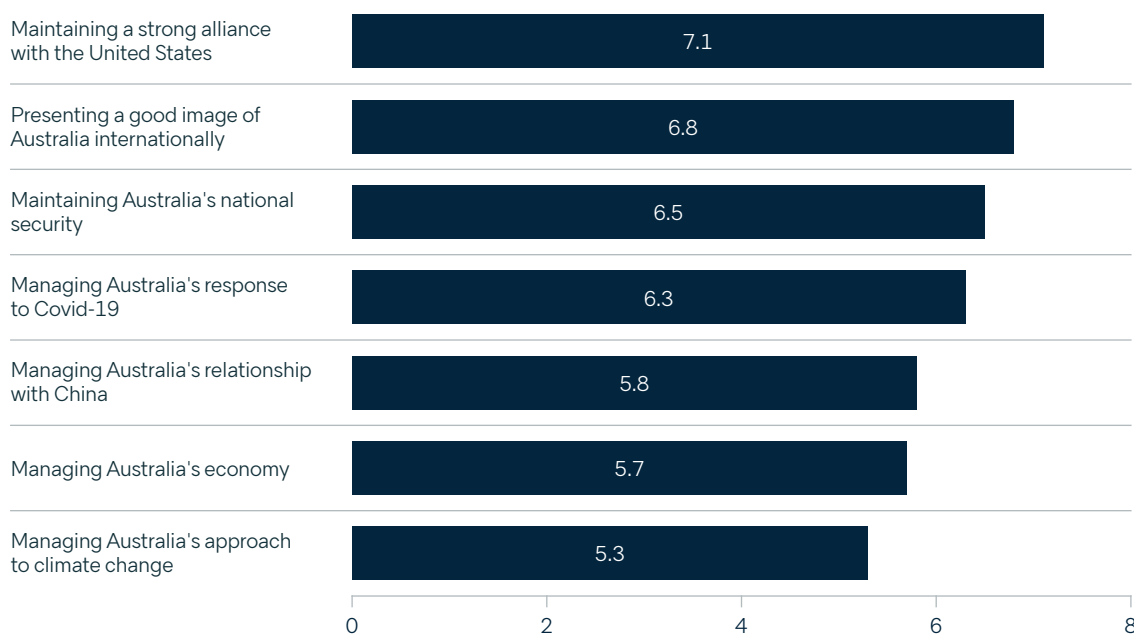
In 2021, when the Lowy Institute Poll last asked this question, Australians awarded the then Coalition government its highest marks for 'managing Australia's response to Covid-19' (7.7), followed by 'maintaining Australia's national security' and 'maintaining a strong alliance with the United States' (both at 6.8).

In 2021, Australians also gave the then Coalition government its lowest mark for 'managing Australia's approach to climate change' (4.6), and its next lowest mark for 'managing Australia's relationship with China' (5.1).

FIGURE 34

### Labor government report card

Now thinking about Australian politics. What mark out of ten would you personally give the Labor 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 0 a very poor job?



<sup>7</sup> Scores represent the mean of weighted responses.

Australians give the Albanese government its highest mark for 'maintaining a strong alliance with the United States' (7.1) and its lowest mark for 'managing Australia's approach to climate change' (5.3)

