

**Mapping Social Cohesion:
2009 Scanlon Foundation Report**

Professor Andrew Markus

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Transcript

Grattan Institute hosted a discussion with Professor Markus to talk about the findings of the report *Mapping Social Cohesion 2009 - The Scanlon Foundation Surveys*. The discussion focused on contemporary immigration and immigrant's experiences of connectedness, social justice, sense of belonging and worth.

Speaker: Andrew Markus (Andrew)

Moderator: John Daley (John)

JOHN: In the media over the last year we've seen significant concern about population growth, about immigration and most recently about asylum seekers. And obviously this is an important public and contemporary issue, the kind of thing Grattan Institute worries about in terms of its mission to look at important social policy issues and important domestic policy issues, and work out what we as a country could do even better. And as part of that we need to have a good understanding of social attitudes to migration and of migrants so that we can understand where we're doing well and where we could potentially do a little better.

The reason we're here tonight is that the Scanlon Foundation commissioned a substantial project with the Australian Multicultural Foundation and the Monash Institute for the Study of Global Movements to investigate. And Professor Markus has led this work and we're very fortunate to have him here today.

Professor Andrew Markus is the Pratt Foundation Research Professor in the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation at Monash University and he's a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. He has researched Australian immigration and Indigenous history and he's the author or co-author of a number of books including *Race: John Howard and the Remaking of Australia*, *Building a New Community: Immigration and the Victorian Economy*, and he has a lovely red copy which I dare say he'll show to anyone who asks, of his most recent book, *Australia's Immigration Revolution*. But his most recent publication and the reason we're here tonight is this project, *Mapping Social Cohesion*, the Scanlon Foundation Surveys released a few months ago. It's available on the internet. There are a few copies up the back but I notice they have been selling extremely quickly. We might auction off the few remaining ones and everyone else can download it off the web from the Scanlon Foundation website or from the website of the Monash University.

So with that introduction, Professor Markus, how big is Australia's immigration program at the moment, and how do we think about it? What are the different classifications within it?

ANDREW: Alright. I have to get used to this format 'cause we're going to do question and answer right from the beginning as opposed from a PowerPoint, and I'm very excited to see how it's going to work. But if we first of all just look at the context of Australia's immigration and I think there's a lot of misconceptions about what's been happening in Australia and you'll see all sorts of different figures quoted. For example, one figure that you might find quoted is that there's been a 450,000 increase in the last 12 months. That's one figure. A second figure is that there has been something like 225,000 immigrants arrive in the last 12 months. And that all helps to create a sense that we're experiencing unprecedented movement of peoples. And in a way we are, but people are missing the point. And you have to be able to unpack all of these elements and I just very quickly want to do that. But the book that we wrote called *Australia's Immigration Revolution*, published by Allen Unwin a couple of months ago, actually last year, helped to unpack that. So we're dealing with natural increase. Natural increase is something like one-third of that figure of 450. Net migration is something similar because just as immigration has gone up, so have departures increased. So the number of people leaving Australia permanently, when they leave the country and they tick in their departure card, leaving permanently, is now around 80,000, up from about 40,000 10 years ago. And then in addition to that, we have very large numbers of long stay or temporary residents. And that in particular is an issue that is not on the radar. The students are, but the big picture is not, I believe.

Now if we look at the number of temporary residents in Australia on the 30th June, 2009, and you can't actually get this figure anywhere, you have to put it together from bits and pieces and

make estimates. There are 1.4 million temporary residents in Australia, or residents without permanent rights. That comprises some half a million New Zealanders, little bit more than half a million New Zealanders. You know that New Zealanders can come in Australia, just show a passport and get permanent residence. Not citizenship, not welfare, but residence. Like just as we can go to New Zealand. Then there's working holiday makers, the 457 visas, students, bridging visas, people, say, who apply for asylum and other categories and they're given bridging visas while their claims are being assessed. And then another group that I would suggest maybe and hardly anyone in this room has heard about: 485 visas. Has anyone heard of 485 visas? There's no less than maybe 200,000 people on 485 visas. These are students who've completed their studies and been given an extension to stay in the country for a period, up to two years, while they get experience in the areas in which they've worked. So it's supposed to be quid pro quo, they get more experience, we get extra labour. So it's become quite a complex.

JOHN: Alright. So that's the context. Lots of people have already published surveys on immigration, you can open most newspapers and find a number pretty quickly. What motivated you to commission yet more survey work?

ANDREW: Good. Because I think that practically all of the research that's been done in this country is, I could say, superficial. And it wasn't my initiative, it was an initiative of the Scanlon Foundation, and then I was brought in as someone to make it happen. The sort of surveying that's done in this country, and maybe I can just sort of go through that briefly, often they're just one question. So there's something called an omnibus survey where there might be 20 questions and various interested parties might pay to get a question or two questions put into a survey. So there might be an omnibus survey. The newspapers, News Limited and so on will often run omnibus surveys. And then they get nice headlines out of that, you know, from one or two questions. So that's the first aspect. I'm now talking about politicisation of immigration issues. One or two questions. Then there are other polls which might have more questions but don't have a large enough sample base. A number of people here would be familiar with the Lowy polls on foreign policy. The latest one they just published on Monday. Now that's a very interesting poll. It's interesting because it's run annually, so we start to get a run of data. And they tend to run the same question, not just one question, might be 30 questions. But the issue with the Scanlon polls is that there's a sample of 1,000. Now a sample of 1,000 is fine for overall reliability, plus or minus 3%, but you can't get any depth into such a sample. Does that make sense? You can't disaggregate that sample very much. You can do male and female but you can't go very far into it to look at sub-groups. So if we want to look at sub-groups you have to have a large survey. So the Scanlon Foundation surveys have been 4,000. And if you look at our publications and we've issued now not only the preliminary report but there's a full report, we can section that in so many different ways. From let's say 40 different questions we can generate 4,000 unique tables because we've got the demographics and the size to do that.

