



TRUST IN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

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STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE”

FROM TURNBULL
TO MORRISON
The Trust Divide



Edited by Mark Evans, Michelle Grattan
and Brendan McCaffrie

Democracy. Are you in?



If current trends continue by **2025** fewer than 1 in 10 Australians will trust their politicians and key political institutions.

Democracy 2025 is driving a national conversation on how we can strengthen democratic practice, celebrate our democratic achievements and be the best democracy that we can be.

Democracy 2025 audits the qualities of Australian democracy, investigates and experiments with what works in terms of renewing our representative system of government and facilitates non-partisan conversations on how to improve our democratic practice.



Session structure

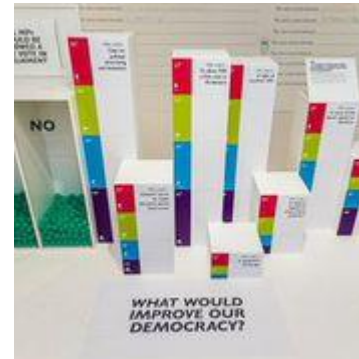
1. Operationalising the concept of political trust
2. What do Australians think about democracy?
3. What do Australians think about their political institutions?
4. What do Australians think about the policies and services they receive?
5. What reforms would Australians like to see?
6. In conclusion: bringing citizenship back in



Workshop context – governing in times of mistrust

The findings presented here are drawn from:

- a quantitative survey of 1021 Australians in July 2018;
- 36 focus groups conducted in 2019 in every state and territory;
- APS deliberative jury on bridging the trust divide conducted in February 2019; and,
- a survey of 2019 participants in the IPAA Future Leaders Program.



TRUST AND DEMOCRACY IN AUSTRALIA

Democratic decline and renewal

Gerry Stoker, Mark Evans and Max Halupka
December 2018

Report No. 1



DEMOCRATIC SATISFACTION IN AUSTRALIA 1996 TO 2018

BRIDGING THE TRUST DIVIDE

Lessons from international experience

Gerry Stoker, Mark Evans and Max Halupka

Report No. 2



DEMOCRATIC SATISFACTION IN AUSTRALIA 1996 TO 2018

AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE LIBERATIVE JURY REPORT BRIDGING THE TRUST DIVIDE – DEFINING THE CHALLENGE, MAKING THE CHANGE

MARK EVANS | NICOLE HUNTER
NICOLE MOORE | KIMBRA WHITE

Report No. 4



HOW AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLITICIANS WOULD LIKE TO REFORM THEIR DEMOCRACY

MARK EVANS | GERRY STOKER | MAX HALUPKA

Report No. 5



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www.democracy2025.gov.au



1. Operationalising the concept of political trust

Political trust is a relational concept about:

- “...holding a positive perception about the actions of an individual or an organisation” (OECD 2017: 16) that requires “keeping promises and agreements” (Hethrington 2005: 1).
- In addition, we consider trust as a psychological contract between the individual and the organisation as “expectations and obligations” (Cullinane and Dundo., 2006; Rousseau 2001);
- and simultaneously as an informal social contract between government and citizens involving rights and obligations.

There are three different components of trust that operate in a liberal democracy:

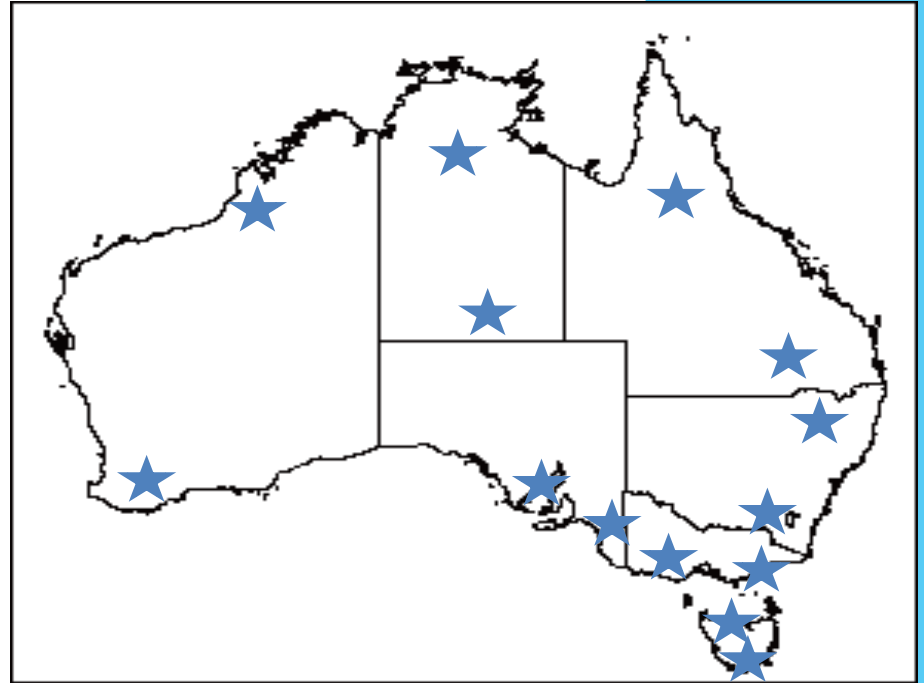
- **Trust** occurs when A trusts that B *will* act on their behalf and in their interests to do X in particular and more generally.
- **Mistrust** occurs when A assumes that B *may not* act on their behalf and in their interests to do X but will judge B according to information and context. This definition is associated with the notion of a critical citizen and active citizenship and is viewed to strengthen democracy.
- **Distrust** occurs when A assumes that B is untrustworthy and will cause harm to their interests in respect of X or more generally.

