

NAB SPECIAL INSIGHT REPORT

LIFE IN THE “LUCKY COUNTRY” – IS AUSTRALIA STILL A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WHAT MAKES IT GREAT & WHAT OF THE FUTURE?



NAB Behavioural & Industry Economics

April 2018

By most measures (economic and social), Australia stacks up remarkably well against other countries as a great place to live. This enviable position often sees Australia labelled the “Lucky Country”. But do we agree, what is it we value most and what do we fear losing? In this special report, NAB asks over 2,000 Australians from all walks of life to explore life in the lucky country.

Highlights

Overwhelmingly, we continue to view our country very favourably... around 9 in 10 Australians agree this is indeed a great place to live (only 1 in 20 don't think so), and this view is broadly unchanged from last year - irrespective of where we live, how old we are and our gender.

What is it that continues to make Australia such a great place to live?... most Australians agree it's our access to open spaces, our beaches, parks etc., our general lifestyle & friendliness of people and relatively safety and security arising from crime, terrorism etc.

Some factors rang true for even more Australians than last year... especially safety, open spaces, our democratic system of government, the environment, law and order and people & lifestyle.

But there are also some areas that have gone backwards... in particular, utilities provision, our relative level of population, access to and relative housing affordability and living costs.

And, what makes Australia a great place to live varies according to where we live... Victoria leads the way for entertainment and jobs and NSW/ACT for education and law & order. People & lifestyle resonated most with Queenslanders, but they were also by far the least positive when it came to public transport. SA/NT was highest for open spaces, but fell well behind for utilities. Roads and utilities were viewed much more positively in WA, while Tasmania led the way for safety and travel time.

Of concern, Australians believe most things will deteriorate over the next 10 years, led by the cost of living and housing access/affordability... other key concerns include taxes, jobs and social welfare. The only areas expected to improve are entertainment (cinemas, theatre, sports etc.), public transport, telecommunications & internet and inclusion (our acceptance of diversity in gender, race, age and beliefs).

There were also some interesting shifts in expectations for the future, with far fewer Australians positive about telecommunications and utilities... perhaps reflecting concerns in regards to the rollout of Australia next generation broadband and rising utility prices.

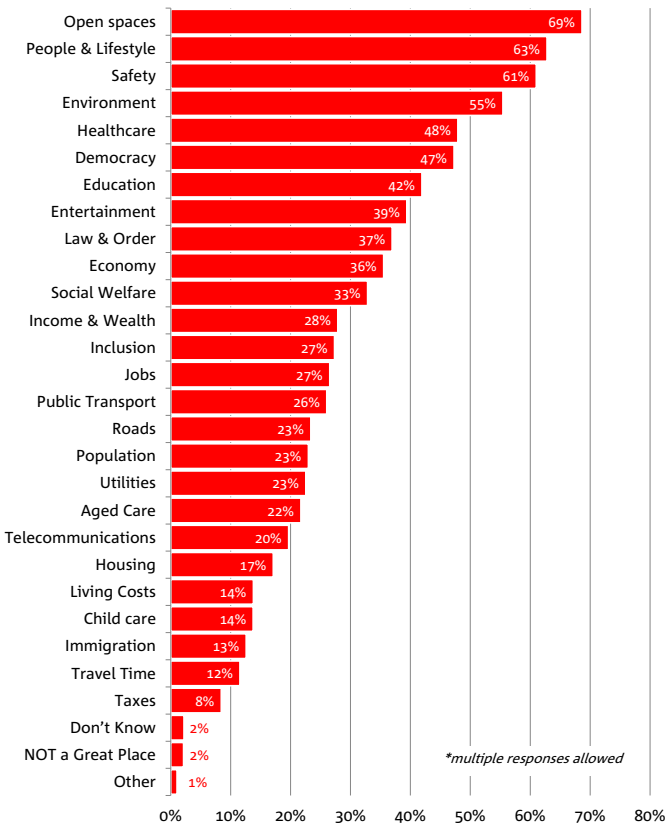
Again, how we see the future, varies a lot by state... NSW is the only state where inclusion is expected to worsen in the next 10 years. Victoria is the most positive for education and least negative for aged care and jobs. Queenslanders are the most negative for the environment, utilities, social welfare, and along with Tasmanians, the economy. Those in SA/NT, are most positive about their roads, but by far the most negative about jobs, aged care and healthcare. WA is the most positive for inclusion. Tasmanians are much more optimistic about entertainment, public transport, telecommunications, immigration and democracy, but also far less optimistic about living costs, housing and education.

By age, young Australians are much more optimistic across nearly all factors... particularly in regards to entertainment, public transport, telecommunications, inclusion, education, roads, the economy, healthcare and jobs. In contrast, over 50s are the most pessimistic, especially for living costs and safety. A lot more over 50s also expect things to worsen for jobs, social welfare, travel time, utilities, immigration and democracy.

