ANZPAA
Australia New Zealand
Policing Advisory Agency

Trust in police

Compendium | 2021

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Contents

Introduction **3**
Part 1: Understanding trust in police **4**
Key Concepts 4
Trust 4
Confidence 4
Legitimacy 5
Why trust is important 5
Part 2: The Four Dimensions of Trust **6**
Applying the Four Dimensions of Trust 8
Measuring and monitoring 8
Methods 8
Building and maintaining trust 9
Part 3: Forming perceptions of trust **10**
Environmental factors 10
Institutional Roles 10
Media Portrayals 11
Police Politicisation 12
Interactive factors 13
Types of Experiences 13
Militarisation 13
Perceptions of fairness 14
Conclusions 15
Policing's reserve of trust 15
Forming perceptions and the Four Dimensions of Trust 15
Appendix A: Trust surveys and questions **16**
References **21**

ANZPAA

Introduction

The Trust in police: Compendium is a document that draws together over three years of ANZPAA research and analysis on a range of topics relating to police trust and legitimacy. This document explores the key concepts relating to trust. It further examines how public perceptions of trust may be formed and how these perceptions could impact policing.

Since 2018, Police Commissioners across Australia and New Zealand, serving in their role as the ANZPAA Board identified community trust and police legitimacy as key strategic priorities for policing across Australia and New Zealand. Trust as a concept can be vague difficult to define.

To address this inherent ambiguity, ANZPAA developed the Four Dimensions of Trust as a foundation for a shared understanding of trust across Australian and New Zealand policing. From this foundation, ANZPAA undertook additional work that included:

- the development of tools for measuring and monitoring trust
- an exploration of factors which cause trust to be lost and the consequences this may pose for police
- numerous shorter briefings, environment scans, and presentations.

The Trust in Policing: Compendium (Compendium) compiles ANZPAA's work on trust and legitimacy since 2018. The compendium is structured as follows:

- **Part 1: Understanding trust in police** – detailing key concepts and ideas associated with understanding trust.
- **Part 2: The Four Dimensions of Trust** – exploring trust as multi-dimensional and detailing the Four Dimensions of trust as a tool for police.
- **Part 3: Forming perceptions of trust** – examining factors which may influence how the public form their perceptions of trust.

In combining the work into this compendium ANZPAA has been able to collate a large body of work in key areas for ease of access across policing. The Compendium may be used as a reference tool as each theme is self-contained, detailing the research and findings pertaining to it.

The full compendium may also be used to understand and operationalise the Four Dimensions of Trust, and as a guide to understanding (and therefore preventing) common factors which may cause a loss of trust in police.

Ultimately, this compendium is aimed to empower police leaders, officers and staff through delivering a collective piece that may inform their own research, discussions and initiatives relating to trust in policing.

It should be acknowledged that, while trust in policing is an important, highly researched area, this compendium only focuses on the work undertaken conducted by ANZPAA on this matter.

Part 1: Understanding trust in police

Part 1 of this compendium is aimed at developing a common understanding of trust and its importance for police. This part examines key concepts associated with trust, and the importance of trust for police.

Key Concepts

Trust

Trust mitigates uncertainty in the world. It assures people that others will act as expected, particularly in situations of uncertainty, risk, or vulnerability.[1] As such, trust can be understood as:

"the positive features of an individual's (the trustor's) expectations for how another party (the trustee) might act in situations of uncertainty, risk, or vulnerability".[2]

Public interactions with police often come with uncertainty, risk and vulnerability. The unpredictable situations police must respond to combined with factors known to cause crime, and the vulnerability of those that require police assistance, results in a police operational environment that is fundamentally complex and uncertain.

Additionally, there is inherent risk when society grants some people the authority to use force against others. When the public seek police assistance, they expect police to act in certain, positive ways. Being trusted, and losing trust, therefore directly impacts the ability of police to do their job.

It is important to note that trust can be vested in both individuals and institutions.[i] People may develop trust in an individual police officer through positive interactions and, as a result, develop greater feelings of trust towards policing as a whole. Conversely, members of the public may trust individual police officers due to long-standing perceptions that the institution of policing is trustworthy. Trust may therefore be a transferable property.

Confidence

Trust and confidence are often used interchangeably. Both capture expectations relating to the actions or behaviours of individuals, or institutions. However, trust and confidence also differ in important ways:

- **trust** is used to describe the **expectation** of how another party might act under certain conditions
- **confidence** is used to describe the **probability** of a particular outcome occurring.

For example, an individual may trust that a train service is reliable. However, they will be confident that a train will arrive at a certain time based on having viewed the timetable. When applied to people or institutions, confidence mostly concerns the probability of task completion and satisfaction with an outcome.

Within the context of policing, confidence can be summarised as[3]:

a judgement usually based on an individual's direct experiences, about the probability of police capably and competently discharging their functions.

Confidence judgements are usually formed based on a prior understanding of the probability of an event occurring. Trust on the other hand, relies on a broader range of information and can be understood as multidimensional. One such dimension relates to police effectiveness, (the perception that police are capable of undertaking their duties), which is closely related to confidence. For ease of reference, this compendium will focus on the broader concept of trust[ii] and will address issues of confidence through the effectiveness dimension of trust.

