

PRESS RELEASE

Australia among the world leaders when it comes to social cohesion but globally it is under assault – Ipsos study

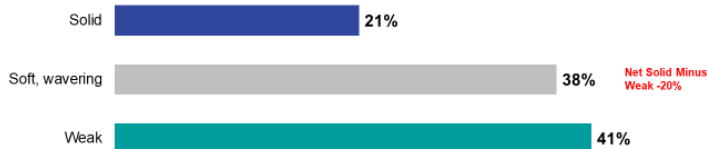
Almost twice as many global citizens are “weak” than “solid” in their sense of social cohesion. In Australia the story is very different, one and a half times as many citizens are “solid” than “weak” in their sense of social cohesion.

Sydney, Australia, October 29, 2020 – The Ipsos Social Cohesion Index (ISCI) suggests that social cohesion is under assault globally, but not in Australia. Based on a survey of over 20,000 adults in 27 countries, Ipsos finds that twice as many global citizens are “weak” (41%) than “solid” (21%) in their sense of social cohesion.

SOCIAL COHESION - GLOBAL SNAPSHOT

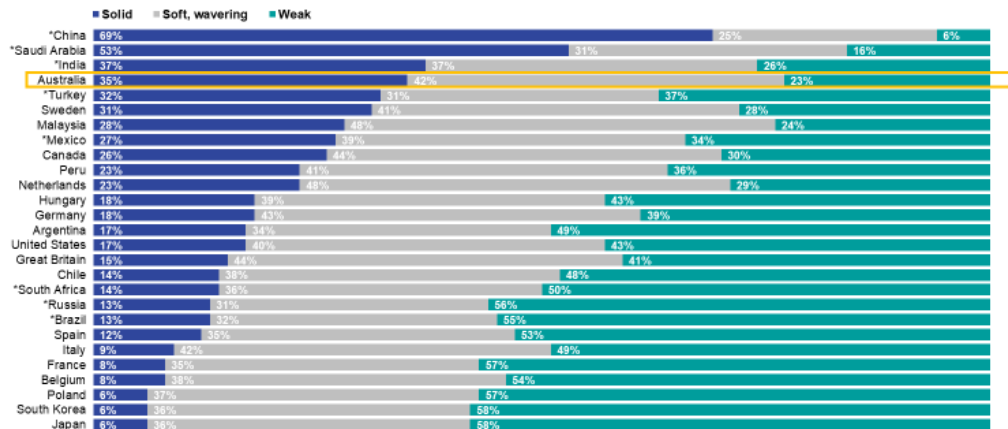
Social Cohesion worldwide is under assault. Almost twice as many citizens are “weak” than “solid” in their sense of social cohesion.

SOCIAL COHESION INDEX



In Australia however, it is almost the opposite with 35% “solid” and 23% “weak”. This makes us one of the most socially cohesive countries in our study.

OVERALL SOCIAL COHESION INDEX



*samples represent a more affluent, connected population

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Why does this matter?

Many experts are talking about the importance of social cohesion and social capital in the pandemic recovery and beyond.

They note that the “group-think” and “what have you done for me and mine” perspective created by lower social cohesion can ultimately tear a society apart. People make demands of governments and businesses to act more to address how they think they are “wronged” and what their specific wants/needs are, than about what is good for the whole.

Therefore, social cohesion has widespread potential impact on marketing, messaging and positioning in the private sector, and public and social policy in the public sector moving forward.

