



# ANUpoll

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

## Public opinion about science

December 2010



Without science and scientists, much of what we take for granted would simply not exist.

Australians would be without modern medicine, TV, telephones, the Internet and space exploration – without a fundamental understanding of how things work.

Public views about science and scientists are a critical part of how we view ourselves and our evolution into a 21st century economy and society.

So it is appropriate that the eighth ANUpoll looks at what Australians really think of science, scientists and, specifically, climate science. This ANUpoll also asks how Australians feel about science in comparison to topics like sport and religion.

And the results? Science does very well.

ANUpoll shows us that Australians have a diverse and complex relationship with science. Many of us are proud of our country's scientific achievements and confident about their worth. However it also tells us that Australians are confused about climate science and unhappy when politicians ignore scientific advice.

Like previous ANUpolls, this study sheds light on a policy issue critical to the nation's future. The way in which we define, direct and fund science will have profound implications that will outlive us all.

ANUpoll differs from other opinion polls by placing public opinion in a broad policy context, and by comparing Australian and international opinion on critical issues.

ANUpoll is designed to inform public and policy debate, and to assist in scholarly research. It builds on the University's long tradition of social survey research. I hope that this ANUpoll will contribute to a greater understanding of the role of science and scientists in our great nation.

Professor Ian Chubb AC  
Vice-Chancellor and President

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ian Chubb". The signature is stylized and cursive.



THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

## Public opinion about science

Rod Lamberts  
Will J. Grant  
Aaron Martin

ANU College of Physical and Mathematical Sciences  
ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences

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# Key points summary

## Knowledge and interest in science

- The Australian public is more interested in science (in particular health issues, medical discoveries and environmental issues) than news about sport, films or politics.
- Despite this interest, a large number of people feel poorly informed about science.
- Australians also highly rate the contribution of scientists to society, valuing their contribution above that of nearly all other professions.

## Science and life

- Australians are overwhelmingly positive about both the potential and the benefits of science, with over 85 per cent feeling that it has made life easier for most people.
- However, this confidence is tempered with a belief that science is not solving the problems of poverty and hunger around the world.

## Science and religion

- Australians are split on the association between religion and science. Three in 10 believe we depend too much on science and not enough on faith, while five in 10 reject this idea.
- Australians see more conflict between science and religion in broader society than people in the US. Just over two thirds of respondents saw such conflict in Australia, compared with just over half in America.

## Science and climate change

- The Australian public remains divided and unsure about climate science. Four respondents in 10 think that most climate scientists disagree over whether the Earth has been warming. One third think most climate scientists disagree about the human causes of this warming.

## Science and policy

- Australians are proud of Australian science, with 60 per cent of respondents considering it above average or the best in the world.
- However, Australians are less pleased with government, feeling that politicians do not adequately consider scientific advice, or adequately regulate industry.

## Key trends: most important problems and political mood

- Though Australians remain largely positive about the direction in which the country is heading, this ANUpoll marks the lowest point in satisfaction seen since ANUpoll began, with approximately three respondents in 10 dissatisfied with the way the country is heading.
- A significant increase has been seen in the number of people viewing 'better government' as the key problem facing Australia.

# About the survey

ANUpoll is conducted for The Australian National University by the Social Research Centre, Melbourne. The survey is a national random sample of the adult population aged 18 years and over, conducted by telephone. In this survey, 1,200 people were interviewed between 15 June and 2 July 2010, with a response rate of 43.2 per cent. The results have been weighted to represent the national population. The survey's margin of error is  $\pm 2.5$  per cent.

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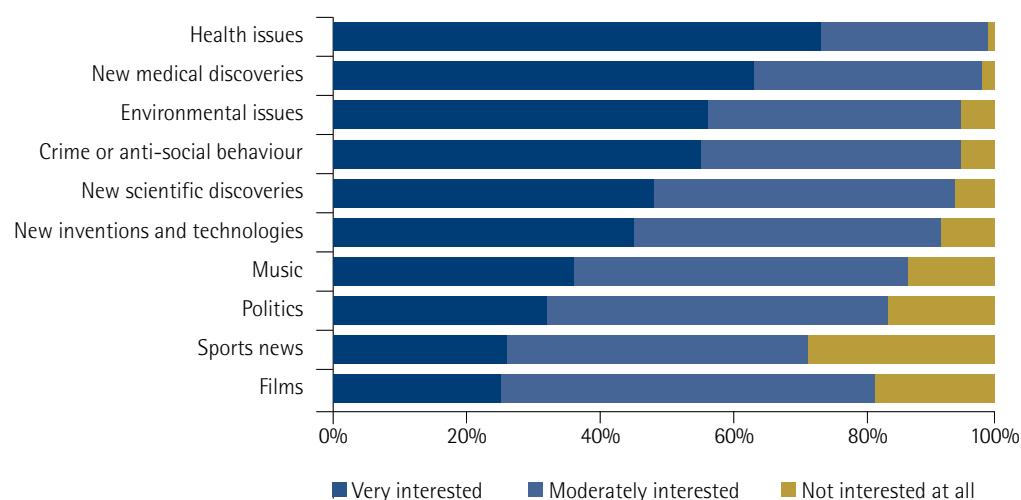
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# Knowledge and interest in science

## Key points

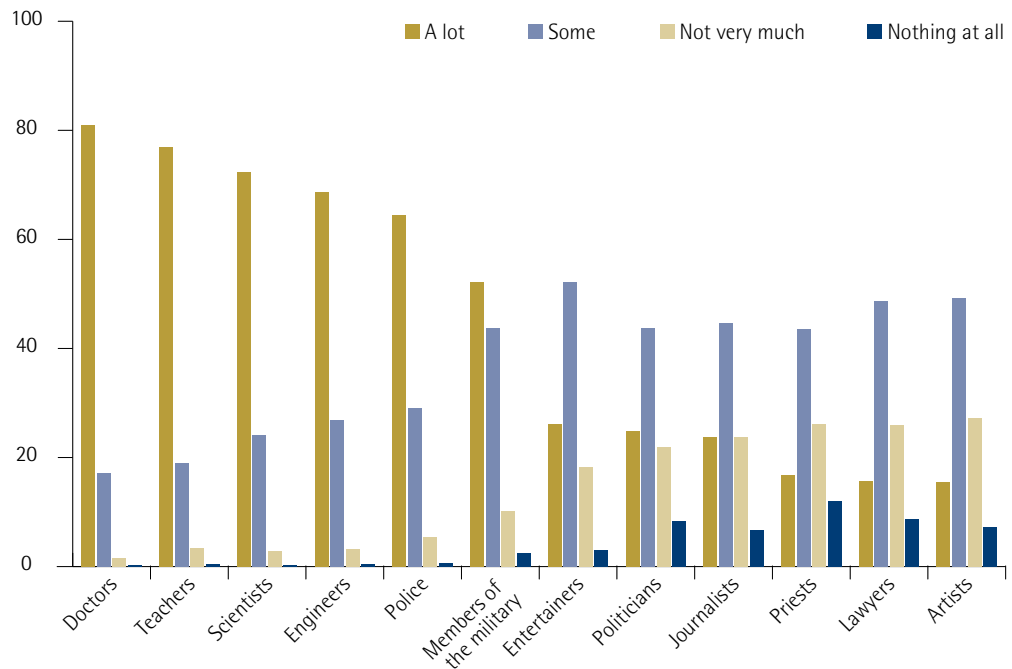
- The Australian public is more interested in science (in particular health issues, medical discoveries and environmental issues) than news about sport, films or politics.
- Despite this interest, a large number of people feel poorly informed about science.
- Australians also highly rate the contribution of scientists to society, valuing their contribution above that of nearly all other professions.

Australian people are fundamentally interested in the scientific world. Asked to report their level of interest in a range of topical issues, nearly all respondents to ANUpoll reported interest in health, medical discoveries, environmental issues, scientific discoveries and new inventions. These issues outranked music, politics, sports news and films. Though most Australians reported some interest in each of the categories of the survey, the lowest level of interest was reserved for sports news, with more than a quarter of respondents reporting no interest at all in the topic.



