

*10 Essentials To Make  
Australia Fair Report*

Australia Fair 

## ***Is Australia fair?***

As Australia experiences a period of economic growth, what impact this change has had on fairness? There is concern around trends that challenge Australia's ideal as the land of the fair go – for example the divide between rich and poor or 'rich poor gap' and the concentration of joblessness and disadvantage in 'poverty postcodes' in rural and outer metropolitan areas. Ongoing social problems such as homelessness, domestic violence, and the poor standard of living and health of indigenous communities are a human stain on Australia's economic and cultural prosperity.

In responses to ACOSS's consultation, these concerns were indicated in both general and specific terms with respondents framing their 10 essentials to make Australia fair as aspirational or as a criticism of contemporary Australian problems such as rising housing prices.

The top ten items with the most responses are provided below with a full listing of topics attached as an appendix. The findings of this ranking concurs with polling data suggesting the particular popularity and concern of Australians about health, housing and education.

However, in considering what was needed to make Australia a fair country, respondents nominated concerns outside of their own immediate needs such as rights for indigenous people and poverty.

This report outlines the results of this online and local community consultations and features new telephone polls conducted by Roy Morgan research. It forms a snapshot of the essentials Australians believe are needed to make Australia fair and the values that concern them in relation to opportunities for all and our national identity.

## **10 Essentials to Make Australia Fair – Results of Online & Community Meetings Consultation**

This consultation was conducted from June-September 2006 at community meetings and online. A total of around 1600 people participated by providing nominating 15,964 nominations of topics that make Australia fair (10 essentials per participant). The details of the consultation are available in Appendix 2.

Based on number of nominations, percentage of respondents who nominated that topic and percentage of total nominations to each topic, the 10 essentials to make Australia fair are:

