

Approval of President Mbeki remains high in 2005

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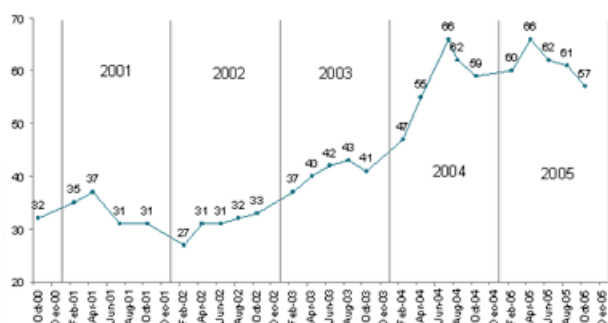
RS, South Africa's leading insights company, has conducted a series of surveys since 2000 that ascertain whether people feel the President is doing a good job.

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%.

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 feel 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 has scaled new heights for the President, during which his approval score averaged 61%, up three points from his 2004 average of 58%.

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



In non-metro areas, his approval rating rises even further - to 67% (April/August 2005), compared with 68% in August 2004 and 46% in August 2003. His overall average for the whole country is 65%.

All in all, this is a remarkable and sustained performance in a controversy-ridden year.

How consistent is the rating?

%	February 2005	April 2005	June 2005	August 2005	October 2005	Ave 2005	All-time low	All-time high
Total metro SA	60	66	62	61	57	61	27	66
Blacks	75	80	73	72	70	74	35 ^a	81 ^b
Whites	31	35	38	47	32	37	9 ^c	47 ^d
Coloureds	40	41	43	38	40	40	17 ^e	55 ^f
Indians/Asians	40	62	52	40	39	47	11 ^g	62 ^h

^a Feb 2002 ^b July/Aug 2004
^c Feb 2002/Oct 2002 ^d July 2004

^e Feb 2001 ^f Aug 2005
^g April 2001 ^h April 2005

The scores for metro blacks and whites are fairly consistent throughout 2005, although both groups at some point either gave a new all-time high or equaled a previous high; the coloured sample was very consistent but well down on the 55% all-time high achieved in July 2004. The Indian/Asian sample showed higher volatility, and although April recorded a new high, this has since dropped considerably. A consistent 12% of people give a don't know response, this being highest amongst whites at 25% on average.

At year's end (late October), in the black metro sample, younger people were more negative (65% approval compared with the overall average for blacks of 70%). The President's approval rating was fairly consistent across all language groups:

- Zulu speakers - 67% (Zulu speakers in KwaZulu-Natal - 58%)
- Sotho speakers - 71%
- Tswana speakers - 69%
- Xhosa speakers - 74%

Analysis by city amongst blacks reveals that KwaZulu-Natal shows the poorest ratings, but when one looks at all population groups, Cape Town records the lowest results:

- Johannesburg and environs: blacks - 74%, total - 65%
- Pretoria: blacks - 64%, total - 55%
- Durban: blacks - 59%, total - 51%
- Cape Town: blacks - 69%, total - 41%
- Port Elizabeth/East London: blacks - 79%, total 63%
- Bloemfontein: blacks - 60%, total - 63%

If one adds non-metro areas, his approval ratings are -

- Northern Cape, Eastern Cape and Free State - 79%
- North West - 75%
- Limpopo - 74%
- Gauteng - 66%
- Western Cape - 54%
- Mpumalanga - 51%
- KwaZulu-Natal - 49%

Comparing these results with those for President Mandela in 1998

%	Mbeki Ave 2005	All- time low	All- time high		Mandela 1998
Total metro SA	61	27	66		55
Blacks	74	35	81		72
Whites	37	9	47		28
Coloureds	40	17	55		29
Indians/Asians	47	11	62		21

1998 represents the last full calendar year of President Nelson period in office. President Mbeki's results for 2005 show an almost identical rating amongst blacks, and a better rating amongst all other race groups. This comparison must be made with caution, however, as SA has had the benefit of a longer period of stability that had President Mandela in 1998.

Summary

The President's ratings have remained high throughout the controversy-ridden year of 2005 with only a relatively modest drop towards the end of the year.

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