

A photograph capturing a vibrant Chinese New Year celebration. The scene is filled with a dense shower of red and gold confetti falling from above. In the foreground, two young children are looking towards the camera with joyful expressions. The background shows a crowd of people and a building facade with a sign that includes the word 'Hotel'. The overall atmosphere is festive and celebratory.

LOWY
INSTITUTE
POLL

2021 Being Chinese in Australia: Public opinion in Chinese communities

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- produce distinctive research and fresh policy options for Australia's international policy and to contribute to the wider international debate
- promote discussion of Australia's role in the world by providing an accessible and high-quality forum for discussion of Australian international relations through debates, seminars, lectures, dialogues and conferences.

This is the second survey from the Lowy Institute's Multiculturalism, Identity and Influence Project, funded by the Australian Department of Home Affairs. The views, information or advice expressed in this report are the responsibility of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Lowy Institute or the Australian government.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Australia is home to more than 1.2 million Chinese-Australians, some 5% of the Australian population, many of whom report being uniquely affected by the country's fraught relationship with China, the foreign interference debate and the Covid-19 pandemic. The second Lowy Institute's *Being Chinese in Australia* poll, published a year since the first survey, is based on fieldwork carried out in late 2021. It reveals that many Chinese-Australians continue to face discrimination and negative treatment in Australia. One in three respondents reports having been treated differently or less favourably in 2021 because of their Chinese heritage.

Most Chinese-Australians identify strongly with both countries and cultures. The vast majority take pride in the Australian way of life and culture, though this sentiment is down from 2020. Similarly, affinities with China have also dropped. In fact, the number of Chinese-Australians who express a sense of belonging — whether to Australia, China or their local community — has fallen across the board in the last year.

Many respondents rely heavily on WeChat, a Chinese app, for their news and contact with friends and family. But they are also sceptical of the reliability of news shared on the platform. More Chinese-Australians rate Australian media platforms as being fair and accurate than news shared on WeChat. However, the majority also say that Australian media reporting about China is too negative.

Concern about Covid-19 and other potential epidemics tops the list of threats for Chinese-Australians in 2021. Survey respondents consider countries with a zero-tolerance policy towards the virus as having handled the pandemic best. However, disinformation has created significant uncertainty and divided opinion among the Chinese-Australian community as to the origins of Covid-19. A significant minority appear to believe that the pandemic may have originated from a laboratory leak, either in China or the United States.

The deterioration in Australia–China relations is the second-ranked threat, with just over half of respondents concerned that fraught bilateral ties present a critical threat to Australia's interests. While a commanding majority of Chinese-Australians say they trust both Australia and China to act responsibly in the world, levels of trust in both countries have declined slightly from the 2020 survey.

Approximately half of respondents believe that Australia's alliance with the United States is important for Australia's security. Nevertheless, around three-quarters say Australia should remain neutral in the event of a conflict between China and the United States — a view held by a smaller majority of the broader Australian population. The majority of Chinese-Australians continue to see China as more of an economic partner to Australia than a security threat.

Chinese-Australians are divided about the merits and drawbacks of China's system of government, and a similar split exists within the community as to whether democratic systems or non-democratic systems are preferable. However, Chinese-Australians are far more likely to express confidence in China's President Xi Jinping than the broader Australian population.

Nevertheless, an increasing number of Chinese-Australians say they are concerned about China's foreign influence on Australia's political processes, and around half the Chinese-Australian population now say that the media, public and politicians are paying the right amount of attention to the issue of foreign interference more broadly.

INTRODUCTION

Since the dismantling of the White Australia policy, Australia's population of Chinese heritage has grown dramatically. Chinese-Australians today number 1.2 million people and Mandarin has become the second-most spoken language in the country.¹ There is significant diversity among Chinese-Australians: many were born in Australia, with family histories that span generations of Australia's past. The majority have migrated more recently, moving from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

Chinese-Australian communities have flourished and contributed to many aspects of Australian life. More recently, however, the bilateral relationship between China and Australia has deteriorated significantly. Links between Chinese-Australians and Beijing have come under scrutiny from the Australian government, media and the public. Adding to these strains, the Covid-19 pandemic has placed further pressure on Chinese-Australian communities, with reports of Australians of Asian heritage being subjected to heightened discrimination and prejudice.

To understand the effect of these developments for Chinese-Australian communities more broadly, the Lowy Institute's Multiculturalism, Identity and Influence Project conducted its second nationally representative poll of Chinese-Australians at the end of 2021.² Respondents were asked about their perspectives on life in Australia, and views on a wide range of issues — from foreign influence and relationships with China, to systems of government and pride in Australian life and culture.

The survey finds a broad diversity of experiences and perspectives across Chinese-Australian communities. There is both continuity and divergence when these sentiments are compared to the broader Australian population, and the views of those of other diaspora communities.

It is common for migrants to feel dual ties to both their country of origin and their chosen home. This trend is well-established in academic research in Australia,³ where more than a quarter of Australians were born overseas.⁴ This is also true in other countries with large migrant populations, such as Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

Research clearly shows that the longer a first-generation immigrant lives in a host country, the more strongly they tend to identify with that

There is significant diversity among Chinese-Australians: many were born in Australia, with family histories that span generations of Australia's past.

country.⁵ This is not only true with regards to questions of identity and social cohesion, but attitudes to politics and governance. For example, many studies find that migrants leaving authoritarian regimes to settle in a stable democracy “do not see democracy as the only game in town”, in contrast to citizens who have only ever experienced democratic government.⁶

The release of the second annual *Being Chinese in Australia: Public Opinion in Chinese Communities* survey sheds light on these dynamics and builds on one of the largest studies of attitudes among Chinese-Australians ever undertaken. The poll adds much needed context and understanding of an important, but often misinterpreted, part of Australian society.



THE AUSTRALIAN WAY OF LIFE

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The length of time spent in Australia appears to contribute to the level of pride expressed by Chinese-Australians.

In 2021, most Chinese-Australians express warmth about Australia as a place to live, and pride in the Australian way of life and culture. Eight in ten Chinese-Australians (83%) rate Australia as a ‘very good’ or ‘good’ place to live, a six-point increase from 2020.

Time spent in Australia correlated with positive views about the country. Respondents born in Australia or who arrived in 1989 or earlier were most likely to rate Australia as a ‘very good’ place to live. Conversely, recent arrivals were less likely to say Australia was a ‘very good’ place to live.

Most Chinese-Australians continue to report pride in Australian life and culture in 2021, though this has fallen in the past year. Seven in ten (71%) say they take pride in the Australian way of life and culture to a ‘great’ or ‘moderate’ extent, a 13-point fall from 2020. This shift shows an increasing gap between Chinese-Australian communities and the broader Australian population. In 2020, 84% of Chinese-Australians expressed pride in the Australian way of life and culture — almost the same number as the broader population (88%) that reported the same sentiment in the annual Scanlon Foundation survey.⁷ In 2021, this gap has extended to 16 percentage points.

The length of time spent in Australia appears to contribute to the level of pride expressed by Chinese-Australians. Two-thirds of respondents who arrived between 2010 and 2019 (66%) hold a ‘great’ or ‘moderate’ level of pride in the Australian way of life and culture, and this increased to 88% for those who arrived between 1980 and 1989.

Figure 1: Australia as a place to live

The vast majority of Chinese-Australians continue to see Australia as a good or very good place to live.

QUESTION Overall, how would you rate Australia as a place to live?

Very good Good Average Poor

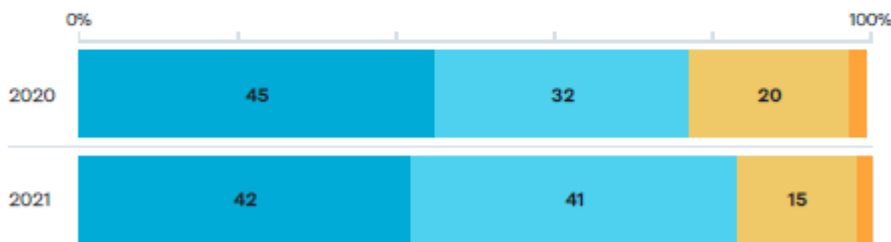
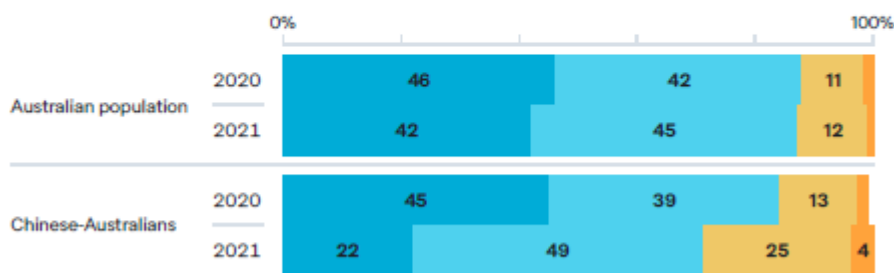


Figure 2: Pride in Australian way of life and culture

Most Chinese-Australians continue to report pride in Australian life and culture in 2021, though this has fallen in the past year.

QUESTION To what extent do you take pride in the Australian way of life and culture?

To a great extent To a moderate extent Only slightly Not at all



Data for the broader Australian population is from the [Scanlon Foundation Mapping Social Cohesion 2021 report](#).



**BELONGING
AND
COMMUNITY**

BELONGING AND COMMUNITY

Chinese-Australians report a mix of often overlapping cultural identities. Around half the surveyed population (48%) identify as either Chinese-Australian or Australian-Chinese. Four in ten (43%) identify as Chinese, while 5% identify as only Australian.

The majority of Chinese-Australians feel a sense of belonging to Australia, China and their local community. However, the strength of this sentiment towards all three has declined since 2020. The number of Chinese-Australians who express a 'great' or 'moderate' sense of belonging to Australia fell seven points to 64%. The number of Chinese-Australians who express a sense of belonging to China fell three points to 62%, while the sense of belonging to 'the Chinese people' was unchanged from 2020 at 69%. The sense of belonging to 'your local community' declined by eight points to 61%.

More Chinese-Australians who arrived in the 1980s express a greater sense of belonging to Australia and their local community than those who arrived between 2010 and 2019. Sense of belonging to China also decreased over time. However, the sense of connection that many Chinese-Australians report with 'the Chinese people' is consistent, regardless of when they arrived in Australia.

One of the key findings from the 2020 *Being Chinese in Australia* survey was that one in five Chinese-Australians (18%) had been physically threatened or attacked because of their Chinese heritage. This troubling figure remains unchanged in 2021. However, fewer Chinese-Australians reported other forms of negative discrimination over the past year. Around one-third of Chinese-Australians (34%) say they have been treated 'differently or less favourably because [they] are of Chinese heritage', a marginal decrease from 37% in 2020. A similar proportion (33%) say someone 'expressed support for [them] because of their Chinese heritage', a seven-point decline from 2020. Fewer Chinese-Australians reported verbal abuse, with 25% saying they 'have been called offensive names because [they] are of Chinese heritage', down six points from 2020.

More Chinese-Australians who arrived in the 1980s express a greater sense of belonging to Australia and their local community than those who arrived between 2010 and 2019.

Figure 3: Sense of belonging

Most Chinese-Australians express a sense of belonging to both Australia and China.

QUESTION To what extent do you have a sense of belonging to...?

