# Trust in Australian public services Technical Appendix 2024-2025

## Survey history and wave frequency

The Survey was trialled in two pilot waves (of 2,500 people) in November 2018 and February 2019. Findings from these pilot waves were used to test and refine the Survey, and the first full wave of the Survey was held in March 2019. The sample size of the March 2019 wave was doubled to 5,000 people, and this wave is used as a baseline. The sample size then reverted to 2,500 respondents.

Following the baseline, survey waves were held approximately every four months, with eight waves (and over 30,000 responses) collected between March 2019 and June 2021. Commencing November 2020, the sample size was doubled to 5,000 people per wave, to allow for more detailed insights in Australians’ experiences with Australian public services.

From July 2021, the Survey has been undertaken monthly with a sample size of approximately 1000 per wave. This enables ‘pulse’ checks of overall satisfaction with, and trust in services, and provides more timely and nuanced data on the impact of any significant events on satisfaction with and trust in services.

In July 2024 the sample size was temporarily increased to 2,000 people for that wave only. This was to allow for more detailed insights on smaller population groups from a module of questions in support of a [Long-term Insights Briefing](https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/long-term-insights-briefings) on the future of government service delivery.

Between March 2025 and June 2025, the sample size was temporarily increased to 1,500 people per wave. This was to allow for more detailed insights on less commonly reported specific activities within services.

**Wave details for 2024-2025 financial year**

| **Wave** | **Soft Launch** | **Full Launch** | **Survey Close** | **Final responses** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **July 2024** | 01-Jul-24 | 02-Jul-24 | 29-Jul-24 | 2,076 |
| **August 2024** | 05-Aug-24 | 06-Aug-24 | 21-Aug-24 | 1,026 |
| **September 2024** | 02-Sep-24 | 03-Sep-24 | 23-Sep-24 | 1,006 |
| **October 2024** | 03-Oct-24 | 04-Oct-24 | 21-Oct-24 | 1,015 |
| **November 2024** | 01-Nov-24 | 02-Nov-24 | 13-Nov-24 | 1,009 |
| **December 2024** | 2-Dec-24 | 3-Dec-24 | 19-Dec-24 | 1,004 |
| **January 2025** | 6-Jan-25 | 6-Jan-25 | 24-Jan-25 | 1,004 |
| **February 2025** | 3-Feb-25 | 3-Feb-25 | 21-Feb-25 | 1,011 |
| **March 2025** | 1-Mar-25 | 3-Mar-25 | 28-Mar-25 | 1,507 |
| **April 2025** | 1-Apr-25 | 2-Apr-25 | 14-Apr-25 | 1,515 |
| **May 2025** | 1-May-25 | 2-May-25 | 16-May-25 | 1,506 |
| **June 2025** | 3-Jun-25 | 4-Jun-25 | 27-Jun-25 | 1,519 |

## Survey respondents

The Survey targets adults (aged 18 years or older) who may access Australian public services. The majority of survey participants are Australian citizen residents, but it also captures permanent residents, citizens living abroad (including special visas), and visitors to Australia.

The design of the Survey ensures Australians reflect on their experiences with Australian public services (also known as Commonwealth, federal or national public services) and not state, territory or local public services. Respondents do not need to have accessed Australian public services; those who have not are still asked for their general opinions of Australian public services.

The Survey uses an established online panel, consisting of people who answer surveys in exchange for minor rewards (e.g. gift cards, airline miles). Panellists are recruited to the panel via online marketing and direct email. Respondents are subject to a number of guidelines to ensure that the responses are of a high quality. These guidelines include age restrictions, quality expectations and communication standards. In addition, the Survey has a 12-month exclusion period – people who complete it cannot answer another survey wave until at least a year has passed. The Survey is currently delivered in English only.

## Sampling methodology

Panel participants are asked to complete the Survey via email, with an attached survey link, and they may commence the Survey directly from the link or by logging into their accounts. Participants are able to complete the Survey via desktop, mobile or tablet devices. Responses are confidential, and the Survey does not collect information that could reasonably be used to identify a participant by people who are permitted access to the data.

