



Australia

Progress Map Australia

As a vast country with only a marginally developed rail network, Australia is highly dependent on road transport and mobility – the future of which lies in electric mobility. The progress map for Australia now shows that the country is ready and willing to embrace this future. People clearly want things to move faster when it comes to maintaining or even expanding mobility, whilst at the same time reducing the emission of greenhouse gases that are harming the climate. On the other hand, tackling the issue of climate change via a newly introduced fuel tax is not something Australia greets with enthusiasm; in this respect, the country would rather turn the dial back.

Australians also clearly wish their nation to be even more progressive when it comes to values touching on a person's freedom for self-realization. Equality (gender equality and gay rights) as well as issues concerning the individual working environment (expansion of public child-care, finding purpose and meaning in one's work and the idea of lifelong learning) are things on which Australians would like to see things move faster.

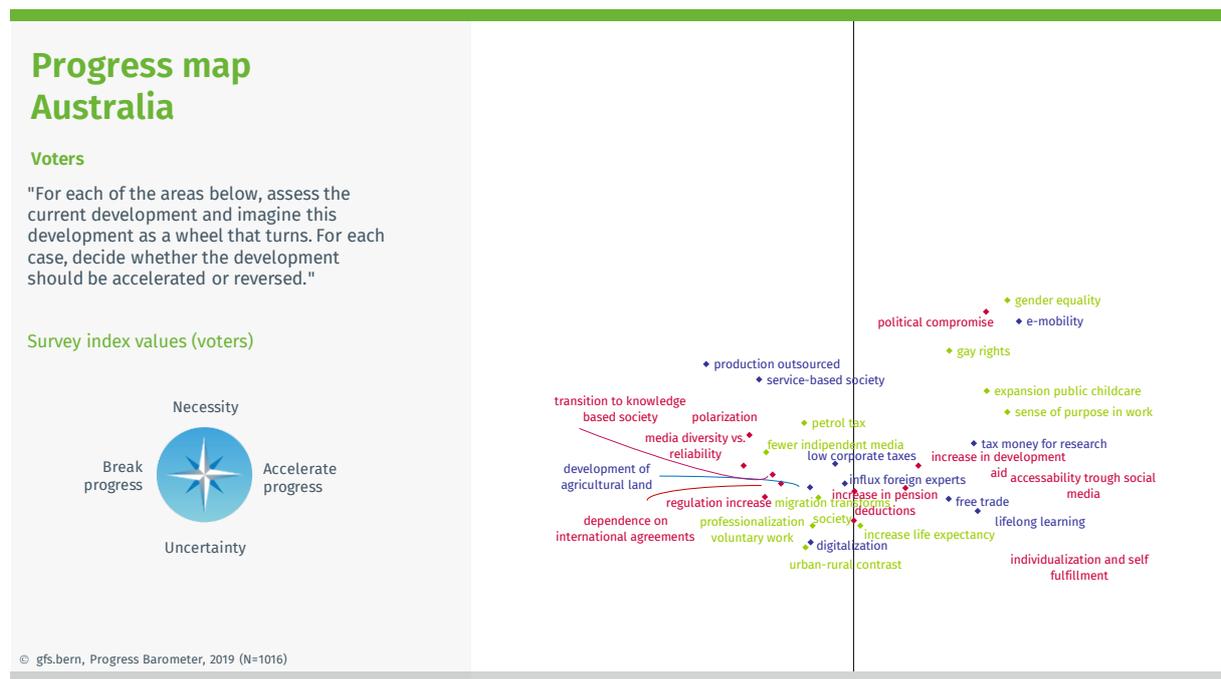
While Australians want to see more taxpayers' money spent on research, they would also prefer to turn the dial wheel when it comes to the influx of foreign experts into the country, the prospect of traditional professions being made redundant by digitalization and the country's move away from manufacturing to a services-based economy. Accordingly, Australians are particularly averse to outsourcing certain aspects of production abroad, this being the development where the nation would like to turn the dial back most of all.

Aspects of globalization in general seem to be met with certain reservations: while Australia wants less dependence on international agreements and prefers not have migration transform their society, there is also a clear desire for progress in terms of allowing more free trade. People are also willing to spend more money on development aid.



In the realm of politics and public opinion, Australia faces the same challenges as many other nations: Political polarization is on the increase¹ and, despite a high degree of trust in the media compared with other countries, the fake news issue is leaving its mark.² On both political polarization and the disappearance of independent media, Australia would like to turn the dial back. There is a clear desire for greater compromise in politics.

According to the census of 2016³, two-thirds of Australia's population live in its cities, leaving the vast heartland of the country mostly – and increasingly – unpopulated. The increase in this urban-rural divide is something on which Australia would like to turn the dial back. Accordingly, the fact that this growth of cities and infrastructure implies the redevelopment of more and more agricultural land is something that makes Australians quite averse to progress.



Desire for Progress in Australia

Compared to the other 16 countries surveyed in this year's Progress Barometer, the desire for progress in Australia on certain aspects of society, the economy and politics is offset by the aversion to further development in other areas. On average, this conflict leads to an overall desire for the status quo to be maintained – particularly in the area of politics and the economy. When it comes to societal issues, however, Australians have a slight desire for progress.

Australias self- assessment of progress

When asked, how Australians themselves would rate progress in their country, 51% are of the opinion that their country is currently very progressive or somewhat progressive when it comes to social issues, while 47% think the same of economic progress and 32% think political progress has been made. In terms of the nation's self-assessment of progress, the ranking of the three areas correspond to the index calculated from the 30 progress items.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/aug/07/australian-politics-becoming-more-polarised>

² <https://www.ipsos.com/en-au/australians-trust-media-less-ipsos-trust-media-study>

³ <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookup/Media%20Release10>

Further information



Future prospects: 19% of Australians see their personal future as quite bleak – as opposed to 78% who view it with some optimism or mixed feelings. Regarding the prospects of the next generation, Australians are more pessimistic. A majority (59%) tends to agree that there is a risk their children will not be as well off as the respondents themselves. And while they would consider themselves being part of Australia's middle class, they are afraid that their social and economic status is increasingly under pressure. Only 25% of Australians are very or quite confident that they will have enough money to live comfortably throughout their retirement years



Life satisfaction: Roughly half of all Australians (47%) are fully satisfied with their life, while a quarter of the population is completely dissatisfied (22%)



Power of innovation: 54% agree with the notion that new technologies will help solve major problems. While this is a slight majority, Australians are still more sceptical when it comes to the power of innovation than most other countries (Germany, Japan and Switzerland being even more sceptical than Australia)



Battle against climate change: While Australia is not enthusiastic about the introduction of a petrol tax, there are still clear signs of the wish for more action in dealing with climate change: 70% agree that the state needs to do more to stop companies from polluting the environment; 72% also think that the economy has been too one-sided in its focus on growth while sustainability has been ignored.



Social cohesion: According to Australians, only a small minority is getting richer while everyone else is missing out on the benefits of growth (77%). Consequently, the state should do more to reduce income inequality between rich and poor (61% tend to agree).