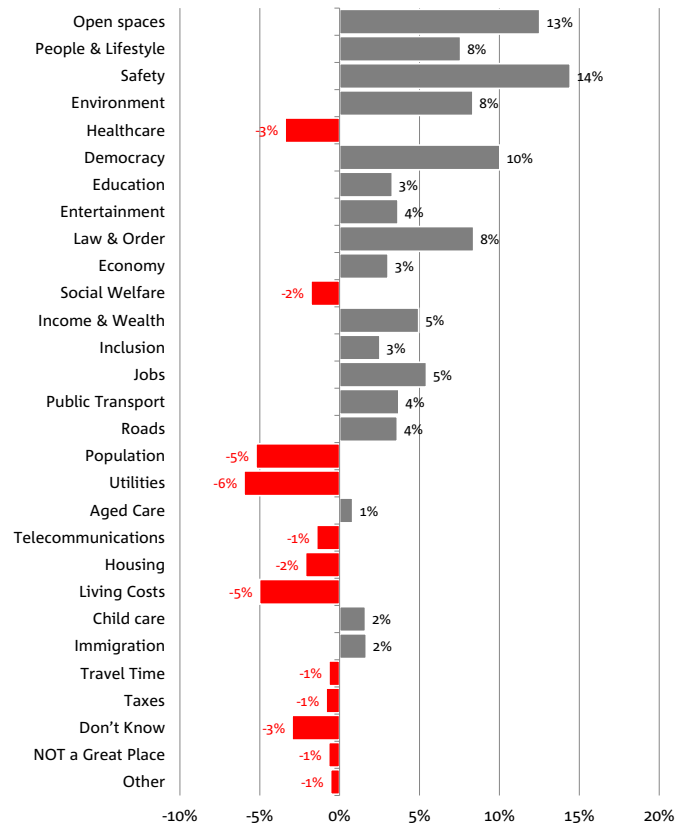


What makes Australia a great place to live and what has changed over the past year?

WHAT MAKES AUSTRALIA A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE - 2018
(percentage of respondents)*

