

Tuesday, 22 March 2022

Since March 2019 government trust & distrust have fluctuated but 2021 ended with soaring levels of distrust

Roy Morgan surveys on 'Trust' and 'Distrust' of government and government services show distrust levels soared in the second half of 2021 while trust in government fell after sexual assault allegations in Parliament house emerged in early 2021 and were followed by further allegations against Government MPs Christian Porter, Alan Tudge and Andrew Laming.

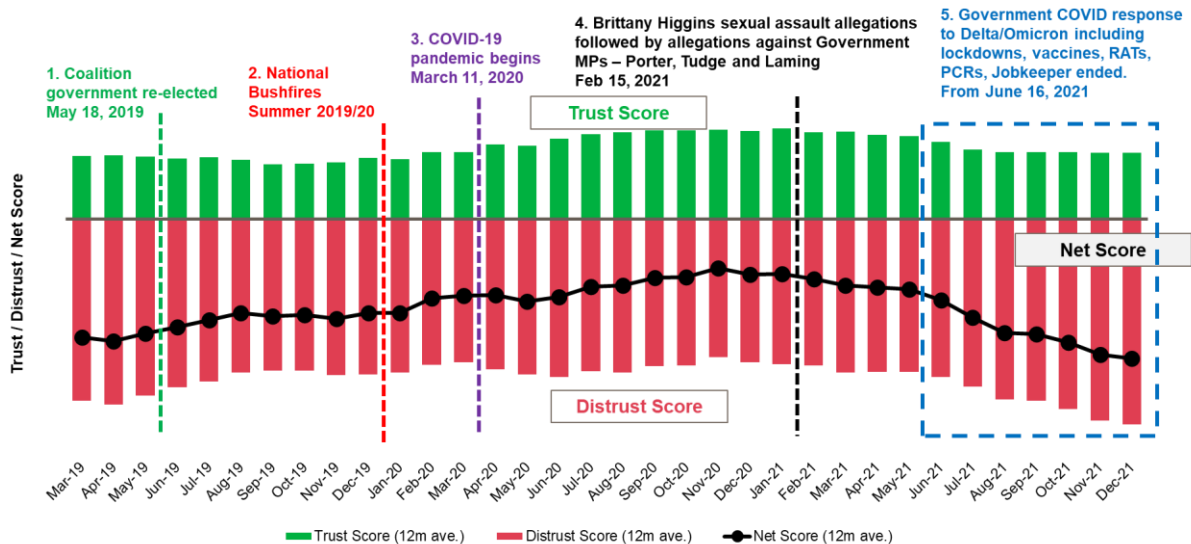
A look at trust and distrust during the term of the current government shows distrust in government and Government services has consistently far exceeded the level of trust leading to a consistently negative 'Net Trust Score' since early 2019.

During the early stages of the pandemic there was a clear increase in trust in Government and government services, however this higher than usual level of trust peaked at the end of 2020 and early in 2021 before the sexual assault allegations from Liberal Party staffer Brittany Higgins emerged.

The sexual assault allegations surrounding the Morrison Government have lingered over the past year and from June 2021 the emergence of the 'Delta variant' laid bare the Government's lack of preparedness for another outbreak of COVID-19.

The extended lockdowns in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra in the second half of 2021 along with the failure to procure enough vaccines and 'Rapid Antigen Tests' later in the year when the 'Omicron variant' emerged have seen distrust levels in government increase to record levels.

Government & Government services: Trust, Distrust and Net Trust (March 2019 – Dec. 2021)



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia). Risk Monitor. **Base:** Australians 14+, Latest 12 months average n=21,314; Latest 12 months average for industry n=700. Includes ABS, ACCC, AEC, ASIC, ATO, Centrelink, Comcare, CSIRO, Defence Force, Education Department, Federal Government, Government (unspecified), Local Government, Medicare, My Health Record, NDIS, Queensland Health, State Government, VicHealth.

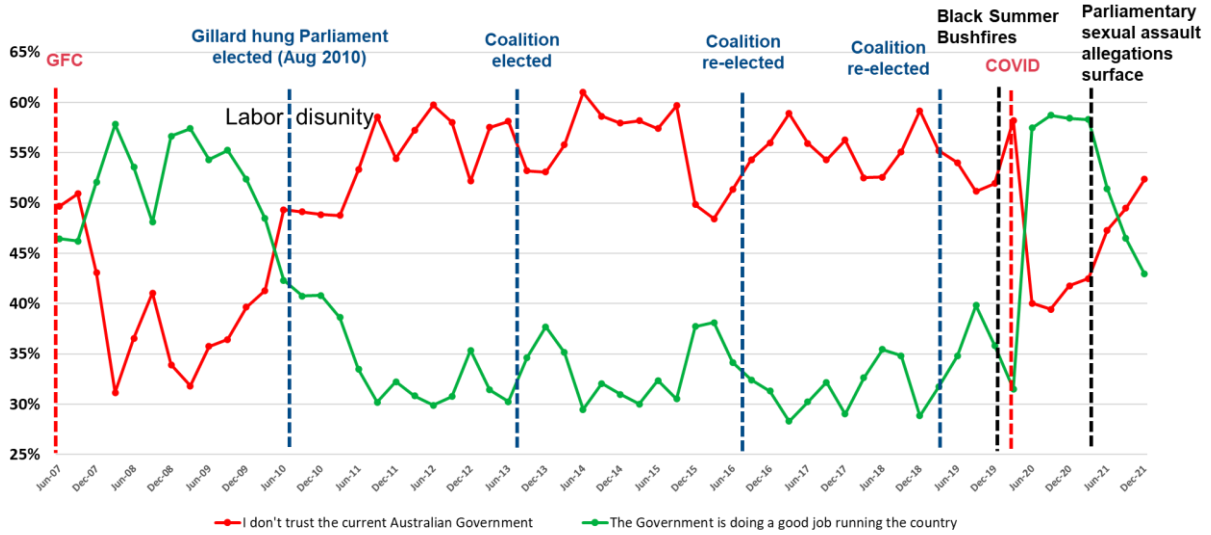
According to Roy Morgan CEO Michele Levine: "If we take a much longer view and go back to 2007, we see that during the Labor disunity of the Rudd / Gillard years distrust in the Australian government was very high while simultaneously any belief that the government was doing a good job was really low.