■ To a great extent ■ To a moderate extent ■ Only slightly ■ Not at all

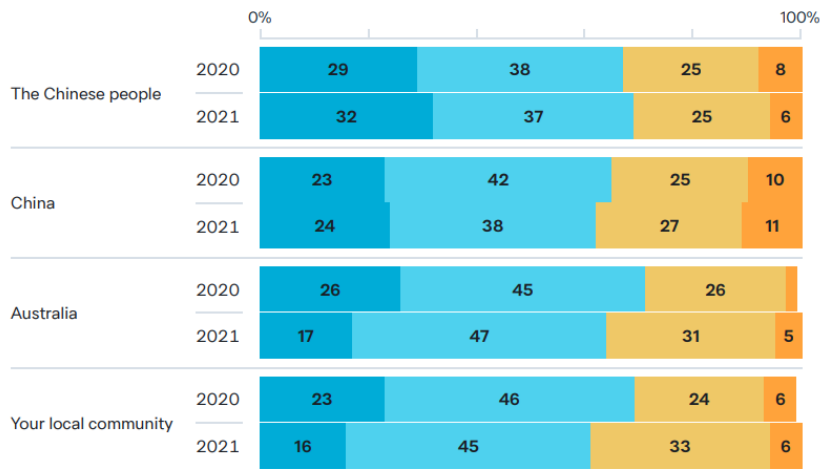
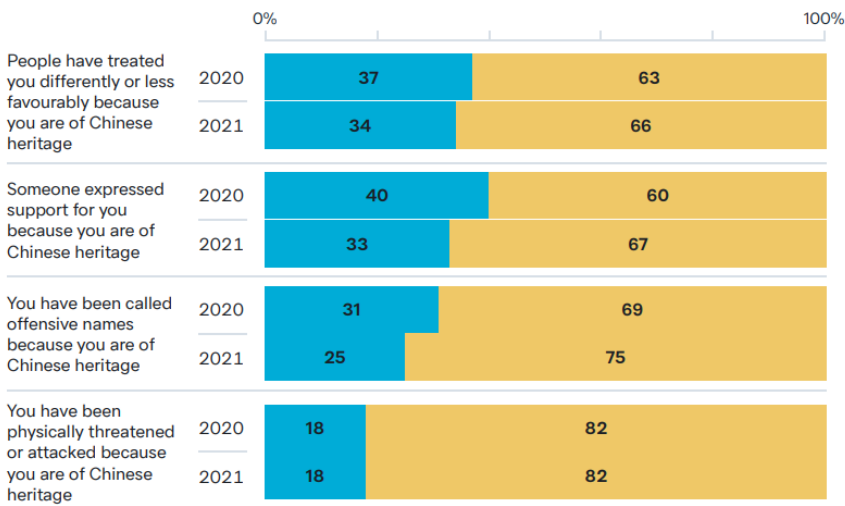


Figure 4: Personal experience of discrimination

While fewer Chinese-Australians in 2021 experienced negative treatment because of their heritage, 18% still report being subject to physical threats and attacks.

QUESTION For each of the following, please indicate if you have or have not personally experienced it in the last 12 months in Australia.

- Yes, has happened to me in the last 12 months
- No, has not happened to me in the last 12 months





POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT

Chinese-Australians hold a broad range of preferences when it comes to systems of government. Much like 2020, 34% of Chinese-Australians say 'democracy is preferable to any other kind of government'. This is around half the proportion of the broader Australian population who prefer democracy (71%).⁸ A greater proportion of Chinese-Australians (45%) say 'in some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable', a marginal increase of four points from 2020. The handling of the Covid-19 pandemic may have had an impact on these views: more Chinese-Australians say China has handled the pandemic well than those who say the same about Australia.

Chinese-Australians participate in the political process about as much as the broader Australian population, both at fairly low levels. Almost half the Chinese-Australian population (44%) had signed an online petition in the past five years. This level of engagement is similar to the broader Australian population, where 48% reported signing an online petition in the 2019 Australian Election Study.⁹

Just over a third of Chinese-Australians (38%) use the internet, including social media networks, to share their opinion about Australian politics and government on a daily or weekly basis. Another three in ten (31%) say they share their opinion 'a few times a year' or 'hardly ever'. Chinese-Australians are similarly unlikely to share their opinion about China's politics and government, with 28% saying they share their views on a daily or weekly basis and 39% sharing opinions about China's politics and government 'a few times a year' or 'hardly ever'.

Chinese-Australians participate in the political process about as much as the broader Australian population, both at fairly low levels.

Figure 5: Views on democracy

Chinese-Australians continue to be divided about their preferences between democratic and non-democratic systems of government.

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

- Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government
- For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have
- In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable
- Not sure

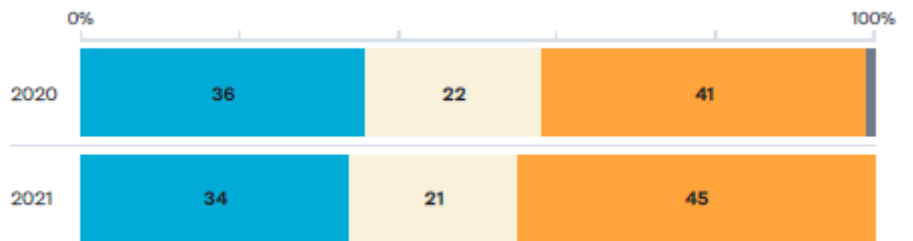


Figure 6: Political advocacy

A minority of Chinese-Australians engage in the political process by signing petitions, writing to politicians or sharing their opinions about politics and government online.

QUESTION Over the past five years or so, have you done any of the following things to express your views about something the government should or should not be doing?

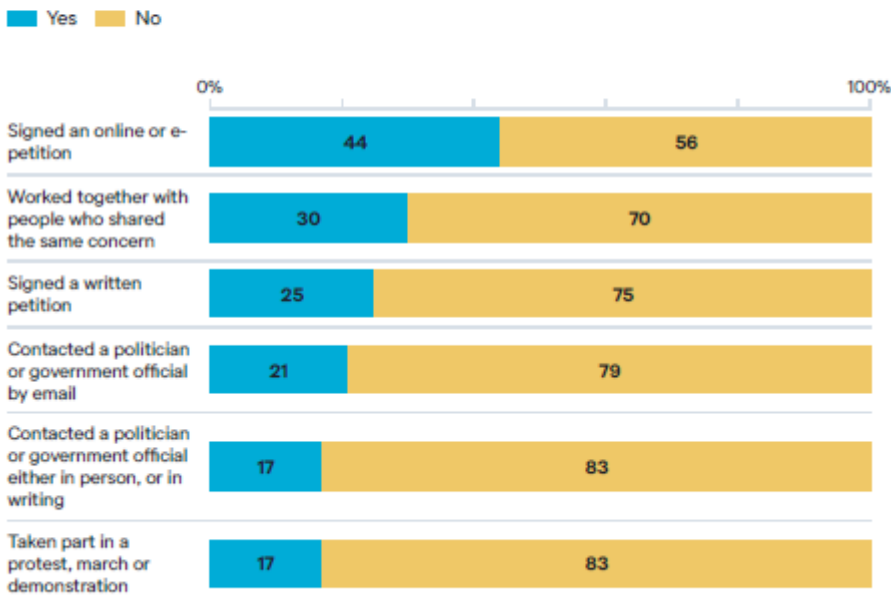
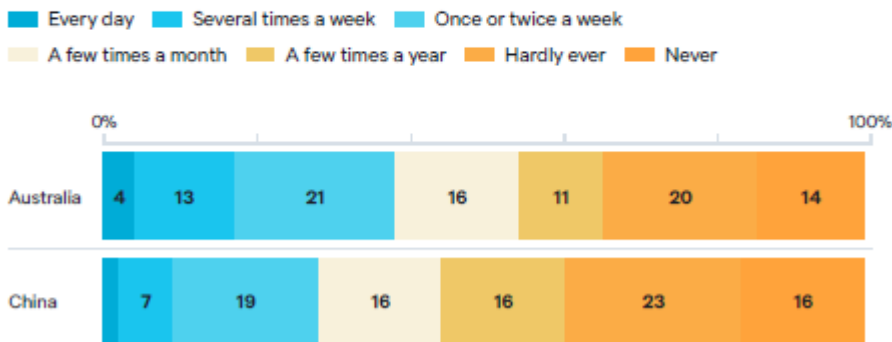


Figure 7: Politics and social media

Chinese-Australians rarely share their views online about Australian and Chinese politics and government.

QUESTION How often do you use the internet, including social media networks, to share your opinion about the politics and government of...?



Messages



WhatsApp



Telegram



LINE



WeChat



Signal

MEDIA AND NEWS HABITS

MEDIA AND NEWS HABITS

Although Chinese-Australians have an overwhelming preference for using the popular Chinese app WeChat to access their news, there is more scepticism about the reliability of news on WeChat than other outlets.

WeChat remains the dominant source for Chinese-Australians to access both English and Chinese-language news. Some 86% of Chinese-Australians use WeChat 'often' or 'sometimes' for their Chinese-language news, which is stable from the 2020 survey. And 63% of Chinese-Australians use WeChat 'often' or 'sometimes' to access English-language news.

WeChat is not only used for news: 66% of respondents report they use WeChat to keep in contact with family and friends. Four in ten Chinese-Australians (38%) say they use WeChat for finding information about Chinese communities in Australia. A third of Chinese-Australians (33%) use WeChat for everyday living, 19% use it for shopping, and 14% for learning activities.

Notwithstanding the ubiquity of WeChat, Chinese-Australians hold low levels of trust in the news that is shared on WeChat Official Accounts. By contrast, seven in ten Chinese-Australians (71%) trust English-language media outlets in Australia 'a great deal' or 'somewhat' to report the news accurately and fairly. More Chinese-Australians trust Chinese-language media outlets in Australia to report fairly and accurately, compared to levels of trust in Chinese-language media outlets in China. Six in ten Chinese-Australians (61%) say they trust Chinese-language media outlets in Australia 'a great deal' or 'somewhat'. More than half (56%) trust Chinese-language media outlets in China, while only 49% say they trust WeChat Official Accounts to report news accurately and fairly 'a great deal' or 'to some extent'.

Although Chinese-Australians have high engagement rates with social media apps, such as WeChat, there is limited usage of social media to share views and opinions on politics, as seen in the political participation section.

While there is greater trust in Australian media outlets, as indicated above, the overall sentiment in 2021 towards how Australian media covers China has worsened with 57% of Chinese-Australians believing the coverage is too negative. This is up seven percentage points since

WeChat remains the dominant source for Chinese-Australians to access both English and Chinese-language news.

2020. Those who believe the reporting is too positive declined to 9% from 19% in 2020, while those who say the reporting of China is fair and balanced increased very marginally to 33% from 31%.

Statistical modelling of this dataset indicates that trust in news from Chinese-language media outlets in China is a strong predictor for a sense of belonging to China. That is, the more a person trusts news from Chinese-language media outlets in China, the more likely they are to report a 'great' sense of belonging to China (see Methodology, p.46).

Figure 8: WeChat and English and Chinese-language news

WeChat remains a dominant source of both English and Chinese-language news for Chinese-Australians.

QUESTION Now thinking about WeChat in particular. Please indicate if you use WeChat often, sometimes or never to get your English/Chinese-language news.