But just let me illustrate what's been happening in Australia. These are some headings. This is from The Age: Poll shows deep unease on 35 million people by 2049. News Com: Queensland residents want to cap population growth. This is a poll that shows Aussies want immigration capped. Again, a News poll in January. ABC News: Labor elite out of touch on population growth, reporting some actually so called academic work, academic surveying done at Monash University.

So the sorts of issues we have with surveying, you have people asking nonsensical questions, which I'll illustrate in a second, you have people asking leading questions, you have misinterpretation of data, you have misrepresentation of data and you have very limited surveying. I don't know how it works in other areas but certainly the areas I'm familiar with, immigration and ethnicity and population issues, Australia is so far behind best practice in Canada, United Kingdom, EU, that we're impoverished in the quality of the surveying. And as I hope we'll see through our discussion today, the Scanlon Foundation has made possible, which to me is very exciting, a fuller understanding of public opinion in Australia.

You know, this was my example, my best example of a nonsensical question. This was run by Galaxy Poll for News Limited: would you be in favour or opposed to the federal government capping immigration into Australia? Well immigration has always been capped. So what does

that mean? There's always a cap on immigration. That question suggests that, you know, the government is letting anyone in and would you want to cap that. And they found that 66% agreed with that statement. Now what were the other 34% of people thinking? In 2008/2009 immigration to Australia was higher than any other year. Do you think that Australia needs more people, yes or no? Now that was not News Poll, that was like an academic paper published in *People and Place*, authored by Kathy Betts. To me that's not a good question. Would you agree that it's a pretty much a leading question? And also that it's evaluated on a two point scale, yes or no? Why not a five point scale?

Now look at this. And what's so striking about this example is we had Angus Reid Global Monitor, which doesn't claim to be I think state of the art surveying, but they have panels and the panels respond and so on. But it's just the interpretation they put on it. So they gave people five propositions and they asked, do you agree or disagree? I particularly want to draw your attention to the third, Australia has a fragile environment that cannot cope with a much larger population, 61% agreed. Australia has the space and resources to cope with a much larger population. You know, the sort of question that they've ... the level of consistency, whether we get consistency or not. With some of these we do get consistency. Aussies don't want population of 36 million. Two-thirds of the population are opposed to a bigger Australia. These were the sort of headlines in the Sydney Morning Herald and The Australian. This comes from the Lowy Poll and what strikes me when you look at the distribution of numbers, 4, 22, 43, 23, 6. Alright, so the question put to people, you know, what's the best target population for Australia? You want to reduce it, keep it current, 30 million, 40 million or 50 million. What do you notice with those numbers? Anything? It's a beautiful bell curve. You see that's a beautiful bell curve. So what does it mean if you've got a bell curve response? It may mean that people don't really have much of an idea and they'll distribute themselves in terms of a normal distribution over that sort of spectrum. So I don't necessarily put much emphasis on that. So if we get onto research design and I don't know if you want to sort of lead into that ...

JOHN: Yeah.

ANDREW: ... but what I was trying to do was to illustrate to you the problems with current surveying not even getting to the question of looking at a multiplicity of issues and questions and seeing how they relate, but just one question which is very simplistic, could be misleading, and then the interpretations that can be placed on that.

JOHN: Well I guess that's a convincing case we should do better.

ANDREW: Yes.

JOHN: What did you do?

ANDREW: Alright. So what did we do? So what I'm talking about is going from things which are narrowly one dimensional to multi-dimensional, 'cause survey data becomes interesting when we can look at it from many different angles. When you just look at it from one angle or in a very narrow way, you might get newspaper headlines but you're not necessarily going to get much understanding. So we want to go multi-dimensional and get a deep understanding. So we spent over a year just trying to work out a justifiable conceptualisation of what we were doing. And we decided that we would look at five domains of social cohesion. We would look at people's sense of belonging, acceptance, participation, life satisfaction and social justice. So instead of just one question or two questions or three questions, have a conceptualisation of what it is you're doing and then what it is you're trying to achieve.

Further, instead of just having a very small sample, we had a sample of 3,800 in the last Scanlon survey. That included 2,000 for a national survey and we looked at six local areas. So what we're trying to do is we're trying to get a benchmark, a sense of in this culture, in Australian society, how do people respond to this sort of question? And then, now, if that's the national norm for how people respond to that sort of question, then how do people in areas where there's a lot of immigrants respond to that sort of question? And how do people in areas where there are no immigrants respond to that sort of question? So our design was 2,000 national, four areas of high immigrant concentration, so in Melbourne we looked at Dandenong

and we looked at part of the area around Broadmeadows, two low socio-economic areas but high numbers of non-English speaking background immigrants. And then we looked at two other areas, also in Sydney we did the same, and we looked at two other areas where there were practically no immigrants. One was Sunbury, outer Melbourne, and in Sydney we looked at Engadine, in that region, again outer Sydney, and just see what sort of numbers we get there. So again, the whole emphasis is let's see from different angles how people respond to these questions as a way of understanding a complex reality, multidimensional reality rather than one dimensional reality.