Footnotes

[i] For the purposes of the compendium, an institution could also be known as an organisation or industry.
[ii] For additional information on developing a consistent understanding of trust for police refer Appendix A

Legitimacy

Legitimacy captures a belief that an institution is morally justified in wielding its power and using force.[4] Features of legitimate institutions include that they are trusted and are:

- perceived to act in appropriate ways
- institutions that people feel a (voluntary) obligation to obey.[5]

Trust is sometimes considered a component of legitimacy. In practice, this means that an institution cannot be legitimate if it is not trusted. Unlike trust and confidence judgements, perceptions of legitimacy only apply to institutions. Legitimacy fundamentally concerns perceptions about the rights of an institution to wield certain powers and, by extension, the kinds of rights and responsibilities conferred to individuals who occupy roles within the institution (such as judges or police officers).

Why trust is important

Trust directly impacts policing's ability to undertake fundamental aspects of their job. Trust either produces (or helps to produce) two behaviours from the public:

- **Cooperation:** A prosocial attitude reflecting a willingness to engage in the community and to help institutions
- **Compliance:** An attitude reflecting a willingness to comply with the lawful directions of an institution.

In broader academic literature, the relationship between trust, cooperation, and compliance is sometimes described as being mediated by the concept of legitimacy.[6] Research has also found that trust has a stronger relationship with cooperation than it does with compliance. As such, trust may have a stronger likelihood of producing or undermining cooperation rather than compliance.[7]

Cooperation is distinct from people's willingness to comply with policing's lawful directions. A willingness to comply is linked to whether an institution is perceived as legitimate. If police as an institution are perceived as not acting in appropriate ways, or the public do not feel a voluntary obligation to obey, they are unlikely to comply with the demands of police officers.

A loss of cooperation or compliance may impact policing in the following ways:

Decrease in Cooperation

Potential Impact

A loss of cooperation may impact public willingness to report crimes and victimisation to police.

Such a reduction in reporting may be greater in minority communities as they are already less likely to contact police.[8] The same is true for victims of crime.[9]

High levels of trust and cooperation are linked to public willingness to participate in community initiatives (such as neighbourhood watch) that combat crime.

Consequences for police

Consequences for police may include:

- reduction in information and intelligence that support police operations
- isolation of police from community support resulting in stretched resources
- hindrance of community initiatives (i.e. neighbourhood watch) causing some communities to become more reliant on police, and others to disengage.

Decrease in Compliance

Potential Impact

A loss of trust may cause an increase in vigilantism as it represents an implicit rejection of authority. Members of the community may seek to take on the duties of justice institutions, particularly when they feel that police are ineffective.

Falling compliance may also lead to people resisting police directions in highly charged situations like protests. This may in turn lead to increased allegations of police misconduct as the public become hypervigilant of police actions and operational responses.

Consequences for police

Vigilantism may result in:

- an escalation of violence as community members might use violence against perceived criminals, who may in turn retaliate
- miscarriages of justice as community members are untrained and their actions unregulated.

A decrease in compliance may further result in:

- isolation of police from community support resulting in a stretching of police resources
- increased levels anti-social community behaviour.

Part 2: The Four Dimensions of Trust

Part 2 examines the multidimensional nature of trust and introduces the Four Dimensions of Trust as an analytical tool. This part also explores how, by using the Four Dimensions of Trust, police can better measure and monitor trust to inform community engagement.

Trust as Multidimensional

Approaching trust as multidimensional is important for police as such an understanding may facilitate the following:

- **Monitoring**: While police tend to enjoy relatively high levels of public trust, only viewing trust in an aggregated form can disguise areas where police may have opportunities to improve. Tracking these dimensions over time may also allow police to pre-empt possible changes in aggregate trust.
- **Responding**: A multidimensional understanding of trust may also allow police to better target their resources in the areas that need it most. This can potentially serve as a cost-saving measure with funding of actions and initiatives being more precise.

Both of these practical reasons are discussed in further detail below. Before addressing these it is worth considering why there is value in a shared conception of the different dimensions of trust.

A shared conception

A shared concept of trust is important for police as it may support and facilitate co-ordinated trust building initiatives.

Doing this is important as members of the public are unlikely to rely on legal or political boundaries when forming trust judgements. While people likely draw a distinction between their 'local' police and police elsewhere, it is very unlikely that most understand 'local' as tracking standard legal or political borders.

The increased visibility of police and the interconnectivity afforded by social media also means that now more than ever, the actions of police are subject to scrutiny regardless of location.

As perceptions of policing are often informed by media consumption it is likely that the actions of police in one area of the country may have ramifications for trust in police elsewhere.

This can even extend across national borders, as seen by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests which spread from the U.S to other western liberal democracies.

In short, no police organisation exists in a vacuum where only their actions within a local community will impact perceptions of trust. For countries with multiple jurisdictions, each has an interest in ensuring that trust building measures are consistently applied to ensure that all communities trust police regardless of their particular legal or political boundaries.

To realise the benefits of a multidimensional, shared concept of trust in policing as discussed above, ANZPAA proposed the Four Dimensions of Trust.