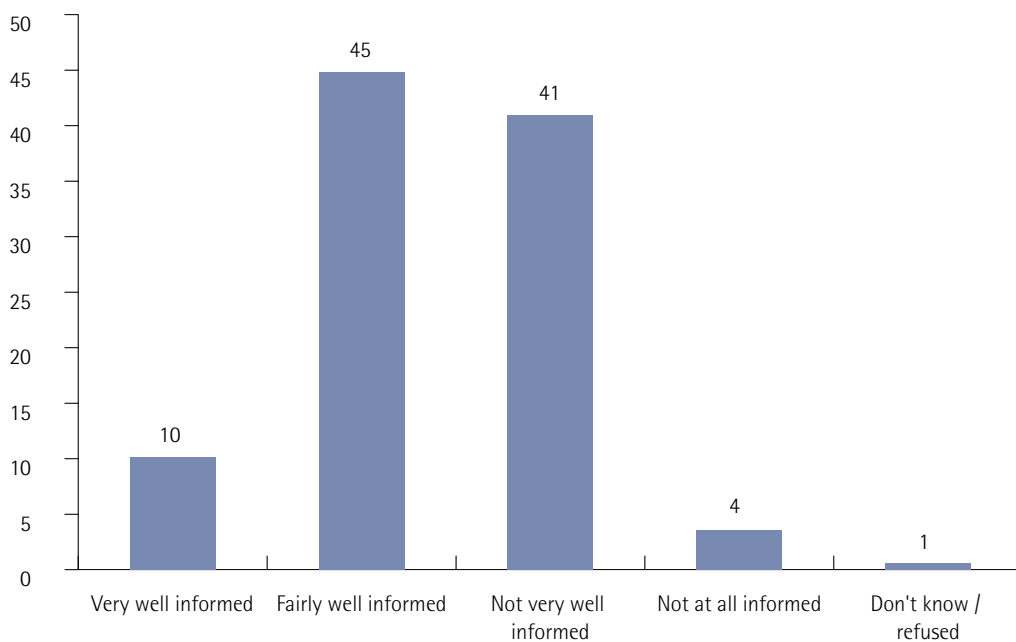
Similarly, when asked to consider the contribution made to society by various professions, Australians are overwhelmingly positive about the contributions made by scientists, doctors, engineers, teachers, police and the military. In contrast, respondents viewed priests, politicians, journalists, lawyers and artists as making a smaller contribution to society.

**Q** Thinking about some different professions, how much do you think the following contribute to the well being of our society?



However, despite this interest in science and respect for scientists, a significant minority of Australians – over four out of every 10 respondents – feel either not very well or not at all informed about science.

**Q:** How well informed do you feel about science?



## International comparisons

A 2005 European survey showed a similar spread of interest in science topics, with 87 per cent being interested in environmental pollution, 83 per cent being interested in new medical discoveries and 78 per cent being interested in new scientific discoveries. The only difference was that they were slightly less enthusiastic than the Australian respondents. Similarly, a 2008 UK survey found that 43 per cent of people felt not very well informed or not at all informed about science (compared with 44.5 per cent of Australians who felt this way).

Sources: *Europeans, Science and Technology* (Eurobarometer, available from [ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_224\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_224_report_en.pdf)); *Public Attitudes to Science 2008* (UK Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills, available from <http://www.dius.gov.uk/policies/science/science-and-society/public-engagement/public-attitudes-2008>)

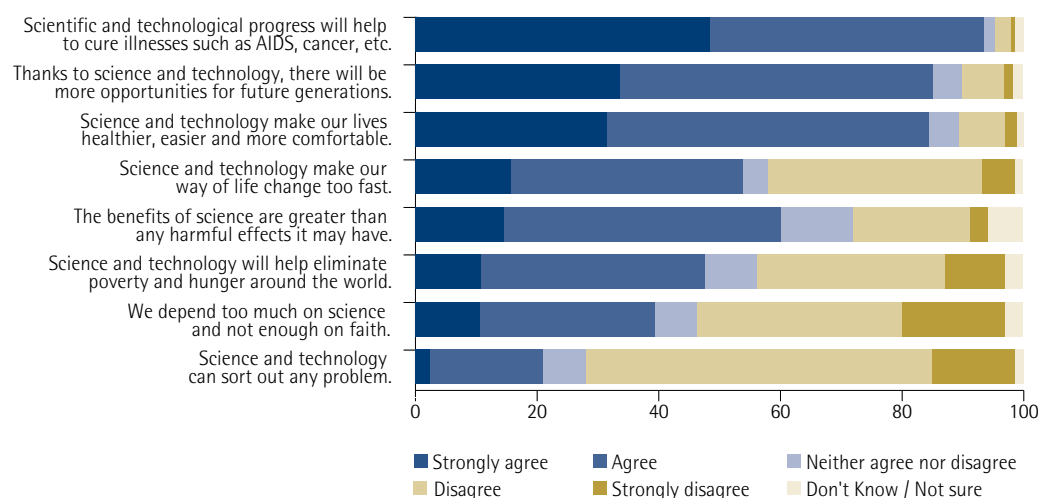


# Science and life

## Key points

- Australians are overwhelmingly positive about both the potential and the benefits of science, with over 85 per cent feeling that it has made life easier for most people.
- However, this confidence is tempered with a belief that science is not solving the problems of poverty and hunger around the world.

The Australian public is clearly very positive about the potential for science and technology to cure illness, make our lives more comfortable and provide opportunities for future generations. More than 85 per cent of the population feel that science has made life easier for most people, and nearly 65 per cent believe that the benefits of science are greater than any harmful effects. Australians are much more divided about how effective science and technology can be in eliminating poverty and hunger. They are also almost evenly split on the question of whether science and technology are changing our way of life too fast, and less than a quarter believe science and technology can sort out any problem.



## International comparisons

Europeans surveyed in 2005 reported a similar belief in the benefits of science as the Australians sampled here, although the Europeans saw the benefits of science as limited in some areas. In the European survey, 88 per cent reported that scientific and technological progress would help cure illnesses such as AIDS and cancer, while only 39 per cent felt that science and technology would help to eliminate poverty and hunger around the world.

Source: *Europeans, Science and Technology* (Eurobarometer, available from [ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_224\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_224_report_en.pdf)).

# Science and religion

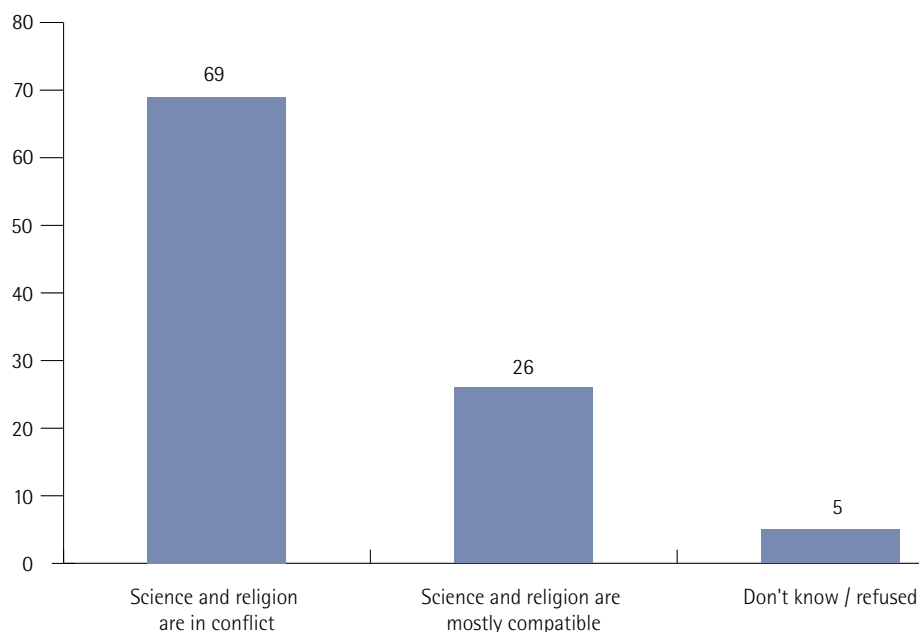
## Key points

- Australians are split on the association between religion and science. Three in 10 believe we depend too much on science and not enough on faith, while five in 10 reject this idea.
- Australians see more conflict between science and religion in broader society than people in the US. Just over two thirds of respondents see such conflict in Australia, compared with just over half of Americans.

