



Australia Fair

Social Exclusion in good economic times?

People are living in poverty, if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living which is regarded as acceptable by society generally. As a result of inadequate incomes and resources people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society

National Anti-poverty Strategy, 1997

Who is living in poverty?

For example, people experiencing poverty are more likely to live in areas with high unemployment levels, such as the old manufacturing zones surrounding capital cities, which in many cases have unemployment rates over 10%, including:

- Blacktown - south-west (NSW) 10%,
- Sunshine (VIC) 11%,
- Broadmeadows (VIC) 12%,
- Elizabeth (SA) 17%,
- Inala (QLD) 13%,
- Kingston (QLD) 16%.[\[1\]](#)

[\[1\]](#) Source: DEWR 2006, *Small area labour markets* (June quarter).

In good economic times?

While the 'official' unemployment rate has fallen to less than 5 per cent and there are shortages of workers at many skill levels and in many regions, a minority of Australians remain deeply disadvantaged in the labour market:

- 800,000 children are living in jobless households;
- 72% of jobless Parenting Payment recipients, 64% of long term unemployed people and 44% of people with disabilities have Year 10 education or less;
- 40% of Newstart Allowance recipients have been on this payment for 2 years or more;
- 45% of single parents on income support suffer from clinical depression or anxiety conditions and 17% have considered suicide

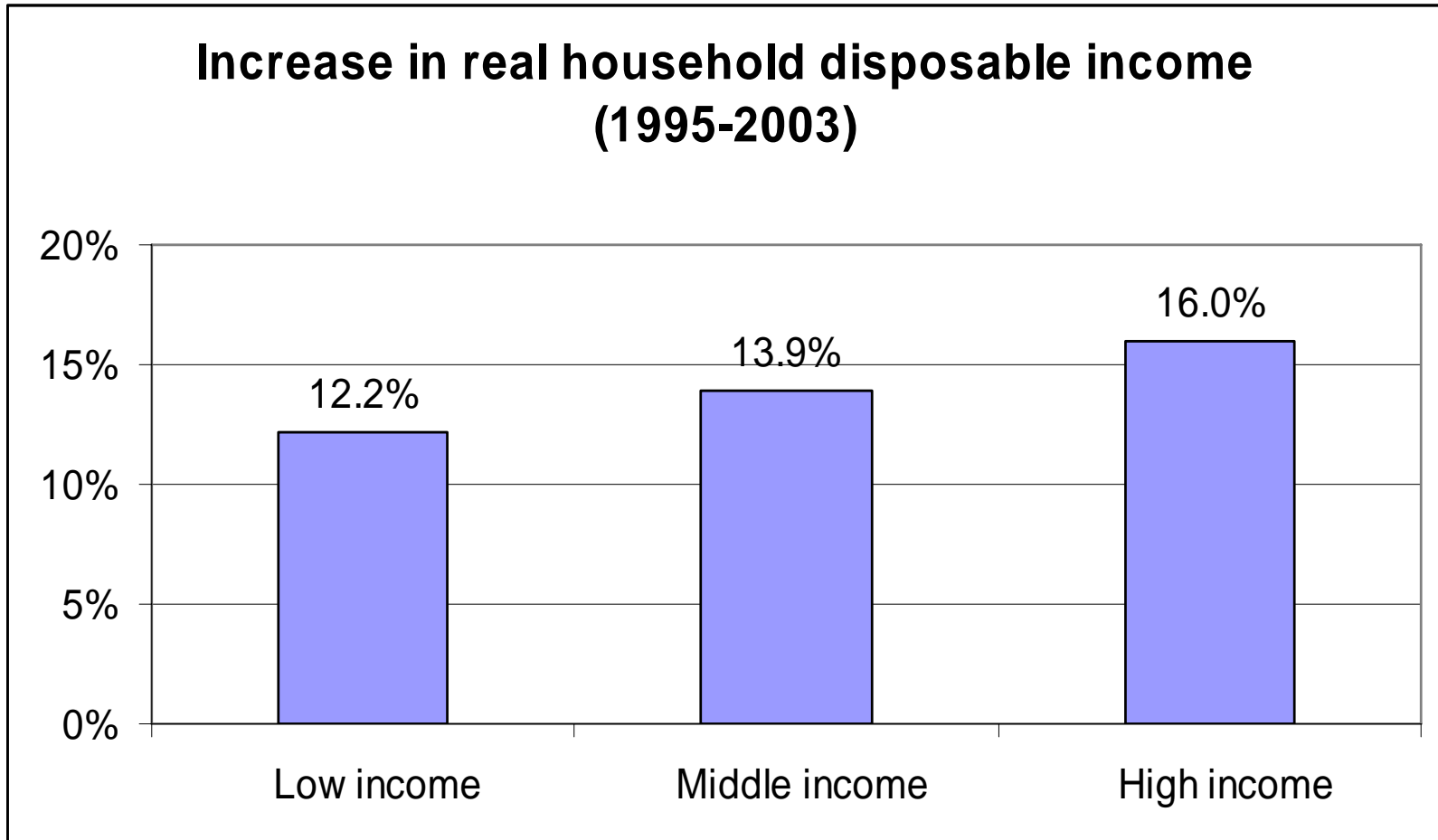
Public opinion and policy on participation requirements