The Four Dimensions of Trust

The positive features of an individual's trust judgements toward police can be broken into four dimensions. The first two dimensions (Effectiveness and Value Alignment) are focused on outcomes police aim to achieve. The remaining two Dimensions (Fairness and Intentions) are focused on police policies, procedures and practices used to achieve these outcomes.[iii]

Footnotes

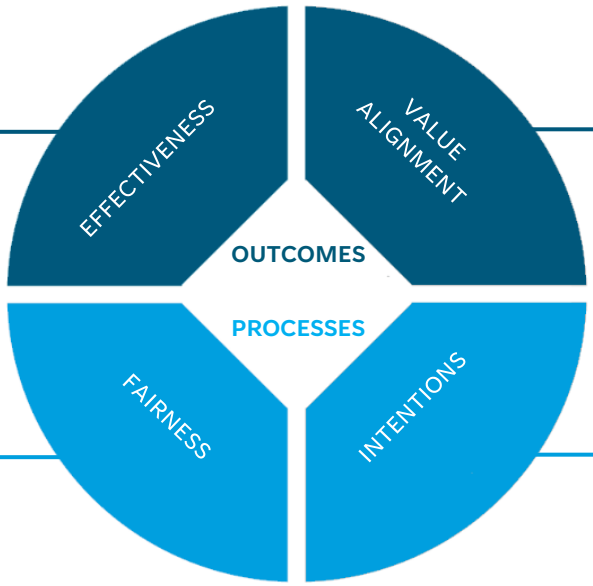
[iii] It should be acknowledged that the Four Dimensions of Trust identified above are interlinked and that in order for the public to trust police, all of these dimensions must be satisfied.

Visualising the Four Dimensions of Trust

Effectiveness: the perception that policing is capable of undertaking what is expected of them. It refers to:

- delivering expected outcomes such as apprehending criminals and preventing crime
- undertaking their duties in a professional and competent manner.

Value Alignment: the perception that police understand and represent the values and needs of the communities they serve. Communities expect police to reflect their values and to advocate for their interests. For some communities this alignment can only be achieved through the process of consultation and engagement itself.



Fairness: the perception around how policing achieves its assigned goals and how police officers discharge their duties. It can be broken down into three distinct areas:

- **Procedural fairness**: police follow due process while ensuring equal protection, and equal rights in their policies, practices and procedures
- **Distributional fairness**: equal access for community members to police services which are equitably distributed
- **Fairness of quality**: consistency of the services delivery to communities.

Intentions: the perception that police hold the right intentions in undertaking their duties and that these are undertaken in the interest of communities.

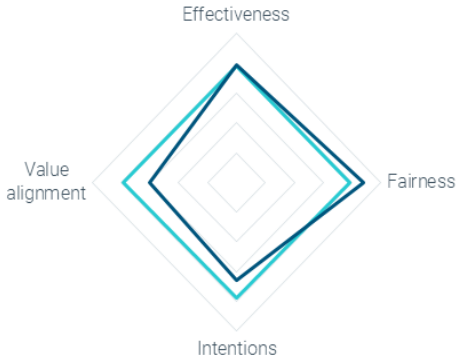
Police benefit from a general assumption that individuals who become police officers have benevolent motives, and therefore policing as an institution has good intentions.

However, a member of the public must believe that an officer has the right intentions when interacting with or using their powers on them in particular.

Applying the Four Dimensions of Trust

Measuring and monitoring

The figure below depicts a 'trust diamond' that can be visualised when measuring public perceptions using the Four Dimensions of Trust.



The white borders represent a hypothetical 'perfect' level of trust (i.e there is 100% trust in the police). The light blue line depicts measures of 'aggregate trust' which is usually captured by general questions on survey vehicles (such as 'do you trust police?').The dark blue lines represent the Four Dimensions of Trust.

In the above (hypothetical) example, the agency in question enjoys high levels of perceived Fairness and Effectiveness, but lower levels of Value Alignment and Intentions, both of which are lower than the aggregate trust. In this case, the best use of resources for this agency to build community trust would be to target resource investment in aligning police values with those of the community and to focus on perceptions of police intentions when interacting with the public.

Methods

There are several methods which police may seek to use to measure and monitor trust, including:

National Surveys

- *Seeking to embed measures capturing all Four Dimensions of Trust in national surveys.*[iv]
- *Collating data from measures on existing national surveys which approximate the Four Dimensions of trust.*

Jurisdictional Data Gathering

- *Align local jurisdictional surveys undertaken by community engagement divisions/units to the Four Dimensions of Trust.*
- *Jurisdiction wide, online surveys administered via social media aligned to the Four Dimensions of Trust.*
- *Include questions on the Four Dimensions of Trust on certain feedback forms imbedded on police agency websites.*

Operational initiatives

- *Embedding questions aligned with the Four Dimensions of Trust in operational research and trials (e.g. procedural justice trials).*
- *Encourage, and note discussion around the Four Dimensions of Trust at during community engagements.*

As jurisdictions collect data through these approaches, trust can be measured in the short term, and monitored in the longer term. [v] This further allows for initiatives and police responses to be better targeted.

Footnotes

[iv] Or running a one-off national survey with a third party or other government agency.
[v] For a list of available survey measure and possible questions see Appendix A

Building and maintaining trust

The Four Dimensions of Trust may allow police to better target their resources for community engagement and trust building activities in the areas that need it most. This can potentially serve as a cost-saving measure with funding of initiatives being more precise.

The table below depicts different areas of policing which may align to the Four Dimensions of Trust.