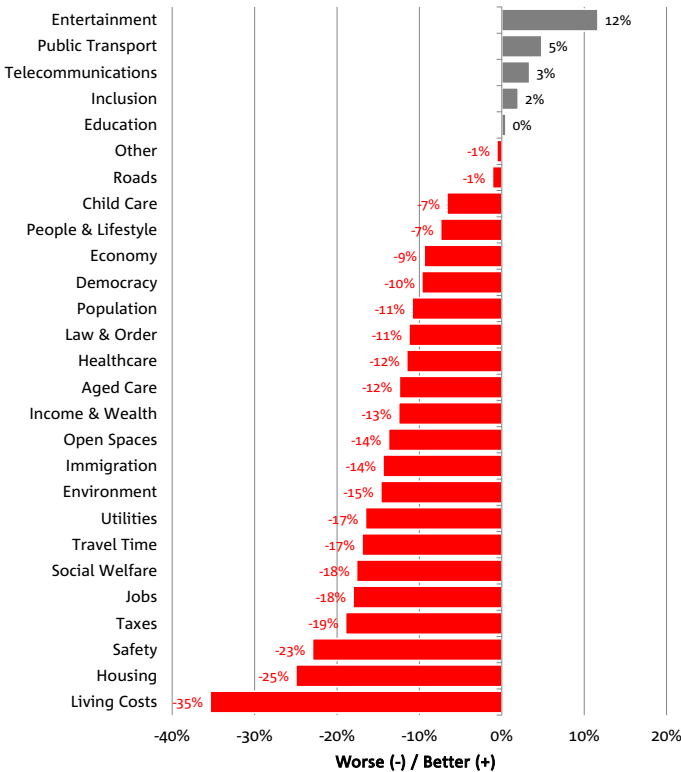


WHAT MAKES AUSTRALIA A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE - 2018
WHAT'S CHANGED SINCE LAST YEAR

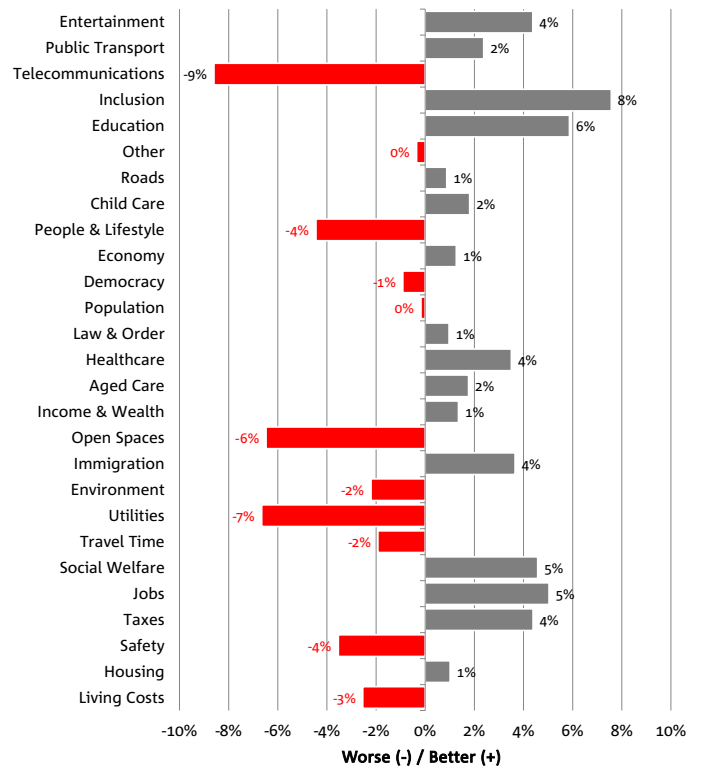


Will Australia still be a great place to live a decade from now and what has changed over the past year?

WILL IT GET BETTER OR WORSE IN NEXT 10 YEARS - 2018?
(net balance)



HOW HAS IT CHANGED SINCE LAST YEAR?
(difference)



*net balance (improve/deteriorate) e.g. 10% expect living costs to get better; 45% to get worse:
On balance -35% worse

Detailed Report

By most measures (social and economic), Australia stacks up well against all other countries as a great place to live. Our capital cities are also consistently ranked highly among the most liveable places in the world.

But do we agree, what is that we value most and what do we fear losing?

In this report, NAB again asks Australians to tell us how they see life in the lucky country.

Overwhelmingly, we continue to view our country very favourably - around 9 in 10 (88%) agree that Australia is indeed a great place to live.

And, only 1 in 20 (6%) don't believe it's a great place to live.

Importantly, these views have remained broadly unchanged over the past year - irrespective of where we live, how old we are and by gender.

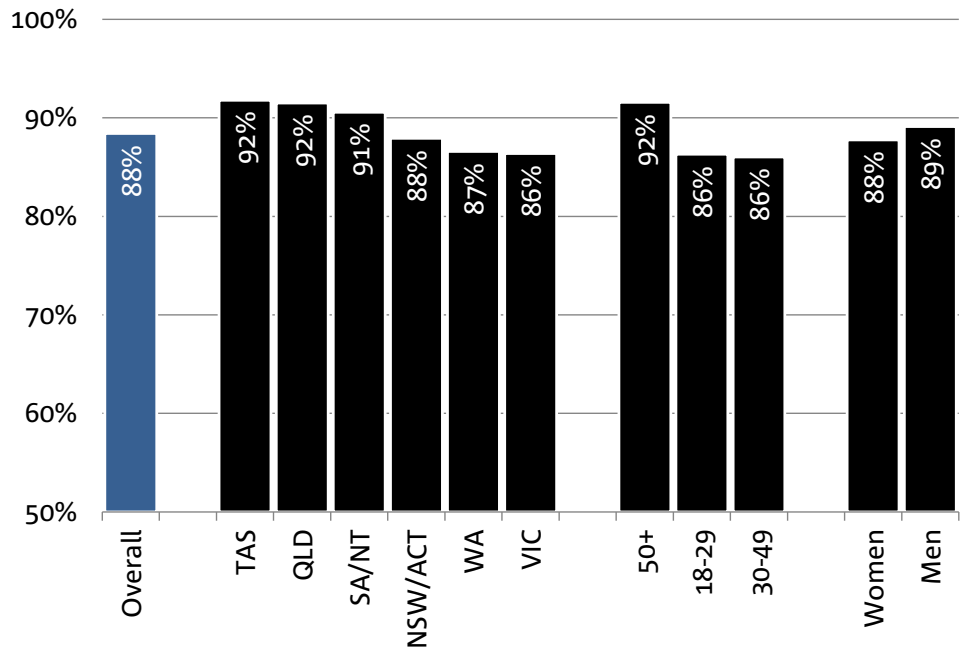
In fact, in Tasmania people are notably even more positive, with the number of Tasmanians who said Australia was a great place to live climbing to 92%, up from 85% a year ago.

By state, Tasmania (92%) and Queensland (92%) are the most positive and Victoria (86%) and WA (87%) the least positive - but still at very high levels.

