

# Applying a race-class narrative for Australia

**WE ARE  
UNION**

# White supremacy & us

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- This project is not *just* about Nazis
- But we do have a problem with Nazis.



# The "race-class" narrative

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Developed in the United States. Progressives used these narratives in key races to oust Trump.



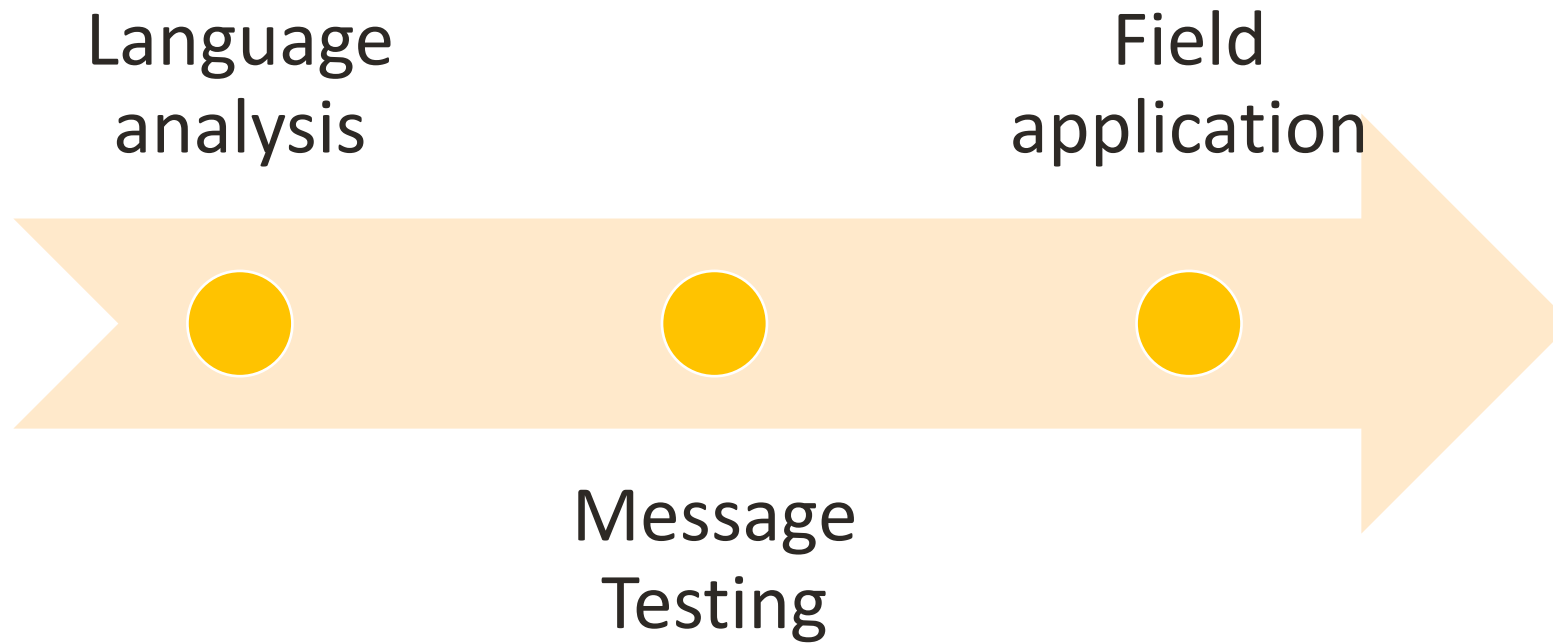




Working people can fight back.

# Project outline

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# Awesome language we already use

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**Assumed inclusion/Anti-racism is union business:** “The CFMEU sends its deepest condolences and prayers to the fallen victims... in the devastating tragedy in Beirut, Lebanon. To our Members whose families may have been affected, our thoughts and prayers are with you also..”

