

Tuesday, 28 September 2021

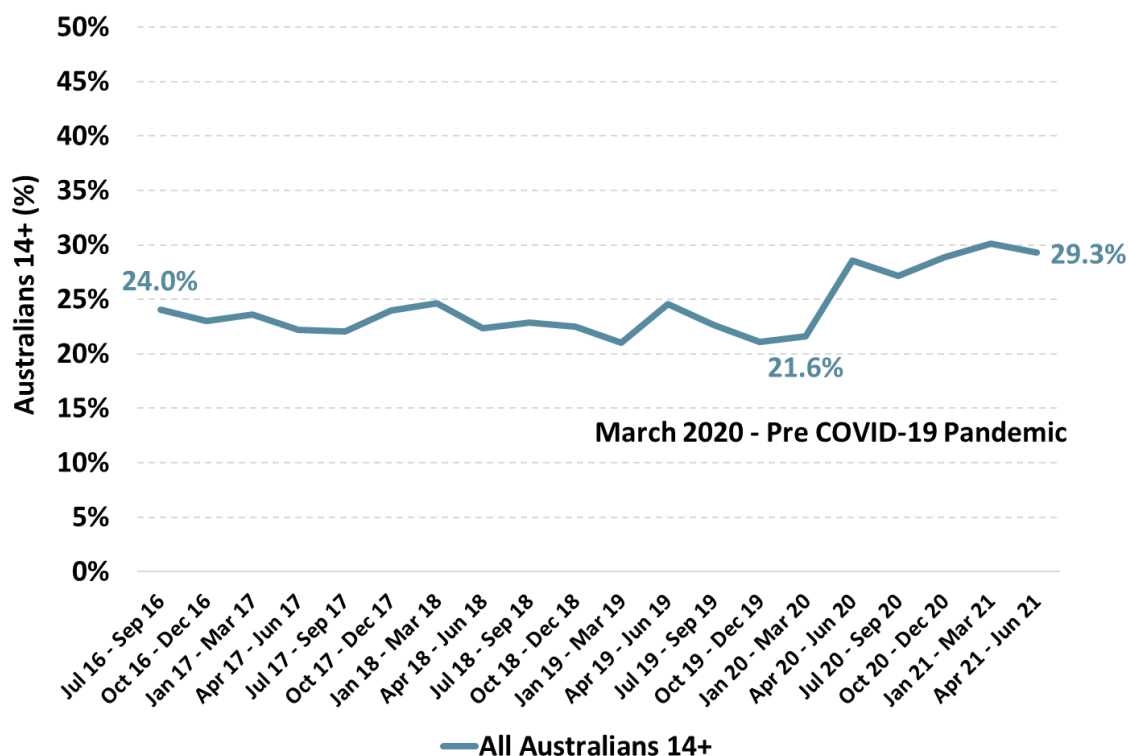
## 29% of Australians now say '*Freedom is more important than the law*'

New Roy Morgan data shows since the COVID-19 pandemic began there has been a sustained increase in how Australians view freedom compared to the law of the land. 29.3% of Australians 14+ now agree that '*Freedom is more important than the law*' – an increase of almost 8% points compared to the March quarter 2020 (21.6% of Australians) just prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This sentiment was evident in the streets of Melbourne over the last week as we witnessed daily protests by construction workers, 'tradies' and others, against vaccine mandates and the extended lockdown. The protesters in Inner Melbourne were frequently seen chanting in large groups for 'freedom' in contravention of the current health orders in Victoria preventing large gatherings of people.

When the pandemic began agreement with this statement jumped 7% points in the June quarter 2020 to 28.6% of Australians and has remained between 27-31% over the last year.

