



Kindness in Australia

THE NATIONAL KINDNESS INDEX

mccrindle





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Introduction

Helga's is passionate about helping Australians feel happier, healthier, and more connected through acts of care and encouraging others to be kind. Knowing that every grain of care counts, Helga's is seeking to understand how acts of kindness can have a ripple effect in our communities. That's why in 2021, Helga's commissioned McCrindle to produce a first of its kind report, exploring the current state of kindness in Australia. This report and the tools used to measure Australia's kindness have been developed to provide a benchmark to track Australia's kindness overtime. This report tells the story of how Australians share kindness and reminds us that a little kindness in the community goes a long way in the world.

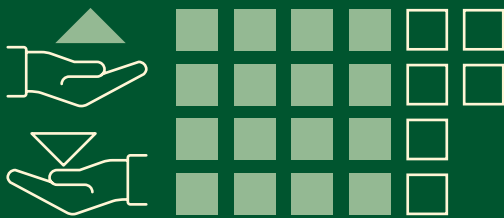


In a world where loneliness is prominent and felt by half of Australians, at least once a week¹, showing kindness to your neighbour may be the perfect antidote to some of the challenges we face as a country. Showing kindness can increase our connection with others which may improve our happiness and when we are happy, we are healthy. It's important, therefore, to consider how Australians can incorporate kindness, showing kindness to one another, in order to create a kinder society for all.

¹ Lim, M. 2018. Australian Loneliness report: a survey exploring the loneliness levels of Australians and the impact on their health and wellbeing. Australian Psychological Society and Swinburne University.

Executive summary

Kindness is part of Australia's fabric. Not only do Australians believe the culture of kindness in Australia is stronger than the rest of the world (62%), they're also living that out in their daily lives. The average Australian performs 16 acts of kindness every week through the words they speak, the actions they perform, and the time they give.



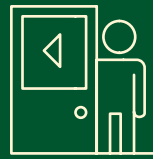
Each Australian performs an average of **16 acts of kindness per week**, but only receive six acts

Being kind isn't always easy. Australians face barriers to being kind such as being out of their comfort zone (25%) or not knowing how their kindness will be received (25%). Australians are looking for more acts of kindness which display a friendly heart, including:



Food may be key in helping Australians show kindness to each other, as almost four in five (78%) believe sharing a meal with friends and family is a powerful way to display kindness. Three in four Australians (75%) believe making someone food is a powerful way to display kindness and seven in ten (69%) believe buying someone food is powerful.

The most common acts of kindness that Australians perform are:



72%

Holding the door or lift open for someone



68%

Giving someone a compliment



67%

Asking if someone is ok

While Australians are conscious of the kindness they give to others, they are less aware of the kindness they receive. Australians only record an average of 6 acts of kindness received each week, highlighting a gap of 10 acts of kindness that are going unnoticed. This highlights our need to be mindful not only when being kind, but also, taking note and appreciating when others might be showing kindness to us.

The acts of kindness we want more of:



67%

Asking if someone is ok



64%

Helping someone in need



62%

Saying 'hi' to someone you walk past on the street

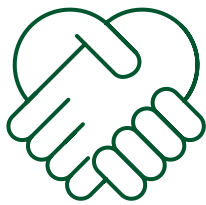


Australians are optimistic about where kindness is going in Australia. Not only are they more likely to believe Australians are kinder now than they were 12 months ago (46%), but two in five (40%) also believe Australians will be kinder in the future.

Kindness Index

The Kindness Index, developed by McCrindle for Helga's, calculates a kindness score for individuals based on factors including their behaviour, attitudes, and their thoughts and feelings towards the virtues of kindness.

The Index is based on three key virtues which define what it means to be a kind person. Overall, the three virtues are comprised of nine unique indicators. Each indicator is determined by a question using a 6-point Likert scale measuring how strongly someone agrees with certain statements or how often they perform certain activities. These virtues help to paint the picture of how an individual engages with each virtue.



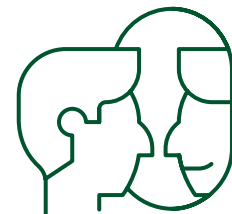
Empathy measures the extent to which a person feels a sense of connection to others that drives a desire to show kindness. The indicators of empathy are:

- Compassion
- Consideration
- Friendliness



Altruism measures the extent to which a person is willing to give without expecting to receive anything in return. The indicators of altruism are:

- Encouragement
- Generosity
- Trust



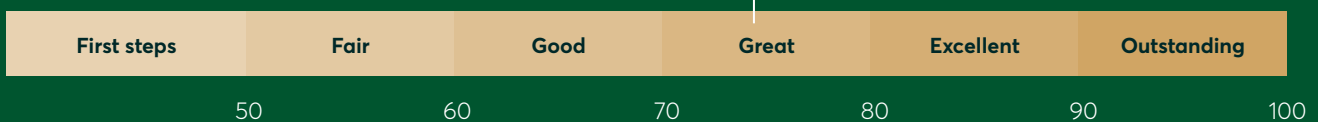
Reflection evaluates the degree to which a person is controlled and reflects on their actions. The indicators of reflection are:

- Gentleness
- Patience
- Tolerance

An average score is provided for each of the three virtues, with the average across the three virtues providing the overall Kindness Index score. The Kindness Index score can range from 0 to 100. The diagram below provides a benchmark for different score brackets to show a person's position on the Kindness Index.

