FAITH & BELIEF IN AUSTRALIA DEFINED

CHRISTIANITY
Less Spirituality

45% CHRISTIANITY

14% SPIRITUAL NOT RELIGIOUS

32% NO RELIGION

AUSTRALIA’S RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

WHAT DO THE SPIRITUAL BUT NOT RELIGIOUS BELIEVE? (TOP 3)

1. ‘There is an ultimate purpose and meaning’ 36%
2. Inward journey of self-discovery 26%
3. Mixture of religious beliefs 22%

WHY NO RELIGION? (TOP 3)

1. Prefer science and ‘evidence-based’ approach 49%
2. ‘Religion is a crutch for the weak’ 18%
3. ‘Religion is outdated & traditional’ 14%

2016 CENSUS RESULTS

52.1% CHRISTIANITY
30.1% NO RELIGION
2.6% ISLAM
2.4% BUDDHISM
3.2% OTHER
9.6% NOT STATED

AUSTRALIANS IDENTIFYING WITH NO RELIGION IS GROWING

From 0.4% in 1911 to 30.1% in 2016

FULL REPORT AT faithandbelief.org.au
55% of Australians talk about spirituality or religion at least occasionally.

- **Often**: 9%
- **Occasionally**: 46%
- **Never**: 45%

**Australian Attitudes Towards Christianity**

- **I consider myself a Christian (38%)**
  - I believe in Christianity, but don’t consider myself a Christian
  - I believe much of Christianity, but still have some significant doubts
  - I believe in the ethics and values of Christianity, but I don’t practice Christianity in any way
  - I believe Christianity and churches should have religious freedoms, but I don’t want to be involved
  - I have some issues with Christianity and it isn’t for me
  - I have strong reservations about Christianity and have no interest in it
  - I am passionately opposed to Christianity

**Modified Engels Scale**

- Almost 1 in 4 warm (24%)
- 1 in 8 neutral (12%)
- 1 in 4 cool (26%)

**Greatest Influences on Opinions of Christians & Christianity**

1. Parents & Family
2. Friends & Networks
3. Books & Articles
4. The Media

- **Parents & Family**: 57%
- **Friends & Networks**: 25%
- **Books & Articles**: 22%
- **The Media**: 21%

**Outgrowing Religion?**

Analysis of all ‘religious’ and ‘spiritual but not religious’ (*n=669*)

- **Converter** committed to religion brought up in
  - 47%
- **No longer religious**
  - 17%
- **Synthesizer** set of beliefs not fitting any one religion
  - 14%
- **Never been religious**
  - 10%
- **Adopter** non-religious prior to choosing current religion
  - 7%

**Non-Christians’ Openness to Exploring Religion** (*n=565*)

- **Very interested/quite open**: 10%
- **Would consider**: 13%
- **Unlikely/would not consider**: 77%

**internet & social is #3 for Gen Z**

(24% compared to 14% overall)

Gen Z established in 1995
Almost 1.5 million Australian adults do not know any Christians (8%).

Almost 1 in 10 Gen Y do not know any Christians.

Almost 1 in 10 Gen Y do not know any Christians.

TOP ATTRACTIONS TO RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY
(% who are strongly attracted)

- 16% Seeing people who live out a genuine faith
- 13% Experiencing a personal trauma or life event
- 12% Stories or testimonies from people who have changed due to their faith

TOP REPELLENTS TO RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY
(% who are strongly repelled)

- 19% Philosophical discussion and debating ideas
- 26% Miraculous stories
- 27% Hearing from public figures and celebrities who are examples of that faith

TOP 10 PERCEPTIONS OF CHRISTIANS
92% of Australians know at least one Christian (n=932). They see Christians as:

- 41% CARING
- 35% LOVING
- 35% KIND
- 31% HONEST
- 32% FAITHFUL
- 25% TRADITIONAL
- 20% JUDGEMENTAL
- 18% OLD-FASHIONED
- 18% OPINIONATED
- 17% HYPOCRITICAL

ISSUE BLOCKERS
Issues that are most likely to prevent ‘Non-Christians’ who are ‘open to change’ from exploring Christianity (n=266) (% Block completely)

- HOMOSEXUALITY 33%
- HELL AND CONDEMNATION 24%
- SUFFERING 24%
- SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS 23%
- ROLE OF WOMEN 21%
- THE BIBLE 20%
- SCIENCE AND EVOLUTION 18%

TOP 5 BEHAVIOUR BLOCKERS
Behaviours that are most likely to prevent ‘Non Christians’ who are ‘open to change’ from exploring Christianity (n=266) (% Massive negative influence)

1. CHURCH ABUSE 57%
2. HYPOCRISY 47%
3. RELIGIOUS WARS 45%
4. JUDGING OTHERS 43%
5. ISSUES AROUND MONEY 40%
THE CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

I don’t have that religious support system. There must be a lot of comfort in that. I envy that.

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE CHURCH GENERALLY?

18% Nothing at all
60% Moderate/ a little
22% A great deal/ a lot

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR LOCAL CHURCH?

56% Not well at all
26% Moderate/ slightly well
18% Extremely/ very well

PERCEIVED IMPACT OF CHURCHES IN YOUR AREA

9% Negative
47% Neither positive or negative
44% Positive

There is nothing negative about him, he was a very moral person. So many good traits there, if he does exist.

HOW MUCH DO AUSTRALIANS KNOW ABOUT JESUS’ LIFE?

28% Very little or nothing
24% A moderate amount
45% A significant amount

HOW IMPORTANT WAS JESUS’ LIFE TO...

THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE WORLD?

14% Not at all
33% Slightly/ somewhat
53% Extremely/ very

YOU PERSONALLY?

37% Not at all
32% Slightly/ somewhat
31% Extremely/ very

THE POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES OF JESUS’ LIFE

50% LOVE
39% HOPE
34% CARE
34% TRUTH
30% STRENGTH

29% WISDOM
29% NON-VIOLENT
27% SALVATION
25% GRACE
25% FREEDOM

Quotes provided in this infographic are from focus groups conducted with non-Christians.

METHODOLOGY:
A national survey of Australians n=1024. Responses reflect full sample except where otherwise stated. Research conducted January 2017. Australian public data is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. McCrindle conducted three focus groups (Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y) during March 2017. Full report at faithandbelief.org.au

Research & report by:
mccrindle.com.au

1 in 29 Australians have never heard of Jesus