

# Approval of President Mbeki remains low

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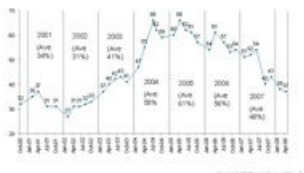
TNS Research Surveys, South Africa's leading marketing and social insights company, has conducted a series of surveys since 2000 that ascertain whether people feel the President is doing a good job as President of South Africa.

These surveys are conducted amongst a sample of 2 000 SA adults from the seven major metropolitan areas of South Africa, interviewing them face-to-face in their homes, with a margin of error of under 2.5%. The latest reading was taken in April 2008.

## How does the President fare?

For three years - from 2000 to 2001 - the President's approval rating lay generally in the low 30s. But, from February 2003, the percentage of people who felt that President Mbeki is doing a good job as President began to rise. By the end of 2003, it was in the low 40s. 2004 saw a remarkable rise with the Ten Years of Democracy celebrations and the successful second democratic elections. 2005 scaled new heights for the President, during which his approval score averaged 61%, up three points from his 2004 average of 58%. In 2006, after the fourth consecutive fall (to 54% in February) from his high of 66% in April 2005, his approval rating staged a recovery back to 61% but had dropped to 54% by year end. This level was maintained until June 2007 but the September reading showed a dramatic drop to 40%, the lowest since April 2003. The November reading showed a marginal shift upwards to 43%. **However, in February 2008, the reading showed a sharp drop to 38% and the latest April reading of 37% confirms that sentiment towards the President has not improved, but remains at a low level.**

SA Adults in metro areas - Approval rating of President Mbeki (% of people who feel the President is doing a good job)



SA Adults in metro areas -  
Approval rating of President  
Mbeki

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## How consistent is the rating?

%	Ave 2005	Ave 2006	Feb 2007	April 2007	June 2007	Sept 2007	Nov 2007	Ave 2007	Feb 2008	April 2008	All- time low	All- time high
Total metro SA	61	56	51	52	54	40	43	48	38	37	27	66
Blacks	74	68	64	67	65	53	53	62	48	47	35 <sup>a</sup>	81 <sup>b</sup>
Whites	37	33	31	23	34	14	25	26	18	20	9 <sup>c</sup>	47 <sup>d</sup>
Coloureds	40	38	28	30	33	16	28	27	25	22	16 <sup>e</sup>	55 <sup>f</sup>
Indians/Asians	47	38	25	36	43	24	30	32	24	23	11 <sup>g</sup>	62 <sup>h</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Feb 2002

<sup>b</sup> July/Aug 2004

<sup>c</sup> Feb 2001

<sup>d</sup> Aug 2005

<sup>e</sup> September 2007

<sup>f</sup> July 2005

<sup>g</sup> April 2001

<sup>h</sup> April 2005

- The scores for metro blacks were fairly consistent throughout 2005 but dropped notably in February 2006, recovering well in April. They ended 2006 at 69%. The score now at 47% is the lowest since early 2003 and is considerable down on the 67% this time last year.
- The scores amongst whites have been consistently in the mid 30s in recent years until the end of 2006 when they dropped to 26%. They were more volatile in 2007 dropping to a low of 14% (the lowest since 2002) before recovering in November to 25%. The February reading dropped back to 18% and is now at 20%.
- The coloured sample reached a new all-time low in September 2007 but has recovered somewhat to 22%.
- The Indian/Asian sample is more volatile but has steadied this year.

Analysis by area shows that, in April 2008, support for the President was highest in East London (65% - but down dramatically from the 87% figure in February) and lowest in Durban, Cape Town, Pretoria and the West Rand. Red arrows below indicate significant drops since February.

