

Thursday, 26 July 2018

## We have got it all wrong on Millennials

By Laura Demasi, Director of Social Trends at Roy Morgan

**They have been cast as experience-seeking, travel-loving, commitment-avoiding mortgage-dodgers who privilege lifestyle above all else and invented the concept of the "bank of mum and dad".**

Some of this is borne out in the data – particularly the travel-loving, mortgage-dodging bits - but Australian Millennials (born between 1976 and 1990) are no more all the same than any other generation.

However there is one thing that makes them completely unique - the profound impact of immigration on this generation, which has defined it like no other before, ever.

Right now in Sydney and Melbourne – our most populous cities and home to 8.2 million Australians – close to one in three Millennials (31 per cent) were born in Asia. And their younger brothers and sisters are not far behind: more than one in five Generation Zs in Sydney and Melbourne (23 per cent) were born in Asia.

To put this into perspective, people born in Asia account for 11 per cent of the overall Australian population aged over 14. They are also much less prominent in other generations; in Sydney and Melbourne, 12 per cent of Generation X was born in Asia, 6 per cent of Baby Boomers and just 3 per cent of pre-Boomers.

So a very large proportion of today's young Australians was born Asia, particularly those living in Sydney and Melbourne. So what? Digging deeper into the data reveals that Asian-born Millennials are very different to their Australian-born peers when it comes to mindset. In contrast to their typically progressive, tradition-eschewing counterparts, Asian-born Millennials are much more likely to hold socially conservative views and values, despite their youth.

They are already bucking some of the big generational trends that have defined their Australian-born generational counterparts. Take marriage for instance. Four in 10 Australian-born Millennials are married (44 per cent), compared to more than seven in 10 Asian-born Millennials (74 per cent) across the country.

When you break that down further, Millennials born in India are even more likely to embrace the institution – 86 per cent are married, almost double the figure for their Australian-born peers. They are also more likely to have children – six in 10 have children under 16 at home, compared to 55 per cent of their Australian-born peers.

When it comes to house and home, close to one in five Millennials from China own their home outright, compared to one in eight Australian-born Millennials. Across the board, a greater percentage of Asian-born Millennials are light spenders compared to Australian-born Millennials.

Doesn't quite fit with the smashed-avocado loving, mortgage-dodging, commitment avoiding, man-bun wearing hipster-barista that has come to symbolise Millennials in this country, does it?

Marriage isn't the only traditional institution that Asian-born Millennials are embracing in contrast to their peers. Religion, too is more prominent among Asian-born Millennials: one in four regularly attend a place of worship, compared to 14 per cent of their Australian-born peers.

Meanwhile, triple the percentage of Asian-born Millennials believe that traditional gender roles should be upheld in the home: 15 per cent believe women should just run the home, compared to 4 per cent of their Australian born peers. They are also more likely to hold conservative views in regards to the rights of gay Australians, particularly those born in India: while three-quarters (77 per cent) of Australian-born Millennials believe gay couples should be allowed to adopt children, only just over half (54 per cent) of those born in India do.

And when it comes to politics, a greater proportion of Asian-born Millennials intend to vote Liberal - particularly Chinese- and Indian-born.

Education also sets Asian-born Millennials well apart from their peers. In this instance they aren't bucking a trend but are taking it to the next level. While Australians in general are becoming more educated, those from Asia are streets ahead: less than half of Australian-born Millennials have a degree compared to 74 per cent of Asian-born Millennials – with those from China (82 per cent) and India (79 per cent) sitting at the top of the tree.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media consumption patterns are also wildly different. Put it this way - if you are a commercial TV station looking to boost ratings amongst Millennials, don't bother trying to appeal to those born in China – almost half of them don't watch any commercial TV at all, compared to 22 per cent of their Australian-born counterparts.

What's clear is that for the most part we appear to have got Millennials wrong by completely overlooking the immense diversity that exists among them – starting with cultural difference and its profound influence on mindset and behaviour.

Yes, there are lots of bearded Kombucha-chugging Millennials flitting from one overseas adventure to the next but they certainly don't represent everyone.

There are just as many Asian-born Millennials quietly building what you could describe as a fairly conservative life in comparison (with or without a jam jar as a coffee cup), who share more in common with the average Baby Boomer when it comes to mindset and values than their own generational peers.

The future of Australia could be a little different to what we're expecting. Tradition and social conservatism will likely live on, not just in the hearts and minds of some older Australians but within a fair chunk of our young people too.

**Laura Demasi is the director of social trends at Roy Morgan.**

**For comments or more information about Roy Morgan data, please contact:**

**Roy Morgan Enquiries**

Office: +61 (3) 9224 5309

[askroymorgan@roymorgan.com](mailto:askroymorgan@roymorgan.com)

**About Roy Morgan**

Roy Morgan is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state of Australia, as well as in the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan has over 70 years' experience in collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

**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. Margin of error 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. 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%
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2