## Australian prime ministers and foreign policy

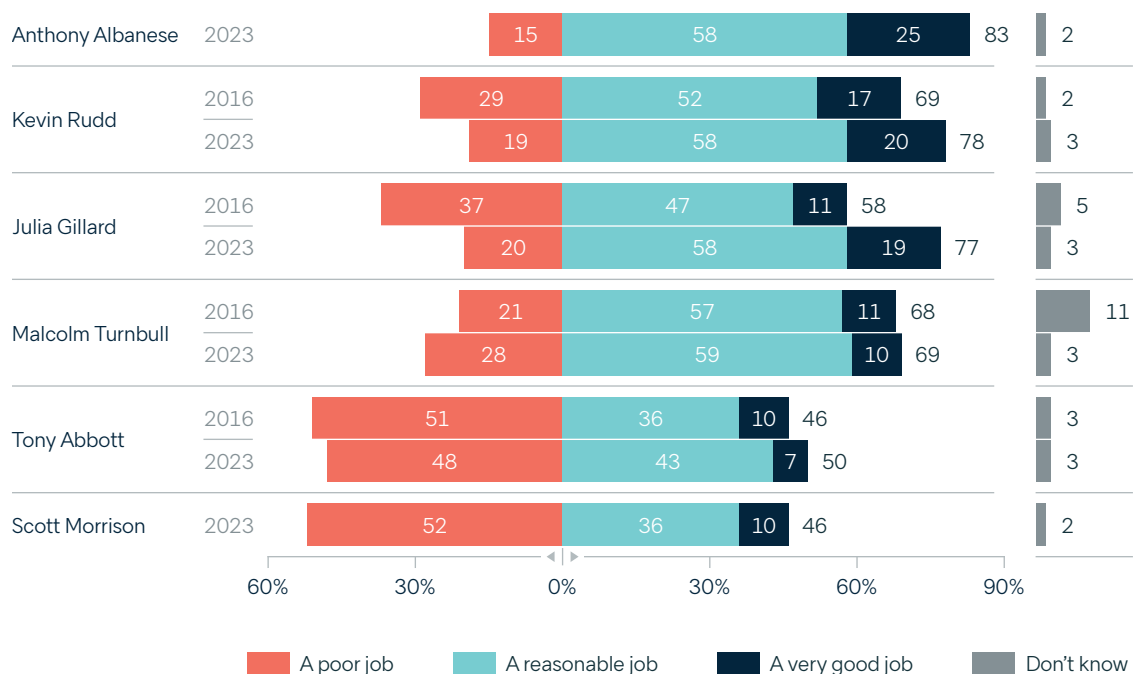
Over the past 15 years, Australia has had three Labor and three Coalition prime ministers. In this Poll, we asked Australians how they rated the foreign policy performance of each of these leaders, a question we last asked in 2016.<sup>8</sup>

One year into the role, Anthony Albanese is ranked the highest of all prime ministers on this measure, with 83% of Australians saying he is doing a 'very good' or 'reasonable' job handling foreign policy. He is followed by Kevin Rudd (78%), Julia Gillard (77%) and Malcolm Turnbull (69%). Australians regard Tony Abbott (50%) and Scott Morrison (46%) the least favourably on their handling of foreign policy.

**FIGURE 35**

### Australian prime ministers and foreign policy

Now thinking about the way Australia's foreign policy has been handled by different prime ministers over the last 15 years. In your personal view, has each of the following prime ministers done a very good job, a reasonable job, or a poor job in handling Australia's foreign policy?



<sup>8</sup> In the 2016 Lowy Institute Poll, the prime ministers included were Bob Hawke, Paul Keating, John Howard, Kevin Rudd, Julia Gillard, Malcolm Turnbull and Tony Abbott.

# 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. For more information on the methodology of the Lowy Institute Poll, including changes in mode from 2018 onwards, see p.45.

**TABLE 1**

## Trust in global powers

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

2023 (ranked by total who trust 'a great deal' and 'somewhat')	A great deal	Somewhat	Total: a great deal and somewhat	Not very much	Not at all	Total: not very much and not at all
Japan	28	57	85	12	2	14
United Kingdom	28	56	84	12	4	16
France	17	62	79	17	3	20
United States	16	45	61	29	10	39
India	7	51	58	33	8	41
Indonesia	3	48	51	41	8	49
China	2	13	15	40	44	84
Russia	1	7	8	25	67	92

	A great deal											Total: 'a great deal' and 'somewhat'										
	2006	2008	2009	2011	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2006	2008	2009	2011	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Japan	19	15	33	30	31	33	-	22	29	27	28	73	68	81	83	86	87	-	82	87	87	85
United Kingdom	-	-	-	-	50	45	-	24	28	29	28	-	-	-	-	90	90	-	84	87	87	84
France	-	-	-	-	-	29	-	-	-	19	17	-	-	-	-	83	-	-	-	-	82	79
United States	19	24	38	40	20	15	14	12	13	16	16	60	69	82	83	61	55	52	51	61	65	61
India	9	8	9	7	9	8	-	4	7	5	7	68	55	60	61	64	59	-	45	61	56	58
Indonesia	-	-	6	5	5	-	-	2	2	4	3	-	-	45	46	52	-	-	36	48	51	51
China	7	7	7	12	8	7	4	4	2	2	2	60	47	59	59	54	52	32	23	16	12	15
Russia	-	7	7	7	5	3	-	2	2	1	1	-	53	59	53	38	28	-	24	26	5	8

TABLE 2

**Confidence in world leaders**

Here is a list of political leaders. For each, please indicate how much confidence you have in the leader to do the right thing regarding world affairs — a lot of confidence, some confidence, not too much confidence or no confidence at all.