Total metro SA - 37% approve (38% in February) (43% end 2007)

- Gauteng - 40% approve (42% in February) (50% end 2007)
  - Johannesburg and environs - 43% (44% in February) (51% end 2007)
    - Johannesburg excluding Soweto - 43% (41% in February) (50% end 2007)
    - Soweto - 41% (47% in February) (45% end 2007)
    - East Rand - 44% (42% in February) (51% end 2007)
    - West Rand - 34% (39% in February) (31% end 2007)
    - Vaal Triangle and South Rand - 47% (55% in February) (73% end 2007)
  - Pretoria - 29% (33% in February) (48% end 2007)
- Cape Town - 33% (33% in February) (34% end 2007)
- Durban - 23% (23% in February) (22% end 2007)
- Eastern Cape - 55% (61% in February) (56% end 2007)
  - Port Elizabeth - 50% (49% in February) (55% end 2007)
  - East London - 65% (87% in February) (60% end 2007) ↓
- Bloemfontein - 60% (60% in February) (50% end 2007)

The President's approval rating showed some differences by black language groups:

- > Zulu speakers - 39% (40% in February) (41% end 2007)
- > Sotho speakers - 46% (50% in February) (61% end 2007)
- > Tswana speakers - 47% (42% in February) (50% end 2007)
- > Xhosa speakers - 65% (65% in February) (67% end 2007)

## And how is Jacob Zuma perceived as President of the ANC?

In both February and April, TNS Research Surveys also asked people whether they felt that Jacob Zuma is doing a good job as President of the ANC. In metro areas, 36% felt that he is doing a good job in both studies but 26% and 24% respectively said "Don't know".

- "Is Jacob Zuma doing a good job as President of the ANC?"
  - Yes - 36% (36% in February)
    - Blacks - 50% (also 50% in February), whites - 16% (up from 8% in February), coloureds - 6% (down from

11% in February), Indians/Asians - 12% (down from 18% in February).

- No - 40% (38% in February)
  - Blacks - 26% (21% in February), whites - 51% (72% in February), coloureds - 78% (71% in February), Indians/Asians - 67% (58% in February)
- Don't know - 24% (26% in February)
  - Blacks - 24% (28% in February), whites - 33% (20% in February), coloureds - 15% (18% in February), Indians/Asians - 21% (30% in February)

Black males show the highest approval rating at 55%, with black females markedly lower at 46%. Jacob Zuma's approval rating at President of the ANC also drops off markedly for those aged 50 years and over. Regional differences are notable, with the Eastern Cape showing exceptionally low approval figures and Soweto, the East Rand and Durban showing the highest.

Total metro SA - 36% approve

- Gauteng - 44% approve (41% in February)
  - Johannesburg and environs - 45% (42% in February)
    - Johannesburg excluding Soweto - 32% (34% in February)
    - Soweto - 62% (well up from the 46% in February)†
    - East Rand - 53% (46% in February)
    - West Rand - 43% (33% in February)
    - Vaal Triangle and South Rand - 41% (51% in February)
  - Pretoria - 41% (36% in February)
- Cape Town - 14% (17% in February)
- Durban - 47% (50% in February)
- Eastern Cape - 10% (same in February)
  - Port Elizabeth - 6% (11% in February)
  - East London - 18% (7% in February)
- Bloemfontein - 40% (48% in February)

Jacob Zuma's approval rating showed some differences by black language groups:

- > Zulu speakers - 64% (64% in February)
- > Sotho speakers - 44% (50% in February)
- > Tswana speakers - 53% (44% in February)
- > Xhosa speakers - 28% (31% in February)

## Our take-out

The President's approval rating as President of South Africa remains low in the second quarter of 2008 after a considerable drop in the last six months of 2007. This fall has been across all race groups with only the Eastern Cape showing any strength.

Jacob Zuma's approval rating as President of the ANC is also still quite low but a quarter of the people have adopted a wait-

and-see attitude. Approval levels are low for whites (but have risen in the last two months) and for coloureds and Indians/Asians with a half of blacks giving a positive response. A marked improvement from residents of Soweto is evident.

## Technical note

The studies are conducted amongst a sample of 2 000 adults (1260 blacks, 385 whites, 240 coloureds and 115 Indians/Asians) in the seven major metropolitan areas: they have a margin of error of under 2.5% for the results found for the total sample. The studies were conducted by TNS Research Surveys (Pty) Ltd as part of their ongoing research into current social and political issues and were funded by TNS Research Surveys. For more details, please contact Neil Higgs on 011-778-7500 or 082-376-6312.

Website: [www.tnsresearchsurveys.co.za](http://www.tnsresearchsurveys.co.za).

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