

# DEMOCRACY 2025:

## *Strengthening democratic practice program update*

PROF MARK EVANS  
Director  
*Democracy 2025* –  
Strengthening  
democratic practice



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# 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.



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*Democracy*  
**2025**

# CORE PROGRAMS

## *Strengthening democratic practice*

1. PUBLIC TRUST PROGRAM
2. DEMOCRACY LAB
3. IGNITE LEARNING
4. ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM
5. AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY IN THE ASIAN CENTURY
6. TRUST BUILDING LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS



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# 1. Public trust program – *the power of data*

## 5 key sub projects

**How Australia Compares** funded by the ESRC  
World Values Survey  
(**Stoker**, Norris and Jennings)

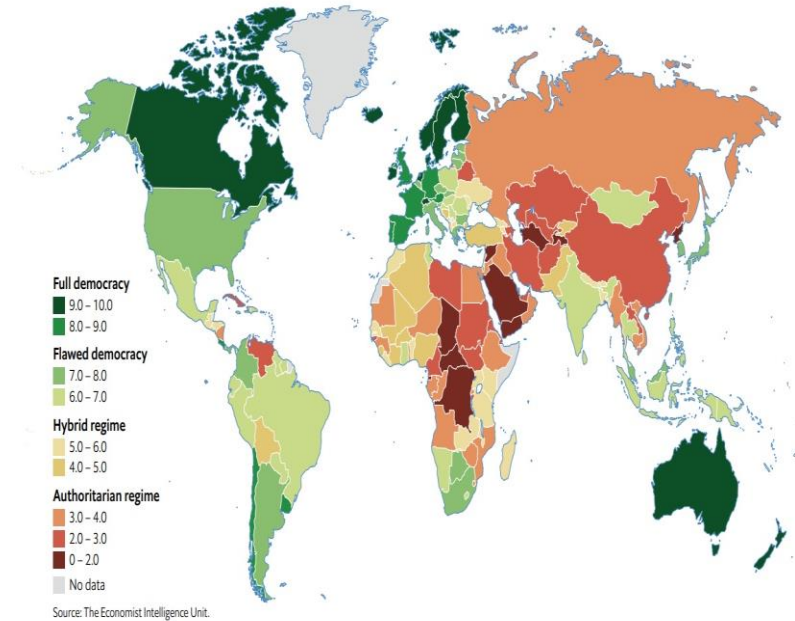
**Citizen Trust Survey**  
funded by Department of Prime Minister &  
Cabinet  
Qualitative Survey  
(**Evans**)

**Parliamentarian Trust Survey**  
sponsored by JSEM  
(**Evans**, Halupka, **Stoker**)

**Democratic Audit of Australia** partnership with  
the Democratic Audit of the United Kingdom  
and the London School of Economics  
(**Evans**, Dunleavy)

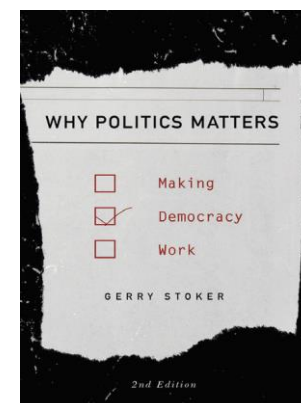
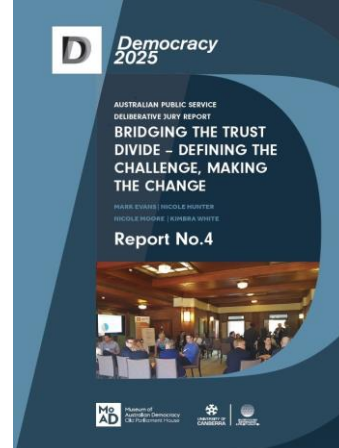
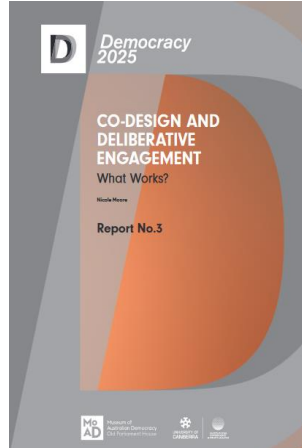
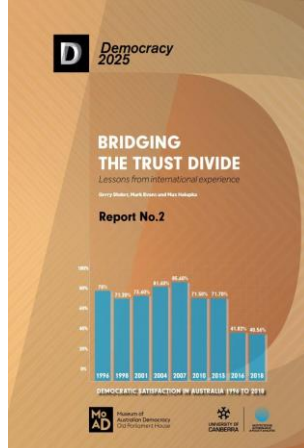
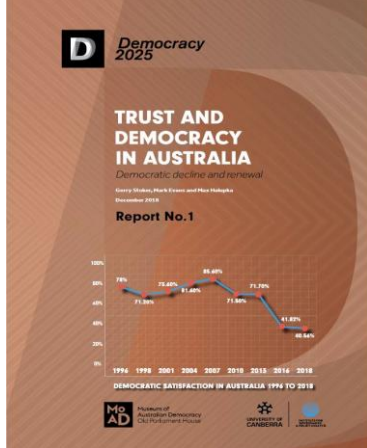
**Community Trust Survey** (**Evans**, Grattan,  
**Halupka**) – focus group research in marginals

Chart 1: Democracy Index 2019, global map by regime type



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DEMOCRACY 2025 REPORTS, ARTICLES,  
PODCASTS AND BLOGS CAN BE FOUND AT:  
**WWW.DEMOCRACY2025.GOV.AU**

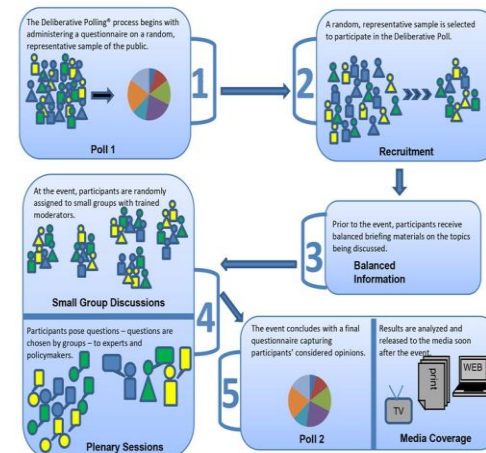
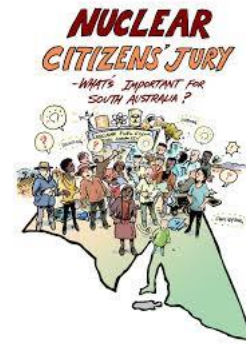


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## 2. Democracy Lab – *thinking differently, designing trust systems*

### PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE JURY ON “BRIDGING THE TRUST DIVIDE” WITH MOSAICLAB, & ANU’S PUBLIC POLICY AND SOCIETAL IMPACT HUB
- “BUILDING TRUST ON-LINE” REVIEW OF BUSINESS.GOV.AU WITH MINISTERS CASH AND ANDREWS
- “CO-DESIGN AND DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY: WHAT WORKS” (REPORT NO. 4)
- *BETTER OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK* (COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES). THIS CODESIGN PROJECT WITH THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE IS SUPPORTING SOCIAL SERVICES MINISTER ANNE RUSTON’S REFORM OF THE DEPARTMENT TO OUTCOME-DRIVEN (CITIZEN-CENTRIC) PROGRAM DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT (2020 ONGOING).



