

Firstlinks poll: Reactions to Australian versus French retirement ages - responses

An edited selection of responses is included below.

Q1. Why have Australians and French people reacted differently to increasing the eligibility age for pensions?

A lot of (thinking) Australians can plan for retirement at 60 or earlier, particularly those with SMSF. We do not have to wait for retirement age and retire when we want.
Culturally more aligned to UK/US - Protestant Work Ethic, but also an assumption that with Super, pensions really only apply to the poor (and not 'us'), even if that may not be the case for many.
The French do not understand the reality of increasing longevity. They also have a tradition of taking to the streets if they disagree with govt. policy.
We are generally not as volatile. Still there must have been some pushback against increasing pension age to 70 otherwise it would still be happening.
French like to protest - it is cultural.
Cultural history. The French have a long history of noisy, dramatic and even violent protest, that never really developed here in Australia.
The French pension age was increased abruptly by two years. The Australian pension age was increased stealthily by 6 months over four years ago nobody even noticed it.
Greater awareness that we have an aging population that cannot be supported in the same way as it has been. There has to be a trade-off between spending on other needs and supporting retirees.
A French physical reaction with added expenses and society disruption that the taxpayer has to provide versus an Australian verbal pressure reaction and less society disruption and voter warning re next election.
Australians are passive. France has a history of revolution.
Australians are apathetic!!
Australians are more complacent, not organised, ready to be led
The obvious answer is Frances deep history and culture of a generous welfare state. But it runs deeper - see the excellent article by Simon Kuper in the FT (23 March). who notes "There's a generalised, long-term rage against the state and its embodiment, the president."
French people will protest against any change in working conditions as they are less trusting of government.
If you travel around France, as I have done a number of times, you will hear the proprietors of businesses say that many of their countrymen are lazy and that too many of them are prepared to live on social security rather than be in paid employment. It's not that this is rare in Australia, but we seem to have a different mindset about reward for effort.
Differences in entrenched culture.
The French believe that the government should look after them from cradle to grave with no individual responsibility.

Among a great many other reasons, the French are by nature more passionate and volatile and their political system more autocratic and remote. You ask the wrong question. Why would you expect them to react the same way as Australians?

Background social security payments in Australia

As recent experience would suggest, the French generally are intractable and somewhat arrogant with a hands-out attitude particularly affecting the 'baby boomer' cohort. The rigid employment rules stifle employment opportunities for younger people and limits flexibility and mobility of labour much to the detriment of the French economy.

Many European governments have for years been more generous in benefits and rebates. Thus, the people have much greater expectations of this to continue.

Politically motivated

We have become too passive. We should have done the same.

French philosophy/ attitude more leftist.

Australians are a people who will do what they are told. Despite the fact we think we are free, we will doff the cap and tug on the forelock when push comes to shove. Whereas the French have a history of revolution, similar to the United States.

It's more about Macron and the political landscape than about the retirement age.

Australians are harder workers

Australians are brought up to be self-reliant with a work ethic, not a sense of socialist entitlement.

For the French, the French Revolution is a socially unifying contemporary history. Mythology about Aussie fairness and opportunity is counter to the French experience. A conflict of interest in Australian politics is totally acceptable in France.

Having been to France it is simply French culture vs Australian culture.

The Australian government clearly communicated the logic and reasoning of the policy, which is difficult to dispute.

Because there are already plenty of handouts and other ways to get a govt income before aged pension.

French people are used to the age pension starting a lot earlier. No one probably has tried to increase the eligibility age at all and this was a shock. Australians have become conditioned to increases in the eligibility age.

The French are passionate about protecting their rights. Australians are complacent by comparison.

Australians have a culture of working hard. Many of us are migrants or came from a migrant background, wanting a better life and are prepared to work for it.

Ours has been increased gradually over time. France went from 65 to 60 and are now battling to raise it back up. Blame Mitterrand's silly reduction.

We realise our generation is the luckiest by far, and waiting a couple of extra years before accepting the golden handshake is a gracious way of saying thank you to the next generation.

It is a cultural thing. There are parts of Europe that believe they should not have to work for too long. The Greek public servants used to retire at 50 years old. That mindset is why their economies have excessive pressure supporting the retired persons.

Two completely different cultures : one could argue that "no worries mate, she'll be right" yields a less militant society than one based in revolution - just take a peek into their national anthem - "Aux armes citoyens!, Formez vos bataillons".

She'll be right mate.