JOHN: And as I understood the report, one of the purposes of picking somewhere like Sunbury was so that you could isolate the impact of relatively lower SES status and background, so that you were comparing two areas with relatively lower incomes, one of them with substantially high levels of migration and one of them with relatively low, was that the idea?

ANDREW: Not quite. Because there was a hypothesis that in the outer urban areas, which aren't necessarily lower socio-economic, they can be more tending towards the middle, and even better. They're the younger people but they're maybe first home, young families, just trying to understand how they're responding. And we have other data that helps us see what happens in areas where there are not large numbers of non-English speaking background immigrants. And Frankston is one. So we can, for example, compare Dandenong and Frankston. Dandenong is a very rich multicultural area and Frankston is very much Anglo, with English speaking immigrants but very large numbers of Australian born, but both of them low socio-economic areas. If we had money we would actually survey in Frankston. You know, just to give you a sense, like I'm saying in Australia, 1,000 sample is regarded as acceptable. We did 4,000. Amazing. In Canada they did a survey with 42,000. Alright? That's sort of like state of the art. And in England the regular surveys are 15,000. So that you start to get a richer understanding of communities and ethnic groups that we start to approach.

JOHN: And from a methodological point of view, how do you cope with the fact that by definition, you're bringing a disproportionate number of people who can't speak English or who don't have particularly strong English?

ANDREW: Okay. So we actually have the option of surveying in six community languages. So when ... and we have two colleagues here from the Social Research Centre who do this for us, if I could just give a plug to the Social Research Centre, because ... I was just saying before that with some people you work and they charge by the minute, and I think Darren and David, I think you guys want to get the job done as best you can. So the callers are trained and when someone answers and says I can't speak English, then you might ask which language would you be comfortable speaking in, so we can ... Italian, Greek, Cantonese, Arabic, Lebanese, we have a range of languages that people can answer, yes.

JOHN: Terrific. Okay. So that was the survey. What did you find?

ANDREW: Alright. Can I just have a plug at this before we do that?

JOHN: Yeah, okay. Please do.

ANDREW: What I want to plug here is that interpreting data, and what we want to move away from is this simplistic notion that you judge between zero and 100 and if you get 55 or 60, that's good 'cause it's more than 50. And our whole approach and something that I've been developing, looking at the data and interacting with the data and making sense, at first I thought amazing, 85% agree. And then after a while I realised that's the sort of question that the range for that question is actually 70 to 90. And so what you have to understand is the sort of question and the range. So that again is very important in our work.

There are three types of questions: one type of question where you get a strong positive, it's inherent in the question; there's another sort of question you'll get a strong negative, and the nature of that question is that it's seen to be something for a minority. So the majority of respondents necessarily will say we are not taken with that. And then there are the politicised issues where the range is 30 to 70. So this is now my like second major point. One is, how do

you design a good survey, and it involves a lot of thought about the questionnaire and a lot of thought about the sample. But also then in interpreting the survey, look at the sort of question that you've got, because this is a little bit too complicated to explain but look at the first two colours which is the blue and the brown and this is 100%. With some questions you're getting very close to 100% agreement at the top two levels. And with other questions you get very little. I won't go into that now, but you need to interpret the results in the context of the range.

And as I say, a good illustration of this would be reading a headline in the newspaper and the headline says Ablett fails to kick a goal. And then you read further on and he was 150 metres out. And you say, wait a minute, Ablett couldn't have kicked the goal from 150 metres out. If you think that he could have kicked the goal from 150 metres out, you don't know anything about football. So if you then have a headline which says 60% of Aussies want X, and you're not aware that actually that's a question in the range 55 to 75, you're not understanding the data. Is that making sense? Yeah?

JOHN: Yeah.

ANDREW: So I think that's vital when we come to look at the data.

JOHN: Alright. So when we do look at their data, 'cause we're all anxious to see what the answers are.

ANDREW: Alright. So, we've got a number of areas, but let's just talk about belonging and satisfaction areas. What we find is that Australians are satisfied on a whole range of indicators. Then when we compare Australian data with overseas data, 'cause by training I'm a historian so I'm linked to context, I want to understand context. How does Australia compare to the United States and the EU countries and England? We're at the top end of the range. So when we ask people, your sense of belonging, you know, 95, 96% have a strong or sense of belonging in the top two levels. Pride in Australian life is in the 90s. Happiness with life, around 90. Hard work brings a better life in Australia, 80% of people agree. And these are the two surveys we've done, 2009, 2007, you can see how similar the data is. And satisfaction with financial position, 72, 73. So what our data shows is in general, Australians are relatively satisfied, relatively happy with life in Australia. But you know, don't get too excited, it's the sort of question that produces that sort of result. A bad result wouldn't be 40, a bad result would be 85. It's that sort of question. Interestingly, in 2009, level of financial satisfaction didn't go down markedly. That was an interesting finding from our survey 'cause given the GFC, you might have expected that to happen. But then you start to think it was more anxiety in Australia than significant increase in unemployment and bankruptcies and so on that we find in England and United States and Europe.