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### 3. Ignite learning – *envisaging the future of Australian democracy*

- WE HAVE BUILT A COMPREHENSIVE EVIDENCE BASE ON HOW YOUNG AUSTRALIANS IMAGINE A PARLIAMENT OF THE FUTURE WITH DATA DRAWN FROM THE 90,000 STUDENTS AND TEACHERS WHO ENGAGE WITH MOAD'S AWARD WINNING LEARNING PROGRAMS.
- THE BASE-LINE SURVEY HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND ROLL-OUT HAS BEGUN.
- WE ARE DESIGNING LESSON PLANS TO HELP TEACHERS USE THE DATA IN CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES.



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## 4. Engagement program – celebrating and drawing lessons from the past, building for the future



James Frouzakis



Listen  
After the crisis: what lessons can be drawn from the management of Covid-19 for the recovery process?

52:57



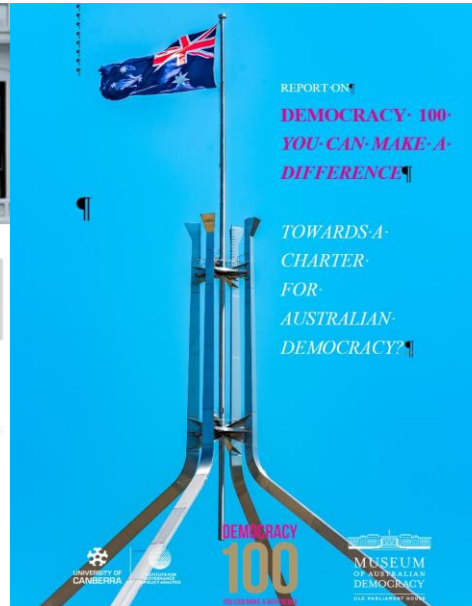
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*Democratic Fundamentals podcast on "Political Trust in Times of Covid-19"*

In this fourth episode of the Conversation-Democracy 2025 Podcast on "Political Trust in Times of Covid-19", Michelle Grattan and Mark Evans explore the lessons that can be drawn from the management of COVID-19 for the recovery process with the ABC's Norman Swan and Mark Kenny from the Australian Studies Institute at the Australian National University.

The discussion draws on the very latest findings from a comparative survey conducted by Democracy 2025 and Trustgov in May and June in Australia, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States on political trust and democracy in times of Coronavirus.



JOIN A UNIQUE  
EXPERIMENT:  
How can we save  
democracy in a  
post-COVID 19  
world?

### Overview

What will democracy look like in a post COVID-19 world?

You can have your say through a new international crowdsourced project calling for ideas on how to strengthen democratic practice and identify pathways to reform. The end product of this project will be a book commissioned by Palgrave Macmillan.

### Have your say

Every three weeks we'll post a draft chapter of the book and request comments on it via this [open Facebook group](#). If you're not on Facebook but would still like to participate, you can view each chapter [here](#) and email your comments through to [Mark.Evans@canberra.edu.au](mailto:Mark.Evans@canberra.edu.au).

### The chapters:

- Book structure
- Introduction
- Chapter 1 | Chapter 1 rejoinder
- Chapter 2 | Notes for Chapter 2
- Chapter 4, 5 and 6

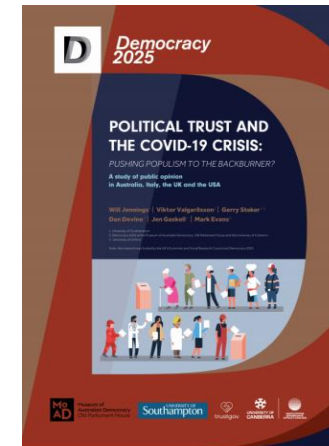


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## 5. Australian democracy in the Asian century – *championing democracy in the region*

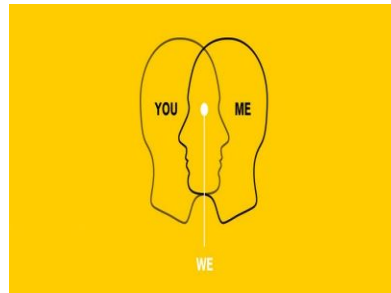
- FLEDGLING DEMOCRACIES IN SOUTH EAST ASIA CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE AND THIS IS POTENTIALLY UNDERMINING REGIONAL STABILITY AND COHESION. AUSTRALIA POSSESSES THE MOST MATURE LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN THE ASIAN REGION AND HAS A MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP ITS NEWLY DEMOCRATIC NEIGHBOURS CHART A STABLE DEMOCRATIC COURSE.
- THE CURRENT FOCUS OF THIS PROGRAM IS THE: **HOW AUSTRALIA COMPARES SURVEY – DRAWING ON DATA FROM THE WORLD VALUES SURVEY**
- IN COLLABORATION WITH THE [TRUSTGOV PROJECT](#), THIS SURVEY COMPARES AUSTRALIA'S DEMOCRATIC PERFORMANCE WITH OTHER MATURE AND REGIONAL DEMOCRACIES.



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## 6. Democracy 2025 Trust Building Leadership Programs – *integrity, empathy and delivery*

“DOING POLICY DIFFERENTLY”  
GRADUATE CERTIFICATE  
PROGRAM FOR THE CENTRAL  
AGENCIES SPONSORED BY  
MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND  
PM&C



“SOCIAL POLICY DESIGN AND  
ANALYSIS” GRADUATE  
CERTIFICATE PROGRAM FOR  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL  
SERVICES



“POLICY INNOVATION”  
GRADUATE CERTIFICATE  
PROGRAM FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE”



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# On political trust (as an informal contract)

“Keeping promises and agreements” and thereby holding positive perceptions about people in government and their actions.

Marc Hethrington (2005: 1.)

## Note:

**Distrust** is a bad thing as it leads to low public confidence, risk averse, short-termist politics and democratic backsliding

