What is the SMI?

The Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion (SMI) shows how Australia ranks according to five key indicators of social cohesion: belonging, worth, social justice, participation and acceptance.

What are the five indicators of social cohesion?

The five domains of social cohesion are:

**Belonging**: Indication of pride in the Australian way of life and culture; sense of belonging; importance of maintaining Australian way of life and culture.

**Worth**: Satisfaction with present financial situation and indication of happiness over the last year.

**Social justice and equity**: Views on the adequacy of financial support for people on low incomes; the gap between high and low incomes; Australia as a land of economic opportunity; trust in the Australian government.

**Participation** (political): Voted in an election; signed a petition; contacted a Member of Parliament; participated in a boycott; attended a protest.

**Acceptance and rejection, legitimacy**: The scale measures rejection, indicated by negative view of immigration from many different countries; reported experience of discrimination in the last 12 months; disagreement with government support to ethnic minorities for maintenance of customs and traditions; feeling that life in three or four years will be worse.

Change in the Scanlon-Monash Index

While over the course of the Scanlon Foundation surveys movement of the SMI has been negative, the Index has registered relatively minor change since 2010.

Following the benchmark 2007 survey there was marginal positive movement in 2009, with the SMI reaching 101.2 index points. The next three surveys (2010-2012) averaged 93.6. Subsequent surveys (2013-2019) averaged 89.6, down by 4.0 index points. In 2019, the Index is at 89.6, with negligible change from 89.7 in 2018, and exactly the average of the last seven years.

Within the five domains covered by the Index – belonging, worth, social justice, participation and acceptance – there has been minimal change between 2018 and 2019, averaging 2.48 index points.

Indicative of a number of positive findings, 90% of respondents indicate ‘sense of belonging in Australia’ to a ‘great’ or ‘moderate’ extent, and 90% ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ with the proposition that ‘in the modern world, maintaining the Australian way of life and culture is important’. Both of these indicators have been constant at 90% over the last two surveys. In 2019, 87% indicate that they take ‘pride in the Australian way of life and culture’ to a ‘great’ or ‘moderate’ extent.

The Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion, 2007-2019*

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<td>93.8</td>
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<td>3. Social justice and equity</td>
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<td>91.7</td>
<td>87.5</td>
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<td>98.0</td>
<td>106.4</td>
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<td>90.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average</td>
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<td>93.8</td>
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*Results of interviewer-administered Random Digital Dialling (RDD) telephone survey