In contrast to mistrust, distrust is viewed to weaken democracy and confidence in government.

What do Australians think are the attributes of trustworthy government?

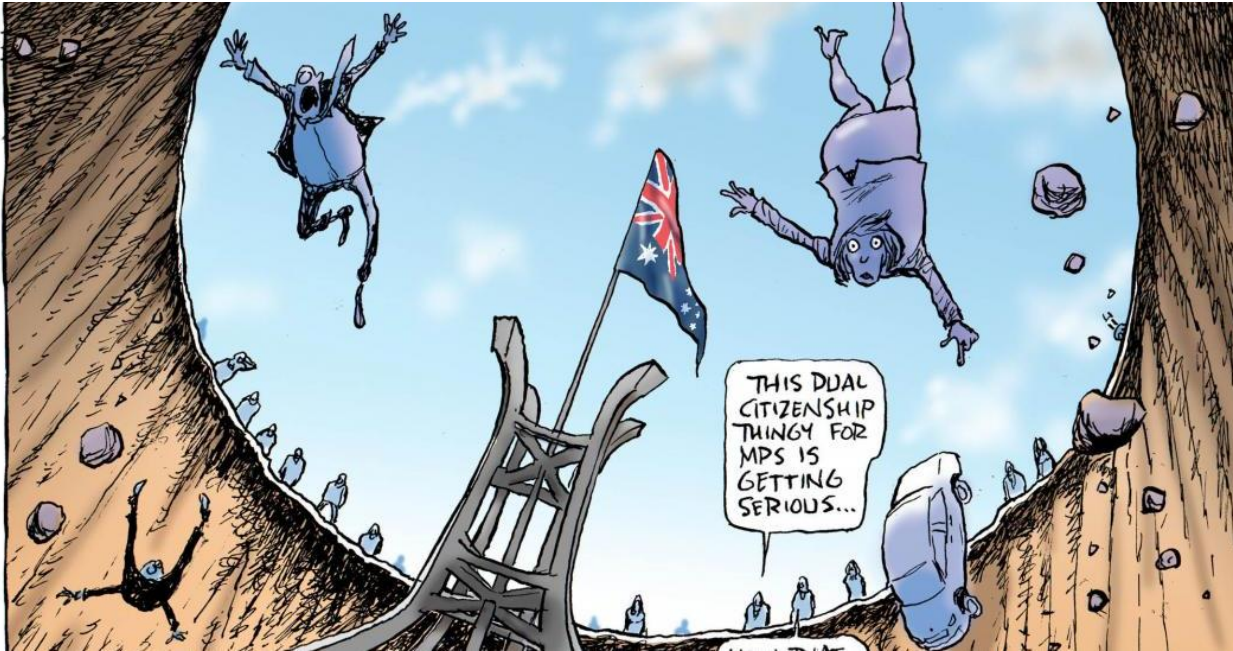
- Integrity (“honesty”, “transparency”, “consistency” or procedural fairness)
- Empathy (“care”, “respect”, “understanding”)
- Delivery (“do what you say”)
- Loyalty (“have your back”, expectation for institutional paternalism)

(14 field sites, 36 focus groups)



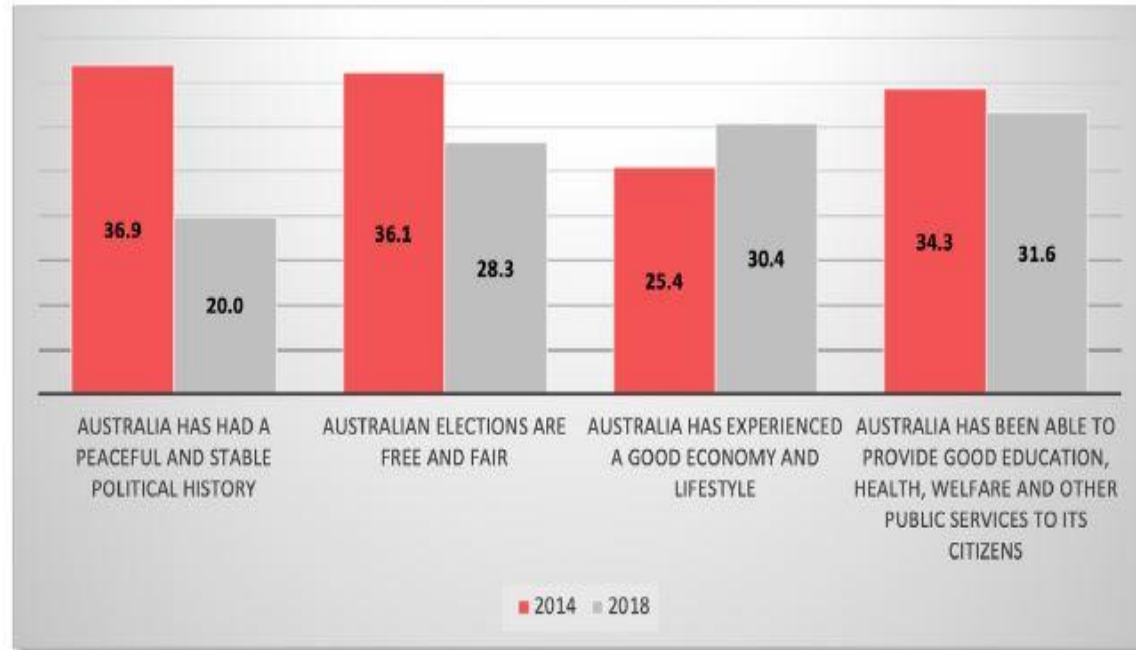
Why is trust important for service delivery?