The Survey waves are ‘soft launched’ (tested on a small number of people) prior to full launch. Three key areas of testing are undertaken as part of the soft launch:

1. Ensuring there are no errors in the Survey programming (e.g. misrouting, errors in survey logic).
	1. Screen outs are working as intended for those who:
		1. Are under the age of 18
		2. Are not within the targeted scope of Australian citizenship, residency or visa status.
	2. Respondents who have qualified for the Survey are correctly flowing through to the end of the Survey.
	3. Respondents who are meant to skip survey questions or sections based on their responses do so and are not shown questions they are not meant to be shown.
2. Ensuring the Survey is yielding quality responses.
	1. Median survey length (time to complete) is reasonable.
	2. Respondents are able to complete longer questions without dropping out.
3. Checking incidence rates from which to update assumptions relating to total targeted sample.
	1. Review all screen outs to conclude they are legitimate.

Once the review of the data from the soft launch has concluded, and any required updates to the Survey have been made, the Survey is full launched targeting the full number of respondents.

## Quotas

When collecting responses, quotas are placed on the proportions by age, gender, state/territory location, and metro/regional location. Prior to September 2022 these quotas were based on the 2016 ABS Census results, from September 2022 onwards the quotas were based on the 2021 ABS Census results. Prior to July 2024, external expert advice recommended that data did not need to be weighted. Using quotas was sufficient for the demographics of respondents to reflect those of the general Australian population. From July 2024 onwards, we have introduced simplified weighting to account for oversampling in some months in the 2024/2025 financial year. See the weighting section for more information.

A hard interlocking quota was used for the intersection of age and gender, with an individual hard quota for state/territory and a soft (varies by +/- 30% per wave) quota for metro/regional location in the 2024-2025 financial year.

*Quota used since September 2022 (not including oversamples in July 2024, and March to June 2025)*

| **n** | **Male** | **Female** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **18-24 years** | 56 | 53 | **109** |
| **25-34 year** | 92 | 92 | **184** |
| **35-44 years** | 87 | 89 | **176** |
| **45-54 years** | 80 | 82 | **162** |
| **55-64 years** | 73 | 77 | **150** |
| **65+ years** | 102 | 116 | **218** |
| **TOTAL** | **491** | **509** | **1,000** |
| **NSW** |  |  | 314 |
| **VIC** |  |  | 256 |
| **Qld** |  |  | 203 |
| **SA** |  |  | 71 |
| **WA** |  |  | 106 |
| **TAS** |  |  | 23 |
| **NT** |  |  | 9 |
| **ACT** |  |  | 18 |
| **TOTAL** |  |  | **1,000** |

## Weighting

Prior to July 2024 the survey data was unweighted. This was based on external expert advice that quotas were sufficient for the demographics of respondents to reflect those of the general Australian population. In the 2024/2025 financial year several waves were oversampled to allow for more detailed insights on smaller population groups. A simplified weighting scheme has been introduced to ensure the overall results remain representative of the Australian population.

Two periods were oversampled, in different ways:

* In July 2024 an additional 1,000 people were surveyed, for a total of 2,000 respondents in that wave, to allow for more detailed insights from a module of questions on the future of government service delivery. 500 of the additional respondents were sampled in a nationally representative way, by scaling the quotas up by 50%. The remaining 500 additional respondents were obtained by oversampling populations of interest.
* Between March 2025 and June 2025 an additional 500 people were surveyed per wave, for a total of 1,500 respondents per wave, to allow for more detailed insights on less commonly reported specific activities within services. The additional respondents were sampled in a nationally representative way, by scaling the quotas up by 50%.

### Weights for standard waves

The purpose of the weighting is only to correct for additional sampling, so all responses in waves without additional sample have been assigned a weight of 1.

This includes all waves prior to July 2024, and all waves between August 2024 and February 2025.

