

Monday, 20 September 2019

Affordability continues to be a key barrier for improving digital inclusion in Australia

The [Australian Digital Inclusion Index](#) is a comprehensive picture of Australians' online participation through three measures - access, affordability and digital ability. It looks at trends across demographics including age, geography, socio-economics, people with a disability and Indigenous Australians.

In the four years since the benchmark for measuring digital inclusion in Australia was launched, affordability is the area where significant improvements have not been made.

The ADII is based on data from more than 16,000 Australians captured in the annual cycle of the Roy Morgan Single Source survey, and is produced by RMIT University's Digital Ethnography Research Centre and the Centre for Social Impact at Swinburne University in partnership with Telstra and Roy Morgan.

The high level key findings in the 2019 Index are:

- **Access continues to improve** – underpinned by the rollout of the NBN, this measure has seen the biggest improvement since benchmarking began.
- **Digital ability marginally improved in 2019** and has been steadily improving since 2014 (when data was first collected). The 2019 Index findings show addressing digital ability isn't just about building skills but also increasing confidence in the use of different technologies.
- **Affordability** – although value for money spent on internet services continues to improve, the share of total household budgets spent on these services has increased in 2019. Despite the increasing availability of the NBN, the affordability gap between high and low-income households remains at the same level as in 2014. Improvements to affordability are unlikely in the absence of a lower cost NBN broadband product, or increase in household income for those in lower-income brackets.

Among other findings in the 2019 Index was a deep dive into the digital inclusion of recently-arrived migrants in Shepparton. Shepparton is home to new migrants from countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Iraq and Sub-Saharan Africa. Insights were gleaned into the key challenges this group faces to be digitally included – affordability and low levels of English literacy.

Professor Julian Thomas from RMIT's Digital Ethnography Research Centre (and Lead researcher) said, *"Digital inclusion is a complex and persistent problem. The Index provides a vital evidence base, which can help us develop positive strategies to ensure all Australians gain the benefits of the digital economy."*

Professor Jo Barraket, Director of the Centre for Social Impact Swinburne said, *"It's more than about having access to cheaper services. We know that until household incomes at the lower end improve, the notion of affordability of digital services remains out of reach for so many people in Australia. Until this happens we can expect the affordability gap to only worsen over time."*

Other key findings of the 2019 Australian Digital Index

- South Australia recorded the largest improvement in overall digital inclusion of all the states and territories.
- In general, Australians with low levels of income, education, and employment are significantly less digitally included. There is consequently a substantial digital divide between richer and poorer Australians.
- The gap between the most digitally included age group (people aged 25-34 years) and the least digitally included age group (people aged 65+) narrowed for the first time since 2014.

- ADII Supplementary survey research conducted in the far north Queensland remote Indigenous community of Pormpuraaw and the central Australian remote Indigenous community of Ali Curung suggest digital inclusion for Indigenous Australians further diminishes with remoteness, particularly with regard to access and affordability.
- Geography matters. The ADII reveals substantial differences between Australians living in rural and urban areas.
- More than four million Australians access the internet solely through a mobile connection, often linked with socio economic factors including low income, unemployment and low levels of education.

To learn more about the Australian Digital Inclusion Index and understand the Digital Inclusion of your target audience call Roy Morgan on (03) 9224 5309 or email askroymorgan@roymorgan.com.

Please click on this link to the [Roy Morgan Online Store \(www.store.roymorgan.com\)](http://www.store.roymorgan.com).

The 2019 ADII is available to download: <https://digitalinclusionindex.org.au/the-index-report/report>.

Roy Morgan Enquiries

Office: +61 (3) 9224 5309

askroymorgan@roymorgan.com

About Roy Morgan

Roy Morgan is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state of Australia, as well as in the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan has over 75 years' experience in 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%
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2