74

AUSTRALIA'S KINDNESS INDEX SCORE 2021



YOUNGER GENERATIONS SCORE THE HIGHEST IN THE KINDNESS INDEX



77

Gen Z
18 - 26



74

Gen Y
27 - 41



74

Gen X
42 - 56



71

Baby Boomers
57 - 75



71

Builders
76+



THE DIFFERENCE OF EMPLOYMENT

Employment makes a difference with employed Australians scoring higher than those who are not employed or who are looking for work.

75 Employed Australians

69 Australians not employed or looking for work



PARENTS WITH YOUNGER CHILDREN ARE KINDER

Interacting with younger children all day may provide more opportunities to display kindness as parents with younger children score higher in the Kindness Index.

77 Parents with at least one child under 18

72 Parents with children over 18

72 Not parents

KINDNESS BEGINS WITH EMPATHY.

Empathy makes up one of the virtues of kindness. Part of being kind is to be considerate of others; empathy explores our motivation to show compassion, our ability to consider others' needs, and our capacity to show friendliness.

Of the empathy indicators, Australians are the strongest in their welcoming attitude as three in four (77%) strongly or somewhat agree others would consider them a welcoming person. More than one in two Australians (57%) display empathy as they consider the needs of others either all the time or very often. Furthermore, Australians feel motivated to help others all the time or very often (50%)



STATE INSIGHTS

Tasmania, the Northern Territory, and Western Australia are the most welcoming states with their residents being more likely than the rest of Australia to agree others would consider them a welcoming person.



82% Tasmania
82% Northern Territory
78% Western Australia

Those from the Northern Territory, Tasmania, and New South Wales are most likely to feel motivated to help someone all the time or very often.



56% Northern Territory
54% Tasmania
53% New South Wales

Those from South Australia, Tasmania, and the Australian Capital Territory are most likely to all the time or very often consider other people's needs.



62% South Australia
61% Tasmania
60% Australian Capital Territory



AUSTRALIANS ARE ALTRUISTIC AT THEIR CORE.

Altruism is an important virtue of kindness as it reflects the often sacrificial nature of kindness where kindness is given freely and without question. Altruism explores how open-handed Australians perceive themselves to be and how willing they are to give encouragement and trust one another.

One of the indicators of altruism, generosity, is particularly high among Australians as seven in ten (72%) strongly or somewhat agree others would consider them a generous person. Not only are Australians generous, but 57% always or most of the time go out of their way to show kindness by encouraging other people.

More than three in five Australians (64%) strongly or somewhat agree they believe people have good intentions when they first meet them. This is important as it indicates we have high trust in others. The more trust we have amidst our communities, the more likely we are to share acts of kindness as we are less concerned we will be taken advantage of or our acts of kindness will be exploited.



STATE INSIGHTS

Western Australia, Tasmania, and New South Wales are the states that love to encourage others, being more likely than the rest of Australia to go out of their way to encourage other people always or most of the time.



61% Western Australia

61% Tasmania

58% New South Wales

Western Australia, Queensland, and the Northern Territory are the most likely states in Australia to strongly or somewhat agree they believe people have good intentions when they first meet them.



65% Western Australia

64% Queensland

64% Northern Territory

Tasmania, the Northern Territory, and Western Australia are more likely than the other states to strongly or somewhat agree others would consider them a generous person.



79% Tasmania

73% Northern Territory

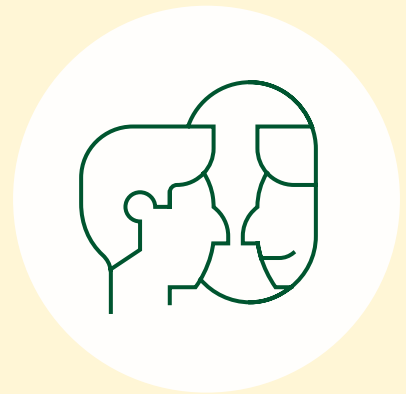
73% Western Australia



BEING KIND FLOWS FROM BEING REFLECTIVE.

Reflection is a key virtue of kindness because being kind often requires you to think more about how your actions might impact others and then act accordingly. Reflection measures how patient, gentle, and tolerant we are towards others in our lives.

Australians perform best in the indicator of tolerance as 62% always or most of the time are able to tolerate the opinions, practices, and behaviours of others when they are different to their own. This is vital for building a kind and harmonious society. Australians further display their reflective nature through patience as 61% strongly or somewhat agree they are a patient person. All the time or very often, Australians believe they respond with gentleness to the circumstances they face (53%).

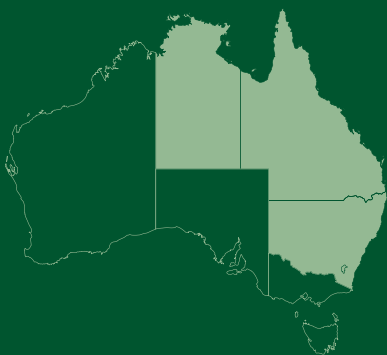


STATE INSIGHTS

New South Wales, Queensland, and the Northern Territory are the most patient states as their residents are the most likely to strongly or somewhat agree they are a patient person.

