



WHAT DO
AUSTRALIANS WANT?

DISCUSSION PAPER

*Active and Effective Government Fit
for the Ages*

Cpd

CENTRE
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DEVELOPMENT
10TH ANNIVERSARY

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DECEMBER 2017

AUSTRALASIAN STUDY OF PARLIAMENT GROUP NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Trust and Current Challenges

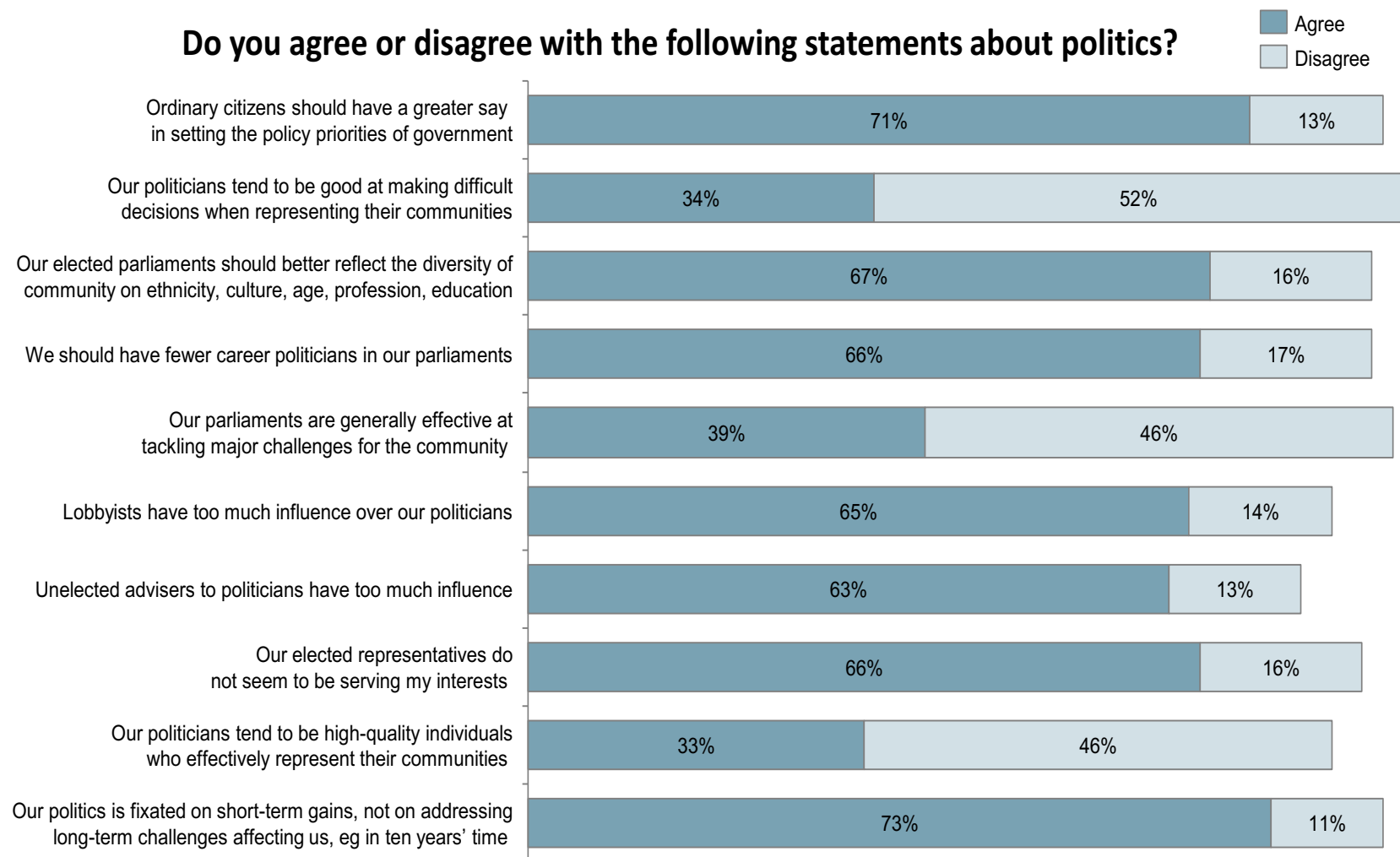
19 July 2018

Travers McLeod
CEO, Centre for Policy Development

2017 CPD/ANU/Essential research on democracy

- Attitudes research emulated 1994 study by Economic Planning Advisory Commission for PM Keating, and 2015 study for Australian Council of Learned Academies
- The three surveys with Professor Glenn Withers AO examined attitudes to services, tax, and policy priorities.
- 2017 survey examined attitudes to politics and democracy, and included November 2017 roundtable.

