

# Progress 4: Governance



Australia's system of government is founded in the liberal democratic tradition. Based on the values of religious tolerance, freedom of speech and association, and the rule of law, Australia's institutions and practices of government reflect British and North American models.

Governance is the authority of the different levels in the system of government to manage a country's affairs. It includes the mechanisms, processes and institutions that regulate individuals' activities as well the way individuals are included in making decisions about aspects that affect their lives.<sup>55</sup>

Characteristics of good governance include approaches that are participatory, accountable, transparent, efficient and equitable.

Governance			
Trust		Participation	
Generalised trust	p. 156	Voter turnout	p. 159
Informal votes	p. 158	Participation in a civic or political group	p. 160
		Uptake of Australian citizenship	p. 162

<sup>55</sup> United Nations, Committee of Experts on Public Administration (UNPAN), Definition of basic concepts and terminologies in governance and public administration, 2006 (E/C.16/2006/4), New York

## P 4.1 Trust

### P 4.1.1 Generalised trust

Generalised trust measures the degree that people in a community feel they can trust one another. Generalised trust is considered a measure of progress for trust in the integrity of governments and private institutions, for example, whether or not the police, one's doctor and hospital could be generally trusted or be trusted to do 'the right thing' for the individual. While there are many personal and circumstantial factors that influence the level of trust people have for one another, governance systems in society are likely to also play a role due to the significant influence they have over many aspects of people's lives.<sup>56</sup>

- Overall there has been no change between 2006 and 2010 in the level of generalised trust reported by Australians, with just over 54 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing that most people can be trusted.

#### *Generalised trust across remoteness classes*

- Across the remoteness classes there was a slight increase in generalised trust in major cities (up from 53.2 per cent to 54.0 per cent) compared to a decrease in the remaining classes.
- While there was a slight decrease in trust across inner regional Australia (down from 56.3 per cent to 55.7 per cent), people living in inner regional Australia still had the highest generalised trust.
- The decline in outer regional and remote Australia was much larger, decreasing by 3.5 percentage points to 51.9 per cent.
- In 2006 the major cities of Australia were the only remoteness class where generalised trust was below the national average. However, in 2010 generalised trust in the major cities was comparable to the national average and the level of trust in the three most remote classes had dropped below the national average.

*Table P 4.1.1.a Levels of generalised trust by remoteness class*

<i>Remoteness Class</i>	<i>2006 per cent</i>	<i>2010 per cent</i>	<i>2006–2010 change percentage points</i>
Major Cities	53.2	54.0	0.8
Inner Regional	56.3	55.7	-0.6
Outer Regional and Remote	55.4	51.9	-3.5
AUSTRALIA	54.1	54.1	0.0

Source: ABS, General Social Survey, Australia 2006 and 2010

Persons aged 18 years and over.

Proportion of persons who agree or strongly agree that most people can be trusted.

Remoteness area estimates exclude very remote areas as the General Social Survey was not conducted in very remote parts of Australia.

<sup>56</sup> Adapted from ABS, Measures of Australia's Progress, 2013.

### Generalised trust across capital cities and the balance of state

- Only three regions (the ACT, areas of NSW outside the capital, and Greater Darwin) had no or limited change in generalised trust between 2006 and 2010. The remaining regions were evenly split, six recording higher trust in 2011 and six lower.
- The highest increases in trust occurred in Greater Hobart, Greater Adelaide and the areas of Tasmania outside the capital, all increasing by more than five percentage points and all having above the national average level of trust in 2011.
- The largest decreases in trust were observed in the areas outside of the Northern Territory outside the capital (10.5 percentage points), the areas of South Australia outside the capital (9.3 percentage points) and Greater Brisbane (3.7 percentage points). All three of these regions had shifted from generalised trust at or above the national average in 2006 to levels below the national average in 2010.

