

# Terrorism fears fade as social worries grow

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THE lack of major terrorist events in the past six months has seen a corresponding drop in public concern about terrorism.

But an increasing number of Australians are starting to worry about social issues, such as immigration and the level of tolerance in the community.

A survey by Roy Morgan Research, commissioned for next month's Future Summit in Brisbane, shows that the number of Australians who believe terrorism is the most important issue facing the country has slipped from 21 per cent in October to 12 per cent this month.

Concern about terrorism as the major problem facing the world is also dropping within Australia, with less than a third of Australians (32 per cent) now thinking it is the major international issue, well down from 52 per cent in October.

The October survey was taken when the London bombing in July and the Bali bombings of early October were still fresh in people's minds.

As Australians look inwards they are becoming more interested in softer "human" issues. The Morgan survey showed interest in such issues was up from 14 per cent to 25 per cent in the past six months.



There is no single driver of the rise, although concern about immigration has gone up significantly and multiculturalism, which previously didn't register, is now starting to be perceived as a wider community issue.

Since the Cronulla riots in Sydney last year there is also increasing concern about intolerance. In the October survey, less than 1 per cent of Australians said they were concerned about it, but now 3 per cent cite it as their major concern.

There was also a rise from 14 per cent to 20 per cent in the proportion of people who thought economic issues were the most important ones facing the country, but this rise was solely attributable to concern about industrial relations.

In the October survey, industrial relations did not rate as a concern. But in the April survey it was cited by 6 per cent of respondents as the most important issue facing the country.

The Future Summit, which is jointly sponsored by *The Australian*, will be held in Brisbane on May 11-12.