

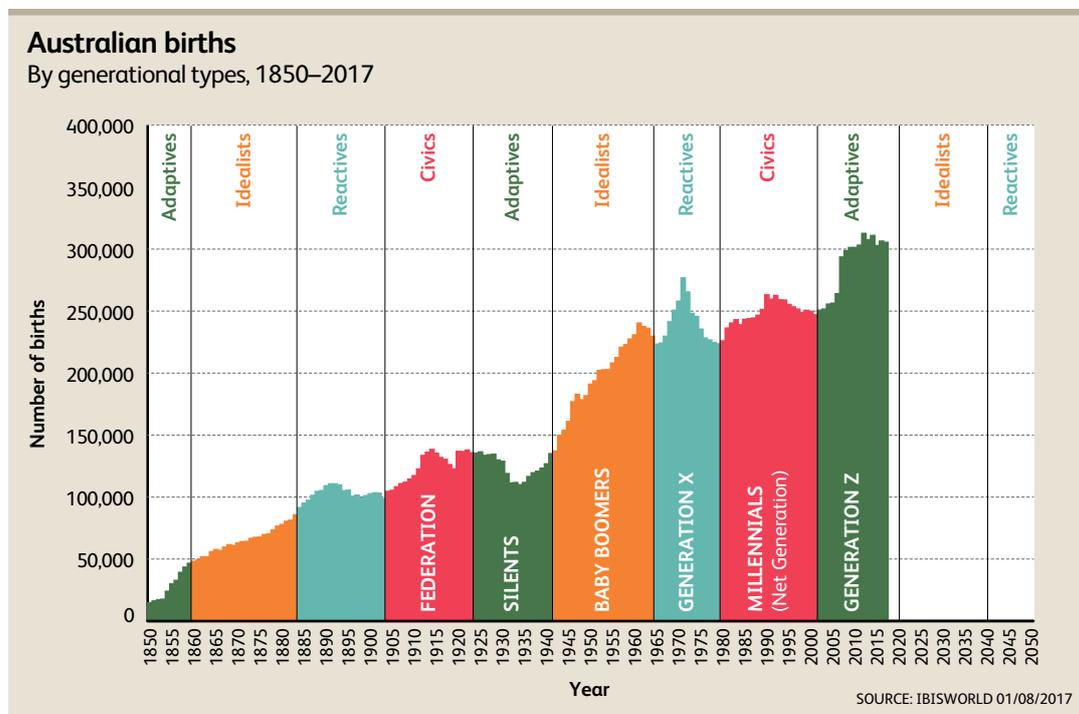
## The Millennials Are Where the Action Is

IBISWorld Newsletter

August 2017

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Australia gets a new generation of citizens around every 20 years on average, as shown in the first chart below. We have had 12 generations since 1788: Interestingly, five-and-a-bit of them are still alive today. The 'bit' refers to the last of the Federation generation, now over 92 years of age and representing less than half a percent of the population.



As shown in the above chart, generations can be categorised into one of four types: civics, adaptives, idealists and reactives. These generational types were established by authors William Strauss and Neil Howe in their 1991 tome, *Generations*. Going back over three centuries, they discovered that these types repeated sequentially, around 20 years apart, over this period. IBISWorld found a similar pattern in Australia.

A brief definition of the four types of generations is provided below:

### The four types of generations

#### Civics

The wealth-creating, nation-building generation.  
Can-do, pragmatic and rationalist. Not a lot of social graces.

#### Adaptives

The generally silent and obedient, but more socially aware, generation.  
Adapt wealth-building to other social needs. Make good leaders.

#### Idealists

The social visionaries and idealists. Want to change the world now.  
Humanists and social re-engineers. Big spenders.

