



# Fisheries & Aquaculture Industries' Research Outcomes

The Community Trust in Rural Industries project aims to understand the nature of the relationship between Australia's rural industries and the community, uncovering the real drivers of trust, risks and opportunities and the connectedness of the sector. It also aims to build capacity of rural industries to improve levels of community trust in their activities and people.

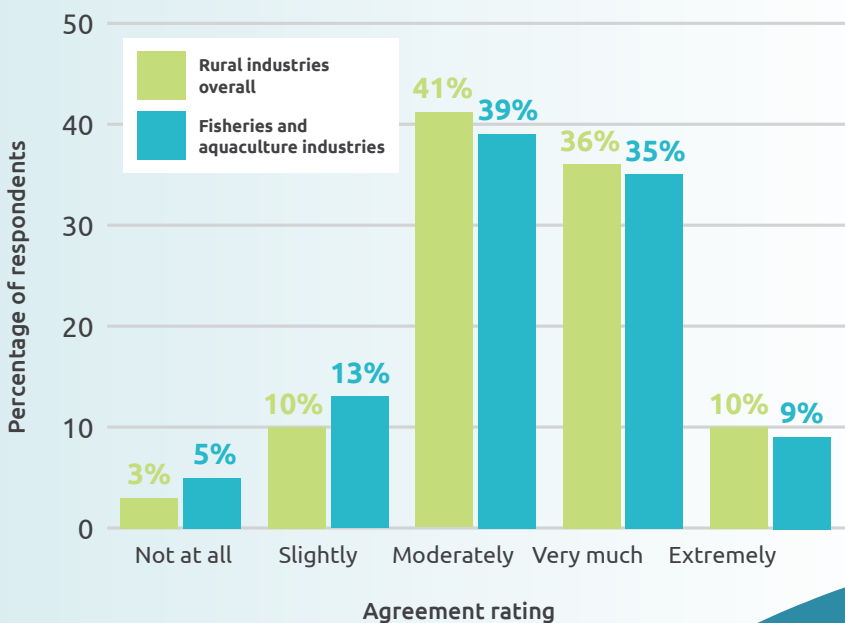
JULY 2020

## Year one research findings at a glance

**1** Trust in rural industries is generally strong but levels of trust vary across the community and by industry.

**2** At a sector-wide level, the community sees rural industries primarily as responsible stewards of the land and sea.

How much do you trust Australian rural industries/ fisheries and aquaculture to act responsibly?



3

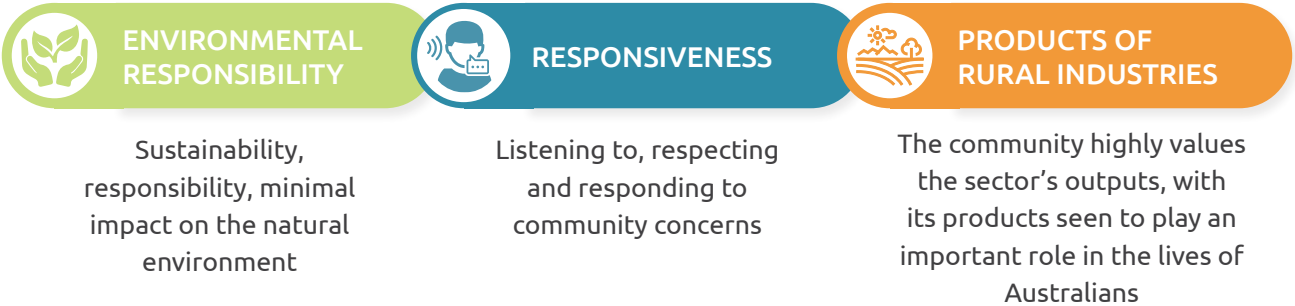
### Rural industries are connected to each other in the eyes of the community

Almost half (48 per cent) of all respondents agreed that if they hear about a rural industry acting irresponsibly, it negatively affects their opinion of all rural industries.