**Mistrust** is a good thing; all about critical citizens making informed choices



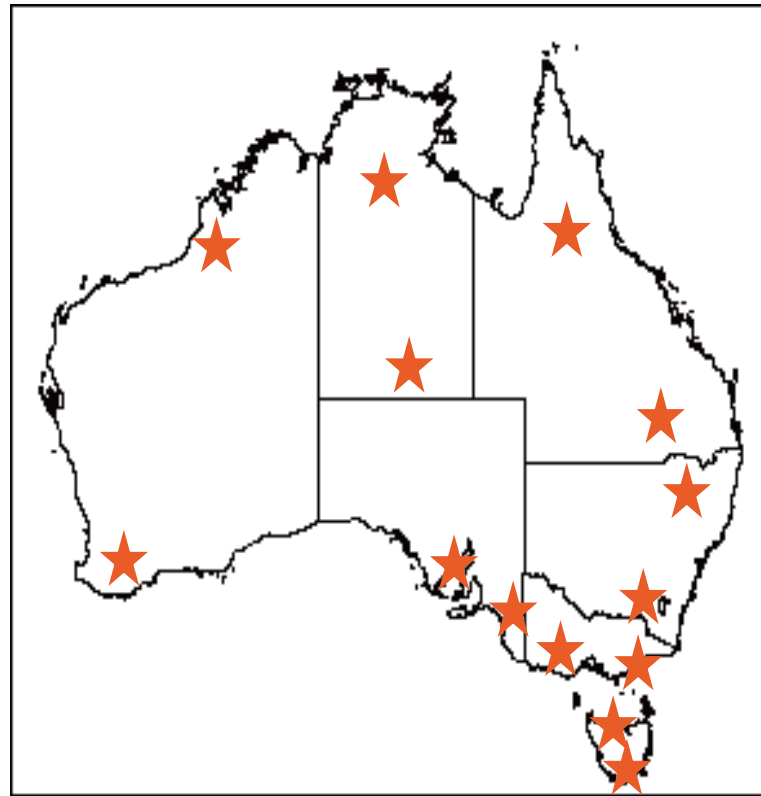
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# What does trust mean to most Australians?

(14 field sites, 36 focus groups)

- Integrity (honesty, transparency)
- Empathy (care, respect)
- Delivery ("do what you say")
- Loyalty ("have your back", expectation for institutional paternalism)

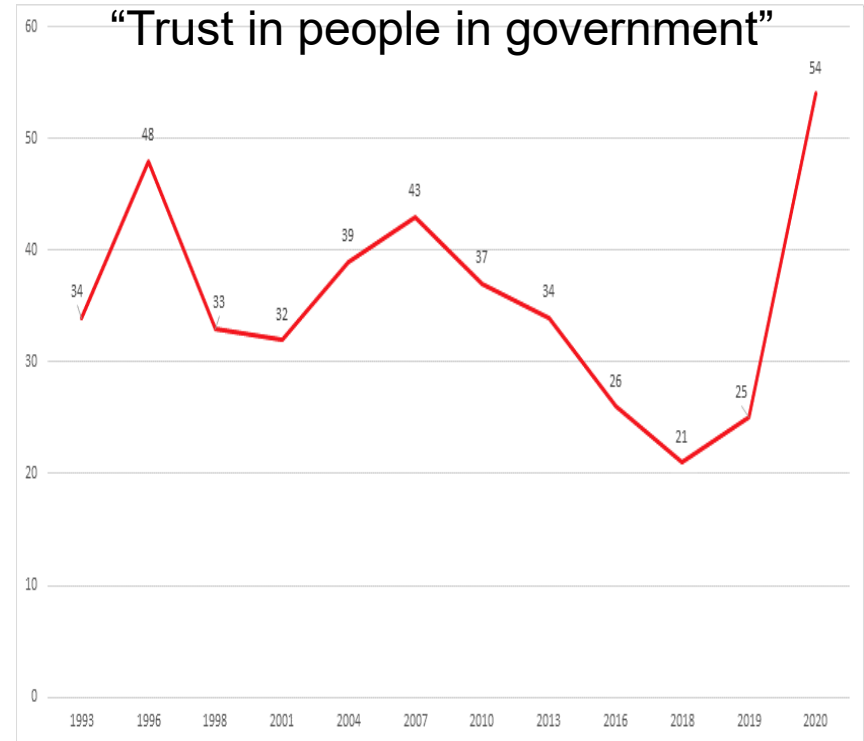
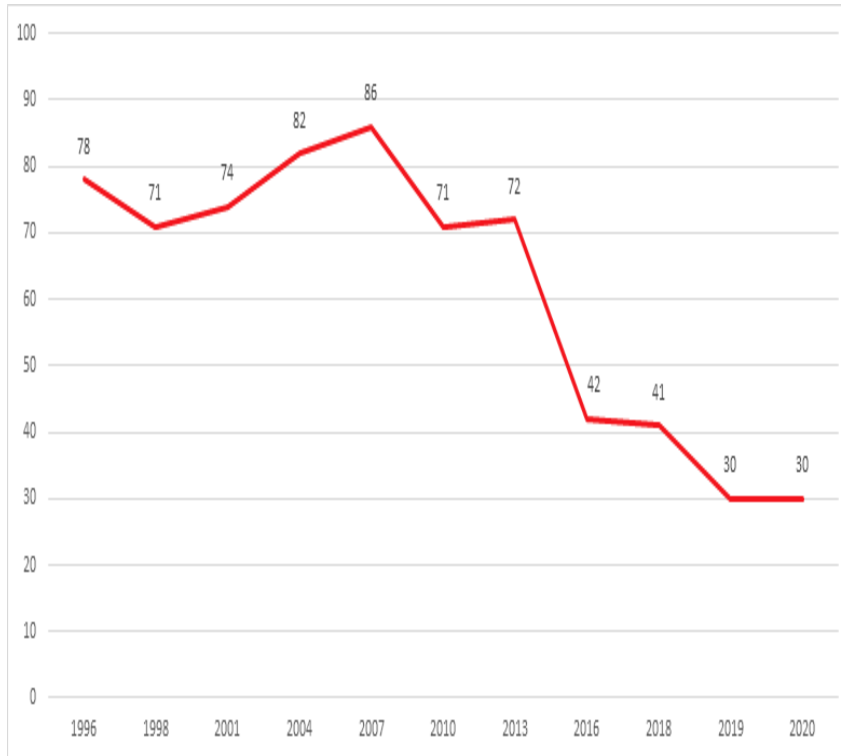


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**Political trust was at an all time low (according to time series data) despite 28 years of economic growth but notice the corona-trust-spike!**

Aspect of trust	Data	Survey Source
Trust in people in government	25%	AES 2019
Federal government	30%	D25 2018 and WVS 2017-20
Government ministers	23%	D25 2018 and WVS 2017-20
Members of parliament	21%	D25 2018
Parliament	28%	WVS 2017-20
Political parties	20% (D25), 11% (WVS)	Trustgov-D25 2020 and WVS 2017-20
Honesty and integrity of politicians is strong (“strongly disagree/disagree”)	89%	D25 2018
Agree “corruption is present in the country”	66%	WVS 2017-20
Social trust (trust between people)	47% (D25), 49% (WVS)	D25 2018 and WVS 2017-20
PM personal approval rating (July 2020)		
Trust in people in government	54%	Trustgov/D25

# TRUST AND DEMOCRACY IN AUSTRALIA



"Satisfaction with democratic arrangements"  
(AES 1996 to 2013 & 2019 & World Values Survey 2019-20)



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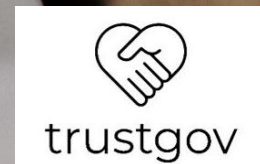


# Political Trust and the COVID-19 Crisis

Summary charts

August 2020

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# About the Project

- The TrustGov project (funded by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council) and Democracy 2025 at the Museum of Australian Democracy teamed up to conduct surveys fielded by Ipsos MORI in May and June 2020.
- We asked nationally representative online samples of the Australian, Italian, UK and US publics a series of questions about their perceptions of the coronavirus pandemic, their general trust in a number of institutions, and their evaluations of the performance of political leaders in handling the crisis.
- Details of the fieldwork dates and sample sizes of the four surveys are summarised below

Country	Fieldwork	Sample
Australia	28 May – 15 June*	1,061
Italy	21-22 May	1,134
UK	18-19 May	1,167
USA	19-23 May	1,150

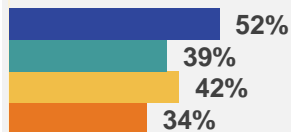
\*The main fieldwork (N = 1051) ran from 28th May to 5th June, with a top-up sample (N = 267) added from 5th to 15th June.

