

ON INTERNATIONAL HUGGING DAY - SURVEY REVEALS AUSTRALIANS ARE A NATION OF HUGGERS

- Chris Hemsworth voted celebrity Australians would most like to hug
- Malcolm Turnbull voted celebrity Australians think is most in need of a hug



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- Hugging is a big part of Australian life with the average Australian giving six hugs per day
- Celebrity love: poll reveals Chris Hemsworth is the celebrity Australians would most like to hug and Malcolm Turnbull is the celebrity Australians think is most in need of a hug, followed by Kyle Sandilands - plus the other celebs that made the top ten most huggable
- Men are just as cuddly with family as their female counterparts, although not so much with their mates
- Preschool aged children the most affectionate giving and receiving the most hugs
- Dr Lisa A Williams, expert in social psychology, tells us what the results mean
- The 'Duggee Hug' is an intrinsic element of every episode of the hit pre-school show *Hey Duggee*

January 21, 2019: Australians would most like to hug **Chris Hemsworth** and **Hugh Jackman** (women) and **Elle Macpherson** and **Margot Robbie** (men) but both genders agreed **Malcolm Turnbull** is most in need of a hug.

To mark International Hugging Day and inspired by the famous 'Duggee Hug' at the end of each episode of *Hey Duggee* - the BAFTA award-winning pre-school show - CBeebies Australia has commissioned research* into the hugging habits of Australians. The results of a survey of over 500 Australians reveal that Aussies love a hug, giving on average six hugs per day, with 86% of us either giving or receiving one every day. Our favourite thing about hugging is that it shows affection and increases bonding (31%), followed by an increased feeling of happiness (15%).

These findings align with research into the benefits of hugging. As the University of New South Wales (UNSW) social psychologist Dr Lisa A Williams points out, "Hugs can happen in positive contexts – while greeting, celebrating an achievement, or simply enjoying the presence of a loved one – but they can also occur in negative contexts when support is needed. The physical and mental benefits of hugging across both positive and negative contexts are well-documented. For example, individuals who receive more hugs are less likely to catch the common cold and experience interpersonal conflict as less acute. More generally, their relationships overall are happier."



So who is doing all the hugging? Families and couples are doing the lion's share particularly those aged 25-44. Women give on average 4.7 hugs a day and receive 3.9, with men not far behind giving 3.4 a day and getting back an average of 3. People aged 66-75 are hugging the least, giving and receiving on average two per day, followed closely by single-income individuals with no kids, who recorded similar results but these groups make up for it by dishing out hugs to their pets. We think our children (37%) and partners (37%) give the best hugs, followed by our parents (9%).

At family gatherings, men (47%) and women (49%) agree a hug is the preferred greeting, with a kiss on the cheek also popular (34%) particularly among the older generation. In social settings, men are much less likely to engage in a hug when meeting up with a mate (22%) preferring a handshake (53%). Women, however, like to hug it out with their friends (53%), with a kiss on the cheek the next most popular greeting among females (28%). Embracing our friends is not so popular with the older generation, with only 24% of people 66-75 saying they hug their friends compared with 53% of people 18-24 and 55% of people 25-34.

Unsurprisingly parents and children give and receive the most hugs with 79% of parents hugging their children every day and receiving a similar number back (78%). Hugging of children is incredibly common but the number of hugs drops once the kids hit their teenage years. Pre-schoolers are receiving the most hugs, getting on average 8.4 per day although 85% of parents still give their teenagers at least one hug per day. Children between 2.5 - 3.5 years old are the most affectionate, giving their parents 7.7 hugs per day, while kids aged 13-17 are the least affectionate offering their parents only 2.9 hugs a day.

As a nation of pet owners, we love to hug our furry friends. 89% of dog owners and 87% of cat owners reveal they hug their pets, with singles and parents of older kids doing the most, suggesting pets are a substitute for people not getting their hugs elsewhere. Hugging our pets makes us feel loved, content and warm. Along with pets, over 44% of us admitted to hugging a soft toy for comfort, primarily women and people 18-24 (69%).

No matter who is involved in the hug, the benefits are robust. According to Dr Williams, "Physiologically, hugs produce improved cardiovascular functioning and promote the release of oxytocin, a hormone that has been implicated in the development of bonding and trust. Psychologically, hugs also indicate that the relationship is characterised by closeness and concern."

The Notebook, Titanic, Ghost, Love Actually and 90s sitcom *Friends* offered some of Australia's favourite onscreen hugs.