The Ipsos Social Cohesion Index is a measure based on citizens’ attitudes relative to:

- Social relations—trust in other people, shared priorities with others, and diversity
- Connectedness—national identity, trust in the political system, and fairness of treatment
- Common good—helping others, respecting laws and corruption

Key Australian findings

- Australia is one of only six countries with net positive social cohesion - China (+65%), Saudi Arabia (+37%), Australia (+12%), India (+11%), Malaysia (+4%) and Sweden (+3%).
- We also fare well on each of the sub-indices that make up the Social Cohesion Index:
 - On social relations, we have a net positive of 15%, whereas the global figure is zero as the proportion of “solid” is equal to the “weak”.
 - On connectedness, Australia as a net positive of 24%, whereas globally there is a net negative of 1%.
 - On common good, we have a net positive of 28%, whereas globally there is a net negative of 5%.
- The other key stand out for Australia is in regard to the ‘Connectedness Sub-Index’:
 - The assessment of defining oneself as a citizen of the country in Australia (48% strong agreement) is much higher than perceptions of being treated fairly (32% strong agreement), which is in turn much higher than trust in the system (14% strong agreement)
 - Globally, defining oneself as a citizen of the country (45% strong agreement) is much higher than perceptions of being treated fairly (21% strong agreement) and trust in the system (14% strong agreement).

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Ipsos Public Affairs Australia Deputy Managing Director, David Elliott, said: "While we have some interesting company at the top of the Social Cohesion Index, the fact that we score well on social cohesion shouldn't surprise. If you look at the elements that make up the Index, many of them seem to be things that Australia and Australians often pride themselves on: a diverse population with different ethnicities and cultures; we like to think we all share some basic values, for example mateship and a fair go for all; we have a strong identity as Australians and generally like to think we are all treated fairly; and we tend to be pretty law abiding and adopt a sense of shared responsibility.

"There have been countless examples in 2020 where these attributes of Australia have been on display, whether it has been chipping in and helping those affected by bushfires, helping the vulnerable through COVID, or generally adhering to the various restrictions and advice we have received through COVID.

"If social cohesion is important to a nation's ability to recover from this pandemic, we have a reason to feel a little more optimistic than many around the globe."

Key global findings

Lack of social cohesion cuts across most individual countries, although some are more challenged than others. For example, those with the most negative social cohesion are Japan (-52%), South Korea (-52%), Poland (-51%), France (-49%) and Belgium (-46%). The net score of the United States is -26%.

Myriad of competing attitudes

- On "Social relations," on the more positive, 32% globally "strongly agree" that "having a diverse population, with different ethnicities, cultures, etc. is a very good thing for the country." But, only 15% globally "strongly agree" that "I have the same outlook on life, opinions on important issues, etc. than other (country citizens)."
- On "Connectedness," on the more positive, 45% globally "strongly agree" that "I define myself as a (country citizen) first before anything else." But, only 14% globally "strongly agree" that "I trust government/our political system to do what is right."
- On "Common good," on the more positive, 39% globally "strongly agree" that "I respect our laws and ways of doing things." But, only 9% globally strongly believe that their society/system is corruption-free.

"Social cohesion is the bedrock for societies and economies to function. No country will evolve in a positive direction if its citizens are all rowing in different directions," Darrell Bricker PhD, Global Service Line Leader, Public Affairs, Ipsos, said. "So, while understanding citizen attitudes toward issues and policies is important for the public sector, and customer experience and brand for the private sector, it is important to understand that there is a more fundamental level encapsulated in social cohesion that greatly influences both."



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About the Study

This study did not have any external sponsors or partners. It was initiated and run by Ipsos, because we are curious about the world we live in and how citizens around the globe think and feel about their world.

These are the findings of a 27-country Ipsos survey conducted between September 25 and October 9, 2020 among 20,011 adults aged 18-74 in the United States, Canada, Malaysia, South Africa, and Turkey and 16-74 in 22 other countries, via Ipsos' Global Advisor online survey platform.

Each country's sample consists of 1000+ individuals in Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China (mainland), France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Spain, and the United States, and 500+ individuals in Argentina, Chile, Hungary, India, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, and Turkey.

About Ipsos

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Our passionately curious research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide true understanding and powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. We serve more than 5000 clients across the world with 75 business solutions.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1st, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

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For more information on this news release, please contact:

Rochelle Burbury
Third Avenue Consulting
0408 774 577
rochelle@thirdavenuecom.au