- Trust is the glue between government and citizen that enables collective action for mutual benefit; without trust...(micro-performance hypothesis)
- “The business of government is slower and more expensive” (Fukiyama 1995;OECD 2017, p.127).
- Governments don’t take risks; they bunker down and focus on short-term imperative: “people need to trust the government to support more government” (Hetherington and Husser, 2012: 312).
- We often see reduced civic engagement (Franklin, 2004) which impacts on social cohesion.
- There are often compliance problems with laws and regulation (Van Ryzin 2011), and legitimacy issues in territorial political management (Butler, 2004).
- And, arguably, trust in Commonwealth government services is even more important in a federated state where collaborative problem solving is fundamental to maintaining nation building efforts (Deem and Tiernan, 2019).



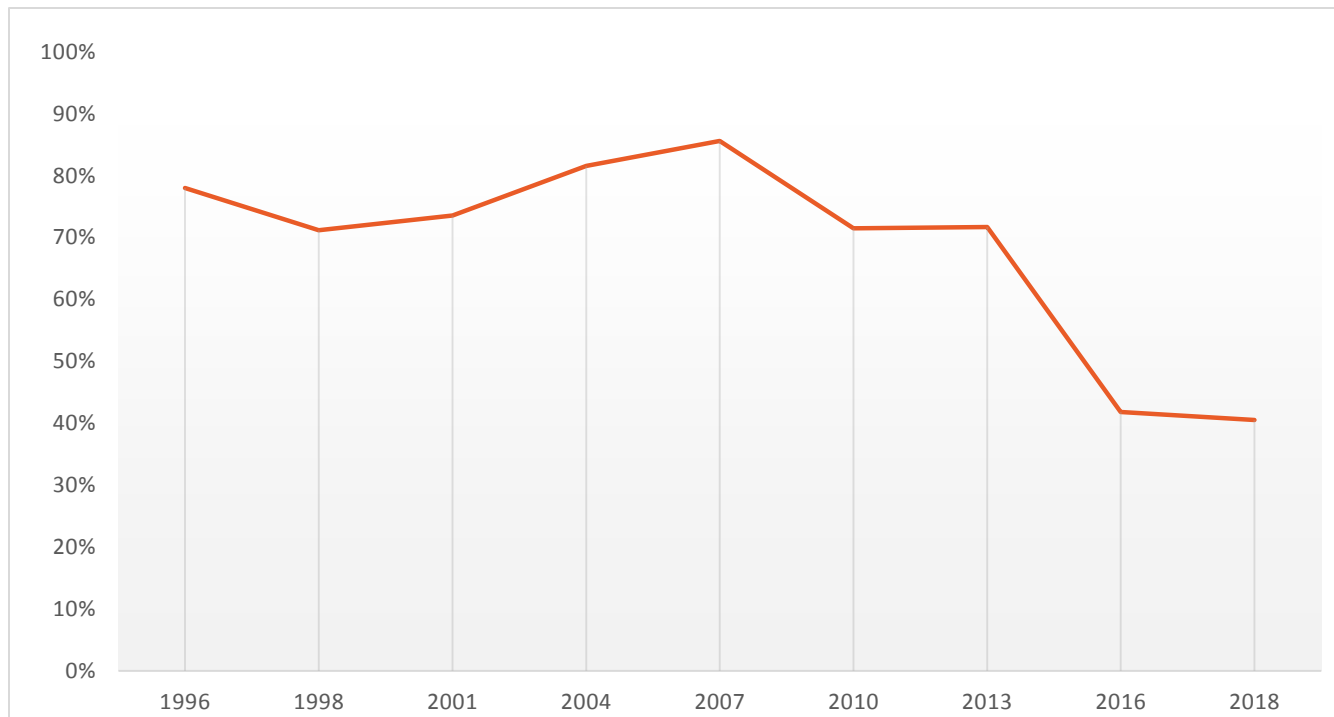
2. What do Australians think about democracy?

Australians are happy with underlying democratic values and infrastructure



Q: What do you like about the way democracy works in Australia today? Please select up to three responses that you believe are most important

But deeply unhappy with democratic politics (a decade of decline)



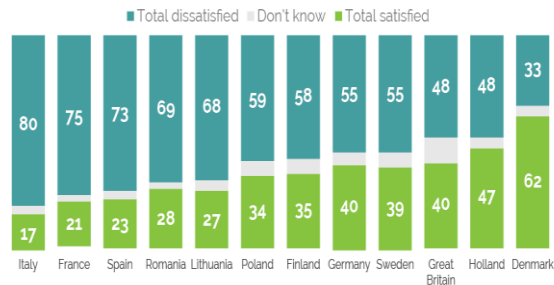
Source:
AES 1996 –
2013; D25
2016
onwards

Yes a global phenomenon but Australia has had 28 years of economic growth!