JOHN: And was there perhaps also a comparative effect, you know, people were busy reading the newspapers, hearing about how bad it was in the US and England and going well actually I'm not so bad.

ANDREW: Yeah. Yeah, there were swings and roundabouts in Australia weren't there?

JOHN: Yeah.

ANDREW: Like for example peoples' interest rates went down and petrol got cheaper and so on. And most of the people kept their job. Like our unemployment peaked at 5.9%, and in America it's still over 10% and in Spain it's 20%. So we didn't have that shot. And other surveys such as there's an ANU poll conducted about the same time as our poll, also showed that level of satisfaction hadn't gone down in 2009. Alright, so that was one area.

JOHN: Okay. So coming to immigration ...

ANDREW: Immigration.

JOHN: What are the Australian attitudes? And I guess one of the most interesting things for me in the survey was how have they changed over time and where are we going?

ANDREW: Yeah. Alright. Now in terms of my questions, now three types of questions, questions about immigration are in the second category. It's a politicised issue. So it's an issue where you'll get significant fluctuations and the norm is between 30 and 70, alright? So 30 to 70. When you ask people, there's a standard question, what do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia? People have been asking this question consistently, going back to the 1950s, so we've got long running data on this. Now in the early '90s, remember the recession of the early '90s, level of dissatisfaction was around 70%. And what we found was that one of the achievements of the Howard government was to bring that number right down. And I think what the Howard government did was it convinced people that you could trust them on immigration. You know, for its very tough asylum policies and so on, you know, we'll guard the borders and so on. So that had the impact that it brought the negativity too high, right down, around 40% negativity. And what was interesting was that hadn't shifted in 2009. It was still around 40%. Now you always read polls plus or minus 3%, within that range, so when you open up your newspaper and it said Labor Party down 1%, Liberals up 1%, what they're really saying to you is we got the same result as last time but we can't sell newspapers telling you that, so Labor Party went down 1%. It's well within the margin of error. So interestingly, even though since 2001 immigration went up, public opinion didn't really move. And what's also interesting about that is the attitude to immigration tends to be strongly correlated with level of unemployment. Now unemployment did actually go up from a low in 2007 when it was around say 4.6, 4.7 to nearly 6%. But negativity towards immigration hadn't shifted.

JOHN: Does that suggest that the success of the Howard government wasn't so much in changing attitudes to migration as simply pulling the unemployment rate down? Another way of thinking about it?

ANDREW: Well, that's true, but there have been times, for example if we go back to here ... actually I haven't got it here, but I've got data for the 1960s, right. You actually can get a situation where after a period of sustained high immigration, even though the economy's going gangbusters and whatever, negativity increases just because it'd been going for that long that people are starting to get concerned. And there's certainly been a lot of movement in Australia. But what this was showing, that people hadn't really got very concerned. And then I get concerned saying did we actually get the data wrong? You know, is our survey wrong? So I always want to see, even though these surveys are imperfect, what else might they tell us? So that's the Scanlon. The AG Neilson was about five months later, 43%, Morgan at 41%. And there's a slight difference in the sample because we look at everybody over the age of 18 and some of these surveys only look at people who are citizens who can vote and that can make about 2% difference. So when you factor that in, you've got three polls there with the same result. Is that a fair interpretation? Around 40% negativity, three polls, up to March. Now I don't know what's happened since March. We're actually doing another poll, the Scanlon Foundation decided that immigration was so important today that we actually needed to get some reliable and interesting data. So we're about to start a current survey, like tonight, just to see what's happened as a result of various discussions.

JOHN: And presumably one of the interesting things about that survey will be, given the recent noise in the press and in politics around asylum seekers, has that changed anything?

ANDREW: Yes. So, this is the question: what's been the impact of the population debate and the asylum issue on attitudes towards immigration? And the Liberals run a very tight sort of very risky strategy, because if they actually do run an election which is heavily focused on asylum and border protection, this can actually have lots of unintended consequences for social cohesion in this country and also for attitudes to immigration. And what drives immigration is not governments, it's demand in the economy. Would you agree with that?

JOHN: Yeah, well and I think that the data as I understand it is something like, you know, at the peak of it, asylum seekers are in the order of 5,000 migrants, when you're talking about the kind of numbers that you are around 400,000 a year, at least in terms of net ...

ANDREW: Yeah.

JOHN: ... in terms of gross increase, it's not driving the numbers.

ANDREW: Yeah. And some colleagues of mine who are economists tell me the impact in Australia when there's high labour demand and an incapacity to meet that demand generates tremendous inflationary pressures. So that's the risk. But what the Liberals know is that people don't like asylum seekers and you can actually go to town on that and get a lot of support in the short term. So we've got a lot of survey data which I won't go into, but the people who have a positive outlook to asylum seekers arriving in Australia by boat probably outnumbered like seven, eight to one by those who sort of want to have a very tough policy towards asylum seekers. So I won't go into that now but there's lots of data on that.

JOHN: Yeah. As you said, you got a very large sample size and one of the virtues of that is that you can kind of cut the data by all sorts of things.

ANDREW: Yeah.

JOHN: Probably not what people had for breakfast but almost that, and see what it is that correlates well, and we can have arguments about causation, but what is it that correlates with attitudes to migration?

ANDREW: Yeah.

JOHN: What did you find on that score?