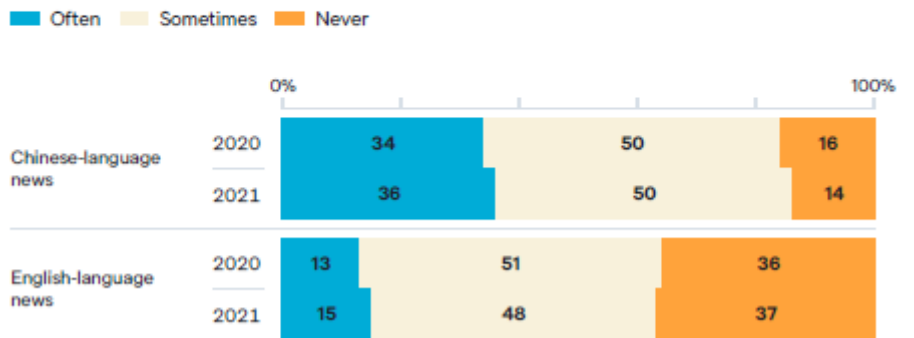


Figure 9: WeChat usage

The most common function of WeChat for Chinese-Australians is maintaining contact with family and friends.

QUESTION Apart from using WeChat to access news, what else, if anything, do you use WeChat for?

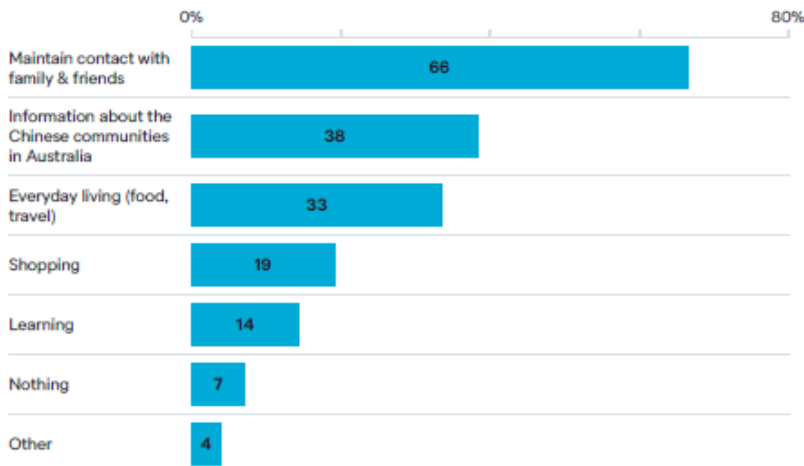


Figure 10: Trust in sources of information

Although most Chinese-Australians use WeChat for news, many also doubt the reliability and accuracy of news they read on the app.

QUESTION How much do you trust the following sources to report news accurately and fairly?

Legend: Not at all (orange), Not very much (yellow), Somewhat (light blue), A great deal (dark blue)

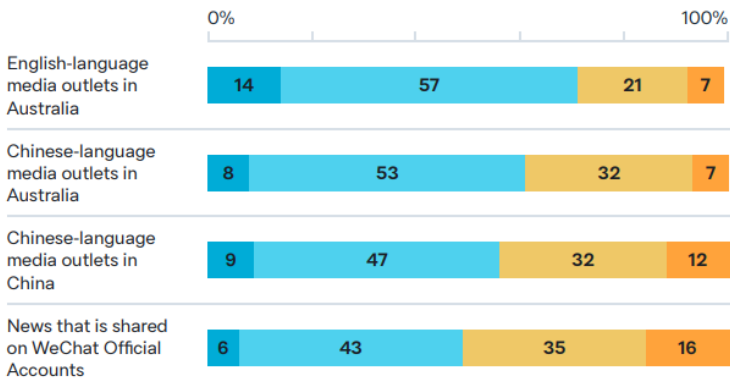
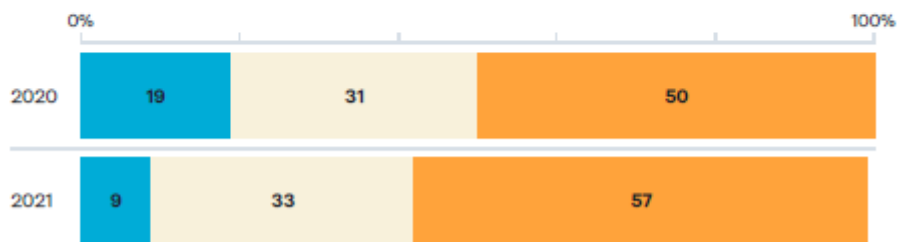


Figure 11: Australian media reporting about China

The majority of Chinese-Australians say Australian media reporting about China is too negative.

QUESTION Overall, would you say Australian media reporting about China is too positive, too negative or fair and balanced?

Too positive Fair and balanced Too negative





GLOBAL POWERS AND WORLD LEADERS

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Chinese-Australians report lower levels of trust in major powers and lower levels of confidence in foreign leaders than the broader Australian population.

In general, Chinese-Australians report lower levels of trust in major powers and lower levels of confidence in foreign leaders than the broader Australian population. Chinese-Australians are also less likely to view potential threats as ‘critical’ when compared with other Australians.

The one exception to this trend is in relation to China, where Chinese-Australians are far more trusting and confident than the broader Australian population. In recent years, Australians’ views of China have hit record lows. But this phenomenon is not reflected in the views of most Chinese-Australians. Rather, Chinese-Australians express high levels of trust in both Australia and China. Almost seven in ten Chinese-Australians say they trust Australia (68%) and China (67%) ‘a great deal’ or ‘somewhat’ to act responsibly in the world. However, levels of trust in both countries declined slightly from the 2020 survey, Australia by six points and China by five points. By contrast, 92% of the broader Australian population say they trust Australia, and only 16% trust China, according to the 2021 Lowy Institute Poll.

Chinese-Australians also express a high level of trust in the United Kingdom: 65% say they trust the United Kingdom ‘a great deal’ or ‘somewhat’ to act responsibly in the world. More than half say they trust Japan (55%) and Hong Kong (54%).

The Chinese-Australian population is divided in terms of their levels of trust in the United States and Taiwan, with 51% saying they trust both to act responsibly in the world. Chinese-Australians’ trust in the United States declined by six percentage points since 2020, despite the election of Joe Biden as president of the United States.

At the lower end of the spectrum, 45% of Chinese-Australians trust Russia ‘a great deal’ or ‘somewhat’ to act responsibly. Indonesia (36%) and India (34%) sit at the bottom of the list of ten countries as the least-trusted countries for Chinese-Australians.

Both Chinese-Australians and the broader Australian population rank New Zealand’s Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern at the top of the list of leaders who inspire confidence. However, there is a wide gulf between the two groups: 68% of Chinese-Australians have ‘a lot’ or ‘some’

confidence in Prime Minister Ardern 'to do the right thing regarding world affairs', compared to 91% of the broader Australian population.

Confidence in China's President Xi Jinping diverged greatly between Chinese-Australians and the broader population. The majority of Chinese-Australians (65%) have 'a lot' or 'some' confidence in President Xi, compared to only 10% of the broader Australian population.

Aside from President Xi, other authoritarian leaders such as Russia's Vladimir Putin also inspire confidence amongst more Chinese-Australians than the broader population. Half of respondents (51%) express confidence in President Putin. However, this survey was conducted prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. A similar gulf exists between Chinese-Australians and the broader population with their confidence levels in North Korea's leader. While only 5% of Australians report any confidence in Kim Jong-un, 33% of Chinese-Australians say they have 'a lot' or 'some' confidence in him.

Around half of Chinese-Australians (52%) say they have confidence in UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson. A similar number (49%) have confidence in Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison. Slightly fewer Chinese-Australians (44%) express confidence in Australia's opposition leader, Anthony Albanese.

Almost half the Chinese-Australian population express confidence in Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam (48%), then-Prime Minister of Japan, Yoshihide Suga (45%) and Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen (43%).

Four in ten Chinese-Australians (42%) have confidence in US President Joe Biden, 27 points lower than the broader Australian public (69%). In a similar result to the levels of trust in their countries, both Indonesian President Joko Widodo (37%) and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (30%) inspire relatively low levels of confidence amongst Chinese-Australians.

Confidence in China's President Xi Jinping diverged greatly between Chinese-Australians and the broader population.

Figure 12: Trust in major powers

Nearly seven in ten Chinese-Australians trust both Australia and China to act responsibly in the world. Only half trust the United States and Taiwan.

QUESTION Now about various countries and territories in the world. How much do you trust the following countries or territories to act responsibly in the world?

■ A great deal ■ Somewhat ■ Not very much ■ Not at all

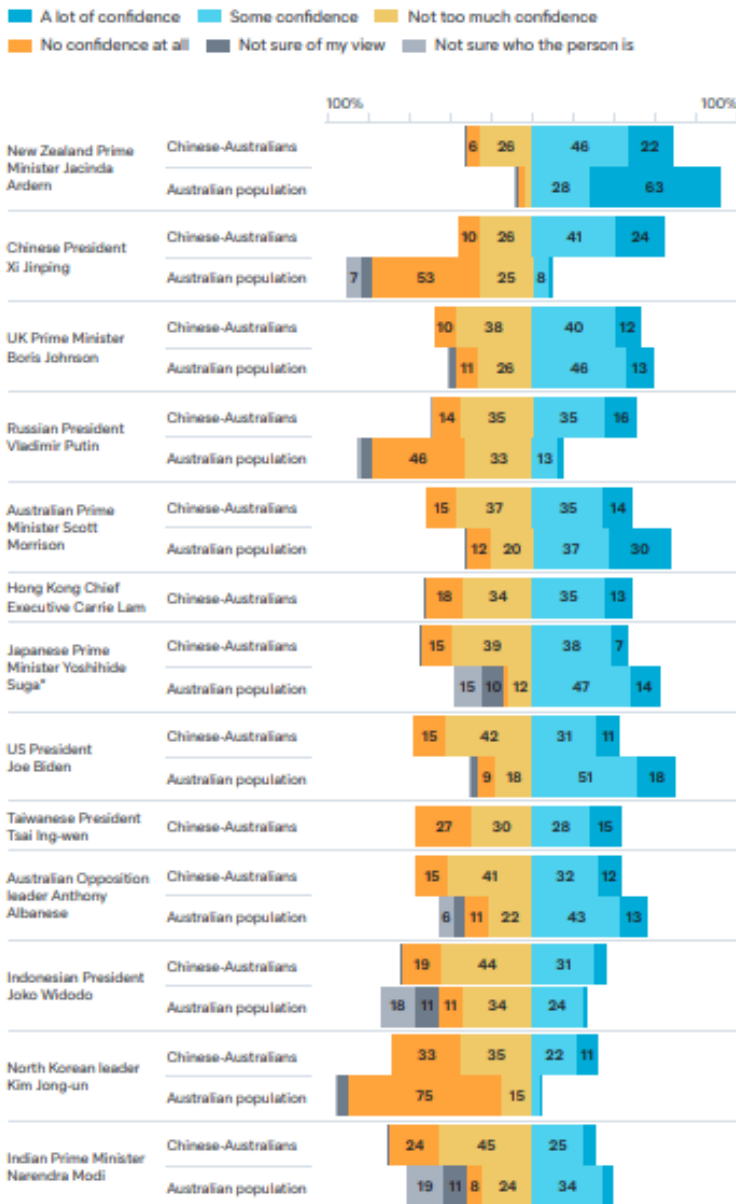


Data for the broader Australian population is from the [2021 Lowy Institute Poll](#).

Figure 13: Confidence in political leaders

Far more Chinese-Australians express confidence in Chinese President Xi Jinping than the broader Australian population.

QUESTION How much confidence do you have in each leader to do the right thing regarding world affairs?



Data for the broader Australian population is from the 2021 Lowy Institute Poll.
 *The fieldwork was conducted before and during the period when the current Japanese Prime Minister, Fumio Kishida, came into office on 4 October 2021.



SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

When asked about whether Australia can maintain good relations with the United States and China at the same time, Chinese-Australians express less optimism than other Australians. A slight majority of Chinese-Australians (53%) say Australia can do this, but this is a view held by 72% of the broader Australian population.

As well as lower levels of trust and confidence in the United States and its leadership, Chinese-Australians see Australia's alliance with the United States as less important than other Australians do. While nearly half of respondents (48%) say that Australia's alliance with the United States is 'very' or 'fairly important' for Australia's security, this remains 30 points below the attitude of the broader Australian population (78%).

Lower levels of importance attached to the ANZUS alliance also translate into lower levels of support for the United States in a potential conflict. Around three-quarters of Chinese-Australians (74%) say Australia should remain neutral in the event of a conflict between China and the United States — a view held by a smaller majority of the broader Australian population (57%). Only one in ten Chinese-Australians (11%) say Australia should support the United States in a potential conflict, compared to 41% of other Australians. More Chinese-Australians (14%) say Australia should support China, a view only held by 1% of the broader Australian population.

More Chinese-Australians see Covid-19, the state of Australia-China relations and an economic downturn as a threat to Australia rather than a potential military conflict between the United States and China. Concern about 'Covid-19 and other potential epidemics' tops the list of threats for Chinese-Australians in 2021, with 56% saying the pandemic poses 'a critical threat' to the vital interests of Australia in the next ten years. Australia-China relations is the second-ranked threat, with 51% of Chinese-Australians seeing the current state of the relationship as a critical threat to Australia's interests. A similar proportion of Chinese-Australians (49%) are concerned about 'a severe downturn in the global economy'.

Chinese-Australians' concern about climate change increased significantly in the past year, with 43% saying climate change poses 'a critical threat' to Australia's vital interests. While this represents a 13-point surge from 2020, fewer Chinese-Australians are concerned

More Chinese-Australians see Covid-19, the state of Australia-China relations and an economic downturn as a threat to Australia rather than a potential military conflict between the United States and China.

More Chinese-Australians see reduced immigration during the pandemic as a critical threat to Australia than the broader population.

about climate change than the broader Australian population. In terms of other concerns, four in ten (39%) Chinese-Australians say ‘the dissemination of false information or fake news’ is a critical threat.

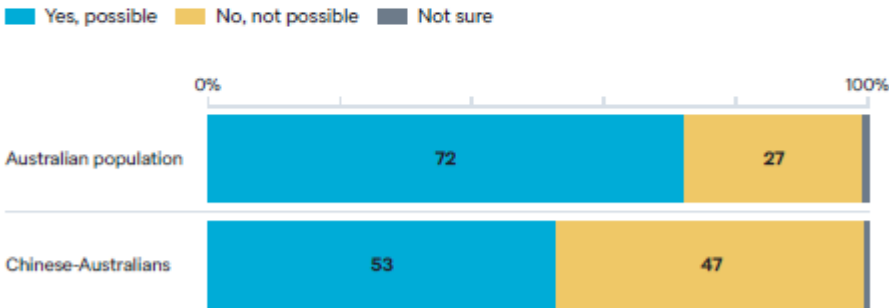
Although Chinese-Australians would largely prefer to remain neutral in a conflict, concern about a potential military clash between the United States and China over Taiwan increased in 2021. More than a third of Chinese-Australians (37%) say this kind of military conflict poses a critical threat to Australia’s vital interests, an increase of five points since 2020. A similar number (35%) see ‘foreign interference in Australian politics’ as a critical threat in 2021. Far fewer Chinese-Australians are concerned about ‘cyberattacks from other countries’, with only 29% saying these pose a critical threat. By contrast, cyberattacks are a high priority for the broader Australian population, with 62% saying they pose a critical threat.

More Chinese-Australians see reduced immigration during the pandemic as a critical threat to Australia than the broader population. Nearly one in three Chinese-Australians (29%) says ‘a lower rate of immigration into Australia’ is a critical threat, a view held by only 9% of the broader Australian population. More than a quarter of Chinese-Australians (28%) say ‘the influence of social media companies’ is a critical threat to Australia’s vital interests. Although 56% of the broader Australian public indicate North Korea’s nuclear program is a critical threat, only a quarter (25%) of Chinese-Australians share the same sentiment.

Figure 14: Maintain good relationship with both China and the United States

Chinese-Australians are less optimistic than other Australians about the country's ability to maintain good relations with the United States and China at the same time, though the majority still say it is possible.

QUESTION Now about Australia's relationships with China and the United States. Do you think it is possible or not possible for Australia to have a good relationship with China and a good relationship with the United States at the same time?

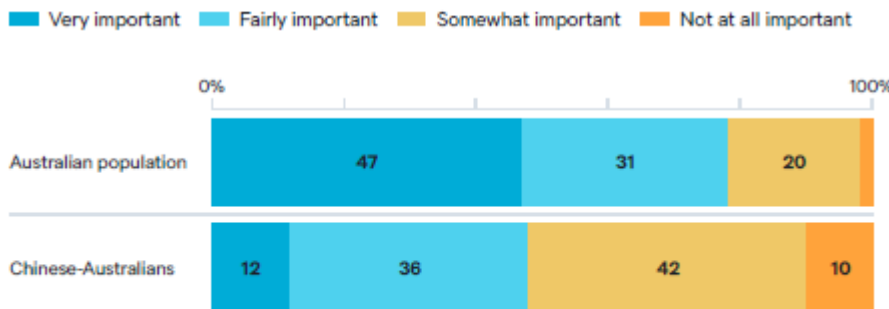


Data for the broader Australian population is from the [2021 Lowy Institute Poll](#).

Figure 15: Importance of the United States alliance for Australia's security

The majority of Chinese-Australians see Australia's alliance with the United States as important for Australia's security, but place less importance on ANZUS than the broader Australian population.

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



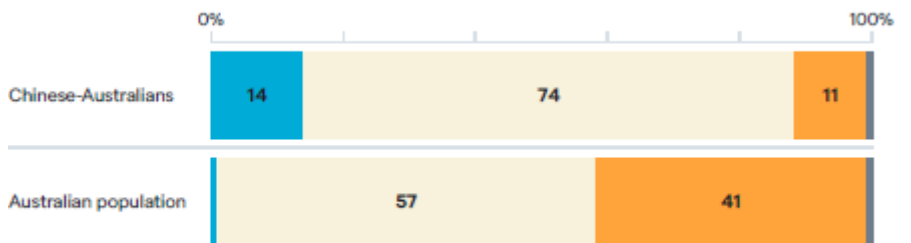
Data for the broader Australian population is from the [2021 Lowy Institute Poll](#).

Figure 16: Military conflict between China and the United States

Nearly three-quarters of Chinese-Australians believe Australia should remain neutral in the event of a military conflict between China and the United States, a view shared by the majority of the broader Australian population.

QUESTION 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.

■ Australia should support China
 ■ Australia should remain neutral
■ Australia should support the United States
 ■ Not sure

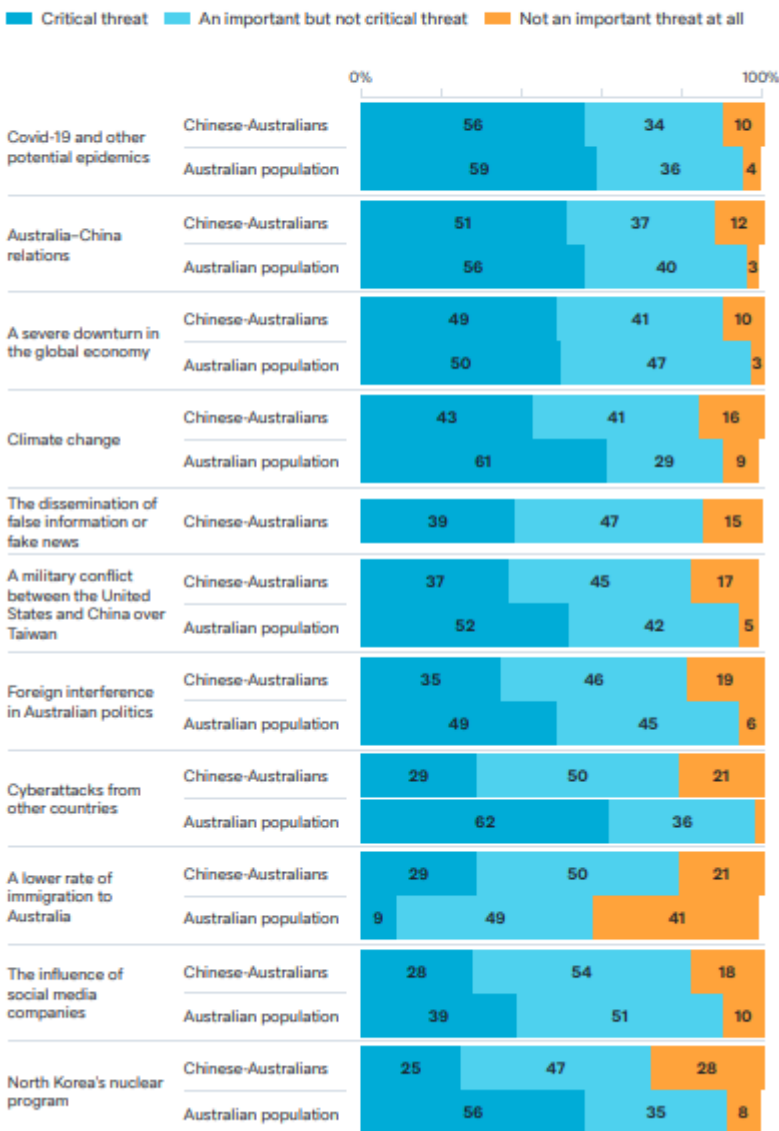


Data for the broader Australian population is from the [2021 Lowy Institute Poll](#).

Figure 17: Threats to vital Australian interests

Chinese-Australians express high levels of concern about Covid-19 and Australia-China relations.

QUESTION Below is a list of possible threats to the vital interests of Australia in the next ten years. Do you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all?



Data for the broader Australian population is from the 2021 Lowy Institute Poll.

The image features a dark, textured background with several rectangular panels, each containing a different film still. The panels are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with some overlapping. The stills depict various scenes: a person in a white shirt, a person in a dark jacket, a person in a white coat, and a person in a blue jacket. The text "FOREIGN INTERFERENCE" is overlaid in the center in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

**FOREIGN
INTERFERENCE**

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

The question of foreign influence and interference in Australia remained in the headlines in 2021. In this year's poll, Chinese-Australians are evenly divided over whether China's foreign influence on Australia's political processes presents a concern. Half the respondents (50%) say they are concerned about foreign influence from China, a four-point increase from 2020. There are similar levels of concern over the influence of India (55%) and Japan (53%). Only a third (36%) say they are concerned about the influence of the United States on Australia's political processes.

In a striking shift in 2021, Chinese-Australians are more likely to see media, politicians and the public paying sufficient attention to the issue of foreign interference. Around half the Chinese-Australian population say the media (50%, up 23 points), politicians (50%, up 24 points) and the public (58%, up 27 points) are giving 'about the right amount' of attention to the issue of foreign interference.