# Confidence in institutions: Rally around the flag?

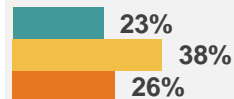
% "A great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in...

**Australia** **Italy** **United Kingdom** **USA**

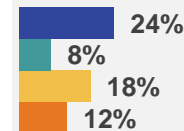
## Government



## Parliament



## Political Parties



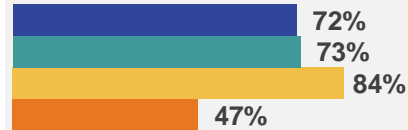
## The EU



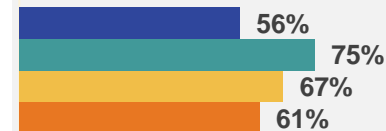
## World Health Organisation



## Health Service



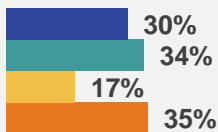
## Universities



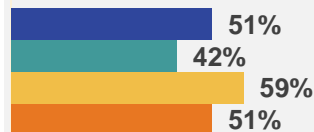
## Armed Forces



## Press



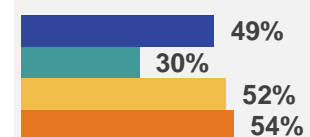
## Courts



## Police



## Civil Service



Base: 1,134 adults in Italy 21-22 May, 1,061 adults in Australia 28 May – 15 June, 1,167 adults in the UK 18-19 May, 1,150 adults in the USA 19-23 May

  
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# Evaluations of leader handling of COVID-19: lived experience matters

% “Agree” or “strongly agree”

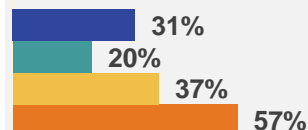
■ Scott Morrison (AUS)

■ Giuseppe Conte (IT)

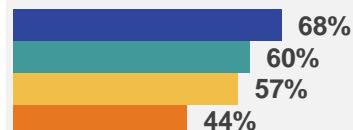
■ Boris Johnson (UK)

■ Donald Trump (US)

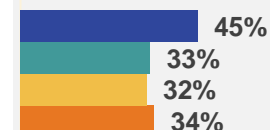
Acts in his own interests



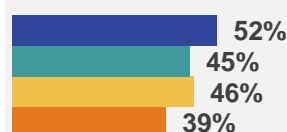
Does his best to serve his country



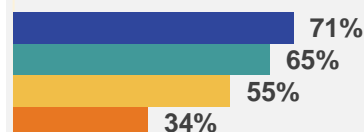
Cares about people like me



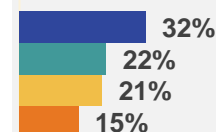
Listens to his party



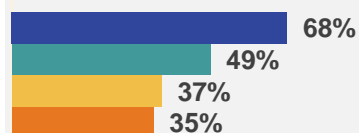
Listens to experts



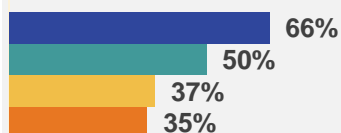
Listens to other parties



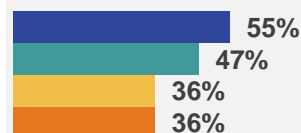
Handling the situation well



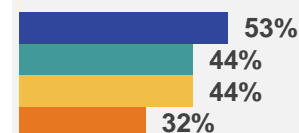
Handling the outbreak competently



Open and transparent



Free of corruption in his handling



Base: 1,134 adults in Italy 21-22 May, 1,061 adults in Australia 28 May – 15 June, 1,167 adults in the UK 18-19 May, 1,150 adults in the USA 19-23 May

  
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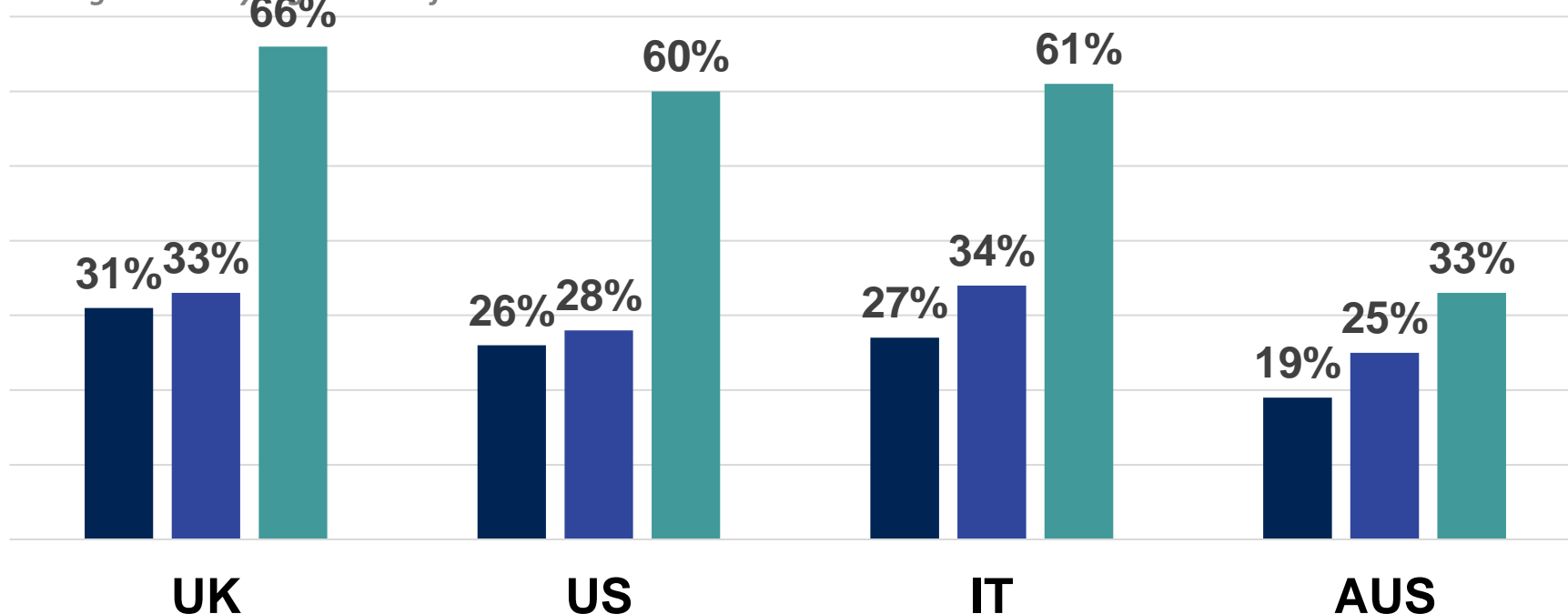
Ipsos MORI