ANDREW: So you'll find this in the long report which we'll put up on the web within a week or so, where we've done a lot more statistical analysis of the data. So again, in addition to getting better data sets, we want to push the boundaries of data analysis. So our friends at the Social Research Centre actually worked out a new way of weighting the data. So normally surveys are weighted for age and population, so it aligns with those two variables. But we now weight for educational attainment and whether you're a non-English speaking background or so. Surveys would traditionally have too many university educated people, so we weight for that and bring that down and that makes a couple of percentage difference as well. And then, so we also push the boundaries of sensible analysis, and that's what we're going to be illustrating now. So, we can cross-section the data. We put together four questions which give us, through factor analysis we can see that the questions hang together, and we create a scale of attitude to immigration and then we run that against the various different variables as in our report. So if you're younger, you're much more likely to be positive towards immigration than if you're over the age of 65.

JOHN: So in these charts, below the line means I think immigration's great and above the line means I'm not so sure?

ANDREW: Yes.

JOHN: Is that how I interpret them? Okay, great.

ANDREW: Correct.

JOHN: Thank you.

ANDREW: So the higher up you are, the more negative from the right. So this is birthplace, so you're much more likely to be positive to immigration if you're non-English speaking background, even if you're English speaking background immigrant than if you're native born. And financial situation, which won't surprise you, if you're prosperous you're going to be more favourable to immigration than if you're struggling. And intended vote is very interesting. Labor voters are pretty much on the line. Liberal voters are a little bit above. But the interesting thing is that the Greens are the most favourable. This is a contradiction there, isn't there, 'cause you would think the Greens would be anti-immigration. But also Greens are very nice people.

(Audience chuckling)

ANDREW: Yeah. Greens are sort of positive, pluralistic, open-minded, tend to be better educated, tend to be younger, so they go with the demographics that are open to immigration, so you do have this, like, complication to a sort of simple picture.

JOHN: So, given all of that, that's I guess the good news. I guess there is nevertheless some bad news in this report around intolerance and levels of intolerance. Do we have a problem with that? What does the evidence say? And, I guess one of the things that struck me out of the report was a number that something like 40% of people who have been in Australia a long time, so sort of at least second or third generation Australians, say that accepting immigrants from different countries does not make Australia stronger. One of the questions I think it prompts is should we be worried about that number? How does it compare with attitudes in other countries? And is it significant that we've got a higher level of intolerance amongst people who have been here for longer as distinct from recent immigrants?

ANDREW: Yeah, great. So this was something I was particularly interested to sort of get a handle on, 'cause in my earlier research as a historian I've done lots on racism in Australian society, towards Aboriginal people and immigrants and so on. So what does the data tell us? And also how does Australia compare with other countries, because people say is Australia a racist country or not a racist country? Which from one perspective is meaningless. Like what's the proportion of intolerant people in our society and what's the proportion of tolerant people and what's the distribution? So not just the Scanlon survey, but a whole range of surveys indicated that the seriously intolerant ... I actually don't use the word racist. I don't think it gets us anywhere. You say racist and everyone sort of goes to their corners, puts the barriers up and whatever. Let's talk about intolerance. People who are seriously intolerant don't like pluralism, don't like an open society and so on, are uncomfortable with minorities. They're about 10%. And I could quote you about 20 surveys that sort of indicate that, you know, if you ask a five point scale and at the end of the scale you'll get about 10%.

And similarly we have about 10% who are actively tolerant and the rest are in between. But when you take the intolerant and the people who are tending to intolerant, that gives you about 40%. This is the catchment for the politics of race in this country. The Pauline Hanson politics. You know, if you want to run an election campaign, a Tampa campaign, border protection campaign, that's your potential. You're going to tap into that, you're going to lose some people but that's what you want to tap into. It's a substantial number. Just to give you an illustration of that. Take this question: accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger. Alright? So the national benchmark is 9%, so in the Scanlon surveys 9% nationally will strongly disagree that immigrants from many countries makes us stronger. If we look at people who are second or third generation Australians, that goes up to 12%. If we look at the same people, second, third, fourth generation Australians in Dandenong and Broadmeadows where there's a lot of diversity, that number goes up to 17%. But if we look at Asian born, it's 12%, and non-English speaking born is 9%. So this I think is the important figure, isn't it? But also it reminds us that don't think that non-English speaking background people are all tolerant and whatever, they're not. It's all societies. So what I say about this then is compared to other countries, compared to other countries, the level of serious intolerance is more towards the lower end. The lowest is Sweden and some of the Scandinavian countries where it might be 5%. But there are some countries around 30% seriously intolerant. So we're about 10%. Okay. But, the issue is that in these areas of high immigrant concentration, you add the seriously intolerant and intolerant and you're getting 40%. So the lesson there is this is a work in progress, and politicians who want to go around and stir up intolerance understand that, as they say, put the genie back in the bottle is not that easy, because we do have an issue. All societies have an issue and politicians, I believe, have a responsibility. And our survey shows you the sort of issue that you have.

JOHN: Is there anything that you think we can do to make it less likely that people will pull that genie out of the bottle?

ANDREW: Less likely?

JOHN: Yeah.