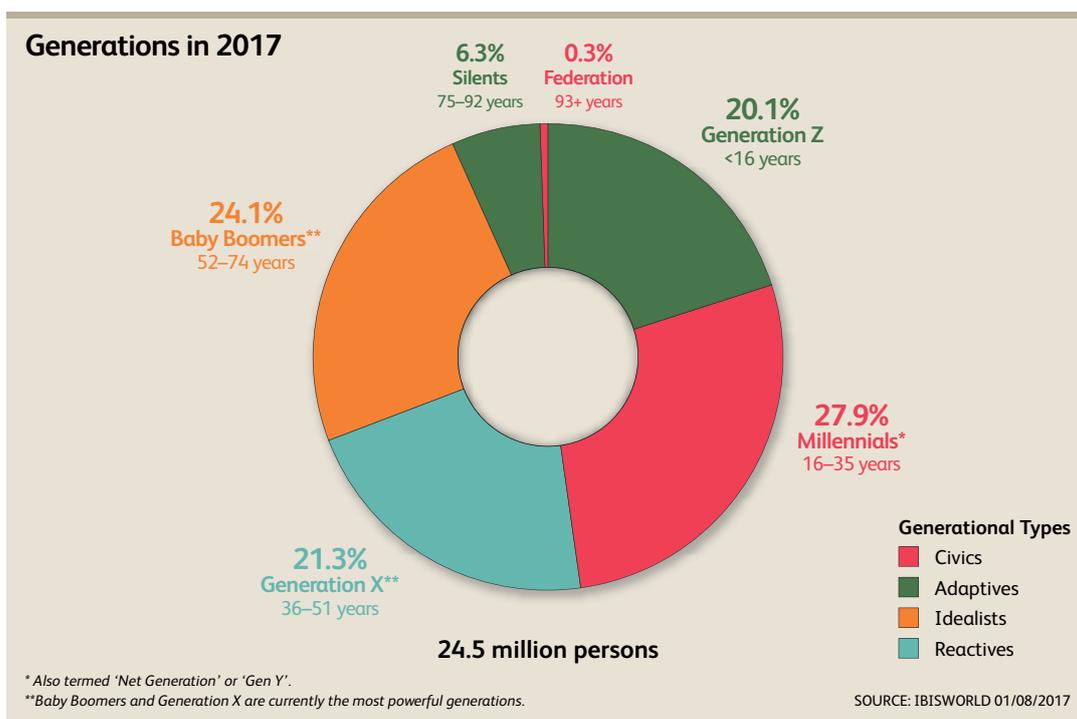
#### Reactives

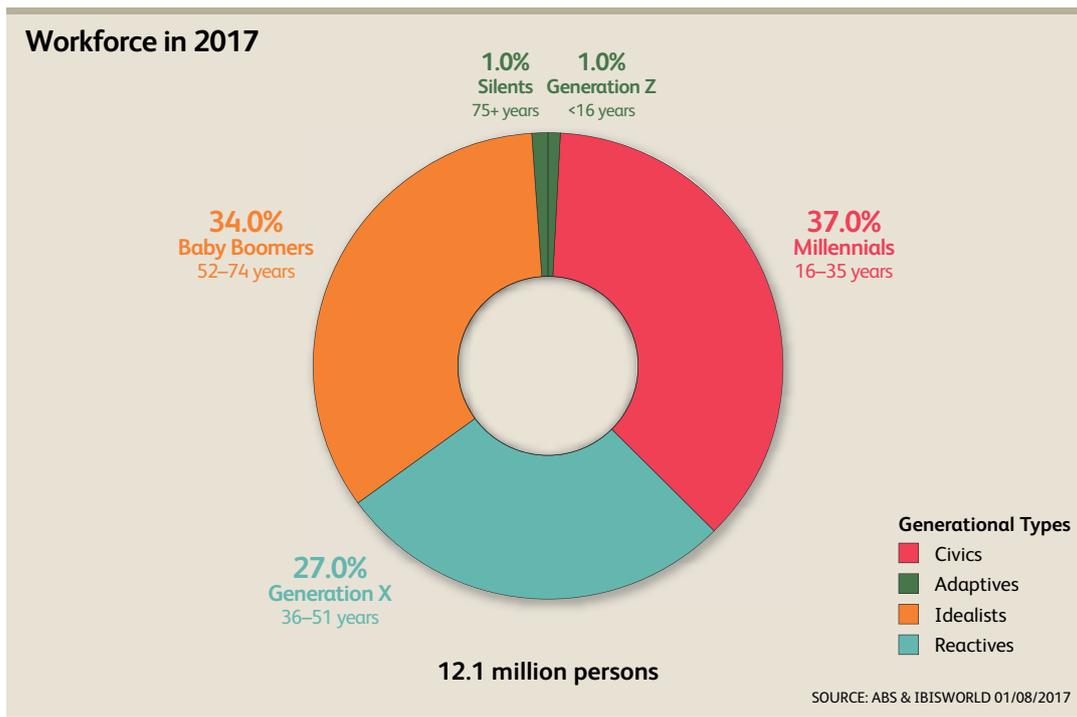
The reactive, conciliatory generation. Consolidators of change; peace-seekers.  
Repair the damage of idealists. Pave the way for new civics.