Those from Western Australia, Queensland, and New South Wales are only slightly more likely than other states to respond with gentleness to circumstances they face, either all the time or very often.

Those from the Northern Territory, Tasmania, and Western Australia are slightly more likely than those from other states to display more tolerance, either always or most of the time believing they are able to tolerate different opinions, practices, and behaviours of others when they are different to their own.



63% New South Wales
62% Queensland
61% Northern Territory



54% Western Australia
54% Queensland
53% New South Wales



66% Northern Territory
65% Tasmania
64% Western Australia

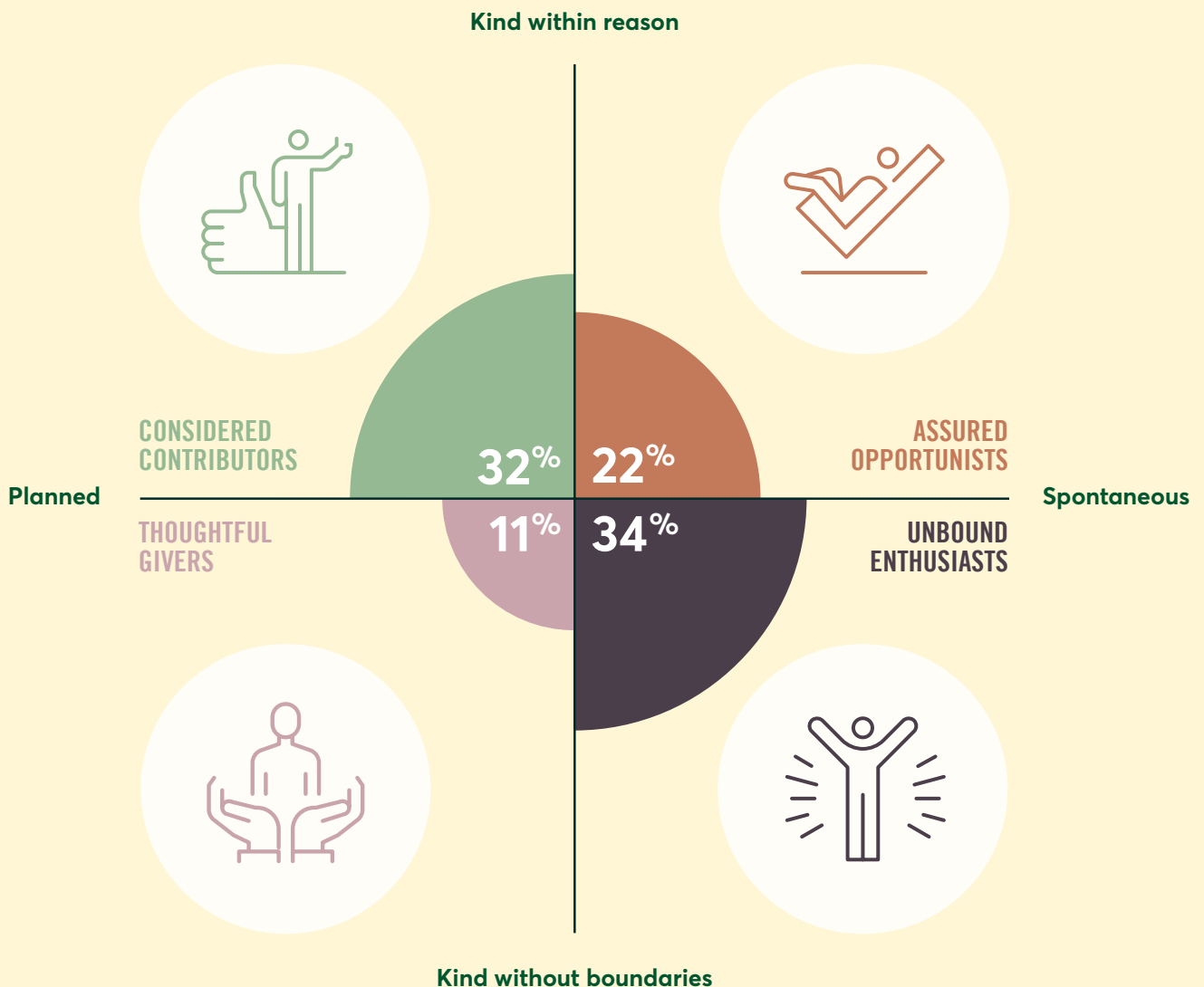


How are Australians living out kindness?

THE KINDNESS PERSONAS

Australians show kindness in their own, unique ways, reflecting their personality and character. Some Australians are kind by being spontaneous and performing random acts of kindness, others love to plan and be methodical in how they show kindness. For some, being kind is not about placing limitations on kindness, while for others it's important they show

kindness within reason and are thoughtful about how they share kindness. No matter how Australians like to show their kindness, each person can be categorised into the following kindness personas:





CONSIDERED CONTRIBUTORS

Considered Contributors make up a third of our population (32%). These are people who love to be intentional with their kindness. They enjoy planning kind acts and thinking about how their kindness will best be received. They are more likely than others to show kindness through comforting others with touch. Considered Contributors have the highest Kindness Index score at 76.



ASSURED OPPORTUNISTS

Assured Opportunists make up one fifth of our population (22%). These people show kindness spontaneously, while still considering how and where their kindness might be best received. Their preferred way to show kindness is with their words. Assured Opportunists score a 70 on the Kindness Index.



