

2025 Edelman Trust Barometer

Australia Report: Trust and the Crisis of Grievance

Top 10 Findings

01 Majority hold grievances against government, business, and the rich.

Sixty-two percent of Australian respondents have a moderate or high sense of grievance. This is defined by a belief that government and business make their lives harder and serve narrow interests, and wealthy people benefit unfairly from the system while regular people struggle.

02 Widespread grievance erodes trust.

Those with a high sense of grievance distrust all four institutions (business, government, media, and NGOs) and CEOs. With greater trust in our institutions, we see grievance dissolve and economic optimism flourish.

03 The Aussie Value of 'a fair go' is on the line.

72% of Australians believe the wealthy don't pay their fair share of taxes, leading to the belief the system is forever in wealthy's favour. 60% of Australians believe the selfishness of the rich causes many of our problems.

04 Fear of discrimination surges.

1 in 2 Australian respondents worry about experiencing prejudice, discrimination, or racism – up 8 points in the last year and with significant increases across women, ages 18-34 and 55+. The most worried; 59% of young adults 18-34.

05 Majority lack optimism for the next generation.

Less than 1 in 5 Australians believe that things will be better for the next generation. This pessimism for the future sits in front of only five countries in our study, France, Germany, Japan, The Netherlands and Italy whilst on par with the UK.

06 Fear that our leaders lie to us is at an all-time high.

64% of Australians worry that our government leaders purposely mislead us by saying things they know are false or gross exaggerations. For business leaders this sits at 66%, and for journalists, 68%.

07 Nearly 1 in 3 Australians approve of hostile activism.

To bring about change, 31% approve of one or more of the following actions: attacking people online, intentionally spreading disinformation, threatening or committing violence, damaging public or private property. This rises to 1 in 2 Australians aged 18-34 who approve of hostile activism.

08 Australians who feel a high level of grievance expect more from business, not less.

Among those with a high sense of grievance in Australia, business is seen as 95 points less ethical and 30 points less competent than among those with a low sense of grievance. Those with a high sense of grievance are more likely to say business is not doing enough to address issues like affordability, climate change, job retraining, misinformation, and discrimination.

09 Australia's social contract at risk, what helps 'the other side' doesn't help me.

A zero-sum mindset is increasingly permeating Australian society. Those Australians with high grievance are twice as likely to feel that "what helps people who don't share my politics will come at a cost to me", compared with those with low grievance.

10 Australia's media credibility at risk, with Australians believing ideology trumps facts.

69% of Australians believe that it is becoming harder to tell if news is from respected media or individuals trying to deceive people. Australians are questioning the credibility of the media sector. Further, the majority of Australians believe the media puts attracting a bigger audience and ideology ahead of informing the public with what they need to know.

To learn more about the Edelman Trust Barometer, visit <https://www.edelman.com.au/trust/2025/trust-barometer> #TrustBarometer
All data is based on general population sample unless otherwise noted.