2022 (ranked by total saying 'a lot of' and 'some' confidence)	A lot	Some	Total: a lot and some confidence	Not too much	None at all	Total: not too much confidence and none at all	Not sure who the person is	Not sure
Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy	31	41	72	13	9	22	3	4
New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins	25	47	72	8	2	10	9	9
French President Emmanuel Macron	15	49	64	17	5	22	7	7
Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida	17	47	64	11	2	13	13	10
UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak	16	47	63	17	6	23	7	7
US President Joe Biden	15	44	59	24	14	38	1	2
Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi	6	38	44	24	8	32	14	9
Indonesian President Joko Widodo	4	30	34	33	7	40	16	10
Chinese President Xi Jinping	2	9	11	26	53	79	5	4
Russian President Vladimir Putin	1	6	7	10	80	90	1	2
North Korean leader Kim Jong-un	0	3	3	12	80	92	1	3

Percentage saying 'a lot of' and 'some' confidence' (ranked by 2022 responses)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy	–	–	–	–	–	72
New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins (Jacinda Ardern 2018–22)	–	88	87	91	87	72
French President Emmanuel Macron	61	–	–	–	67	64
Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida (Shinzo Abe 2018–20, Yoshihide Suga 2021)	66	–	73	61	65	64
UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak (Boris Johnson 2019–22, Theresa May 2018)	68	–	55	59	59	63
US President Joe Biden (Donald Trump 2018–20)	30	25	30	69	58	59
Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi	37	–	42	38	38	44
Indonesian President Joko Widodo	–	34	32	26	32	34
Chinese President Xi Jinping	43	30	22	10	11	11
Russian President Vladimir Putin	19	21	–	16	6	7
North Korean leader Kim Jong-un	4	7	6	5	5	3

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**TABLE 3**

### Feelings thermometer

Please rate your feelings towards some countries, territories and institutions, with one hundred meaning a very warm, favourable feeling, zero meaning a very cold, unfavourable feeling, and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from zero to one hundred: the higher the number the more favourable your feelings are towards that country, territory or institution. If you have no opinion or have never heard of that country, territory or institution, please say so.<sup>1</sup>

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
New Zealand	–	81	–	83	84	85	85	–	84	83	–	85	86	86	–	87	86	85
Japan	64	63	64	66	64	67	70	65	67	68	70	71	74	72	69	73	74	75
United Kingdom <sup>2</sup>	74	75	77	–	–	79	–	77	–	79	–	81	82	76	74	76	77	75
Singapore	65	64	65	–	69	–	–	67	–	–	71	–	–	–	–	–	–	72
France	–	–	69	–	70	–	–	–	71	–	–	71	70	–	–	–	69	68
Taiwan	–	–	–	–	–	58	–	–	–	–	59	–	60	59	57	62	64	65
Ukraine	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	51	–	–	–	–	–	–	69	65
European Union	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	62	67	66	60	62	62	64
South Korea	56	–	50	53	–	57	61	–	59	–	–	60	62	–	57	61	63	64
United Nations	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	62	–	–	–	61	–	61	64
United States	62	60	64	67	68	70	71	70	71	73	68	69	67	63	62	62	65	63
Solomon Islands	–	–	–	–	–	61	–	–	63	–	–	64	–	–	–	–	–	61
Papua New Guinea	63	57	60	–	62	–	64	60	59	58	63	61	63	59	56	60	61	60
Philippines	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	59	61	–	–	57	–	60
India	62	55	57	56	55	56	58	55	57	56	59	60	58	53	52	56	57	58
Timor-Leste <sup>3</sup>	57	54	56	50	–	–	–	–	58	–	60	–	57	–	–	–	–	58
Indonesia	50	47	50	49	54	51	54	53	52	46	54	55	54	51	51	55	57	57
Myanmar <sup>4</sup>	–	–	–	46	–	–	50	50	50	–	55	54	50	46	–	41	46	42
China	61	56	56	53	54	53	59	54	60	58	58	59	58	49	39	32	33	33
Russia	–	–	55	–	55	–	–	–	–	45	52	50	47	43	42	41	19	20
North Korea	43	–	–	30	37	34	33	31	29	29	26	30	25	25	–	–	–	16

<sup>1</sup> In 2006, this question asked respondents about their feelings towards 'countries and peoples'. From 2007 to 2018, this question asked respondents about their feelings towards 'countries'.

<sup>2</sup> Until 2015, asked as 'Great Britain'; from 2015 asked as 'United Kingdom (Great Britain)'.

<sup>3</sup> Until 2018, asked as 'East Timor'. In 2023, asked as 'Timor-Leste'.

<sup>4</sup> Until 2019, asked as 'Myanmar/Burma'. From 2021, asked as 'Myanmar'.



**TABLE 4****Australia's best friend in Asia**

Thinking about Australia's relations in Asia. In your personal opinion, which one of the following countries is Australia's best friend in Asia?