Australia's foreign interference debate has focused on Chinese-Australians and their real or perceived ties with the Chinese government or Chinese community groups.¹⁰ The 2021 results continue to point to low levels of reported interaction between Chinese-Australians and the Chinese embassy, consulate or cultural groups. The majority of Chinese-Australians (59%) report no contact at all with the Chinese embassy or consulate in the last 12 months. Only 18% of Chinese-Australians say they have 'regular' or 'occasional' contact with the Chinese embassy or consulate. Almost half the respondents (49%) say they interacted with Chinese community and cultural organisations 'every few months' or 'once or twice' in the last 12 months. Almost a third (29%) say they had no engagement at all.

In this year's poll, Chinese-Australians are evenly divided over whether China's foreign influence on Australia's political processes presents a concern.

Figure 18: Foreign influence in Australian political processes

Around half of Chinese-Australians are concerned about foreign influence on Australia’s political processes from China, while a third are concerned about the influence of the United States.

QUESTION Now about the issue of foreign influence in Australia’s political processes. Are you personally concerned or not concerned about the influence of each of the following countries on Australia’s political processes?

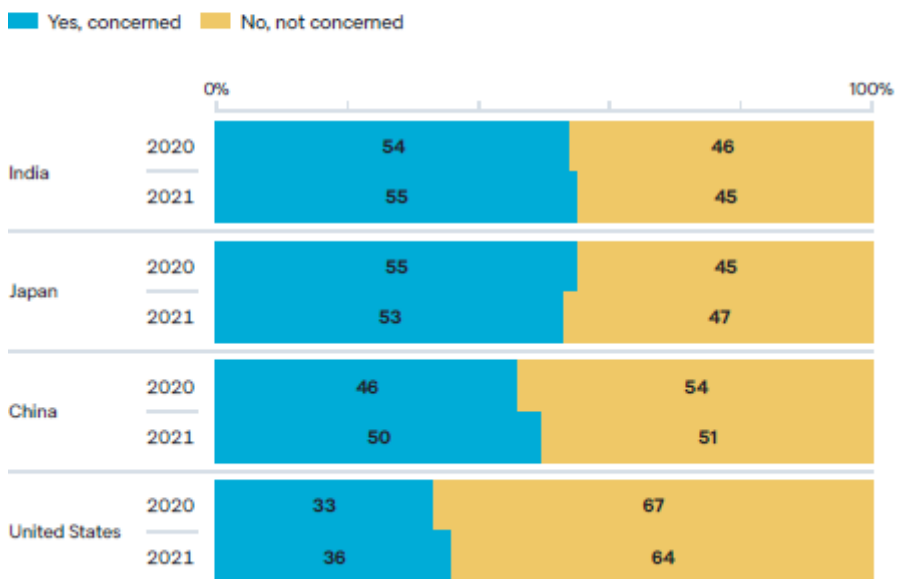


Figure 19: Amount of attention to foreign interference

Half the Chinese-Australian population now say foreign interference is receiving about the right amount of attention in Australia, a significant increase since 2020.

QUESTION Do you personally think too much, too little or about the right amount of attention is given to the issue of foreign interference by each of the following groups?

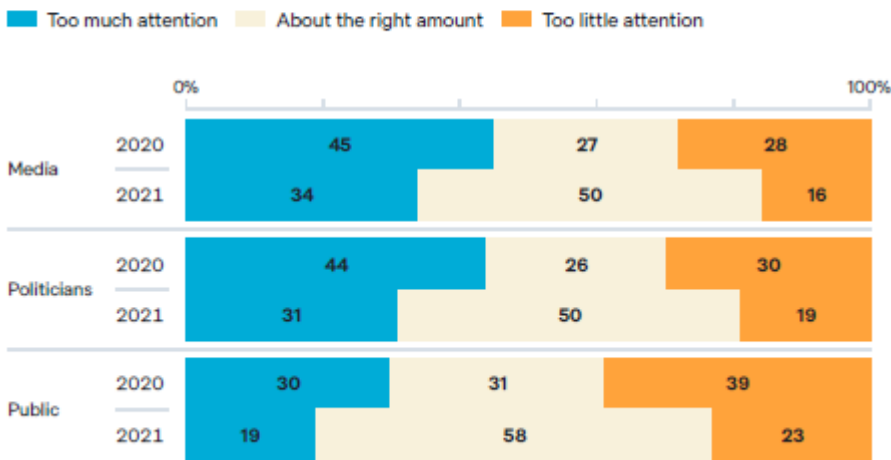


Figure 20: Contact with the Chinese embassy or consulate

Chinese-Australians continue to report low levels of contact with the Chinese embassy or consulate.

QUESTION Over the last 12 months, how often, if at all, have you had any contact with the Chinese embassy or consulate in your state or territory?

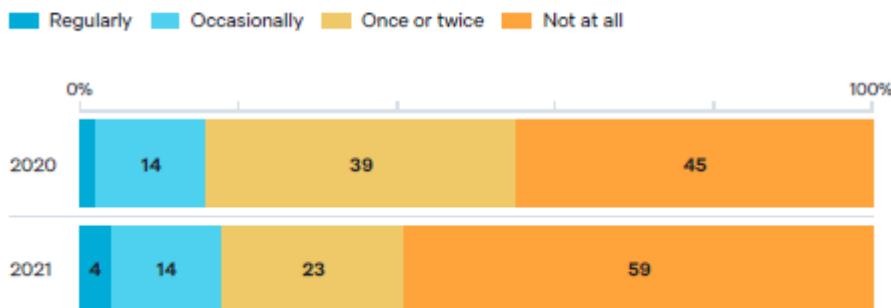
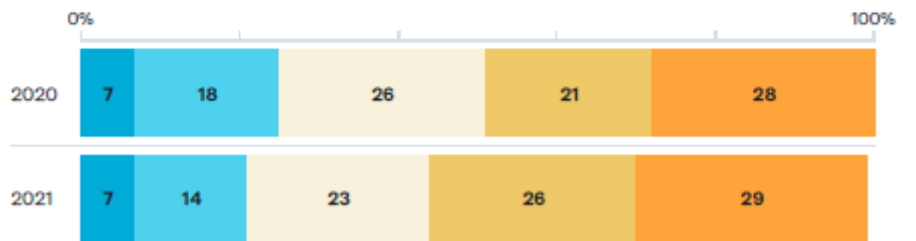


Figure 21: Interaction with overseas Chinese organisations

As in 2020, most Chinese-Australians say they have limited interaction with Chinese community and cultural organisations.

QUESTION Over the last 12 months, how often, if at all, have you had any interaction with Chinese community and cultural organisations?

■ At least once a week
 ■ About once a month
 ■ Every few months
■ Once or twice
 ■ Never





COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The majority of Chinese-Australians see countries that have maintained a 'Covid-zero' or elimination strategy in the most positive light.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Responses to the Covid-19 pandemic have varied greatly across the globe, and so too have public responses to government intervention.¹¹ The majority of Chinese-Australians see countries that have maintained a 'Covid-zero' or elimination strategy in the most positive light: 76% say China has handled Covid-19 'very well' or 'fairly well', while 57% and 54% say the same of Australia and Taiwan, respectively.

Most Chinese-Australians are more critical when it comes to countries that have experienced large death tolls during the pandemic. For example, only 34% of Chinese-Australians say the United Kingdom has handled the outbreak 'very' or 'fairly well'. The United States and India are ranked even lower on the list, with 23% and 20% of respondents saying the countries have handled the pandemic 'very well' or 'fairly well', respectively.

While the most recent evidence indicates that the Covid-19 pandemic was probably caused by human-animal contact in China,¹² at the time of fieldwork for this survey, there was a live debate about the origins of the novel coronavirus. In October 2021, a review by the US intelligence community as to whether the Covid-19 virus originated naturally or escaped from a laboratory in China yielded inconclusive results.¹³ Meanwhile, Chinese government officials and state-owned media, among others, made false claims that Covid-19 had emerged from a US military base, Fort Detrick.¹⁴

Amid intense global speculation and outright disinformation, the survey reveals significant uncertainty and divided opinions among the Chinese-Australian community as to the origins of the pandemic.

When asked about their views regarding the origins of Covid-19, the largest group, some 31% of respondents, report being unsure about the causes of the pandemic. Only 21% believe that the most likely cause of the Covid-19 pandemic was from human contact with an infected animal in China.

A significant minority, some four in ten respondents, appear to believe that the pandemic may have originated from a lab leak, either in China or the United States. Of the total respondents, 27% believe the virus may have originated in the United States and just over half as many (15%) think that the most likely cause of the pandemic was a lab leak in China.

Figure 22: Global responses to Covid-19

The majority of Chinese-Australians see countries aiming for Covid-zero as handling the pandemic well.

QUESTION Overall, how well or badly do you think each of the following countries has handled the Covid-19 outbreak so far?

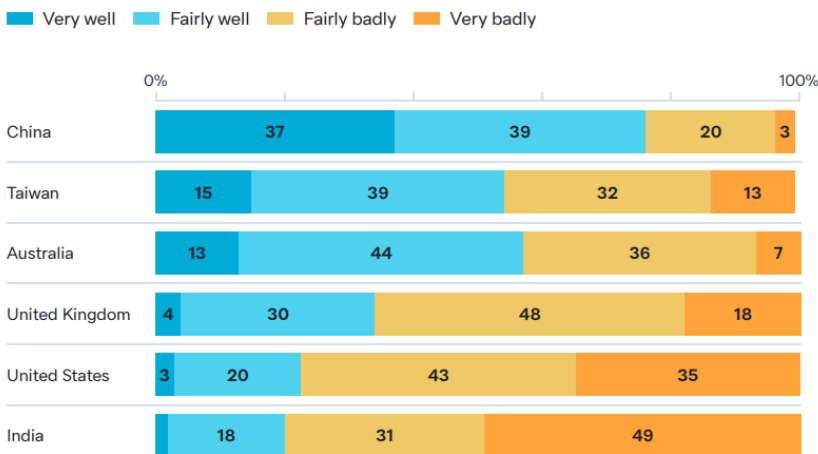
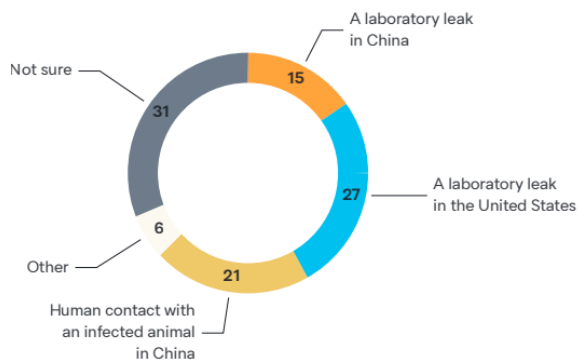


Figure 23: Likely cause of the Covid-19 pandemic

Uncertainty and divided opinions exist among the Chinese-Australian community as to the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic.

QUESTION From what you have seen or heard, which of the following do you think is the most likely cause of the Covid-19 pandemic?





AUSTRALIA- CHINA RELATIONS

AUSTRALIA–CHINA RELATIONS

As Australia’s relationship with China has deteriorated in recent years, Australian views of China have also soured. However, Chinese-Australians and the broader Australian public alike see China’s culture, history and people as having a positive influence on their views of China. Seven in ten Chinese-Australians (73%) say ‘China’s culture and history’ have a positive influence on their view of China, a response shared by 68% of the broader Australian population. Similarly, 70% of Chinese-Australians indicate that ‘Chinese people [they] have met’ have a positive influence, a view held by 76% of the broader Australian population.