Table P 4.1.1.b Levels of generalised trust by capital city/balance of state

Capital City / Rest of State	2006 per cent	2010 per cent	2006–2010 change percentage points
Greater Sydney	52.0	50.0	-2.0
Rest of New South Wales	56.6	56.5	-0.1
Greater Melbourne	51.7	54.9	3.2
Rest of Victoria	57.7	60.7	3.0
Greater Brisbane	54.5	50.8	-3.7
Rest of Queensland	53.4	50.8	-2.6
Greater Adelaide	50.7	57.3	6.6
Rest of South Australia	63.1	53.8	-9.3
Greater Perth	57.6	56.3	-1.3
Rest of Western Australia	54.1	55.9	1.8
Greater Hobart	55.0	62.2	7.2
Rest of Tasmania	54.5	59.9	5.4
Greater Darwin	51.7	51.5	-0.2
Rest of Northern Territory	57.0	46.5	-10.5
Australian Capital Territory	61.5	61.5	0.0

Source: ABS, General Social Survey, Australia 2006 and 2010

Persons aged 18 years and over.

Proportion of persons who agree or strongly agree that most people can be trusted.

## P 4.1.2 Informal votes

Informal votes in Australian federal elections are an indicator of trust in governance processes and systems. An informal vote is a ballot paper which has been incorrectly completed or not filled in at all. Informal votes are not counted towards any candidate. The rate of informal voting is the proportion of informal votes cast as a proportion of the total number of votes in a federal election. This is calculated separately for each house of the Parliament.

If trust in governance systems in Australia was low, then this could be reflected by the community through a high rate of informal voting at federal elections. This measure intends to capture some of this likely effect.<sup>57</sup>

- Nationally there has been an increase in the rate of informal voting for the House of Representatives between 2007 and 2013 (up from 4.0 per cent to 5.9 per cent).
- While there was an overall increase in the rate of informal Senate votes cast between the 2007 and 2013 elections, there was a much larger increase between 2007 and 2010 which was followed by a moderate decline between 2010 and 2013.

### Informal votes by remoteness<sup>58</sup>

- Consistent with the national trend, all levels of remoteness showed an increase in the rate of informal voting between 2007 and 2013. The largest increase in informal voting in the House of Representatives occurred in outer metropolitan regions, up 2.4 percentage points to 6.3 per cent (also the highest rate of informal voting across the remoteness classes).
- The lowest increase for informal voting for the House of Representatives was in rural regions where informal votes increased by 1.7 percentage points to 5.5 per cent between 2007 and 2013 (the lowest rate of informal voting across the remoteness levels).
- There was less variation across remoteness levels for changes in the rate of informal voting in the Senate, with all areas having an increase of between 0.3 and 0.5 percentage points between 2007 and 2013.

Table P 4.1.2.a Informal votes in Australian federal elections by remoteness

Remoteness	2007 per cent	2010 per cent	2013 per cent	2007–2013 change percentage points	Trend
<b>House of Representatives</b>					
Inner Metropolitan	4.2	5.6	6.0	1.8	
Outer Metropolitan	4.0	5.9	6.3	2.4	
Provincial	3.7	5.5	5.7	2.0	
Rural	3.8	5.1	5.5	1.7	
AUSTRALIA	4.0	5.6	5.9	2.0	
<b>Senate</b>					
Inner Metropolitan	2.6	3.6	3.1	0.5	
Outer Metropolitan	2.8	4.1	3.2	0.3	
Provincial	2.3	3.6	2.7	0.4	
Rural	2.3	3.6	2.8	0.4	
AUSTRALIA	2.5	3.7	3.0	0.4	

Source: AEC, Virtual Tally Room, 2007, 2010, 2013

Commonwealth electoral divisions (CEDs) have been classified according to the AEC demographic classification system. This is broadly comparable to the ASGS Remoteness Structure.

Informal votes as a proportion of total votes at each election.

<sup>57</sup> Adapted from ABS, Measures of Australia's Progress, 2013.

<sup>58</sup> Commonwealth electoral divisions (CEDs) have been classified according to the Australian Electoral Commission demographic classification system. This is broadly comparable to the ASGS Remoteness Structure.

## P 4.2 Participation

### P 4.2.1 Voter turnout

Voter turnout at federal elections indicates the involvement of Australians in the decision making process. Voting is a significant activity people can undertake to influence the systems that govern them. When voter turnout at federal elections is high, it indicates that people are actively involved in making decisions that affect both themselves and the wider community. Voter turnout can be different for the House of Representatives and the Senate, as it is based on ballots cast separately for each house. The level of voter turnout in Australia is also heavily influenced by compulsory voting laws which should be taken into account when interpreting this indicator.<sup>59</sup>

- Nationally voter turnout for the House of Representatives decreased between 2007 and 2013 (down 1.5 percentage points to 93.2 per cent). Voter turnout for Senate elections showed a similar pattern (decreasing by 1.3 percentage points to 93.9 per cent).
- In both the House of Representatives and Senate the reduction in voter turnout occurred between the 2007 and 2010 elections, with voter turnout at the 2013 election similar to 2010 levels.