	2014	2016	2022	2023
Japan	29	25	43	44
India	5	6	7	16
Singapore	13	12	21	15
Indonesia	8	15	15	12
China	29	30	6	7
South Korea	5	4	4	4
Not sure	11	9	3	3

**TABLE 5****Feelings of safety**

Now about world events, how safe do you feel?

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2015	2017	2018	2020	2021	2022	2023
Very safe	30	30	40	35	44	42	24	20	18	4	6	6	6
Safe	61	56	50	57	46	50	56	59	60	46	64	47	57
Total: safe	91	86	90	92	90	92	80	79	78	50	70	53	63
Unsafe	8	10	8	8	7	5	16	16	20	41	27	40	34
Very unsafe	1	3	1	1	2	2	3	5	1	9	3	6	3
Total: unsafe	9	13	9	9	9	7	19	21	21	50	30	46	37
Not sure	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0

TABLE 6

**Threats to Australia's vital interests**

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

2023 (ranked by percentage saying 'critical threat')	Critical threat	An important but not critical threat	Not an important threat at all	Not sure
Cyberattacks from other countries	68	30	1	0
A military conflict between the United States and China over Taiwan	64	32	3	1
North Korea's nuclear program	60	35	4	0
China's foreign policy	59	37	3	1
Climate change <sup>5</sup>	59	30	11	0
A severe downturn in the global economy	57	42	1	0
Russia's foreign policy	57	36	6	1
Foreign interference in Australian politics	51	44	4	1
The rise of authoritarian systems of government around the world	49	46	5	1
International terrorism	48	46	6	0
Political instability in the United States	32	60	7	1
Covid-19 and other potential epidemics <sup>6</sup>	30	56	14	0

Percentage saying 'critical threat' (ranked by 2023 responses)	2006	2008	2009	2014	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cyberattacks from other countries	-	-	-	51	55	57	62	-	62	64	68
A military conflict between the United States and China over Taiwan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	35	52	64	64
North Korea's nuclear program	-	-	-	-	65	66	60	-	56	58	60
China's foreign policy	-	-	-	-	36	-	-	-	-	65	59
Climate change <sup>5</sup>	68	66	52	46	57	58	64	59	61	62	59
A severe downturn in the global economy	-	-	-	-	53	50	51	71	50	55	57
Russia's foreign policy	-	-	-	-	32	-	-	-	-	68	57
Foreign interference in Australian politics	-	-	-	-	-	-	49	42	49	49	51
The rise of authoritarian systems of government around the world	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	41	-	55	49
International terrorism	73	66	68	65	67	66	61	46	51	48	48
Political instability in the United States	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34	32
Covid-19 and other potential epidemics <sup>6</sup>	58	47	43	-	-	-	-	76	59	42	30

5 From 2006–2009, this question asked about 'global warming' rather than 'climate change'.

6 In 2020, asked as 'novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and other potential epidemics'. From 2006–2009, asked as 'AIDS, avian flu and other potential epidemics'.

TABLE 7

**AUKUS**

Thinking now about Australia's partnerships in the world. Do you think AUKUS, the security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, will make Australia/our region more safe, less safe or make no difference?

		More safe	Make no difference	Less safe	Not sure	Never heard of AUKUS
Australia	2023	49	23	9	12	7
	2022	52	22	7	11	8
Our region	2023	46	25	9	13	7
	2022	49	24	8	11	8

TABLE 8

**Acquiring nuclear-powered submarines**

Now a question about submarines that are powered by nuclear energy, but do not have nuclear weapons. Are you in favour of or against Australia acquiring nuclear-powered submarines?

	Strongly in favour	Somewhat in favour	Total: in favour	Somewhat against	Strongly against	Total: against	Neither in favour nor against	Not sure
2023	26	41	67	21	10	31	1	2
2022	33	37	70	17	11	28	1	1

TABLE 9

**Nuclear-powered submarines and regional stability**

The Australian government recently announced that Australia will acquire a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These submarines will be powered by nuclear energy but will not carry nuclear weapons. Do you think Australia's acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines under AUKUS will:

Deter military conflict and help ensure stability in the Indo-Pacific region	Make no difference	Increase the risk of military conflict and instability in the Indo-Pacific region	Not sure
28	32	20	20

TABLE 10

**Nuclear-powered submarines — cost**

Over the next 30 years, the total cost of the program is estimated to be between \$268 billion and \$368 billion. Do you think it's worth paying this cost for the additional capability nuclear-powered submarines provide, or not?