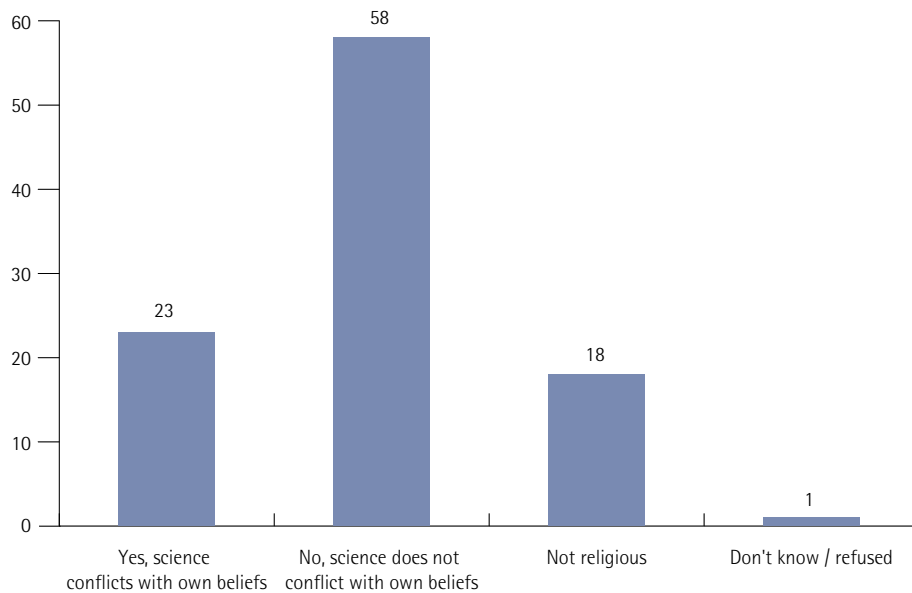
The Australian public are somewhat split in regard to their views on the relationship between science and religion. Three in 10 believe we depend too much on science and not enough on faith, while five respondents in 10 rejected this position. The remainder were either neutral, unsure or refused to answer the question.

When asked if they considered science and religion to be in conflict, two thirds of respondents felt science and religion to be in conflict, but less than a quarter felt that science conflicted with their personal religious beliefs. In this survey one third of Australians reported no religious faith.

**Q: Which of the following statements do you most agree with?**



**Q:** Does science sometimes conflict with your religious beliefs?



## International comparisons

A 2009 survey in the US reported a slightly different picture, with Americans seeing less conflict between science and religion in their society. In the US, 55 per cent of people thought science and religion were often in conflict, compared with 38 per cent considering science and religion to be mostly compatible. Reversing this, 36 per cent (higher than our 23 per cent) saw conflict between science and their own beliefs, though there were differences in some of the response options between the two surveys. US respondents, for example, did not have an option to indicate that they were not religious.

Source: 2009 General Public Science Survey. Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, (available from [people-press.org/report/528/](http://people-press.org/report/528/)).

# Science and climate change

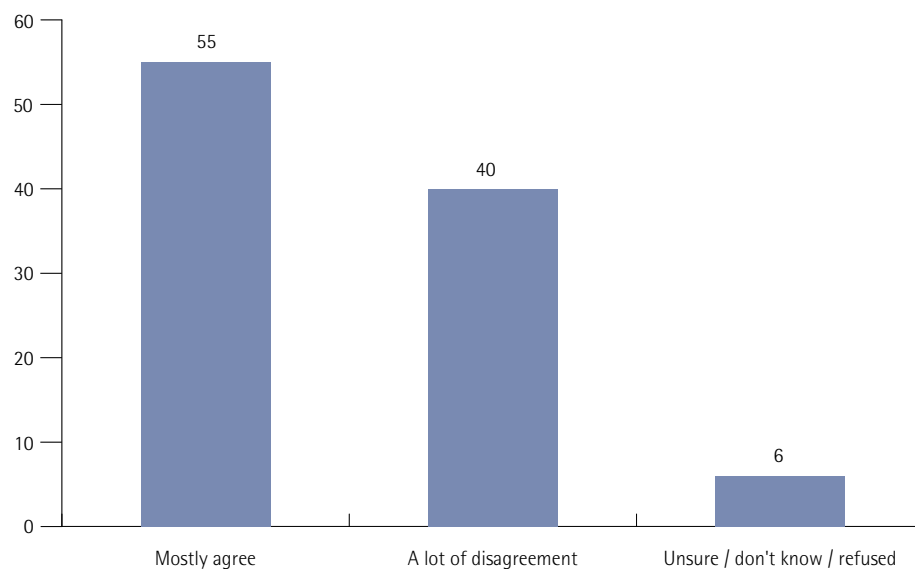
## Key point

- The Australian public remains divided and unsure about climate science. Four respondents in 10 think that most climate scientists disagree over whether the Earth has been warming. One third think most climate scientists disagree about the human causes of this warming.

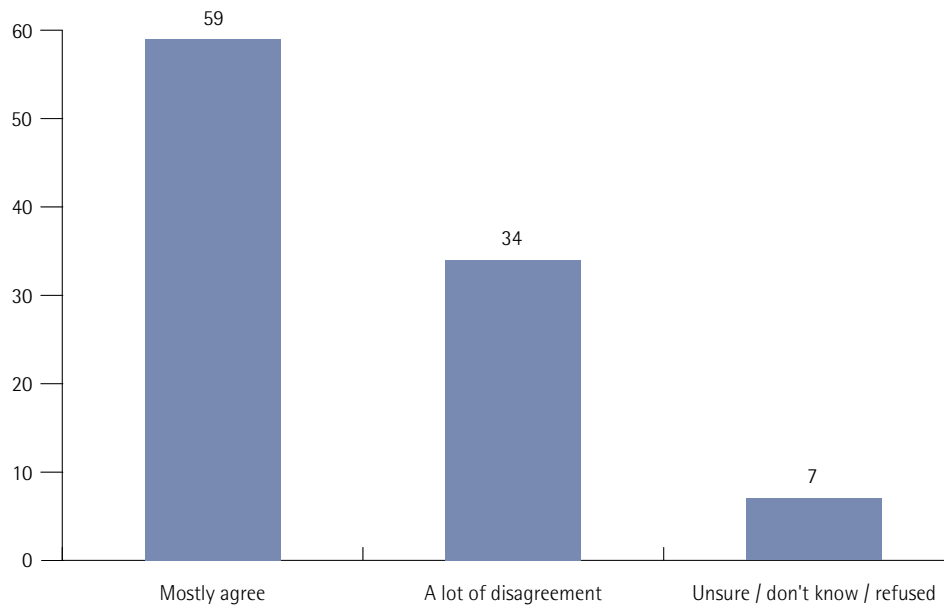
Australians continue to be confused about the level of consensus among climate scientists on the issue of climate change. Forty per cent of people think that most climate scientists disagree over whether the Earth has been warming in recent years, and just over a third think that climate scientists disagree as to whether human activities are a major cause of climate change.

The consensus opinion of climate scientists – reflected in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – is that the 'warming of the climate system is unequivocal' and that 'most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations.'

**Q:** Do you think most climate scientists agree or disagree that the Earth has been warming in recent years?



**Q: Do you think most climate scientists agree or disagree that human activities, such as burning coal and oil, are a major cause of global warming?**



## International comparisons

A 2007 survey conducted in the US revealed a fairly similar picture. On the first question, 'Do you think most climate scientists agree or disagree that the Earth has been warming in recent years?', 52 per cent of Americans saw agreement (54.5 per cent in our sample) and 39 per cent saw a lot of disagreement (39.9 per cent in our sample). Nine per cent were unsure. On the second question, 'Do you think most climate scientists agree or disagree that human activities are a major cause of global warming?', 47 per cent of Americans saw agreement (58.7 per cent in our sample), while 42 per cent saw a lot of disagreement (34.1 per cent in our sample). 11 per cent were unsure.

Sources: *Newsweek Poll* (conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International, Aug 1-2 2007, available from [www.pollingreport.com/enviro2.htm](http://www.pollingreport.com/enviro2.htm)); *IPCC Fourth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report* (available from [www.ipcc.ch/publications\\_and\\_data/publications\\_ipcc\\_fourth\\_assessment\\_report\\_synthesis\\_report.htm](http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/publications_ipcc_fourth_assessment_report_synthesis_report.htm))