However, there is a growing gulf between Chinese-Australians and the broader Australian population on most other China-related issues. While most Australians were enthusiastic about China’s economic growth in the past, this sentiment has shifted in the last five years. Seven in ten Chinese-Australians (72%) continue to say China’s economic growth is a positive influence on their view of China, in contrast to a more split opinion on this question in the broader Australian population. Just less than half of Australians (47%) say China’s economic growth has a positive influence on their views. The divide is even clearer on Chinese investment in Australia: 63% of Chinese-Australians see this investment as a positive, compared to 20% of the broader Australian population.

China, though now the world’s largest carbon emitter, announced a range of environmental and climate change initiatives in the past year, including a carbon neutral pledge for 2060 and an intention to stop funding coal-fired power overseas. The majority of Chinese-Australians (56%) regard China’s environmental policies as a positive influence on their overall view of China. The broader Australian population is less convinced, with only 17% seeing China’s environmental policies in a positive light.

The discrepancy between Chinese-Australians and the broader population is most visible when considering China’s military activities and system of government. A little over half the Chinese-Australians surveyed see China’s military activities in the region (53%) and China’s system of government (52%) as a positive influence on their views of China. However, the broader population is overwhelmingly negative in their views of China’s military and governance. Almost all Australians say China’s military activities in the region (93%) and China’s system of

While most Australians were enthusiastic about China’s economic growth in the past, this sentiment has shifted in the last five years.

Despite the ongoing tension between Australia and China, more Chinese-Australians regard China as an economic partner than in 2020.

government (92%) have a negative influence on their perceptions of China.

Despite the ongoing tension between Australia and China, more Chinese-Australians regard China as an economic partner than in 2020. More than seven in ten Chinese-Australians (73%) view China as 'more of an economic partner to Australia' than a security threat in 2021, a seven-point increase from 2020. For the broader Australian population, the trend is the opposite, with only 34% seeing China as an economic partner in 2021, compared to 55% in 2020.

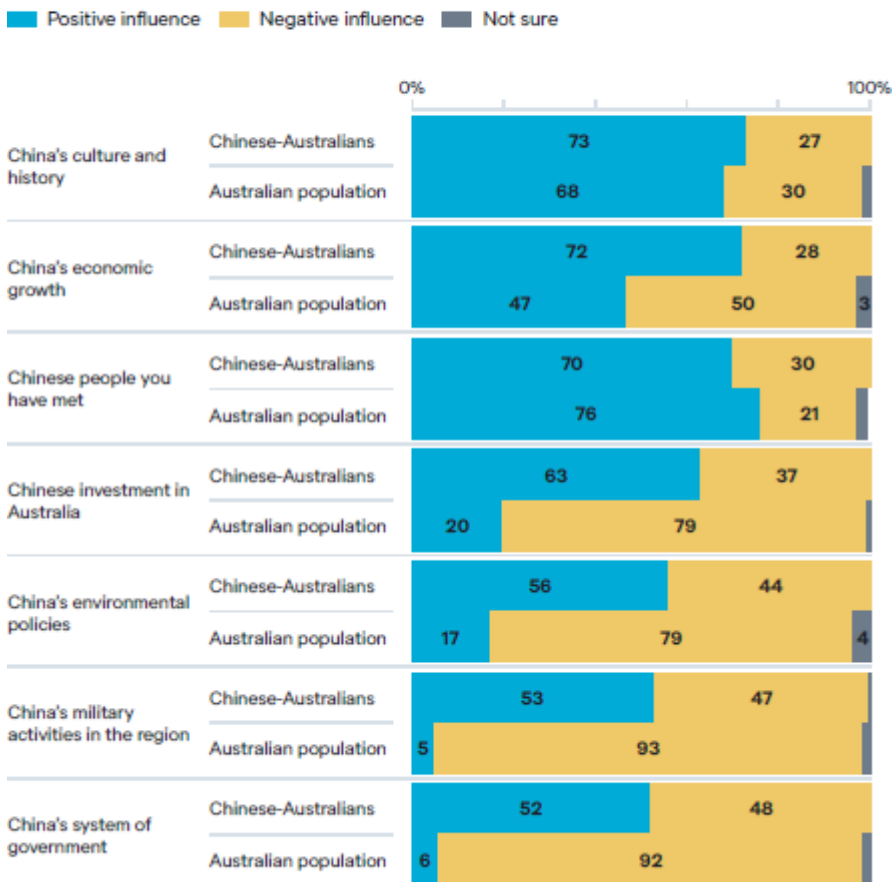
According to statistical modelling of the results, a respondent's view on whether Australian media reporting on China is balanced is a strong predictor of whether they see China as more of an economic partner or more of a security threat to Australia. Chinese-Australians who say the Australian media is 'too negative' in its China coverage are also more likely to view China as an economic partner. Conversely, those who see the Australian media as 'too positive' towards China are more likely to see China as a security threat to Australia.

When asked about the responsibility for the tensions in the Australia-China relationship, four in ten Chinese-Australians (41%) say both countries are to blame. A similar proportion of Chinese-Australians (40%) say Australia is more to blame. Only 19% of Chinese-Australians say China is more to blame, which is a sharp contrast to the broader Australian population, of which the majority (56%) ascribe blame to China.

Figure 24: Views of China

Chinese-Australians tend to see China’s culture, history and people as having a positive influence on their views of China.

QUESTION For each of the following factors, please indicate whether, for you personally, they have a positive or negative influence on your overall view of China.



Data for the broader Australian population is from the [2021 Lowy Institute Poll](#).

Figure 25: China: economic partner or security threat?

Most Chinese-Australians continue to see China as more of an economic partner to Australia, in stark contrast to the broader Australian population that see China as more of a security threat.

QUESTION 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?

■ More of an economic partner to Australia
 ■ Both equally
 ■ More of a security threat to Australia
 ■ Not sure



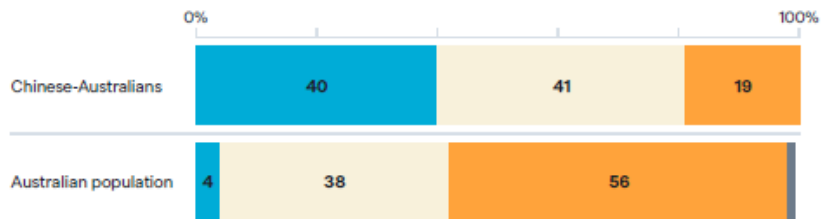
Data for the broader Australian population is from the [2021 Lowy Institute Poll](#).

Figure 26: Tensions in the Australia–China relationship

More Chinese-Australians blame Australia for tensions in the Australia–China relationship than the broader Australian population, though four in ten say that both countries are equally to blame.

QUESTION Which country is more to blame for the tensions in the Australia–China relationship?

■ Australia is more to blame
 ■ They are equally to blame
 ■ China is more to blame
 ■ Not sure



Data for the broader Australian population is from the [2021 Lowy Institute Poll](#).

METHODOLOGY

2021 Being Chinese in Australia: Public Opinion in Chinese Communities reports the results of a national survey of 1002 adults in Australia who self-identify as of Chinese heritage. The survey was conducted between 16 September and 24 October 2021. The Social Research Centre (SRC) conducted the non-probability online survey using the Multicultural Marketing and Management (MMM) panel.

The questionnaire was developed by the authors and then refined in consultation with the SRC. The order of questions in the questionnaire was different from the order presented in this report.

The survey respondents include citizens, permanent residents and visa holders (excluding tourist visa holders) who identified as having Chinese ancestry. Those who had resided in Australia for less than one year were excluded. A total of 1401 panel members engaged with the survey and of those, 1002 (71.5%) completed the survey.

Respondents had the option to complete the questionnaire in English, Simplified Chinese or Traditional Chinese. A very high proportion chose to complete in a language other than English with 62.9% selecting Simplified Chinese, 12.3% selecting Traditional Chinese and 24.9% completing the survey in English.

Given approximately 5.6% of the Australian population identify as of Chinese ancestry in the Census, randomly recruiting a sample of 1000 Chinese-Australians would have required interviewing and screening approximately 20 000 Australians. This approach would not have been practical, and so the SRC worked with non-probability responses to build a representative sample.

One identified concern in the 2020 sample for *Being Chinese in Australia* was the over-representation of younger, highly acculturated, second-generation respondents.

In order to ensure a more balanced sample profile, quotas based on country of birth and age were set. The sample design was representative of the Australian population of adults over the age of 18 who reported Chinese ancestry as either their first or second response to the 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census question. The profile of survey respondents was compared with ABS benchmarks

across age, gender, location and country of birth to determine the extent, if any, of response bias.

To address potential bias in the sample, weighting was applied. The design weights were adjusted so that they match external benchmarks of key demographic parameters likely to be correlated with the survey outcomes and the likelihood of response. The variables that best met the criteria for inclusion in the weight were country of birth, age by education, and state.

To address data quality and the results being potentially biased, an IP address check was built into the survey to reject any address that was outside Australia. Quality checks around verbatims, speedsters and nonsensical or contradicting responses were also implemented.

Chinese-Australians constitute a population that is dispersed and diverse, including recent immigrants from multiple countries with different native languages who may have difficulty completing a public opinion survey in English. Increased attention paid to Chinese-Australians by both the Australian and Chinese political class may have also made some more reluctant to cooperate with a survey request. Collectively, these characteristics present significant challenges to anyone wishing to survey this population.

In 2021, the SRC was contracted to conduct statistical modelling to assess the relationship between selected person responses, collected on the 2021 questionnaire, and the key headline measures. By using a model that simultaneously explores the relationship of multiple characteristics with the headline measures, we are able to obtain a more nuanced explanation of the 'net' association that characteristics may have on the measures.

A logistic regression model was produced for each of the key outcomes, predicting each person's response on the basis of their characteristics and responses to other items (see Table A, below). Fourteen models were generated, one for each outcome. Stepwise selection (this approach iteratively removed predictors from the full model, each time testing if doing so made a notable difference to the model predictions) was then applied to each model to obtain reduced models with the smallest possible set of informative predictors. The quality of each model was assessed along with the relative contribution of each predictor. Finally, coefficients for each model were extracted to enable a more detailed examination of the modelled relationships.

Table A: List of outcome and predictor variables included in models

Outcomes	Predictors
A1. Overall rating of Australia as a place to live	Age group
A2. Take pride in Australian way of life and culture	Australian citizen
A4a. Sense of belonging in Australia	Country of birth
A4b. Sense of belonging to China	Gender
A4b. Sense of belonging to Chinese people	Highest education
A4b. Sense of belonging to local community	Year first arrived in Australia to live
A5a. Been treated differently or less favourably because of Chinese heritage	A3. Personal view about democracy
A5b. Received support because of Chinese heritage	A5. Self-identification
A5c. Been called offensive names because of Chinese heritage	A6b. Frequency of using WeChat for Chinese-language news
A5d. Been physically threatened or attacked because of Chinese heritage	A8a. Trust news from Chinese-language media outlets in Australia
A14f. Threats to Australia's vital interests: Australia–China relations	A8b. Trust news from Chinese-language media outlets in China
A16a. Foreign influence in Australian politics: by China	A8c. Trust news from English-language media outlets in Australia
A21. China as economic partner or security threat	A8d. Trust news from WeChat Official Accounts
A22. Country more to blame for Australia–China tensions	A10. Balance in how Australian media reports on China
	A19. Most likely cause of Covid-19 pandemic
	D1. Political party feel closest to

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Several questions in this report were modelled on those developed by other polling organisations, including the Pew Research Center, Australian Election Study, OmniPoll, the Scanlon Foundation, Chinese-Language Digital/Social Media in Australia: Rethinking Soft Power project and Asian Barometer Survey — Australia. Fieldwork was managed by Karly Day of the SRC. Benjamin Phillips of the SRC provided survey design/methodology and weighting advice. Sebastian Mission, also of the SRC, provided weighting advice and the execution of the weighting analysis. Multivariate modelling and advice were provided by Andrew C. Ward, Storm Logan and Sam Slamowicz of the SRC. John Davis of OmniPoll provided independent consulting and reviewed the questionnaire. David Tang and Xuyang Dong provided research assistance. Brody Smith designed the website interactive.