**Worker/Person-first language:** “The **crew**, made up of Chinese and Burmese nationals, have been on board the ship for 14 months and claim they are being intimidated into signing contract extensions.”

**Anti-racism as professional responsibility:** “Schools, and everyone who works in them, play a vital role in supporting refugees, people seeking asylum and people from a refugee or asylum seeker background.”

**Every worker in Australia:** “Every worker counts. If you work in Australia, you deserve a safe and dignified workplace, no exceptions.”



## Victim-blaming:

“Our government **allows this international workforce to undermine** Australian training and drive wages down.”

“This leads to displacement as skilled workers leave their communities in search of work while **foreign labour** is brought in to fill jobs **cheaply**.”

“...private pathology providers who are looking for another **easily exploited** group to use.”

“[Union official] said despite the high numbers of Australian workers looking for work in these regions... work on these jobsites is increasingly being done by **foreign, often unlicensed workers**.”



*Counter "scarcity" narrative with solidarity between local and migrant workers in demanding fair wages and safe workplaces for **every worker in Australia**.*



# Message testing

- Can union messages avoid victim-blaming and still be as effective?
- What is the impact on message appeal of evoking race or nationality in a typical class narrative?





# Research methodology

- online panel (n = 1,023) representative of Australian general population
- Segmented by political attitudes and moral foundations
- Two sets of message testing:
  - Preference between class-only and race-class constructions
  - Perceived accuracy of employer-blaming vs victim-blaming constructions



# Sample

Table 1 – Demographic profile

Category	Cohort		Category	Cohort	
<b>Gender</b>	Female	49%	<b>State</b>	NSW	27%
	Male	51%		VIC	24%
<b>Age</b>	18-29	24%		QLD	20%
	30-44	26%		WA	12%
	45-59	25%		SA	8%
	60 plus	25%		TAS	4%
				ACT	3%
				NT	2%

Table 3 – Union membership

Category	Cohort	
<b>Union membership</b>	Never a member	57%
	Former member	33%
	Current member	11%

# Sample

Table 2 – CALD profile

Category	Cohort		Category	Cohort	
Migration	Born in Australia	75%	Citizenship	Australian Citizen	90%
	Emigrated to Australia within the last 5 years	3%		Permanent Resident	7%
	Emigrated to Australia 5-10 years ago	4%		Applied for Permanent Residency	1%
	Emigrated to Australia 10+ years ago	18%		Temporary Resident	1%
LOTE	Speak only English at home	75%		Prefer not to say	1%
	Speak a language other than English at home	15%			
	Speak mainly English at home	10%			

# Background to Racial Tolerance Index

The research design drew on previous research on race-class narrative such as the Minnesota Dial Survey, and on moral foundations theory as a predictor of attitudes and to shift attitudes.

Respondents were asked to consider the extent to which they agreed with a battery of statements about **migration and race**. The battery consisted of two positive (tolerant) and two negative (intolerant) statements:

- *“Australia’s migrant intake was much too high (prior to the COVID-19 crisis)”*
- *“People from racial, ethnic, cultural and religious minority groups should behave more like mainstream Australians”*



**NEGATIVE (INTOLERANT)**

- *“It is a good thing for Australian society to be made up of different cultures”*
- *“All migrants should be accepted regardless of where they came from”*



**POSITIVE (TOLERANT)**

Based on these responses, a Racial Tolerance Index score was calculated for each respondent.