Very different cultures, I suspect, with a far stronger sense of entitlement and tradition in France driving their protests. Mind you, interesting to compare the Australian public's low-key response to the age increase with the significant response to proposed changes in tax treatment (eg franked dividends, superannuation limits) Why is that so? Perhaps Australians respond differently to universal changes compared with apparently selective changes?

The average retirement age in Australia is 55.4 years (Source: ABS). Plenty of Aussies retire early (includes my wife and I).

Largely national character. Australians are mostly accepting of change and more moderate in response, coupled with often debt being carried into near retirement age, necessitating working longer anyway. The French are more passionate, expressive, and volatile by nature. Not a bad thing, just different, but it's historically how they react.

The French tend to have a negative view on many issues. Macron is actively disliked by most French people, but the other presidential choices were considered worse. French people have a history of being informed and more active in the expression of views than Australians who use terms like, 'the silent majority'. The French pension reform is more immediate than the Australian introduction to raise the eligibility age. It was not approved by parliament and was enacted using a special presidential power. Most French people will rely almost completely upon their govt. pension that they have financially contributed to unlike Aust. People in France tend to strongly believe that retirement life is very special after a more rigid employment system. Transitioning to retirement is not as common as Aust. I am Australian and have been living mostly in France/Switzerland since retirement over 6 years ago.

Culture.

The French appear to overreact to minor issues.

When it comes to work and the work ethic, we are much closer to the Americans than the Europeans.

Very different histories could have conditioned each country to different levels of perceived rights vs reality. Australia hasn't had centuries of unrest and revolutions for equality and no Napoleon to promise ordinary people a fair go, such as true weights and measures (of bread for example) or holidays for housewives. Nor does Australia have an enshrined Bill of Rights.

It is no coincidence the three top countries are Latin cultures. Having lived in Spain for many years, it took me some time to learn that you work to live, not live to work. Our Australian culture of long work weeks is not healthy and possibly explains why many European countries (including the so-called 'more industrious' northern ones) with shorter work weeks often top the 'happiness' index. Before I retired as a financial planner, I often met wealthy clients whose main concern in retirement was how not to pay tax rather than how to enjoy their money.

The French have a history of revolution and protest - it's part of their nature; not so for Aussies, or much less so.

Cultural and social differences would be my guess. Although given most of those impacted by the increase in Australia will have had compulsory super for a significant portion of their working lives, perhaps we just figure super will cover the gap until we are eligible.

Big super balances, more people not getting the pension. Not my problem attitude.

French expectations of what government must provide, and tolerance for inter-generational inequity.

Hard to say. I'd like to think that Australians (with our decades now living and working with the superannuation system) are somehow more across the realities of living longer (ie: will need more money all up, therefore should start saving/investing earlier, do because of Super but also that not being dependent on the government pension is sometimes a badge of honour). There is probably a lot to say about how the Macron government pushed the changes through, but I am very much in the dark about how the French people and pension system interact.

Australians understand better than the French that having a low retirement age has an overall negative impact on the economy.

Australia has a very generous welfare system that allows payments such as Disability Pensions and JobSeeker well before age 67. It would be interesting to see what is paid out for 60- to 67-year-olds. I suspect the answer is correlated to why the Aussies aren't protesting.

It's a bit like the second amendment in the USA. Retirement age is a sacred cow in France. Not in Australia.

Because the French pension system is "pay-as-you-go" they have paid directly for it so feel more entitled to its timing. Ours comes out of consolidated revenue so there is a lesser sense of entitlement.

The French have always been very militant regarding any issue they feel affects them. Most other European peoples react differently to the French as well.

The maturity of France and its established position.

The long timeframe for implementation definitely helped but I would suggest that it is really in the DNA of the people. French people can be very passionate about life in general and can express that passion in action. Australians on the other hand are much easier going and accepting of the situation. I don't believe that there is much doubt that the increase is required but passion will help you to try to not give up on anything that you already have!

Oz made people aware of the demographic issues looming in '80s vs. France one is not aware of much discussion on pensions?

Australians are generally ignorant of what is really occurring around the world both politically & economically. Maybe the media could be blamed for that - it's a complex discussion. Someone once explained it as "we are dumb fat & happy". I think it's because we have been the lucky country! Who knows what the future has install for us?

French have an entitled culture and Aussies have a more complacent She'll be right Mate culture

Culture - All Australians grew up with parents that worked hard because they had to, to give their children a decent standard of living. While I really can't personally comment on the French culture it would appear they have a more casual approach to hard work and the benefits that come from that.

A case was presented to the Australian people outlining the reasons for the increase. One reason being we can't afford to pay the pension to retirees from such a young age. It was a reasonable argument and made sense to most people.

