

Help us restore trust in experts

Written by Charis Palmer, Deputy Editor, The Conversation

The Conversation thrives on readers and republishers who help us share our content, but we don't often ask *why* they do this.

Is it because they value academic expertise, facts and evidence, or is it because they agree with the sentiment expressed in the article? We hope it's the former, but we know that's not always the case.

For the most part we publish analysis, not opinion, aiming to inform rather than persuade. But today's readers can self-select, filtering out content they disagree with and refusing to engage when they feel discussions have become too vitriolic for them to meaningfully participate. The challenge remains getting people out of their bubble.

Trust in institutions, including government and the media continues to decline at a rate we should all be worried about. Trust in media dropped from 42% to 32% in Australia last year, according to [Edelman's Trust Barometer](#). This global survey also found disturbing trends in the attitude toward experts, with "a person like me" increasingly considered to be on par, in terms of credibility, with a technical or academic expert. 59% of people surveyed would rather believe a search engine than a human editor, and more than half (53%) do not regularly listen to people or organisations they disagree with.

We're keen to collaborate with more Australian media organisations to help restore some of the trust we've all lost.

One way publishers can do this is by republishing our content, including our [FactChecks](#), which we think are the most rigorous in the country. There's also opportunity for more formal collaborations, like sharing our news list in advance and working together on editorial projects. We've been working closely with academics for six years and can help reporters identify the most current experts to help bring more evidence to the table.

And for you, our reader, we're keen to hear how you share our content with your friends and family. How can we make it easier for the public to take in multiple points of view on issues that matter to them? The evidence tells us that simply [shouting more facts](#) at people doesn't work.

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Building trust and playing the long game does, something we will continue to do.

We're also experimenting with different types of storytelling to share facts in different ways. Like our [comic explainer](#) on memory.

It's a complex issue, but simply ignoring it is not an option. If trust in the media continues to erode and people lose faith in experts, our democracies will continue to suffer.

One of the aims of [our charter](#) is to provide the public with clarity and insight into society's biggest problems. The loss of support for evidence-based decision making is one such problem.

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