

Australian Community Sentiment Research 2025



About this study

To understand community perceptions and trust in the Australian red meat industry, MLA conducts an annual study called the Australian Community Sentiment Research.

The research commenced in 2010, making research in 2025 the sixteenth year to analyse Australia's community sentiment towards the red meat industry.

Each year the sample includes approximately 1500 main grocery buyers and main meal preparers, aged 18-64 years, from Australia's five top capital cities (Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide).

The research findings enable Australian red meat industry stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the community's expectations of industry as well as topics the community are keen to learn more about.

Key findings from 2025

Australians are **increasing their red meat consumption** – particularly younger Australians. Vegetarianism is in decline with the **nutrition of red meat being a key driver**.



Perceptions around **environmental impact, transparency, ethical practices, and regulations** are **important for driving trust**.

Trust in the industry is at an all time high. The **red meat industry is amongst the most trusted** industries in Australia*



Those who are more knowledgeable about the industry have **better perceptions** about the industry, trust the industry more and are **more likely to be increasing their consumption**.



MLA's Australian Good Meat educational content leaves viewers feeling **more positive** about the industry.

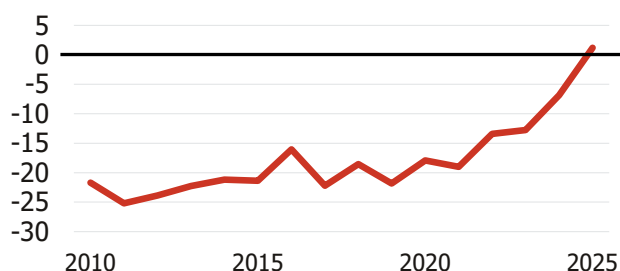
Red meat consumption is increasing.

The proportion of Australians who say they are increasing the amount of red meat they eat is increasing. **24% say they're eating more red meat than 12 months ago.** This is the highest recorded percentage of people of increasing consumption since the research started in 2010.

22% say they are eating less red meat and this is the lowest seen proportion of people reducing consumption since 2010.

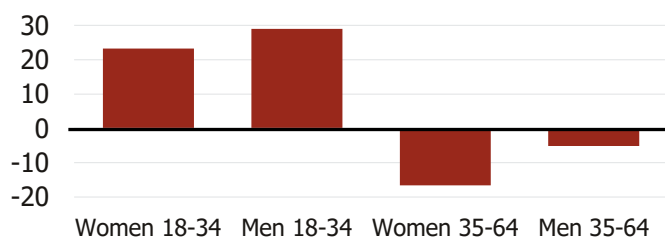
For the first time, more Australians are increasing their red meat intake than reducing.

NET Red meat consumption (% more minus % less)



Young people, in particular, are more likely to be eating more red meat.

NET Red meat consumption (% more minus % less)



Those increasing their red meat intake do so for health and nutrition reasons.



Red Meat Consumption



One in five red meat eaters have tried vegetarianism in the past.

Concern about animal welfare remains the main reason for vegetarianism, followed by environmental concern.

Those who return to eating red meat confess they were craving meat or experiencing health problems.

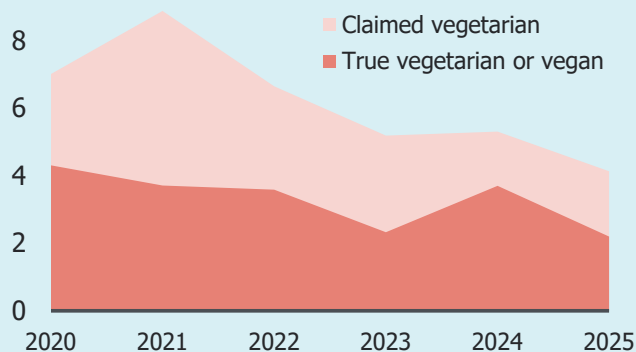


Vegetarianism is decreasing.

4% of Australians label themselves as a vegetarian but almost half (47%) of them eat meat or fish at least sometimes.

This leaves only 2% of Australians who are truly vegetarian or vegan – the lowest percentage seen since tracking commenced.

% claimed vegetarian vs true vegetarian / vegan



Australians believe the red meat industry is important for the economy and contributes positively to society.



77%

agree the **beef industry** is important for the economy.



72%

agree the **lamb industry** is important for the economy.



72%

agree the **beef industry** generates significant regional jobs.



71%

agree the **lamb industry** generates significant regional jobs.



