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Wednesday, 11 October 2017

## It's Official: Australians not concerned about mass facial recognition technology

As reported last night by [Michele Levine on ABCTV's Q&A](#), a special Roy Morgan Snap SMS Survey taken last weekend finds the majority of Australians (67.5%) are not concerned that 'under anti-terror measures State Governments will provide driver licence photos for mass facial-recognition technology' while 32.5% are concerned.

This special Roy Morgan Snap SMS Survey was conducted over last weekend of October 6-8, 2017 with a cross-section of 1,486 Australians aged 18+.

### Questions:

"Under anti-terror measures State Governments will provide driver licence photos for mass facial recognition technology. Does this concern you?" Respondents were then asked: "And why do you say that?" – Detailed verbatim responses follow on from these tables.

### Analysis by Voting Intention

Analysis by Voting Intention shows the Greens supporters (59%) are more concerned about mass facial recognition technology than Labor supporters (33.5%) or L-NP supporters (19%).

	Total	Electors						Non-Electors
		Electors	L-NP	ALP	Greens	Others	Can't say	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	32.5	33	19	33.5	59	51.5	25.5	10.5
No	67.5	67	81	66.5	41	48.5	74.5	89.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

### Analysis by Gender & Age

Analysis by gender shows little difference between women (33%) and men (32%) concerned about mass facial recognition technology. Analysis by Age shows younger people (45% of those aged 18-24) are more likely to be concerned about mass facial recognition technology than older people (19% of those aged 65+).

	Total	Gender		Age				
		Men	Women	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	32.5	32	33	45	43.5	33	27.5	19
No	67.5	68	67	55	56.5	67	72.5	81
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

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## Analysis by State

Analysis by State shows a majority of all States are unconcerned with Queenslanders and South Australians the least concerned (75.5%) followed by Tasmania (68.5%), Western Australia (66.5%), New South Wales (66%) and Victorians (62%).

	Total	State						Region	
		NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	City	Country
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	32.5	34	38	24.5	33.5	24.5	31.5	35.5	26
No	67.5	66	62	75.5	66.5	75.5	68.5	64.5	74
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

### Qualitative Responses to follow up question: "And why do you say that?"

Those who answered No, they were not concerned, most frequently asserted they had nothing to hide, so why be worried about this initiative, that security is very important to protect against terrorists and catch the 'bad guys'. Many folks simply place a higher priority on security than privacy.

Many also mentioned that the concept of privacy has already changed so much with everyone providing so much information so readily about themselves already, so what's the difference?

### Important to protect against terrorists and catch the bad guys. Security is very important:

*"If it is for Australian's security then why not."*

*"Good thing if it helps the fight against Terrorism."*

*"National Security."*

*"Terrorism is becoming a bigger problem and concern."*

*"Security must come first."*

*"Security is paramount to Australia."*

*"Because it will help law enforcement thwart potential terrorist attacks."*

*"If it means we are safer then all good."*

*"Terrorists need to be caught by any means."*

*"Not bothered - we have passports with facial recognition."*

*"We need better security."*

*"Better Security for everyone."*

*"Stop the terrorists and criminals."*

*"Anything that prevents terrorism."*

*"Any means to keep Australians safe."*

*"Facial recognition will help identify criminals."*

*"Because people who don't do bad things have nothing to hide. What are they going to do about burqas?"*

*"Everyone should for the good of the nation – and the burqa should be banned as well."*

**Nothing to hide, I'm a good person, I haven't done anything that this might worry me:**

*"I have nothing to hide."*

*"If you've nothing to hide, there is no issue."*

*"Because I want to be safe and have nothing to hide."*

*"It doesn't bother me."*

*"It should only worry the terrorists."*

*"Not a problem if you're not doing anything wrong."*

*"I have nothing to hide – my face is an open book for the world to see."*

*"I'm a law abiding citizen with nothing to hide so why worry?"*

*"I have nothing to hide and it's a reasonable thing for our security."*

**Concepts of privacy have changed and safety for people has pre-eminence:**

*"Safety more important than privacy."*

*"It will keep society honest and safer."*

*"It's a safeguard in the world we live in."*

*"We're already under mass surveillance."*

*"Privacy is now a thing of the past."*

*"We have it on our passports already. I would be more concerned with social media such as Facebook and Snapchat. They own millions of facial photos which you can never remove."*

*"There is already so much identity information accessible it doesn't matter to me."*

*"Rather have some reduction in privacy for the benefit of the general public."*

*"Licence, therefore photo are, as I understand it, already readily accessible now."*

**Those who answered Yes**, they were concerned, continually brought up invasion of privacy and civil liberties being eroded. There were also mentions of a lack of trust in Government – whether in regards to Government's general competence or whether the Government would later dip into these databases for other uses in the future.

Others also mentioned the potential racial profiling that could be done and some brought up that not everyone has a license and therefore that the measure doesn't go far enough.

