

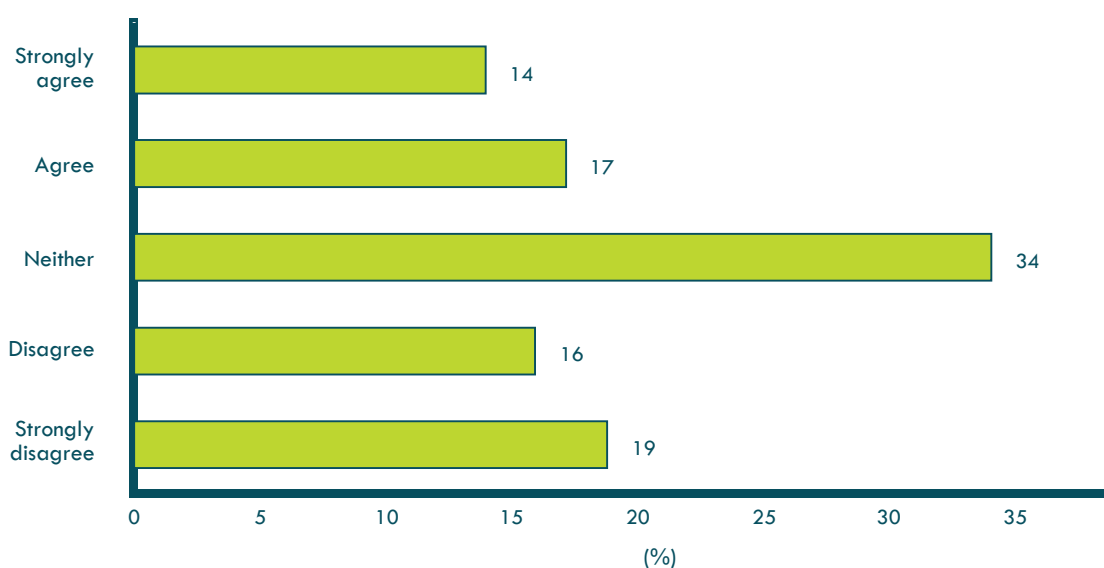
Jesus' resurrection

Australian Spirituality Fact Sheet 5

Australians split over Jesus' resurrection

As part of the Australian Survey of Social Attitudes in 2009, some 1718 people across Australian communities were asked whether they believed that Jesus' resurrection was an actual historical event. The results indicate that around a third do not believe, a third are uncertain and a third do believe it was an actual event in history. There is slight variation between these groups, with non believers (35%) and the non-committal (34%) slightly outnumbering those who believe (31%).

Agree or disagree: "Jesus' resurrection from the dead was an actual historical event."



Source: 2009 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes.

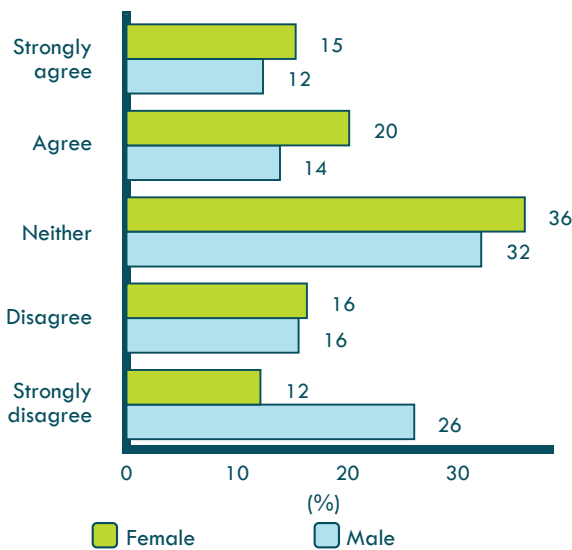
Jesus' death and resurrection has long been a cornerstone of Christian doctrine. Australians are relatively evenly split in their responses. Some 31% believe the resurrection was an historical event, 34% neither agree or disagree and 35% disbelieve.

When it comes to strength of conviction on the issue, those who firmly reject Jesus' resurrection as a historical event slightly outnumber those who firmly believe in the resurrection of Jesus (19% strongly disagree vs 14% strongly agree).

INSIDE...

- **More men disagree**
- **Young and old extremes**
- **University-educated say no**
- **Australian born are less certain**
- **Few religious people disagree**
- **Belief and attendance align**

Agree or disagree: "Jesus' resurrection from the dead was an actual historical event."



