



AUT RESEARCH CENTRE FOR
JOURNALISM, MEDIA & DEMOCRACY

AOTEAROA

Trust in news falls alarmingly, steep declines for Māori TV, TVNZ and RNZ

AUT research centre for Journalism, Media and Democracy (JMAD)

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The AUT research centre for **Journalism, Media and Democracy (JMAD)** has published its third [Trust in News in Aotearoa New Zealand](#) report, authored by Dr Merja Myllylahti and Dr Greg Treadwell. The report finds that in 2022, New Zealanders' trust in news and news brands continued to fall at an alarming level.

In three years of 2020-22, trust in the news people consume dropped 10%. While in 2020, 62% of New Zealanders trusted the news they consumed, in 2022 the figure was 52%. Additionally, general trust in the news continues to decline. In three years of 2020-22, trust in news in general fell 8% from 53% in 2020 to 45% in 2022.

In 2021-2022, trust in the Iwi radio network, Māori TV and TVNZ dropped more than 10% from the previous year, and trust in RNZ fell almost 9%. RNZ remained the most trusted news brand (trust score 6.2/10). *The Otago Daily Times* (6.0/10), included in the survey for the first time, was the second most trusted news brand in 2022, followed by TVNZ (5.9/10) and Newshub (5.8/10). Only The Spinoff and Newstalk ZB maintained their 2021 trust levels.

- New Zealanders are very interested in the news; 22% of those surveyed have paid for the news and 36% have financially supported news organisations. Yet, trust in the news and news brands is eroding, says Dr Merja Myllylahti, JMAD co-director and co-author of the report.
- Paradoxically, one of the main reasons for distrust in news media appears to be the Government's funding of it. A large number of respondents now perceive media as an extension of the Government, hence it is seen untrustworthy, says Myllylahti.
- This year, journalists have been increasingly under attack when reporting on the Covid crisis, vaccinations, vaccine mandates, protests and so on. In its role as disseminator of vital information in a crisis, the media has perhaps been seen as the Government mouthpiece. In one sense, it has quite rightly been, says Dr Greg Treadwell, co-author of the report.

The *Trust in Aotearoa News in New Zealand* report is produced in collaboration with the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. For the 2022 report, 1,085 New Zealand adults (18 years of age or over) were surveyed between February 22 and March 1, 2022, by Horizon Research. The survey has a maximum margin of error at the 95% confidence level for the total sample of $\pm 3.0\%$

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JMAD podcast available here: <https://www.jmadresearch.com/trust-in-news-in-new-zealand>