*Fair Health*

*Fair Services*

*Fair Education*

*Fair Environment*

*Fair Work*

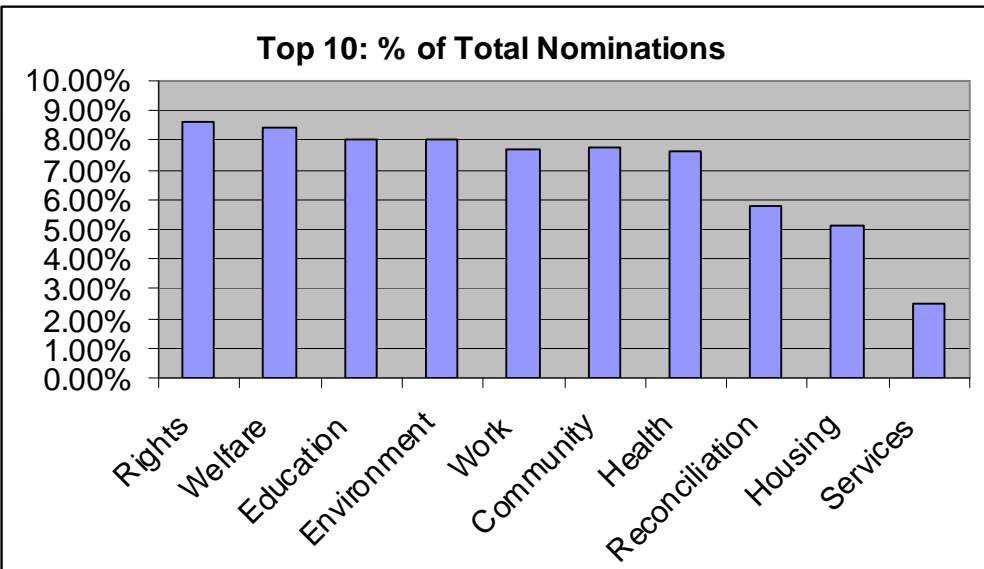
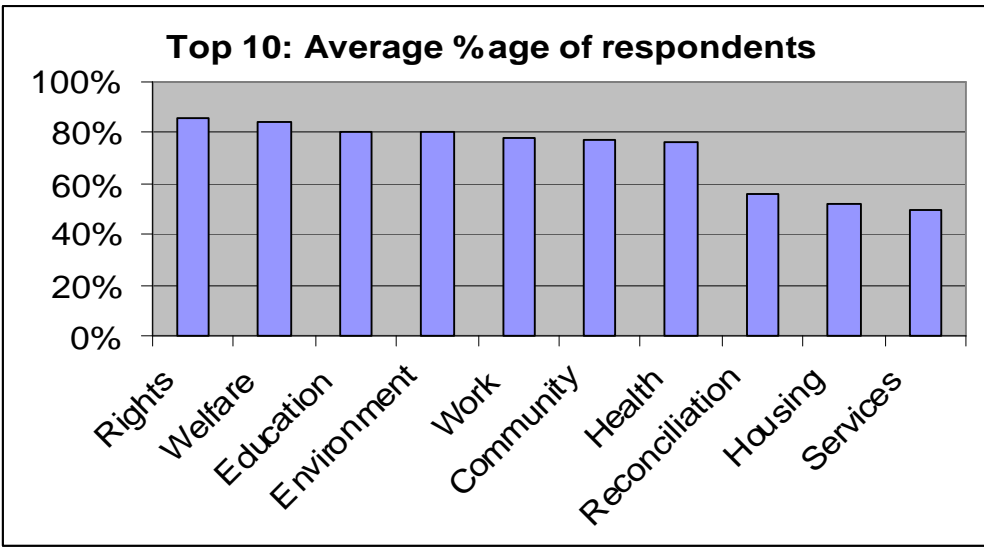
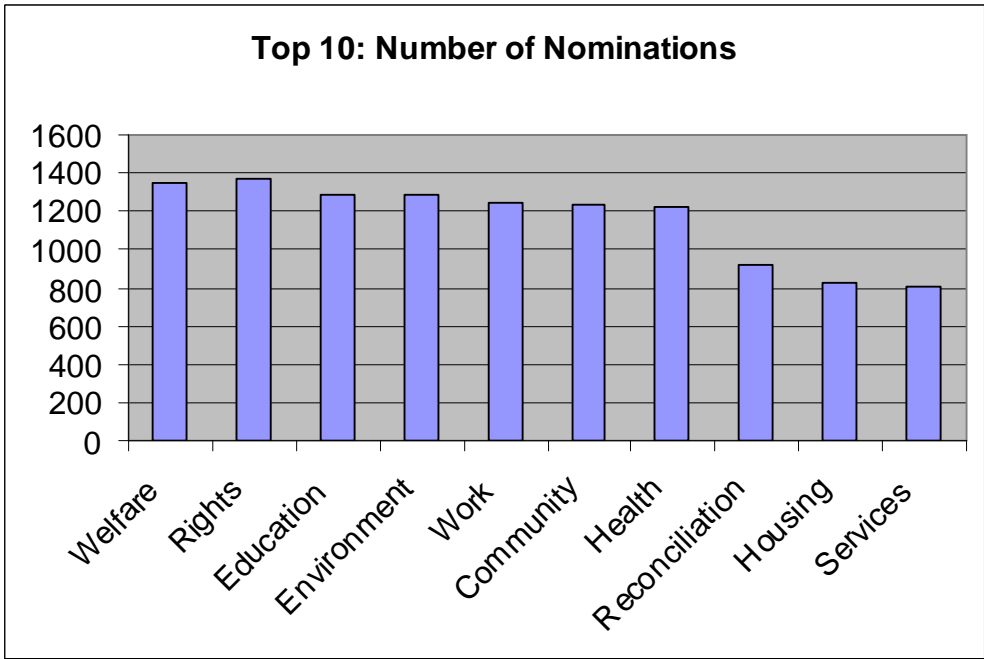
*Fair Community (incl. safety)*

*Fair Welfare*

*Fair Reconciliation*

*Fair Housing*

*Fair Rights and responsibilities*



### **1) Fair Rights**

An average of 86% of respondents indicated equal rights and responsibilities were one of their list of ten essentials to make Australia fair.

This category incorporates the expressed need to ensure equality for everyone regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or nationality. Respondents indicated Australia was fair when people had equal rights and opportunities to participate in work, society and politics.

This category counted for 8.6% of a total 15,964 entered nominations for essentials to make Australia fair.

### **2) Fair Welfare**

An average of 84% of respondents nominated poverty, adequate incomes, welfare or a safety net for poor people in their list of ten essentials to make Australia fair.

Specific concerns were expressed around the income and services for people living in poverty and the need to reduce poverty in Australia and overseas.

This category counted for 8.4% of a total 15,964 entered nominations for essentials to make Australia fair.

### **3) Fair Education**

An average of 80% of respondents included education in their list of ten essentials to make Australia fair.