### Weights for July 2024

The additional sample for July 2024 includes oversampling of small population groups. Raking (as implemented in the R package *anesrake*) was used to calculate weights that ensured the overall results remain representative of Australia’s demographic distribution. The target proportions for the raking were the quotas for:

* State
* Metro vs regional
* Age by gender cross classified

In addition, targets were set for the following proportions, calculated from the prior 3 waves of the survey (April to June 2024):

* People with a disability
* First Nations
* Employment status
* Language spoken at home

The final weights were calculated by halving the raking weights, to account for July 2024 having twice the usual sample.

### Weights for March 2025 through June 2025

The additional sample for March 2025 through June 2025 was achieved by increasing the quotas by 50%. As such responses in those waves have been assigned a weight of:

$$\frac{1}{1.5}=0.\overline{66}$$

## Data quality and limitations

The survey panel used is a non-probability panel. Because respondents must have signed up to complete the Survey, and need internet access to complete it, it is not as representative as randomly selecting participants from the whole population. However, from testing via the phone survey and benchmarking against other surveys, the Commission has not detected any major bias in the results. The Survey is delivered in English only, and participants need an internet connection to complete the Survey on their device.

All sample surveys are subject to sampling and non-sampling error. Non-sampling error may occur in any data collection. Possible sources of non-sampling error include errors in reporting or recording of information, occasional errors in coding and processing data, and errors introduced by linkage processes.

The data uses quotas to ensure the sample is representative on national Australian demographics by age, gender and location. Weighting is also used to account for oversampling in specific months.

Note, due to methodological differences between surveys, findings regarding trust-in and satisfaction-with public services obtained through this survey are not directly comparable to other surveys.

## Service numbers

For individual service reporting, we do not report on any service where less than 50 people answered questions about that service in a financial year. The number of people who answered questions about each service in each financial year since 2018-2019 is in the table below.

*Individual service sample sizes*

| **Service** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **2024** | **2025** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Australian Competition and Consumer Commission  | 239 | 293 | 271 | 156 | 173 | 429 |  1,575  |
| Australian Electoral Commission | < 50 | < 50 | 98 | 84 | 70 | 1,953 |  4,907  |
| Australian Taxation Office  | 1,995 | 1,932 | 3,401 | 2,889 | 2,723 | 4,354 |  8,148  |
| Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  | 103 | 120 | 113 | 79 | 101 | 329 | 718 |
| Department of Education, Skills and Employment | 317 | 365 | 718 | 460 |  |  |  |
| Department of Employment and Workplace Relations  |  |  |  |  | 198 | 471 |  1,295  |
| Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)  | 350 | 346 | 323 | 216 | 372 | 420 |  1,347  |
| Department of Home Affairs  | 270 | 299 | 393 | 220 | 337 | 281 |  1,358  |
| Department of Veterans' Affairs  | 123 | 169 | 274 | 190 | 285 | 187 |  530  |
| Fair Work Ombudsman  | 122 | 144 | 295 | 171 | 204 | 308 |  1,268  |
| My Aged Care | 252 | 334 | 601 | 414 | 524 | 641 |  1,397  |
| National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)  | 211 | 222 | 465 | 359 | 424 | 455 |  1,222  |
| Pharmaceuticals Benefits Scheme  | 343 | 290 | 581 | 412 | 535 | 593 |  2,349  |
| Services Australia - Centrelink | 2,094 | 1,971 | 3,719 | 3,317 | 3,350 | 3,917 |  6,258  |
| Services Australia - Child Support | 311 | 284 | 571 | 404 | 541 | 566 |  1,086  |
| Services Australia - Medicare | 1,781 | 1,584 | 2,758 | 2,720 | 2,723 | 3,789 |  8,034  |

## Specific service activities and access channels

In September 2024 we introduced a new module to the questionnaire, asking more detailed questions on the specific service activities respondents undertook and which access channels they used (also called interaction channels). For example, respondents who accessed services from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission may be asked:

**What did you do in relation to this service? Please select all that apply.**

* Reported a scam, consumer or business issue and/or an unsafe product
* Communicated with someone from the ACCC for information or guidance about scams, consumer or small business issues, or an unsafe product
* Accessed publicly available information from the ACCC (including the ACCC’s website and other brands such as Scamwatch and the Product Safety Australia website) about scams, consumer or small business issues, or an unsafe product
* Other (please specify)

For full details of the new module please see the questionnaire, under the section “Individual Service Experiences”.