# Moral Foundations

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Care and Fairness



Appeal more  
to **PROGRESSIVE**  
principles of morality

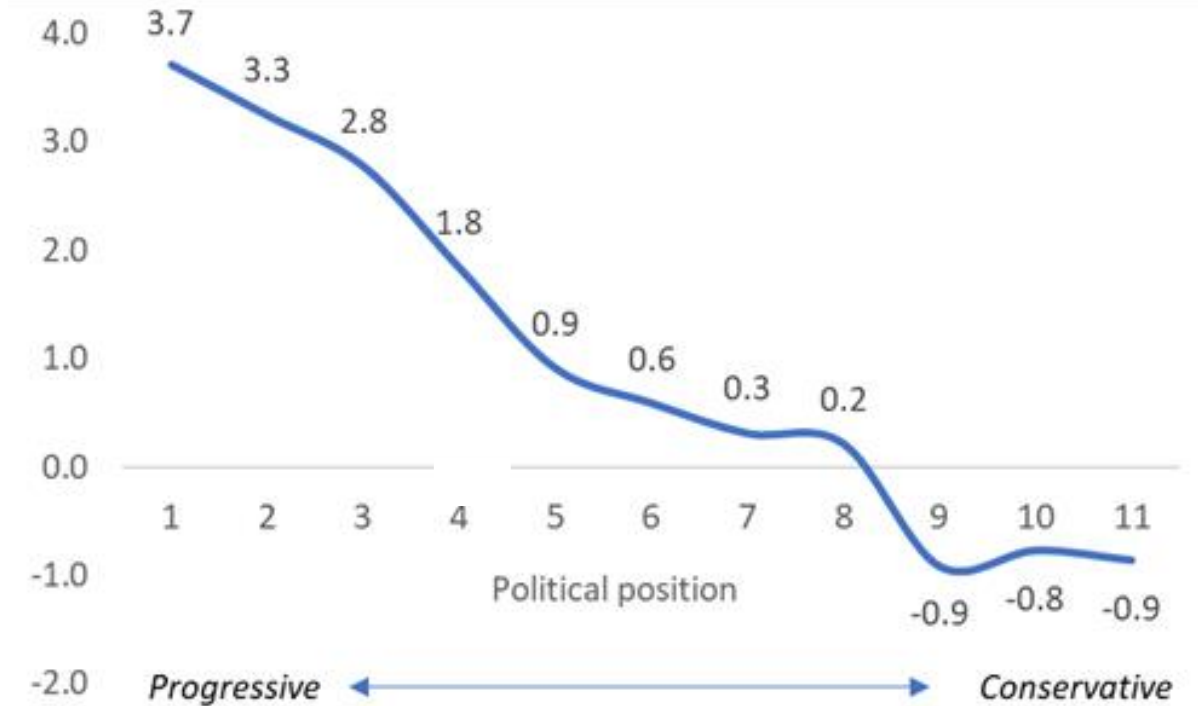
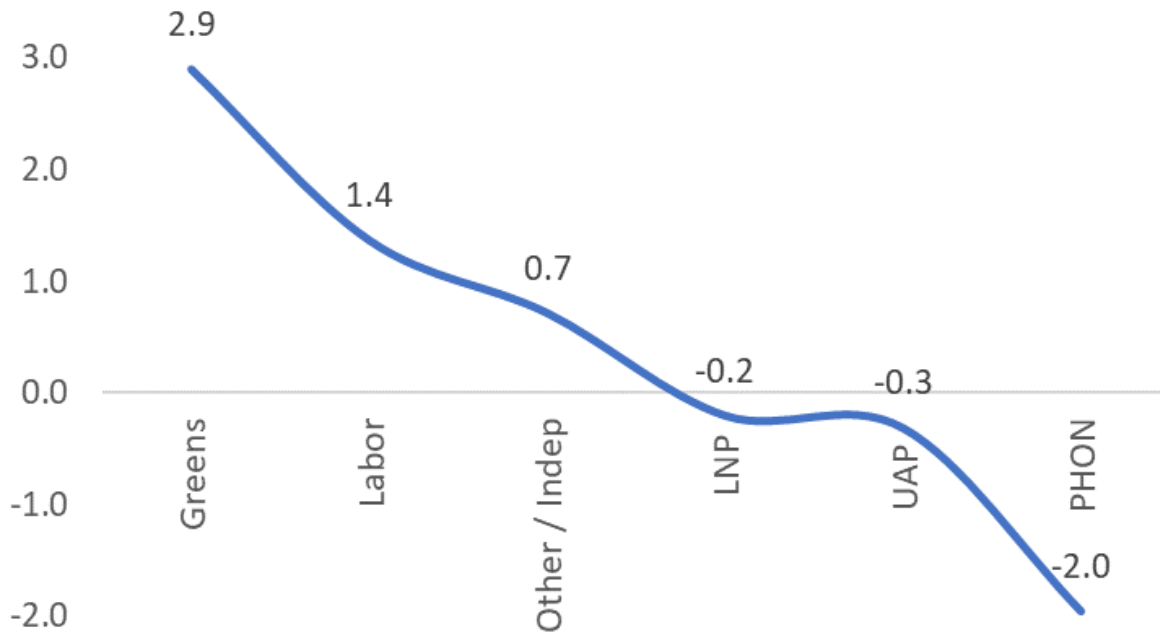


