

## The Australian Identity in 2012

From our focus groups to our national surveys, from social research to demographic analysis, we spend much time taking the pulse of the community. In the lead up to the Australian Community Forum, here's a snapshot of Australia in 2012.

Australia today is loved for more than its sweeping plains and far horizons. Certainly the **old affections run deep** however there is more discussion on **Australia as a cultural hub, a fashion destination and a nation hosting iconic events.**

It seems that Australians are comfortable in their own skin- **embracing of this sunburnt country with all its iconic landmarks, yet proud of the cultural achievements and events, many of which are renowned internationally.** There's an understated confidence that welcomes the world to this unique landscape, yet has the posture to proudly list off our cultural achievements.

There is expressed a **self-assuredness of our place globally** and an acceptance of our traditions, history and Australian Spirit beyond clichés.

The **irrepressible Aussie humour** comes through strongly too. It is a safe humour- witty, dry and usually self deprecating. **Current events and troubles are responded to with a laugh.** The old "*stop laughing- this is serious*" attitude lives on.

Our weaknesses (e.g. the old tyranny of distance and isolation) are **reinterpreted humorously as strengths.**

There is a **depth to our reflections** on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Australia. The iconic language and Australianism is **retained and reinterpreted with a new sophistication**, and without the cringe.

Our cultural identity is also **being interpreted beyond the beach or sport.**

**Multiculturalism has come of age in Australia.** You can tell because **there is little self consciousness and even less tokenism expressed.** Rather the cultural mix is in our national DNA, it's part of our lifestyle- it's who we are. The fact that more than 1 in 4 of us weren't

born here seems unremarkable- as though it has always been thus. Many comments celebrated the richness of our lifestyle that comes through the input of so many cultures.

**The growing strength of the Aussie spirit:** When asked how the Australian spirit has changed over the last 15 years more than two in three (68%) believe it is as strong or stronger today, with the main changes expressed being:

- Growing maturity and sophistication in our culture.
- Improved tolerance and richer diversity in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Australia.
- More open expressions of this Australian spirit and patriotism.

**A Diverse Aussie Spirit:** The majority of Australians also believe that multiculturalism has had a positive and enriching impact in our country (83.6%). Approximately 9 in 10 of these positive responses identified the most celebrated aspects as being:

1. New experiences associated with the diversity of cultures (particularly food, music and fashion);
2. Growth in our global influence, connections and friendships at a national, community and individual level;
3. An appreciation for the sense of understanding, tolerance and unity that multiculturalism strives to promote.

In line with these findings, roughly 8 in 9 Aussies believe there are aspects of the Australian Spirit that unite us all – regardless of one’s cultural background (88.3%).

**Our place in the world:** Australians were asked how our nation is viewed around the world and almost 9 in 10 (88.3%) believe that Australia is viewed positively, or very positively, by the rest of the world. 10% believe that we are viewed neutrally, 1.8% hold that Australia is viewed negatively with not a single respondent stating that the rest of the world holds a very negative view of Australia.

When compared to other countries they have visited, over 4 in 5 Australians (80.6%) stated there is nowhere else they would prefer to live.

When asked about what makes Australia such a great place to live in, the top six responses were the outdoor landscape (28%), local climate (27%), the Australian way of life (26%), friendly people (22%), freedom (22%) and a peaceful and safe place to live (19%).