

Appendix B: Participant demographics

Expanded basic demographics

This appendix presents expanded demographic information for participants who completed onboarding and provided consent to participate in the study (N = 419). All demographic questions were optional; therefore, totals vary slightly across items, and percentages are calculated using the number of valid responses for each question.

Table B1. Demographic characteristics of onboarding participants.

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Age group	18–24	24	5.8%
	25–34	58	13.9%
	35–44	84	20.2%
	45–54	96	23.1%
	55–64	120	28.8%
	65–74	24	5.8%
	75+	10	2.4%
Gender	Female	199	47.8%
	Male	203	48.8%
	Non-binary / third gender	8	1.9%
	Prefer not to say	6	1.4%
Highest education	Bachelors degree	148	35.7%
	Doctorate	42	10.1%
	High school graduate	27	6.5%
	Less than high school	6	1.4%
	Masters degree	104	25.1%
	Professional degree	17	4.1%
	Some university	71	17.1%
Location (state/territory)	Northern Territory	4	1.0%
	Tasmania	10	2.4%
	Outside Australia	12	2.9%
	South Australia	19	4.6%
	Western Australia	24	5.8%
	ACT	26	6.3%
	Queensland	76	18.3%
	New South Wales	91	21.9%
	Victoria	153	36.9%
Employment status	Not working (other)	17	4.1%
	Not working (disabled)	24	5.8%
	Not working (looking for work)	41	9.9%
	Not working (retired)	47	11.3%
	Working (self-employed)	48	11.6%
	Working (paid employee)	238	57.3%

Political alignment scoring rubric

Participants' responses to a set of attitudinal and "feeling thermometer" questions were converted to numerical scores, which were then summed to produce an overall political alignment score. Negative scores indicate a more left-leaning orientation, positive scores indicate a more right-leaning orientation, and values near zero indicate centrist or mixed views. Several items were adapted from Pew Research Center's political typology surveys (Pew Research Center, 2021). Weights were intentionally set asymmetrically for items where one response option signals a strong ideological position while the opposing option reflects a broadly mainstream view that carries less diagnostic weight. For example, endorsing "too much openness risks losing national identity" was treated as a stronger rightward signal than endorsing "openness is essential to Australian identity" was a leftward one, since the latter reflects a widely held position across the Australian political spectrum. Symmetric weights in such cases would overstate the ideological significance of mainstream responses.

Table B2. Political leaning scoring rubric.

Question	Response Option	Score
If you had to choose, would you rather have:	Larger government providing more services	-3
	Smaller government providing fewer services	+3
	No answer / Other	0
Which of the following statements is closest to your viewpoint?	Openness is essential to Australian identity	-1
	Too much openness risks losing national identity	+7
	No answer / Other	0
In general, would you say that experts who study a subject for many years are:	Usually worse than non-experts	+7
	Neither better nor worse	+3
	Usually better	0
	No answer	0
How much more needs to be done, if anything, to ensure that all Australians have equal rights and opportunities, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion?	None at all	+8
	A little	+4
	A moderate amount	0
	A lot	-4
	A great deal	-8
How much of a problem, if any, would you say each of the following are in Australia today? - People being too easily offended by things others say	Major problem	+6
	Minor problem	0
	Not a problem	-6
How much of a problem, if any, would you say each of the following are in Australia today? - People saying things that are offensive to others	Major problem	-6
	Minor problem	0
	Not a problem	+6
Which statement do you agree with most?	Corporations make a fair and reasonable amount	+3
	Corporations make too much profit	0
Which statement do you agree with most?	Private schools receive a fair share of government money.	+4

	Private schools receive too much funding from the government and more money should go to public schools.	-4
Should Australia increase its defense spending to counter potential threats in the Asia-Pacific region?	Strongly agree with increasing	+4
	Somewhat agree	+1
	Neither agree nor disagree	0
	Somewhat disagree	-5
	Strongly disagree	-7

Attitudes toward political parties scoring rubric

Participants rated their feelings toward political parties/groups from 0 (extremely negative) to 10 (extremely positive). Each rating was re-scaled so that positive feelings toward right-leaning parties/groups increased the score, while positive feelings toward left-leaning parties/groups decreased it (and vice versa).

Table B3. Transformation formulae for converting party feeling-thermometer ratings into political alignment scores. Ratings were centered at 5 (neutral) and scaled by party-specific weights.