Yes	No	Not sure
27	47	27

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**TABLE 11**

### Defence strategy

Now thinking about Australia's defence. Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

To keep Australia safe, we should invest more in military capabilities that deter potential enemies far from our shores	To keep Australia safe, we should invest more in military capabilities that protect Australia close to home	Neither of the above / not sure
26	40	34

**TABLE 12**

### The Quad

Now a question about 'the Quad', the partnership between Australia, India, Japan and the United States. Do you think 'the Quad' will make Australia/our region more safe, less safe or make no difference?

		More safe	Make no difference	Less safe	Not sure	Never heard of the Quad
Australia	2023	51	22	4	11	12
	2022	53	20	4	10	12
Our region	2023	50	22	5	11	12
	2022	52	21	5	11	12

**TABLE 13**

### Foreign military based in Australia

Are you personally in favour of or against Australia allowing the United States to base military forces here in Australia?<sup>7</sup>

		Strongly in favour	Somewhat in favour	Total: in favour	Somewhat against	Strongly against	Total: against	Don't know
United States	2023	17	40	57	27	15	42	1
	2022	22	41	63	22	14	36	1
	2013	26	35	61	17	17	34	5
	2011	20	35	55	21	22	43	2
United Kingdom	2022	22	45	67	21	11	32	1

<sup>7</sup> In 2022, respondents were also asked if they were in favour of or against Australia allowing the United Kingdom to base military forces in Australia.

TABLE 14

**Australia's response to the war in Ukraine**

Thinking more about Russia's invasion of Ukraine, would you support or oppose Australia:

		Strongly support	Somewhat support	Total: support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Total: oppose	Not sure
Keeping strict sanctions on Russia	2023	61	26	87	7	5	12	1
	2022	69	20	89	5	4	9	1
Admitting Ukrainian refugees into Australia	2023	46	38	84	11	4	15	0
	2022	61	29	90	7	3	10	1
Providing military aid to Ukraine	2023	37	39	76	14	10	24	1
	2022	52	31	83	10	6	16	1

TABLE 15

**Future role of the United States and China**

Now a question about the role and influence of countries as world leaders in the future. Ten years from now, do you think the [United States/China] will play...

	A more important and powerful role as a world leader	About the same as now	A less important and powerful role as a world leader	Not sure
China	61	28	10	1
United States	22	45	32	1

TABLE 16

**US alliance: importance to Australia's security**

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

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Very important	45	42	36	42	55	56	59	59	54	53	53	42	53	48	38	43	47	60	51
Fairly important	27	28	27	34	30	30	23	28	28	26	27	29	24	28	34	35	31	27	31
Total: very and fairly important	72	70	63	76	85	86	82	87	82	79	80	71	77	76	72	78	78	87	82
Somewhat important	20	22	27	20	12	12	15	12	16	17	16	22	18	20	23	18	20	11	14
Not at all important	7	8	9	4	2	2	3	1	3	4	4	7	4	4	4	4	2	2	3
Not sure	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1

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**TABLE 17**

### US alliance: effect

Here are some different arguments about the alliance relationship with the United States. For each one please indicate whether you personally agree or disagree.

Percentage saying 'agree' (ranked 2023)	2011	2015	2019	2022	2023
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	73	58	69	77	74
The alliance relationship with the United States makes Australia safer from attack or pressure from China	57	53	56	64	61

**TABLE 18**

### Respect for the United States

In your opinion is the United States more respected in the world under President Joe Biden, or was it more respected under former President Donald Trump?

More respected under President Biden	More respected under President Trump	Not sure
73	24	3

**TABLE 19**

### Australia–China ministerial contact

Over the last 12 months, there has been a resumption of high-level ministerial contact between the Australian and Chinese governments. In your opinion, what impact will this have on Australia's national interests?

Very positive	Somewhat positive	No impact	Somewhat negative	Very negative	Not sure
10	46	21	17	3	3

**TABLE 20**

### China: economic partner or security threat

Thinking now about Australia and China. In your own view, is China more of an economic partner to Australia or more of a security threat to Australia?

	2015	2017	2018	2020	2021	2022	2023
More of a security threat <sup>8</sup>	15	13	12	41	63	63	52
More of an economic partner	77	79	82	55	34	33	44
Both equally	4	5	0	3	1	3	2
Neither	1	0	3	0	0	0	0
Not sure	2	3	3	1	1	1	2

<sup>8</sup> In 2015, 2017 and 2018, the question asked if China was 'more of a military threat'.