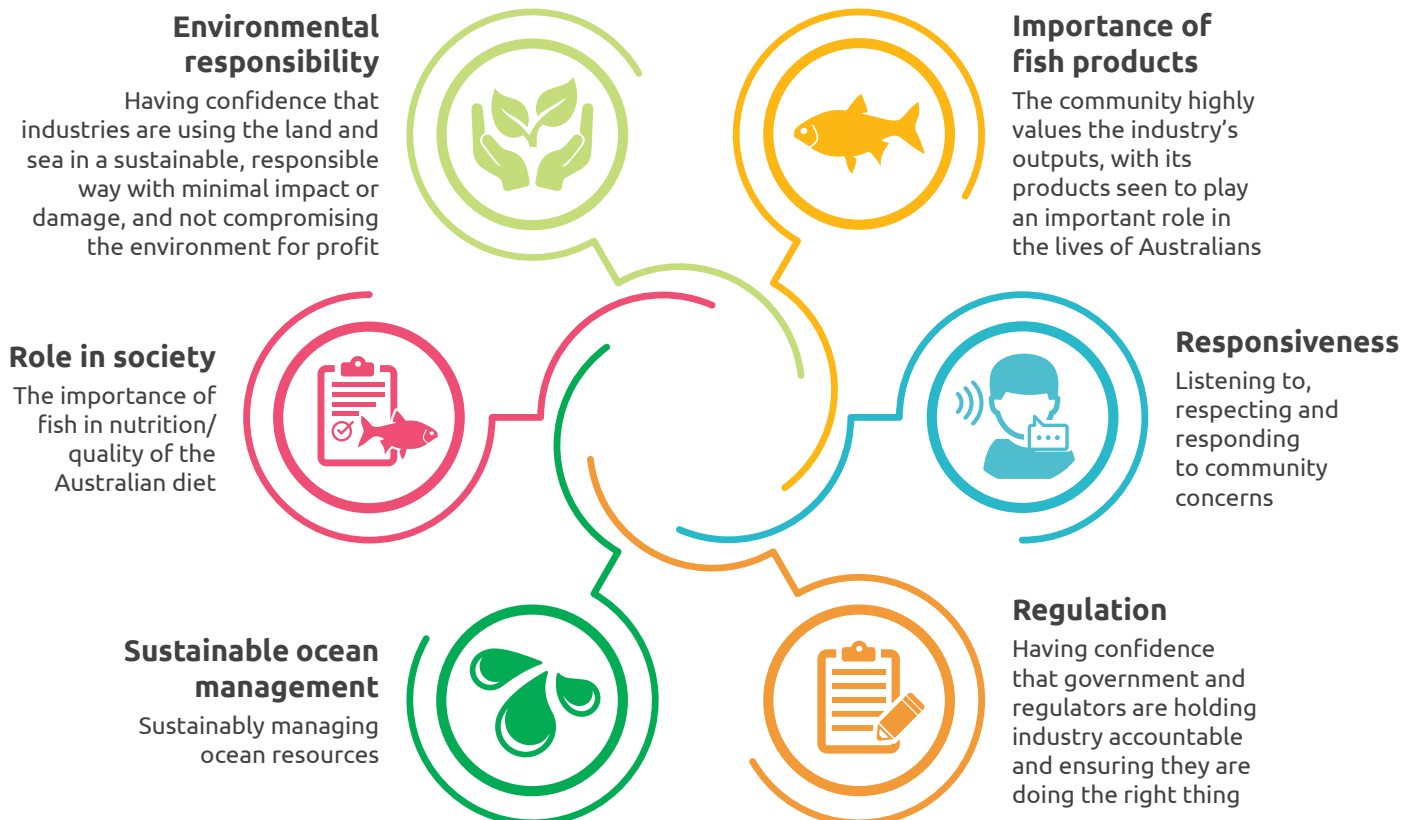


4

### The research identified the drivers of community trust in rural industries as:



### The research identified the drivers of community trust in fisheries and aquaculture industries as:

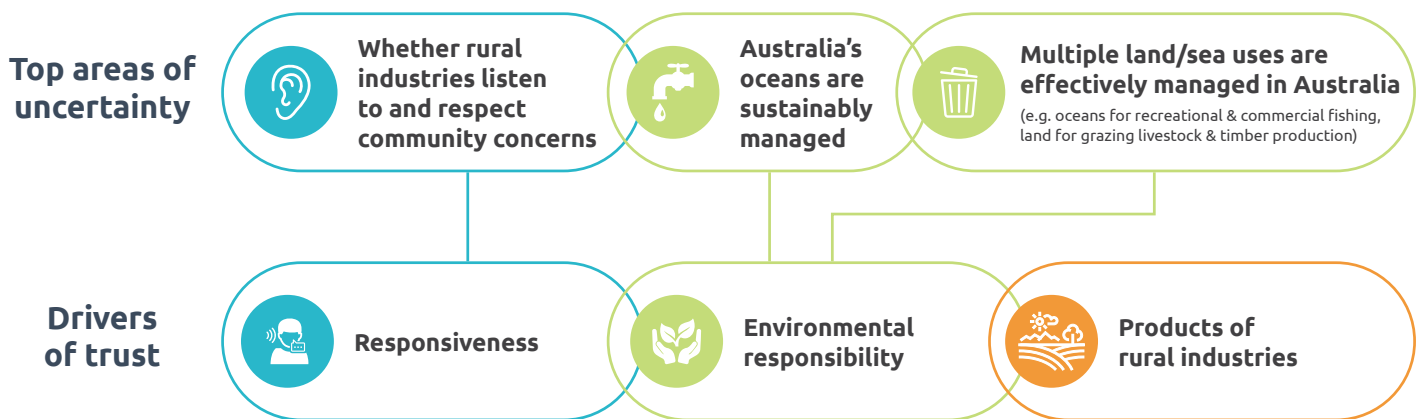


5

## The research uncovered a number of issues that large sections of the community were uncertain about -

(meaning they do not have strong views one way or another or have gaps in their knowledge around Australian rural industries).

Some of these areas of uncertainty included the extent to which rural industries listen to and engage with community concerns; manage oceans sustainably and manage multiple land/sea uses effectively.



Notably, most of the issues the community expressed uncertainty about relate to the two key drivers of trust - environmental responsibility and sector responsiveness.

6

## As stewards of the land and sea, the community expects farmers, fishers and foresters to use resources responsibly and sustainably.

Industries need to ensure that their production systems, practices and processes align with community expectations, particularly around environmental management. This may require practice change in areas that do not align with community expectations. Education or communication campaigns alone will not create alignment, trust can only be built through a combination of industry action and community engagement.



# What does this mean for fisheries & aquaculture industries?



The research reinforces that **community wants to know it is being heard and understood by fish producers and catchers**, and seeks ongoing reassurance that their concerns are being addressed. This requires the industry to be responsive to community attitudes and to communicate any changes.



The community does not expect the industry to be faultless, but it **does expect it to proactively engage on areas of community concern**, and in turn respond to breaking issues quickly and openly.



There is opportunity for industries to respond productively and consistently. The research showed that **the industry acting irresponsibly negatively affects the community's opinion of all rural industries**.