Political group	Transformation formula
Liberal Party	$(\text{rating} - 5) \times 0.4$
Labor Party	$(\text{rating} - 5) \times -0.2$
Nationals	$(\text{rating} - 5) \times 0.5$
Greens	$(\text{rating} - 5) \times -0.4$
Teals	$(\text{rating} - 5) \times -0.2$
Independents	$(\text{rating} - 5) \times -0.1$
One Nation	$(\text{rating} - 5) \times 0.6$

Political alignment distribution

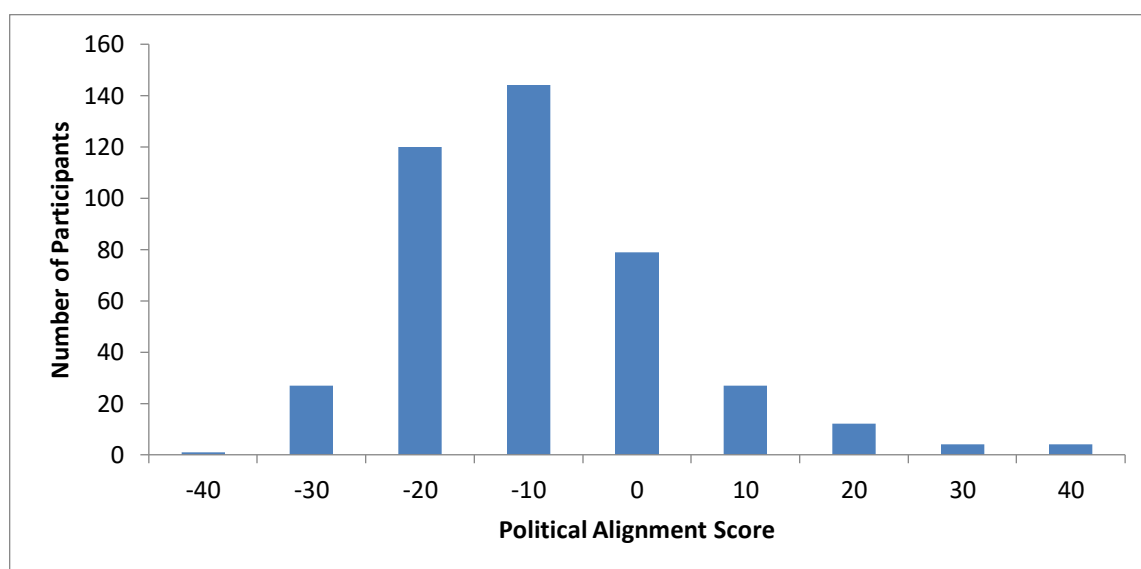


Figure B1. Distribution of political alignment scores for all consenting participants.

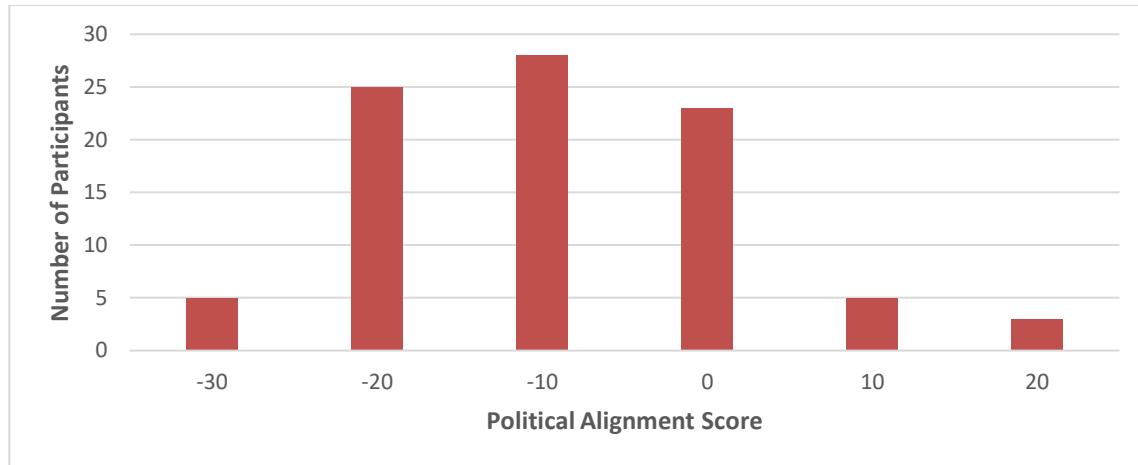


Figure B2. Distribution of available political alignment scores for active participants (n = 89).

Mitigating ideological bias in detection

The cohort's left-of-center skew (see distributions above) raises the concern, noted in the body, that raters may flag content conflicting with their own views (Park et al., 2026). Two points contextualize this. First, the skew broadly mirrors the Australian electorate at the time: the 2025 election was held under compulsory voting with roughly 90% turnout (Australian Electoral Commission, 2025b) and returned a landslide for the center-left Labor Party (Australian Electoral Commission, 2025a), so a left-leaning pool is less anomalous than in a voluntary-turnout setting. Second, our attempt to balance the cohort through separate targeted recruitment campaigns aimed at left- and right-of-center users did not overcome the skew, which suggests it reflects the composition of the politically engaged social media population we drew from rather than a recruitment artifact. The mitigations described in the body—bias training, required written justification (Pennycook & Rand, 2019), and dilution of individual skew through peer assessment—reduce but cannot eliminate this risk.