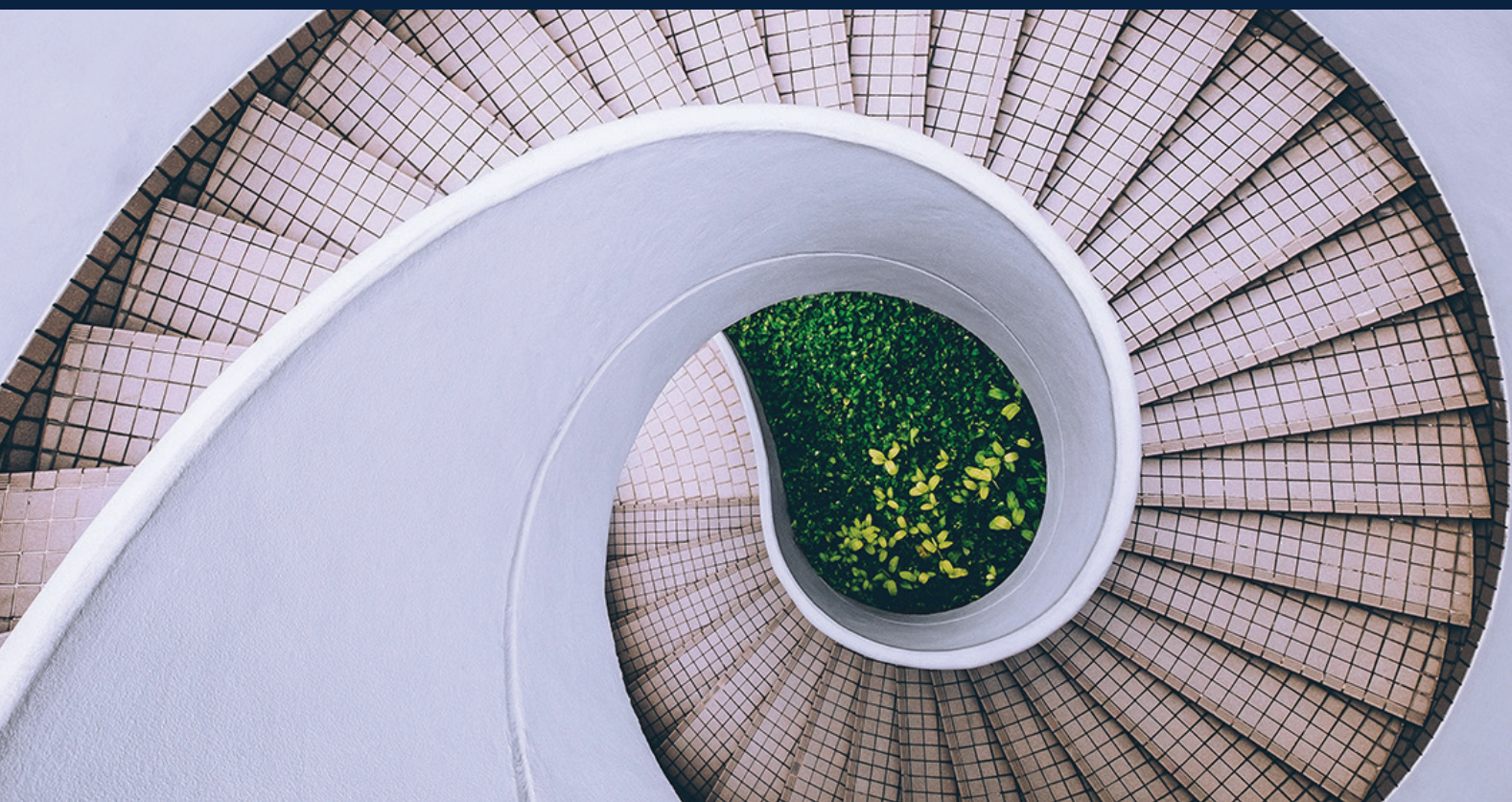




# Together Index 2021

The impact of communication on social cohesion



## MELBOURNE

**Darren Behar**

Managing Partner

P +61 458 001 296

E [darren@senateshj.com.au](mailto:darren@senateshj.com.au)

## SYDNEY

**Jodie Wrigley**

Head of Health and Social Change

P +61 402 303 555

E [jodie@senateshj.com.au](mailto:jodie@senateshj.com.au)

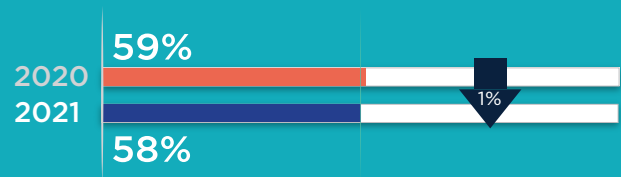
[www.senateshj.com](http://www.senateshj.com)

senate **shj**

# The Togetherness Index

The Togetherness Index (TI) considers what communication elements contribute to social cohesion, or togetherness, within the community.

