

Trust in polities concerns Australian voters

December 6 2012

More than half of Australians think they have no say about what the government does nor any influence on politics, a new analysis from QUT shows.

And fewer than a third of Australians surveyed (27 per cent) believe that MPs try to keep promises made during an [election campaign](#).

The paper "[Are We Keeping the Bastards Honest? Perceptions of Corruption, Integrity and Influence on Politics](#)", is based on results from the 2007 Australian Survey of [Social Attitudes](#), a biennial survey of about 8000 Australians.

QUT [political scientist](#) Professor Clive Bean, author of the paper, said there was a strong sense among Australians that "it's not what you know but who you know" that matters when it comes to political influence.

"Many Australians feel relatively powerless in the political arena," he said.

"They are concerned that people with the right connections will get more favourable treatment from public officials and Australians are not confident that elected politicians and appointed public officials can be trusted.

"Only two per cent of voters surveyed were confident treatment people receive from public officials definitely did not depend on who they know."

The paper was published in the new book *Australia: Identity, Fear and Governance in the 21st Century*, published by Australian National University E-Press.

Professor Bean's analysis showed 53 per cent of Australians surveyed strongly agreed/agreed that "people like me don't have any say about what the government does".

And 58 per cent of [respondents](#) strongly disagreed/disagreed that the "average citizen had considerable influence on politics".

Professor Bean said most Australians surveyed thought there was little [corruption](#) in Australian politics, with one in six (17 per cent) people believing quite a lot or all politicians were corrupt.

Nearly half of those surveyed (45 per cent) said there were "almost none or a few" politicians involved in corruption, with another 38 per cent saying some politicians were.

"Corruption does not appear to be seen by the public as a major problem in Australian politics, but as in so many countries, trust in politicians is modest at best," he said.

Professor Bean said university-educated [Australians](#) and people who had a high degree of "social trust" and felt connected to their communities were less likely to be cynical about politics.

"[Australia: Identity, Fear and Governance in the 21st Century](#)," edited by Juliet Pietsch and Haydn Aarons, is available through Australian National University E-Press.

More information: [epress.anu.edu.au/wp-content/u ... ds/2012/11/ch075.pdf](http://epress.anu.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/ch075.pdf)

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

Citation: Trust in pollies concerns Australian voters (2012, December 6) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-12-pollies-australian-voters.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.