64%

agree **cattle farmers** positively contribute to society*.



63%

agree **sheep farmers** positively contribute to society*.

*Sentiment steadily increasing since 2022

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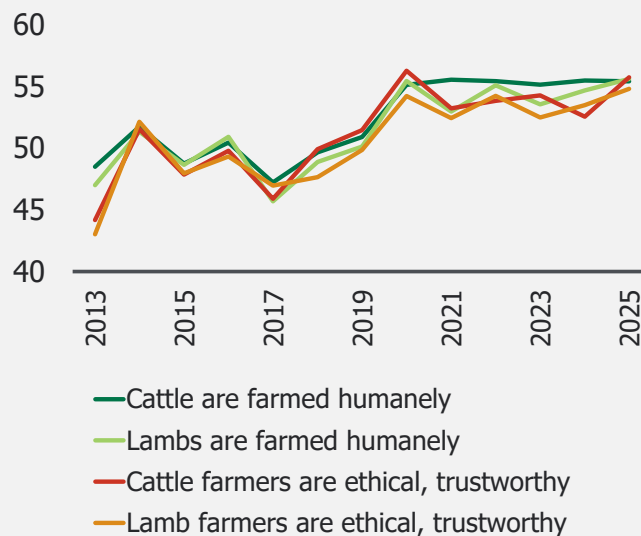
Animal welfare is of interest to the community.

When thinking about red meat production, animal welfare is the top topic that red meat eaters claim to have thought about in the past month. Roughly one third of red meat eaters say animal welfare is on their mind. However, this is declining compared to 2020 when almost half of red meat eaters had animal welfare on their mind.

Industry Perceptions

Positive perceptions towards farmers being ethical, trustworthy and treating livestock humanely have gradually trended upwards.

% agree

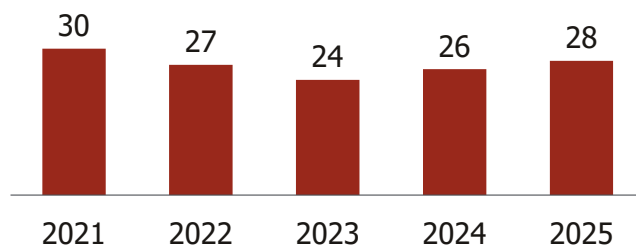


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Majority of meat eaters either do not feel guilty eating meat or feel neutral.

However, in the last couple of years there's been a slight increase in those who do feel guilty.

% agree with 'I feel guilty eating red meat'

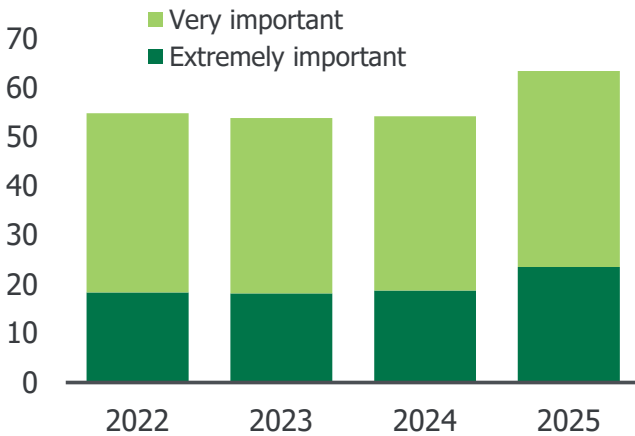


Main reasons for feeling guilty are thoughts around killing an animal for human consumption and environmental impact.

One third of those who feel guilty have tried vegetarianism in the past.

Sustainability is more important to Australians than it was a few years ago.