#### Voter turnout by remoteness<sup>60</sup>

- Voter turnout across all remoteness levels decreased in line with the national trends for both the House of Representatives and the Senate.
- Inner metropolitan regions had the largest decrease in voter turnout and also the lowest rates of turnout for both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Outer metropolitan regions also had decreases larger than the national average.
- Provincial and rural regions had smaller decreases in voter turnout and also maintained the highest levels of voter turnout between 2007 and 2013 for both the House of Representatives and Senate.

Table P 4.2.1.a Voter turnout at federal elections by remoteness

Remoteness	2007	2010	2013	2007-2013	Trend
	per cent	per cent	per cent	change percentage points	
<b>House of Representatives</b>					
Inner Metropolitan	94.1	92.2	92.2	-1.9	
Outer Metropolitan	95.1	93.4	93.4	-1.7	
Provincial	95.2	93.9	94.1	-1.0	
Rural	94.9	93.7	93.7	-1.2	
AUSTRALIA	94.8	93.2	93.2	-1.5	
<b>Senate</b>					
Inner Metropolitan	94.6	93.0	93.0	-1.6	
Outer Metropolitan	95.5	94.1	94.1	-1.4	
Provincial	95.5	94.4	94.6	-0.9	
Rural	95.2	94.1	94.2	-1.0	
AUSTRALIA	95.2	93.8	93.9	-1.3	

Source: AEC, Virtual Tally Room, 2007, 2010, 2013

Commonwealth electoral divisions (CEDs) have been classified according to the AEC demographic classification system. This is broadly comparable to the ASGS remoteness classes.

<sup>59</sup> Adapted from ABS, Measures of Australia's Progress, 2013.

<sup>60</sup> Commonwealth electoral divisions (CEDs) have been classified according to the Australian Electoral Commission demographic classification system. This is broadly comparable to the ASGS Remoteness Structure.

## P 4.2.2 Participation in a civic or political group

This indicator measures the proportion of the population aged 18 years and over who actively participated in a civic or political group in the last 12 months. Active participation in civic and political groups is measure of progress in terms of the opportunity to contribute to decision making. When participation in civic or political groups is high, it indicates that there are sufficient opportunities for people to get involved and contribute to organisations that affect social governance systems. However, if active participation in civic or political groups is low this suggests there are few opportunities to get involved.<sup>61</sup>

- Nationally, there has been little change in the level of participation in a civic or political group between 2006 and 2010, increasing marginally from 18.6 per cent to 18.7 per cent.

### *Participation in a civic or political group across remoteness classes*

- Major cities and inner regional areas showed very little change, both decreasing by 0.1 percentage point.
- At the same time, the level of participation in a civic or political group increased by 2.80 percentage points in outer regional and remote areas.

Table P 4.2.2.a People who have actively participated in a civic or political group in the last 12 months by remoteness class

Remoteness Class	2006	2010	2006–2010
	per cent	per cent	change percentage points
Major Cities	18.1	18.0	-0.1
Inner Regional	19.9	19.8	-0.1
Outer Regional and Remote	18.8	21.6	2.8
AUSTRALIA	18.6	18.7	0.1

Source: ABS, General Social Survey, 2006, 2010

Persons aged 18 years and over.

Remoteness area estimates exclude very remote areas as the General Social Survey was not conducted in very remote parts of Australia.



<sup>61</sup> Adapted from ABS, Measures of Australia's Progress, 2013.

### Participation in a civic or political group across capital cities and the balance of state

- The proportion of people actively involved in a civic or political group increased in eight regions, was unchanged in one region (the areas of Tasmania outside the capital) and decreased in six regions.
- The largest increase in participation occurred in the areas of the Northern Territory outside the capital,<sup>62</sup> Greater Darwin, the areas of South Australia outside the capital, and Greater Adelaide, with all having participation rates above the national average in both 2006 and 2010.
- In contrast, the largest decreases in civic or political group participation were in Greater Perth and areas of New South Wales outside the capital, all decreasing by more than 1.5 percentage points.