Respondents are only asked these more detailed questions about one service, even if they accessed multiple services. When a respondent has access more than one service, then a least-fill method is used to allocate them questions about the service which has the fewest responses so far that wave. If there is an equal number of responses for two services, then one is chosen randomly.

The number of people who answered questions about each service activity and access channel included in the 2024-25 annual report is provided in the tables below.

*Australian Competition and Consumer Commission service activity sample sizes*

| **Service Activity** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Reported a scam, consumer, business or product issue | 237 |
| Contacted the ACCC about scams, consumer or product issues | 211 |
| Accessed publicly available information from the ACCC | 187 |

*Australian Competition and Consumer Commission access channel sample sizes*

| **Access Channel** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Phone call | 180 |
| ACCC and related social media | 94 |
| ACCC, Scamwatch or Product Safety Australia website contact forms | 191 |
| ACCC, Scamwatch or Product Safety Australia websites | 229 |

*Australian Electoral Commission service activity sample sizes*

| **Service Activity** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Contacted the AEC for advice | 89 |
| Accessed publicly available information from the AEC | 169 |
| Enrolled to vote | 133 |
| Checked or updated enrolment details | 404 |
| Applied for a postal vote | 217 |
| Voted by sending a postal vote | 159 |
| Voted in an election | 284 |
| Voted early or in-person | 259 |

*Australian Electoral Commission access channel sample sizes*

| **Access Channel** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Phone call | 103 |
| Letter (Post) | 116 |
| Face-to-face (e.g. local offices) | 73 |
| Face-to-face (polling places) | 403 |
| AEC website contact form | 134 |
| AEC website | 567 |

*Australian Taxation Office service activity sample sizes*

| **Topic** | **Service Activity** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Tax | Lodged or amended a tax return | 970 |
| Contacted the ATO for advice/information on tax | 50 |
| Accessed the ATO's publicly available information on tax | 65 |
| Super | Checked superannuation details through the ATO | 104 |
| Employment | Viewed income statements (or Payment Summary) | 68 |

*Australian Taxation Office access channel sample sizes*

| **Access Channel** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Phone call | 109 |
| ATO myTax | 71 |
| ATO app | 54 |
| Face-to-face (e.g. self-service centres) | 55 |
| Tax agent or other advocate | 257 |
| ATO website | 471 |
| myGov | 474 |

*Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry service activity sample sizes*

| **Topic** | **Service Activity** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Bio security | Interacted with biosecurity after arrival in Australia | 66 |
| Sought approval to bring/mail goods into Australia | 86 |
| Contacted DAFF for advice/information | 61 |
| Accessed public information from DAFF | 75 |
| Sought information for a biosecurity Approved Arrangement | 51 |
| Agriculture | Contacted DAFF for advice/information | 140 |
| Accessed public information from DAFF | 108 |
| Fisheries | Contacted DAFF for advice/information | 102 |
| Accessed public information from DAFF | 99 |
| Trade | Contacted DAFF for advice/information | 63 |
| Accessed public available information from DAFF | 55 |

*Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry access channel sample sizes*

| **Access Channel** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Phone call | 140 |
| DAFF social media | 114 |
| Email | 100 |
| Face-to-face (e.g. local offices) | 146 |
| DAFF website contact form | 157 |
| DAFF websites | 191 |

*Department of Employment and Workplace Relations service activity sample sizes*

| **Service Activity** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Searched/ applied for a job through Workforce Australia | 268 |
| Participated in an employment program | 222 |
| Used the Apprenticeship Data Management System | 70 |
| Contacted DEWR for advice/information | 99 |
| Accessed public information from DEWR | 78 |

*Department of Employment and Workplace Relations access channel sample sizes*

| **Access Channel** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Phone call | 194 |
| DEWR app | 65 |
| Email | 97 |
| DEWR website contact form | 73 |
| DEWR and related websites | 152 |
| myGov | 267 |

*Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade service activity sample sizes*

| **Service Activity** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Applied for a passport | 310 |
| Accessed public information from Smartraveller | 163 |
| Subscribed to updates on a destination on Smartraveller | 68 |

*Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade access channel sample sizes*

| **Access Channel** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Phone call | 98 |
| Face-to-face through Australia Post | 202 |
| Email | 51 |
| Face-to-face (e.g. embassies, Australian offices) | 69 |
| DFAT and related websites | 284 |

*Department of Home Affairs service activity sample sizes*

|  | **Service Activity** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Visa, immigration and citizenship | Applied for Australian citizenship or a visa | 193 |
| Checked on the status or provided extra documentation | 96 |
| Reported changes in your situation | 62 |
| Contacted Department of Home Affairs for information | 64 |
| Accessed public information from Home Affairs | 66 |
| Settle programs and services | Accessed a settlement or transition support program | 58 |
| Travel | Interacted with Border Force at an airport or port | 72 |

*Department of Home Affairs access channel sample sizes*

| **Access Channel** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Phone call | 129 |
| Digital applications | 126 |
| Email | 103 |
| Face-to-face (e.g. at an airport or seaport) | 147 |
| Lawyer or registered migration agent | 78 |
| Department of Home Affairs website contact form | 106 |
| Department of Home Affairs and related websites | 160 |

*Department of Veterans' Affairs service activity sample sizes*

| **Service Activity** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Submitted a claim | 154 |
| Received financial support | 149 |
| Accessed medical treatment | 157 |
| Accessed a rehabilitation service | 87 |
| Accessed another service or support not covered above | 95 |
| Contacted Veterans' Affairs for advice/information | 132 |
| Accessed public information from Veterans' Affairs | 67 |

*Department of Veterans' Affairs access channel sample sizes*

| **Access Channel** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Phone call | 192 |
| Email | 105 |
| Face-to-face (e.g. local offices) | 86 |
| Veteran Support Officer - on base | 82 |
| DVA website contact form | 97 |
| DVA website | 137 |
| MyService through myGov | 101 |

*Fair Work Ombusdman service activity sample sizes*

| **Service Activity** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Contacted the FWO for advice or information | 202 |
| Accessed public information from the FWO | 246 |
| Sought involvement from FWO with a workplace issue | 109 |
| Used the Pay and Conditions Tool to calculate pay/ rates | 154 |
| Accessed self-help tools on the FWO website | 109 |

*Fair Work Ombusdman access channel sample sizes*

| **Access Channel** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Phone call | 204 |
| FWO My account | 61 |
| Email | 113 |
| FWO website | 296 |
| FWO chatbot or digital assistant | 55 |

*My Aged Care service activity sample sizes*

| **Service Activity** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Contacted My Aged Care about access to care/ services | 305 |
| Checked what services I’m approved for | 138 |
| Accessed information about My Aged Care services | 158 |
| Had an re/assessment through My Aged Care | 219 |
| Applied to increase or change aged care services | 66 |
| Sought a referral code to connect with a service | 131 |
| Accessed a My Aged Care registered provider | 131 |
| Updated personal details or documents | 103 |
| Checked outcome of assessment or support plan | 63 |

*My Aged Care access channel sample sizes*

| **Access Channel** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Phone call | 374 |
| Face-to-face (e.g. service centres) | 114 |
| Through a provider, agent or advocate | 130 |
| My Aged Care website | 192 |
| My Aged Care Online Account through myGov | 111 |

*National Disability Insurance Scheme service activity sample sizes*

| **Service Activity** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Applied for the NDIS | 168 |
| Requested a review or change to a plan | 194 |
| Contacted the NDIS for advice/information | 241 |
| Accessed public information from the NDIS | 113 |
| Contacted the NDIS to make a complaint | 77 |

*National Disability Insurance Scheme access channel sample sizes*

| **Access Channel** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Phone call | 288 |
| NDIS app | 53 |
| Email | 104 |
| Face-to-face (e.g. service centre) | 118 |
| NDIS website contact form | 82 |
| NDIS website | 127 |
| myGov | 110 |