# Perceived threat of COVID-19 to... lived experience matters

■ You personally ■ Your job or business ■ Your country

% "High" or "very high" level of threat



Base: 1,134 adults in Italy 21-22 May, 1,061 adults in Australia 28 May – 15 June, 1,167 adults in the UK 18-19 May, 1,150 adults in the USA 19-23 May

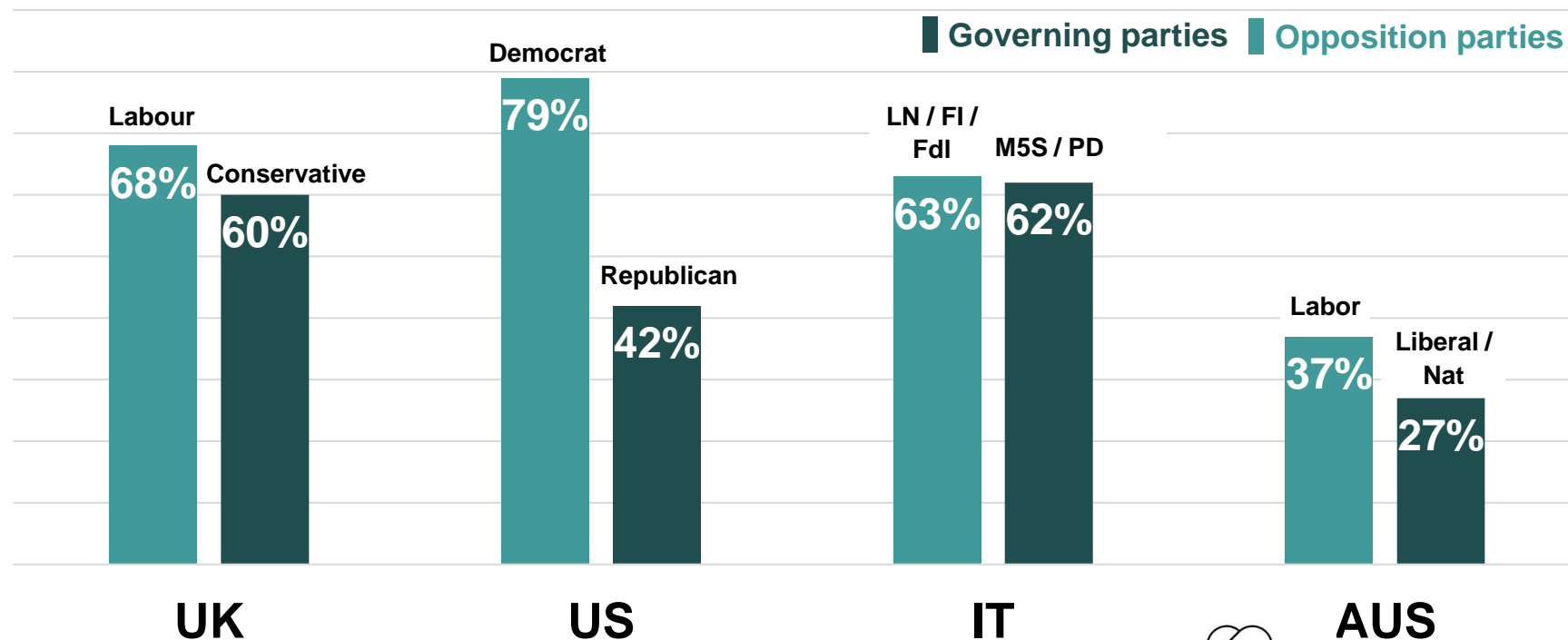


Ipsos MORI



# Partisan divides in perceptions of the national threat of COVID-19: lived experience matters

*% "High" or "very high" level of threat to their country by party currently most inclined to support*



Base: 393 M5S/PD supporters, 267 LN/FI/FdI supporters in Italy 21-22 May, 295 Labor supporters, 430 Liberal/Nat supporters in Australia 28 May - 15 June, 306 Labour supporters, 350 Conservative supporters in the UK 18-19 May, 483 Democrat supporters and 430 Republican supporters in the USA 19-23 May

  
trustgov

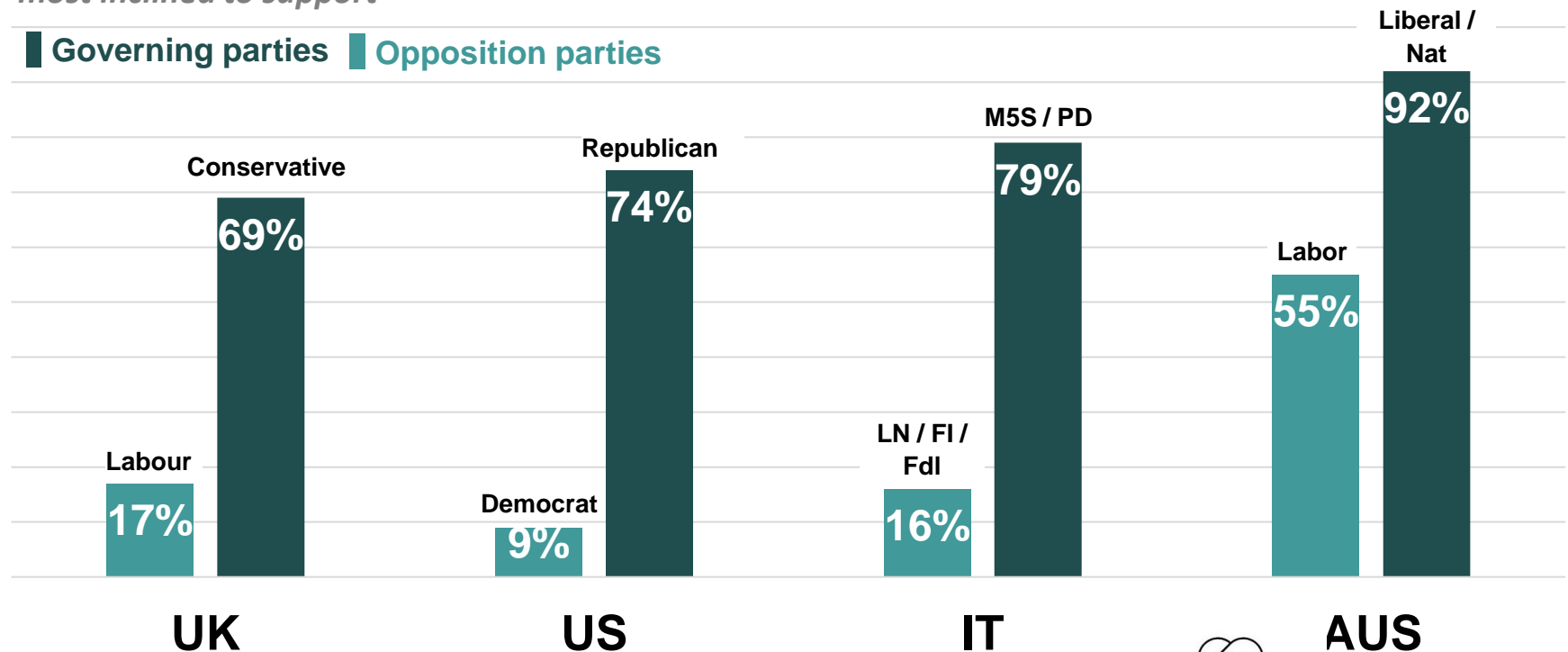
Ipsos MORI





# Partisan divides in evaluations of leader handling of COVID-19: bi-partisanship

% 'agree' or 'strongly agree' the leader is handling the coronavirus situation well by party currently most inclined to support