% Importance of sustainability

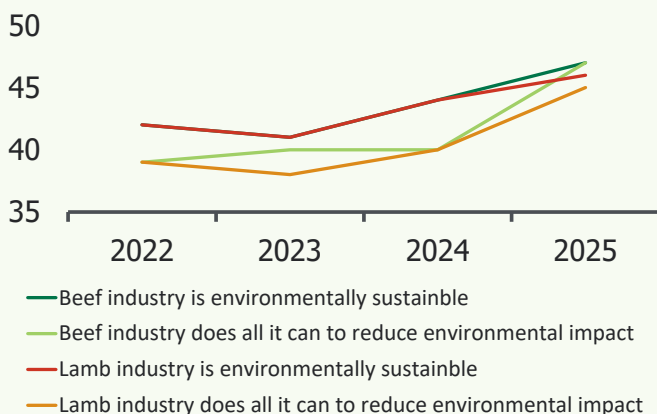


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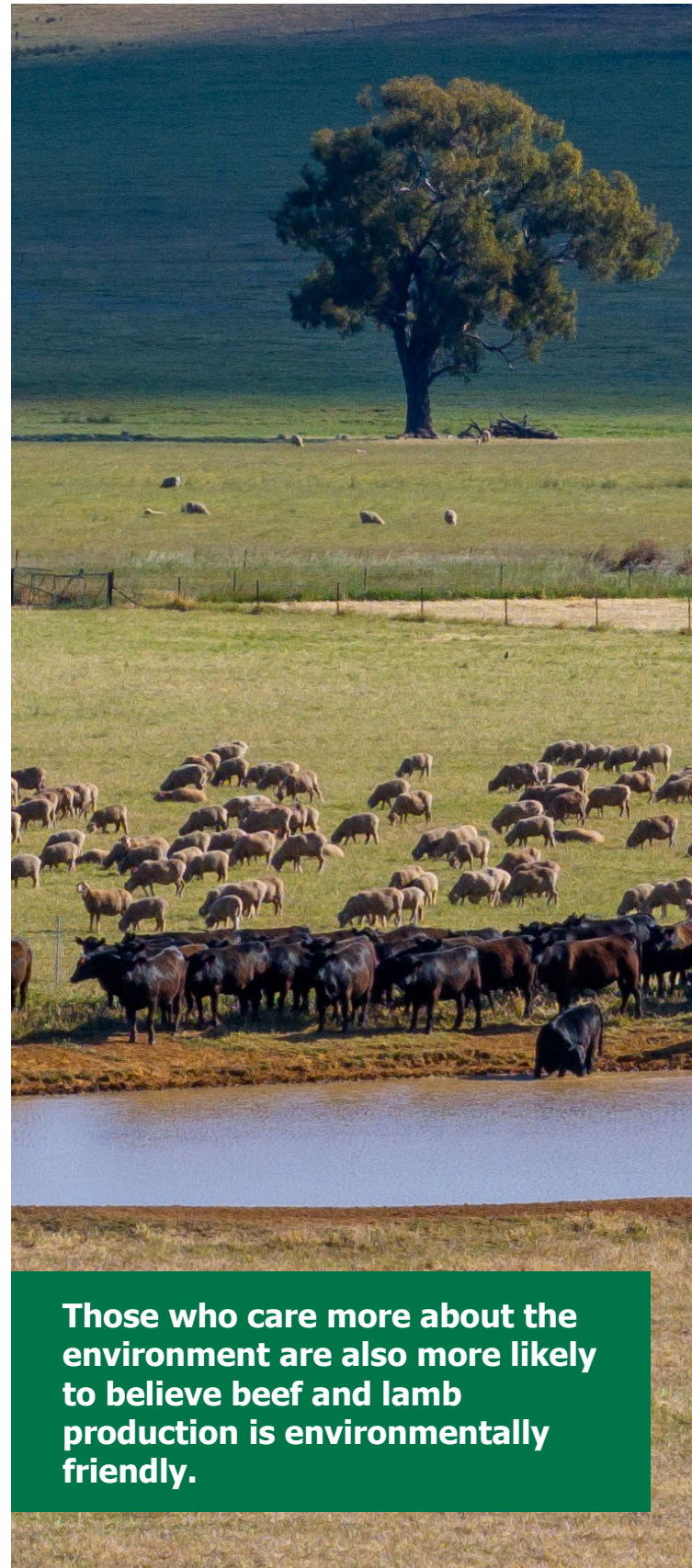
Perceptions towards the sustainability of the red meat industry are improving, but there is room to improve further.

Agreement levels for 'environmentally friendly and sustainable' and 'doing all it can to reduce its environmental impact' are just below 50% with many still unsure, indicating more need to be done and that there's an opportunity to increase communications on the industry's sustainability initiatives to the community.

% agree



+ see footnote



Those who care more about the environment are also more likely to believe beef and lamb production is environmentally friendly.

*Among those who don't find the environment very or extremely important, they typically say it is somewhat important
 +Amongst those that don't agree with the statement, the majority are neutral (they sit on the fence or say they don't know)

Trust is at the highest level seen to date.