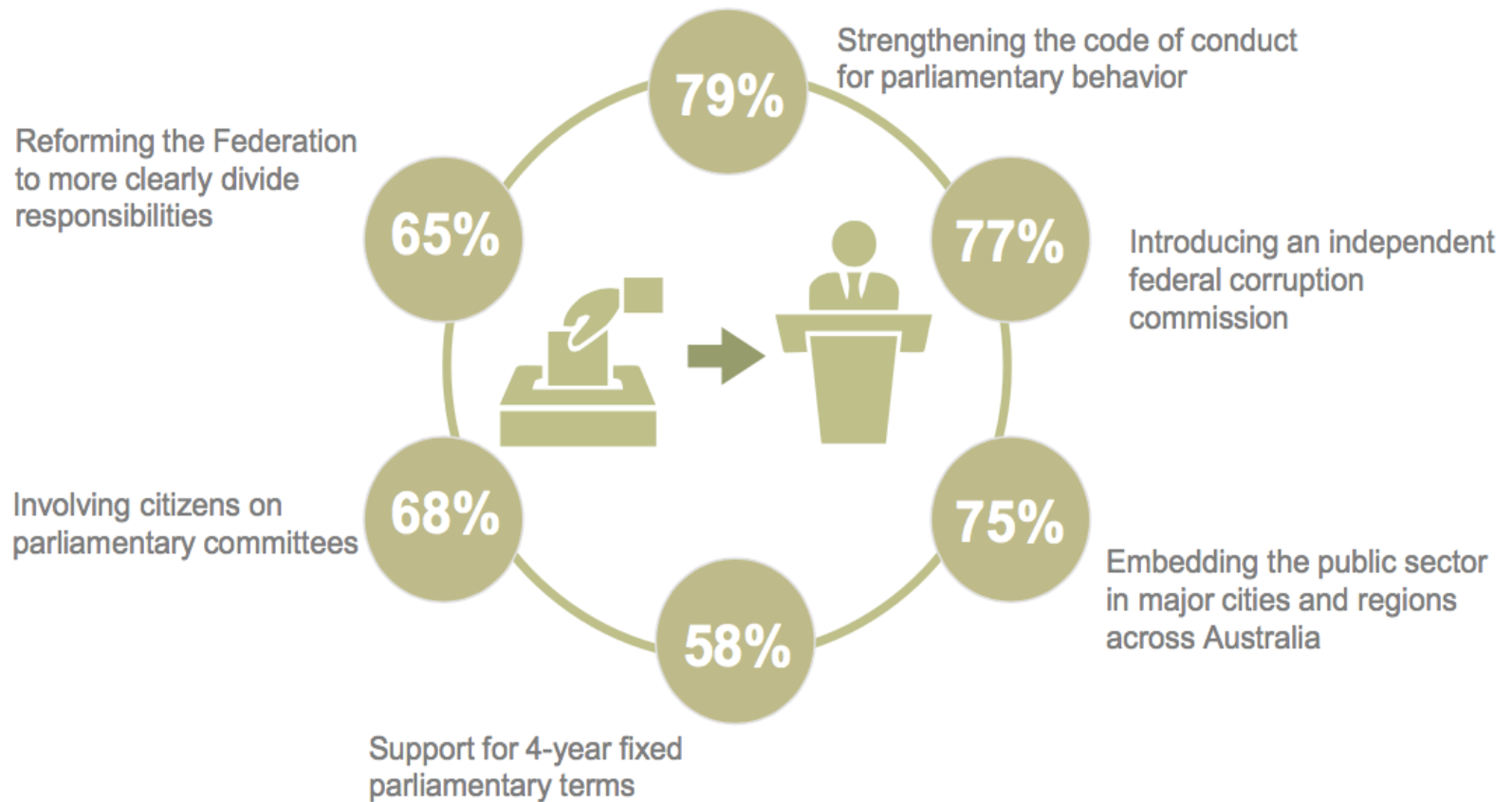
Australians distrust politics and institutions



Other findings show falling trust and confidence in institutions

- Edelman Survey: NGOs trusted more than government, business and the media.
- CEDA Community Survey: only 5% of people believed they have gained a lot after 26 years of economic growth, 79% believe gap between richest and poorest unacceptable.
- NAB's Wellbeing Index: is at its lowest level since it started five years ago (has fallen for three successive quarters).

But Australians have a huge appetite for positive reform options



What do Australians want (1994-2017)?

- Health and education the most important and under-resourced services
- Consistent willingness to pay more tax for essential services seen as having great community benefit
- Strong skepticism about outsourcing social services
- Negative impression of Australian politics and performance of government
- Strong appetite for democratic reforms

Importance of services and active government role

- Australians consistently prepared to pay more for essential services like health, schools and economic infrastructure because they are seen to benefit the community
- Skeptical about the outsourcing of social services



61% Respondents are prepared to pay some level of increased tax



Most people want government to retain the skills and capability to deliver services directly

Australians want policies that deliver broad benefits and build national capability



Investing in economic infrastructure to support growth and productivity



Providing better job security for all people



Boosting wages to support growth and productivity



Investing in R&D to find new tech and innovations



Shifting to clean, renewable energy sources

Australians want a particular type of democracy

What Australians think the main purpose of democracy is



For Australians on average full-time incomes, nearly one in two (48%) believe the main purpose of democracy is “ensuring people are treated fairly and equally, including the most vulnerable.”

Australia at a turning point?

- Australian confidence in democratic bargain is wavering.
- Huge appetite for democratic renewal, especially reforms to systems and processes.
- Strong indicators present reform cycle is at an end, and that substantive policies aren't responding to community attitudes or to structural changes in society, the economy and the region.
- Rebuilding trust and confidence isn't *just* about reforms to systems and processes. It requires an agreed framework for the future so the best ideas can rise to the top.
- ***What is the next reform phase for government and democracy?***



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