Base: 393 M5S/PD supporters, 267 LN/FI/FdI supporters in Italy 21-22 May, 295 Labor supporters, 430 Liberal/Nat supporters in Australia 28 May - 15 June, 306 Labour supporters, 350 Conservative supporters in the UK 18-19 May, 483 Democrat supporters and 430 Republican supporters in the USA 19-23 May

  
trustgov

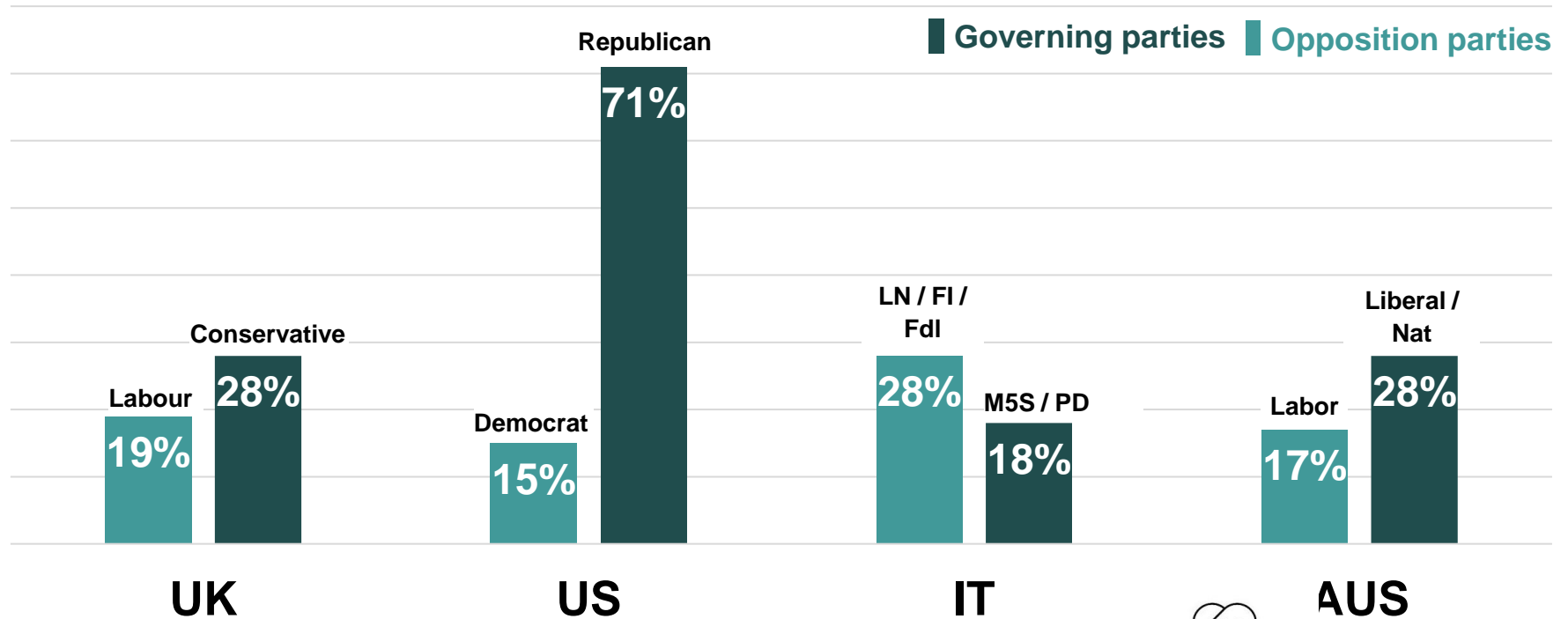
AUS

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# Partisan divides in perceptions of media exaggeration of COVID-19

*% 'agree' or 'strongly agree' media have exaggerated the 'extent of the coronavirus' by party currently most inclined to support*



Base: 393 M5S/PD supporters, 267 LN/FI/FdI supporters in Italy 21-22 May, 295 Labor supporters, 430 Liberal/Nat supporters in Australia 28 May - 15 June, 306 Labour supporters, 350 Conservative supporters in the UK 18-19 May, 483 Democrat supporters and 430 Republican supporters in the USA 19-23 May

  
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# STAYING “LUCKY”

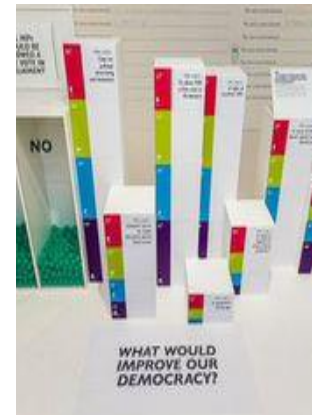
- AUSTRALIA HAS BEEN LUCKY IN TERMS OF ITS RELATIVE GEOGRAPHICAL ISOLATION FROM INTERNATIONAL AIR PASSENGER TRAFFIC DURING THE PANDEMIC.
- BUT AUSTRALIA HAS ALSO BENEFITED FROM EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE — FACILITATED BY STRONG POLITICAL BIPARTISANSHIP FROM LABOR — AND BY ATYPICAL COORDINATION OF STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS VIA THE NATIONAL CABINET.
- THE BIG QUESTION NOW IS WHETHER MORRISON CAN SUSTAIN STRONG LEVELS OF PUBLIC TRUST IN THE RECOVERY PERIOD.
- THERE ARE TWO POSITIVE LESSONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THE GOVERNMENT’S MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 IN THIS REGARD.
- FIRST, THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE EXPECTS THEIR GOVERNMENTS TO CONTINUE TO LISTEN TO THE EXPERTS, AS REFLECTED IN THE HIGH REGARD THAT AUSTRALIANS HAVE FOR EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION-MAKING OBSERVED IN THE SURVEY.
- SECOND, THE FOCUS ON COLLABORATION AND BIPARTISANSHIP HAS PLAYED WELL WITH AN AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC FED UP WITH ADVERSARIAL POLITICS.
- THE CRITICAL INSIGHT THEN IS CLEAR: AUSTRALIA NEEDS TO EMBRACE THIS NEW STYLE OF POLITICS — ONE THAT IS CLEANER, COLLABORATIVE AND EVIDENCE-BASED — TO DRIVE POST-COVID-19 RECOVERY AND REMAIN A LUCKY COUNTRY.



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# Citizens' and politicians on reform

- We draw on findings from an attitudinal survey of federal parliamentarians in the House of Representatives of the 45<sup>th</sup> Federal Parliament that evaluates the quality of democratic practice in Australia.
- The survey was sponsored by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) and was completed by 98 out of a possible 226 respondents (43.36 per cent).
- Where possible, the findings are compared with the general public to identify areas of common concern.