Because the French age limit was lowered only a few years ago and people react badly when a benefit is given and then taken away.

France has a history of revolution which Australia certainly does not.

The French have a tradition of supporting each other; Australians tend to just think about themselves

Culture

It's been implemented and communicated differently. In Australia the change was flagged years in advance and is gradual. In France, it's 2 years all at once with no notice and implemented by Presidential decree without going through Parliament. Europeans are also generally more suspicious about what happens when democratic processes aren't followed given many tragic examples. We seem to be more relaxed about that here, e.g. viewing Morrison being allowed to take 5 portfolios in secret as a bit of a joke.

Cultural differences. Apathy

I am unsure but it maybe that Australians are more accepting of authority and intensely dislike street violence.

It is a weekend outing for the French, they go to work Monday to Friday, riot Saturday and Sunday and back to work Monday. Australians go to the beach or footy Saturday and Sunday.

It's historical.

More Australians are self-funding their retirement at least for the first years. I retired at age 52 on my own terms with my own financial support. The pension here is a backstop if required and not people's only income. We are more laid back and many probably don't understand the rules anyway!

Maybe we are just a bit more inclined to be pragmatic and accept that the downside to living far longer is the requirement to work a few more productive years. Doesn't seem an unreasonable expectation?

There are 34,000 Australian soldiers in graves in France. As a nation we have known from before Federation that we will have to put in more to prosper in every way, working longer is our contribution to all who have gone before us and to ourselves.

The French pay significantly higher taxes than Australians. Early retirement is the trade-off for the French for the additional taxes.

I guess we are used to working longer to enable educating our children then to save for retirement; I did not retire until 73 because of extensive travel and time zones.

The 'full life package' needs to be reviewed in context with taxes that people pay over their working life; what perks and pros and cons each continent offers.

Australians are mostly happy to keep working. Having worked for a company that had offices in Paris I recall the French complaining about pay relativities when they worked far fewer hours and had far more holidays.

Both countries have the right to protest but only one has the expectation to use it. If you protest in France, you are a patriot but in Australia you are a whinger. Captain of French soccer team effectively gave away the World Cup final when he headbutted an opposition player because he said something degrading about his sister. President Macron praised him for standing up for his beliefs rather than berating him for letting his temper deny the country of victory. Australians are too laid back to take many matters seriously.

Political culture very different.

I think Australians are striving hard to provide for their families and their future retirement and want to be self-funded (if possible) in retirement years.

Australian changes were announced 14 years ago so people have accepted it. If it was suddenly changed, reaction might be different.

Work life balance is more ingrained in France than here, and that is protected and fought for more.

Work ethics, the French value life work balance more than Australians do. French are more reliant on pension, whereas our super system is better, can retire earlier.

It is bizarre to me that the French don't accept an increase in age eligibility as life expectancy increases.

Australians have a better work ethic and understand that the pension money must come from somewhere.

Different culture , different history , and different nature of the people.

There are many other differences between the French approach to issues vs the Australian attitude (see the different treatment of migrants as an example). As your article shows, the age for pension eligibility in Australia has been 65 for over 100 years, so it is our baseline and the adjustment to 67 is not seen as such a big change. A very different culture when the baseline was much closer to 60 years.

Maybe a side effect of the superannuation system in Australia, I understand the French are solely reliant on age pension.

Culture. And Australians are not as politically engaged. Look at housing. As Saul Eslake has stated 'the young should be rioting in the streets'.

More time to adjust and a much more compliant culture here.

A cultural thing. The French are more accustomed to handouts and quasi-socialist administrations. Australians tend to be more independent and self-sufficient (although perhaps not the younger generations).

Too many diverse cultures in our country to find community support.

The French have a history of violent protest against policies with which they disagree, it seems to be embedded in their culture. On this specific issue they have had years of political leaders telling them they are entitled to pensions at an early age and an affluent, long retirement. It is not surprising they resent having their "entitlements" taken away.

Pension is seen a safety net here, not as an entitlement.

Increases to Australia's eligibility age for the pension were well flagged plus our generous superannuation system still allows people to finish work before 67 and fund their own retirement until they are of pensionable age.

We are not as ingrained as others expecting Government support.

- we are richer individually and collectively
- smaller gap between richest and poorest in Australia
- less racial, cultural, economic bigotry & hostility
- Australians reject violence culturally, morally, socially

I did bung this question into ChatGPT, and it gave a rather well-rounded summary of the why. For me, however, it is a combination of the heavy-handedness of Macron versus the staggered approach we took in Australia.

Ours was brought in very gradually over time.

The French know how to live.

