
UMR Omnibus

AUSTRALIAN VIEWS ON SOME RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS

February 2007

SURVEY OF 1,000 ACROSS AUSTRALIA

INTERVIEW DATES 8-12 February 2007

Prepared By UMR Research Pty Ltd



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Introduction

This document summarises results of a representative nationwide survey of 1,000 Australians aged 18 and over which asked a set of questions relating to religion and politics. Interview dates were 8th to 12th February 2007.

A small proportion preferred not to answer one or more of the four questions. They have been omitted from results. It's perhaps worth noting that people who said they regularly attend church or another place of worship were less likely than the survey average to choose not to answer the other questions, despite their potentially controversial nature.

The margin for error for the total sample of 1,000 is +/- 3%..

Main Findings

One quarter of Australians regularly attend church

Exactly 24% of Australian adults attend church or some other place of worship at least once a month on average. Not surprisingly, older people are more likely than younger people to do so, as are women in comparison with men. Also, Coalition voters are more likely to be regular churchgoers than Labor voters.

Jesus: son of god to half, just a man to a quarter

About half – 51% - of Australians believe the Christian teaching that Jesus was the son of god. Another 9% sees him as having a direct connection with god, but as a prophet or representative rather than as an actual son. This means that 60% associate him directly with god in some way.

On the other hand, nearly a quarter – 23%, including 3% of regular church goers - believe he was just a man only and another 8% thinks he didn't exist at all; 10% say they are unsure. Younger people, Labor voters and men are most likely to believe that Jesus was a man only.

Only one third of Australians and one half of churchgoers believe in conscious life after death

Australia is, if anything, an agnostic nation when it comes to the question of conscious life after death (the word conscious was included to eliminate the “you become part of the soil and a plant” view). Nearly half, 45%, say they are unsure as to whether there is such life after death; a touch over one third – 34% - believes there is, while about one fifth – 21% - believes there is not.

Somewhat surprisingly, only 49% of regular churchgoers answer this question in the affirmative, as do just 25% of people aged over 60. It seems we become pessimistic about this topic as we age (unless you take the "no, not again!" view). The under 30s are most likely to believe in life after death.

And, despite the fact that Coalition voters are more likely than Labor voters to go to church regularly, there is minimal difference between them on this question (Coalition 37%, Labor 35%). This underlines the fact that the correlation between attending church and believing in life after death, while there, is not all that strong.

Jesus would anoint St Kevin, not St John

About four in ten Australians are aware that some senior figures on both sides of politics were debating not too long ago the implications of Christianity for Australian politics, including exactly half of churchgoers.

It would appear that Kevin Rudd and Labor have had the better of this debate as more Australians – including regular churchgoers – believe that Jesus would be more inclined to support Kevin Rudd rather than John Howard. This is by a margin of 27% to 14% (with 29% regarding them both equally and 30% being unsure).

Among regular churchgoers, who are more likely to be Coalition rather than Labor voters, Kevin Rudd wins by 25% to 19%.

Attendance at Church or Other Place of Worship

On average, do you attend church or another place of worship once a month or more often?

	Yes %	No %	Unsure %
All Respondents	24	76	-
Labor voters	19	81	-
Coalition voters	32	68	-
Male	21	79	-
Female	26	74	-
18-29	19	81	-
30-39	20	80	-
40-49	20	79	1
50-59	27	73	-
60 and Over	34	66	-
NSW	30	70	-
VIC	21	78	1
QLD	22	78	-
WA/SA/TAS/NT/ACT	19	81	-
Metropolitan	24	76	-
Regional	23	77	-
Attend church regularly	100	-	-
Under \$40,000	26	74	-
\$40,001 - \$80,000	26	74	-
Over \$80,000	21	79	-

5% refused to answer and have been omitted

Opinion about Jesus Christ

Do you believe that Jesus Christ:

	Was the son of God	Was a prophet or representative of God, but not an actual son	Was just a man only	Did not exist at all	Unsure
	%	%	%	%	%
All Respondents	51	8	23	8	10
Labor voters	43	11	28	7	11
Coalition voters	65	7	14	8	6
Male	45	8	31	9	7
Female	57	9	15	8	11
18-29	48	6	25	9	12
30-39	51	8	25	9	7
40-49	49	8	23	11	9
50-59	53	11	21	7	8
60 and Over	54	10	19	6	11
NSW	56	8	19	7	10
VIC	49	7	25	10	9
QLD	60	7	18	6	9
WA/SA/TAS/NT/ACT	37	12	30	11	10
Metropolitan	50	9	26	8	7
Regional	52	8	19	9	12
Attend church regularly	89	5	3	-	3
Under \$40,000	51	10	23	5	11
\$40,001 - \$80,000	57	9	19	7	8
Over \$80,000	48	7	28	8	9

8% refused to answer and have been omitted

Life After Death

Do you believe or not believe that people experience conscious life after they die or are you unsure?

	Believe %	Do not believe %	Unsure %
All Respondents	34	21	45
Labor voters	35	19	46
Coalition voters	37	18	45
Male	29	27	44
Female	38	15	47
18-29	39	22	39
30-39	34	19	47
40-49	35	15	50
50-59	36	19	45
60 and Over	25	30	45
NSW	36	16	48
VIC	25	27	48
QLD	42	14	44
WA/SA/TAS/NT/ACT	35	26	39
Metropolitan	32	23	45
Regional	36	19	45
Attend church regularly	49	12	39
Under \$40,000	35	21	44
\$40,001 - \$80,000	36	17	47
Over \$80,000	30	23	47

5% refused to answer and have been omitted

Awareness of Recent Political Debate in Australia About Christianity

Are you aware that some senior politicians have been recently debating the implications of Christianity for Australian politics?

	Yes, aware %	No, not aware %
All Respondents	39	61
Labor voters	43	57
Coalition voters	40	60
Male	41	59
Female	37	63
18-29	31	69
30-39	32	68
40-49	39	61
50-59	48	52
60 and Over	46	54
NSW	42	58
VIC	41	59
QLD	30	70
WA/SA/TAS/NT/ACT	38	62
Metropolitan	41	59
Regional	35	65
Attend church regularly	50	50
Under \$40,000	40	60
\$40,001 - \$80,000	36	64
Over \$80,000	41	59

5% refused to answer and have been omitted

Which Australian Leader Would Jesus Support?

Given your view of what Jesus Christ stood for, do you think he would be more inclined to support John Howard or Kevin Rudd?

	John Howard %	Kevin Rudd %	Same %	Unsure %
All Respondents	14	27	29	30
Labor voters	6	45	26	23
Coalition voters	28	7	28	37
Male	16	29	31	24
Female	13	25	27	35
18-29	19	29	24	28
30-39	13	30	24	33
40-49	10	23	36	31
50-59	12	28	33	27
60 and Over	15	23	31	31
NSW	16	26	29	29
VIC	15	28	28	29
QLD	10	27	32	31
WA/SA/TAS/NT/ACT	14	26	29	31
Metropolitan	15	28	26	31
Regional	13	25	34	28
Attend church regularly	19	25	29	27
Under \$40,000	14	24	35	27
\$40,001 - \$80,000	16	26	28	30
Over \$80,000	14	29	28	29

11% refused to answer and have been omitted