**Hofstede's cultural dimensions**

**Power Distance**

This dimension deals with the fact that all individuals in societies are not equal – it expresses the attitude of the culture towards these inequalities amongst us. Power Distance is defined as ***the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.*** It has to do with the fact that a society’s inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders.

Australia scores low on this dimension (36). Within Australian organizations, hierarchy is established for convenience, superiors are always accessible and managers rely on individual employees and teams for their expertise. Both managers and employees expect to be consulted and information is shared frequently. At the same time, communication is informal, direct and participative.

**Individualism**

The fundamental issue addressed by this dimension is ***the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members.*** It has to do with whether people´s self-image is defined in terms of “I” or “We”. In Individualist societies people are supposed to look after themselves and their direct family only. In Collectivist societies people belong to ‘in groups’ that take care of them in exchange for loyalty.

Australia, with a score of 90 on this dimension, is a highly Individualist culture. This translates into a loosely-knit society in which the expectation is that people look after themselves and their immediate families. In the business world, employees are expected to be self-reliant and display initiative. Also, within the exchange-based world of work, hiring and promotion decisions are based on merit or evidence of what one has done or can do.

**Indulgence**

One challenge that confronts humanity, now and in the past, is the degree to which small children are socialized. Without socialization we do not become “human”. This dimension is defined as ***the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses***, based on the way they were raised. Relatively weak control is called “Indulgence” and relatively strong control is called “Restraint”. Cultures can, therefore, be described as Indulgent or Restrained.

With a high score of 71, Australia is an Indulgent country. People in societies classified by a high score in Indulgence generally exhibit a willingness to realise their impulses and desires with regard to enjoying life and having fun. They possess a positive attitude and have a tendency towards optimism. In addition, they place a higher degree of importance on leisure time, act as they please and spend money as they wish.

**Masculinity**

A high score (Masculine) on this dimension indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success, with success being defined by the “winner” or “best-in-the-field.” This value system starts in school and continues throughout one’s life – both in work and leisure pursuits.

A low score (Feminine) on the dimension means that the dominant values in society are caring for others and quality of life. A Feminine society is one where quality of life is the sign of success and standing out from the crowd is not admirable. ***The fundamental issue here is what motivates people, wanting to be the best (Masculine) or liking what you do (Feminine).***

Australia scores 61 on this dimension and is considered a “Masculine” society. Behaviour in school, work, and play are based on the shared values that people should “strive to be the best they can be” and that “the winner takes all”. Australians are proud of their successes and achievements in life, and it offers a basis for hiring and promotion decisions in the workplace. Conflicts are resolved at the individual level and the goal is to win.

**Uncertainty Avoidance**

The dimension Uncertainty Avoidance has to do with the way that a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or just let it happen? This ambiguity brings with it anxiety and different cultures have learnt to deal with this anxiety in different ways. ***The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these*** is reflected in the score on Uncertainty Avoidance.

Australia scores a very intermediate 51 on this dimension.

**Long Term Orientation**

This dimension describes ***how every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future***, and societies prioritise these two existential goals differently. Normative societies. which score low on this dimension, for example, prefer to maintain time-honoured traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion. Those with a culture which scores high, on the other hand, take a more pragmatic approach: they encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future.

Australia scores 21 on this dimension and therefore has a normative culture. People in such societies have a strong concern with establishing the absolute Truth; they are normative in their thinking. They exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results.