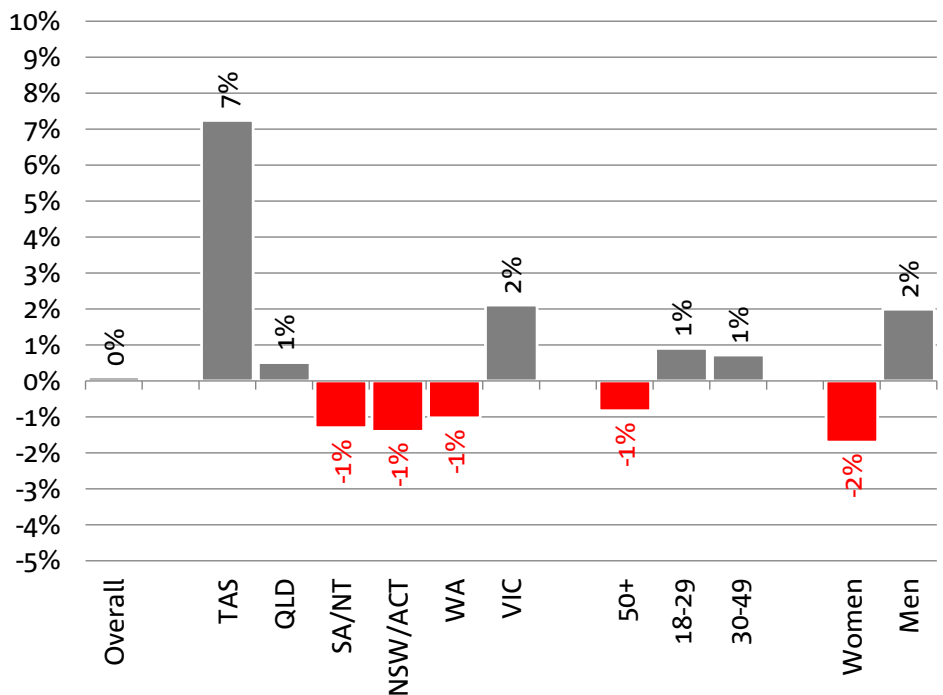
By age, Australians over the age of 50 are the most positive (92%) ahead of 30-49 year olds (86%) and 18-29 year olds (86%).

Women and men were equally optimistic. But, there was an improvement in positive perceptions among men, while women were a little less positive compared to last year.

NUMBER OF AUSTRALIANS WHO THINK AUSTRALIA IS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE NOW - 2018 (%)



HOW IT'S CHANGED SINCE LAST YEAR



What is it that continues to make Australia such a great place to live?

According to around 2 in 3 (69%) Australians, it is access to **open spaces**, our beaches, parks etc., our **general lifestyle & friendliness of people** (63%) and relatively **safety** and security arising from crime, terrorism etc. (61%).

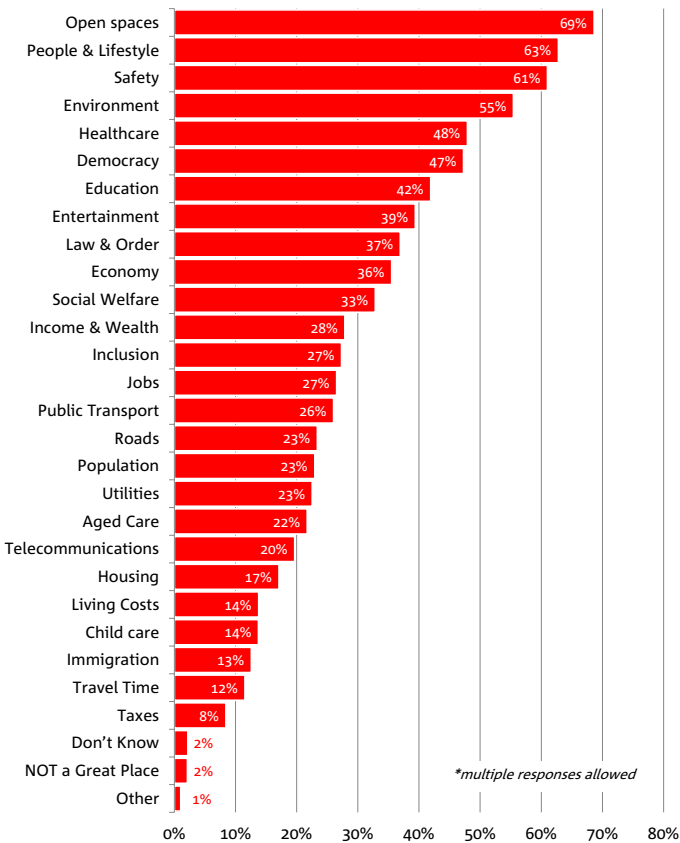
Other key factors include our clean **environment** and unique natural wonders (55%), access to affordable and quality **healthcare** (48%), **democracy** (47%) and access to quality **education** (42%).

Encouragingly, a lot more people also said these factors made Australia great than in 2017, except healthcare, which resonated with slightly fewer people.