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# Context. The disconnection of political parties from communities and citizens

## The governance role

- ❖ recruit, select and develop political leaders
- ❖ formulate viable policy agendas and frame political choices
- ❖ form governments or, when not in power, hold governments accountable
- ❖ aggregate perspectives and build effective coalitions

## The community linkage role

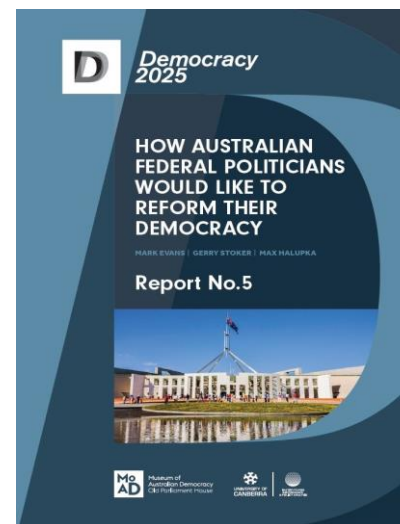
- ❖ express broad values and ideological positions to capture the wider concerns of citizens
- ❖ educate citizens about political issues
- ❖ recruit, select and develop local political leaders

Explained in Australia by: disdain for adversarial politics; creeping economic insecurity in shrinking communities hard-hit by globalisation; and declining political distrust exacerbated by successive leadership spills

## The integrity role

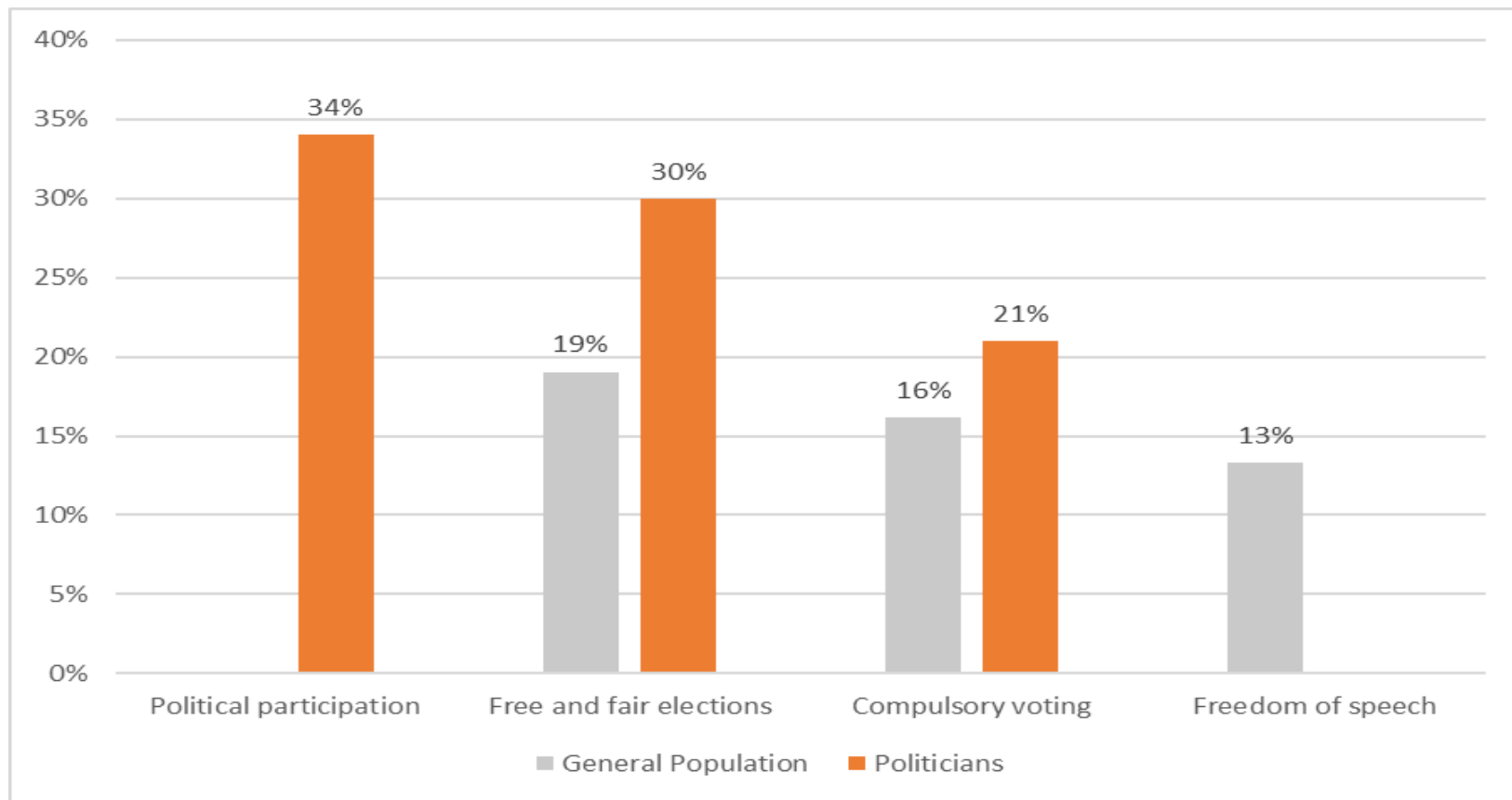
- ❖ guardians of liberal democratic norms and values and upholders of the highest standards of conduct in public life  
(Mair, 1994 and Katz and Mair, 2014)