**Having available guidance on best-practice approaches will empower fishers and aquaculturists** to build trust in their own industry and in the sector.



The community's main information sources are the internet, television news, television current affairs and social media. **These channels can be used by the industry to communicate action and engage directly with the community**, particularly on those issues where large portions of the community were uncertain.



The findings show that the pathway to building and **maintaining community trust is to be genuinely responsive to community attitudes**, particularly around environmental sustainability and resource use. **The key is to demonstrate responsiveness through action**. Telling the community you are doing the right thing is not enough. Proactive, transparent, long term engagement on emerging issues and concerns is required.

## How can industry build trust?



Map industry practices and **critically review them against the key drivers of trust**



**Understand your industry's environmental impact** and identify strategies and plans to mitigate those impacts



Build a **regular process for listening to community concerns** around environmental impacts and other issues, acknowledging these concerns, and responding to them proactively rather than defensively



**Become more proactive** in the areas the community identified they are uncertain about

### About the program

The Community Trust in Rural Industries Program is a cross-sector initiative involving ten Rural Research and Development Corporations, the National Farmers' Federation and the NSW Department of Primary Industries to build the capacity of food and fibre industries to productively engage with the community.

The Program is examining the issues impacting on food and fibre industries and how these industries relate to each other in the minds of community members. It involves community research by Voconiq amongst a sample of more than 6,000 Australians over a three-year period to provide insights on cross-sector issues and best practice approaches. This fact sheet outlines the results from Year One research.

Data collection for the community survey was completed between the 2nd of December 2019 and the 30th of January 2020. Of the 7,329 surveys that were completed, 6,461 were included for analysis after data cleaning.

Voconiq is an Australian data science company built on a platform of research developed by Australia's national science agency, CSIRO.

For further information please contact Virginia Johnstone, Project Manager, on 0430 793 875.