	(Majority) public opinion on participation requirements	Welfare to Work participation requirements
Parents	Seek at least part time employment and/or train when youngest child reaches school age ^[1]	Seek part time employment when youngest child reaches 6 years
People with disabilities	Prepare for work or train, where relevant to circumstances ^[2]	Seek part time employment if able to work part time

^[1] 58% of respondents said single parents with school age children should be required to look for work and 64% said they should be required to train. However, only 13% and 23% respectively thought they should be required to do so when they had a preschool aged child.

^[2] 40% of respondents thought work requirements should depend on the personal circumstances of people with disabilities, 27% said they should be required to look for work and 30% said they should not. 86% thought they should be required to join programs that will help them obtain employment in future.

Income inequality



Public perception of income inequality

When asked “Do you think the gap between the rich and poor in Australia is widening, or not?”, 77% of respondents to one of the Roy Morgan surveys said yes, 17% said no and 6% could not say. Although it might be argued that there is a bias in public opinion in favour of the belief that inequality is widening, the evidence on income distribution at least seems to suggest that the public got this right.

Question:	Yes	No	Don't know
Is the gap between rich and poor widening?	77%	17%	6%

Source: Upcoming Report ACOSS.

How much for an acceptable standard of living

Poverty lines and public perceptions of the minimum needed to achieve an acceptable standard of living (2005)

	Henderson Poverty Line (dollars per week)	Minimum income needed for acceptable living standard (dollars per week)
Single adult, no children	\$325	\$400
Two adults, two children	\$610	\$800

Sources: Melbourne Institute, *Poverty Lines* 2005 (head in workforce)

Roy Morgan Research 2005, *Perceptions of an acceptable standard of living in Australia* (median responses).

Identification of groups most at risk of poverty

	Incidence of poverty from poverty research (%)	Public perceptions of groups with an unacceptable living standard (% mentioning each group)
Unemployed people	55%	38%
Aboriginal people	58%	32%
Aged people	7%	23%
Homeless people	Data not available	16%
Single parents	22%	15%
Low income families generally	14%	12%