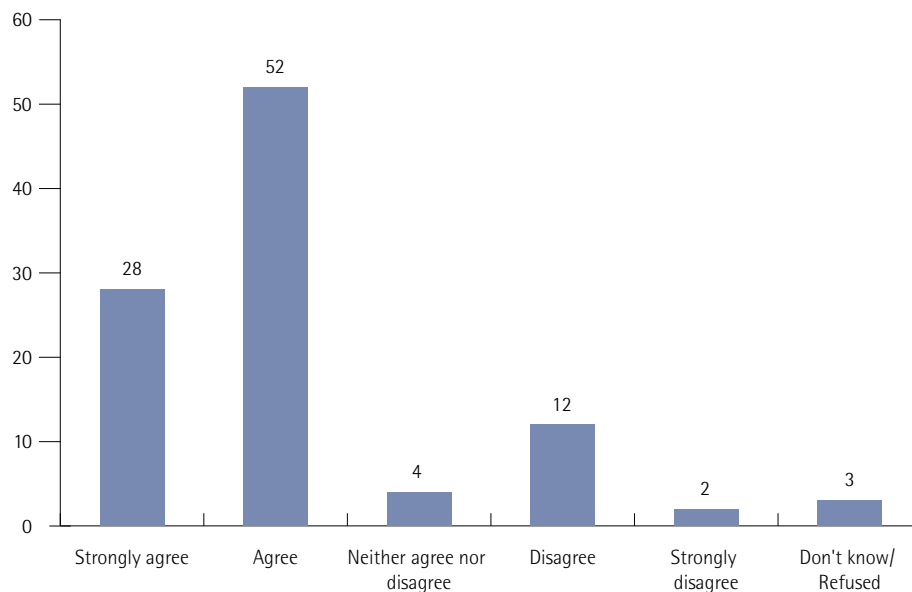
# Science and policy

## Key points

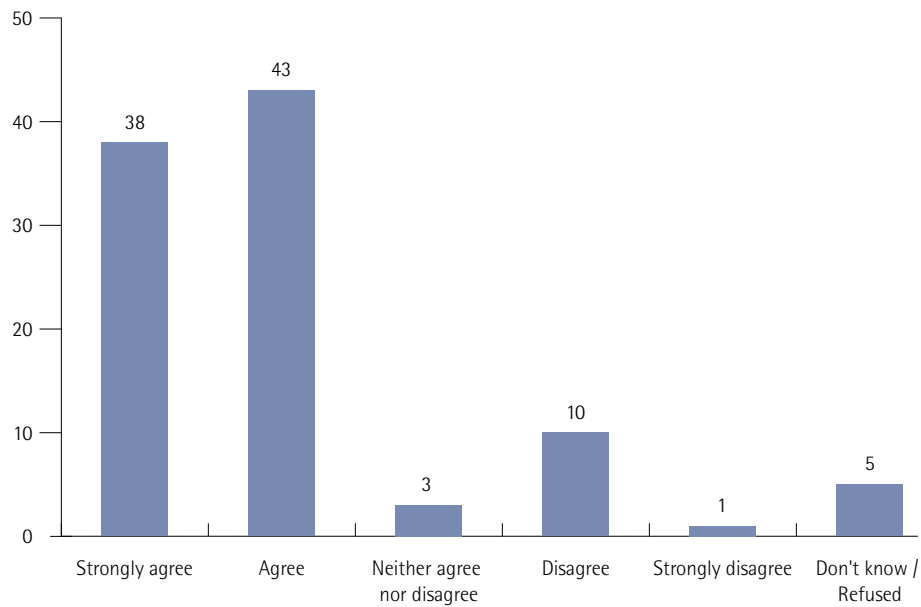
- Australians are proud of Australian science, with 60 per cent of respondents considering it above average or the best in the world.
- However, Australians are less pleased with government, feeling that politicians do not adequately consider scientific advice, or adequately regulate industry.

Australians overwhelmingly believe that politicians are not listening to scientists enough, and are too easily swayed by media reaction. Eight out of 10 people thought that politicians should rely more on the advice of scientists, and a similar number thought that politicians are too easily swayed by media reaction to scientific issues.

**Q:** Do you tend to agree or disagree that: Politicians should rely more on the advice of expert scientists?

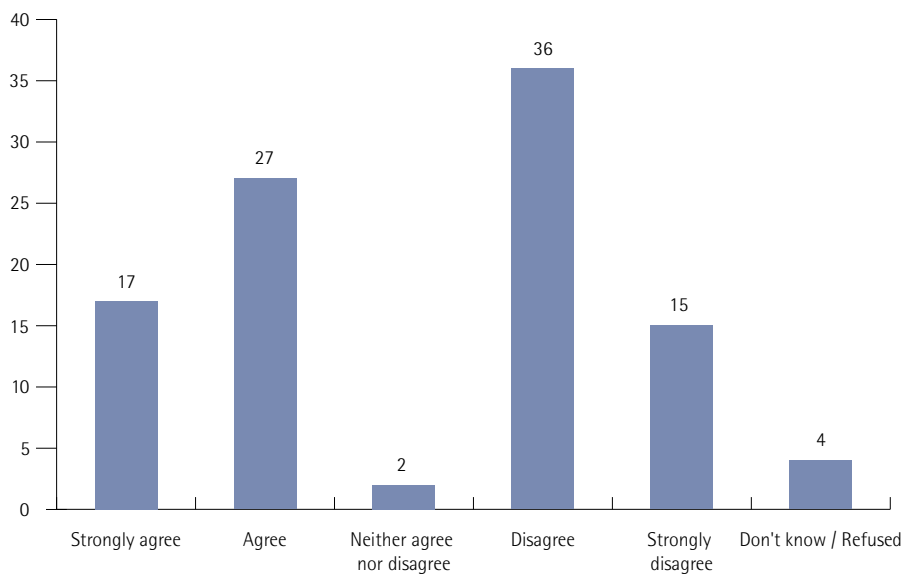


**Q: Do you tend to agree or disagree that: Politicians are too easily swayed by the media's reaction to scientific issues?**



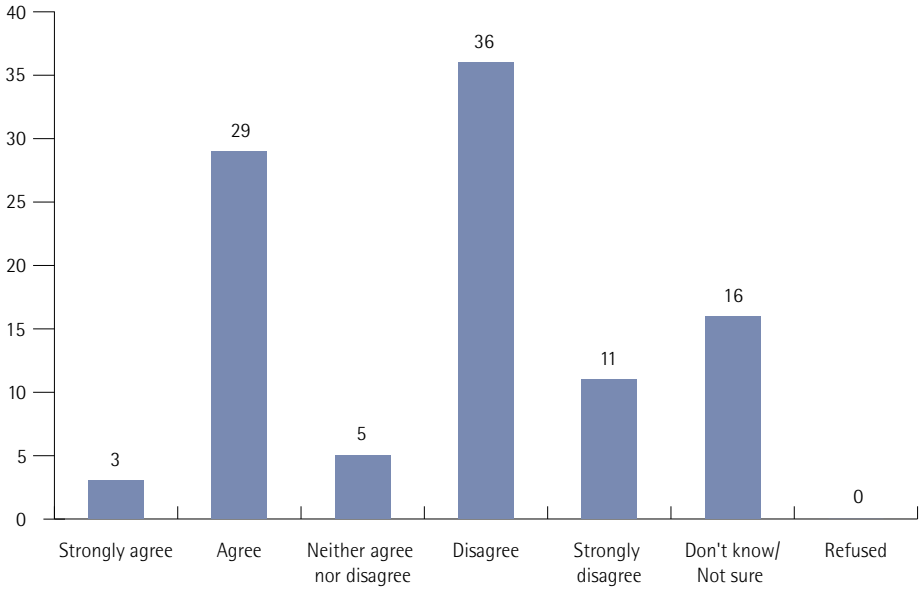
Just over half of the respondents thought that scientists employed by the government should be able to comment on government policies, and only slightly fewer (44 per cent) suggested they should not.

**Q: Do you tend to agree or disagree that: Scientists employed by the government should not comment on government policies?**

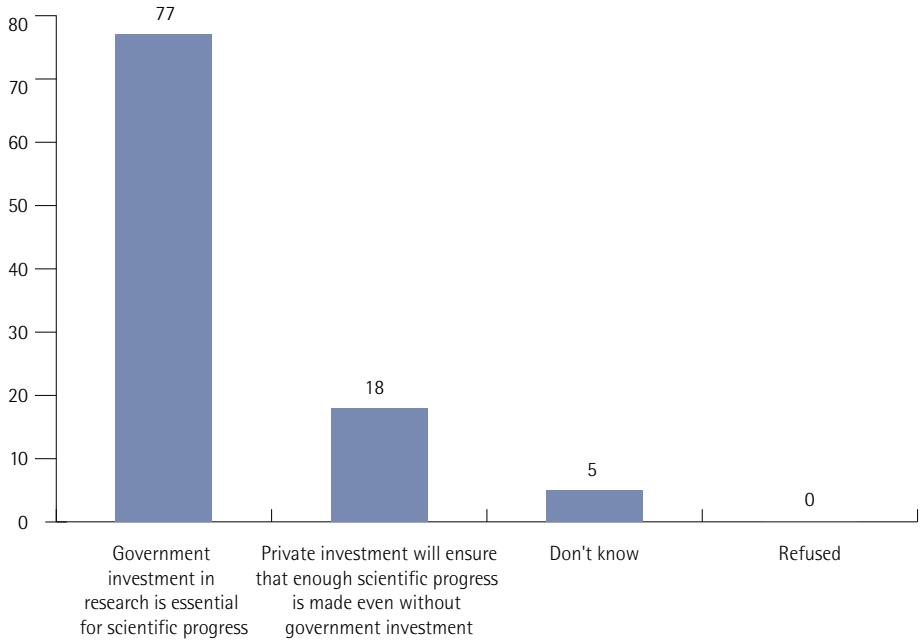


Nearly half of those surveyed did not agree that research conducted by industry is well regulated, with only a third believing it is. Just over 20 per cent were unsure or ambivalent about this issue, but the vast majority (77 per cent) believe that government investment is essential for scientific progress.

