

Sheep jokes? Nah, it seems they love us, really

by Greg Ansley Australia correspondent

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So much for the sheep jokes.

New research shows that despite traditional trans-Tasman rivalry, Australians like New Zealanders more than any other nationality.

They also believe that our values are the closest of any country, trust us more than anyone else, and we are important to their economy.

Which is just as well, as Kiwis now make up 2 per cent of the population, second only to the 6 per cent who were born in Britain.

Figures released yesterday by the bureau also show that almost one in 10 overseas-born residents is a New Zealander.

And for all the kidding, the Aussies don't really mind us much.

A new mood-of-the-nation poll by strategic research and consultancy firm Crosby **Textor** puts New Zealand second only to Britain in overall popularity, way ahead of the United States and two to three times above the ranking of other major European and Asian nations.

Crosby Textor found that 90 per cent of respondents nationwide thought Kiwis were likeable as a people, ahead of the 85 per cent who thought the same of the British and the 76 per cent who liked Americans.

The other most-liked nationalities were Fijians, Japanese, Singaporeans and Chinese.

New Zealand was the country that most thought could be relied on, ahead of Britain. Both were way ahead of the next most trusted, the US.

Similarly, 88 per cent of respondents believed New Zealand shared Australia's values, followed by Britain, with 87 per cent, and the US, with 71 per cent. And Kiwis ranked first among the peoples considered honest and trustworthy.

Nor do Aussies believe Kiwis are blinkered by the tyranny of distance, despite the blasts frequently directed our way by critics of Wellington's defence and foreign policies.

Three out of four respondents believed that Kiwis were in tune with events outside their country, again second only to the British, and almost 80 per cent considered us an important trading partner.

While almost 60 per cent thought the US could be relied upon, only half thought Americans were in tune with the world outside their borders, and 46 per cent considered America honest and trustworthy.

And while 83 per cent considered China an important trading partner, only 18 per cent thought Beijing could be relied upon.



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