We are happy to work for a better lifestyle...

The long lead time in Australia before the changes became effective.

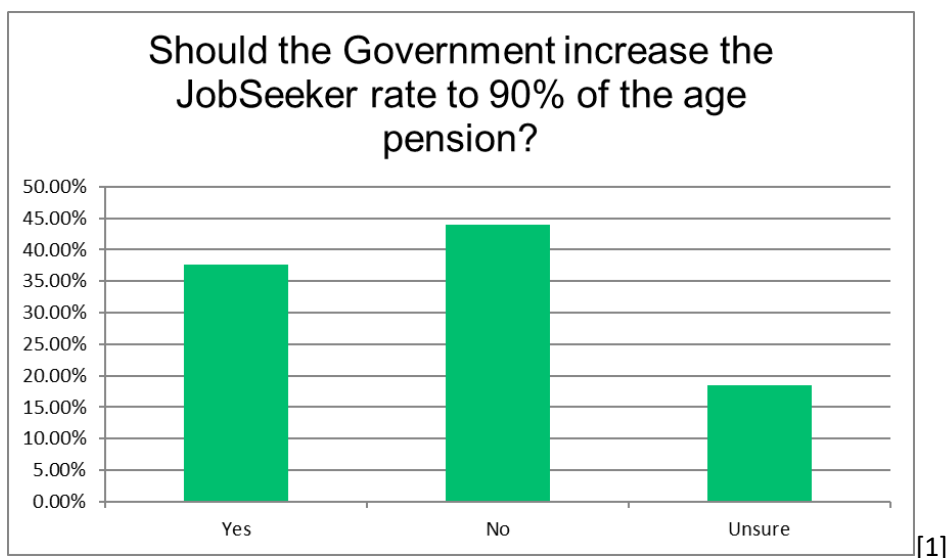
Due to expectations the French expect to retire early and have the state support them. Australians not so much.

People in France who protest against the removal of their rights are hailed as heroes, protecting French concepts of liberty, equality, fraternity and acting in the common good. People in Australia who protest against the removal of their rights, eg the covid restrictions, are mocked and ridiculed as selfish and not acting in the common good. France has a history of violent revolution against oppressive authority. Australia has a history of docile acceptance of authority.

Maybe Australians are more open to the reasons behind the change as they do sound sensible. The French seem to be more self-oriented.

French history of shorter working hours in favour of lifestyle.

Q2. Should the Government increase the JobSeeker rate to 90% of the age pension?



For first month, yes 90% of age pension, then drop. There needs to be an incentive to work, either through training or financial incentives.

Should be lifted but not that high.

The current level is insufficient for a basic standard of living.

We have low unemployment and there are plenty of jobs for the willing. Perhaps increase it for the first six months.

No Australian should be poor. Give them government jobs.

75% same percentage as Workcover, but 90% for the first 3 months.

Jobseeker should equal the Age Pension, and have the same name, the Age Pension is simply the dole for oldies anyway!

People might not look for a job.

Phase in as affordable but a longer-term commitment.

Too many on government teat already.

Because jobseeker is unlimited in time

Plenty of jobs in regional areas. I have moved 12 times in my working life & to different States. Stop complaining & have a go.

If it becomes too comfortable to live on jobseeker payment, why seek work?

It's impossible for people on JobSeeker to live without relying on family or charity. It's an inhumane amount to live on.

90% is a bit too high - 75% would be reasonable. And US unemployment benefits only last a few weeks with stringent rules to apply for jobs each week!

Maybe 80%

Apples and oranges. They are quite unrelated and should not be compared. JobSeeker is short-term welfare to bridge involuntary employment while the age pension is a long-term safety net for the aged.

There is currently a lack of incentive to work. JobSeeker is only the tip of the iceberg of social security, eg. rental assistance etc etc

Currently, employers are seeking out new employees probably in specific and skilled occupations. There are many vacancies in the services sectors which remain unfilled. Why encourage people to adopt an unreasonable job expectation by paying more than a basic standard of living.

It should be about 50% of median wages.

Higher payouts = longer on the couch, why work?

JobSeeker rules, requirements and dollar amount are criminal. More needs to be done about financial education in formative years so that as adults people stand a chance at achieving.

These people are living in poverty...Cost of living increases have put them further behind.... we are wealthy enough as a country.

JobSeeker recipients are more likely to be supporting children. Why do we punish their unfortunate offspring solely due to the fact their parents are unable to secure appropriate employment.

It is unaffordable and will encourage those with low integrity to bludge off the system.