Loyalty, Authority and Sanctity

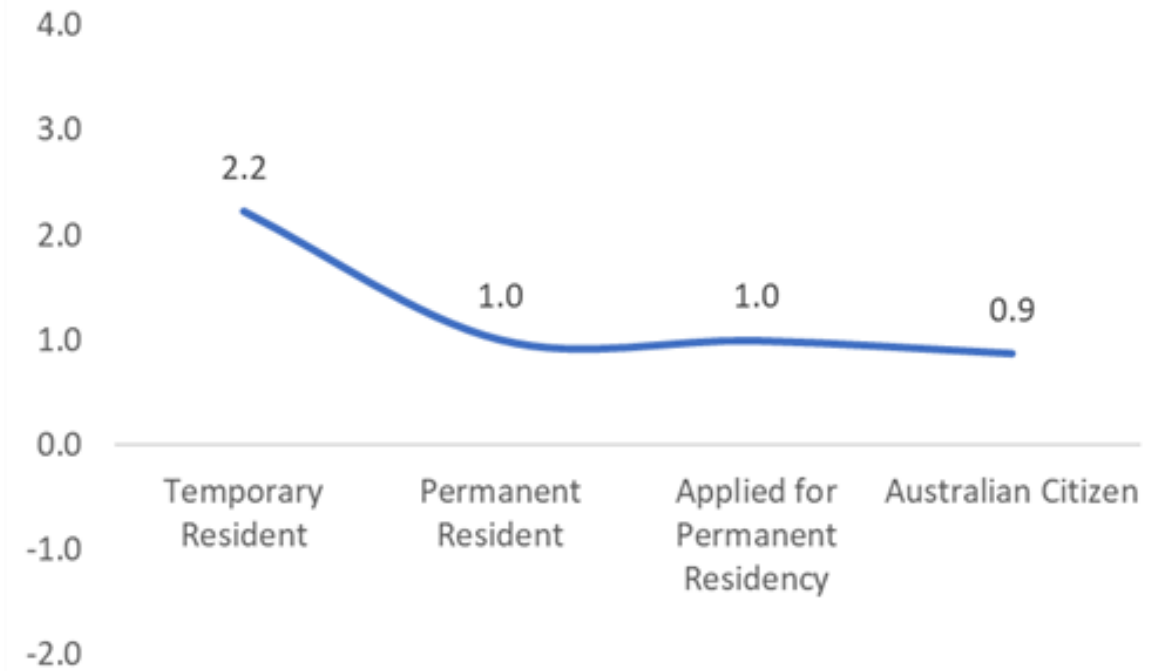
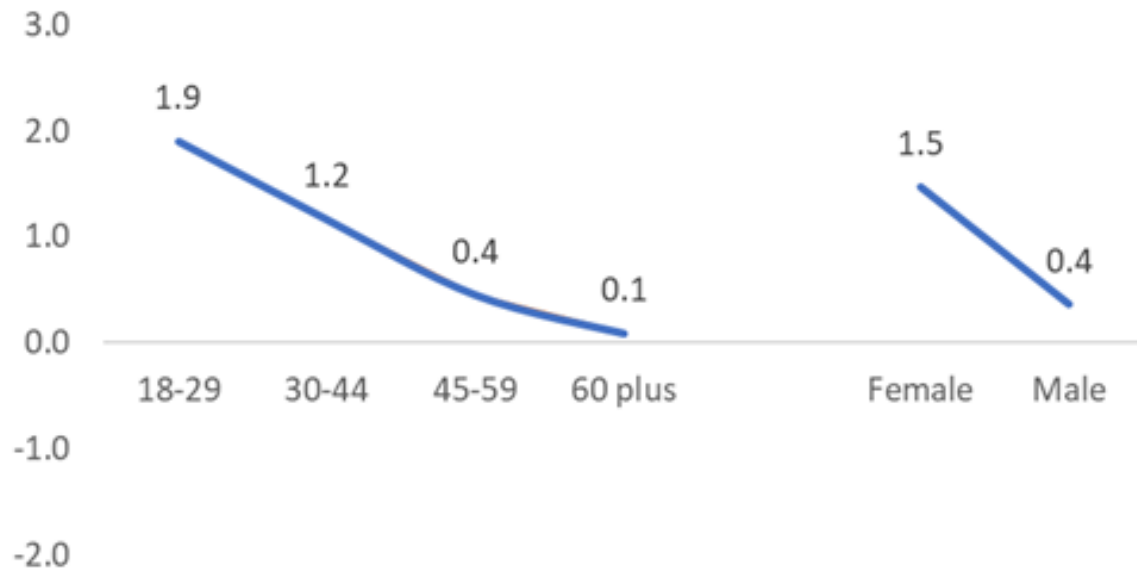


