

Trust 10 Australia 2022

01 Australia's trust bubble bursts; no institution trusted

All institutions experienced sharp declines in trust, eroding the record-high levels of public trust recorded in 2021. At 58%, business and NGOs are the most trusted institutions, 52% of Australians say they trust government and 43% trust media.

02 Government and media seen as divisive social forces

When asked whether each institution serves to divide or unify society, more than half of Australians see media (55%) and government (52%) as divisive. Conversely, more Australians see business and NGOs as more unifying than those who consider these institutions playing a dividing role.

03 All news sources are distrusted

Traditional media is only trusted by 48% of Australians, search engines by 47%, owned media by 33% and social media by only 24%. Amid this skepticism, Australians' concerns about disinformation and fake news remain high with 73% worried about fake news being used as a weapon.

04 Australians are convinced they're being lied to

Over six in ten Australians believe that journalists and reporters (65%), government leaders (61%) and business leaders (61%) are actively trying to mislead them by saying things they know are false or grossly exaggerated.

05 Distrust is society's default

More than half of Australians (55%) say their default tendency is to distrust something until they see evidence it is trustworthy. Another 61% say people are incapable of having constructive and civil debates about issues they disagree on.

06 All stakeholders hold business accountable

All stakeholders now hold business accountable for taking a stand on issues that align with their values and beliefs; 56% of Australian consumers will buy or advocate for brands based on their belief and values; 57% Australian employees will choose a place to work, and 64% of investors will invest based on their beliefs and values.

07 Societal leadership becomes operational imperative

When considering a job, 60% of employees want their CEO to speak out on controversial issues they care about, and 80% of Australians believe CEOs should be visible when discussing policy with external stakeholders or work their company has done to benefit society. CEOs are also expected to shape conversation and policy debates on jobs/economy (72%), and climate change (61%).

08 Business is the only institution seen as competent and ethical

Business is now the only institution perceived as both competent and ethical – a stark shift from last year's results. Not only is business seen as competent and ethical, it is also seen as an effective driver of positive change.

09 Australians want more, not less, engagement on social issues

Australians want business to be doing more, not less, when engaging on all societal issues. 44% say business should be doing more when it comes to climate change, compared to 10% who think business is overstepping when it comes to the environment. Similarly, 42% want business to do more on workforce reskilling and 40% of Australians think business needs to take greater action on economic inequality.

10 Employers remain the most trusted and believable sources

Employers are once again the most trusted, with 74% of Australian employees trusting their employer over business, NGOs, government and media generally. Employers, as a source of believable information, eclipse that of government (63%) and media reports with named sources (58%), with 70% believing information from their employer after seeing it automatically or once or twice.