**Q: Do you tend to agree or disagree that: Research conducted by industry is well controlled and regulated?**



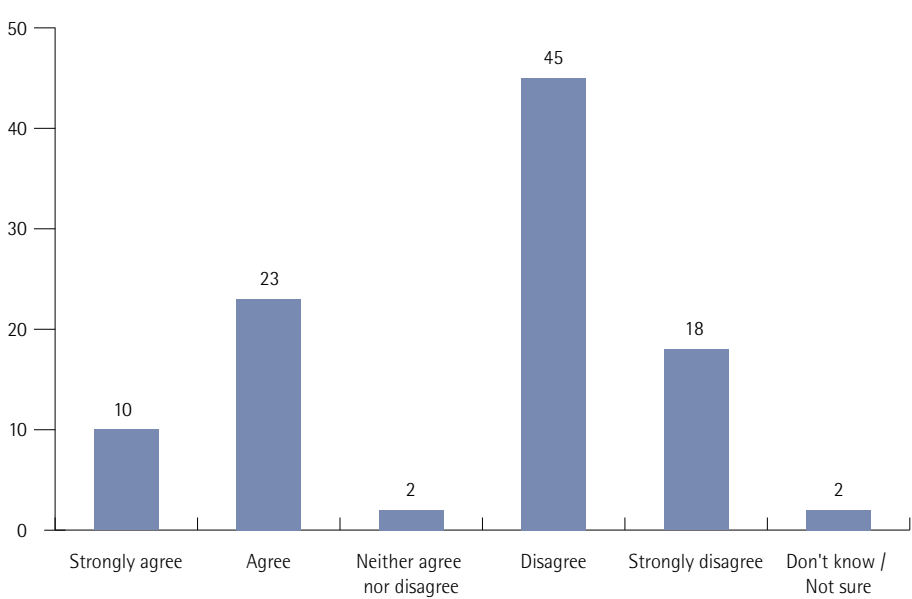
**Q: Which of the following statements comes closer to your view?**



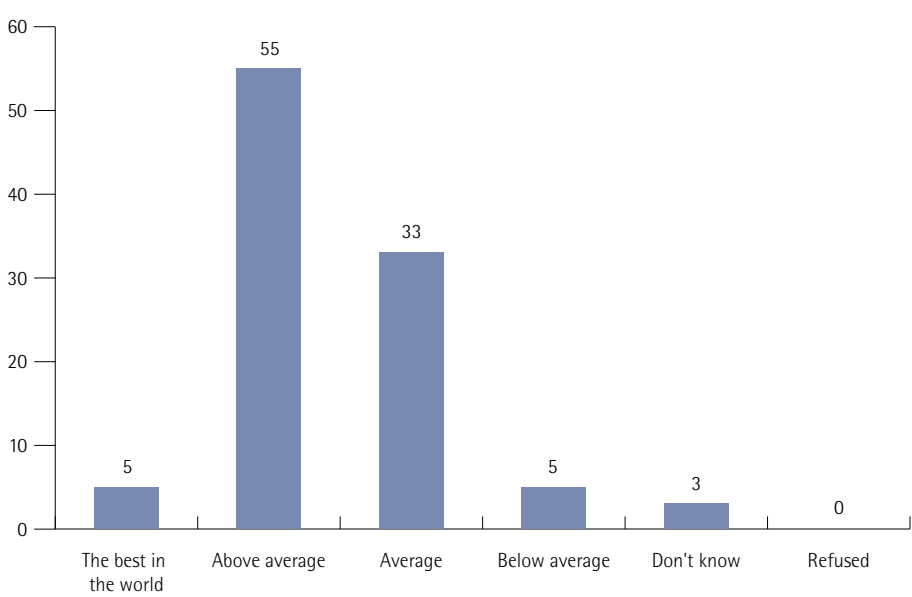


A significant proportion (over 60 per cent) of Australians think that science should be limited in what it is allowed to investigate, but a third disagree with this sentiment. In addition, people generally think Australia does well when comparing its scientific achievements with other industrialised countries. Sixty per cent of respondents considered Australia above average or the best in the world, and a third considered Australia as at least average. Very few (just under five per cent) considered Australia to be below average.

**Q: Do you tend to agree or disagree that: There should be no limit to what science is allowed to investigate?**



**Q: Comparing Australia to other industrialised countries in terms of its scientific achievements, do you think that Australia is...?**



## International comparisons

Australians are more likely to consider government investment in research essential for scientific progress than those in the US. In a 2009 survey, 60 per cent of Americans considered government investment essential (compared with 77 per cent in our Australian sample). Europeans largely agreed with Australians that politicians should rely more on the advice of expert scientists, with 73 per cent of respondents in a 2005 survey, throughout the EU, arguing that politicians should rely more on scientific advice.

Sources: *2009 General Public Science Survey* (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, available from [people-press.org/report/528/](http://people-press.org/report/528/)); *Europeans, Science and Technology* (Eurobarometer, available from [ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_224\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_224_report_en.pdf)).

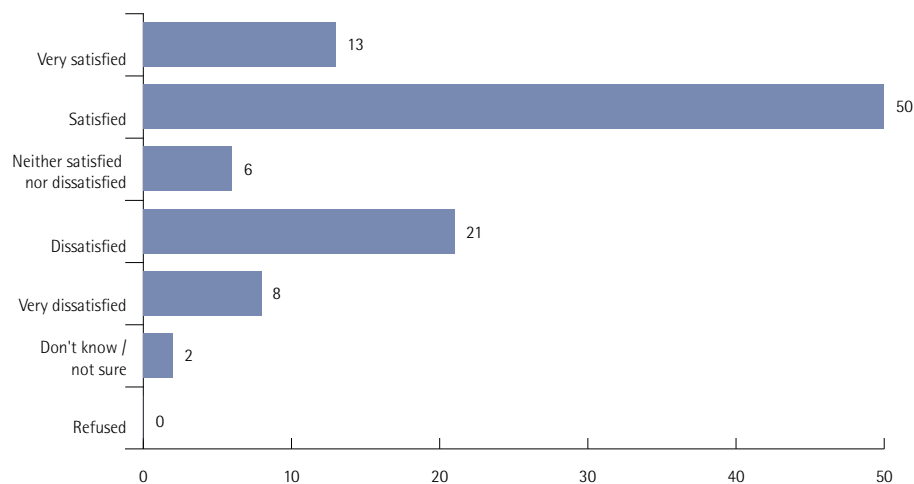
# Key trends: most important problems and the political mood

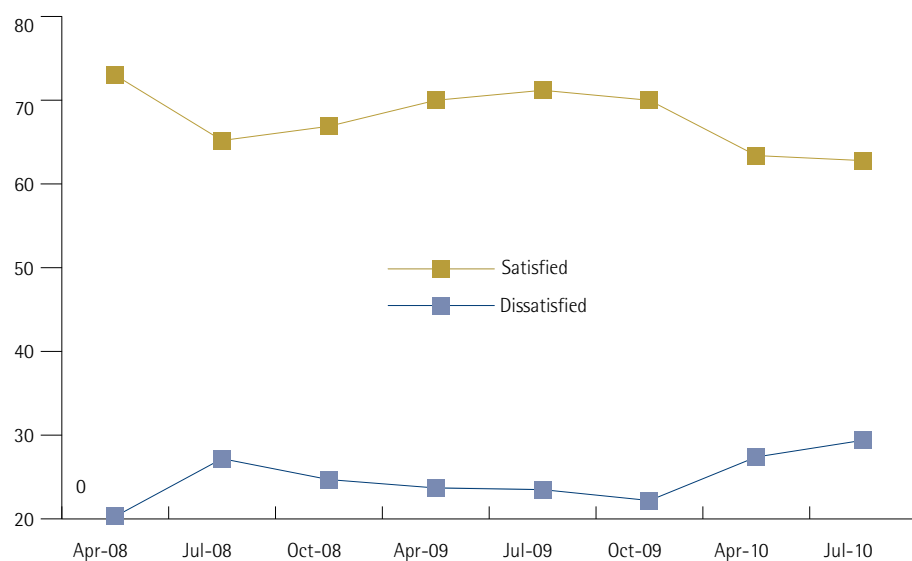
## Key points

- Though Australians remain largely positive about the direction in which the country is heading, this ANUpoll marks the lowest point in satisfaction seen since ANUpoll began, with approximately three respondents in 10 dissatisfied with the way the country is heading.
- A significant increase has been seen in the number of people viewing 'better government' as the key problem facing Australia.