Jobseeker is high enough, not far off minimum wage so many choose not to work. If JobSeeker rises the % of people not willing to work or train themselves for a higher paid or more satisfying job would increase.

Incentive has to be maintained to find work.

Incentive required for jobseekers to be suitably motivated.

Then the unemployed will never be bothered to look for a job

JobSeeker is just that. It's a safety net to protect you while you look for work. With very low unemployment levels there are jobs for anyone who wants one.

NDIS out of control how can we afford?

It needs to go up a bit but not that much. Higher rates could be paid to older people. No person under 50 should be out of work in current market.

The reality is that if a person hasn't eaten well or slept well, they are unlikely to be able to work well.

The JobSeeker rate should be set to encourage people to return to the workforce. I would suggest a tiered payment system that reduces the longer you are using the supplement.

It isn't meant to be easy otherwise there's no incentive to work.

The age pension provides dignity, albeit frugal. Australia can use its wealth to provide for those in need and could be funded by ditching the planned stage 4 tax cuts.

Increase the chance of moving from the JobSeeker to a job.

If job seekers can't afford to apply for and travel to interviews, they will never get a job. Giving them an increase may save money in the longer term.

I fully support an increase in the JobSeeker rate, but I am not convinced that it should be linked to the age pension as these are very different types of support.

Federal Government debt is already around \$1 trillion and expected to keep rising towards \$1.5 trillion. Living standards will eventually decline for many people, not just the unemployed. Health care costs are soaring and will keep rising. Australia is spending over \$500 billion for new weapons to prepare for possible war. It means less money for other spending.

Increasing the money is unlikely to improve the outcome. Despite the low money (strong incentive to work) we still have many long-term unemployed. A percentage may be 'unemployable' but I personally know of several who simply don't really want to work or won't move to where the work is (I'm sure there are many, many more). So, increasing the money without really addressing why so many stay unemployed is not the answer and only further de-incentivises some to stay on JobSeeker.

A better system protects actual working people who lose jobs with a higher payment that reduces with time. Incentivising long-term reliance on benefits increases the burden on the few who really pay substantial taxes.

It's too low and people suffer.

Welfare should be provided to those in need of government assistance, not everyone.

The current JobSeeker rate is punitive. It also creates a moral hazard for those who genuinely don't want to work to look for avenues to get on the DSP.

My answer would be yes, provided it did not diminish the desire to look for a job.

Fairness. It's near impossible to live on the smell of an oily rag.

If age pensioners find it hard to live on the pension how can younger people get by on less?

Welfare for unemployed is such a small portion of federal spending, especially considering welfare for families. It's embarrassing how poorly we support the needy.

It's just the natural and right thing to do. It is Natural Justice.

The current setting is punitive and arises from the incorrect belief that anyone receiving JobSeeker is just lazy and could get work if they wanted it. The reality is rather more complicated.

If their own advisory body is recommending an increase, then they should increase it. I'm fortunate enough to be earning in the bracket where Stage 3 tax cuts benefit me, but am conscious that it is not optimal allocation of tax cuts (ie: forgoing tax revenue).

It should be 100% of the age pension.

The money will be spent in any case and be recirculated in the economy!

It reduces the incentive to work.

Just do it already!!!

Apparently, our unemployment benefits are among the lowest in the world.

A too high rate would be a disincentive to actively continue to seek work or accept the work available, not just wait to find the type of work desired.

Insufficient incentive to get off welfare.

When we start taxing the wealthy enough to pay for this type of social expenditure.

I think about 75%.

It is difficult however there still needs to be a strong financial incentive to find work. It probably should be pegged somewhere but I'm not sure that 90% is the right level.

Avoid becoming sit down money.

Many middle aged in transition to retirement but unemployed &/or casually and younger gens difficult to afford rent.

We are wealthier than just about any other country in our planet.

Probably something like 80% is sufficient.

JobSeeker is an interim measure until a person can get employment - too many expect to be able to survive on it indefinitely.

People can't be expected to live below the poverty line.

There are expenses that are unavoidable on JobSeeker, such as a working mobile phone, internet and a computer to apply for jobs and lodge Centrelink forms, transport to interviews and decent interview clothes that those on a pension can avoid.

Current level is a joke to enable people to live and find a job and creates a poverty trap.

If a Labor government won't address serious disadvantage while allowing massive regressive tax cuts for the well-off, this is not only a political but a national failure.

10-15 percent is affordable.

Probably yes but over time. All welfare payments should be indexed in the same way to stop this happening again. Many of those on Newstart are suffering ill health, poorly educated, have limited English or are not suited to a modern workforce. We are a rich country and should look after the less well off.

how do we differentiate where benefit to the individual is the main income for a household or is it additional to an already well funded household

Only for those who genuinely cannot find work.