*Pharmaceuticals Benefits Scheme service activity sample sizes*

| **Service Activity** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Contacted the PBS for information | 67 |
| Accessed public information about the PBS | 75 |
| Submitted a patient claim for refund | 69 |
| Received PBS subsidised medication | 515 |
| Applied for a PBS Safety Net card | 152 |

*Pharmaceuticals Benefits Scheme access channel sample sizes*

| **Access Channel** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Phone call | 81 |
| Face-to-face (e.g. service centre) | 89 |
| Healthcare provider or pharmacy | 427 |
| PBS website | 130 |

*Services Australia – Centrelink service activity sample sizes*

| **Service Activity** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Applied for a payment, subsidy or similar | 358 |
| Received a payment, subsidy or concession card | 412 |
| Contacted Services Australia for advice/information | 228 |
| Accessed Services Australia's public information | 102 |
| Linked Centrelink to myGov | 361 |
| Managed Centrelink obligations | 402 |

*Services Australia – Centrelink access channel sample sizes*

| **Access Channel** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Phone call | 342 |
| Services Australia apps | 149 |
| Face-to-face (e.g. service centre) | 389 |
| Services Australia website | 227 |
| myGov | 623 |

*Services Australia – Child Support service activity sample sizes*

| **Service Activity** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Applied for a Child Support Assessment | 115 |
| Made a payment | 93 |
| Received a payment | 193 |
| Contacted Services Australia for advice/information | 136 |
| Accessed Services Australia's public information | 62 |
| Linked Child Support to myGov | 98 |
| Managed Child Support | 151 |

*Services Australia – Child Support access channel sample sizes*

| **Access Channel** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Phone call | 244 |
| Services Australia apps | 64 |
| Email | 56 |
| Services Australia website | 118 |
| myGov | 233 |

*Services Australia – Medicare service activity sample sizes*

| **Service Activity** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Applied for a Medicare Card | 142 |
| Applied for and/or received a reimbursement | 359 |
| Contacted Services Australia for information | 55 |
| Linked Medicare to myGov | 317 |
| Managed Medicare | 442 |

*Services Australia – Medicare access channel sample sizes*

| **Access Channel** | **Sample size** |
| --- | --- |
| Phone call | 170 |
| Services Australia apps | 109 |
| Face-to-face (e.g. service centre) | 108 |
| Healthcare provider | 247 |
| Services Australia website | 169 |
| myGov | 644 |

## Change in response scale in the 2023-24 financial year

In 2023, we implemented changes to the questionnaire based on recommendations by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and a previous independent review by The Australian National University’s Centre for Social Research. Both questionnaires, prior to these changes as well as after these changes, are available as supplementary materials to the 2024 Annual Report.

The updated questionnaire asks respondents to rate their trust and satisfaction on a 5-point Likert scale, with a 7-point Likert scale used previously (see Figure 1). The removal of two points on the scale (‘somewhat agree’ and ‘somewhat disagree’) resulted in a significantly greater proportion of respondents rating their trust and satisfaction as neutral (i.e. ‘neither agree nor disagree’).



Figure 1: the old (7-point) and new (5-point) Likert scales

To allow for historical comparisons to be made on an equivalent basis, we have corrected the results from previous years. The method used is described below and has been quality assured by ABS.

These adjustments mean that results in this report are not directly comparable to previous annual reports. The [online interactive dashboard](https://www.apsreform.gov.au/research/trust-in-australian-public-services/dashboard-of-survey-results) can be used to further explore changes over time.

#### Backcasting method and impact

In previously published results for the survey, ‘somewhat agree’ or ‘somewhat disagree’ responses on the 7-point Likert scale counted towards the percentage of respondents who trusted or distrusted services, respectively. However, these points were removed in the change to the 5-point Likert scale, resulting in a greater proportion of respondents selecting ‘neither agree nor disagree’ (i.e. neutral).

For the Trust in Australian public services 2024 Annual Report, we have modelled what the results from the 7-point Likert scale questionnaire would have been if a 5-point scale had been used instead so that previous results can be compared on an equivalent basis.