### % of Australians agree: '*Freedom is more important than the law*': 2016-21

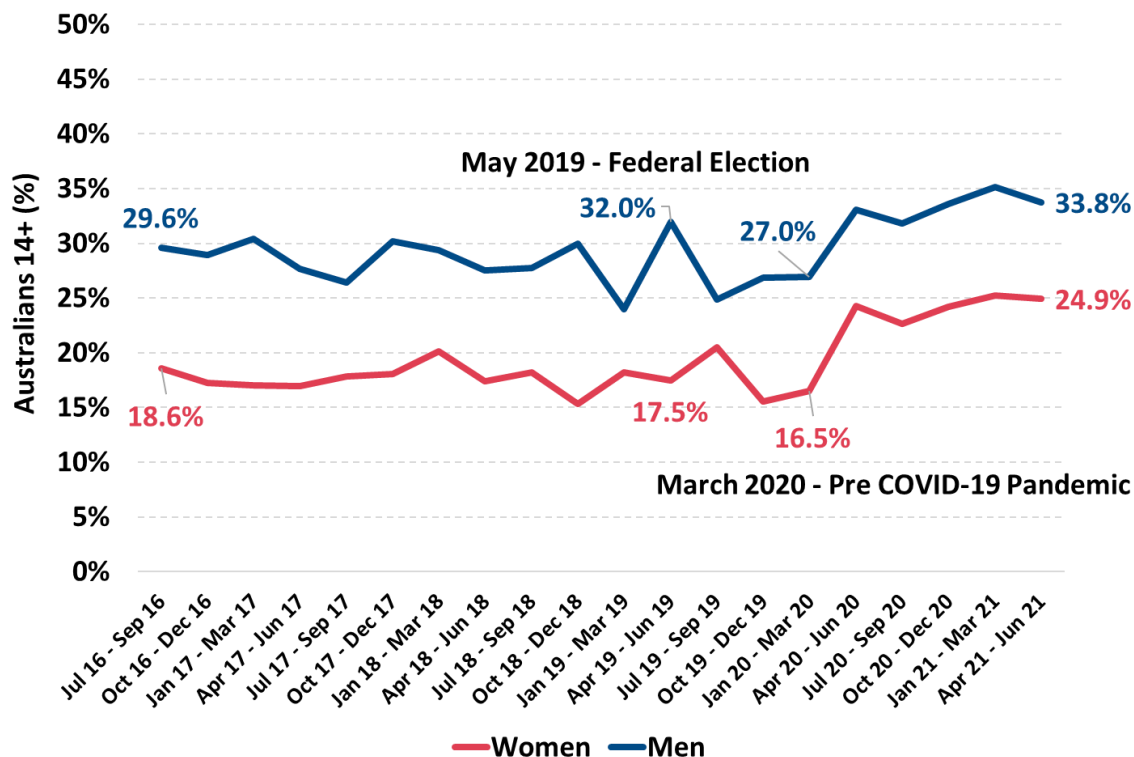


**Source:** Roy Morgan Single Source, July 2016 – June 2021. Average quarterly interviews, n = 13,468.

Women have driven a larger share of this increase since the pandemic began than men – although men are still more likely to agree with the statement by a significant margin. Around a quarter of women, 24.9%, now agree with the statement, an increase of 8.4% points from the March quarter 2020 and close to the high of 25.2% reached in the March quarter 2021.

Over a third of men, 33.8%, agree with the statement in the June quarter 2021, an increase of 6.8% points from the March quarter 2020 and above the pre-pandemic high of 32% reached briefly in the June quarter 2019 at the time of the 2019 Federal Election in May 2019.

## % of Women Vs Men who agree: 'Freedom is more important than the law': 2016-21



**Source:** Roy Morgan Single Source, July 2016 – June 2021. Average quarterly interviews, n = 13,468.  
**Base:** Australians 14+.

### Generation Z and Millennials are the most likely to agree freedom is more important than the law

Analysis of how different generations respond to this statement shows agreement is heavily co-related to age and is higher the younger one gets. Even so, there have been increases across all generations of people who agree that *'freedom is more important than the law'*.

Almost two-fifths of young people in Generation Z (38.1%) agree that *'freedom is more important than the law'* – an increase of 5.4% points from the March quarter 2020 – and higher than any other generation.

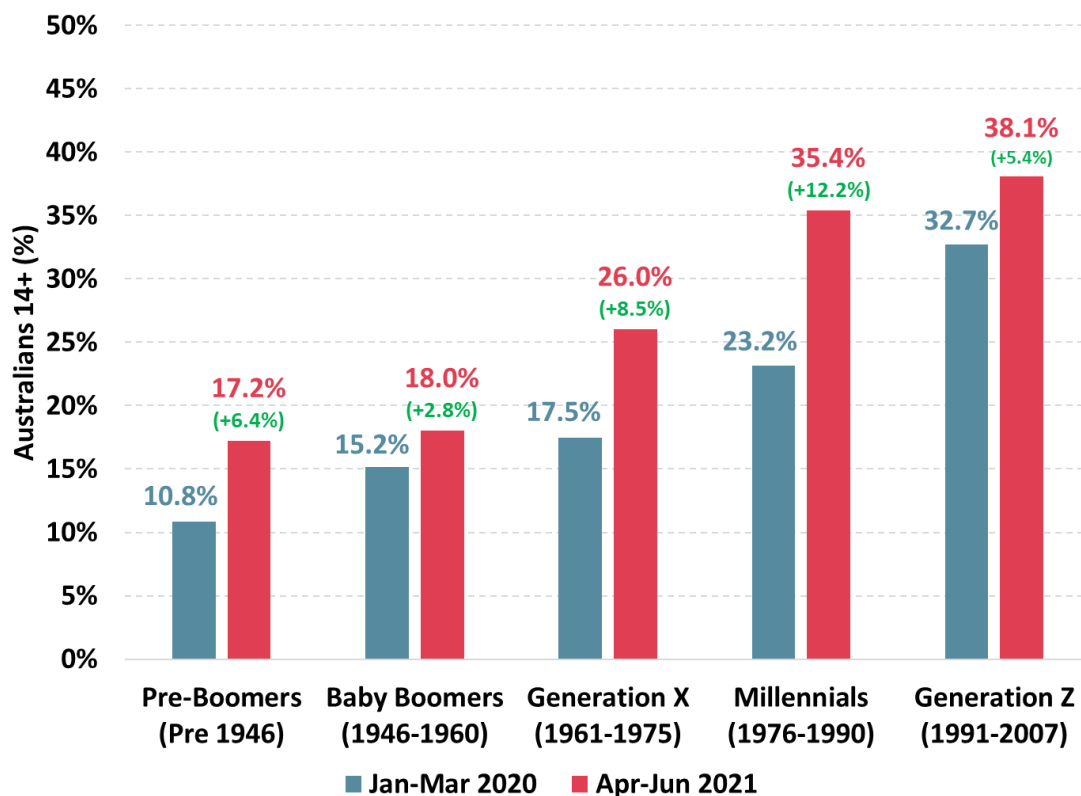
However, the biggest increase in those who agree that *'freedom is more important than the law'* during the pandemic has come for Millennials, those largely aged in their 30s and early 40s, up 12.2% points to 35.4% in the June quarter 2021.