Appeal more  
to **CONSERVATIVE**  
principles of morality

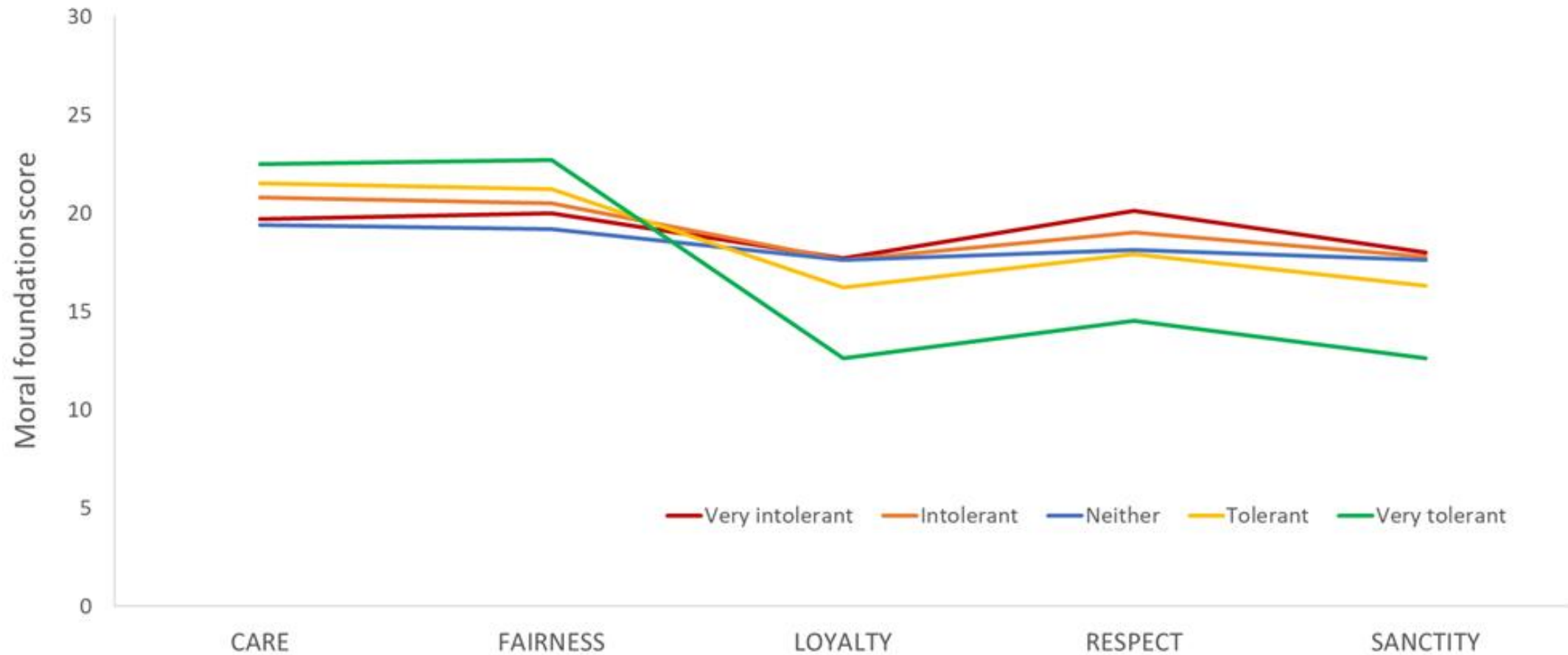
## Average racial tolerance index by political position