Now amongst the least trusted mature democracies in the world
(Edelman Trust Barometer, 2019)

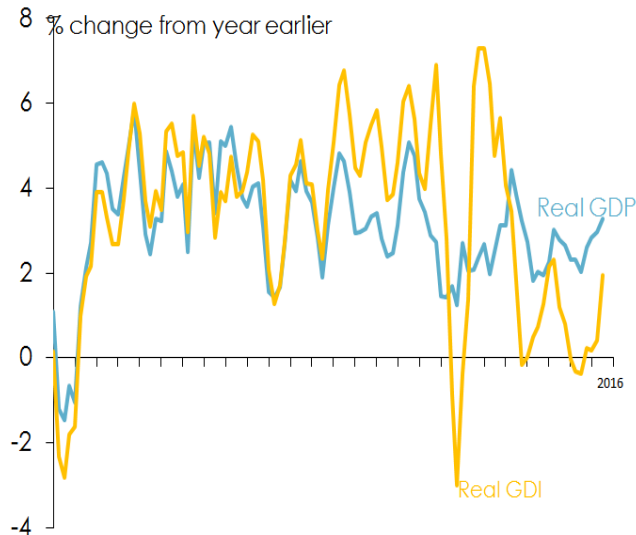
Satisfaction with democracy is low across Europe

On the whole, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way that democracy works in your country? %



YouGov | yougov.com

August 31 - 9 September, 2016



Australia compared with other established democracies (World Values Survey, Wave 7 2017-20)

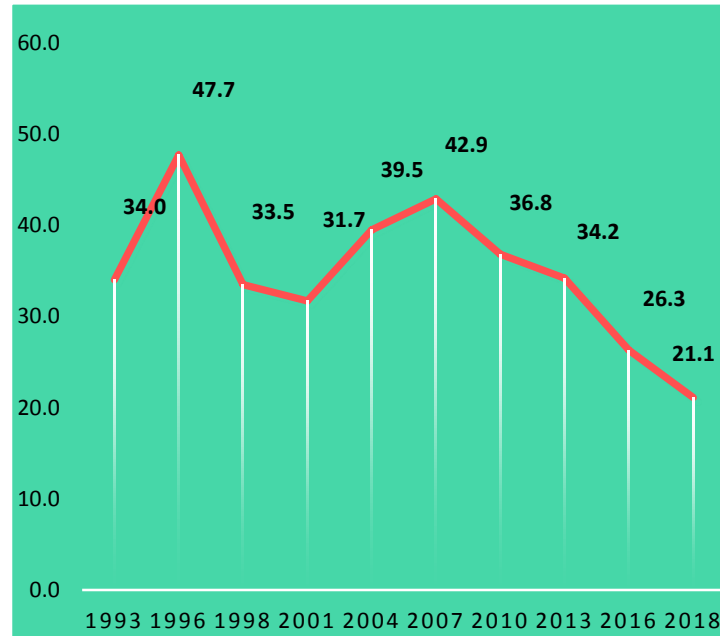
	Political Trust %	Social Trust %
Spain	22	41
Italy	24	27
Australia	30	49
France	32	27
United States	34	37
Germany	37	47
Austria	39	50
Denmark	40	77
Finland	45	71
Netherlands	46	58
Switzerland	67	59
Sweden	67	64



3. What do Australians think about their political institutions?

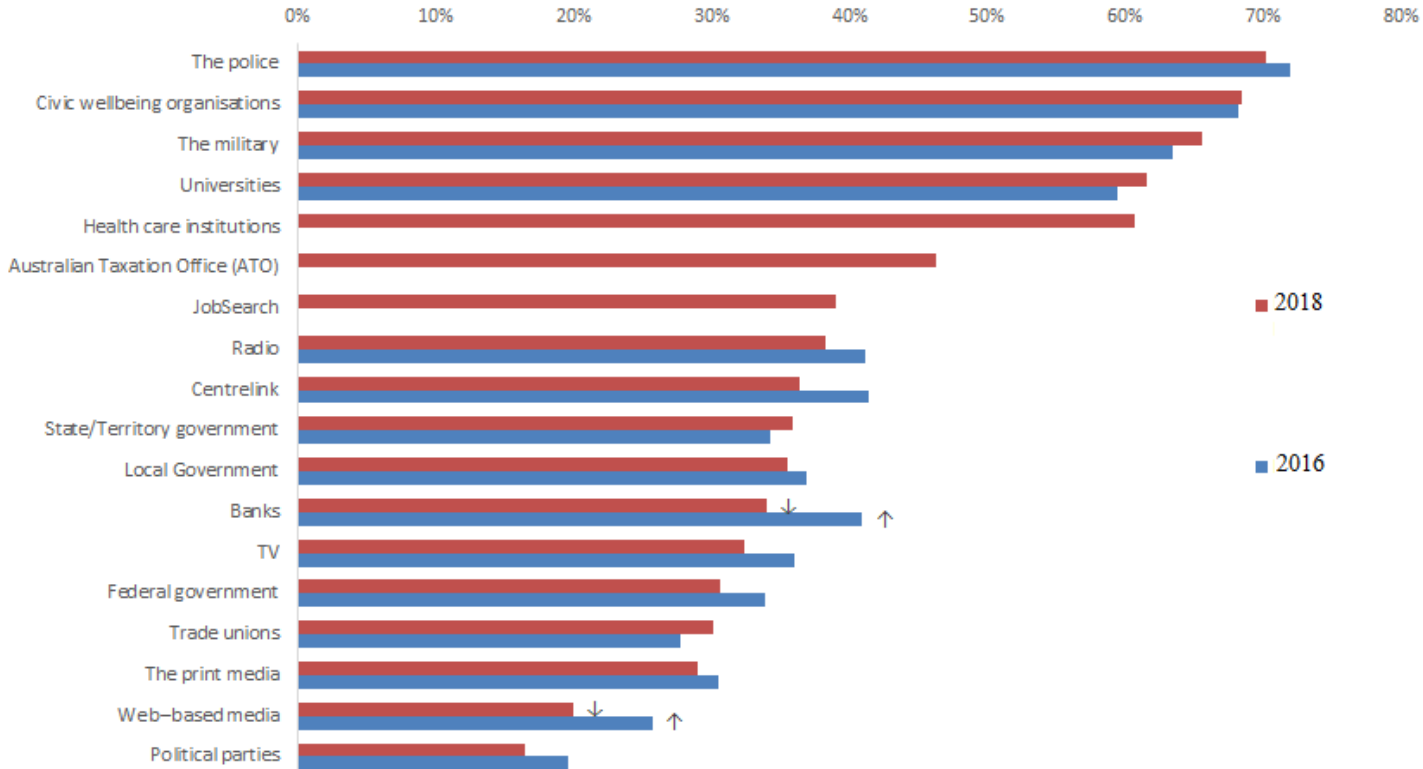
Trust in government and politicians is at an all-time low (according to AES time series)

