

EARNING TRUST

UNLOCKING AI ADOPTION FOR AUSTRALIANS

Australia needs to move beyond quantifying its AI trust problem and identify levers for change.

Can well-designed regulation increase public trust in AI – and with it, discerning adoption?

Trust allows individuals to engage with AI where it adds value – and to opt out when they determine it does not. Trust is the basis of the social licence that businesses, government and organisations depend on to leverage these new technologies in innovative and impactful ways.

The answer is resounding: Australians want the government to act; well-designed regulation would increase their trust and adoption of AI.

WHAT THE EVIDENCE SHOWS

Australians are asking for AI regulation
The mandate is decisive.

Support is informed, not fearful. Knowledge and understanding drives demand for AI regulation.

Three issues dominate. Privacy. Jobs. Misinformation.

Context drives trust. A standalone one-size-fits-all approach (like the EU AI Act) is not sufficient to build Australia's trust in AI. Australians favour sector-specific approaches, or sector-specific approaches *and* an AI Act with overarching general protections.

Australia is not one audience. Four distinct AI personas have different motivations for supporting AI regulation.

This is bigger than AI. Trust in AI reflects trust in government.

WHAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO

Act now. Treat AI regulation as an enabler of trust and adoption. Progress priority reforms and fund regulators to enforce existing law.

Build AI literacy. Equip Australians with practical understanding of AI and its risks.

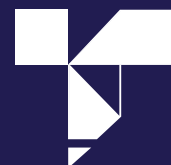
Start where it counts. Sequence reforms to address priority harms first and build early trust (privacy, workers' rights, digital duty of care).

Calibrate rules to real-world use in sectors like healthcare, education and law enforcement. Consider a Coordinated AI Regulation (CAIR) Act, not as a standalone solution, but to deliver baseline protections, coordination and consistency across sector-specific regulation.

Communicate with precision. Tailor messaging to different cohorts.

Lead with legitimacy. Treat AI governance as core to democratic trust and institutional credibility.

Findings based on nationally representative focus groups & survey of Australians



**TECH POLICY
DESIGN INSTITUTE**

85%
OF AUSTRALIANS

support government regulation of AI



70%
OF AUSTRALIANS

would be more comfortable with AI being used if they knew there were strong government regulations in place

1%
OF AUSTRALIANS

have 'complete trust' that AI will be used responsibly



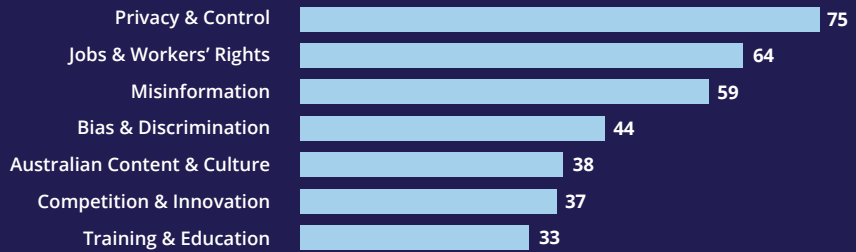
44%
OF AUSTRALIANS

have 'not much' or 'no trust at all' that AI will be used responsibly

49% of women have 'none' or 'not much trust' that AI will be used responsibly, compared to 39% of men



AUSTRALIANS' PRIORITY ISSUES FOR AI REGULATION



GEN Z

has the **most trust** in AI being used responsibly (61% moderate/a lot/complete), and is the group most likely to accept no regulation or industry regulation as enough (16%)

BOOMERS

have the **least trust** in AI being used responsibly (44% have moderate, a lot or complete trust) and is the group most likely to want government regulation of some kind (91%)

OLDER AUSTRALIANS ARE MORE LIKELY TO WANT REGULATION

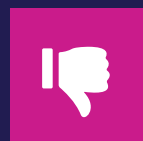


with every year of age increasing regulation demand by 1%



STRONG SECTOR-SPECIFIC LAWS

is Australians' leading preference for government regulation, above general overarching laws



2%
OF AUSTRALIANS

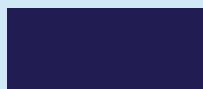
oppose government regulation

AUSTRALIAN AI PERSONAS

Australia's population falls into 4 distinct AI personas



TECH CHAMPION



28%



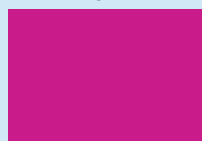
ENTRENCHED SCEPTIC



15%



REGULATION-ENABLED ADOPTER



45%



SELF-ASSURED ADOPTER



12%