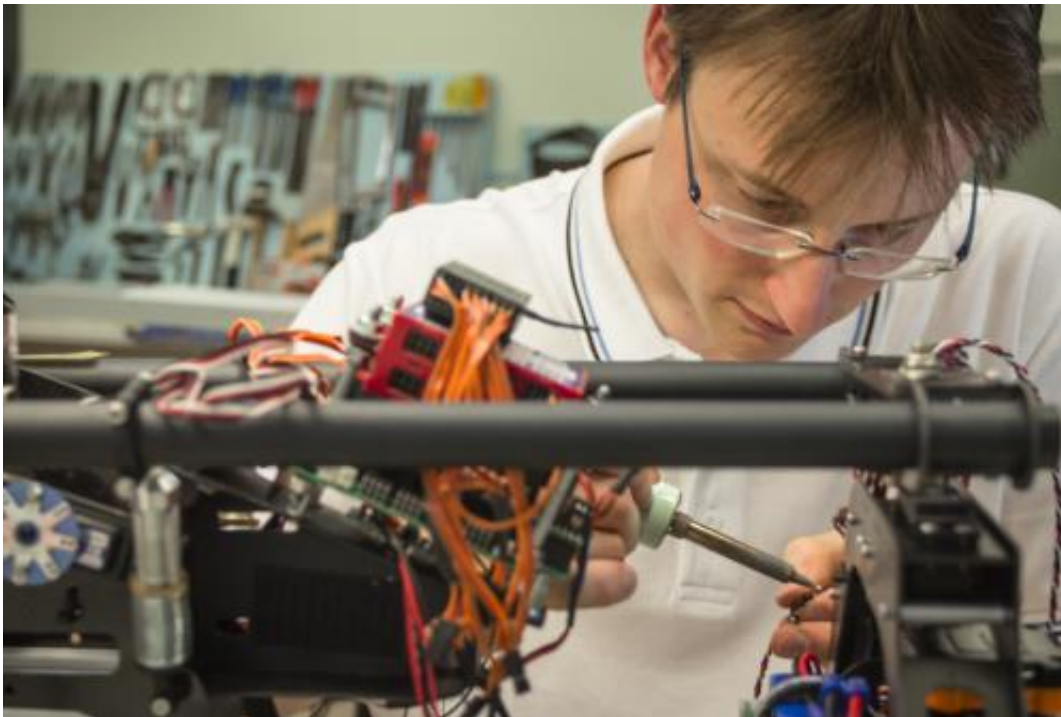


Australians respect science but don't know the details

May 29 2014



A new report has found Australians have extremely positive attitudes about science and technology, although they're not always clear about the details.

The report, entitled How do Australians engage with [science](#)? presents preliminary findings from a national survey, designed by Dr Suzette

Searle from the Australian National Centre for the Public Awareness of Science.

The survey found 80 per cent of participants agreed that science was very important to solving many of the problems facing us as a society today, yet only 49 per cent could name an Australian achievement in [science and technology](#).

"It's clear that most Australians think scientific research makes an important contribution to the economy, that they see careers in science as good careers, that they engage with information about science and technology frequently and recognise science and technology as part of everyday life," Dr Searle says.

For example, 87 per cent of respondents had spoken about technology with friends, family or colleagues in a social situation in the previous 12 months, and two thirds had visited a science related venue.

While participants placed much more trust in scientists than they did in radio talkback hosts, politicians or religious leaders, 21 per cent did not know who they could trust as a source of accurate scientific information. A further nine per cent felt they could trust no one.

"It's heartening, however, that people do talk about and participate in science and technology so much," Dr Searle says. "But we need to find out more about why those people didn't know who to trust."

Only 31 per cent and 40 per cent respectively felt the media provided them with enough information about science, and technology. Nearly 60 per cent cited internet searches as their preferred source of information.

"The findings of this survey are important because Australians are telling us that they value the role of scientists, science and [technology](#) in our

society," says Dr Searle.

The [survey](#) of 1020 Australians over the age of 18 was conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs.

More information: The report is available online:
[diffusion.weblogs.anu.edu.au/f...ence.-April-2014.pdf](#)

Provided by Australian National University

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