- Lowest levels of trust in government and politicians in Australia since the introduction of times series data
- Just 31% trust Federal government
- Ministers and MPs (whether federal or state) rate at just 21%
- More than 60% believe that the honesty and integrity of politicians is very low






Source:
AES 1996 –
2013; D25
2016
onwards

Who do we trust? The police, the military, civic & health care organisations and universities



Australia is an increasingly divided country

Most trusting	Less trusting	Least trusting
<p>Baby Boomers (+55) Earning + \$200k a year; National or Liberal Party supporters; New Australians.</p> <p>Gen Z is the most politically trusting cohort, with highest levels of trust in political institutions</p> 	<p>Gen X (31%) Women less satisfied with democracy (3 times less likely to be “very satisfied”) & most distrusting of politicians and political institutions</p> 	<p>Disconnected voters completely switched-off from traditional politics (10%)</p> <p>Critics of the Two Party System The largest group - up for a new politics (30%)</p> <p>Tactical voters looking to bring resources to the community</p> 

KEY

Builders: late 1920s
Boomers: 1946
Gen X: 1965
Gen Y: early 1980s
Gen Z (early 1990s)

The relationship between declining political and social trust is also becoming more significant

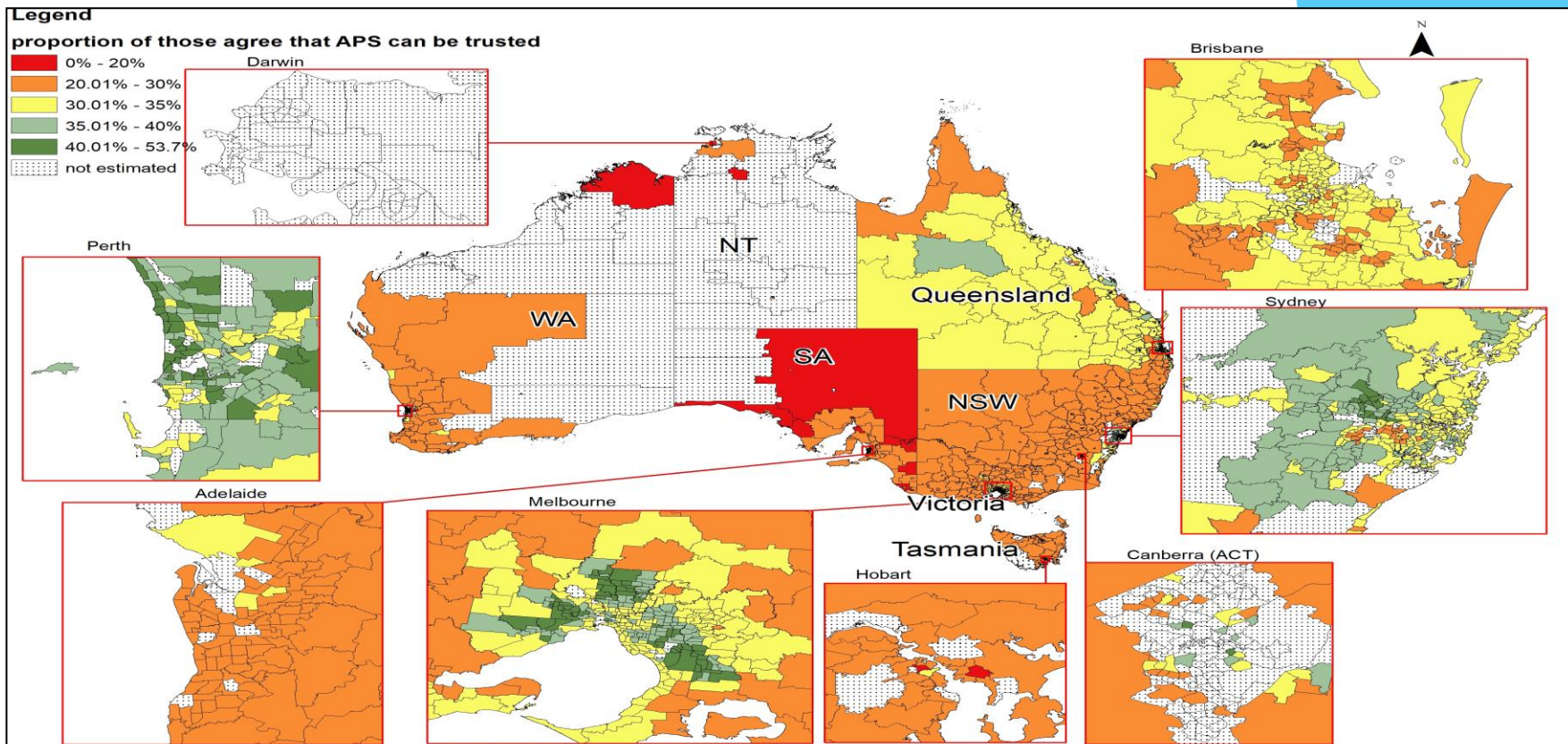
- Social trust between people has fallen below 50% for the first time to 47% (HILDA, 2019).
- Although a majority still believe that people in their neighbourhood would help others out – except for the very rich (47%).
- Political trust declines by social income.
- The gap between the poor and the poorest of the poor is increasing.