ANDREW: I think if you have some influence in the political process and if you have some influence in the media. But unfortunately, I believe that our media does not have a fantastic record on these issues. If you look at headlines day after day after day on the asylum issue, and I've been collecting them, and it's a very grim picture, isn't it? Would you agree with me, it's a grim picture? It's totally out of keeping with the scale of the issue. And understand that you whip up animosity and the basis of a tolerant society is where people can empathise with the other, understand the other. And what is happening here is, don't understand the asylum seekers, don't consider them as human beings. And people who have been in the media or had things to do with the media tell me at certain times they deliberately will not publish pictures which humanise the asylum seekers.

JOHN: Yeah. That's probably not a bad introduction to multiculturalism which of course is one of those words that means a lot of things to a lot of different people. But one of the things that you looked at was attitudes towards maintaining customs and traditions and whether people thought that was a good idea or a bad idea.

ANDREW: Yeah.

JOHN: What did you find there?

ANDREW: Yeah, alright. So it depends very much on the question that you ask, and then various politicians will make of that question what they will. So if you're part of the want to promote multiculturalism to government, you'll tell them, look, cultural diversity is good. In Victoria 89% agree with that and in South Australia 88% agree with that. And that was a 2007 survey with reasonable samples. So isn't that fantastic? Ninety percent of the population agree that cultural diversity is good. And what they're missing is the sort of question that will produce that sort of result. It's an 82-95% range question. And similarly if you ask people multiculturalism is necessary people from different cultures that live in harmony, 80%. So these are other polls that I'm using here now. Multiculturalism, is it good or bad for Australia? Seventy-eight percent. Do you support a policy of multiculturalism, 80%. So again you're getting very strong positives. But when you ask people something much more concrete, you give them a choice, some people say it's better for a country if different racial ethnic groups maintain their distinct customs, or it's better if these groups adapt and blend in. Eighty percent in 2003 favours blend in, 18% for maintenance of customs. We asked in our survey, giving people the options of both, and we recorded both, it was still 60% said it's better if people blend in. So again, what I would say the data indicates, if you ask questions about multiculturalism in the abstract, people endorse it. You ask people about multiculturalism in concrete terms, and it becomes very much a minority position. We also ask people should government be supporting ethnic groups to maintain culture and tradition? And again if you get 30% agreeing with that, you're doing well.

JOHN: Yeah.

ANDREW: So that in terms of concrete, when you start to think about government expenditure and so on, it becomes a minority position.

JOHN: And I thought one of the interesting things about this question was that idea of blending in which, you know, could cover an awful lot of things including many traditions in fact being maintained, albeit within a wider culture, and I guess one of the things that it reminded me of was Noel Pearson's work where he's been very strong on saying actually, our problem is we try and pigeonhole people into one culture or another, and actually it's very possible for people to belong to two cultures, or indeed many cultures, and indeed probably all of us do in some way or another belong to a multitude of different cultures. And the problems arise when we try and force people and say you can only pick one ...

ANDREW: Yeah.

JOHN: ... and that's when a lot of the problems arise. In terms of the detailed analysis, as you said, one of the advantages that you have that you could cut the data in a lot of ways, what did

you find at more detailed level in terms of attitudes towards all of those other issues around social cohesion that you started off that framework with?

ANDREW: Yeah. So I'll just talk very briefly about this 'cause we're going to run out of time and there won't be any chance for questions, but so what we're trying to do with this data now is to develop a technique where we can simultaneously look at say 20 questions. Alright? We're going now from that situation is they only asked one question, to a context where we ask 20 questions, we try to put that together. And in the social sciences there's various methodologies for doing this. There's something called fractal analysis, another thing called small space analysis. The problem with these methodologies is that they're so complicated that you've got no hope whatsoever of conveying the results of that to a large audience, and I'm actually in the business of trying to convey these results in a meaningful way. So what I've done is I've developed a system, which I'll explain now just very, very quickly, and if you're interested, 'cause I can give a whole talk just on this, it's in our full report which will be on the web, as I say, in a week. But I group questions in terms of questions relating to satisfaction, belonging, sense of justice, sense of trust, immigration, attitudes to immigration, the impact of immigration in the local area, and then sense of safety. So does that make sense? A whole range of questions. And what I try to do is to use the national data as the benchmark, and then I look at areas, local areas where there's a lot of immigrants and just see what variation occurs in the local area. Alright. So we've gone from the simplistic, leading, stupid questions to try to ask meaningful questions and with our colleagues, and I've got three colleagues in this room, we just spend a month carefully looking at questions and trialling questions and making sure that they work. Alright. And then what happens is you actually try and map what's happening. Now this is in the area, as I said to you, trust, belonging, satisfaction and so on, and we group all the questions. Now the first box here is the local area. This is the national data and this calculates the variance. Is that methodology making sense? So I've got a benchmark from the national, and then I see what's happening in the local area.

JOHN: So the local area is one with high levels of NE ...

ANDREW: High ... yeah.

JOHN: ... non-English speaking background people?

ANDREW: Yeah. And further, this is only second, third, fourth generation Australians. I want to understand what's happening to old Australians in areas where there's a lot of immigrants by benchmarking that against the national data. And what I'm looking for is variance. I'm no longer interested in it 10%, 60%, whatever. I'm more interested in the variance from the national to the local to see what's happening in the local. And what we find, for example, sense of belonging, happiness, economic opportunity. See the numbers here, that shows you the variance, 6, 1, 7, 6, 4, 2. Not much variance. So in a way people are saying that we're quite happy and we're not significantly different from the national data.

