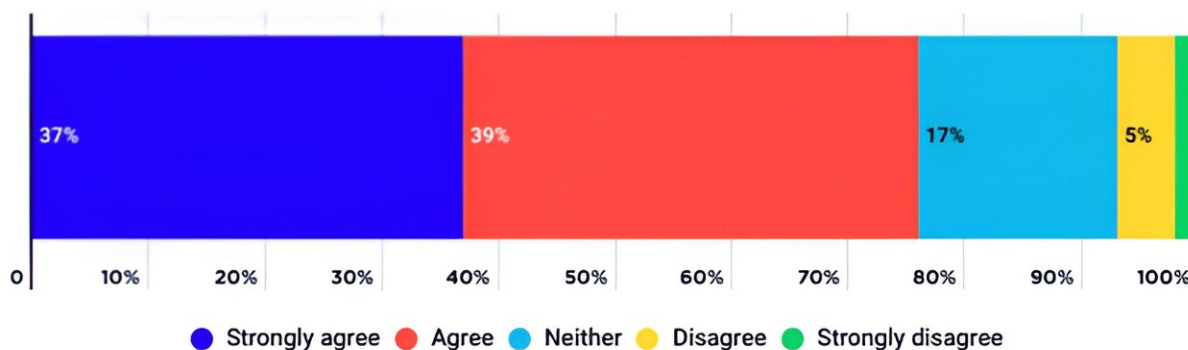


Report shows most people in Australia support lifting incomes for those with the least

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In Australia, 76% of people agreed that the incomes of those on the lowest incomes are too low and should be increased. Credit: <https://povertyandinequality.acoss.org.au/community-attitudes-towards-poverty-and-inequality/>

Three in four people in Australia support an income boost for people on the lowest incomes, while less than a quarter think it's possible to live on the current JobSeeker rate, new research by ACOSS and UNSW Sydney shows.

The latest [report](#) from the Poverty and Inequality partnership, "Community attitudes towards poverty and inequality," also shows 74% think the gap between [wealthy people](#) and those living in poverty is too

large and should be reduced.

The survey of 2,000 adults in Australia, conducted in 2023, shows most people (62%) think [government policies](#) have contributed to poverty, while 75% think it can be solved with the right systems and policies.

UNSW Scientia Professor Carla Treloar of the Social Policy Research Center, who is the report's lead author, says community attitudes can wield significant influence on [social policy](#).

"This research underscores the public's awareness of [policy](#) impacts. The fact that the majority of people in Australia believe that government policies both contribute to and can solve poverty and inequality demands immediate policy reform. It's time to address unjust policies failing those in need."

Key findings include:

- More than two-thirds (69%) think poverty is a big problem in Australia
- Just 23% agreed they could live on the current JobSeeker rate
- Another 58% said they would not be able to live on that amount, while 19% were unsure
- Three-quarters (76%) agree the incomes of people earning the least are too low and should be increased
- Most people think no one deserves to live in poverty, and that unemployment payments should be enough so people do not have to skip meals (86%) and can afford to see a doctor (84%)

Professor Attila Brungs, Vice-Chancellor and President, UNSW Sydney said, "The Poverty and Inequality Partnership between ACOSS and UNSW exemplifies our University's vision for societal impact and the power of research to influence positive change.

"The insights and robust evidence that the Poverty and Inequality Partnership provides are vitally important for understanding how we can do better for some of the most disadvantaged groups of people in our society.

"Millions of Australians live with poverty and inequality. Highlighting community attitudes can help inform shifts in [social policies](#) that lead to better outcomes for us all."

Policy considerations

The researchers say their insights into community attitudes towards poverty and inequality provide an opportunity for contemplating existing policy configurations and how we might change them.

"This [survey](#) shows popular support for the Federal Government to intervene to directly tackle poverty and the wealth gap that is threatening Australia's social and economic fabric," says ACOSS Acting CEO Edwina MacDonald.

"Most people know it is simply not possible to live on the punishingly low rate of JobSeeker that traps people further in poverty.

"Instead, the majority of people think the government has a responsibility to look after those people struggling the most.

"We know from the pandemic that the key to solving [poverty](#) is lifting income support payments. The government has no excuse not to bring them up to at least the Age Pension rate of \$78 a day in the face of such strong public support."

More information: Community attitudes towards poverty and inequality. [povertyandinequality.acoss.org ... erty-and-inequality/](http://povertyandinequality.acoss.org...erty-and-inequality/)

Provided by University of New South Wales

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