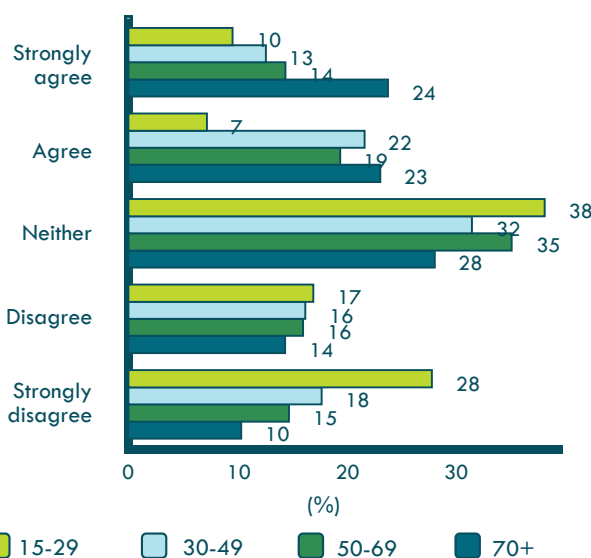
Sex: Higher proportions of women believe in the resurrection of Jesus than men.

Some 35% of women agree or strongly agree that Jesus' resurrection was an actual historical event, in comparison to 26% of men.

Around a third of both women and men are either uncertain or non-committal about their view (36% women and 32% men neither agree or disagree).

More men refute the resurrection of Jesus. Some 42% of men disagree or strongly disagree, compared with 29% of women.

Sex



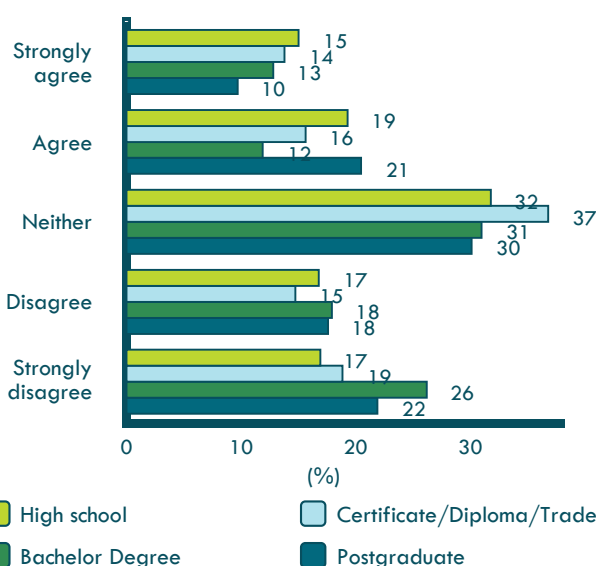
Age: The most significant results occur in the youngest and highest age brackets.

Persons aged 70+ have the highest levels of agreement (47% agree or strongly agree with Jesus' resurrection), and those aged 15-29 express the lowest levels of belief (17% agree or strongly agree).

When it comes to disbelief, the two ends of the age spectrum are again polarised with 45% of 15-29 year olds who disagree or strongly disagree, compared with 25% of persons aged 70+.

The middle age brackets are relatively evenly spread on the issue, following the general population trend of around a third believing, a third disbelieving and a third non-committal.

Age



Education: There is slight variation between some educational groupings when it comes to belief in Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

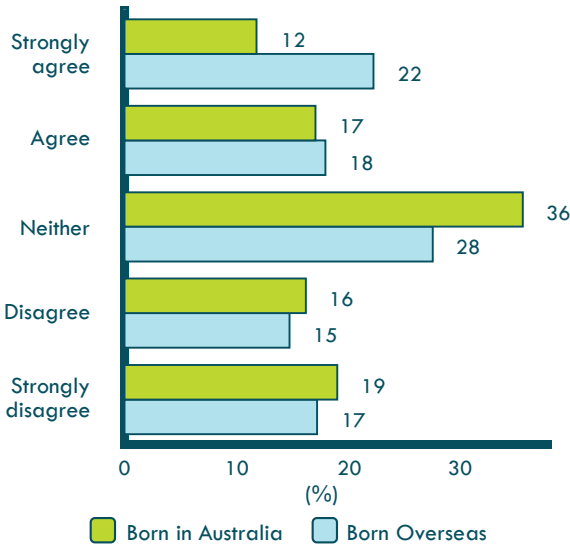
On the whole, there was very little difference between people of different education levels, with figures looking very like the overall national results.

Those with a certificate/diploma/trade qualification are more likely to be undecided about the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus.

The most significant difference however is between those who have a university education and those who do not. University educated whether Bachelor Degree (44%) or Postgraduate (40%) are more likely to disagree that the resurrection was an actual historical event.

Education

Agree or disagree: "Jesus' resurrection from the dead was an actual historical event."



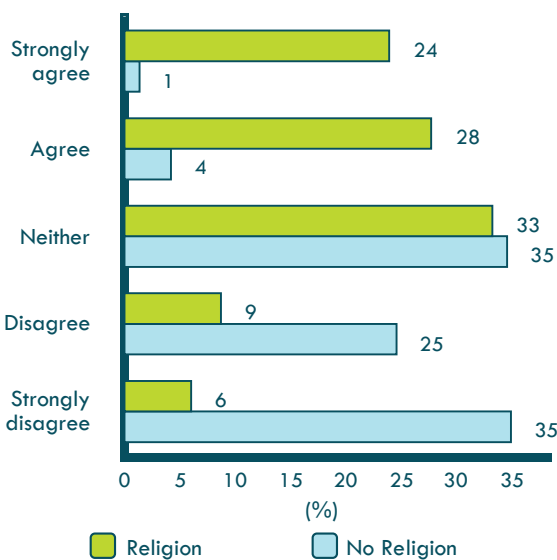
Ethnicity: Strength of belief in Jesus' resurrection as an historical event is more evident in those born overseas.