Education is recognised as a key essential in providing Australians with a fair go but respondents expressed particular concern around the quality of school education for children and teenagers and the affordability of tertiary education and further training.

This category counted for 8% of a total 15,964 entered nominations for essentials to make Australia fair.

### **4) Fair Environment**

An average of 80% of respondents incorporated the environment in their list of ten essentials to make Australia fair.

This category incorporates the essential need for clean water and air as well as expressed desires for Australia to do more to protect its marine and land environment.

This category counted for 8% of a total 15,964 entered nominations for essentials to make Australia fair.

### **5) Fair Work**

An average of 78% of respondents selected work, wages or fair working conditions in their list of ten essentials to make Australia fair.

Respondents reported wages were a necessary protection against hardship and reward for work. Many raised specific concerns around working conditions and recent industrial relations legislation.

This category counted for 7.7% of a total 15,964 entered nominations for essentials to make Australia fair.

## **6) Fair Community**

77% of respondents chose safety, safe communities, freedom from violence and abuse or child protection in their list of ten essentials to make Australia fair.

Most respondents pointed to the need to ensure Australians were better protected from crime, child abuse, violence against women and other forms of violence in Australian society. Child protection and child abuse was the most nominated concern within this category.

This category counted for 7.76% of a total 15,964 entered nominations for essentials to make Australia fair.

## **7) Fair Health**

76% of respondents chose health in their list of ten essentials to make Australia fair. This category includes staffing, resources and access to all health services.

People reported ongoing concerns about access, affordability and quality of health services. Most nominated specific concerns were dental health and mental health.

This category counted for 7.65% of a total 15,964 entered nominations for essentials to make Australia fair.

## **8) Fair Reconciliation**

56% of respondents included indigenous rights or reconciliation in their list of ten essentials to make Australia fair.

Most common specific concerns reported were the need for reconciliation and improvement of living standards and health in indigenous communities.

This category counted for 5.76% of a total 15,964 entered nominations for essentials to make Australia fair.

## **9) Fair Housing**

52% of respondents selected housing in their list of ten essentials to make Australia fair.

This category includes the issues of homelessness, house prices, rental accommodation in cities and emergency housing. Housing affordability was cited as a common problem in Australian cities.

This category counted for 5.16% of a total 15,964 entered nominations for essentials to make Australia fair.

## **10) Fair Services**

50% of respondents selected community services in their list of ten essentials to make Australia fair.

This category includes all services, excepting health, education and child protection services. The most nominated specific service was child care. This category counted for 2.51% of a total 15,964 entered nominations for essentials to make Australia fair.

## Telephone polling

The results of the ACOSS consultation also concur with telephone polling commissioned by ACOSS and conducted by Roy Morgan Research.

On October 9/10, 2006, Roy Morgan Research conducted a survey of 672 Australians aged 14 and over. The survey asked a series of opinion based questions around whether Australia is a fair place to live.

When asked an open and unprompted question about what are the 10 essentials to make Australia a fairer place, people responded with 8 out of 10 of the essentials reported in the ACOSS consultation.

Most often nominated in telephone polling are Rights, Education, Work, Health, Welfare, Environment, Tax, Services, Reconciliation and Transport/Infrastrucutre. A full list of the responses are provided below in Table 1.

**Table 1: Key Essentials to Make Australia a Fair Place**

Equality and Human Rights	<b>24%</b>
Education	<b>24%</b>
Wages and Conditions	<b>20%</b>
Health	<b>16%</b>
Welfare/Safety net for poor	<b>8%</b>
Environment	<b>6%</b>
Tax	<b>4%</b>
Services (like child care)	<b>4%</b>
Indigenous rights & reconciliation	<b>4%</b>
Transport	<b>4%</b>
Better/fairer/honest Government	<b>4%</b>
Tolerance/understanding	<b>4%</b>
Housing	<b>4%</b>
Safety – from violence & abuse	<b>4%</b>
Employment/Training	<b>3%</b>

\* Questions were added to Roy Morgan Research's weekly CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) Omnibus survey. A nationally representative sample of 672 people, aged 14 and over, was interviewed on the evening of the 9th and 10th of October, 2005.

The 10 Essentials to Make Australia Fair correspond with other polling done around what was needed to make an individual's life fair in Australia. When polled by Roy Morgan Research\*, Australians were asked a series of questions about what they regarded as an acceptable standard of living.