# How satisfied are federal politicians with Australia's democratic arrangements?

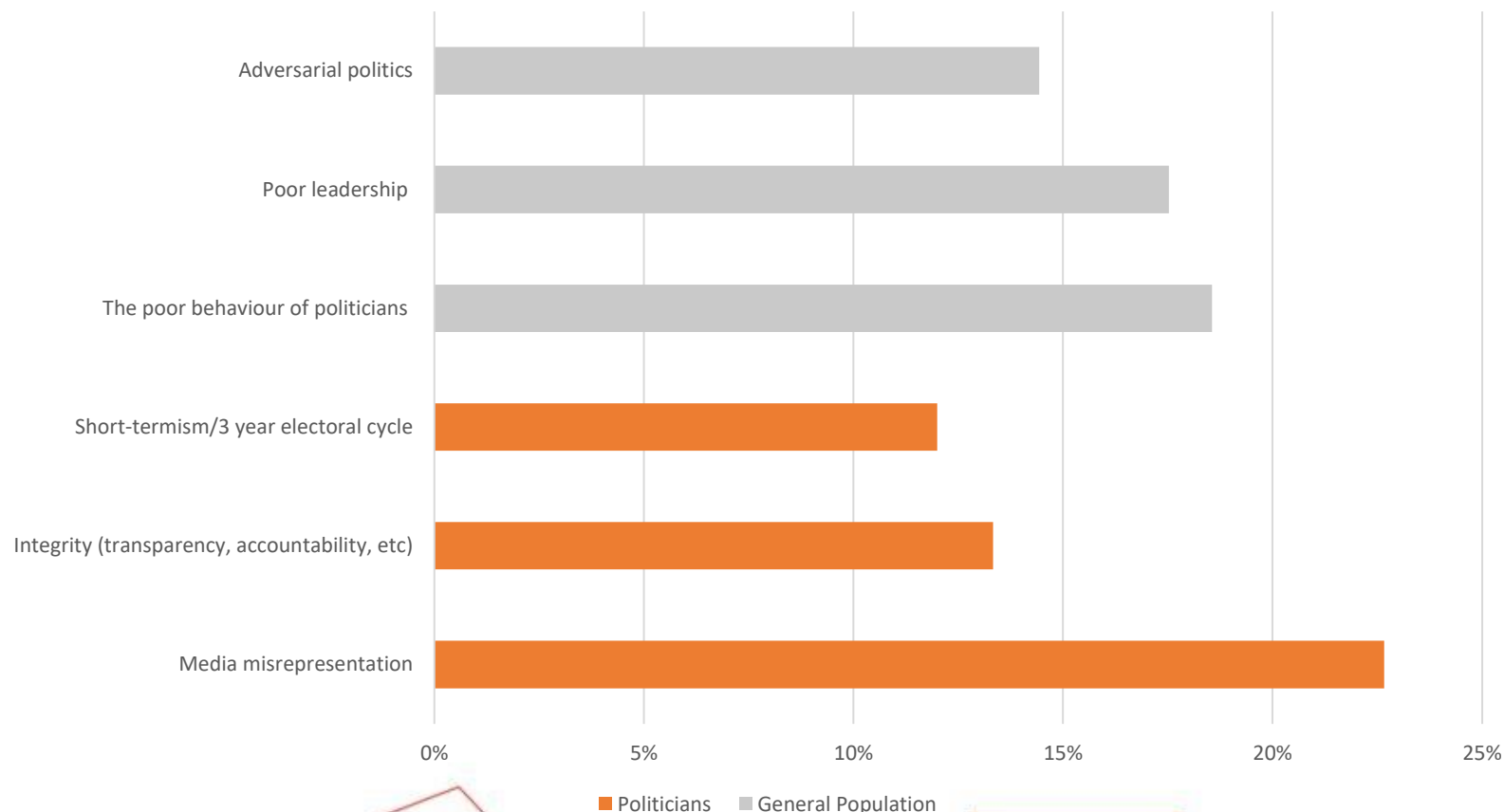


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# Similar likes about Australian democracy



# But different views on why we have declining trust and democratic satisfaction



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# **BUT there is recognition of the need for renewal within the political elite**

Politicians acknowledge that they have not performed their community linkage role very well and agree that the standards of parliamentary integrity are low.

They embrace reforms aimed at improving representative democracy, diluting the power of the party machine and increasing local accountability.

## **The Top 5 reforms**

- Regulation of campaign expenditure and political donations (76%)
- Provision of local and federal manifestos (58%)
- Greater use of E-petitions to Parliament (54%)
- Ordinary party members and voters should have more say in choosing party leaders and election candidates (49%)
- There should be less voting on party lines based on manifesto promises and more free votes (46%)

## But in contrast with Australian citizens they are against reforms that undermine their power base:

- the right to recall MPs for re-election if they fail to provide effective representation during the parliamentary term (72%);
- performance review for politicians (72%); and,
- greater use of citizen juries based on the criminal jury system (64%).

At the same time parliamentarians embrace other reforms that enhance the community-linkage and governance roles including:

### Community linkage & governance reforms

- Dual citizens to be able to stand for election without renouncing overseas citizenship +.
- Improved publicly funded civics education +.
- Reduction in the size of electorates in regional and rural Australia x.
- Four year terms x.
- Committee system reform x.
- Regional sittings of parliament x.
- Affirmative indigenous representation in parliament x.



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# A highly traditional reform program but with an interesting mix

- Most of these reforms are about improving existing democratic practices than designing new ways of doing democracy.
- The approach to reform is traditional; there is little reference to digital democracy or the digital party (Smith 2009 & Alonso et al., 2011). which is taking-off in Europe and Latin America or to the protection of individual or group rights
- Politicians embrace reforms that enhance their autonomy from the party machine and

are willing to make concessions to improve their community linkage role but on balance reject reforms that diminish their autonomy.

Hence, there remains compelling evidence in support of the view held by 75 per cent of Australian citizens that “people in government look after themselves” (AES, 2019, p. 99) and this was further highlighted by the recent “Sports rorts” scandal.



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# Connecting-up – finding common ground

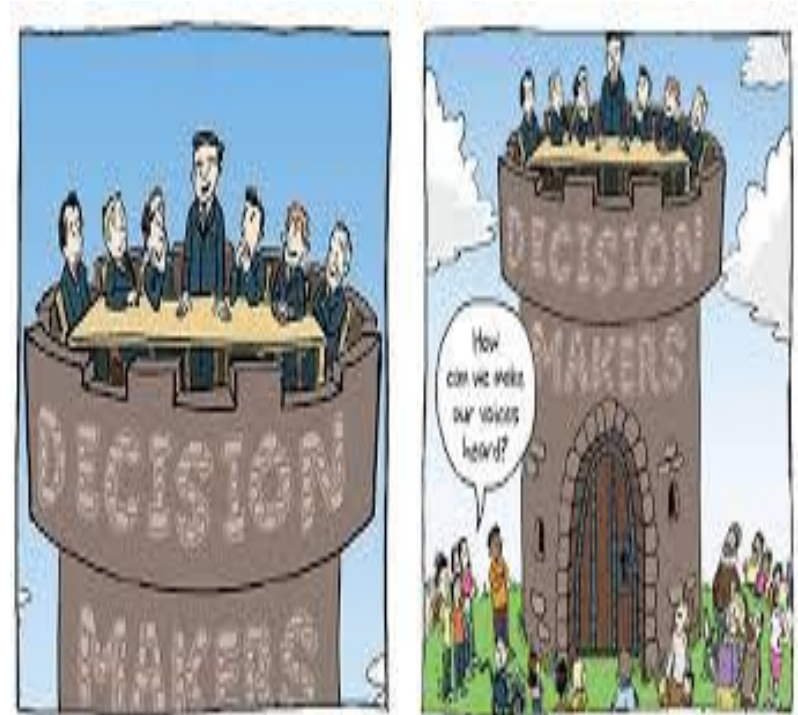
- ❖ Reform is as much about improving existing democratic practices as designing new ways of doing democracy.
- ❖ The reform agendas of citizens and politicians do not entirely match up, but there is a degree of alignment that provides some common ground.
- ❖ Both embrace reforms aimed at improving representative democracy and local accountability and provide hope for enhancing the integrity of government through regulation of campaign expenditure and political donations and some support for a federal ICAC.



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# But it is the mixture of reforms that will matter

- ❖ It is also increasingly evident that Australian citizens think that participatory reforms can be used to bolster the legitimacy of representative democracy and enhance trust between government and citizen.
- ❖ The recognition by politicians of the importance of their community-linkage role provides common ground for participatory reform at the local level.
- ❖ It is the mixture of reforms that will matter most in the next chapter of Australia's democratic story which is likely to take place in the midst of profound economic crisis. **Fertile conditions for democratic renewal!**



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