

## New report shows satisfaction with Australia's democracy has halved in a decade

A new report shows satisfaction with Australia's democracy has more than halved in a decade. As a result of these findings MoAD (Museum of Australian Democracy) today announced a new initiative to combat the declining trust trajectory.

The report, *Trust and Democracy in Australia*, was released today by MoAD and the University of Canberra's Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis (UC-IGPA).

It finds that fewer than 41 per cent of Australian citizens are currently satisfied with the way democracy works in Australia—down from 86 per cent in 2007.

Public satisfaction has fallen particularly sharply since 2013, when 72 per cent said they were satisfied.

Levels of trust are at their lowest levels since survey data has been available. This includes trust in the Australian Government at 31 per cent and politicians, whether state or federal, at 21 per cent.

Social trust between Australians has fallen below 50 per cent for the first time, to 47 per cent, and there is a growing group of disenfranchised voters feeling left behind and angry.

Daryl Karp, MoAD Director, said the continuing decline of trust is alarming.

“Despite our world class democracy and 25 years of economic growth—which traditionally leads to increased satisfaction—Australians have grown more distrustful of politicians, sceptical about democratic institutions and disillusioned with democratic processes.

“If nothing is done to combat this declining trajectory, by 2025 fewer than 10 per cent of Australians will trust their politicians and key political institutions.”

Professor Mark Evans, from UC-IGPA and co-author of the report, said the findings were drawn from a national survey exploring the relationship between trust in the political system and attitudes towards democracy.

“The survey was conducted in July, prior to the Liberal Party's leadership spill. Responses at that time showed the majority of Australians disliked the conflict driven politics of federal parliament.

“The consequences of declining trust are far reaching. Weakening political trust erodes civic engagement, reduces support for evidence based public policies, promotes risk aversion in government, and creates the space for the rise of authoritarian-populist forces,” Professor Evans explained.

Ms Karp said the problem must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

“MoAD and UC-ICPGA are embarking on a bold new initiative, **Democracy 2025**, to bridge the trust divide and re-engage Australians with their democracy.

“**Democracy 2025** will be a world leading initiative based at the spiritual home of Australian democracy – Old Parliament House, Canberra.

“Our aim is to become Australia's leading go-to for applied research, analysis and interpretation of the challenges facing representative democracy and its potential for innovation and renewal.”

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“By bringing together business, government, the public service and the community we will promote excellence and innovation in democratic governance.

“Restoring trust in our governance is critical to the health of our democracy and, more broadly, to the defence of liberal democracy in our region.

“We cannot afford to be complacent,” Ms Karp said.

*Trust and Democracy in Australia* was launched at Parliament House, followed by a panel discussion on its implications. Panellists’ conversation was facilitated by Virginia Haussegger and included Professor Evans, Michelle Grattan, Dan Bourchier and Mark Kenny.

The report is the latest in a series attitudinal surveys MoAD and UC-IGPA have conducted with the Social Research Institute at Ipsos. It is available at [democracy2025.gov.au](http://democracy2025.gov.au)

## **About MoAD**

The Museum of Australian Democracy celebrates Australia’s proud history as a democratic nation and actively promotes the participation of its citizens in determining its future.

MoAD is a museum not just of objects but of ideas. In our iconic heritage building, we tell the story of Australia’s journey to becoming one of the world’s most vibrant and multicultural democratic nations.

MoAD is a place where stories, conversations and narratives from myriad perspectives can be heard and discussed.

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For further information, please contact Heather Wallace, [heather.wallace@moadoph.gov.au](mailto:heather.wallace@moadoph.gov.au), (02) 6270 8157 or 0439 436 870.

## **Interview Opportunity – please contact Heather for interview schedule**

Daryl Karp, Director – MoAD

Professor Mark Evans – UC-IGPA