***NOTE:** the table below is not an exhaustive list and shouldn't be taken to imply that jurisdictions are not currently targeting these policies and structures.*

DIMENSION OF TRUST	POSSIBLE INITIATIVES	POLICE POLICIES AND STRUCTURES
Effectiveness	• Increase response times • Focus on workforce capability in key areas and enhancing capacity with innovative policy (e.g. surging) • Include evidence-based policing where possible • Communicate policing successes beyond crime stats releases.	Education and Training Professional Standards Response capacity Workforce capability and capacity
Value Alignment	• Community engagement and presence with a focus on visibility • Promoting local/community initiatives police are undertaking • Consider "citizen academies" as a consultation and learning tool • Engage with community on their own terms (e.g. through local events, artistic pursuits).	Organisational strategies Oath of office Stakeholder partnerships Community engagement initiatives Recruitment
Intentions	• Focus on procedural initiatives (e.g. procedural justice training) • Embrace accountability • Promote and communicate internal complaints processes and procedure • Respond to freedom of information and data requests where possible, communicate reasons if not feasible.	Codes of Conduct Legislative requirements Professional standards Complaints processes
Fairness	• Explain reasons why an individual is being spoken to or arrested • Consider creating a trust dashboard for public consumption • Promote values sought in potential police recruits.	Organisational strategies Oath of office Complaints processes Community engagement initiatives Transparency Recruitment

Part 3: Forming perceptions of trust

Part 3 examines how the public form their perceptions of trust. This part explores trust perceptions as they relate to police and other criminal justice system institutions.

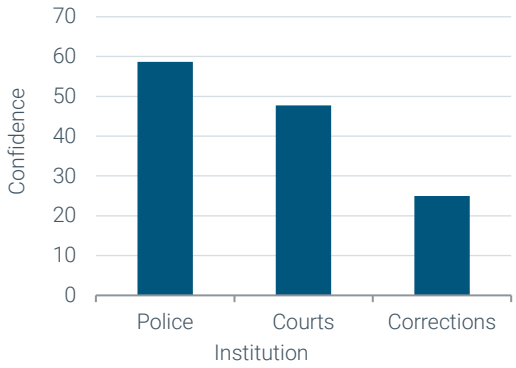
Understanding, measuring, and monitoring trust for police should be contextualised with an understanding of how communities form perceptions of trust. People do not form perceptions of trust in a vacuum. They may be influenced by:

- environmental factors (such as institutional roles and media reporting)
- interactive factors (direct or indirect contact).

A useful way to understand this is by comparing perceptions of trust in the three different branches of the criminal justice system.

Research[10] indicates that there is a persistent 'evaporation' of trust across these institutions.[11] Police usually enjoy the highest levels of trust[12] followed by courts, with the least trust in corrections:

Trust in the Effectiveness of Australia's justice system, 2007
Source: The Australian Survey of Social Attitudes, 2007



Examining this evaporation effect can provide insight into the different ways in which people form their perceptions about trust. The following section examines the evaporation effect considering the following factors influencing perceptions of trust:

Environmental factors

- Institutional roles
- Media portrayals
- Police Politicisation

Interactive factors

- Experience
- Perceptions of fairness
- Militarisation

The evaporation effect is largely explained by the environmental factors being more favourable to police, creating a 'reserve of trust' higher than that of other criminal justice institutions. However police are still susceptible to losing public trust, mostly through interactive factors.

Environmental factors

Institutional Roles

The roles assigned to criminal justice institutions may predetermine the levels of trust people have for them and contribute to a 'reserve of trust' for police. Research indicates that police score well when compared to other justice institutions as public opinion sympathises more with policing's focus on 'crime control,' rather than on the due process focus of the roles and functions of the courts and corrections.[13] As Indermaur and Roberts have argued:

> ***"the journey from the police to courts [...] represents the movement from the rather appealing and entertaining focus on crime fighting through the psychologically ambiguous process of sentencing, mixing as it does, a concern for both punishment and treatment".***[14]

Additionally, police deal with preventing, disrupting and responding to crime, as well as a host of other roles that require interactions with the public.

Police are the most public facing of all three criminal justice institutions, and are the institution the public are most likely to come into contact with.

A significantly smaller subset of the public will interact with the courts, this being mostly restricted to individuals accused of crimes and their supporters.[vi]

An even smaller subset will interact with the prison system as prisons deal exclusively with those found guilty by the courts.

This is important with respect to how trust is formed because the less contact people have with an institution, the more likely they are to rely on the depiction of that institution in the media, or on the experiences of others.

Dimensions potentially impacted by institutional roles:

- **Value Alignment:** Victims are often the focus for police, whereas courts attempt to balance the rights of victims with the rights of the accused, and corrections switches focus to the rights of those imprisoned and their rehabilitation. This links to the Value Alignment Dimension of Trust as people perceive policing's role to better align with their own values.
- **Intentions:** People form views on the perceived intentions of those who work in justice institutions through assumptions and portrayals about why an individual might have joined the institution in the first place. Those who join the police are often seen as ethical, honest and motivated by a desire to serve the public.[15] Comparatively, judges score slightly lower, while lawyers are usually ranked lower still.[16] International research also shows occupations such as probation officers score much lower in evaluations of professionalism than police, judges, and lawyers.[17]

Media Portrayals

The relationship between contact with an institution and reliance on media portrayals is negatively correlated, (i.e. the more contact, the less reliance on media).