SOURCE: STRAUSS & HOWE, IBISWORLD 01/08/2017

These days, we use descriptors or nicknames for the various generations. Working back from the oldest to the youngest, the current generations are: Federationists (civics), Silents (adaptives), Baby Boomers (idealists), Generation Xers (reactives), Millennials (new civics) and Generation Zers (new adaptives).

We show these generations below as a percentage of Australia's population and workforce in 2017.





When it comes to generations, it is safer to talk in generalities, rather than specifics. Individuals' attitudes and behaviours are fashioned by a range of factors, including intelligence and emotional quotients, parentage, race, religion, socioeconomic cohort, health and disabilities. So, members of the four generation types are not cloned into one of four categories. They do vary for the above reasons, and are reactive to the generations that have preceded them.

### What makes the millennial civics different?

We should begin by saying that millennials (and the following generation) are born more as children of the world than nationals, courtesy of the borderless internet. Yes, they have pride in their city and country, and they barrack for their local sports teams; but their tribalism is more diffuse than any generation in history. They have virtual tribes, via social media, as well as physical associations and communities.

Millennials have less hang-ups about God, religion, politics and other man-made (and thus flawed) human beliefs and loyalties. The ready availability of facts and information has ruined good stories that have been around for centuries. Millennials give short shrift to urban myths and superstitions, but are temporarily taken in by scuttlebutt.

Despite their discerning nature, this generation can be sensitive, bullied and unsure all the same. As humans, our DNA does have some emotional hard-wiring – after all, we aren't humanoids.

## **In business and work**

Millennials are the most entrepreneurial generation we have seen for a long time. Over 275,000 new businesses start up each year, and a significant proportion of them are founded by people under 36 years of age. While most of these businesses will be lucky to survive three years, thousands of founders are making it into the millionaire bracket, both locally and abroad, in new age industries and technologies. Like the silent-achiever generation that preceded them, Generation X, millennials are proving themselves to be good managers.

As employees, millennials respond to measurement of, and rewards for, outputs more than inputs (i.e. turning up on time for fixed-hour regimes). They tend to accept contractual arrangements, making them less of an employee and more of a contractor in a business-to-business relationship.

## **As voters**

The political spectrum is perhaps more interesting. Australia, along with most developed Western nations, has had a notable absence of political nous and leadership for a decade (longer in some countries). Emotionalism – including irrationality and populism – has filled most of the void created by years of indifferent political and economic progress, and an acute shortage of statesmen (both genders).

While this has led to an increase in the swinging-vote category, millennials have begun to contribute to some extraordinary upsets as their numbers have grown to today's biggest voting share. Adroit use of social media has bolstered the visibility and effectiveness of political parties and issues, as was the case during Barack Obama's election campaign and subsequent presidency. In the United Kingdom, Brexit was won by the emotionalists; but they might not win again in the event of a re-run. The Macron win in France was a clear win for rationalism and the millennials.

Politicians that fail to understand millennials – and their dedication to rational thinking, vision and leadership – deserve to lose unlosable elections. The millennials are a powerful, digitally adapted, savvy generation. They won't tolerate incompetent leaders, ignoramuses and zealots forever.



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