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TABLES

Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table 1: Australia as a place to live

Overall, how would you rate Australia as a place to live?

	2020	2021
Very good	45%	42%
Good	32%	41%
Total: Very good / good	77%	83%
Average	20%	15%
Poor	2%	2%
Very poor	0%	0%
Total: Poor / Very poor	2%	2%

Table 2: Pride in Australian life and culture

To what extent do you take pride in the Australian way of life and culture?

	2020	2021
To a great extent	45%	22%
To a moderate extent	39%	49%
Total: To a great extent / moderate extent	84%	71%
Only slightly	13%	25%
Not at all	2%	4%
Total: Only slightly / not at all	15%	29%
Don't know / refused	1%	0%

Table 3: Sense of belonging

And to what extent do you have a sense of belonging to...? (ranked by total indicating 'to a great extent' and 'to a moderate extent')

	To a great extent		To a moderate extent		Total: To a great extent / moderate		Only slightly		Not at all		Total: Only slightly / not at all	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Chinese people	29%	32%	39%	37%	68%	69%	25%	25%	8%	6%	33%	31%
Australia	26%	17%	45%	47%	71%	64%	26%	31%	2%	5%	28%	36%
China	23%	24%	42%	38%	65%	62%	25%	27%	10%	11%	35%	38%
Your local community	23%	16%	46%	45%	69%	61%	24%	33%	6%	6%	30%	39%

Table 4: Personal experience of discrimination

For each of the following, please indicate if you have, or have not, personally experienced it in the last 12 months in Australia.

	People have treated you differently or less favourably because you are of Chinese heritage		Someone expressed support for you because you are of Chinese heritage		You have been called offensive names because you are of Chinese heritage		You have been physically threatened or attacked because you are of Chinese heritage	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
No, has not happened to me in the last 12 months	63%	66%	60%	67%	69%	75%	82%	82%
Yes, has happened to me in the last 12 months	37%	34%	40%	33%	31%	25%	18%	18%

Table 5: Views on democracy

Please say which one of the three statements comes closest to your own personal views about democracy.

	2020	2021
In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable	41%	45%
Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government	36%	34%
For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have	22%	21%
Don't know / refused	1%	0%

Table 6: Political advocacy

Over the past five years or so, have you done any of the following things to express your views about something the government should or should not be doing?

	Yes		No	
	Chinese-Australians	Australian population	Chinese-Australians	Australian population
Signed an online petition	44%	48%	56%	52%
Worked together with people who shared the same concern	30%	24%	70%	76%
Signed a written petition	25%	37%	75%	63%
Contacted a politician or government official by email	21%	23%	79%	77%
Contacted a politician or government official either in person or in writing	17%	15%	83%	85%
Taken part in a protest, march or demonstration	17%	12%	83%	88%

Note: Data for the broader Australian population is taken from *Trends in Australian Political Opinion: Results from the Australian Election Study 1987-2019* and is for the year 2019.

Table 7: Politics and social media

How often do you use the internet, including social media networks, to share your opinion about Australian/China’s politics and government?

	Australian politics and government	China’s politics and government
Every day	4%	2%
Several times a week	13%	7%
Total: Every day / several times a week	17%	9%
Once or twice a week	21%	19%
A few times a month	16%	16%
Total: Once or twice a week / a few times a month	37%	35%
A few times a year	11%	16%
Hardly ever	20%	23%
Total: A few times a year / hardly ever	31%	39%
Never	14%	16%
Not sure / prefer not to say	0%	1%

Table 8: WeChat and English-language news

And now thinking about WeChat in particular. Please indicate if you use WeChat often, sometimes or never to get your English-language news.

	2020	2021
Often	13%	15%
Sometimes	51%	48%
Total: Often / sometimes	64%	63%
Never	36%	37%
Don't know / refused	1%	0%

Table 9: WeChat and Chinese-language news

And please indicate if you use WeChat often, sometimes or never to get your Chinese-language news.

	2020	2021
Often	34%	36%
Sometimes	50%	50%
Total: Often / sometimes	84%	86%
Never	16%	14%
Don't know / refused	1%	0%

Table 10: WeChat usage

Apart from using WeChat to access news, what else, if anything, do you use WeChat for?

Maintain contact with family & friends	66%
Information about Chinese communities in Australia	38%
Everyday living (food, travel)	33%
Shopping	19%
Learning	14%
Nothing / refused	7%
Other	4%

Table 11: Trust in sources of information

How much do you trust the following sources to report news accurately and fairly? (ranked by total indicating 'somewhat' and 'a great deal')

	A great deal	Somewhat	Total: Somewhat / a great deal	Not very much	Not at all / not sure	Total: Not at all / not very much / not sure
English-language media outlets in Australia	14%	57%	71%	21%	7%	28%
Chinese-language media outlets in Australia	8%	53%	61%	32%	7%	39%
Chinese language media outlets in China	9%	47%	56%	32%	12%	44%
News that is shared on WeChat Official Accounts	6%	43%	49%	35%	16%	51%

Table 12: Australian media reporting about China

Overall, would you say Australian media reporting about China is:

	2020	2021
Too negative	50%	57%
Too positive	19%	9%
Fair and balanced	31%	33%
Not sure / refused	0%	1%

Table 13.0: Trust in major powers

How much do you trust the following countries or territories to act responsibly in the world?
(Comparison between BCIA 2020 and BCIA 2021)

	A great deal		Somewhat		Total: A great deal / somewhat		Not very much		Not at all		Total: Not very much / not at all	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Australia	27%	20%	47%	48%	74%	68%	23%	27%	2%	6%	25%	33%
China	22%	22%	50%	45%	72%	67%	21%	26%	7%	7%	28%	33%
United Kingdom	—	16%	—	49%	—	65%	—	30%	—	6%	—	36%
Japan	14%	13%	40%	42%	54%	55%	39%	32%	7%	13%	46%	45%
Hong Kong	—	12%	—	42%	—	54%	—	35%	—	11%	—	46%
United States	13%	13%	44%	38%	57%	51%	34%	35%	9%	14%	43%	49%
Taiwan	—	15%	—	36%	—	51%	—	33%	—	16%	—	49%
Russia	—	9%	—	36%	—	45%	—	40%	—	14%	—	54%
Indonesia	—	9%	—	27%	—	36%	—	45%	—	18%	—	63%
India	8%	9%	33%	25%	41%	34%	43%	41%	16%	25%	59%	66%

Table 13.1: Trust in major powers

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

(Comparison between BCIA 2021 and LI 2021)

	A great deal		Somewhat		Total: A great deal / somewhat		Not very much		Not at all		Total: Not very much / not at all	
	CA	AP	CA	AP	CA	AP	CA	AP	CA	AP	CA	AP
Australia	20%	46%	48%	46%	68%	92%	27%	7%	6%	1%	33%	8%
China	22%	2%	45%	14%	67%	16%	26%	37%	7%	47%	33%	84%
UK	16%	28%	49%	59%	65%	87%	30%	12%	6%	1%	36%	13%
Japan	13%	29%	42%	58%	55%	87%	32%	11%	13%	2%	45%	13%
Hong Kong	12%	-	42%	-	54%	-	35%	-	11%	-	46%	-
US	13%	13%	38%	48%	51%	61%	35%	31%	14%	8%	49%	39%
Taiwan	15%	-	36%	-	51%	-	33%	-	16%	-	49%	-
Russia	9%	2%	36%	24%	45%	26%	40%	47%	14%	27%	54%	74%
Indonesia	9%	2%	27%	46%	36%	48%	45%	42%	18%	9%	63%	51%
India	9%	7%	25%	54%	34%	61%	41%	32%	25%	7%	66%	39%

CA = Chinese-Australians / AP = Australian population

Table 14: Confidence in political leaders

Please indicate how much confidence you have in each leader to do the right thing regarding world affairs — a lot of confidence, some confidence, not too much confidence or no confidence at all. (Comparison between BCIA 2021 and LI 2021)

	A lot		Some		Total: A lot / some confidence		Not too much		None at all		Total: Not too much confidence / none at all		Not sure who the person is		Don't know / no view	
	CA	AP	CA	AP	CA	AP	CA	AP	CA	AP	CA	AP	CA	AP	CA	AP
New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern	22%	63%	46%	28%	68%	91%	26%	4%	6%	2%	32%	6%	0%	2%	0%	1%
Chinese President Xi Jinping	24%	2%	41%	8%	65%	10%	26%	25%	10%	53%	36%	78%	0%	7%	0%	5%
UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson	12%	13%	40%	46%	52%	59%	38%	26%	10%	11%	48%	37%	0%	1%	0%	3%
Russian President Vladimir Putin	16%	3%	35%	13%	51%	16%	35%	33%	14%	45%	49%	78%	0%	2%	0%	5%
Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison	14%	30%	35%	37%	49%	67%	37%	20%	15%	12%	52%	32%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam	13%	-	35%	-	48%	-	34%	-	18%	-	52%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga*	7%	14%	38%	47%	45%	61%	39%	12%	15%	2%	54%	14%	0%	15%	0%	10%
Australian Opposition leader Anthony Albanese	12%	13%	32%	43%	44%	56%	41%	22%	15%	11%	56%	33%	0%	6%	0%	6%
Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen	15%	-	28%	-	43%	-	30%	-	27%	-	57%	-	0%	-	0%	-
US President Joe Biden	11%	18%	31%	51%	42%	69%	42%	18%	15%	9%	57%	27%	0%	1%	0%	3%
Indonesian President Joko Widodo (Jokowi)	6%	2%	31%	24%	37%	26%	44%	34%	19%	11%	63%	45%	0%	18%	0%	11%
North Korean leader Kim Jong-un	11%	1%	22%	4%	33%	5%	35%	15%	33%	75%	68%	90%	0%	2%	0%	4%
Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi	5%	4%	25%	34%	30%	38%	45%	24%	24%	8%	69%	32%	0%	19%	0%	11%

*The fieldwork was conducted before and during the period when the current Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida came into office on 4 October 2021.

CA = Chinese-Australians / AP = Australian population

Table 15: Maintain good relationship with both China and the United States

Do you think it is possible or not possible for Australia to have a good relationship with China and a good relationship with the United States at the same time?

(Comparison between BCIA 2021 and LI 2021)

	Chinese-Australians	Australian population
Yes, possible	53%	72%
No, not possible	47%	27%
Not sure	1%	1%

Table 16: Importance of the United States alliance for Australia’s security

Thinking now about the United States. How important is Australia’s alliance relationship with the United States for Australia’s security? (Comparison between BCIA 2021 and LIP 2021)

	Chinese-Australians	Australian population
Very important	12%	47%
Fairly important	36%	31%
Total: Very / fairly important	48%	78%
Somewhat important	42%	20%
Not at all important	10%	2%
Not sure	1%	0%

Table 17: 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.