This is demonstrated in findings from the ABS where:[vii]

48% of respondents formed perceptions based on **contact** with police	**52%** of respondents formed perceptions based on **media** portrayals of police
14% through **contact** with courts	**72%** based on **media** portrayals of courts
8.5% through **contact** with corrections	**74%** based on **media** portrayals of corrections

This relationship does not indicate whether the resulting perceptions formed through media portrayals are positive or negative only the relative power the media holds in forming perceptions. However, other research suggests that greater reliance on media portrayals leads to less accurate information about the operation of that institution.[18] For example, research from the United Kingdom suggests that trust in the prison system is affected by the perception that prisons have become 'soft options' when dealing with criminals.[19] This effect can also be seen in Australia, with articles routinely published on 'cushy' prisons and the amenities for inmates.[20]

Even if all the information conveyed within media portrayals was strictly accurate, institutional roles tend to shape media narratives and how stories about police are framed. The institutional role of police tends to be viewed more positively than that of the courts and corrections, due to its 'exciting' focus on crime fighting and (mostly) victim centric nature. Media portrayals of the institutions tend to lean into this, effectively amplifying it.[21]

However there are still ways in which some reliance on media portrayals can negatively impact perceptions of trust in police. Research indicates that:[22]

- people are more likely to base their views on crime from media portrayals
- crime statistics as represented in media are the most trusted compared to official releases
- people are less likely to trust official sources of information on crime
- those who believe crime is rising are less likely to have trust in the justice system.

Footnotes

[vi] (excluding civil courts).
[vii] Perceptions of the Justice System Module for example

Overall, less reliance on media portrayals and more favourable narratives and framing positively impacts perceptions of trust in police more than it does perceptions of other criminal justice system institutions.

Dimensions potentially impacted by media portrayals:

- **Effectiveness:** Media portrayals may negatively impact the Effectiveness Dimension of Trust for police. Research indicates that the less informed people are about actual crime rates, the more likely it is that they will not trust police effectiveness, and the more punitive their attitudes will be toward accused persons.[23] This links to research indicating a lack of trust in court effectiveness correlates with punitive public attitudes.[24, 25]

Police Politicisation

Police politicisation is closely related to media portrayals in forming perceptions of trust. To understand police politicisation, it is important to distinguish between 'political' and 'politicised:'[26]

- **Political** refers to police being exposed to, and engaging at some level with, politics. Like any other public service, police compete for a share of finite resources, the distribution of which is inherently 'political' given the direction and aspirations of governments.[27] The criminal justice system, and its broader goal of securing and maintaining public safety is also subject to politics and may become political in nature.
- **Politicised** implies something closer to 'partisan' which generally refers to a strong affiliation or alignment to party politics, populism, or both.

Police politicisation matters for two key reasons:

- **Actual politicisation:** Where the lines between key areas of government and policing are blurred.
- **Perceived politicisation:** The public perception that politicians are too involved in police matters, that police are too involved in political matters, or both.

Both actual and perceived police politicisation threatens the long-standing principle of police independence from government.

While the exact scope of this independence is contested, and context dependent[28] there is some consensus (including in Australia and New Zealand) that police tend to have independence from government over operational matters.

Media portrayals may play an important role in promoting perceived politicisation. The most direct way this happens is through media coverage. A fracturing (and partisan) media landscape has drawn senior police executives into political debates, especially when commenting on crime and police. Regardless of how neutral the commentary may be, partisan interests may seek to capitalise on them while media sensationalism and 'click-bait' articles may further skew these comments.

Media sensationalism and 'click-bait' articles may have also increased public focus on actual or perceived relationships between politicians and senior police executives. This kind of coverage draws accusations of perceived police bias from different political sides, strengthening perceptions of police politicisation.

Other drivers of perceived politicisation may include:

- **Role Expansion:** The role of policing has expanded over the past 30-40 years away from a strict focus on only responding to crime. This expanded role includes dealing with mental health callouts, supporting public health enforcement, and an increase in the policing of anti-social behaviour. An expanding role pulls policing into a much wider social and political arena, increasing the likelihood of police being drawn into intensely partisan debates playing out in the media and government.
- **Political Responses to Crime:** Researchers have noted (since at least the early 1990's) that there is often a strong temptation for politicians to take populist approaches on matters of crime and policing, focusing often on perceived increases of crime and disorder. Opposition parties tend to focus on crime and disorder under the tenure of an incumbent government. This either pushes the government into a 'getting tough on crime' stance, or the opposition uses it to campaign against the government.

A policy usually promised in response to such drivers is to increase frontline police officers or 'boots on the ground.'

This is popular as it increases police visibility, making the public feel safer and possibly deterring some volume crime. Rolling out more frontline officers is costly for police, and it may be preferable for police to have more discretion in the way their funding is used, noting their expertise in operational matters.

Conversely, pushing back too strongly against government preferences for more frontline police may cause funding to be withheld or re-directed. Additionally, pushing back publicly may create a perception that police are acting too much like a political group, with their actions possibly being perceived as lobbying.

Dimensions potentially impacted by police politicisation:

- **Value Alignment:** Some members of the public may be unconcerned with government encroaching on police independence, or police becoming more involved in politics so long as this aligns with their political views. However, for many, the principle of police independence remains important and therefore infringing on this may erode this dimension.
- **Intentions:** Should police be perceived to be politicised, the reasons behind operational decisions may be called into question, particularly those involving sensitive matters (such as policing minority or vulnerable communities).
- **Fairness:** The public may start believing that they won't be treated fairly should they openly identify with political parties or movements that police are seen to 'align against'.