## Average racial tolerance index by demographics



## Moral foundations scores

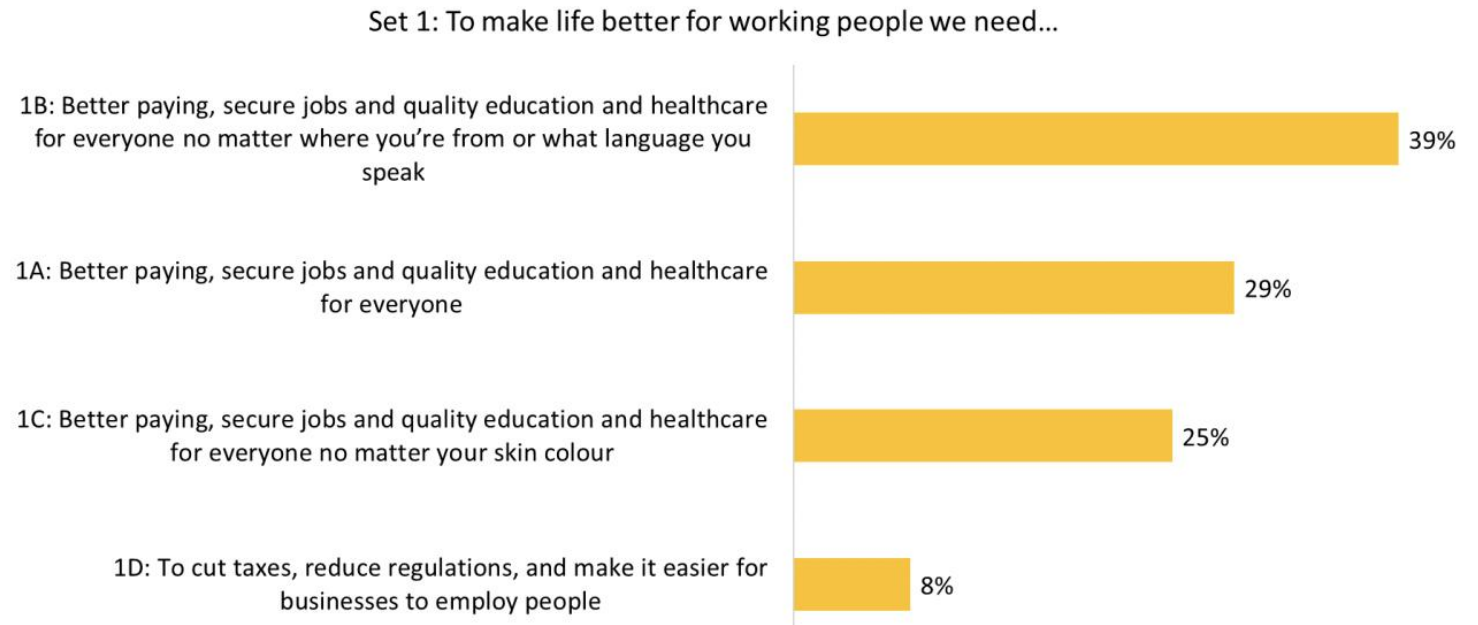




# Test 1: Preference between class & race-class

Respondents asked to choose between four statements. 