(Comparison between BCIA 2021 and LI 2021)

	Chinese- Australians	Australian population
Australia should remain neutral	74%	57%
Australia should support China	14%	1%
Australia should support the United States	11%	41%
Not sure	1%	1%

Table 18.0: Threats to vital Australian interests

Below is a list of possible threats to the vital interests of Australia in the next ten years. Do you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all? (ranked by % saying 'a critical threat')

(Comparison between BCIA 2020 and BCIA 2021)

	Critical threat		An important but not critical threat		Total: Critical threat / important threat		Not an important threat at all	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Covid-19 and other potential epidemics	51%	56%	39%	34%	90%	90%	10%	10%
Australia–China relations	—	51%	—	37%	—	88%	—	12%
A severe downturn in the global economy	41%	49%	49%	41%	90%	90%	10%	10%
Climate change	30%	43%	56%	41%	86%	84%	14%	16%
The dissemination of false information or fake news	40%	39%	46%	47%	86%	86%	14%	15%
A military conflict between the United States and China over Taiwan	32%	37%	49%	45%	81%	82%	19%	17%
Foreign interference in Australian politics	29%	35%	59%	46%	88%	81%	12%	19%
Cyberattacks from other countries	36%	29%	48%	50%	84%	79%	17%	21%
A lower rate of immigration to Australia	—	29%	—	50%	—	79%	—	21%
The influence of social media companies	—	28%	—	54%	—	82%	—	18%
North Korea's nuclear program	—	25%	—	47%	—	72%	—	28%

Table 18.1: Threats to vital Australian interests

Below is a list of possible threats to the vital interests of Australia in the next ten years. Do you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all? (ranked by % saying ‘a critical threat’)

(Comparison between BCIA 2021 and LI 2021)

	Critical threat		An important but not critical threat		Total: Critical threat / important threat		Not an important threat at all	
	CA	AP	CA	AP	CA	AP	CA	AP
Covid-19 and other potential epidemics	56%	59%	34%	36%	90%	95%	10%	4%
Australia–China relations	51%	56%	37%	40%	88%	96%	12%	3%
A severe downturn in the global economy	49%	50%	41%	47%	90%	97%	10%	3%
Climate change	43%	61%	41%	29%	84%	90%	16%	9%
The dissemination of false information or fake news	39%	—	47%	—	86%	—	15%	—
A military conflict between the United States and China over Taiwan	37%	52%	45%	42%	82%	94%	17%	5%
Foreign interference in Australian politics	35%	49%	46%	45%	81%	94%	19%	6%
Cyberattacks from other countries	29%	62%	50%	36%	79%	98%	21%	2%
A lower rate of immigration to Australia	29%	9%	50%	49%	79%	58%	21%	41%
The influence of social media companies	28%	39%	54%	51%	82%	90%	18%	10%
North Korea’s nuclear program	25%	56%	47%	35%	72%	91%	28%	8%

CA = Chinese-Australians / AP = Australian population

Table 19: Foreign influence in Australian political processes

Are you personally concerned or not concerned about the influence of each of the following countries on Australia’s political processes?

(Comparison between BCIA 2020 and BCIA 2021)

	No, not concerned		Yes, concerned	
	2020	2021	2020	2021
United States	67%	64%	33%	36%
China	54%	51%	46%	50%
Japan	45%	47%	55%	53%
India	46%	45%	54%	55%

Table 20: Amount of attention on foreign interference

Do you personally think too much, too little or about the right amount of attention is given to the issue of foreign interference by each of the following groups?

	Too much attention		Too little attention		About the right amount		Prefer not to say / not sure	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Media	45%	34%	28%	16%	27%	50%	0%	0%
Politicians	44%	31%	30%	19%	26%	50%	0%	0%
Public	30%	19%	39%	23%	31%	58%	0%	0%

Table 21: Contact with the Chinese embassy or consulate

Over the last 12 months, how often, if at all, have you had any contact with the Chinese embassy or consulate in your state or territory?

(Comparison between BCIA 2020 and BCIA 2021)

	2020	2021
Regularly	2%	4%
Occasionally	14%	14%
Total: Regularly / occasionally	16%	18%
Once or twice	39%	23%
Not at all	45%	59%

Table 22: Interaction with overseas Chinese organisations

Over the last 12 months, how often, if at all, have you had any interaction with Chinese community and cultural organisations?

(Comparison between BCIA 2020 and BCIA 2021)

	2020	2021
At least once a week	7%	7%
About once a month	18%	14%
Total: At least once a week / about once a month	25%	21%
Every few months	26%	23%
Once or twice	21%	26%
Total: Every few months / once or twice	47%	49%
Never	28%	29%

Table 23: Global responses to Covid-19

Overall, how well or badly do you think each of the following countries has handled the Covid-19 outbreak so far?

(Comparison between BCIA 2021 and LI 2021)

	Very well		Fairly well		Total: Very well / fairly well		Fairly badly		Very badly	
	CA	AP	CA	AP	CA	AP	CA	AP	CA	AP
China	37%	12%	39%	33%	76%	45%	20%	22%	3%	30%
Australia	13%	65%	44%	30%	57%	95%	36%	4%	7%	0%
Taiwan	15%	23%	39%	43%	54%	66%	32%	20%	13%	5%
United Kingdom	4%	1%	30%	18%	34%	19%	48%	49%	18%	31%
United States	3%	0%	20%	7%	23%	7%	43%	24%	35%	68%
India	2%	2%	18%	25%	20%	27%	31%	47%	49%	21%

CA = Chinese-Australians / AP = Australian population

Table 24: Likely cause of the Covid-19 pandemic

From what you have seen or heard, which of the following do you think is the most likely cause of the Covid-19 pandemic?

Not sure	31%
A laboratory leak in the United States	27%
Human contact with an infected animal in China	21%
A laboratory leak in China	15%
Other	6%

Table 25: Views of China

For each of the following factors, please indicate whether, for you personally, they have a positive or negative influence on your overall view of China.

(Comparison between BCIA 2021 and LI 2021)

	Positive influence		Negative influence		Not sure	
	Chinese-Australians	Australian population	Chinese-Australians	Australian population	Chinese-Australians	Australian population
China's culture and history	73%	68%	27%	30%	0%	2%
China's economic growth	72%	47%	28%	50%	0%	3%
Chinese people you have met	70%	76%	30%	21%	0%	2%
Chinese investment in Australia	63%	20%	37%	79%	0%	1%
China's environmental policies	56%	17%	44%	79%	0%	4%
China's military activities in the region	53%	5%	47%	93%	1%	2%
China's system of government	52%	6%	48%	92%	0%	2%

Table 26: China: economic partner or security threat?

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

(Comparison between BCIA 2020 and BCIA 2021; and LI 2020 and LI 2021)

	Chinese-Australians		Australian population	
	2020	2021	2020	2021
More of an economic partner to Australia	66%	73%	55%	34%
More of a security threat to Australia	34%	27%	41%	63%
Both equally	0%	0%	3%	1%
Not sure	0%	1%	0%	0%

Table 27: Tensions in the Australia–China relationship

Which country is more to blame for the tensions in the Australia–China relationship?

(Comparison between BCIA 2021 and LI 2021)

	Chinese-Australians	Australian population
Australia is more to blame	40%	4%
They are equally to blame	41%	38%
China is more to blame	19%	56%
Not sure	0%	1%

NOTES

Cover image: Lisa Wiltse/Corbis via Getty Images

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, “Census Reveals a Fast Changing, Culturally Diverse Nation”, 2016 Census: Multicultural, 27 June 2017, <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookup/media%20release3>.

² For the purposes of reporting the results of the survey, all respondents are referred to as Chinese-Australians. The respondents were all Australian citizens, permanent residents or long-term visa holders who self-identified as having Chinese heritage. The authors note that some respondents did not identify as Chinese-Australian, but preferred to be considered Chinese, Australian or Australian-Chinese.

³ For a discussion on acculturation research, see David L. Sang and Colleen Ward, “Acculturation in Australia and New Zealand”, in *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology*, (eds.) David L. Sam and John W. Berry, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016) 253–273.

⁴ Joanne Simon-Davies and Chris McGann, “Top 10 Countries of Birth for the Overseas-Born Population Since 1901”, Parliament of Australia, 22 November 2018, https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1819/BornOverseas.

⁵ For example: Débora B. Maehler, Jessica Daikeler, Howard Ramos, Clara Husson and Thuy An Nguyen, “The Cultural Identity of First-Generation Immigrant Children and Youth: Insights from a Meta-Analysis”, *Self and Identity*, 20, No.6 (2021), 715–740. See also: A 2016 Canadian study found that attachment to Canada was more likely in those who immigrated at a younger age, or had spent more time in Canada: Feng Hou, Grant Schellenberg and John Berry, “Patterns and Determinants of Immigrants’ Sense of Belonging to Canada and Their Source Country”, Statistics Canada, 18 October 2016, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2016383-eng.htm>. The same is true in Europe, where data from the 2002–2015 European Social Survey showed that an immigrant’s economic and social integration improved the longer they lived in their destination countries: Nadzeya Laurentsyeva and Alessandra Venturini, “The Social Integration of Immigrants and the Role of Policy — A Literature Review”, *Intereconomics*, 52, No.5, (2017), 285–292, <https://www.intereconomics.eu/contents/year/2017/number/5/article/the-social-integration-of-immigrants-and-the-role-of-policy-a-literature-review.html>. The authors also suggest naturalisation and settlement policies have an impact in the social integration process of immigrants.

⁶ Antoine Bilodeau, Ian McAllister and Mebs Kanji, “Adaptation to Democracy Among Immigrants in Australia”, *International Political Science Review*, Volume 31, 4 June 2010, 141–165, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0192512110364737>; and Jill Sheppard, Marija Taflaga and Liang Jiang, “Explaining High Rates of Political Participation Among Chinese Migrants to Australia”, *International Political Science Review*, Volume 41, 22 May 2019, 385–401, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0192512119834623?journalCode=ipsa>.

- ⁷ Andrew Markus, *Mapping Social Cohesion 2021*, The Scanlon Foundation, (Victoria: Monash University, 2021), <https://scanloninstitute.org.au/mapping-social-cohesion-2021/>.
- ⁸ Lowy Institute Poll, 2021, <https://poll.lowyinstitute.org/charts/democracy>.
- ⁹ Sarah Cameron and Ian McAllister, *The 2019 Australian Federal Election: Results from the Australian Election Study*, (Canberra: Australian National University, 2019), <https://australianelectionstudy.org/publications/>.
- ¹⁰ See Jennifer Hsu, Richard McGregor and Natasha Kassam, *Lines Blurred: Chinese Community Organisations in Australia*, Lowy Institute, Analysis, (Sydney: Lowy Institute, 2021), 2 November 2021, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/lines-blurred-chinese-community-organisations-in-australia>.
- ¹¹ “Beyond Fortress Australia”, Lowy Institute, Interactive, 14 September 2021, <https://interactives.lowyinstitute.org/features/fortress-australia/#introduction>.
- ¹² Carl Zimmer and Benjamin Mueller, “New Research Points to Wuhan Market as Pandemic Origin”, *The New York Times*, 27 February 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/02/26/science/covid-virus-wuhan-origins.html>.
- ¹³ Carl Zimmer, James Gorman and Benjamin Mueller, “Scientists Don’t Want to Ignore the ‘Lab Leak’ Theory, Despite No New Evidence”, *The New York Times*, 21 October 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/27/health/wuhan-coronavirus-lab-leak.html>.
- ¹⁴ “Wuhan Lab Leak Theory: How Fort Detrick became a Centre for Chinese Conspiracies”, BBC News, 23 August 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-58273322>.

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