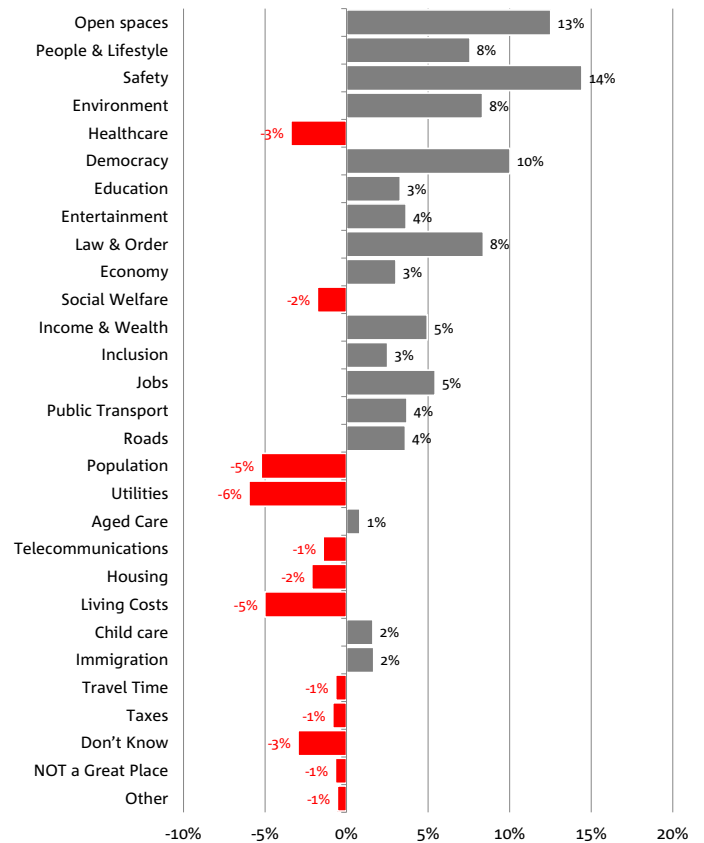
But there are also some areas that have gone backwards since last year.

In particular, we observed a notable fall in the number of Australians who said the quality of **utilities** provision, our relative level of **population**, and **living costs** were factors that made Australia a great place to live.

WHAT MAKES AUSTRALIA A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE - 2018
(percentage of respondents)*



WHAT MAKES AUSTRALIA A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE - 2018
WHAT'S CHANGED SINCE LAST YEAR



But what makes Australia a great place to live varies quite a lot according to the state we live in.

For example, Victoria led the way for **entertainment** and **jobs**, while NSW/ACT led for **education** and **law & order**.

People & lifestyle resonated most with Queenslanders, but they were also by far the least positive when it came to **public transport**.

SA/NT was highest for **open spaces**, but fell well behind for **utilities**.

Roads and **utilities** were viewed much more positively in WA, while Tasmania led the way for **safety** and **travel time**.

By age, over 50s continue to view most factors more positively than all other age groups, except **jobs**. Young and middle-aged Australians shared broadly similar views across all factors.

WHAT MAKES AUSTRALIA A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE? - STATE, AGE & GENDER

	AUST	NSW/ACT	VIC	QLD	SA/NT	WA	TAS	18-29	30-49	50+	Men	Women
Open Spaces	69%	67%	67%	71%	72%	70%	71%	57%	61%	81%	66%	71%
People & Lifestyle	63%	59%	64%	67%	65%	64%	56%	52%	57%	73%	60%	65%
Safety	61%	63%	59%	61%	65%	56%	72%	61%	58%	64%	64%	59%
Environment	55%	54%	53%	57%	64%	54%	67%	49%	51%	63%	55%	56%
Healthcare	48%	50%	47%	47%	43%	50%	42%	42%	44%	55%	46%	50%
Democracy	47%	47%	49%	47%	38%	47%	58%	39%	36%	61%	52%	43%
Education	42%	44%	43%	42%	39%	36%	37%	37%	40%	46%	39%	44%
Entertainment	39%	39%	46%	36%	40%	33%	29%	38%	36%	43%	37%	41%
Law & Order	37%	40%	35%	35%	34%	39%	37%	32%	29%	47%	39%	35%
Economy	36%	38%	34%	34%	35%	33%	38%	30%	29%	44%	38%	33%
Social Welfare	33%	30%	36%	31%	36%	36%	34%	27%	26%	42%	35%	31%
Income & Wealth	28%	29%	29%	24%	25%	28%	31%	26%	26%	31%	31%	25%
Inclusion	27%	25%	30%	28%	29%	22%	40%	23%	23%	33%	25%	29%
Jobs	27%	29%	31%	21%	20%	24%	26%	31%	27%	24%	27%	26%
Public Transport	26%	26%	28%	20%	27%	30%	32%	22%	21%	32%	27%	25%
Roads	23%	20%	23%	21%	24%	40%	21%	20%	22%	26%	25%	21%
Population	23%	22%	25%	22%	24%	23%	23%	19%	18%	30%	26%	20%
Utilities	23%	22%	23%	21%	14%	34%	20%	16%	19%	29%	24%	21%
Aged Care	22%	21%	22%	23%	19%	22%	22%	14%	15%	31%	23%	21%
Telecoms	20%	19%	20%	18%	18%	25%	20%	14%	15%	27%	22%	17%
Housing	17%	15%	16%	18%	21%	20%	23%	15%	13%	22%	18%	17%
Living Costs	14%	13%	15%	13%	16%	13%	23%	9%	10%	19%	16%	12%
Child Care	14%	13%	13%	14%	13%	17%	17%	14%	12%	15%	14%	14%
Immigration	13%	14%	11%	11%	17%	11%	13%	14%	10%	14%	14%	11%
Travel Time	12%	9%	9%	10%	22%	14%	36%	9%	11%	13%	12%	11%
Taxes	8%	8%	10%	7%	10%	8%	13%	8%	6%	11%	10%	7%
NOT a great place to live	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	4%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%

WILL AUSTRALIA STILL BE A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE A DECADE FROM NOW?