Some 22% of persons born overseas strongly agree that Jesus resurrection is an actual historical event, compared to 12% of Australian-born persons.

Persons born overseas also voice less uncertainty about whether Jesus' resurrection was an historical event than the national average.

In contrast, these two groups do not significantly differ in their levels of disagreement.

Ethnicity



Religion: People who described themselves as 'having a religion' are more likely to agree with the statement about Jesus' resurrection.

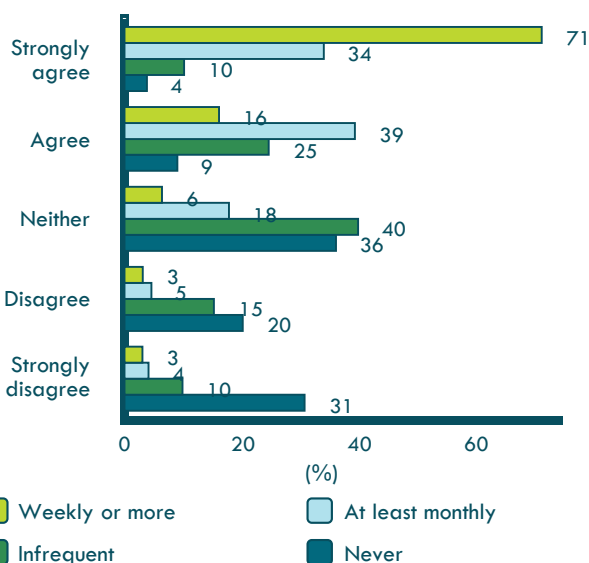
Many of these people will subscribe to Christianity where this belief is a major tenet, (52% agree or strongly agree vs 15% of religious persons who disagree or strongly disagree).

The majority of non-religious persons (60%) do not accept that Jesus' resurrection was an actual historical event (35% strongly disagree).

A small proportion of both religious and non-religious people adopt an opposing position (e.g. 6% of non-religious accept Jesus' resurrection as historical).

Approximately one in three religious and non-religious persons are non-committal (33% and 35% respectively).

Religion



Attendance: As may be expected, committed church attenders express the strongest belief in Jesus' resurrection as a historical event (71% of attenders who attend weekly or more strongly agree and 16% agree).

As frequency of attendance becomes less, so does the proportion who believe in the resurrection. Some 87% of people attending weekly or more either agree or strongly agree with Jesus' resurrection; compared with 73% of those who attend monthly or more and 35% of those attending infrequently (less than monthly).

Interestingly, 13% of those who don't attend church at all still affirm a belief in Jesus' resurrection.

Disbelief amongst non-attenders (56%) outranks uncertainty (36%) or belief (13%).

Attendance

AUSTRALIAN SPIRITUALITY RESOURCES from NCLS Research

Available online
www.ncls.org.au/spirituality

Fact Sheets:

- **Something beyond this life**
explores whether Australians believe in a spiritual dimension to life
- **Just believe or question**
examines the degree of critical reflection in religious faith and spiritual beliefs of Australians
- **Philosophies of life**
identifies which philosophies of life have most influence on how Australians live today
- **Guided by faith**
examines the saliency of religious faith or spirituality in shaping life's decisions, such as career, relationships and lifestyle
- **Jesus' resurrection**
reviews Australian beliefs about whether Jesus resurrection was an actual historical event

Each Fact Sheet presents the overall results for Australia and then compares different groups including: sex, age, education, ethnicity, 'having religion' and church attendance.

Data source:

The International Social Survey Program (ISSP) is an ongoing survey designed to monitor changes in society across a range of countries. In 2009 the ISSP was undertaken in Australia by the Australian National University via the Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (AuSSA).

The survey included a standard component on religion, as well as customised questions regarding religion and spirituality which were commissioned by a consortium that included NCLS Research.

The sample comprised 1718 adults across Australia.

Evans, A. (2009) [computer file], The Australian Survey of Social Attitudes, Australian Social Science Data Archives, The Australian National University, Canberra.

COMMUNITY SPIRITUALITY link to the 2011 NATIONAL CHURCH LIFE SURVEY

Find out about the spiritual beliefs of people who connect with your church but don't attend regularly.

A new addition to the 2011 NCLS and beyond is a survey of local church contacts. Churches can survey people they have contact with, whether through a play group, soup kitchen, or someone they are related to.

It's an effective way to find out about the beliefs, faith practices and spirituality of those connected with your church, as well as what they think of your activities. This will help your church build stronger connections and serve the community more effectively.

For more details
see www.2011ncls.org.au.



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