**TABLE 21****China as a military threat**

Now about China. Do you think it is likely or unlikely that China will become a military threat to Australia in the next 20 years? 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	2017	2018	2022	2023
Very likely	15	19	18	14	16	19	14	15	14	32	29
Somewhat likely	26	27	26	26	25	29	25	31	31	43	46
Total: likely	41	46	44	40	41	48	39	46	45	75	75
Somewhat unlikely	38	36	35	39	36	32	33	34	36	17	20
Very unlikely	18	16	20	19	18	18	23	16	14	6	4
Total: unlikely	56	52	55	58	54	50	56	50	50	23	24

**TABLE 22****Potential Chinese military base in the Pacific**

To what extent are you concerned or not concerned about China potentially opening a military base in a Pacific Island country?

	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Total: concerned	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned	Total: not concerned
2023	42	45	87	11	1	12
2022 <sup>9</sup>	60	28	88	9	3	12

**TABLE 23****Potential military conflict between China and the United States**

In the event of a military conflict between China and the United States, please say which one of the following statements comes closest to your own personal view.

	2021	2022	2023
Australia should remain neutral	57	51	56
Australia should support the United States	41	46	42
Australia should support China	1	1	1
Not sure	1	2	1

<sup>9</sup> In 2022, respondents were asked about their level of concern about a number of different world events, including 'China potentially opening a military base in a Pacific Island country'.

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**TABLE 24**

### Potential conflict over Taiwan

If China were to invade Taiwan, would you support or oppose Australia, acting together with the United States, taking the following actions:

	Support	Oppose	Not sure
Accepting Taiwanese refugees into Australia	80	19	1
Australia imposing economic and diplomatic sanctions on China	76	22	2
Australia sending arms and military supplies to the Taiwanese government	64	34	2
Using the Australian Navy to help prevent China from imposing a blockade around Taiwan	61	36	2
Sending Australian military personnel to Taiwan to help defend it from China	42	56	2

**TABLE 25**

### Australian relations with Pacific Island countries

Now a question about the Pacific Islands. In your opinion, are Australia's relations with Pacific Island countries improving, worsening or staying about the same?

Improving	Staying about the same	Worsening	Not sure
26	49	22	3

**FIGURE 26**

### Foreign aid to the Pacific

Thinking specifically about foreign aid to Pacific Island nations. Would you personally be in favour of or against Australia providing aid for the following purpose:

	In favour		Against		Not sure	
	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023
Disaster relief	93	92	7	7	0	0
To help prevent China from increasing its influence in the Pacific	82	84	16	15	1	2
Long-term economic development	84	83	15	16	1	1
Covid-19 vaccines	86	80	14	19	0	1
Climate change action	75	76	25	23	1	1



**TABLE 27****Economic optimism**

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

	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010	2012	2013	2015	2016	2017	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Very optimistic	14	19	11	16	19	12	14	9	9	9	5	3	10	5	3
Optimistic	53	52	65	70	67	61	62	54	61	65	60	49	69	57	59
Total: optimistic	67	71	76	86	86	73	76	63	70	74	65	52	79	62	62
Pessimistic	8	9	19	11	10	20	15	29	25	20	30	38	19	32	33
Very pessimistic	2	2	4	2	3	5	6	5	5	4	4	10	3	5	4
Total: pessimistic	10	11	23	13	13	25	21	34	30	24	34	48	22	37	37
Neutral <sup>10</sup>	21	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not sure	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	3	1	0	0	1	0

**TABLE 28****Supply chains**

Now thinking about global trade and the supply chains through which Australia sources goods from other countries. In your opinion, which of the following should be a higher priority for Australia?

Ensuring that supply chains run through countries that are friendly towards Australia, even if it means higher prices	Keeping prices as low as possible, even if it means that supply chains run through countries that are unfriendly towards Australia	Not sure
70	29	2

<sup>10</sup> A neutral option was offered to respondents in 2005 and 2007.

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**TABLE 29**

### Democracy

Now a question about democracy. Below are some statements about democracy. Please indicate which one of the three statements comes closest to your own personal views about democracy.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 <sup>11</sup>	2022	2023
Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government	60	59	60	65	61	60	62	65	71	74	73
In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable	23	26	24	18	24	20	20	22	16	18	19
For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have	15	13	13	15	12	16	15	12	11	7	7
Not sure	1	2	3	2	3	4	3	1	1	1	1

**TABLE 30**

### Climate change

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. Please indicate which of the following three statements comes closest to your own point of view.

	2006	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 <sup>12</sup>	2023
Global warming is a serious and pressing problem. We should begin taking steps now even if this involves significant costs	68	60	48	46	41	36	40	45	50	53	54	59	61	56	60	60	56
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	39	45	44	38	38	36	37	31	28	34	30	29	32
Until we are sure that global warming is really a problem, we should not take any steps that would have economic costs	7	8	13	13	19	18	16	15	12	11	9	10	10	10	9	10	11
Not sure/prefer not to say	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1

<sup>11</sup> This survey was fielded in a separate Lowy Institute nationwide poll in November 2020: see Lowy Institute Poll 2021 Methodology for more information.