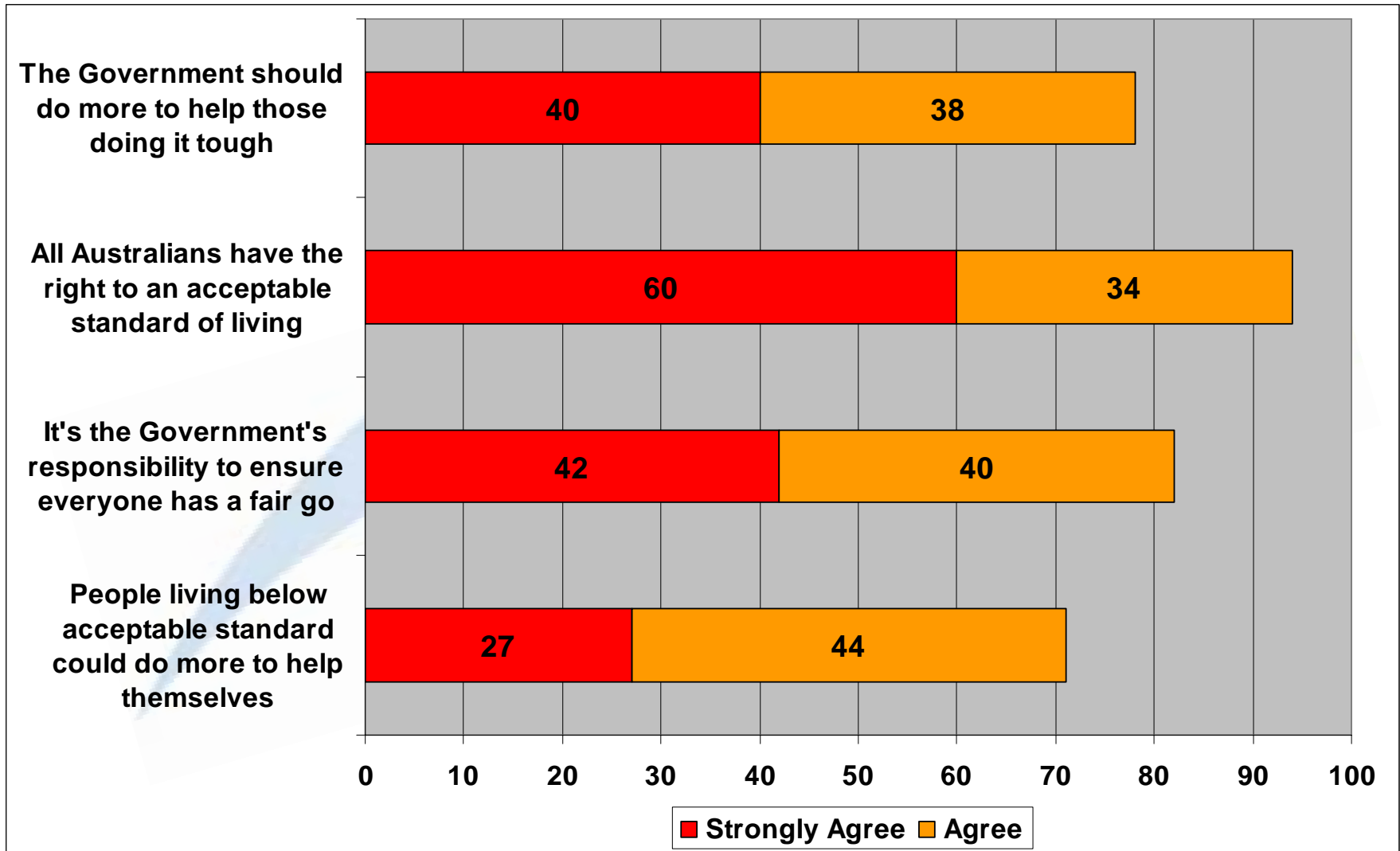
Who is not having an acceptable standard of living?

When asked who were likely to be not be experiencing an acceptable standard of living, people identified groups of concern corresponding to the 10 Essentials to Make Australia Fair – people reliant on social security, Indigenous Australians and people without access to adequate housing or income.

	1st mentioned % of respondents	Total mentioned % of respondents
Unemployed/ People On Welfare	21	38
Aboriginal/ Indigenous	20	32
Poor	13	26
Elderly/ Aged/ Pensioners	9	23
Homeless	8	16
Single Parents/ Mothers	5	15
Low Income Earners/ Low Income Families	4	12
Ethnic	3	9
Disabled	1	8
People with mental health problems	1	6
Drug Addicts/ Alcoholics	1	5
Lazy/ Bludgers	2	4
Families	2	4
People In Country/ Outback/ Farming	1	3
Average Worker	2	3



Agreement with Statements about social disadvantage



What are the solutions?

	Online responses (ACOSS website)		Roy Morgan 'fairness survey'	
	Top 10 'essentials to make Australia fair'	% of respondents	Top 14 'essentials to make Australia fair'	% of respondents
1	Rights & responsibilities	86%	1. Equality and human rights	24%
2	Adequate welfare (income support)	84%	2. Education	24%
3	Fair education	80%	3. Work, adequate wages & conditions	20%
4	Environment	80%	4. Health services	16%
5	Work, adequate wages & conditions	78%	5. Adequate welfare (income support)	8%
6	Safe communities	77%	6. Environment	6%
7	Health services	76%	7. Jobs and Training	4%
8	Reconciliation	56%	8. Community services	4%
9	Affordable, decent housing	52%	9. Reconciliation	4%
10	Community services (eg child care, aged or disability services)	50%	10. Safe Communities	4%
			11. Fair government	4%

10 essentials