As reported by Roy Morgan Research:

- Almost everyone agrees that all Australians have the right to an acceptable standard of living (94%);
- The majority agree that the Government has a responsibility to make sure everyone has a fair go (82%)

When asked who were likely to be not be experiencing an acceptable standard of living, people identified groups of concern corresponding to the 10 Essentials to Make Australia Fair – people reliant on social security, Indigenous Australians and people without access to adequate housing or income.

**Table 2: People perceived to be living below the acceptable standard of living**

	1st mentioned % of respondents	Total mentioned % of respondents
Unemployed/ People On Welfare	21	38
Aboriginal/ Indigenous	20	32
Poor	13	26
Elderly/ Aged/ Pensioners	9	23
Homeless	8	16
Single Parents/ Mothers	5	15
Low Income Earners/ Low Income Families	4	12
Ethnic	3	9
Disabled	1	8
People with mental health problems	1	6
Drug Addicts/ Alcoholics	1	5
Lazy/ Bludgers	2	4
Families	2	4
People In Country/ Outback/ Farming	1	3
Average Worker	2	3

\* Questions were added to Roy Morgan Research's weekly CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) Omnibus survey. A nationally representative sample of 655 people, aged 14 and over, was interviewed on the evening of the 10th and 11th of August, 2005.

When asked what the requirements were for an individual to have an acceptable standard of living, five of the top ten nominated essential requirements directly related to the 10 Essentials to Make Australia Fair, namely housing, wages or income, health, education. Other essentials included in this survey are food, clothing and also the individual's good health and social contact with others.

**Table 3: Perceived requirements for an acceptable standard of living**

	Total % of respondents
Shelter/ A Home/ Housing/ A Roof Over Their Heads	46
Income/ Decent Minimum Wage	44
Food	36
Education Opportunities	23
Access To Health Care	15
Clothing	11
Employment/ Opportunites For Employment	8
Good Health	6
Social Contact/ Family And Friends/ Emotional Support From Family And Friends	6
Good Attitude/ Self Esteem/ Motivation/ Dignity/ Self Respect/ Faith/ Willingness To Succeed/ Determination/ Patience/ Common Sense	5
Access To Social Services	5
Access To Economic Help	4
Service Utilities Eg Water/ Electricity/ Sewerage/ Telephone/ Waste Disposal	4
Right To Live Freely	3
Tax Cuts	2
Transport/ Access To Public Transport	2
More Money	1
Access To Other Facilities (Eg. Sporting)	1
Car	1
Household Products Eg Furniture/ Appliances	1

\* Questions were added to Roy Morgan Research's weekly CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) Omnibus survey. A nationally representative sample of 655 people, aged 14 and over, was interviewed on the evening of the 10th and 11th of August, 2005.

A large proportion of respondents named the basic necessities, such as some form of shelter or housing (46%), a decent income (44%) and food (36%). Employment/opportunities for employment, named by 8% could also be put in the same class as 'a decent income'.

The two most cited needs, after these essentials, were education opportunities (considered to be necessary by 23%) and access to health care (15%). Respondents' ideas about necessities for an acceptable standard of living also included things less easy to acquire, such as good health (6%), social contacts/family and friends (5%) and a good attitude (5%).

## Appendix 1: 10 Essentials to Make Australia Fair – Consultation Results

Number of Nominations	Topic	Average % of respondents
1369	Rights	86%
1348	Welfare	84%
1283	Education	80%
1282	Environment	80%
1242	Work	78%
1239	Community	77%
1222	Health	76%
920	Reconciliation	56%
824	Housing	52%
802	Services	50%
743	Democracy	46%
619	Law	39%
554	Family Life	35%
469	Economy	29%
406	Transport	25%
213	Women	13%
193	International	12%
113	Telecommunications	7%
109	Disability	7%
1014	Other	63%

# Have your say

## Step 1: Read the Australia Fair pack

You can go straight to Step 2 to enter your list of 10 essential things to make Australia fair OR to help you begin thinking about fairness download the pack from [www.acoss.org.au](http://www.acoss.org.au).

## Step 2: Contact details

Please enter your details below and send to the ACOSS office. By registering, you will become part of the network that wants to make Australia fair and we will send you occasional newsletters plus invitations to take other online actions.

Email:.....

Name:.....

Organisation: .....

Emails of Group: .....

## Step 3: Enter your essentials to make Australia fair

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