Job Seeker is too little to live on.

People looking for jobs should only receive basic money or there is no incentive to work.

I really struggle to understand how anyone is on JobSeeker in 2023 when most businesses are crying out for reliable workers? I strongly suspect there is a large group who should be on a disability pension or more appropriate benefit for their circumstances with a very small cohort of diehard slackers who have no genuine intention of contributing to society and they don't deserve rewarding. Thus, has it always been.

Age pension does not include family home; baby boomers already beneficiaries of property boom; Aus prices are rising and we are least generous on unemployment benefits; prevent civil unrest.

There are almost as many vacancies as welfare recipients, they cannot really want a job.

Current levels are too low. There should be an increase but not to 90% that's too high.

A hand up to get into a working situation which individuals can then build on. Everyone needs to have a positive input for Australia.

To qualify my answer, I believe that the JobSeeker rate should actually increase to 200% of the age pension but only for a short time such as three or six months then reduce to a lower amount going forward. Many long-term unemployed start with a short-term view of their situation but are unable to fund the job search process with gusto as their income is so low. JobSeeker to me, needs to focus on recipients as separate groups of short-term and long-term unemployed. They are two completely separate problems and require more strategically refined tools than the one-size-fits-all approach taken now.

Aust basic wages are very high globally so % of a high number is misleading.

Definitely NOT. Australia has a 50-year LOW Unemployment rate, with immigration surging. If all of these immigrants can find work, I think the unemployed can - it should be seen as a 'safety net', not longer-term welfare like Age Pension.

The more you pay people to do nothing, more people do nothing.

90% is too high, but it does need to increase, especially the single amount. We currently have singles getting only 65% of the age pension, but couples getting 78%. Not sure why there is even a difference.

Increase for 6 months, then decrease unless you can prove you are actively pursuing work or training.

Urge to look for work will lessen.

Incentive to find work must remain. An allowance should be substantially less than a pension.

There are plenty of jobs in Australia if you wish to work.

We need to assist our unemployed to live and have sufficient funds to look for jobs.

There are more than enough jobs available for people in Australia, there really is no excuse for unemployment in this country. If you are unemployed, you may not find your dream job immediately but there are other jobs you can take on and work your way up. We have generations of lazy Australians who simply do not want to work.

Big jump, need to keep incentive for people to find work.

Yes to an increase. But not 90% of age pension. 75% to 80%.

There needs to be an incentive to find work.

People on job seeker need more money so they can afford to seek a job.

There is no justification for expecting people of working age to be able to live for less than a retired person. The benefits should be the same.

Why do I see advertisements for city council bus drivers, cafe workers, truck drivers and retail workers regularly. There is plenty of work out there for those who want it.

It should not be a replacement wage, support is available from many other sources.

Are we a humane society? One that cares about (all of) its citizens? Or not? Raise the rate and scrap the stage 3 cuts.

We should be able to do a lot better than many other countries. We are currently at the bottom.

Cruel not to. In an age of very low unemployment talk of 'dole bludgers belongs to a past era.

Walk down the street and get a job. Plenty available everywhere.

Job seeker should help people to survive until they get a job, not replace the need to get a job, the pension should enable people to live without the need to get a job.

But with caveats - need take measures to prevent career JobSeeker.

It should increase for those closest to retirement age.

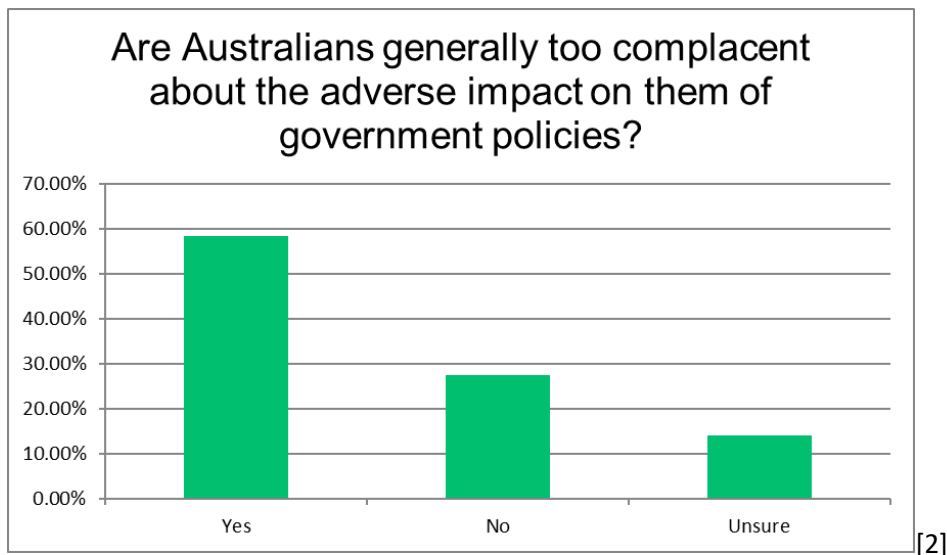
No incentive.