Then we look at immigration issues and we are starting to get big variance. The current immigration program is about right or too low. Only 29% in the local area think it's about right, 50% of the national. So that's big variance. But the biggest variance is in sense of safety and sense of trust, 20% variance, or 20% points variance. Thirty-five percentage points variance. Do you feel safe walking alone at night, 63 as opposed to 28. Now as I said I haven't got time to go into this, but by looking at the data as a totality, not just one question, and then looking at specific groups 'cause we disaggregate this by non-English speaking background groups and other groups as well, and just see what's happening in that way. But the first thing that this says to us is, in an area like Dandenong, a big issue is trust and safety. And we've done other analysis, multiple regression analysis which says the best predictor of you saying that this area is, you know, a good place to be is that you can communicate with your neighbours, aspects to do with communication. So this really does show that if governments want to make a difference, I would say that these are the areas that they've got to tackle to create a sense of safety for people, to seriously tackle crime and the issues that people have with crime, and then the impact of that is that people trust each other more, because if you're worried about your neighbours, you're worried about your locality, you're worried about being out on the street, your sense of trust will go down. And if your sense of trust goes down, the level of cohesion is

seriously impacted. And I think this is the difference between say other socio-economic areas where there aren't a lot of immigrants, and areas where there are a lot of immigrants. Because you had the same sort of tension say in Frankston or parts of Frankston as you might have in Dandenong. But if issues start to escalate and we've seen the pattern of, you know, seriously deteriorating race relations, community relations, they would take on a different character in areas where different ethnic groups are targeting each other and different gangs targeting each other or whatever. So this highlights the sort of complex approach to data, the areas where governments need to be working hardest.

JOHN: I thought one of the really interesting things about the report is that you get that really big difference, or not quite as big, but still very big, if you go and ask the immigrants themselves around do they feel safe walking alone at night, and again you get a big difference depending on whether they're living in an area of high immigration or not.

ANDREW: Yeah.

JOHN: Did that surprise you?

ANDREW: It doesn't surprise me but in a way, you know, there's a lot of positives here. That's what I take away first. When you ask people about are you happy? Like this is a key issue for me, is Australia a land of economic opportunity or not? If you work hard in this country can you get on? Now I'd say when a lot of people say we can't get on, you've got a serious problem. But here you've got like 81% of the national level, 80% of the local level agreeing with that proposition. So these are high numbers and little variance. So these are real positives. You ask people do people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together? And you're asking this of second and third generation Australians in areas where there's a lot of immigrants. And you're getting 68-60. So variance of six is not much difference. So I would say you've got the basis to build. Some countries, the dominant ethic of some countries is against immigration. In England and Germany and a number of countries, the survey data indicates that people do not accept immigration as a positive. In Australia they do, in good times.

JOHN: Yeah.

ANDREW: And here you have the basis on which to build and here you can see the areas you need to tackle, sense of safety central to trust.

JOHN: Well I guess that say it's about going from good to great as distinct from this being a kind of catastrophe situation, what kind of things can we do that you think would make a real difference around that issue around feeling safety 'cause as we're saying, it's not actually an issue about whether people are safe, it's a question of whether people feel safe.

ANDREW: Yes. So we agree the sense of safety is vital, like is a big health sort of statement on the community indicators website. You know, neighbourhood is perceived as safe, foster participation, encourage physical activity, community connectedness, health and wellbeing. So the challenge to me is what more governments can do to foster respect? And the issue here is that we know that some communities do better than the others. It's not all similarly placed socio-economic communities are the same. Some do better than others. Why do some do better than others? So we have to try and work out what is best practice and to model best practice and to prioritise it. And in countries such as England where they've had a lot of trouble, they've done fantastic work to try to model best practice. And I don't think it's a secret. I don't have to go off for two years to find out what it is. The answer is this: I mean first of all address socio-economic inequality as much as you can. That done, you need to run programs that aren't there for two years, that actually have a life of about eight or 10 years, 'cause you know, people resent nothing more, that you come in, you run a program for two years, just as you're starting to produce some results, funding is cut and you're gone. Don't do it. You have to commit yourself and the problem with our system of government is we've got this election cycle. And so it's difficult but it has to be eight to 10 years. These sort of programs don't cost mega dollars. It's not like trying to reform the education system that the present government has been trying to do. But it does require resources, but it doesn't have to be mega resources. It has to have local initiative. It's not one size fits all. You can have a template but you have to have local initiative.

Like we've seen the sort of problems I think and I'll make a political statement that the Howard government's got into with these one size fits all models. Like you know fixing up climate change by putting batts in the roofs and whatever. You have to have local in this, you have to have people who know something about what makes communities work because each community is different. Each community has got its history, its distinctive character. And part of the process is empowering people. That in itself is a step taken in the right direction. And this is really important: balance between accountability and red tape. Because often what will happen is that you have people who should be doing the work, you want to hire them, you can't hire them. Why can't you hire them? They're the best people by far to do the work that needs to be done in these local communities but they may not have the formal qualifications. And so you can't tick all the boxes that need to be ticked. So it's these sort of issues; adequate resources which doesn't mean zillions, adequate length, local initiative and a central template and this balance between accountability and initiative.

JOHN: Thank you. Huge amount of material there. And we've left ourselves probably less time than we'd all love to have for questions, but let's open it up if we may. Just one there. And if you can give us your name and wait for the microphone so that we can record things for posterity, that'd be terrific.