4. What do Australians think about the policies and services they receive?

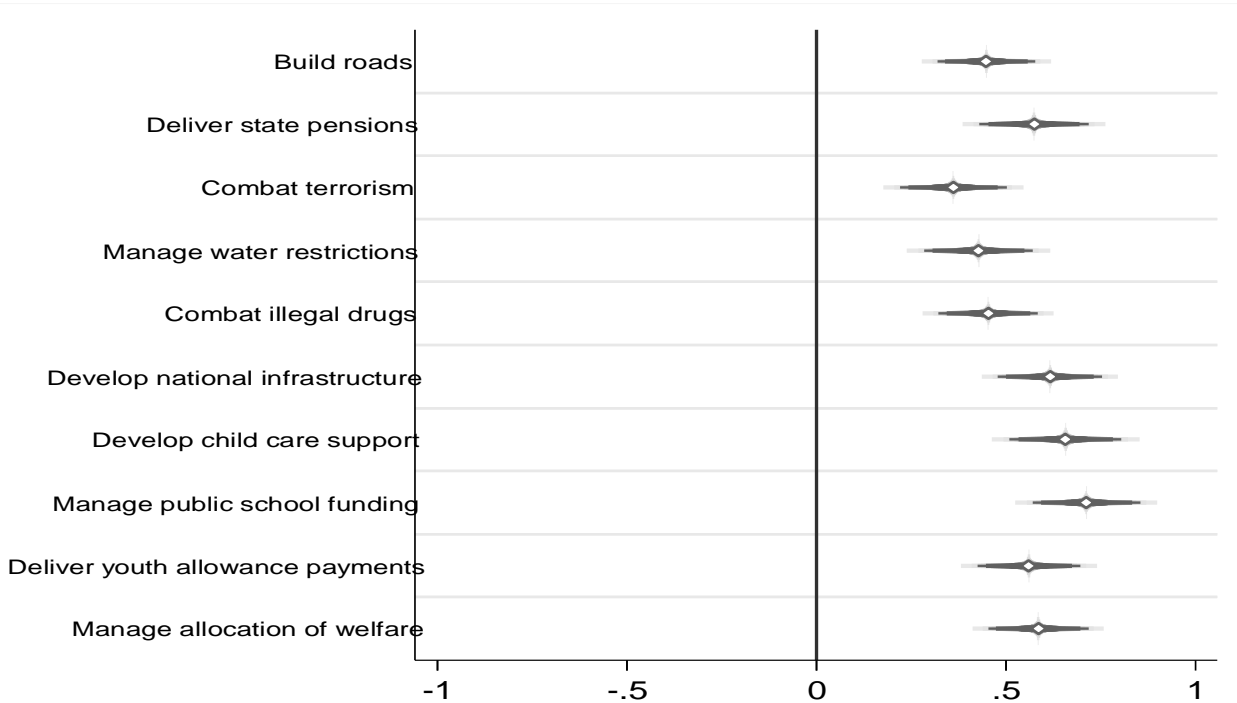


Political distrust impacts adversely on trust in Commonwealth government services (average: 29%, 2019)