THOUGHTFUL GIVERS

Thoughtful Givers constitute 11% of our population. These are people who love to be thoughtful with their acts of kindness, delivering planned acts of kindness, while being generous. Thoughtful Givers do not have any criteria when they show kindness, preferring not to limit their generosity. They are more likely than others to be kind through actions they can perform. Thoughtful Givers score a 74 on the Kindness Index.



UNBOUND ENTHUSIASTS

Unbound Enthusiasts make up one third of our population (34%). They love to be kind as opportunities arise, without limiting their kindness to a certain criteria. They are likely to enjoy showing kindness with their time. Unbound Enthusiasts score a 74 on the Kindness Index.

AUSTRALIANS LOVE TO SHOW KINDNESS IN WORDS AND ACTIONS

Of all the ways that people can display kindness, from using words to encourage others, giving people time, helping others with actions, giving gifts, and offering comfort with touch, Australians are most likely to be kind with their words (73%).

Seven in ten (70%) are extremely or very likely to do actions to help those around them and 70% are likely to give people their time. Australians are least likely to show kindness by offering people comfort with touch (45%) and through giving gifts or donations (39%).

Australians show kindness in different ways. Here's how the kindness personas are most likely to show kindness (extremely/very likely):

	Thoughtful Givers	Considered Contributors	Unbound Enthusiasts	Assured Opportunists
Using my words to encourage others	77%	72%	76%	69%
Doing actions to help those around me	74%	71%	72%	66%
Giving people my time	73%	72%	72%	62%
Offering people comfort with touch	46%	56%	40%	35%
Giving people gifts or donations	44%	51%	33%	29%

Australians most commonly perform acts of kindness in line with their preferred approaches to kindness – those which involve words or actions. The top acts of kindness Australians perform include holding the door or lift open for someone (72%), giving someone a compliment (68%), and asking if someone is ok (67%).

The acts of kindness each person performs can leave a lasting impression on others, even almost 70 years on.

In 1952 I was at a fete at about age 5. They were giving horse rides for 6p (5c) I had no money and I said out loud "I wish I could have ride" and a lady gave me sixpence. I had my horse ride, it was wonderful. I am now 74 and have never forgotten that day. My only regret is I didn't thank the lady, I was so excited that I ran home to tell my mother.

— Male, Baby Boomer, QLD

On average, Australians perform up to 16 acts of kindness a week. Australians are twice as likely to perform acts of kindness toward people they know, compared to people they don't know.



Individuals in the Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, and Tasmania, on average, perform the most acts of kindness in a week. Perhaps their small populations make it easier to share kindness.



- 20 — Northern Territory
- 20 — Australian Capital Territory
- 19 — Tasmania

AUSTRALIANS DIRECT KINDNESS TO THOSE NEAR AND DEAR

Australians are most likely to believe it's important to show kindness to those closest to them, as nine in ten believe in the value of being kind to family (91%) and friends (89%). The more distant the connection with someone, the less likely Australians are to believe it's extremely or very important to show kindness. Despite this, however, more than half of Australians believe in the value of being kind to those in the broader Australian community (58%) and the global community (52%).



On average, younger generations are performing more acts of kindness every week.



19

Gen Z
18 - 26



17

Gen Y
27 - 41



18

Gen X
42 - 56



12

Baby Boomers
57 - 75



9

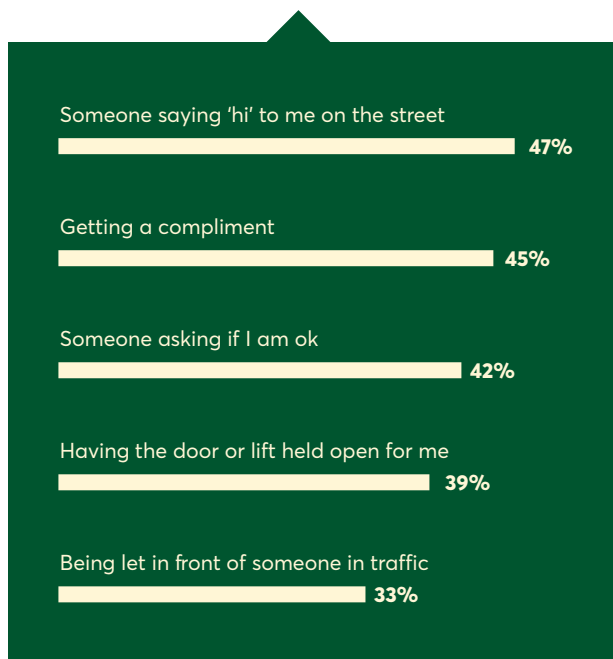
Builders
76+



Filling the kindness gap

Australians receive an average of 6 acts of kindness in a week, however, this highlights a gap as there are 16 acts of kindness being performed in a week. These 10 missing acts of kindness in a week may be lost in translation, where Australians aren't counting what others would consider an act of kindness in their week to be an act of kindness they have received. This highlights the importance of being mindful, not only when giving kindness, but also when receiving kindness. Mindfulness will ensure acts of kindness that others are performing won't go unnoticed.