AUDIENCE: Sure. Anna Videira-Johnson. My question is regarding the perception of lack of safety. Does that correspond to indeed higher crime rate in those areas and therefore it's perfectly justified, or is it a biased perception?

ANDREW: No. It does correspond, it does correspond. You know, you can ... and I've looked at this. These sort of communities are like in the lowest tenth or lowest decile, or second lowest decile, in terms of some of these issues that you raise, so there is that correlation. So obviously you have to deal with substantive issues as well as perceptions.

JOHN: Yeah, terrific. Thank you. Next question.

AUDIENCE: First off, Professor, thank you so much for your work. I'm Kevin Hill from the Department of Justice. And I'm originally from the United States, so I especially applaud your work here and hope that it translates over the Pacific. First off, I'd like to ask, I like your work in the question asking concrete examples about multiculturalism. And I wanted to ask in asking those questions, do you feel like that 40% of intolerance shows up a little bit more when you give concrete examples such as government intervention in minority communities?

ANDREW: Yeah. I think with regard to multiculturalism, like there's two separate issues. One issue which I'm very much persuaded by, it's hard to sell multiculturalism in Australia 'cause there isn't an actual constituency for multiculturalism as there is maybe in parts of the United States, in many parts of the United States or Canada, because in Canada you've got the French and you've got the English and you've got to try and keep the French onside and so on. So it gives you a natural constituency for policies of multiculturalism 'cause you don't know how the French are going to decamp and that's not going to be good for Canada. That's the view of the dominant group. The view of the dominant group in Australia, is what's the point of multiculturalism and the rhetoric about a nation of tribes and so on, it becomes very powerful in this country.

So then when you realise what you can sell and what you can't sell, it's the way that you target programs. I think multiculturalism as a term doesn't work in Australia. And my perception as an outsider is what this government has done is it said it's too difficult, we're not going to touch it. So they really sidelined those sorts of issues. And yet we've been actually very successful in creating avenues for dialogue for people to talk with each other across faith communities, across ethnic communities. So this is really vital to be done in a significant way, not in the way of giving people \$500 here, \$700 there, and they go away or you know, we'll give you some more money next year if you're good. But significant programs to develop dialogue across communities. And the way to sell programs is not to have them marketed as something for minorities, 'cause there isn't a natural constituency and you market it as for a minority, it's not going to get much traction. Does that make sense? So the governments have to work out a strategy for marketing them as a benefit. Like in England the catchcry became *for all of us*, as

replacing some of the ... for all of us is ... and it's hard to sell. And my perception is that in Australia, it's really been sidelined and that's the sort of thing that comes back to bite you.

JOHN: Thank you. Question up the back there. Thank you.

AUDIENCE: Hi, I'm Katherine Loftus. I'm from Melbourne University. Professor, I was just interested in what you thought about the gentrification of areas like Broadmeadows and Footscray, I think just in the context of the housing crisis, we're seeing a lot of people from higher SES groups moving to these areas due to their proximity to the city. And I'm just wondering whether you think this is something that will strengthen the social cohesion of these areas or it might fracture it even further; strengthening it due to the possibly bringing in more wealth or fracturing it due to displacing people who were there already.

ANDREW: Yeah. You might have more ideas on this than I, but obviously one thing would be that if people have already got sort of a stake in those communities, like they own their houses, for example, and then people move in and it has the effect of actually increasing the range of services and the quality of the services, you would think that that would be good. The danger is that if you've got areas where there's a very large rental market and people actually thrown out of their homes to make way for others, then that displacement can cause immediate problems for those people who are being displaced. They can end up being further away from places of employment and so on. So it can cut both ways. It could have advantages and disadvantages. Would that be a reasonable statement or not?

JOHN: Terrific. Thank you. Do we have another question? There's just one up the front.

AUDIENCE: David Penington, University of Melbourne. I wonder if you sample large enough and the questions and identification of respondents is sufficient to be able to analyse whether there are differences attributable to religion such as Islamic respondents or able to compare Islamic Africans with non-Islamic Africans if one's distinguishing race and religion?

ANDREW: Yes. So we did have a number of questions on religion in our survey, so we can actually section the survey by not only what religion are you but how often would you go to a religious service and how important is religion in your life and so on. But the problem is that when we get to some of these groups, the sample becomes very small and becomes very difficult. In the first survey we did, we actually had a boost sample of people who are from the Middle East, mainly Muslims. And that was very hard and we didn't really get enough. So you really need a commitment of funding on another level to do that. What the Canadians did, which is the best example I know, with their 42,000, they did a survey where they had targets of 6,000 for seven different groups. And that gives you very rich data. And it's interesting isn't it, we're really flying blind. Would you agree with that? We've got this huge investment in people and we're flying blind. And because we don't really have the culture in this country to enable us to sort of go into it in any detail. 'Cause if you think about it, as you said at the beginning, let's say that one in four Australians is born overseas, but then when we look at what's characteristic of Australians and the huge diversity, so we have like 150 different nationalities. And then when we start to look at the data it becomes very difficult. So what the Scanlons have done is to enable us to do really good quality work at broad group level which was better than we had before, but not at that sort of level that you're suggesting. That would require then us to go to the next level.

JOHN: Thank you. Grattan Institute has four founding members and one of them is BHP Billiton and we are very, very grateful for their support, along with our other founding members, the Commonwealth of Australia, Victorian government and also the University of Melbourne.

End of recording