Clearly, most people believe Australia is a great place to live now.

But, what about the future?

When asked whether they thought Australia would still be a great place to live in 10 years' time, only 55% (just over 1 in 2) still thought so (compared to 88% who think Australia is great now).

Tasmanians are by far the least optimistic about the future and even more so than in 2017.

In contrast, West Australians are the most confident and notably more so than last year. South Australians are also somewhat more optimistic about the future.

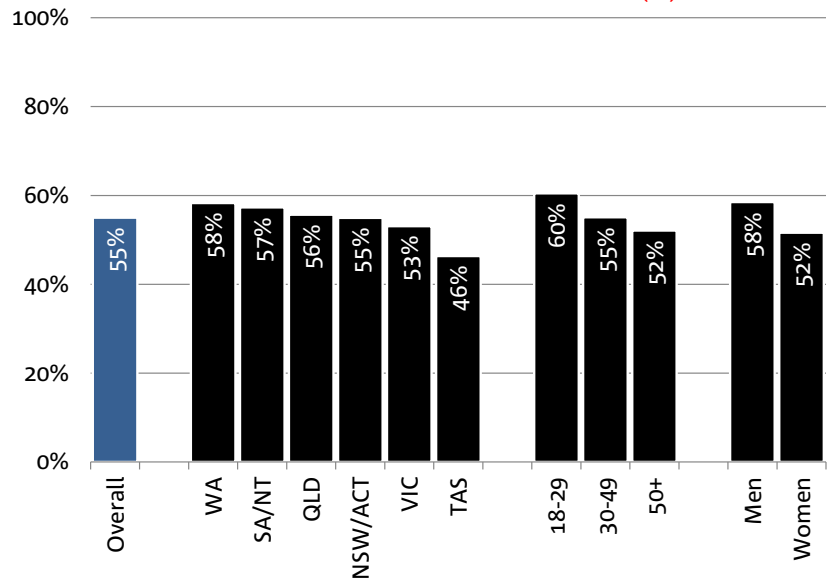
Encouragingly, young people (18-29 years old) are the most optimistic of any age group. They are also more confident than in 2017. Over 50s are the least optimistic.

There is a bigger gulf in perceptions by gender.

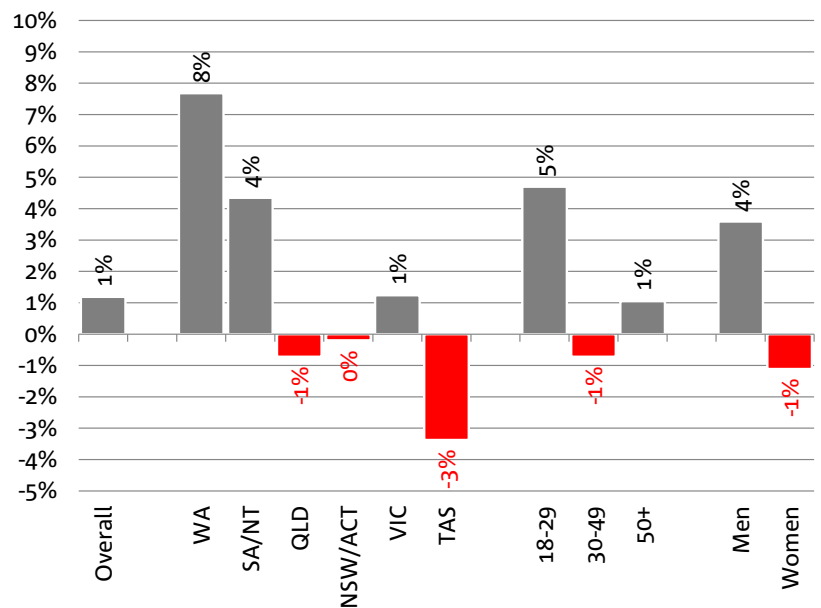
More men (58%) see a bright future than women (52%).

Men are also more optimistic about the future than they were last year, while women are slightly less optimistic.

NUMBER OF AUSTRALIANS WHO THINK AUSTRALIA WILL BE A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE IN 10 YEARS' TIME - 2018 (%)



HOW IT'S CHANGED SINCE LAST YEAR



So, how might Australia change in the future - what do we think will get better and what will get worse? Of concern, Australians on balance believe most things will deteriorate.

The key exceptions are the quality of **entertainment** options such as cinemas, theatre and sports, the quality, availability and physical condition of our **public transport** networks, **telecommunications** and internet and our acceptance of diversity in gender, race, age and beliefs or **inclusion**.