While the top acts of kindness most commonly received are similar to those being performed, they are received on a less frequent basis. The top acts of kindness being received include being greeted by someone on the street (47%), getting a compliment (45%), and being asked if they are ok (42%).



The simple acts of kindness from saying 'hi' to someone on the street, to receiving a compliment to being asked if you are ok are both powerful and memorable as Australians recall moments in their lives where others have extended such kindness to them.

One morning I was walking alone and really internally on the verge of tears due to personal reasons. A stranger passed and said hello and started a polite, friendly conversation about how my day has been. They will never know it, but they had an impact and truly cheered me up.

— Male, Gen Z, NSW

A letter from a young person in a nearby street asking if she could help me in any way. I didn't know her, but she lives next door to a relative of mine. There was no intent of a reward involved.

— Male, Builder, NSW

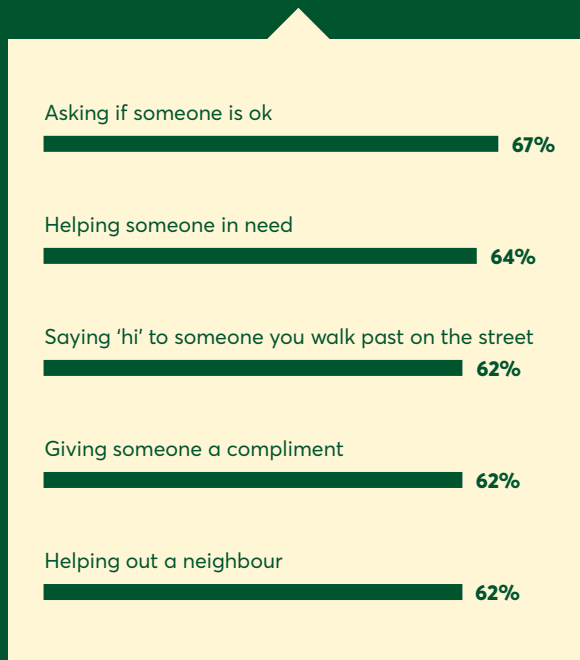
A co-worker complimented me about my kindness which meant very much to me.

— Female, Gen X, NSW



THE TOP THINGS WE WANT MORE OF

There is also a crossover between the acts of kindness that are most commonly performed and received, and the acts of kindness that Australians believe should be performed more in the community. This shows there is a desire to see more of the kindness we are already giving out and receiving. Australia would love to see more people asking if others are ok (67%), helping others in need (64%) and saying hi to people they walk past on the street (62%).



It's not surprising helping someone in need and helping out a neighbour are some of the acts of kindness Australians want to see more of. These acts of kindness leave lasting impressions as Australians reflect on how some of the most memorable acts of kindness they have received have been from times when they were in need and others showed kindness.

My husband passed away and I got very sick. My neighbours mowed the lawns, weeded the garden and I came home to everything perfect, when I came out of hospital. I had all our friends cook meals and support me in every way possible. My girlfriend took me to get a manicure and a pedicure.

— Female, Baby Boomer, NSW

When I was doing self-isolation at the beginning of 2020. I was struck by the unsolicited kindness of people who dropped off food, reading items, jigsaw puzzles, etc. It was extraordinary. Not just family, but also acquaintances who didn't have to be so kind.

— Female, Baby Boomer, NT

Recently when my car broke down at home, my neighbour drove me to the shops, waited while I did my weekly shopping and drove me home.

— Male, Builder, QLD

AUSTRALIANS FACE BARRIERS TO BEING KIND

Being kind isn't always the easy thing to do, however, it's what is needed to help fill the kindness gap. While one in three Australians (36%) are lucky not to face barriers to showing kindness, others are most likely to be held back by feeling out of their comfort zone (25%). A similar proportion (25%) find not knowing how their kindness will be received a barrier to showing kindness. Others are held back by simply not knowing what to do (20%).



It's important to consider how these barriers might be overcome, as the 65% of Australians who face barriers to being kind perform an average of 3.5 fewer acts of kindness each week than those who have no barriers to being kind. This equates to 182 acts of kindness per Australian adult every year. If we were able to overcome these barriers, we might see an additional 2.37 billion acts of kindness performed across Australia each year.

THE POWER OF FOOD

Food is one way in which we can fill the kindness gap. Australians appreciate the power of food as a way in which we can serve others, build community and generate conversation. Almost four in five Australians (78%) believe sharing a meal with friends and family is a powerful way to display kindness. Three in four Australians (75%) believe making someone food is a powerful way to display kindness, while a similar proportion (69%) believe buying someone food is powerful.

Thoughtful Givers are more likely to commonly show kindness by preparing food for someone, likely influenced by their preference to plan out how they deliver kindness.