Our first survey occurred in 2020. Here are the highlights of our second wave survey. The overarching Togetherness Index remained stable at 58 compared with 59 in 2020 – a good sign given the challenging past 12 months.



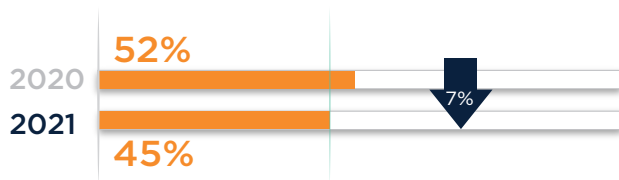
But, we find some interesting trends and significant challenges to overcome when we dig deeper into the results.

## Are people listening to their governments?

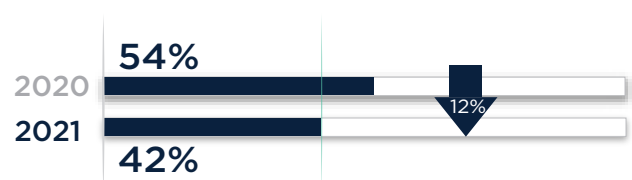
The latest Togetherness Index research shows that state and federal government trust has dropped dramatically in the past year. Trust in federal government communication has fallen to 42% from 54%, while trust in state government communication is down at 45%.

We are also less likely to act on what we hear from our governments. Just a third of people say federal government communication is influential

on their behaviour. Only two fifths of people give this communication much thought. The results raise the spectre of complacency across Australia. This is of particular interest as we also disengage from other forms of communication (see page 2) and social media's power holds up. With COVID-19 largely tamed, despite outbreaks, many may have relaxed and tuned out. The impact of issues with the COVID-19 vaccine rollout may also be having an impact. In



Trust in state government falls 7%

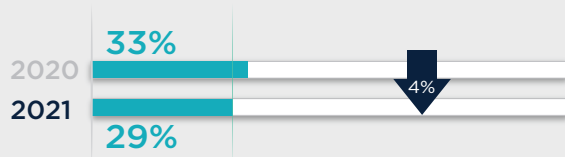


Trust in federal government falls 12%

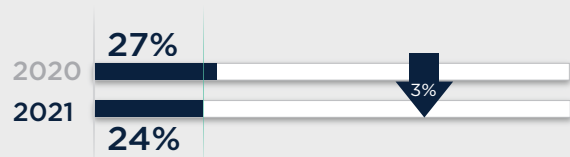
## WHY IS BUSINESS NOT CUTTING THROUGH?

**In the past 12 months, we have heard a great deal about the need and desire for businesses to connect with their stakeholders and communities – to be good citizens.**

Institutional investors and others are putting the pressure on from an ESG perspective, CEOs talk about being purpose-led and connected to and engaging with stakeholders, and businesses have done a lot of work to step up throughout COVID-19. So why is the dial not shifting? Our research shows they still have a long way to go. Just a quarter of people trust what business leaders say, and a similar proportion give much thought to what they say. Few find what business leaders say influences what they do or think. And the proportion simply has not moved since our first survey.



Trust in leaders of large businesses remains low



Only 24% think about messages communicated by large businesses

## How important is social media?

**Social media continues to play a significant role in connecting people, both friends and families.**

This comes at a time when trust in information shared through all other avenues has declined.

It is also playing a significant role in motivating people to change their behaviour, and this clearly amplifies the risk of misinformation. The results indicate that trust in information shared through social media by people and organisations other than friends and family has increased slightly.



Only 20% believe messages communicated through social media have been influential



People trust what they see on social media (excluding family and friends)

Over a quarter still feel optimistic when seeing communication via social media and a similar proportion give a great deal of thought to information on social media, demonstrating its importance in connecting to people. A fifth will change their behaviour.

For more information visit [www.senateshj.com/togethernessindex](http://www.senateshj.com/togethernessindex)