If they do, they'll be little incentive for those that are work shy to actually work.

We must not encourage dependence on welfare.

Difficult but I don't think that JobSeeker should be a lifestyle option. Although changes are needed to our private employment agencies as their support for long term unemployed is not useful.

Q3. Are Australians generally too complacent about the adverse impact on them of government policies?



Australians show their displeasure in the voting booth.

We do not want the rioting like in France but the gap in Australia is too large and increasing.

They seem to decide on the merit of the proposal.

Government is there to (supposedly!) govern. Australians have many other life and employment concerns. Elections the balancing item.

Don't care about how country is run.

We believe in Democracy so unless it's really ridiculous we accept it. Next election sorts them out.

But we make them pay at the next election.

You only need to read the daily newspapers to know that complacency is not a national attribute.

Definitely too trusting of government.

Individually, we are able to be conquered. We are limited in our ability to express our opinion and have it meaningfully discussed. We need something like crowd funding so that these individual voices can be amassed and presented to relevant stakeholders.

Complacent or more stoic?
Accept policy changes too easily.
General public has no idea.
Yes, we do what we are told. We love the nanny state.
They must have learnt from the 2009 election.
Depends entirely on the change and the rationale for the change.
The majority of Australians live from pay to pay and have no time to consider issues and express their views. The French society has tight social groups that discuss political issues and their love of food.
We protest and reject bad policies when needed. Think conscription in 70s.
I suspect most people have no idea of the impacts. By the time they realise they'll be in the final mile before retirement when it's all too late.
We are incredibly fortunate in this country for many reasons. But one of the main ones is our resource wealth which is taken for granted. That doesn't stop some sections of society from railing against the industries that pay for their social services and contribute enormously to government revenues with no clue as to how those revenues might be replaced. Generally we are a complacent, east-going lot.
In Australia, most governments tread a middle-ground and their policies reflect this conservatism. Hence, there is little need to react to government policies. Moreover, Australians are more interested in sport than politics.
I think we all realise we are very lucky compared to the rest of the world.
We should be marching in the streets about the money spent on submarines and the decision to build a stadium in Hobart when that state has a need for housing and a desperate need for medical specialists. The subs will be defunct before they are even built.
While our aged pension age increases, the politicians still have a lucrative system to support them after only a few terms in parliament. Hardly seems equitable.
We've got used to politicians telling us one thing, then doing something completely different, for example promising not to make changes to superannuation and then making changes to superannuation. Australians don't believe a word - hence complacency.
With three levels of government in Australia, it all gets too complicated to understand. Surely there is no need for duplication of departments and every state developing policies that address the same issues. What ridiculous duplication (times 8) of effort and public servants.
It seems to vary considerably from issue to issue. I would love to understand why some changes in government policy attract aggressive responses while others are more muted. What drives the bandwagon effect?
Yes, sometimes. Despite many posthumous bad or average outcomes, the majority aren't prepared to get fully across the issues and determine the likely impact of policy changes. Much of it is maybe because of the type, course and nature of media consumed to stay 'informed'. Nowadays, perhaps more than before the media can be extremely biased, often supporting or pushing a government agenda because their politics is aligned. Often all the facts or a balanced presentation are deliberately omitted.

This is a very broad question, but it is characteristic of Australians to trust authority and be prepared to contribute at some cost to themselves. This has social cohesion benefits by accepting 'the decision' while not really liking it.

We are too reactive, not proactive.

No. Australians are pragmatic. Our governments are generally sensible (by international standards) and we've got world-class institutions and a modern Constitution. Put simply, we've got less to complain about than almost anywhere else in the world.

If the impact is sufficiently onerous a new government is often elected

As our society has become richer, we have become less socially-minded and tend to ignore the realities of those who have not enjoyed the gains as much.

Australians have a 'she'll be right' attitude to a lot of things.

Many simply don't pay much attention and so probably are more complacent than they would be if they knew what was happening in some instances. Those who are engaged are quite capable of making themselves heard. And for the most part, perhaps we just keep things in perspective, regardless of how 'bad' a policy change is, for most of us it is irritating at the margins rather than genuinely harmful.