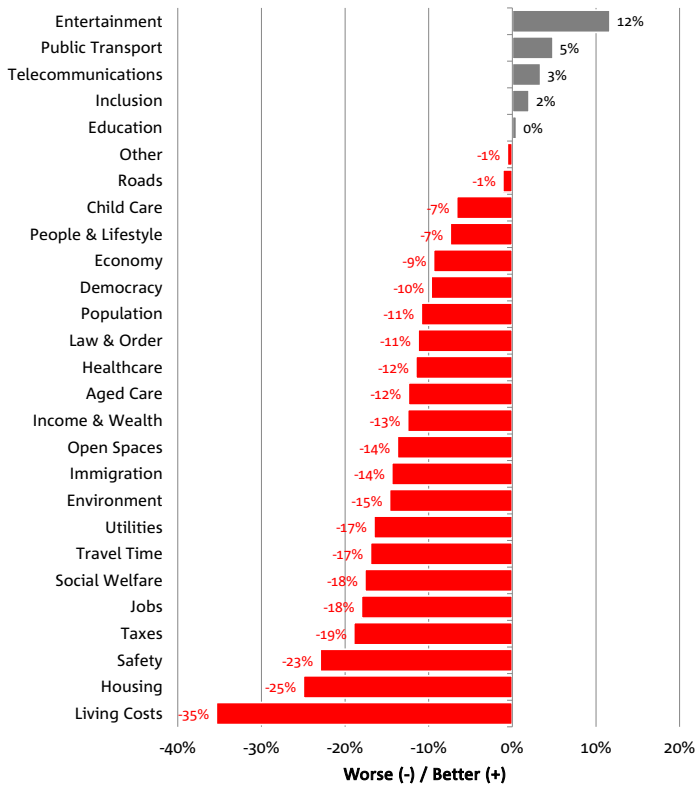
These were the only areas where more people expected things to improve than deteriorate.

NAB's Consumer Behaviour research has consistently identified the cost of living as the single biggest driver of consumer anxiety. So it's not surprising that our **living costs** (-35%) were also pinpointed by most Australians as the key area they think will deteriorate the most over the next 10 years.

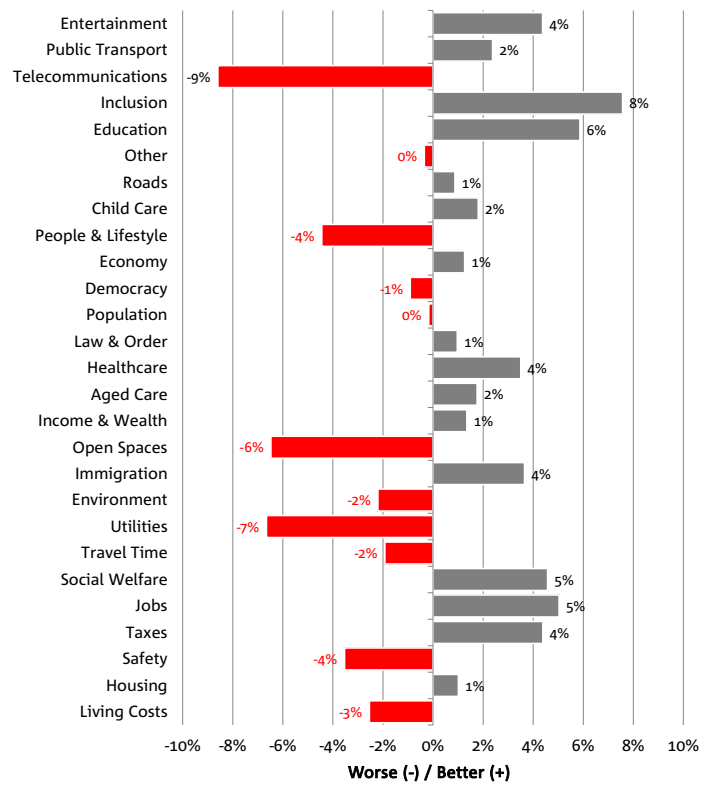
Housing access and affordability (-25%) was next, followed by **safety** (-23%), **taxes** (-19%), **jobs** (-18%) and **social welfare** (-18%).

There have also been some interesting shifts in our views since last year. In particular, far fewer Australians were positive about the future in regards to **telecommunications** and **utilities**, perhaps reflecting concerns in regards to the rollout of Australia next generation broadband and rising utility prices.

WILL IT GET BETTER OR WORSE IN NEXT 10 YEARS - 2018?
(net balance)



HOW HAS IT CHANGED SINCE LAST YEAR?
(difference)



*net balance (improve/deteriorate) e.g. 10% expect living costs to get better; 45% to get worse: On balance -35% worse



WILL IT GET BETTER OR WORSE? - STATE, AGE & GENDER

The overall results mask some very big differences in opinions by state and age.