<p>Top ten celebrities Australians would most like to hug:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chris Hemsworth 2. Hugh Jackman 3. Margot Robbie 4. Nicole Kidman 5. Kylie Minogue 6. Miranda Kerr 7. Carrie Bickmore 8. Elle Macpherson 9. Liam Hemsworth 10. Sophie Monk 	<p>Top five celebrities we feel are in need of a good hug:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Malcolm Turnbull 2. Kyle Sandilands 3. Russell Crowe 4. Karl Stefanovic 5. Sophie Monk
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<p>Top ten celebrities Australian men would most like to hug:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elle Macpherson 2. Margot Robbie 3. Nicole Kidman 4. Kylie Minogue 5. Miranda Kerr 6. Sophie Monk 7. Carrie Bickmore 	<p>Top ten celebrities Australian women would most like to hug:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chris Hemsworth 2. Hugh Jackman 3. Liam Hemsworth 4. Dr Chris Brown 5. Margot Robbie 6. Carrie Bickmore 7. Nicole Kidman
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8. Samantha Armytage	8. Grant Denyer
9. Cate Blanchett	9. Eric Bana
10. Hugh Jackman	10. Kylie Minogue

Hey Duggee is a show that knows the benefits of a good hug. Each episode ends with a #DuggeeHug – where all the animals from The Squirrel Club come together with their teacher, the loveable canine hero Duggee, for a warm embrace before being picked up by their parents.

“While most hugs are three seconds long, there is evidence that longer hugs provide more benefit,” says Dr Williams. So – when you do seek out an embrace, make it count!

Hey Duggee can be seen on CBeebies Australia (available on Foxtel and Fetch) weekdays at 4.40pm and is also available to view on the Foxtel Kids App. Brand new episodes of *Hey Duggee* will air on CBeebies from Monday 4th March at 4.40pm.

Hey Duggee products including plush, toys and infants apparel are available at Big W with new product lines set to hit the market in 2019.

Images, GIFS and video available here -

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/f31a1rk2jahps2e/AAC96lscEoc9hrcmf3nlv0zda?dl=0>

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For more information, please contact: Phoebe Price, 0410 113 449, phoebe.price@bbc.com

NOTES TO EDITORS

Please credit *Hey Duggee* and CBeebies Australia if you use any of the statistics in this press release

*The research was conducted by Fiftyfive5 with a sample nationally representative of age, gender and location. Main sample of 421, 18-65 year olds plus a boost of 111 parents of kids aged 2.5 – 4 years old.

About BBC Studios in Australia & New Zealand

The BBC Studios business in Australia and New Zealand is primarily content sales and branded services, with a newly established production arm. It wholly owns seven channels: BBC First, BBC UKTV, BBC Knowledge and CBeebies on Foxtel and Fetch TV in Australia; BBC Living on Fetch TV; and BBC UKTV and BBC Earth on Sky TV in New Zealand. It distributes great British content from the BBC and other British producers to free-to-air, subscription channels and SVOD platforms and works with partners to bring BBC Studios DVDs, consumer products and live events to the local market. The new production arm in Sydney will produce BBC formats for the local market and create new IP.

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About Hey Duggee

Created by the OSCAR® nominated and BAFTA award-winning Studio AKA, *Hey Duggee* is one of the happiest, most fun places on kids TV! Loved by both children and parents, Duggee is a big loveable dog who runs a club for pre-schoolers. Each episode starts with Duggee welcoming the Squirrels, a bunch of curious little characters. This marks the start of laughter and learning as they discover new things about the world around them, all under the patient guidance of Duggee who rewards them with a squirrel activity badge - which they proudly show to their parents when they are picked up at the end of the day. Packed with humour and pop culture references, *Hey Duggee* captivates viewers of all ages. And who wouldn't want a Duggee hug?

About Dr Lisa A Williams

Dr Lisa A. Williams is a social psychologist whose research examines the dynamics between emotional experience and social interaction. Much of her research focuses how positive emotions that arise in the



context of social interactions function at the interpersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, and societal levels. Her current research program includes projects investigating the prosocial functions of vicarious pride, compassion, and moral elevation. Her research is funded by the Australian Research Council and the Australian Red Cross Blood Service. She received her PhD in 2009 from Northeastern University, US. She is currently Senior Lecturer at the University of New South Wales.

You can access coverage of research on hugging by Dr Williams' here - <https://theconversation.com/the-power-of-a-hug-can-help-you-cope-with-conflict-104318>