Generally, I agree. Those relative few who I see as very conscious and vocal are often those who stand to benefit from status quo or are negatively affected by changes. The majority (general public) are often less knowledgeable and aware than Firstlinks readers, and probably less analytical and rational in nature.

It's a waste of time complaining to politicians who try to change the laws on super, tax and franking when they don't actually know how tax and franking work.

Depends on the issue. Raising pension age is just sensible policy. Most people realise this.

Politics in Australia is very centrist, and policies don't differ too much between the main parties, so the majority of people can accept any initiative, regardless of the government of the day. European politics is far more a question of left or right / socialist or liberal.

Understand sustainability in finances. Doubt any increase over 67 years will be tolerated.

The two-party political system and a dominate right wing press suppresses any public agitations against government policies.

Governments (of all types) cannot be trusted, as they mostly look after themselves.

I guess, yes and no. It really depends on the policy. Sometimes there is too much defending of policies that benefit certain (noisy/powerful) individuals/groups, but they are fundamentally poor. The new \$3M Super Tax springs to mind, not the policy so much but the implementation pandering to the APRA Super Funds instead of just doing it properly.

Our media does focus on selected policies and issues, but often not analysing or explaining well vs. headlines and talking points for political advantage.

Not sure about that one but would agree that with many it is the case.

Our laidback culture.

Most don't take much notice about the details surrounding government. They are not always interested and don't ask the right questions.

We like to whinge but in the main we are deferential.

They are more likely to feel disempowered to exert influence to change decisions made by government.

We just accept it and get on with our lives. Many are too ignorant to understand implications of changing policies.

The elections every three years demonstrate an understanding that all is not well with our government. It is just that we do not seem to be able to harness the common sense within the community.

Definitely. I have a client who emigrated from northern Canada many years ago and he believes that Australia's complacency is due to a generally warmer climate. A temperate climate allows you to live for today whereas a freezing climate forces you to prepare for the future (more so anyway). Government policies don't change what's happening today so Australians don't worry about it.

Yes, I think too many Australians don't keep up to speed with relevant Politics & Legislation - too busy on social media (where they get news) or Netflix.

Australians generally hold politicians in very low regard.

While we don't pay enough attention in general, we also understand that everything can't be just about us an individual, although this seems to be changing for the worse. Too many people are now seeming to think that everything is the government's responsibility or fault. It's not! Sometimes you have to just get off your bum and work a bit harder or go without something for a while.

We understand both sides of the argument we don't just think how does this affect me we also understand that some policies need to be changed because they are unsustainable in the long run.

With the poor quality and performance of politicians, people should never trust or rely on Government policy . Canberra is Robin Hood country .

We understand more than we are given credit for.

I think that we do not often think about the impact of a change until it actually starts and we see the impact. There are some of the population who look at the future impact of a policy, such as the discussion in Firstlinks on the recent superannuation changes, but this is probably an engaged minority of the population.

Most Australians do not read newspapers and consume news through targeted social media channels. Like financial matters, political policies may be viewed as boring, by many, not just those under 40.

Left wing governments rely too heavily on 'other people's money'. True socialism and most are blissfully ignorant of the effects of Labor policies.

The handout mentality is growing, and the younger generations don't seem to understand that all government money is generated by citizens, not magically created by governments.

Our political system of compulsory voting and proportional representation ensures politicians remain sensitive to the views of the electorate, of voters.

Wouldn't expect most Australians are informed enough.

Really just want them to go away whilst we get on with the job.

Still a high level of trust in government but rapidly becoming eroded and undermined.

Whilst the protest movement that characterised the 1970s has long gone, I wouldn't call us complacent. We simply respect an orderly society, and store up the pluses and minuses until we get to the ballot box.

The screams of disapproval when Labor voiced changes to franking credits and negative gearing proves the above question wrong!!! Too many policies by the LNP aimed at making life hard for low-income workers and the disadvantaged get through not because of complacency but because those they affect have no voice and those not affected don't care.

Would change if we had a radical Government, Australian Governments have been generally close to the centre.

Not sufficiently engaged.

Changes that come into effect years in the future are easier to accept. The proposed super changes in 2025 are an example of this.

Aussies had it too good for long time.

If I was in France I would join the protest. Viva la revolution!

Australians are not as politically savvy as Europeans. In Europe politics are taken more seriously. There is plenty of airtime on politics in the media/TV. they chat about politics over coffee. In Australia we spend more time discussing football/sport.

Better than violence in the streets. We can always vote them out.