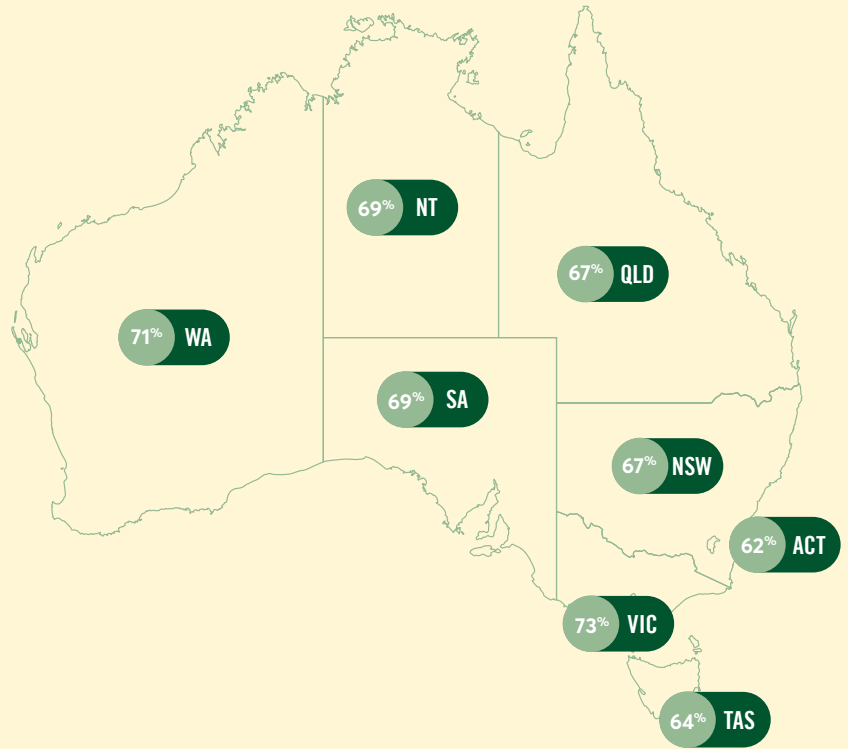
79% Thoughtful Givers

75% Considered Contributors

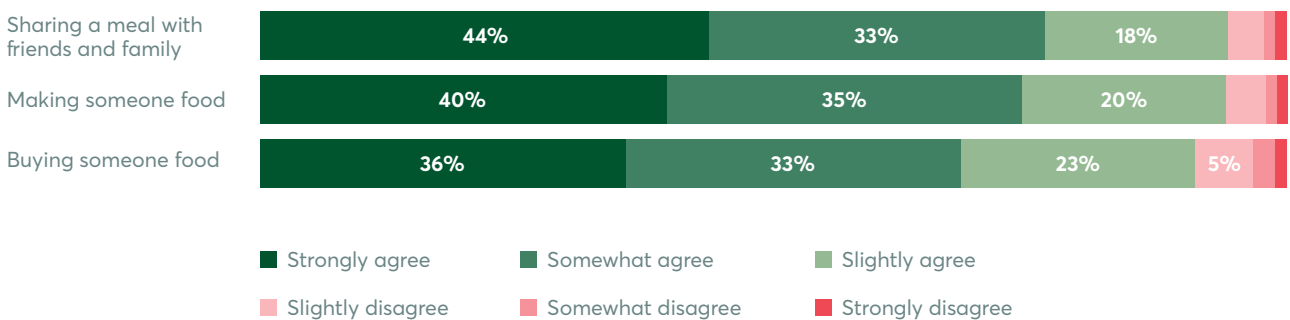
74% Unbound Enthusiasts

73% Assured Opportunists

Victoria is the state most likely to strongly or somewhat agree buying someone food is a powerful way to display kindness.



TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE THE FOLLOWING ARE POWERFUL WAYS TO DISPLAY KINDNESS?



When Australians were asked what some of the most memorable acts of kindness they have received are, it became clear how powerful food can be when being kind. Showing kindness through food can involve grand acts of kindness from paying for someone's groceries to small acts of kindness like being thanked for preparing food.

When there was limits on groceries able to be purchased during COVID-19, I was at the checkout and I have a family of 7 and was over the limit on several items. I tried to explain to the cashier but the rules are the rules so I was not able to purchase all the items. A very lovely lady in the queue behind me heard my story and purchased the items that I was unable to, unbeknown to me and when I was placing the groceries I had purchased in the car she approached me and gave me the items. I offered to pay for them and she would not accept and told me it was a gift...

— **Male, Gen Y, QLD**

Being thanked and told each night what a delicious meal I prepared for the evening meal.

— **Female, Baby Boomer, NSW**



Having lunch with my daughter & granddaughter.

— **Female, Baby Boomer, SA**

Having a bunch of fresh vegetables and fruit left at my door by a neighbour when I've been unwell.

— **Female, Baby Boomer, TAS**

I had no money for basic groceries and my friend gave me some and also made me come over for dinner each night so she knew I had eaten.

— **Female, Gen Z, NSW**

A friend sending us an uber eats voucher during the latest storm last week so we would not have to figure out how to cook dinner without power and how to afford to pay for a take away meal.

— **Female, Gen X, VIC**

When my daughter was in hospital I received an anonymous donation of funds to pay for coffee, meals, parking or anything I needed. Because it was during Christmas time, it meant even more but it was also that they didn't wish to be known, they weren't looking for any type of credit, just wanted to help.

