

FREE TO LIVE OUT OUR BELIEFS

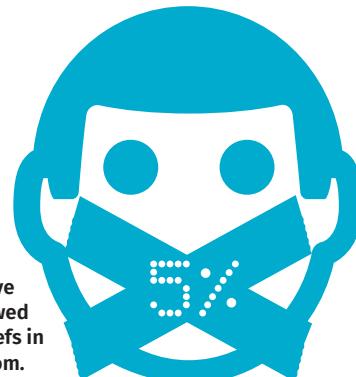
New research shows everyday Australians, across every social divide, want other Australians to be free to live out and express what they deeply believe without penalty or adverse action.

So, why are Australia's leaders so quiet about it?

Should Australians be able to publicly express their deepest beliefs? What if those beliefs affect other Australians? Journalists, commentators and politicians are openly questioning whether that should be allowed at all. However, scant attention has been paid to the views of everyday Australians about these classical freedoms of liberal democracy.

The Institute for Civil Society has released a May 2019 YouGov Galaxy survey of Australians aged 18 years and older, from across Australia, in both urban and regional areas. The results were startling and revealed a passion for freedom for all to speak and live out their beliefs.

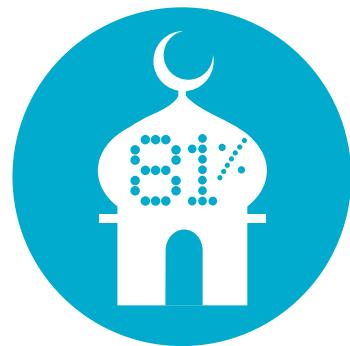
Only a tiny minority (5%) believe Australians should not be allowed to live out and share their beliefs in public. 75% support this freedom.



The vast majority of Aussies (75%) want their neighbours to be able to live out their beliefs in public through speech, practice and teaching. 5% opposed this and 20% were undecided.



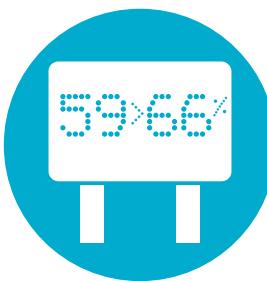
The desire for legal protections for freedom of speech is all but unanimous, 14% call it "somewhat important", 83% say it's "extremely important".



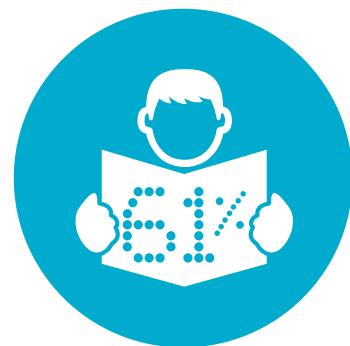
81% say the protection of the right to follow one's beliefs, conscience and values is extremely or very important to them. Only 3% weren't sure or said it wasn't important, and 16% called it somewhat important.



Whether kids are exposed to sex education at primary school — or not — should be up to the parents of those children. So say 63% of us. 15% were opposed and 22% undecided.



In 2017 an independent survey found a little over half of Australians said people should be allowed to speak freely about their own beliefs regarding marriage. Now that same-sex marriage has become law, the proportion of Australians who support free speech on marriage has risen to nearly two-thirds. Our study found 21% are still undecided and only 20% are opposed.



61% of us support business owners, individuals, faith-based charities and schools being free to hold and practise conscientious or religious beliefs without penalties. 14% were opposed and 25% were undecided.

Unity across the divides

Australians support these freedoms across the political spectrum. On the question "Should allowing freedom of thought, conscience and belief in public through speech, practice and teaching be protected in Australia", 74% of ALP voters, 80% of Coalition voters and 72% of Greens voters agreed.

Just the facts

Interviews for Study of Freedoms of Thought, Conscience, Belief, Expression and Association were conducted between Tuesday 7 May and Friday 10 May, 2019. The questionnaire was designed by YouGov Galaxy. Quotas for the sample were applied based on age, gender and region to reflect the broader population.

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Find the full report at the Institute at
<http://www.i4cs.com.au/>