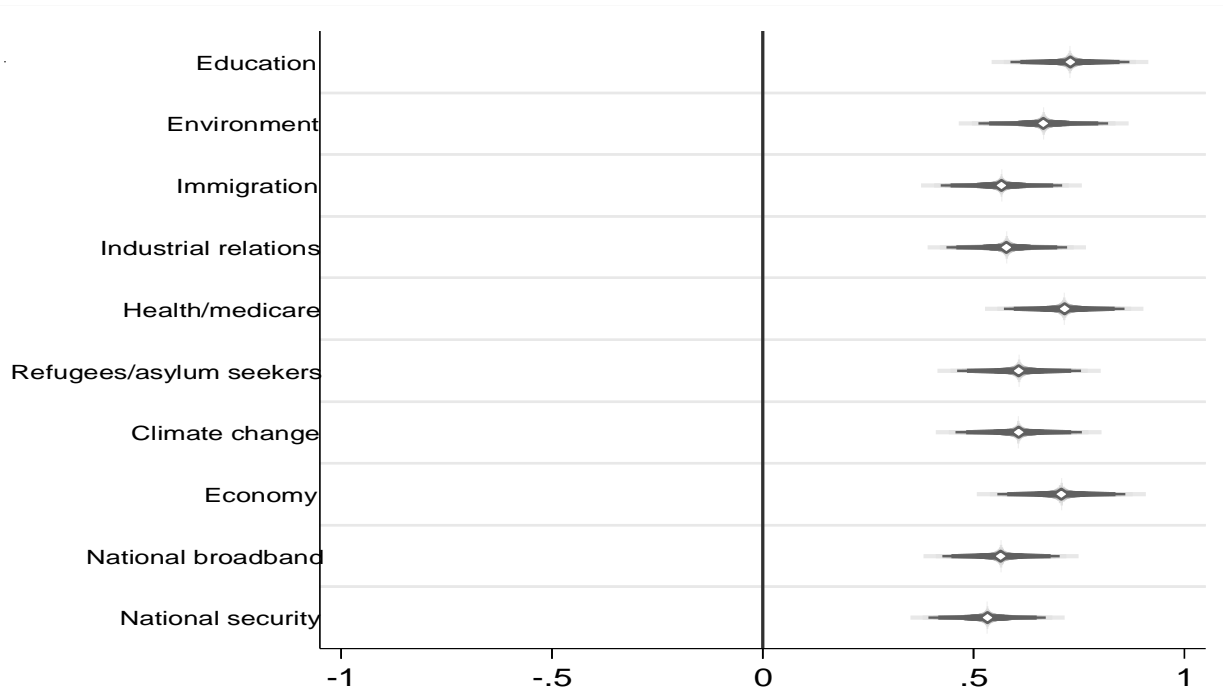
There is limited public confidence in the ability of Commonwealth government to perform core tasks

Effect of trust on confidence in federal government to perform core tasks



Never mind address public policy fundamentals

Effect of trust on confidence in federal government to address big public policy issues



Insights from Citizens – barriers to service delivery



COMMUNICATION MATTERS

Citizens awareness, access and use of services is hampered by poor information and communication.



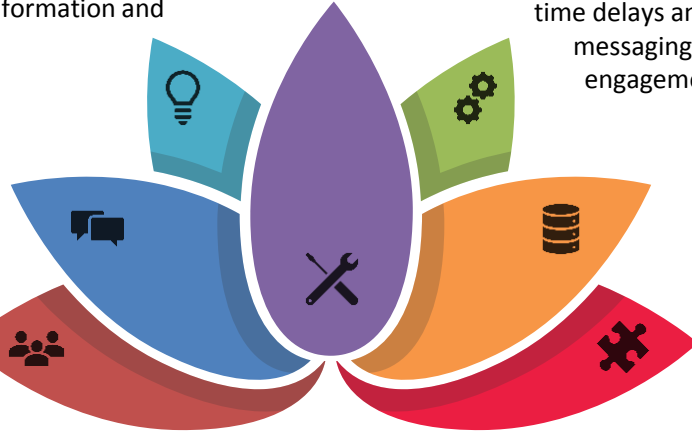
EXPERIENCE MATTERS

Trust is based on the experiences of both the individual and their kinship network (connections, social media)



CONTEXT MATTERS

Political and community context both influence trust outcomes. Politics and trust are inextricably linked, with community conditions mediating or embedding trust perceptions.



ONE GOVERNMENT



Delivery experience and trust are undermined by siloed service delivery, low process transparency, time delays and lack of coherent messaging and consistent engagement outcomes.

COMPLEXITY



Complexity of service needs increases likelihood of negative experience compared to simpler transactional services.

SERVICE CULTURE



Citizens trust is reduced by experience of poor service culture. Lack of empathy, timeliness, pressure to use phone/online delivery approaches, inconsistent information, poor accountability etc.

Insights from Citizens – enablers to service delivery



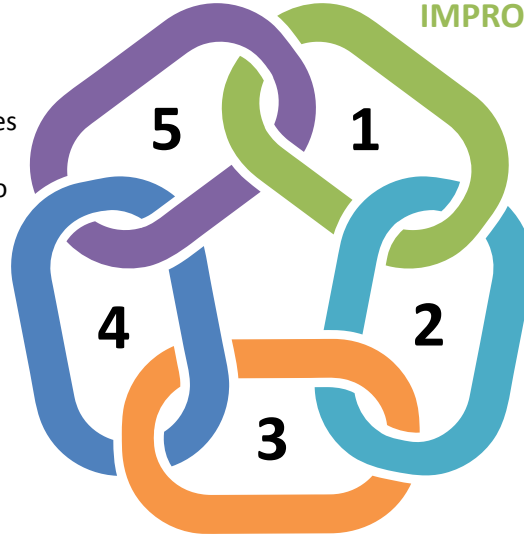
CUT THE COMPLEXITY

Complexity of service delivery, through forms, eligibility criteria, silo's reduces trust. Making services easier to access is important (e.g. 'Service NSW' approach, or back to individual offices to reduce wait times, increase staff knowledge etc).



GOVERNANCE

Increase transparency of service progress, outcomes, including lines of accountability.



IMPROVE INFORMATION FLOWS

Improved clarity of, and access to, information which will increase awareness of services. Use variety of channels to target range of audiences.

DELIVER FOR CITIZENS



Deliver services to suit citizens not government. Make them accessible by reducing wait times, open outside normal business hours, use variety of delivery platforms which are designed to suit the context (e.g. considers internet access in rural Australia).