**Invasion of privacy & civil liberties being eroded:**

*"No privacy for citizens."*

*"I do not like the idea of Big Brother."*

*"Slow decline of civil liberties."*

*"It's a lack of privacy and a surveillance big brother state."*

*"It's an infringement of civil liberties."*

*"Orwell's 1984."*

*"Personal space and privacy is being removed."*

*"Feels like Big Brother and the New World Order (NWO). Confidentiality and invasion of privacy."*

*"It's textbook fascism."*

*"Invasive tracking of everything that we all do concerns me."*

**Lack of trust in Government – whether competence or Government’s future uses of data:**

*“Massive invasion of privacy by a Government which cannot be trusted.”*

*“Too much power to the government I don’t trust.”*

*“Politicians are involved and you can’t trust them.”*

*“Could get into wrong hands.”*

*“Government is not competent enough or trustworthy enough to handle information responsibly.”*

*“Likelihood it will be misused.”*

*“Unnecessary and danger of misuse.”*

*“No privacy guarantees.”*

*“Unsure if can be used for other purpose.”*

*“No trust in Government to keep safe.”*

*“Data protection.”*

*“I don’t trust Government and bureaucracy not to abuse it. It’s a step towards totalitarianism.”*

**Potential for racial profiling and several saying surely this means head coverings must be banned? These concerns tie into worry about the accuracy of the technology:**

*“Concerned about racial profiling and I want measures to protect against that.”*

*“Everyone’s face can be recognized – ban the burqa.”*

*“Everyone should. For the good of the nation. The burqa must be gone.”*

*“So long as it’s the same rule for everyone. Ban the burqa.”*

*“Because it isn’t 100% reliable and can be subject to racial profiling.”*

*“Not to be racist but women wearing the niqab or burqa don’t show their faces.”*

*“Facial Recognition software is not 100% at this time.”*

*“Technology not sufficiently accurate.”*

**A few people even suggested the proposed law doesn’t go far enough:**

*“I don’t think it goes far enough, the laws should be much harsher.”*

*“So far Australia has been lucky, but that luck is unlikely to last without more surveillance.”*

**Michele Levine, Chief Executive Officer, Roy Morgan Research, says:**

*“Following last week’s Las Vegas shooting in which a lone gunman is accused of murdering more than 50 people, and injuring in excess of 500 concert goers, the Australian Government announced plans to establish a national database linked to driver licence photos held by State Governments.*

*“The database will utilise the latest facial-recognition technology to allow for policing agencies to monitor Australians as part of upgraded anti-terrorism efforts to identify potential trouble-makers particularly at large public gatherings and public locations such as train stations and on city streets.*

*“In preparation for my appearance on [ABCTV Q&A on Monday October 9](#), Roy Morgan surveyed over 1,400 Australians and the result was crystal clear. Over two-thirds of*

Australians (67.5%) of the adult population (12.7 million Australians) are not concerned about the implementation of the new facial recognition technology compared to only 32.5% (6.1 million) that do have concerns.

“Respondents that were concerned raised issues of privacy, the Big Brother surveillance State and Government intrusion into our lives along with a lack of trust in the Government agencies to handle the information correctly, or indeed prevent data leaks and hacks seeing this information released or stolen by potentially nefarious entities.

“However, the vast majority of Australians were more comfortable with allowing this new level of surveillance with many mentioning they had nothing to hide and therefore nothing to worry about and that it is important to take any measures we can to deal with the threat of terrorism and increase public safety.”

*Finding No. 7366– This special Roy Morgan Snap SMS Survey was conducted in preparation for an appearance on ABC TV’s Q&A current affairs discussion program on Monday October 9, 2017 with a representative cross-section of 1,486 Australians aged 18+ over the weekend, Friday October 6 – Sunday October 8, 2017. They were asked “Under anti-terror measures State Governments will provide driver licence photos for mass facial recognition technology. Does this concern you? Respondents were then asked: “And why do you say that?”*

**Roy Morgan SMS Polling was extremely accurate at both the last two Federal Elections. Results analysed by Roy Morgan Helix Personas are available on a subscription basis.**  
[www.HelixPersonas.com.au](http://www.HelixPersonas.com.au)

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## Morgan Poll Accuracy — Recent Elections State & Federal (2006 – 2016)

The Morgan Poll has proven to be consistently the most accurate regular poll in recent Australian Elections — including the 2013 Federal Election, 2010 Federal Election, 2007 Federal Election, 2010 Victorian State Election & 2012 Queensland State Election.

The Morgan Poll was the most accurate of all polling companies at [the 2013 Federal Election](#) for the two-party preferred vote (L-NP: 53.5% cf. ALP 46.5%) (sample 4,937 electors).

The Morgan Poll was the most accurate of all polling companies at [the 2007 Federal Election](#) for both primary vote and two-party preferred predictions (sample 2,115 electors).

The Morgan Poll accurately predicted [that the ALP would win the 2006 Queensland Election with a reduced majority](#) (sample 604 electors).

The Morgan Poll accurately predicted [that the ALP would win the 2006 Victorian Election with a reduced majority](#) (sample 956 electors). The Morgan Poll was also the most accurate on the primary vote of the major parties for the Victorian election.

**Note:** The [discussion on Possum Pollytics](#) regarding Morgan and Newspoll is well worth reading.

The following included comment says it all: “I find it interesting that for the only poll in the last five years for which there is any ‘real’ figure with which to compare, i.e. the polls immediately before the 2004 election, Morgan (45.5%) was closer to the actual Coalition Primary (46.7%) than Newspoll (45%) or Nielsen (49%), and Morgan (38.5%) was also closer to the ALP actual primary (37.6%) than Newspoll (39%), and only marginally further away than Nielsen (37%). Since we have no idea of how far away the ongoing polls are from ‘reality’ (whatever that means), surely we should just go with what we know, that in the most recent testable case, Morgan was better at forecasting the actual primary vote than Newspoll. On what possible basis should we decide that the Newspoll or Nielsen primary vote estimate is ‘better’ than Morgan’s.”

[View Federal Voting Intention Trend](#)

### Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. The following table gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. The figures are approximate and for general guidance only, and assume a simple random sample. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
1,000	±3.2	±2.7	±1.9	±1.4