Since ANUpoll began in early 2008, Australians have been consistently positive about the direction in which the country is heading. This remains the case: six in 10 remain satisfied or very satisfied. However, building on the shifts in mood evident in the previous ANUpoll, more Australians now think that the country is moving in the wrong direction – this ANUpoll marks the high point in dissatisfaction since the ANUpoll began. These levels of dissatisfaction are greater than those seen in mid-2008, during the acute economic pessimism of the Global Financial Crisis.

**Q: All things considered, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the country is heading?**





A significant jump can be seen in the number of people saying that 'better government' is the key problem facing Australia. Echoing nearly all previous ANUpolls, the two lead causes of concern remain the economy and the environment.

**Q: What do you think is the most important problem facing Australia today?**

| Rank | Issue                      | Per cent mentioned | April-July change |
|------|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1    | Economy/jobs               | 16.9%              | +2.8              |
| 2    | Environment/global warming | 15.3%              | +2.4              |
| 3    | Immigration                | 13.8%              | +0.6              |
| 4    | Better government          | 10.3%              | +5.8              |
| 5    | Health care                | 6.3%               | -6.5              |
|      | Other                      | 37.4%              | -4.2              |

## Questions

### Key trends: most important problems and the political mood

#### Q Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the country is heading?

|                                    | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|------------------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Very satisfied                     | 153       | 12.8     | 12.8                |
| Satisfied                          | 600       | 50.0     | 62.7                |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 72        | 6.0      | 68.8                |
| Dissatisfied                       | 253       | 21.1     | 89.8                |
| Very dissatisfied                  | 99        | 8.3      | 98.1                |
| Don't know/not sure                | 21        | 1.8      | 99.8                |
| Refused                            | 2         | .2       | 100.0               |
| Total                              | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

#### Q What do you think is the most important problem facing Australia today?

|   | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|---|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Economy/jobs  | 203       | 16.9     | 16.9                |
| Industrial relations                                      | 4         | .3       | 17.3                |
| Interest rates  | 6         | .5       | 17.8                |
| Housing affordability                                     | 19        | 1.6      | 19.3                |
| Health care   | 75        | 6.3      | 25.6                |
| Education   | 31        | 2.6      | 28.2                |
| Defence/national security                                 | 3         | .3       | 28.4                |
| Terrorism   | 5         | .4       | 28.8                |
| Iraq war  | 2         | .2       | 29.0                |
| Afghanistan war   | 5         | .4       | 29.4                |
| Environment/global warming                                | 184       | 15.3     | 44.8                |
| Water management  | 35        | 2.9      | 47.7                |
| Immigration   | 165       | 13.8     | 61.4                |
| Indigenous affairs  | 8         | .7       | 62.1                |
| Taxation  | 28        | 2.3      | 64.4                |
| Trade balance/loss of jobs to overseas                    | 8         | .7       | 65.1                |
| Rural/farming issues                                      | 5         | .4       | 65.5                |
| Social services (including aged care, the disabled, etc.) | 6         | .5       | 66.0                |
| Law and order/crime/justice system                        | 30        | 2.5      | 68.5                |
| Poverty/social exclusion/inequality                       | 18        | 1.5      | 70.0                |
| Infrastructure/planning/innovation                        | 8         | .7       | 70.7                |
| Alcohol and drug use                                      | 7         | .6       | 71.3                |
| Better government   | 123       | 10.3     | 81.5                |
| Young people's behaviour/attitudes                        | 22        | 1.8      | 83.3                |
| Foreign influence/Australia's position in world           | 5         | .4       | 83.8                |
| Values/morals/respect for others                          | 33        | 2.8      | 86.5                |

|                                     |       |       |       |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Family/community/societal breakdown | 12    | 1.0   | 87.5  |
| Increasing/ageing population        | 31    | 2.6   | 90.1  |
| Other                               | 36    | 3.0   | 93.1  |
| None/no other                       | 12    | 1.0   | 94.1  |
| Don't know/can't say                | 68    | 5.7   | 99.8  |
| Refused                             | 3     | .3    | 100.0 |
| Total                               | 1,200 | 100.0 |       |

**Q And what do you think is the second most important problem facing Australia today?**

|   | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|---|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| No answer given   | 83        | 6.9      | 6.9                 |
| Economy/jobs  | 148       | 12.3     | 19.3                |
| Industrial relations                                      | 17        | 1.4      | 20.7                |
| Interest rates  | 10        | .8       | 21.5                |
| Housing affordability                                     | 30        | 2.5      | 24.0                |
| Health care   | 95        | 7.9      | 31.9                |
| Education   | 58        | 4.8      | 36.8                |
| Defence/national security                                 | 7         | .6       | 37.3                |
| Terrorism   | 3         | .3       | 37.6                |
| Iraq war  | 4         | .3       | 37.9                |
| Afghanistan war   | 6         | .5       | 38.4                |
| Environment/global warming                                | 96        | 8.0      | 46.4                |
| Water management  | 37        | 3.1      | 49.5                |
| Immigration   | 125       | 10.4     | 59.9                |
| Indigenous affairs  | 11        | .9       | 60.8                |
| Taxation  | 29        | 2.4      | 63.2                |
| Trade balance/loss of jobs to overseas                    | 4         | .3       | 63.6                |
| Rural/farming issues                                      | 1         | .1       | 63.7                |
| Social services (including aged care, the disabled, etc.) | 12        | 1.0      | 64.7                |
| Law and order/crime/justice system                        | 20        | 1.7      | 66.3                |
| Poverty/social exclusion/inequality                       | 26        | 2.2      | 68.5                |
| Infrastructure/planning/innovation                        | 14        | 1.2      | 69.7                |
| Alcohol and drug use                                      | 6         | .5       | 70.2                |
| Better government   | 51        | 4.3      | 74.4                |
| Young people's behaviour/attitudes                        | 14        | 1.2      | 75.6                |
| Foreign influence/Australia's position in world           | 7         | .6       | 76.2                |
| Values/morals/respect for others                          | 24        | 2.0      | 78.2                |
| Family/community/societal breakdown                       | 5         | .4       | 78.6                |
| Increasing/ageing population                              | 44        | 3.7      | 82.3                |
| Other   | 63        | 5.3      | 87.5                |
| None/no other   | 24        | 2.0      | 89.5                |
| Don't know/can't say                                      | 126       | 10.5     | 100.0               |
| Total   | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

## Knowledge and interest in science

### Q Level of interest: Sports news

|                       | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Very interested       | 308       | 25.7     | 25.7                |
| Moderately interested | 537       | 44.8     | 70.4                |
| Not at all interested | 353       | 29.4     | 99.8                |
| Don't know            | 2         | .2       | 100.0               |
| Total                 | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

### Q Level of interest: Politics

|                       | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Very interested       | 381       | 31.8     | 31.8                |
| Moderately interested | 607       | 50.6     | 82.3                |
| Not at all interested | 209       | 17.4     | 99.8                |
| Don't know            | 2         | .2       | 99.9                |
| Refused               | 1         | .1       | 100.0               |
| Total                 | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

### Q Level of interest: New medical discoveries

|                       | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Very interested       | 753       | 62.7     | 62.7                |
| Moderately interested | 407       | 33.9     | 96.7                |
| Not at all interested | 39        | 3.3      | 99.9                |
| Don't know            | 1         | .1       | 100.0               |
| Total                 | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

### Q Level of interest: Environmental issues

|                       | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Very interested       | 677       | 56.4     | 56.4                |
| Moderately interested | 455       | 37.9     | 94.3                |
| Not at all interested | 65        | 5.4      | 99.8                |
| Don't know            | 3         | .3       | 100.0               |
| Total                 | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

### Q Level of interest: New inventions and technologies

|                       | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Very interested       | 542       | 45.2     | 45.2                |
| Moderately interested | 557       | 46.4     | 91.6                |
| Not at all interested | 98        | 8.2      | 99.8                |
| Don't know            | 3         | .3       | 100.0               |
| Total                 | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