1B, explicitly referencing nationality and language differences, was preferred across the board and by most segments

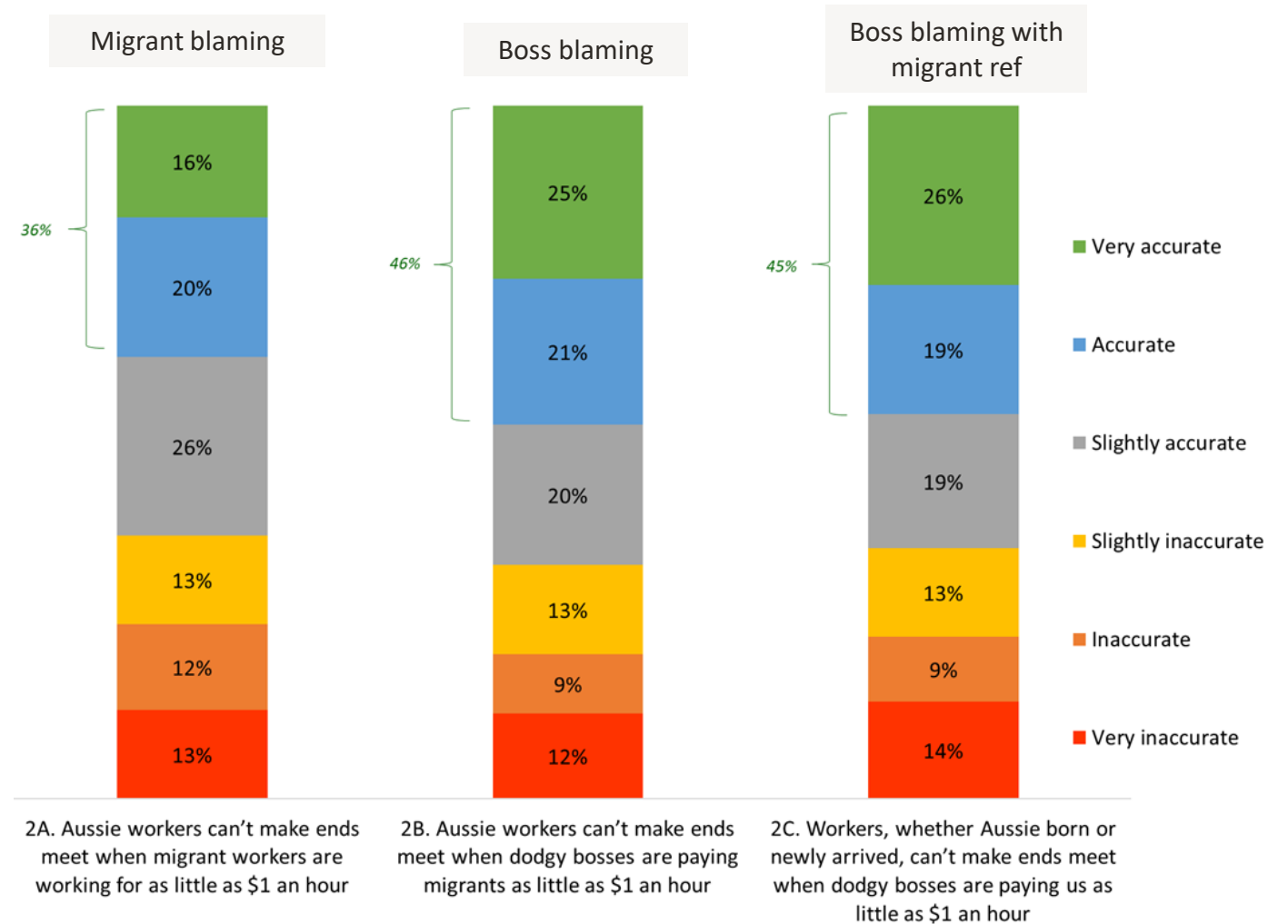
Figure 11 – Overall preferences for Set 1 statements



