

Research shows social class has a strong influence on cultural tastes

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Credit: University of Western Sydney

A major national survey of over 1,200 Australians, led by Western Sydney University, found that social class has a strong influence on a person's cultural tastes – with level of education and occupation being key factors in determining cultural preferences.

Lead investigator on the [Australian Cultural Fields project](#), (opens in new window) Professor Tony Bennett from the Institute for Culture and

Society (ICS), says class remains significant in the daily choices and lifestyles of Australians, and that it is critical to the patterns of inequality in contemporary Australia.

"There are very clear connections between the cultural advantages that middle and upper middle class Australians derive from their home backgrounds, their educational successes, their later occupational careers and the cultural tastes they develop that distinguish them from other Australians," says Professor Bennett.

"The role of culture in the inheritance of inequalities shows that Australia has a long way to go before it can truly be the fair-go country it claims to be."

The ICS researchers have partnered with the ABC to develop a new online survey ([opens in new window](#)) – which is giving the Australian public the chance to reflect on their personal cultural tastes.

The survey asks for users' preferences about television, music and literary activities and tastes, and compares the results with the research project's findings.

"Engaging with this online quiz will help Australians get a sense of how their age, gender, level of education and [social class](#) shape the distinctive pattern of their cultural tastes and interests," says Professor Bennett.

"Just as important, it will tell them a lot about the cultural tastes of Australians who differ from them in these respects, and provide plenty of food for thought about how culture, [class](#), age, education and gender interact in ways that account for the persistence of inequalities in contemporary Australia."

Provided by University of Western Sydney

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