#### Q Level of interest: New scientific discoveries

|                       | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Very interested       | 578       | 48.2     | 48.2                |
| Moderately interested | 534       | 44.5     | 92.7                |
| Not at all interested | 85        | 7.1      | 99.8                |
| Don't know            | 3         | .3       | 100.0               |
| Total                 | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

#### Q Level of interest: Health issues

|                       | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Very interested       | 880       | 73.3     | 73.3                |
| Moderately interested | 303       | 25.3     | 98.6                |
| Not at all interested | 16        | 1.3      | 99.9                |
| Don't know            | 1         | .1       | 100.0               |
| Total                 | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

#### Q Level of interest: Crime or anti-social behaviour

|                       | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Very interested       | 663       | 55.3     | 55.3                |
| Moderately interested | 464       | 38.7     | 93.9                |
| Not at all interested | 66        | 5.5      | 99.4                |
| Don't know            | 7         | .6       | 100.0               |
| Total                 | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

#### Q Level of interest: Music

|                       | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Very interested       | 434       | 36.2     | 36.2                |
| Moderately interested | 605       | 50.4     | 86.6                |
| Not at all interested | 158       | 13.2     | 99.8                |
| Don't know            | 2         | .2       | 99.9                |
| Refused               | 1         | .1       | 100.0               |
| Total                 | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

#### Q Level of interest: Films

|                       | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Very interested       | 299       | 24.9     | 24.9                |
| Moderately interested | 673       | 56.1     | 81.0                |
| Not at all interested | 226       | 18.8     | 99.8                |
| Don't know            | 1         | .1       | 99.9                |
| Refused               | 1         | .1       | 100.0               |
| Total                 | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |



**Q How well informed do you feel about science?**

|                        | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Very well informed     | 121       | 10.1     | 10.1                |
| Fairly well informed   | 538       | 44.8     | 54.9                |
| Not very well informed | 491       | 40.9     | 95.8                |
| Not at all informed    | 43        | 3.6      | 99.4                |
| Don't know             | 6         | .5       | 99.9                |
| Refused                | 1         | .1       | 100.0               |
| Total                  | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Do scientists contribute a lot, some, not very much, or nothing at all to the well-being of our society?**

|                  | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Contribute a lot | 868       | 72.3     | 72.3                |
| Some             | 290       | 24.2     | 96.5                |
| Not very much    | 34        | 2.8      | 99.3                |
| Nothing at all   | 3         | .3       | 99.6                |
| Don't know       | 5         | .4       | 100.0               |
| Total            | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Do doctors contribute a lot, some, not very much, or nothing at all to the well-being of our society?**

|                  | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Contribute a lot | 972       | 81.0     | 81.0                |
| Some             | 206       | 17.2     | 98.2                |
| Not very much    | 19        | 1.6      | 99.8                |
| Nothing at all   | 2         | .2       | 99.9                |
| Don't know       | 1         | .1       | 100.0               |
| Total            | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Do engineers contribute a lot, some, not very much, or nothing at all to the well-being of our society?**

|                  | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Contribute a lot | 823       | 68.6     | 68.6                |
| Some             | 323       | 26.9     | 95.5                |
| Not very much    | 38        | 3.2      | 98.7                |
| Nothing at all   | 6         | .5       | 99.2                |
| Don't know       | 10        | .8       | 100.0               |
| Total            | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Do teachers contribute a lot, some, not very much, or nothing at all to the well-being of our society?**

|                  | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Contribute a lot | 923       | 76.9     | 76.9                |
| Some             | 228       | 19.0     | 95.9                |
| Not very much    | 41        | 3.4      | 99.3                |
| Nothing at all   | 5         | .4       | 99.8                |
| Don't know       | 3         | .3       | 100.0               |
| Total            | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Do priests or ministers of religion contribute a lot, some, not very much, or nothing at all to the well-being of our society?**

|                  | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Contribute a lot | 202       | 16.8     | 16.8                |
| Some             | 522       | 43.5     | 60.3                |
| Not very much    | 313       | 26.1     | 86.4                |
| Nothing at all   | 144       | 12.0     | 98.4                |
| Don't know       | 13        | 1.1      | 99.5                |
| Refused          | 6         | .5       | 100.0               |
| Total            | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Do police contribute a lot, some, not very much, or nothing at all to the well-being of our society?**

|                  | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Contribute a lot | 773       | 64.4     | 64.4                |
| Some             | 349       | 29.1     | 93.5                |
| Not very much    | 66        | 5.5      | 99.0                |
| Nothing at all   | 8         | .7       | 99.7                |
| Don't know       | 2         | .2       | 99.8                |
| Refused          | 2         | .2       | 100.0               |
| Total            | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Do politicians contribute a lot, some, not very much, or nothing at all to the well-being of our society?**

|                  | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Contribute a lot | 297       | 24.8     | 24.8                |
| Some             | 525       | 43.8     | 68.5                |
| Not very much    | 264       | 22.0     | 90.5                |
| Nothing at all   | 101       | 8.4      | 98.9                |
| Don't know       | 10        | .8       | 99.8                |
| Refused          | 3         | .3       | 100.0               |
| Total            | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Do journalists contribute a lot, some, not very much, or nothing at all to the well-being of our society?**

|                  | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Contribute a lot | 285       | 23.8     | 23.8                |
| Some             | 535       | 44.6     | 68.3                |
| Not very much    | 285       | 23.8     | 92.1                |
| Nothing at all   | 80        | 6.7      | 98.8                |
| Don't know       | 13        | 1.1      | 99.8                |
| Refused          | 2         | .2       | 100.0               |
| Total            | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Do artists contribute a lot, some, not very much, or nothing at all to the well-being of our society?**

|                  | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Contribute a lot | 186       | 15.5     | 15.5                |
| Some             | 591       | 49.3     | 64.8                |
| Not very much    | 326       | 27.2     | 91.9                |
| Nothing at all   | 86        | 7.2      | 99.1                |
| Don't know       | 11        | .9       | 100.0               |
| Total            | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Do lawyers contribute a lot, some, not very much, or nothing at all to the well-being of our society?**

|                  | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Contribute a lot | 187       | 15.6     | 15.6                |
| Some             | 584       | 48.7     | 64.3                |
| Not very much    | 312       | 26.0     | 90.3                |
| Nothing at all   | 104       | 8.7      | 98.9                |
| Don't know       | 12        | 1.0      | 99.9                |
| Refused          | 1         | .1       | 100.0               |
| Total            | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Do entertainers contribute a lot, some, not very much, or nothing at all to the well-being of our society?**

|                  | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Contribute a lot | 314       | 26.2     | 26.2                |
| Some             | 625       | 52.1     | 78.3                |
| Not very much    | 219       | 18.3     | 96.5                |
| Nothing at all   | 36        | 3.0      | 99.5                |
| Don't know       | 6         | .5       | 100.0               |
| Total            | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Do members of the military contribute a lot, some, not very much, or nothing at all to the well-being of our society?**

|                  | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Contribute a lot | 626       | 52.2     | 52.2                |
| Some             | 416       | 34.7     | 86.8                |
| Not very much    | 121       | 10.1     | 96.9                |
| Nothing at all   | 29        | 2.4      | 99.3                |
| Don't know       | 7         | .6       | 99.9                |
| Refused          | 1         | .1       | 100.0               |
| Total            | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

