

Public attitudes to science in Australia

Findings from national research commissioned by the Australian Academy of Science

Australians place a high and enduring value on science and its contribution to society. New national research shows strong support for science, investment in research, and the role of government in funding scientific progress.

Strong support for science

89% of Australians (nearly nine in ten) believe science and technology have a positive influence on society.

This reflects a broad and deeply held view that science underpins everyday life, contributes to national progress, and helps address complex challenges.

“A world can’t exist without science. Every day, every moment is filled with science.” - *50+ age group*



Broad support for investment

Australians recognise the importance of sustained investment in science.

84% agree there are many good reasons to invest in science

77% say it is important for Australia to invest in science when considering competing spending priorities

Why science matters to Australians

Australians see investment in science as delivering benefits across multiple areas critical to Australia’s future:



Health and medical advances, improving quality and length of life



Economic prosperity, through gains in productivity, jobs and efficiency



Knowledge creation, strengthening our diagnostic and problem-solving capacity



Technology development, enabling innovation and competitiveness



Environmental understanding, supporting sustainable management of resources



National security, including defence capability



Informed policy-making, supporting better public decision-making



National pride, through Australia’s contribution to global discovery

“[Science] explains how everything works, keeps us safe, and shows us how we can keep the world going.”

- *18-29 age group*



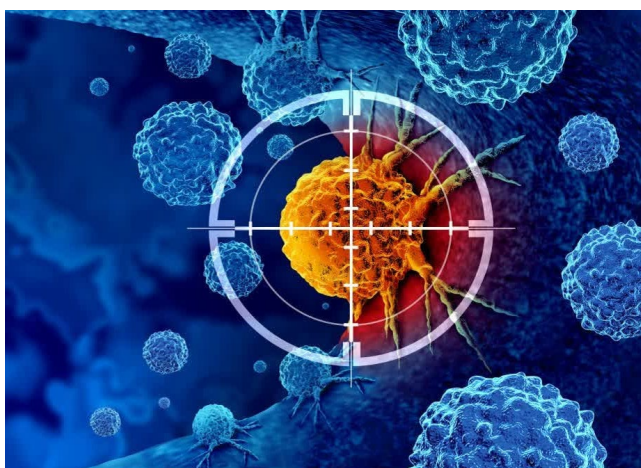
Expectation of government leadership

Australians see government as central to supporting science.

73% (nearly three-quarters) believe government should be one of the top funders of scientific research.

Balancing curiosity and impact

Australians understand that scientific discovery can be unpredictable, but ultimately valuable.



“The cost of science is knowing... sometimes it’s the unexpected that matters most.” - 50+ age group



Science and Australia’s future

The research highlights a strong connection in public attitudes between scientific investment and Australia’s future position in the world.

Australians recognise that sustained investment helps maintain independence, capability and global competitiveness. They are proud in Australia’s history of practical innovation and problem-solving.

“If we fall to the bottom rung, we’ll be at the mercy of other countries that have invested heavily in science.”

- 30-49 age group



“Australia has a proud history of coming up with unique solutions to practical problems... it’s something we should be really proud of.” - 50+ age group



Methodology

Five online focus groups and n=1,500 nationally representative survey conducted by SEC Newgate Australia (ISO20252:2019) between 10th November and 3rd December, 2025.