Interactive factors

Types of Experiences

Experiences have the strongest impact on perceptions of trust. As such, police are well placed to build trust via interactions with the public as they are the most public facing of all three criminal justice institutions. However, this is a double-edged sword for police as positive and negative interactions have asymmetrical effects.

Perceptions of trust are developed through two different kinds of experiences with the criminal justice system:

- **Direct experience:** Contact an individual has directly with the criminal justice system.
- **Vicarious experience:** Information received from an individual's friends, family, or acquaintances who have come into contact with the criminal justice system.

Research suggests that positive encounters have little effect on trust, but negative encounters may undermine it.[29]

This same dynamic plays out with vicarious experience. People who have negative experiences are likely to tell a greater number of people compared to those who have had positive experiences.[30] As such, if someone has a negative interaction with a criminal justice system institution, this will both damage their trust and make them more likely to tell other people about their experience. A positive experience yields less influence on perceptions of trust and influences fewer people.[31]

This represents a ripple effect, where one negative interaction could have an outsized influence on other people's perceptions of trust. There are a number of ways in which an interaction between a member of the public and a representative of a justice system institution may be perceived as negative. The strongest of these perceptions is usually the degree to which the interaction was perceived as being procedurally fair.

Militarisation

The Militarisation of policing may contribute to negative public experiences with police. Militarisation can be understood as:

> ***"the process where police organisations are increasingly influenced by the material, cultural, organisational and operational aspects that are associated with the military."***[32]

The aspects of militarisation defined above are important. However, material aspects of militarisation (police uniforms, equipment and weapons) may have the greatest impact perceptions of trust through both direct and vicarious experience.

This is due to these elements being highly visible to members of the public, both in person or if captured on film. The following are material elements that the public may perceive as being **more militarised**[33]:

- Fatigues/camouflage
- Long-arms
- Armoured vehicles.

While the following are seen as **less militarised**[34]:

- Light blue/white colour uniforms
- Less-than-lethal accoutrements
- Body-worn cameras
- On foot or in unmarked or marked cars.

Militarisation exists on a spectrum with no jurisdiction ever fully militarised or civilianised.[35] Particular police roles, responsibilities, and operational requirements may call for differing degrees of material militarisation.

However research has found that a consequence of this may be that the public view police as less approachable. This is because material militarisation may cause officers to look 'unfriendly' or 'intimidating.'[36] Those who directly interact with officers perceived in this way may be less forthcoming with information or feel uncomfortable contacting police in future.

Dimensions potentially impacted

- **Value Alignment:** Material militarisation may negatively impact the Value Alignment Dimension of Trust for police. As police serve the community, there is an expectation that police reflect the values of the community. The public also draw a visual distinction between more 'militarised' and more 'civilianised' appearances. Consequently, some may feel more aligned to police who appear more civilianised. This may result in some members of the public being less likely to approach certain police officers or be less willing to volunteer information with those they interact with.

Perceptions of fairness

When it comes to personal experiences in the criminal justice system, what matters most in determining whether an individual views their interaction as negative is not how favourable they view the outcome but whether they believe it was reached fairly.[37] This is known as procedural fairness.

When it comes to the courts, this is what matters most in determining people's perceptions (i.e. it matters more than other aspects of fairness). Defendants want to feel that they were treated fairly during court proceedings.

Studies have found that there are two factors which might explain how fairness is perceived in a court setting:[38]

- **Defendant perception of judge:** The defendant's perception of a judge is one of the most important predictors of perceptions of a court's fairness. This especially relates to whether the judge was seen as being respectful and objective.
- **Clear communication:** Clear communication about the courts processes and procedures may impact on the overall view of a court's fairness.

Dimensions potentially impacted

- **Fairness (procedural):** If people are not dealt with in a procedurally fair manner, they are more likely to believe that they have been targeted.[39] When it comes to trust in police this may have a compounding effect on people who feel that they belong to a group they perceive are unfairly targeted by the criminal justice system. For example, of LGBTQIA+ respondents to a 2018 survey:
  - 47.2% indicated that they expected police to treat them unfairly
  - 41.6% agreed that police could be trusted.[40]
- **Fairness (distributional, quality):** These are still important, but do not just relate to interactions police have with members of the public and so do not have the same direct impact.

Conclusions

Policing's reserve of trust

Institutional roles, levels of public contact, and media portrayals all directly contribute to an individual's baseline of trust toward criminal justice system institutions. These, combined with vicarious experience, inform pre-contact levels of trust in criminal justice system institutions.

Police tend to benefit most from their institutional role and portrayal in the media when compared with other criminal justice institutions.

The (mostly positive) effects of this contribute to a 'reserve of trust' for police, essentially a baseline of positive perceptions people have toward police. This appears to insulate police from the 'evaporation effect' experienced by courts and corrections.

While police enjoy this 'reserve of trust', police are also more likely to interact with members of the public than any other institution in the criminal justice system.

As direct experiences have the greatest effect on people's perceptions of trust, and negative interactions may override existing positive perceptions, the greatest risk to policing's reserve of trust is through interactions with members of the public.