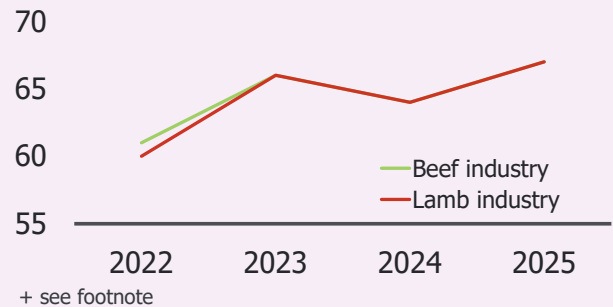
67% of Australians trust the red meat industry to do the right thing.

69% trust red meat producers to provide safe, nutritious and sustainable produce.

Trust is strongest among the middle-aged group (35-44yrs) at 71%.

It is weakest among the youngest age group (18-24yrs) at 61% and among women at 62%.

% trust the industry to 'do the right thing'



The top drivers of trust are perceptions that relate to:

Environmental action

The industry is doing what it can to minimize environmental impact.



Transparency and responsiveness

The industry is open and honest with the public and listens to public opinions.

Ethical practices

Cattle and sheep are raised humanely and farmers are ethical and trustworthy.



Regulations and standards

There are effective regulations and standards in the industry to ensure they do the right thing.

Since last year, there's been an improvement across all trust drivers.

Notable uplifts are seen in perceptions that are important trust drivers. This is seen across both beef and lamb.

Average score for all relevant variables, for beef and lamb
Percentage point increase since last year

	2024	2025	
Environmental action	48%	51%	+3
Transparency and responsiveness	42%	45%	+3
Ethical practices	54%	56%	+2
Regulation and standards	51%	54%	+3

In particular the perception "The Australian beef/lamb industry is doing all it can to reduce its impact on the environment" sees an impressive uplift of 6% (on average between beef and lamb) since last year. This variable is grouped under 'Environmental Action' and contributed to the improvement in this important trust driver scores.

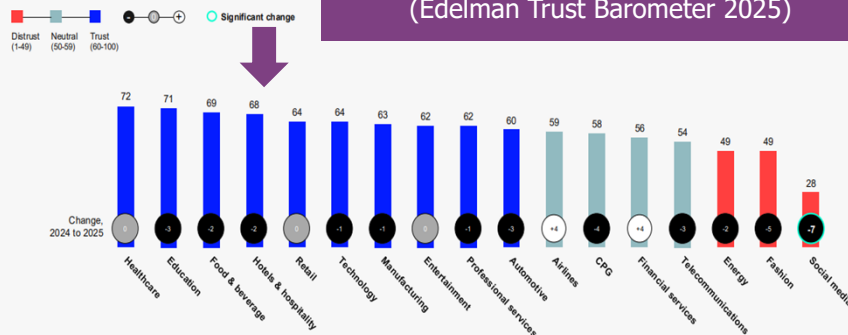


The Australian red meat industry is amongst the most trusted industries in Australia.

With a trust score of **67%**, the red meat industry is among the most trusted.*

Percent trust, in Australia

Compared to other industries (Edelman Trust Barometer 2025)



© 2025 Edelman Trust Barometer. TRU, %ED. Please indicate how much you trust businesses in each of the following industries to do what is right. 9-point scale; top 4 box, trust. Question asked of half the sample. General population, Australia. Yearover-year changes were tested for significance using a t-test set at the 95% confidence level.



And red meat farmers are among the most trusted professions.

Trust in different professions in Australia (% trust)



Trust in the industry

Trust levels differ along the paddock to plate supply chain.

Trust in farmers (paddock) and in the product (plate) are the strongest. Most believe farmers manage land, trees and water ethically and that cattle are raised humanely on farms. However, trust levels dip around transport, packaging and supermarket prices.

ON THE FARM

53% agree cattle and sheep are raised on farms in an ethical and humane way.

52% agree cattle and sheep farmers manage the land ethically.

50% agree cattle and sheep farmers use pastures and trees ethically.

48% agree cattle and sheep farmers use and manage water ethically.

IN TRANSPORT

34% agree cattle and sheep are transported ethically within Australia.

IN STORE

32% agree supermarkets price beef and lamb fairly, don't overcharge

40% agree supermarkets package beef and lamb in an environmentally sustainable way

ON THE PLATE

77% agree the beef and lamb produced in Australia is high quality

74% agree beef and lamb are part of a healthy balanced diet

+ see footnote

*Source for comparison: Edelman Trust Barometer 2025 – Australia Country Report

+Amongst those that don't agree with the statement, the majority are neutral (they sit on the fence or say they don't know)

Australians believe the red meat industry is important for the economy and contributes positively to society.



