

Media Release

Australians want to keep the 'Christ' in Christmas

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Immediate Release



Survey by the Centre for Public Christianity finds that Aussies think highly of Jesus

The majority of Australians think Jesus was a real historical figure who was a good influence on the world, and that Christian Christmas carols should be sung in public, according to a survey commissioned by the **Centre for Public Christianity (CPX)**.

A national representative research-only panel survey by McCrindle Research of 501 Australians of mixed beliefs (55% Christian, 45% other) has found that **91% are supportive of religious songs in public at Christmas time**, with only 1.7% strongly opposed to it.

Only 3% of Australians think that Australia would be better off without Christianity and 63% of us think we would be worse off without it.

Dr Greg Clarke, Director of CPX, said, "This is the opposite view to that of a New Atheist such as Christopher Hitchens, who claims that religion poisons everything. When it comes to the Christian faith, the Australian public doesn't buy that."

Australians seem to have a very high regard for Jesus, even when they are not Christians themselves. **Half (49%) of all Australians think Jesus was the most important figure in history** and 72% think he was "a good influence on the world". But even among non-Christians, 22% consider Jesus to be history's most important figure and 32% of non-Christians consider him to be the "Son of God". 6% of Australians think Jesus was not a real historical figure.

When asked about the **historical accuracy** of the account of **Jesus' birth** in the Bible, **60% consider it to be "accurate" or "roughly accurate"**. 29% of Australians consider it to be "biased, inaccurate" or "myth".

Director of CPX, ancient historian Dr John Dickson says, "It is fascinating to see people's enduring trust in the basic historical nature of the Gospels—something that professional historians would applaud". Dr Dickson said, "It's in stark contrast with popular anti-religious writers who suggest that the Gospels are myth — a view shared by only 14.7% of Australians."

Australians seem to enjoy Christmas, with **88% of respondents describing it as a "happy" time** and 86% finding Christmas "enjoyable". However, this comes at a price, with **68% of us also finding Christmas "exhausting"** and 48% finding it "stressful". It's a darker experience for 12% of Australians, who find Christmas "miserable". 46.7% of Australians find it a "spiritual" time, suggesting that for half of us there is more to Christmas than retail opportunities.

Despite the strong positive associations with Jesus, **72% of Australians consider "spending time with family" to be the most important thing about Christmas** and 42% say they definitely won't attend church this Christmas. However, more people remain undecided than anything else (44.5%), giving churches a last-minute opportunity to win people to their services this year!

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