<sup>12</sup> In 2020, this question was asked as part of COVIDpoll by the Lowy Institute, in a nationally representative online and telephone survey conducted by the Social Research Centre between 14 and 27 April 2020.

TABLE 31

**Indigenous Voice**

Now a question about Australia's international reputation and the proposed Indigenous Voice to parliament. Do you think introducing the Indigenous Voice to parliament would:

Improve Australia's international reputation	Make no difference	Damage Australia's international reputation	Not sure
47	44	8	1

TABLE 32

**Immigration after Covid-19**

Thinking now about the pause in Australia's immigration during the pandemic. Now that borders have reopened, over the next 12 months, do you think the number of immigrants allowed into Australia should be:

	Higher than pre-Covid levels	Around the same as pre-Covid levels	Lower than pre-Covid levels	Not sure
2023	20	53	26	1
2022	21	46	33	1

TABLE 33

**Budget priorities**

Now about the federal budget. If you were making up the budget for the federal government this year, would you personally increase spending, decrease spending or keep spending about the same for:

	Increase spending			Keep spending about the same			Decrease spending		
	2019	2022	2023	2019	2022	2023	2019	2022	2023
Health	81	83	85	16	15	13	3	2	2
Education	74	69	73	23	28	24	3	3	2
Social welfare	47	56	51	37	32	35	16	11	13
Defence	31	51	41	47	36	39	21	13	20
Border protection	32	39	33	52	44	50	16	16	16
Foreign aid	17	24	17	36	42	43	47	34	40

**TABLE 34****Labor government report card**

Now thinking about Australian politics. What mark out of ten would you personally give the Labor 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 0 a very poor job?

	2023 <sup>13</sup>
Maintaining a strong alliance with the United States	7.1
Presenting a good image of Australia internationally	6.8
Maintaining Australia's national security	6.5
Managing Australia's response to Covid-19	6.3
Managing Australia's relationship with China	5.8
Managing Australia's economy	5.7
Managing Australia's approach to climate change	5.3

**TABLE 35****Australian prime ministers and foreign policy**

Now thinking about the way Australia's foreign policy has been handled by different prime ministers over the last 15 years. In your personal view, has each of the following prime ministers done a very good job, a reasonable job, or a poor job in handling Australia's foreign policy?<sup>14</sup>

		A very good job	A reasonable job	Total very good/ reasonable job	A poor job	Don't know
Anthony Albanese	2023	25	58	83	15	2
Kevin Rudd	2023	20	58	78	19	3
	2016	17	52	69	29	2
Julia Gillard	2023	19	58	77	20	3
	2016	11	47	58	37	5
Malcolm Turnbull	2023	10	59	69	28	3
	2016	11	57	68	21	11
Tony Abbott	2023	7	43	50	48	3
	2016	10	36	46	51	3
Scott Morrison	2023	10	36	46	52	2

<sup>13</sup> Scores represent the mean of weighted responses.

<sup>14</sup> In the 2016 Lowy Institute Poll, the prime ministers included were Bob Hawke, Paul Keating, John Howard, Kevin Rudd, Julia Gillard, Malcolm Turnbull and Tony Abbott.

# ABOUT THE POLL

## Methodology

The 2023 Lowy Institute Poll reports the results of a national survey of 2077 Australian adults between 14 and 26 March 2023. The survey was conducted by the Social Research Centre (SRC), using the Life in Australia™ panel — currently the only probability-based online panel in Australia. Members of the panel were randomly recruited via their landline or mobile telephone or via their address (rather than being self-selected volunteers) and agreed to provide their contact details to take part in surveys on a regular basis. SRC uses a mixed-mode approach for the panel, including online surveys (97% of respondents) and computer-assisted telephone interviewing (3% of respondents) to provide coverage of the offline population (households without internet access). The order of questions in the questionnaire was different from the order presented in this report.

On a simple random sample of 2077 responses, the margin of error is 2.2%. Where a complex sample is used, the ‘design effect’ measures the additional variance in comparison with a simple random sample. The design effect for this survey is estimated at 1.69. For the 2023 Lowy Institute Poll survey, a completion rate of 72.9% was achieved. Taking into account the recruitment rate to the panel and attrition from the panel, the cumulative response rate is 4%, which is comparable to many international probability-based panels. Unlike other commercial online panels in Australia, the probability basis of the Life in Australia™ sampling method means results are generalisable to the national population and sampling errors and confidence intervals can be calculated.

