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Tuesday, 18 May 2021

Preference for Chinese-made clothes, electrical goods, mobile phones, footwear and sporting goods drops in 2020

New research by Roy Morgan shows Australians are less likely than a year ago to buy products across a wide range of industries if they know the product is 'Made in China'.

The largest declines were for clothes, electrical goods, mobile phones, footwear and sporting goods.
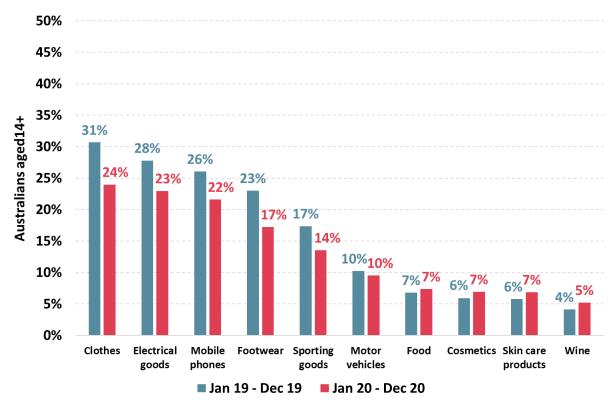
In 2020 only 24% of Australians said they'd be more likely to buy clothes if they knew the clothes were 'Made in China', down 7% points from 2019.

The same trend was evident for Chinese-made electrical goods with 23% (down 5% points from 2019) of Australians saying they'd be more likely to buy the product if they knew it was 'Made in China', mobile phones on 22% (down 4%), footwear on 17% (down 6%) and sporting goods on 14% (down 3%).

There were a number of products for which sentiment barely changed from a year ago but which only a minority of Australians indicated they'd be more likely to buy if they knew the product was 'Made in China'. These products included motor vehicles on 10% (unchanged from 2019), food on 7% (unchanged), cosmetics and skin care products both on 7% (up 1%) and wine on 5% (up 1%).

These results are from the Roy Morgan Single Source survey, derived from comprehensive in-depth interviews with over 1,000 Australians each week and around 50,000 Australians per year.

% of people more likely to buy each product if it was made in China: 2019 vs. 2020

Source: Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia), January – December 2019, n=50,422; and January – December 2020 n=61,294. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they would be more likely or less likely to buy each type of product 'made in China'.

China is easily Australia's largest two-way trading partner but recent tensions between the two countries have seen attitudes towards Chinese-made goods plummet during 2020 as the world grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic says Roy Morgan CEO Michele Levine:

"Australians are a patriotic lot – particularly during times of crisis – with [93% of Australians in 2020 saying they would be more likely to buy a product if they knew it was 'Made in Australia'](#) – an increase of 6% points on 2019.

"However the tendency to turn to home-grown products during the last year has come at the expense of products from Australia's largest trading partner China – now only 21% of Australians say they would be more likely to buy a product they knew was 'Made in China' – down 9% points on a year earlier.

"Looking at discrete product categories shows the most popular consumer goods from China have seen the biggest declines in preference among Australian consumers. Now only 24% of Australians would be more likely to buy clothes they knew were 'Made in China' – down 7% points from 2019.

"There have been similarly large drops in preference amongst Australians for electrical goods – down 5% points to 23%, mobile phones – down 4% points to 22%, footwear – down 6% points to 17% and sporting goods – down 3% points to only 14%.

"The two-way trading relationship between the two countries is heavily weighted in Australia's favour. Australian exports to China (including Hong Kong) amounted to [1]$177.3 billion in 2020, while Australia imported $87 billion in return: a trade surplus of over $90 billion – which is larger than the two-way trade between Australia and any other country by itself.

"The tensions between the two countries are tied to Australian requests for an investigation into the origins of COVID-19 made early in the pandemic. In response to this request the Chinese Government put tariffs and import restrictions on a range of Australian goods including wine, barley, lobsters, coal, timber, red meat and cotton.

"However, the huge declines amongst Australians for a range of Chinese-made goods suggest, even if the differences between the two Governments can be resolved, there will remain something of an image problem for Chinese products in Australia over the next few years."

Related research findings

View our extensive range of [Shopping and Retail profiles,](#) including our profile for [shoppers who try to buy Australian-made products as often as possible](#). These profiles provide a broad understanding of the target audience, in terms of demographics, attitudes, activities and media usage in Australia.

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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.

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[1]*Australia's leading trading partner in 2019/20 according to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is China (Including Hong Kong) ($264.3bn). Exports to the value of $177.3 billion (China: $167.6 billion) and Hong Kong ($9.7 billion); Imports to the value of $87.0 billion (China: $83.45 billion) and Hong Kong ($3.55 billion). DFAT: https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/australias-goods-services-by-top-15-partners-2019-20.pdf

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%
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2