Table P 4.2.2.b People who have actively participated in a civic or political group in the last 12 months by capital city/balance of state

Capital City/Balance of State	2006 per cent	2010 per cent	2006–2010 change percentage points
Greater Sydney	18.0	16.3	-1.7
Rest of New South Wales	18.9	17.0	-1.9
Greater Melbourne	17.2	16.8	-0.4
Rest of Victoria	19.9	22.5	2.6
Greater Brisbane	19.5	21.6	2.1
Rest of Queensland	19.2	21.1	1.9
Greater Adelaide	16.6	20.2	3.6
Rest of South Australia	15.5	20.1	4.6
Greater Perth	20.9	18.7	-2.2
Rest of Western Australia	18.2	21.7	3.5
Greater Hobart	19.8	19.1	-0.7
Rest of Tasmania	17.5	17.5	0.0
Greater Darwin	25.9	31.1	5.2
Rest of Northern Territory	22.9	*32.6	9.7
Australian Capital Territory	23.9	23.5	-0.4

Source: ABS, General Social Survey, 2006, 2010

Persons aged 18 years and over.

Remoteness area estimates exclude very remote areas as the General Social Survey was not conducted in very remote parts of Australia.

\*Estimate has a relative standard error of 25 per cent to 50 per cent and should be used with caution.

<sup>62</sup> Estimate for 2010 has a relative standard error of 25 per cent to 50 per cent and should be used with caution.

## P 4.2.3 Uptake of Australian citizenship

Uptake of Australian citizenship indicates whether new migrants to Australia are adopting the rights and responsibilities of being an Australian citizen. In order to access a number of rights, including the right to vote or to stand for public office, it is necessary that new migrants take up Australian citizenship. In this context, an increase in the uptake of Australian citizenship can be interpreted, at least indirectly, as an indication of people's willingness to take responsibility for being an active participant in societal decision making.<sup>63</sup>

- Across the nation there was an increase in the uptake of Australian Citizenship for new eligible migrants, up by 2.2 percentage points from 77.5 per cent in 2001 to 79.7 per cent in 2011.

### *Uptake of Australian citizenship across remoteness classes*

- An increase was observed across all of the remoteness classes, with the exception of very remote areas.
- The largest increase, 4.0 percentage points, occurred in inner regional Australia, which was also the only remoteness class to increase at a rate above the national average. Notwithstanding this increase, the total uptake of citizenship in inner regional locations trailed that of major cities.
- Very remote areas were the only category where there was a decrease in the uptake of citizenship between 2001 and 2011, decreasing by 1.4 percentage points from 68.4 per cent to 67.0 per cent.

Table P 4.2.3.a Uptake of Australian citizenship by remoteness class

Remoteness Class	2001	2006	2011	2001-2011	Trend
	per cent	per cent	per cent	change percentage points	
Major Cities	78.9	80.4	80.6	1.7	
Inner Regional	70.8	73.8	74.8	4.0	
Outer Regional	72.4	74.3	74.3	1.9	
Remote	69.7	71.5	70.5	0.8	
Very Remote	68.4	69.7	67.0	-1.4	
AUSTRALIA	77.5	79.4	79.7	2.2	

Source: ABS, 2001, 2006, 2011 Censuses of Population and Housing, custom data request

Persons must be overseas-born residents who have lived in Australia for five or more years who are also Australian citizens.

### *Uptake of Australian citizenship across major urban areas*

- Every major urban area with the exception of Greater Darwin saw an increase in the uptake of citizenship for new migrants between 2001 and 2011.
- The largest increases occurred in Bendigo, Launceston, Greater Hobart, and Wollongong, with each of these cities having an increase of 4.0 percentage points or more. The uptake of citizenship in Bendigo and Launceston was still below the national average.
- Greater Darwin was the only major urban area to record a decrease in the uptake of citizenship, with a 0.2 percentage point decline between 2001 and 2011. However, Greater Darwin still had the third highest take-up rate at 81.3 per cent in 2011.

<sup>63</sup> Adapted from ABS, Measures of Australia's Progress, 2013.