In 2019, the Lowy Institute completed a three-year transition in the methodology for Lowy Institute polling, which until 2017 was conducted solely by telephone. From 2005 to 2011, the Poll was conducted by landline only. From 2012 to 2017, it was conducted using both landline and mobile numbers. In 2017, the SRC administered four key

questions from the Poll to an online sample of 2513 respondents in parallel with the telephone survey of 1200 respondents, which was reported in the 2017 Lowy Institute Poll. This parallel survey provided valuable comparison information between the two methodologies. In 2018, the Lowy Institute Poll was a combination of a telephone-only sample of 600 respondents and an online sample of 600 respondents drawn from Life in Australia™. In 2019, the Lowy Institute Poll was administered in the same way as in 2020: with approximately 90% of respondents online and 10% offline.

In order to ensure comparability of the 2018 Poll with the telephone responses of our 2005–17 Polls, the response sets were weighted and blended using the following approach: first, weights for the telephone respondents (50% of the sample) were calculated accounting for the dual chances of being contacted by landline or mobile, and reflecting key population characteristics. Then, for each online respondent, the most similar telephone respondent was found using a range of survey variables, and that person’s telephone weighting was used as the ‘base weight’ for the next step. Finally, the telephone and online responses were then combined into a single data set, and the results then weighted to reflect the demographic profile of the Australian population aged 18 years and over based on Australian Bureau of Statistics population data.

The transition to a predominantly online survey panel for Lowy Institute polls mirrors shifts in survey methods by highly respected polling organisations internationally. The Pew Research Center has moved the majority of its US polling online over the past five years, primarily through its American Trends Panel, another probability-based online panel.<sup>1</sup> The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, which has been conducting nationwide surveys on foreign policy in the United States since 1974, moved to online polling in 2004.<sup>2</sup>

1 Courtney Kennedy and Claudia Deane, “What our Transition to Online Polling Means for Decades of Phone Survey Trends”, Fact Tank, Pew Research Center, 27 February 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/02/27/what-our-transition-to-online-polling-means-for-decades-of-phone-survey-trends/>.

2 Marshall M. Bouton, Catherine Hug, Steven Kull et al, “2004 Chicago Council Survey”, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 4 September 2004, <https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/research/public-opinion-survey/2004-chicago-council-survey>.

## ABOUT THE POLL

The decision to move to an online survey methodology was made because of the declining productivity of telephone surveys. The number of fixed-line telephones is steadily decreasing, and more of the population has moved to mobile-only households, which facilitates call-screening. A decline in contact rates and, to a lesser extent, cooperation rates, has led to reduced response rates for landline and mobile phones.

Some questions in the 2023 Lowy Institute Poll are new and are not affected by the possibility of ‘mode’ differences (where respondents may answer the same question differently in an interviewer-administered telephone survey compared with an online survey, which removes the human element and provides more time for consideration of responses). However, the majority of questions in the 2023 survey are ‘tracking’ questions that have been asked in previous Lowy Institute polls, allowing us to compare public opinion on a single issue over time. On the Lowy Institute website, footnotes and dotted lines have been used in the charts in the Poll to represent this change of mode, which can elicit slightly different responses.

Data quality checks for the online portion of the sample included checks for ‘speeding’ (completing the survey rapidly), ‘straight-lining’ (providing the same answer to every question of a bank of items with the same response options), and the number of non-substantive responses given (don’t know or refused). There was no single determining factor in deciding whether to exclude a case: factors were considered together and included the degree of speeding and the difficulty of straight-lining a particular bank of items.

Life in Australia™ members are offered a small incentive for joining the panel and another incentive for each survey they complete — a \$10 gift card, payment, or donation to a nominated charity.

### April 2023 poll

The Lowy Institute fielded three additional questions (on AUKUS submarines and defence - see figures 9 to 11) in a nationally representative online and telephone survey conducted by the SRC between 11 and 26 April 2023, with a sample size of 4469 Australian adults. The order of questions in the survey was different from the order presented in this report. The survey was also conducted using the Life in Australia™ panel as explained above.

On a simple random sample of 4469 responses, the margin of error is approximately 1.5%. Where a complex sample is used, the ‘design effect’ measures the additional variance in comparison with a simple random sample. The design effect for this survey is estimated at 1.63.

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Several questions in this report and previous Lowy Institute Polls were modelled on those developed by other polling organisations, including the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, the Pew Research Center, Australian Election Study, Scanlon Foundation Research Institute, Ipsos MORI and Essential.

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