A proportion of the ‘somewhat agree' responses have been allocated to ‘neutral’ responses, with the remainder allocated to ‘agree’ responses. Similarly the ‘somewhat disagree’ responses have been allocated to either ‘disagree’ or ‘neutral’.

The same approach has been applied to convert the satisfaction results from a 7-point Likert scale to a 5-point scale.

##### Key Assumptions

This method assumes no change in real world trust or satisfaction between the old and new questionnaires. We are confident that this is a reasonable assumption given that both trust and distrust simultaneously decreased by approximately three percentage points. Normally, an increase in trust is associated with a decrease in distrust and vice versa. Without the correction applied, trust is also stable before and after the questionnaire change (see Figure 2)

Figure 2: Uncorrected trust before and after the change in Likert scale

The method also assumes that if past respondents who answered they ‘somewhat’ trusted had instead been asked to rate trust on a 5-point scale, then a constant proportion would have continued to report positive trust and the remainder would have reported neutral trust. The same assumption applies to the proportion of distrusting, satisfied, and dissatisfied respondents.

##### Calculation of factors

The above assumptions can be framed as the following equality for the proportion of trust over the periods July 2022 – September 2023 and November 2023 – June 2024:



Where

*w* is the wave number (June 2022 is wave 23, July 2022 is wave 24, etc.)

*sw* is the sample for wave *w*

*i* is the *i*th respondent is the sample

*1r,I* is an indicator variable that is 1 if respondent *i* gave a trust rating of *r*, and otherwise 0

The correction factor for the trust rating before November 2023 is then given by:



Similarly for distrust, satisfaction, and dissatisfaction.

The October 2023 data (wave 38) has been excluded from all reporting due to problems with data collection.

## Changes to the shortlist of services

### 2023-24: the addition of the AEC to the shortlist of services

From July 2023 onwards AEC was moved from a dropdown list of approximately 250 small agencies that deliver services to the shortlist of frequently accessed services because it was frequently selected relative to others within the dropdown list. This change resulted in 1,953 respondents in the 2023-2024 financial year indicating that they had accessed services from AEC in the past 12 months, compared with an average of 84 respondents per financial year under the previous version of the questionnaire. The increase in respondents is unlikely to be caused by the October 2023 referendum, as previous financial years have included federal elections without seeing any significant change in number of respondents selecting AEC. We assume the increased visibility of the service prompted a much higher proportion of respondents to recall they have accessed AEC services and therefore to select it.

Associated with this, there was an approximate 10 percentage point decline in the proportion of respondents reporting trust and satisfaction with the AEC, and an approximate 5 percentage point increase in the proportion of respondents reporting distrust and dissatisfaction. We hypothesise that this change is likely attributable to a selection bias, in that respondents who had overcome the friction of selecting the AEC from the dropdown list were motivated to do so because they held more memorable or stronger opinions towards the AEC.

### 2024-25: splitting the shortlist of services over multiple pages

From September 2024 we changed how the shortlist of frequently accessed services is presented to respondents. In the past respondents were asked to choose which services they accessed from a single list including all services on the shortlist (approximately 15-20 options). To make the list simpler to understand for respondents, we changed this to split the shortlist services across four pages of the questionnaire, each with 4-5 options.

This resulted in significantly more people selecting services they had accessed, as can be seen the [Service numbers](#_Service_numbers) section above. Given the size of the increases it is unlikely that it is a just a result of more people accessing services.

Trust and satisfaction in services accessed has increased by approximately 1 percentage point from 2023-24 to 2024-25, despite Trust in Australian public services overall increasing by approximately 4 percentage points in the same time period.

We hypothesise that is also likely attributable to a selection bias, in that the respondents who had overcome the friction of finding a service in the longer list were motivated to do so because they held more memorable or stronger opinions towards that service. The simpler to understand questionnaire may then have led to more neutral-feeling respondents correctly reporting which services they accessed, and therefore dampening the increase in trust and satisfaction for accessed services compared to trust in Australian public services overall.

Trust in Australian public services overall would have been unaffected by this change to the questionnaire, as it is asked of all respondents, and is asked before the changed question about which services were accessed.