Over a quarter of people in Generation X (26%) now agree that *'freedom is more important than the law'*, up 8.5% points from pre-pandemic. This is the second largest increase of any generation and covers people in their late 40s and 50s.

Older Australians aged 60 years and older are the least likely to agree with the statement with only 18% of Baby Boomers and 17.2% of Pre-Boomers agreeing that *'freedom is more important than the law'* – less than half the corresponding figure for those people in Generation Z aged largely under 30.

The data comes from Roy Morgan Single Source, the nation's largest and longest-running program of research into consumer behaviour and attitudes, continuously conducted year-round.

**% of Australians agree: 'Freedom is more important than the law' by Generation in March Quarter 2020 (pre COVID-19) cf. June Quarter 2021**



**Source:** Roy Morgan Single Source, January – March 2020, n=10,852, April – June 2021, n=16,183.

**Base:** Australians 14+.

**Roy Morgan CEO, Michele Levine, says the week of protests in Melbourne last week was sparked by a decision to mandate vaccinations for workers in the building and construction industry – which tend to be younger men – those most likely to agree ‘freedom is more important than the law’:**

*“Melbourne has endured a tumultuous week with over a week of protests during the city’s record-breaking sixth lockdown punctuated by an unexpected earthquake on Wednesday. The protests were sparked by a decision to enforce mandatory vaccinations for workers in the building and construction industry but are also likely feeding on shifting attitudes caused by the pandemic.*

*“The COVID-19 pandemic began in mid-March 2020 and by the end of that month Australia had entered an unprecedented nationwide lockdown that confined people to their homes for large parts of the next two months.*

*“Ever since the first nationwide lockdown there have been a series of lockdowns around Australia including a long second lockdown in Victoria last year and the long current lockdowns in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra which have all stretched on for months.*

*“Immediately following the imposition of the nationwide lockdown the share of Australians agreeing that ‘freedom is more important than the law’ jumped 7% points to 28.6%. This figure has remained elevated ever since and is now at 29.3% in the June quarter 2021.*

*“Agreement with the statement has increased for both genders with 33.8% of men (up 6.8% points from pre-pandemic) and 24.9% of women (up 8.4% points) now agreeing that ‘freedom is more important than the law’ both near highs reached earlier in 2021.*

*“There are also increases for people of all ages – and clearly the highest among the young in Generation Z at 38.1%, up 5.4% points compared to pre-pandemic. By age the biggest increase has been among Millennials, with 35.4% now agreeing ‘freedom is more important than the law’ – up 12.2% points since the pandemic began.*



*"These two generations are primarily comprised of young people in their 20s and 30s who also constitute a large share of workers in the construction industry that drove the protests in Melbourne last week. It's a fair guess that protesters arguing against mandatory vaccinations and the latest lockdown would be very likely to agree that 'freedom is more important than the law'.*

*"As we approach the key vaccination targets of 70% and 80% over the next few months the lockdowns will end, restrictions will be eased and freedom of movement will be restored. It will be interesting to watch whether these views revert to their old levels once we move past lockdowns and restrictions and head towards a Federal Election early in 2022."*

Roy Morgan tracks a wide array of attitudes amongst Australians and key differences can be drawn between people of different ages, incomes, socio-economic level, family make-up, media consumption and almost any demographic you can imagine derived from detailed in-depth interviews with around 50,000 Australians each year collected as part of the Roy Morgan Single Source survey.

For comments or more information about Roy Morgan's data contact:

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### About Roy Morgan

Roy Morgan is Australia's largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state, as well as in the U.S. and U.K. A full-service research organisation, Roy Morgan has over 79 years' experience collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

### Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

| Sample Size | Percentage Estimate |            |            |           |
|-------------|---------------------|------------|------------|-----------|
|             | 40%-60%             | 25% or 75% | 10% or 90% | 5% or 95% |
| 10,000      | ±1.0                | ±0.9       | ±0.6       | ±0.4      |
| 20,000      | ±0.7                | ±0.6       | ±0.4       | ±0.3      |
| 50,000      | ±0.4                | ±0.4       | ±0.3       | ±0.2      |