## Science and life

**Q Overall, would you say science has made life easier or more difficult for most people?**

|                             | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|-----------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Easier                      | 1034      | 86.2     | 86.2                |
| More difficult              | 110       | 9.2      | 95.3                |
| (Not had much of an effect) | 14        | 1.2      | 96.5                |
| Don't know                  | 42        | 3.5      | 100.0               |
| Total                       | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Agree or disagree: Scientific and technological progress will help to cure illnesses such as AIDS, cancer, etc?**

|                            | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Strongly agree             | 581       | 48.4     | 48.4                |
| Agree                      | 539       | 44.9     | 93.3                |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 22        | 1.8      | 95.2                |
| Disagree                   | 32        | 2.7      | 97.8                |
| Strongly disagree          | 9         | .8       | 98.6                |
| Don't know/not sure        | 16        | 1.3      | 99.9                |
| Refused                    | 1         | .1       | 100.0               |
| Total                      | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Agree or disagree: Science and technology make our lives healthier, easier and more comfortable?**

|                            | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Strongly agree             | 378       | 31.5     | 31.5                |
| Agree                      | 634       | 52.8     | 84.3                |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 61        | 5.1      | 89.4                |
| Disagree                   | 89        | 7.4      | 96.8                |
| Strongly disagree          | 24        | 2.0      | 98.8                |
| Don't know/not sure        | 14        | 1.2      | 100.0               |
| Total                      | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Agree or disagree: Thanks to science and technology, there will be more opportunities for future generations?**

|                            | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Strongly agree             | 403       | 33.6     | 33.6                |
| Agree                      | 618       | 51.5     | 85.1                |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 56        | 4.7      | 89.8                |
| Disagree                   | 84        | 7.0      | 96.8                |
| Strongly disagree          | 17        | 1.4      | 98.2                |
| Don't know/not sure        | 20        | 1.7      | 99.8                |
| Refused                    | 2         | .2       | 100.0               |
| Total                      | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Agree or disagree: The benefits of science are greater than any harmful effects it may have?**

|                            | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Strongly agree             | 175       | 14.6     | 14.6                |
| Agree                      | 546       | 45.5     | 60.1                |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 141       | 11.8     | 71.8                |
| Disagree                   | 232       | 19.3     | 91.2                |
| Strongly disagree          | 34        | 2.8      | 94.0                |
| Don't know/not sure        | 70        | 5.8      | 99.8                |
| Refused                    | 2         | .2       | 100.0               |
| Total                      | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Agree or disagree: Science and technology will help eliminate poverty and hunger around the world?**

|                            | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Strongly agree             | 129       | 10.8     | 10.8                |
| Agree                      | 442       | 36.8     | 47.6                |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 102       | 8.5      | 56.1                |
| Disagree                   | 371       | 30.9     | 87.0                |
| Strongly disagree          | 118       | 9.8      | 96.8                |
| Don't know/not sure        | 36        | 3.0      | 99.8                |
| Refused                    | 2         | .2       | 100.0               |
| Total                      | 1,200     | 100      |                     |

**Q Agree or disagree: Science and technology can sort out any problem?**

|                            | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Strongly agree             | 29        | 2.4      | 2.4                 |
| Agree                      | 221       | 18.4     | 20.8                |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 86        | 7.2      | 28.0                |
| Disagree                   | 682       | 56.8     | 84.8                |
| Strongly disagree          | 164       | 13.7     | 98.5                |
| Don't know/not sure        | 18        | 1.5      | 100.0               |
| Total                      | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

| Q Agree or disagree: Science and technology make our way of life change too fast? |           |          |                     |
|---|-----------|----------|---------------------|
|   | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
| Strongly agree  | 189       | 15.8     | 15.8                |
| Agree   | 456       | 38.0     | 53.8                |
| Neither agree nor disagree  | 51        | 4.3      | 58.0                |
| Disagree  | 422       | 35.2     | 93.2                |
| Strongly disagree   | 65        | 5.4      | 98.6                |
| Don't know/not sure   | 15        | 1.3      | 99.8                |
| Refused   | 2         | .2       | 100.0               |
| Total   | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

### Science and religion

| Q Agree or disagree: We depend too much on science and not enough on faith? |           |          |                     |
|---|-----------|----------|---------------------|
|   | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
| Strongly agree  | 127       | 10.6     | 10.6                |
| Agree   | 344       | 28.7     | 39.3                |
| Neither agree nor disagree  | 83        | 6.9      | 46.2                |
| Disagree  | 406       | 33.8     | 80.0                |
| Strongly disagree   | 203       | 16.9     | 96.9                |
| Don't know / not sure   | 34        | 2.8      | 99.8                |
| Refused   | 3         | .3       | 100.0               |
| Total   | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

| Q Which of the following statements do you most agree with? |           |          |                     |
|---|-----------|----------|---------------------|
|   | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
| Science and religion are often in conflict                  | 822       | 68.5     | 68.5                |
| Science and religion are mostly compatible                  | 315       | 26.3     | 94.8                |
| Don't know  | 54        | 4.5      | 99.3                |
| Refused   | 9         | .8       | 100.0               |
| Total   | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

| Q Does science sometimes conflict with your religious beliefs? |           |          |                     |
|--|-----------|----------|---------------------|
|  | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
| Yes, science conflicts with own beliefs                        | 274       | 22.8     | 22.8                |
| No, science does not conflict with own beliefs                 | 695       | 57.9     | 80.8                |
| (Not religious)  | 216       | 18.0     | 98.8                |
| Don't know   | 12        | 1.0      | 99.8                |
| Refused  | 3         | .3       | 100.0               |
| Total  | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

## Science and climate change

**Q Do you think most climate scientists agree or disagree that the earth has been warming in recent years?**

|                      | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Mostly agree         | 654       | 54.5     | 54.5                |
| Alot of disagreement | 479       | 39.9     | 94.4                |
| Unsure/don't know    | 66        | 5.5      | 99.9                |
| Refused              | 1         | .1       | 100.0               |
| Total                | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Do you think most climate scientists agree or disagree that human activities, such as burning coal and oil, are a major cause of global warming?**

|                       | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Mostly agree          | 704       | 58.7     | 58.7                |
| A lot of disagreement | 409       | 34.1     | 92.8                |
| Unsure/don't know     | 86        | 7.2      | 99.9                |
| Refused               | 1         | .1       | 100.0               |
| Total                 | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

## Science and policy

**Q Agree or disagree: Politicians should rely more on the advice of expert scientists?**

|                            | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Strongly agree             | 330       | 27.5     | 27.5                |
| Agree                      | 626       | 52.2     | 79.7                |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 50        | 4.2      | 83.8                |
| Disagree                   | 138       | 11.5     | 95.3                |
| Strongly disagree          | 23        | 1.9      | 97.3                |
| Don't know/not sure        | 27        | 2.3      | 99.5                |
| Refused                    | 6         | .5       | 100.0               |
| Total                      | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Agree or disagree: Politicians are too easily swayed by the media's reaction to scientific issues?**

|                            | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Strongly agree             | 458       | 38.2     | 38.2                |
| Agree                      | 514       | 42.8     | 81.0                |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 32        | 2.7      | 83.7                |
| Disagree                   | 122       | 10.2     | 93.8                |
| Strongly disagree          | 15        | 1.3      | 95.1                |
| Don't know/not sure        | 59        | 4.9      | 100.0               |
| Total                      | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Agree or disagree: Scientists employed by the government should not comment on government policies?**

|                            | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Strongly agree             | 199       | 16.6     | 16.6                |
| Agree                      | 318       | 26.5     | 43.1                |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 20        | 1.7      | 44.8                |
| Disagree                   | 434       | 36.2     | 80.9                |
| Strongly disagree          | 180       | 15.0     | 95.9                |
| Don't know/not sure        | 48        | 4.0      | 99.9                |
| Refused                    | 1         | .1       | 100.0               |
| Total                      | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Agree or disagree: Research conducted by industry is well controlled and regulated?**

|                            | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Strongly agree             | 33        | 2.8      | 2.8                 |
| Agree                      | 350       | 29.2     | 31.9                |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 60        | 5.0      | 36.9                |
| Disagree                   | 437       | 36.4     | 73.3                |
| Strongly disagree          | 129       | 10.8     | 84.1                |
| Don't know/not sure        | 188       | 15.7     | 99.8                |
| Refused                    | 3         | .3       | 100.0               |
| Total                      | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Agree or disagree: There should be no limit to what science is allowed to investigate?**

|                            | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Strongly agree             | 116       | 9.7      | 9.7                 |
| Agree                      | 274       | 22.8     | 32.5                |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 23        | 1.9      | 34.4                |
| Disagree                   | 543       | 45.3     | 79.7                |
| Strongly disagree          | 221       | 18.4     | 98.1                |
| Don't know/not sure        | 23        | 1.9      | 100.0               |
| Total                      | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

**Q Which of the following statements comes closer to your view?**

|   | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|---|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Government investment in research is essential for scientific progress                                    | 924       | 77.0     | 77.0                |
| Private investment will ensure that enough scientific progress is made even without government investment | 211       | 17.6     | 94.6                |
| Don't know  | 63        | 5.3      | 99.8                |
| Refused   | 2         | .2       | 100.0               |
| Total   | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |



**Q Comparing Australia to other industrialised countries in terms of its scientific achievements, do you think that Australia is...?**

|                       | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative per cent |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| The best in the world | 60        | 5.0      | 5.0                 |
| Above average         | 654       | 54.5     | 59.5                |
| Average               | 394       | 32.8     | 92.3                |
| Below average         | 59        | 4.9      | 97.3                |
| Don't know            | 31        | 2.6      | 99.8                |
| Refused               | 2         | .2       | 100.0               |
| Total                 | 1,200     | 100.0    |                     |