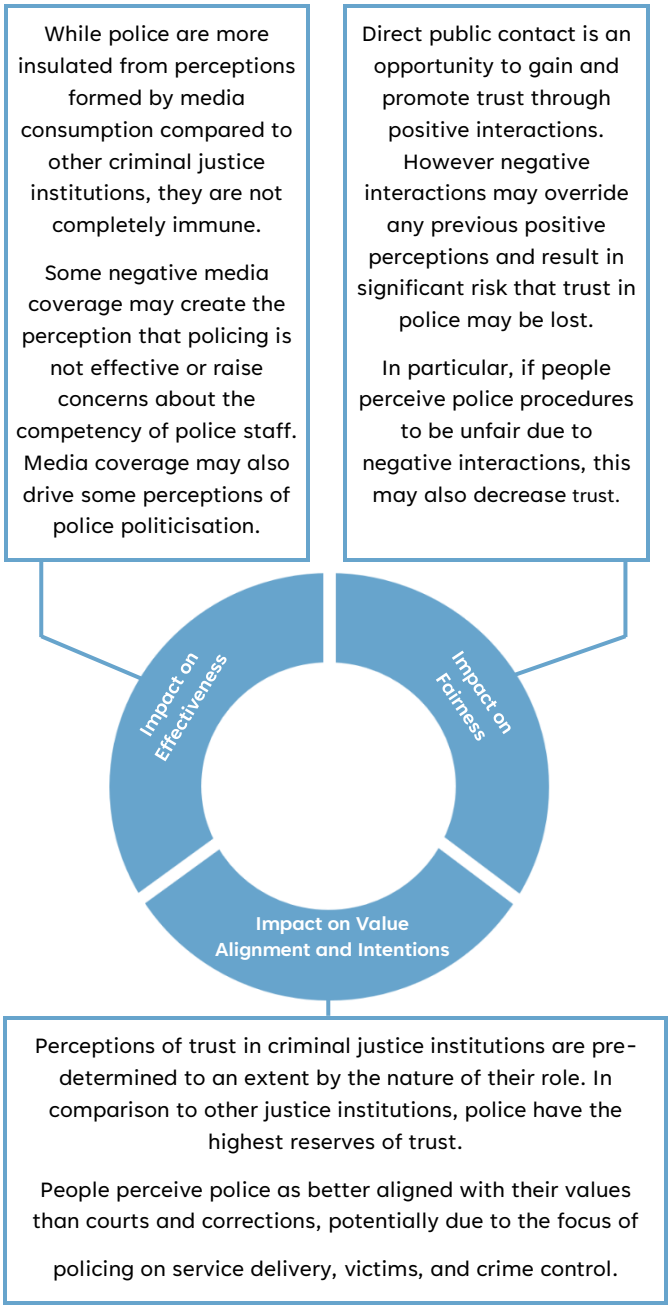
Forming perceptions and the Four Dimensions of Trust

For policing, each of the Four Dimensions of Trust are impacted by the different ways in which trust is formed.

However any impact on one or more of the Four Dimensions of Trust may not have an equal impact on aggregate perceptions of trust.

Additionally police may not be able to devote the same amount of time and effort to building trust in each dimension.

The image below provides an overview on how the forming of perceptions may impact on the Four Dimensions of Trust for police:



Appendix A: Trust surveys and questions

Surveys

A number of surveys have been identified a number of surveys that are currently being run in Australia and New Zealand (or have been run in the past 10 years) by public and private institutions that seek to measure trust in police in some way.

Of these surveys, it has been identified that most align well to the Effectiveness and Fairness Dimensions of Trust. Some surveys also have minimal alignment with the Values Dimension of trust, and only one has limited alignment with Intensions as a Dimension of trust. These may be useful to begin monitoring the different dimensions in lieu of running a jurisdictional specific survey.

For a survey to be included, the following criteria had to be satisfied:

- from a commonwealth country
- containing at least one question on trust in police
- multi-jurisdictional or have a large sample size
- not a one-off survey
- tested in the last 10 years.

COUNTRY	NAME	STATUS	FREQUENCY/ LAST RUN	METHODOLOGY/NOTES	SOURCE	NUMBER OF TRUST MEASURES
Australia	Democracy 2025	Active	2018	Survey of 1021, 20 focus groups	MoAD	1
Australia	Essential Poll	Active	Annually	1500 online	Essential Media	1
Australia	General Social Survey	Active	2014	ABS	ABS	1
Australia	Image of Professions Survey	Active	Annually	Cold call survey, 648 sample	Colmar Brunton	1
Australia	National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing	Active	Annually	Australian policing KPI Survey	ANZPAA	2
Australia	Perceptions of the Justice System	Inactive	2011/12	Module on MPHS survey	ABS	2
Australia	Scanlon Foundation Survey	Active	Annually	29% of adults with landlines	Monash University	1**

Canada	General Social Survey on Victimization	Active	Every 5 years	Random, telephone/face to face, 33,127 respondents	Statistics Canada	2
England & Wales	British Crime Survey	Replaced	2010	Face to face, self-completion	ONS	3
England & Wales	Crime Survey for England and Wales	Active	Annually	Face to face with 35,420 adults and 3,062 children	ONS	3
London	Mayor's Public Attitude Survey	Active	Annually	Random, 3,000 per quarter	London Mayor’s Office	2
New Zealand	Civic and Cultural Participation supplement	Active	2016	Module on the New Zealand General Social Survey	Statistics New Zealand	1
New Zealand	Citizens' Satisfaction Survey	Active	Annually	New Zealand policing KPI Survey	New Zealand Police	3
New Zealand	Crime and Safety Survey	Replaced	2016	Random sample of 7000	Department of Justice	1
New Zealand	Crime Victims Survey	Active	Annually	Random sample of 8000	Department of Justice	Unknown*
New Zealand	New Zealand General Social Survey	Active	2014	Biennial survey that has tested trust	Statistics New Zealand	1
New Zealand	Public perceptions of crime	Unknown	2015	Online survey of 2072	Department of Justice	2
New Zealand	Public Sector Reputation Index	Active	Annually	2,000 online interviews	Colmar Brunton	3

Survey Questions

The following is a list of possible questions (previously tested in other surveys) that may be used to build surveys for police to test.