35% claim they are **knowledgeable** about the **red meat industry**.

Many people claim they're interested in learning more about red meat.

53% are **interested** in **learning more** about the **red meat industry**.



Top three areas of interest to learn more:

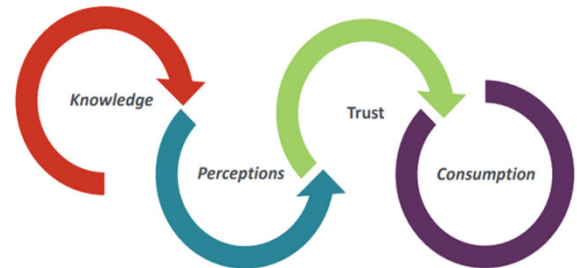
1	How farmers ensure the humane treatment of the animals	(43%)
2	How red meat is beneficial for your health	(41%)
3	How farmers are looking after the environment	(34%)

Producers should have confidence to share their stories as it's most likely to improve perceptions.

In particular, there's opportunity to connect with Gen Z, who are less positive about the industry (despite increasing their red meat consumption).

Industry knowledge

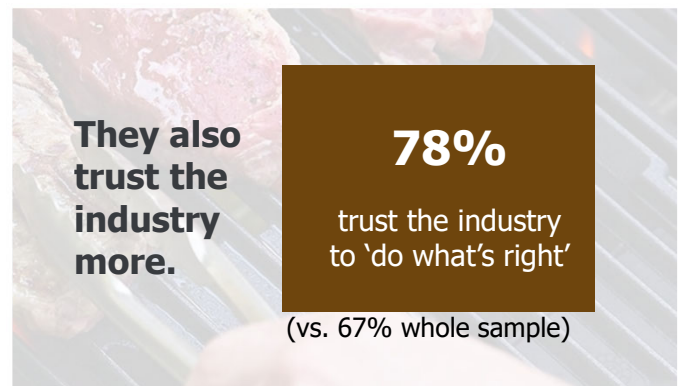
There's a strong correlation between higher levels of knowledge, positive perceptions of the industry, higher trust levels and regular consumption of Australian red meat.



Those who know more about the industry have better perceptions...

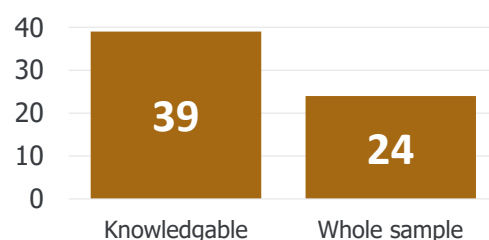
		vs. whole sample
76%	agree producers are ethical and trustworthy.	56%
74%	agree cattle are farmed humanely.	55%
72%	feel good about the production of beef.	55%
70%	agree producers care about the environment.	54%

+ see footnote



They are also more likely to be increasing their red meat consumption.

Red meat increasers %



MLA's Australian Good Meat content was tested to see if it improves perceptions.

An extra (boost) sample of n=600 were exposed to the Australian Good Meat social media video content before completing the survey, to test the impact on perceptions.

The main sample (n=1500) also saw the content, but only at the end of their survey (to keep results comparable to past years).

All results listed earlier in this report are among the main sample only.

Two thirds say the Australian Good Meat content left them feeling more positive about the red meat industry (*one third said they felt the same*).

Gen Z (18–24 year olds), in particular, responded positively with **71%** saying the Australian Good Meat video content made them feel more positive towards the Australian red meat industry.

The content tested uplifted perceptions around environmental action, transparency and responsiveness, and regulations and standards – important drivers of trust in the industry.

+ see footnote

+Amongst those that don't agree with the statement, the majority are neutral (they sit on the fence or say they don't know)

Focus areas for the future:



Despite increased consumption amongst the **younger generations (Gen Z)**, there is a **need to continue to improve perceptions towards the industry** amongst this group, in particular younger women, in order to improve trust in the industry in the future.



Communicating the environmental action that the industry is undertaking will further enhance trust, as this is a key driver of trust in the industry.



Sharing information and engaging with the community is important to demonstrate the industry understands the community, listens, is transparent, changing practices and adheres to standards and regulations.



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MLA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, work and care for. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, as we recognise their history, culture, connection to land and water, and share in their commitment to caring for Country.