CULTURE OF SERVICE



Address issues of poor service through reforms that recognise and respect citizens. Improved training and front of line resourcing essential.





5. What reforms would Australians like to see?

HOWEVER, public appetite for renewal is very strong

- 9 out of 15 proposed reforms received net agreement rates of +50%
- Reforms aimed at improving the practice of representative politics were the most popular, followed by reforms aimed at giving citizens a greater say.
- There were also strong levels of support for reforms aimed at creating a stronger community or local focus to decision-making.

The Top 5 reforms

- limiting money donated to parties and spent in elections
- the right for voters to recall ineffective local MPs
- giving all MPs a free vote in parliament
- co-designing policies with ordinary Australians
- citizen juries to solve complex problems that parliament can't fix

Common ground between citizens and APS leaders

Service culture

Both emphasize the importance of a 'User-first' design approach and personalisation particularly for complex problems. Citizens stress the need for greater client care and support.

Service innovation

The opportunity for innovation lies in digital access and support; the creation of integrated regional service hubs; the recruitment of "trusted" and "local" community service coordinators; & viewing complaints as learning opportunities.

Service quality

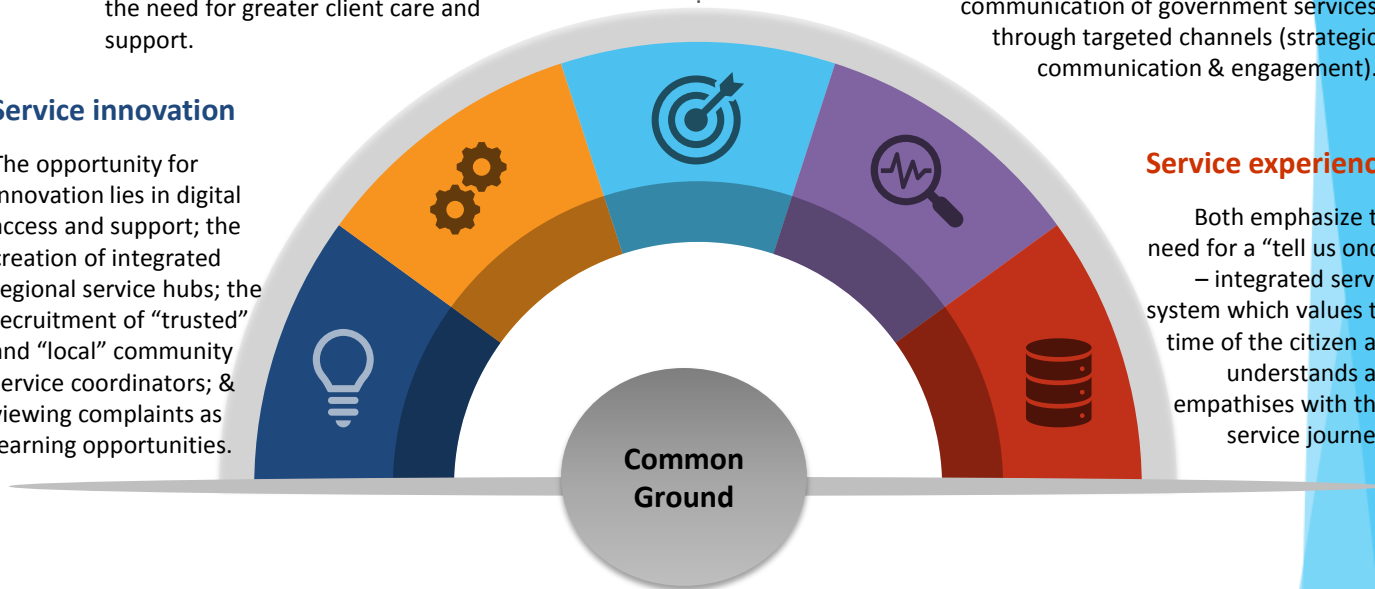
Identification by both parties of the need to establish a single source of truth across government information, and reduce the complexity of the service offer.

Service capacity and capability

Recognition from both parties of the need for service culture capability, greater advocacy support for the vulnerable and intelligent marketing and communication of government services through targeted channels (strategic communication & engagement).

Service experience

Both emphasize the need for a "tell us once" – integrated service system which values the time of the citizen and understands and empathises with their service journeys.



What specific interventions can the APS introduce to help bridge the trust divide? (top 5)

IPAA Future Leaders (N=118)

1. Citizen-centric design/digital design
2. Independent advice (frank and fearless)
3. Good, simple & accessible public services
4. Transparency in decision-making and reporting of outcomes
Authentic community/public engagement/communication =
5. Better leadership (integrity, consistency, communication) =

APS JURY

1. Genuine partnering with citizens through open and proactive co-design at all stages of decision making
2. Ensuring continuous high quality, simple and reliable services
3. Being open about decisions and the justifications/evidence that supports them
4. Ensuring independent institutions can hold Government to account
5. Integrity reform



In conclusion: bringing citizenship back in

The evidence from our research points to the need to bring the language and policy instruments of citizenship back in to drive a public sector reform agenda that:

- builds whole of government collaboration,
- enhances the quality of service-delivery, and
- drives tailored responses that reflect the plurality of individual and community identities in Australia.

The degree of common ground between citizens and APS leaders on both the barriers and enablers to a higher quality service experience is remarkable and potentially helps us to clarify pathways to reform. But...

**“Keep it simple, say what you do
and do what you say”**