"That pattern remained pretty constant through the Abbott, Turnbull and early Morrison governments.

“Then in 2019 when Scott Morrison won the ‘unwinnable’ election things changed - more people believed the government was doing a good job and fewer people distrusted the government.

“But by June 2021 it all went into reverse - Black Summer bushfires, the end of JobKeeper, parliamentary sex scandals, COVID vaccination delays – all sent trust plummeting and distrust climbing.”

Government distrust (red) vs. Government doing a good job running the country (green)



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia). Base: Australians 14+; quarterly average.

“By March 2022 this pattern was being mirrored in the trust and distrust of our political leaders.”

From a snap SMS survey conducted in early March, Roy Morgan can reveal that **government leaders dominate the Net Distrust Score rankings: Prime Minister Scott Morrison is the most distrusted politician in Australia, with Defence Minister Peter Dutton and Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce the second and third most distrusted sitting politicians across the country.**

| Top Political Leaders with a Net Distrust Score March 2022 | |
|---|------------------------|
| | Clive Palmer |
| 1 | Scott Morrison |
| 2 | Peter Dutton |
| 3 | Barnaby Joyce |
| 4 | Pauline Hanson |
| | Vladimir Putin |
| 5 | Craig Kelly |
| 6 | Dominic Perrottet |
| 7 | Angus Taylor |
| 8 | Michaelia Cash |
| 9 | Josh Frydenberg |
| | Donald Trump |
| 10 | Matthew Guy |

Source: Roy Morgan Snap SMS survey conducted on February 28 – March 1, 2022.
Base: Australians aged 14+. n=1,409.

Clive Palmer (not in parliament and therefore not in the rankings) has the highest *Net Distrust Score* (net scores are calculated by subtracting distrust scores from trust scores). Taking distrust on its own however Scott Morrison is more *distrusted* than Clive Palmer.

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg has improved his *Net Distrust Score* ranking to be in 9th position (from 4th place in March 2020).

“With Peter Dutton the second most distrusted politician in Australia and Josh Frydenberg almost out of the top ten, this may well become crucial if the Coalition loses the May election and there’s a leadership battle between Frydenberg & Dutton,” said Ms. Levine.

“Australian political contests are no longer purely won on trust, they are lost on distrust.”

The March survey reveals the political reverse when it comes to the most trusted political leaders in the country. **The ALP dominates the *Net Trust Score* rankings with Penny Wong in the #1 position.**

| Political Leaders with Net Trust Score March 2022 | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1 | Penny Wong |
| 2 | Anthony Albanese |
| 3 | Tanya Plibersek |
| 4 | Mark McGowan |
| 5 | Jacqui Lambie |
| | <i>Gladys Berejiklian</i> |
| 7 | Adam Bandt |

Source: Roy Morgan Snap SMS survey conducted on February 28 – March 1, 2022.

Base: Australians aged 14+. n=1,409.

Anthony Albanese has improved his *Net Trust Score* ranking to move from 8th position in March 2020 to 2nd place by March 2022. Looking solely at trust, the Opposition Leader is the most trusted politician in Australia.

According to Michele Levine, *“The Labor Party is the big winner in this survey with Anthony Albanese the most trusted sitting politician, followed by Penny Wong, Tanya Plibersek and WA Premier Mark McGowan.*

“My take-out from the significant win for Mark McGowan in last year’s WA election and the big swing away from the increasingly distrusted Coalition in Saturday’s South Australian election is that the upcoming federal election will be won or lost on how distrusted a party’s leaders are.

“And a final word on the SA election, my view is not so much that the various polls got it right but that respondents to the pre-election polls did on election day what they said they were going to do.”

Register here for the special Roy Morgan webinar now and receive a live link immediately prior to the presentation: <https://roymorgantrustreport2022.eventbrite.com.au>.

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About Roy Morgan

Roy Morgan is Australia’s largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state, as well as in the U.S. and U.K. A full-service research organisation, Roy Morgan has over 75 years’ experience collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

| Sample Size | Percentage Estimate | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| | 40%-60% | 25% or 75% | 10% or 90% | 5% or 95% |
| 1,000 | ±3.0 | ±2.7 | ±1.9 | ±1.3 |