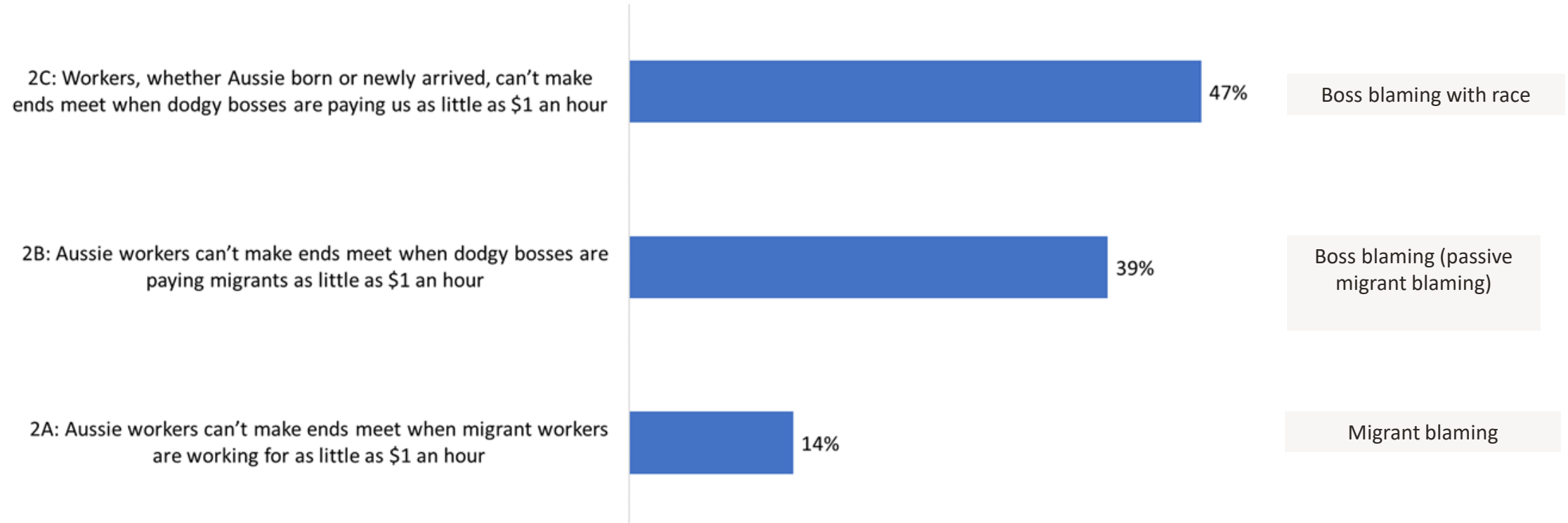
## Message Test 2a: Accuracy of boss vs migrant blaming messages

*Respondents randomly assigned to message A, B, or C, and asked to judge the accuracy of this message in isolation*

**Blaming migrant workers is costing your union 10% of your potential supporters**



## Message test 2b: preference between employer-blaming and migrant-blaming messages



# Conclusions

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- Links between moral foundations, racial tolerance and vote intentions
- To maximise the appeal of union messages (and unions) we should utilise the race-class narrative in message design
- Eliminating victim-blaming constructions may prove effective in inoculating union members against far-right and fringe political influence