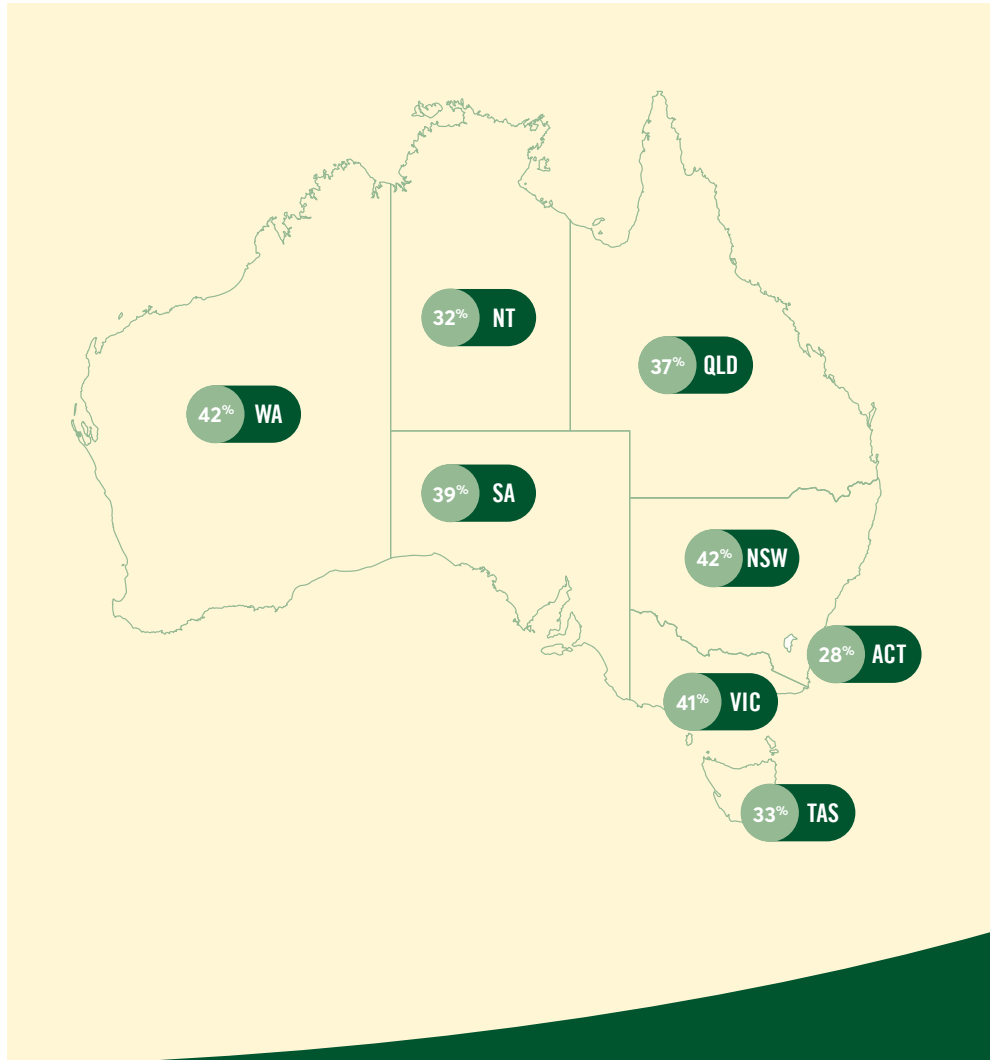
— **Female, Gen X, VIC**

Australia's kind future

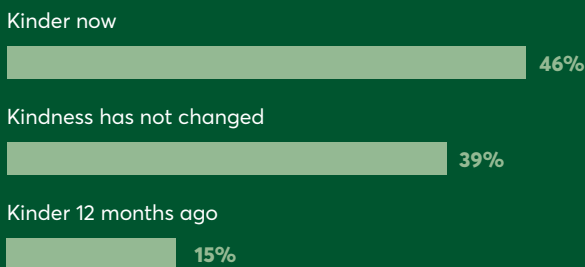
Three in five Australians (62%) believe the culture of kindness in Australia is stronger than in the rest of the world. Not only that, but Australians believe kindness in Australia is growing, with almost one in two (46%) believing Australians are kinder now than they were 12 months ago. A further two in five (39%) believe Australian kindness has not changed and only 15% believe Australians were more kind 12 months ago.

There is also a sense that Australia is heading for a more kind future, as two in five (40%) believe Australians will be kinder in 12 months' time than they are right now. Half of Australians (52%), however, believe Australian kindness will not change. Only 8% show more scepticism, believing Australians won't be kinder in 12 months' time.

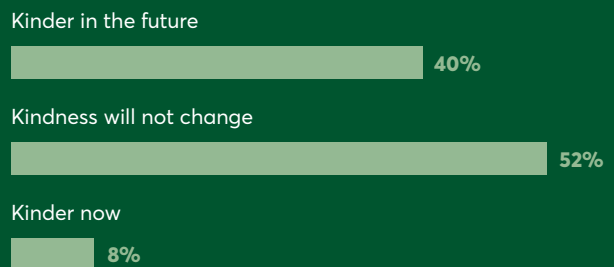
New South Wales, Western Australia and Victoria are the most optimistic states, being most likely to believe Australians will be kinder in 12 months' time than we are right now.



DO YOU BELIEVE AUSTRALIANS ARE KINDER RIGHT NOW THAN THEY WERE 12 MONTHS AGO?



DO YOU BELIEVE AUSTRALIANS WILL BE KINDER IN 12 MONTHS TIME THAN THEY ARE RIGHT NOW?



METHODOLOGY

This report is the collation of data gathered by McCrindle in an online survey of 3,520 Australians, nationally representative by age, gender, and state through an online panel. The survey was in field between the 8th of June to the 24th of June 2021.