NUMBER	QUESTION	DIMENSION	SOURCE
1	I'm going to read out a list of Australian institutions. For each one tell, me how much confidence or trust you have in them in Australia?	Aggregate Trust	Scanlon Foundation Survey – Australia: Link
2	Where zero is not at all, and ten is completely, how much do you trust: the police?	Aggregate Trust	Civic and Cultural Participation supplement - New Zealand: Link
3	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about police in [state]? I have confidence in the police. Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree?	Aggregate Trust	National Survey for Community Satisfaction - Police – Australia: Link
4	Which of the following best describes the level of trust and confidence you have in the Police? Full trust and confidence in the New Zealand Police, Quite a lot, Some trust and confidence, Not much, No trust or confidence in the New Zealand Police, and Don't know.	Aggregate Trust	Citizens' Satisfaction Survey - New Zealand: Link
5	Where 1 is strongly disagree and 7 is strongly agree [are New Zealand police] trustworthy?	Aggregate Trust	Public Sector Reputation Index - New Zealand: Link
6	To what extent do you either agree or disagree with the following statements: police successfully prevent crime. Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree, Don't know.	Effectiveness	Public perceptions of crime - New Zealand: Link
7	Using one of the options on Showcard I, please tell me how good a job you think each group is doing. The police: Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, Very poor?	Effectiveness	NZ Crime and Safety Survey - New Zealand: Link
8	The police effectively enforce the law. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree?	Effectiveness	Perceptions of the Justice System – Australia: Link
9	Thinking about when you [contacted police] regarding [insert reason] do you agree or disagree with the statement: staff were competent (i.e. they were capable or they knew what they were doing)	Effectiveness	Citizens' Satisfaction Survey - New Zealand Link
10	Where 1 is strongly disagree and 7 is strongly agree [do New Zealand police] provide effective services?	Effectiveness	Public Sector Reputation Index - New Zealand Link

11	From what you know or have heard - which rating best describes how you would rate or score people in various occupations for honesty and ethical standards (Very High, High, Average, Low, Very Low)?	Fairness	Image of Professions Survey – Australia Link
12	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about police in [state]? Police treat people fairly and equally. Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree?	Fairness	National Survey for Community Satisfaction - Police – Australia Link
13	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: the [state] police treat people fairly. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?	Fairness	Perceptions of the Justice System – Australia: Link
14	The following questions are about your views on NZ Police. To what extent do you either agree or disagree with the following statements: police treat all ethnic groups fairly. Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree or Don't know.	Fairness	Public perceptions of crime - New Zealand: Link
15	Thinking about when you [contacted police] regarding [insert reason] do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I was treated fairly.	Fairness	Citizens' Satisfaction Survey - New Zealand: Link
16	Where 1 is strongly disagree and 7 is strongly agree [do New Zealand police] deal fairly with people regardless of their background or role ?	Fairness	Public Sector Reputation Index - New Zealand: Link
17	From what you know or have heard - which rating best describes how you would rate or score people in various occupations for honesty and ethical standards (Very High, High, Average, Low, Very Low)?	Intentions	Image of Professions Survey – Australia: Link
18	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about police in [state]? Police are honest. Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree?	Intentions	National Survey for Community Satisfaction - Police – Australia: Link
19	Where 1 is strongly disagree and 7 is strongly agree [are New Zealand police] open and transparent?	Intentions	Public Sector Reputation Index - New Zealand: Link
20	Choosing an answer from this card please say how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the police in your local area: they (the police in this area) understand the issues that affect this community	Intentions	Proposed additional question for Intentions – British Crime Survey England : Link

21	Including anything you've already mentioned, in the last 12 months have the police stopped you for any reason? Do you feel that...you were given a reason for why you had been stopped? Do you feel that...You were treated with respect?	Intentions	Proposed additional question for Intentions – currently used in MOPAC Public Attitude Survey (London): Link
22	To what extent do you either agree or disagree with the following statements: police are visible in my community. Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree, Don't know.	Value Alignment	Public perceptions of crime - New Zealand: Link
23	Where 1 is strongly disagree and 7 is strongly agree [are New Zealand police] listen to the public's point of view?	Value Alignment	Public Sector Reputation Index - New Zealand: Link
24	Choosing an answer from this card please say how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the police in your local area: they (the police in this area) are dealing with the things that matter to people in this community	Value Alignment	Proposed additional question for Value Alignment – British Crime Survey England : Link
25	The police in this area listen to the concerns of local people: Strongly agree, Tend to agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Tend to disagree, Strongly disagree, Don't know, Refused.	Value Alignment	Proposed additional question for Value Alignment – currently used in MOPAC Public Attitude Survey (London): Link

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