	AUST	NSW/ ACT	VIC	QLD	SA/ NT	WA	TAS	18-29	30-49	50+	Men	Women
Entertainment	12%	12%	11%	12%	12%	11%	17%	16%	11%	10%	10%	13%
Public Transport	5%	5%	5%	1%	9%	6%	15%	14%	2%	3%	5%	5%
Telecoms	3%	3%	5%	-2%	3%	9%	15%	10%	0%	3%	3%	4%
Inclusion	2%	-3%	6%	0%	3%	8%	7%	6%	2%	0%	1%	3%
Education	0%	-2%	5%	-1%	1%	3%	-12%	6%	-1%	-1%	0%	1%
Other	-1%	0%	-1%	0%	1%	-3%	-4%	-1%	0%	-1%	0%	-1%
Roads	-1%	-1%	0%	-7%	7%	2%	-10%	10%	-5%	-4%	-2%	0%
Child Care	-7%	-6%	-6%	-8%	-8%	-6%	-6%	0%	-9%	-8%	-8%	-5%
People & Lifestyle	-7%	-9%	-9%	-6%	-5%	-3%	-6%	1%	-10%	-10%	-8%	-7%
Economy	-9%	-10%	-6%	-14%	-12%	-3%	-14%	4%	-11%	-14%	-8%	-11%
Democracy	-10%	-12%	-6%	-14%	-10%	-6%	2%	-3%	-8%	-15%	-10%	-10%
Population	-11%	-13%	-12%	-13%	-2%	-4%	-1%	-6%	-14%	-11%	-11%	-11%
Law & Order	-11%	-8%	-10%	-16%	-11%	-15%	-19%	1%	-13%	-16%	-14%	-8%
Healthcare	-12%	-12%	-10%	-13%	-18%	-8%	-7%	5%	-14%	-17%	-11%	-12%
Aged Care	-12%	-14%	-7%	-15%	-21%	-9%	-16%	-1%	-15%	-16%	-11%	-14%
Income & Wealth	-13%	-10%	-14%	-12%	-16%	-15%	-13%	0%	-15%	-17%	-13%	-12%
Open Spaces	-14%	-17%	-11%	-17%	-8%	-8%	-24%	-10%	-14%	-15%	-12%	-15%
Immigration	-14%	-17%	-14%	-16%	-11%	-12%	7%	-5%	-14%	-20%	-16%	-13%
Environment	-15%	-16%	-15%	-19%	-9%	-11%	-8%	-10%	-18%	-14%	-14%	-16%
Utilities	-17%	-17%	-17%	-21%	-14%	-10%	-11%	-2%	-16%	-25%	-16%	-17%
Travel Time	-17%	-19%	-19%	-17%	-10%	-12%	-10%	-5%	-16%	-24%	-17%	-17%
Social Welfare	-18%	-17%	-16%	-24%	-18%	-13%	-10%	-9%	-17%	-23%	-17%	-18%
Jobs	-18%	-17%	-14%	-21%	-31%	-15%	-19%	3%	-19%	-28%	-17%	-19%
Taxes	-19%	-18%	-19%	-20%	-22%	-19%	-10%	-15%	-21%	-19%	-19%	-19%
Safety	-23%	-18%	-24%	-25%	-30%	-28%	-17%	-2%	-22%	-34%	-25%	-21%
Housing	-25%	-27%	-22%	-26%	-26%	-21%	-32%	-14%	-27%	-29%	-24%	-26%
Living Costs	-35%	-34%	-34%	-41%	-31%	-35%	-45%	-22%	-33%	-44%	-33%	-38%

For example, NSW was the only state where **inclusion** (-3%) was expected worsen in the next 10 years.

Victoria was the most positive state for **education** (5%) and least negative in regards to **aged care** (-7%) and **jobs** (-14%).

Australians living in Queensland were the most negative when it came to the **environment** (-19%), **utilities** (-21%), **social welfare** (-24%) and along with Tasmania, the **economy** (-14%).

In contrast, people living in SA/NT, were the most positive about seeing an improvement in their **roads** (7%), but were also by far the most negative about **jobs** (-31%), **aged care** (-21%) and **healthcare** (-18%).

WA was the most positive state for **inclusion** (8%).

Tasmanians were by far the most optimistic in regards to **entertainment** (17%), **public transport** (15%), **telecommunications** (15%), **immigration** (7%) and **democracy** (2%), but also by far the least optimistic about **living costs** (-45%), **housing** (-32%) and **education** (-12%).

By age, young Australians are much more optimistic across nearly all factors. They are particularly optimistic in regards to **entertainment** (16%), **public transport** (14%), **telecommunications** (10%), **inclusion** (6%), **education** (6%), **roads** (10%), the **economy** (4%), **healthcare** (5%) and **jobs** (3%).

Fewer young people also expect things to get worse across all other factors.

In contrast, over 50s are the most pessimistic, particularly when it comes to **living costs** (-44%) and **safety** (-34%).

A lot more over 50s on balance are also expecting things to worsen when it comes to **jobs** (-28%), **social welfare** (-23%), **travel time** (-24%), **utilities** (-25%), **immigration** (-20%) and **democracy** (-15%).



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