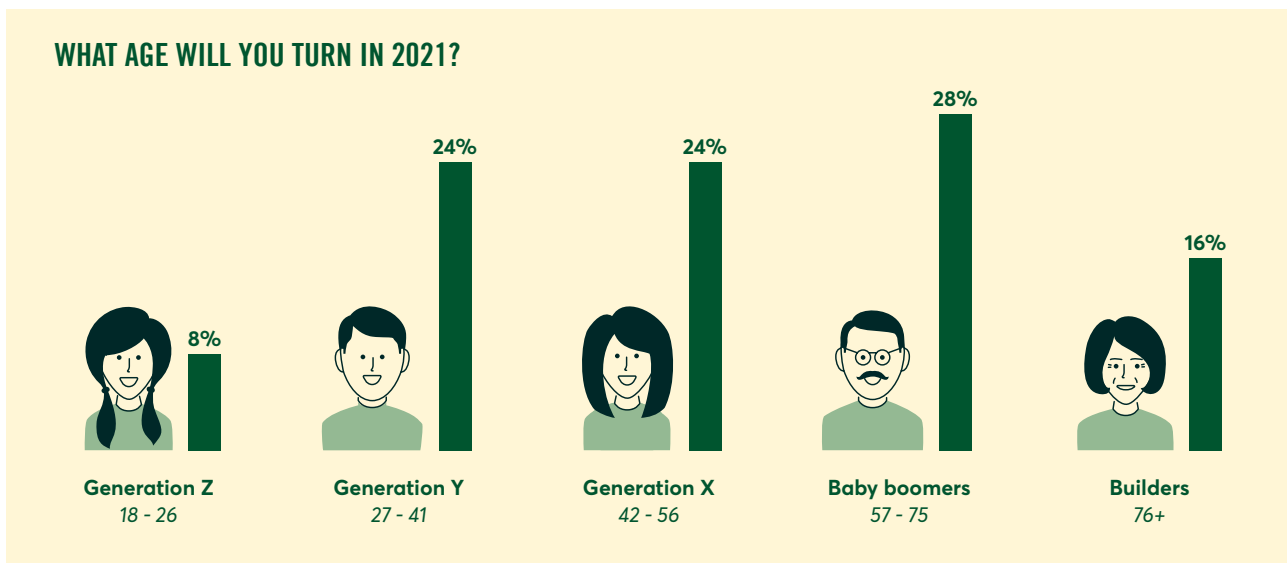
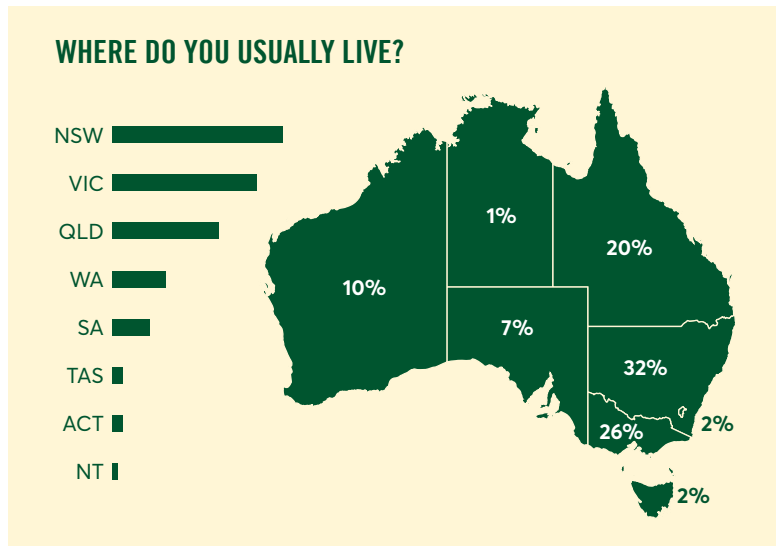
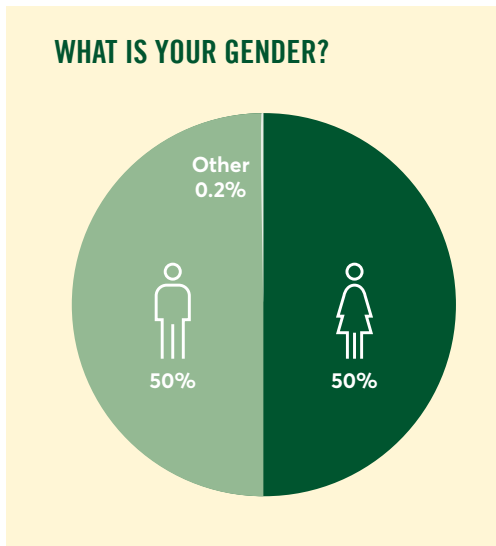
To provide the state based insights, an additional 1,046 responses were collected to allow for robust comparison between the states with a minimum of 400 responses per state, apart from the Northern Territory with 186 responses.

Data labels on the graphs in this report have been rounded and may, therefore, sum to 99% or 101%. Any calculations where two data points have been added are based on raw data (not the rounded data labels on the graph) which have then been rounded once combined.

McCrindle and Helgas would like to thank Hugh Mackay for his guidance on this project and his thoughtful contributions to this important topic of kindness in Australia.

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

n = 3,520



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