Corruption in Queensland: perceptions and prevention

In 2018 a special Global Corruption Barometer survey was conducted by Griffith University and Transparency International Australia. The Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) provided additional funding to increase the number of Queenslanders surveyed.

The survey asked people about their perceptions and experiences of corruption, including their views about the performance of the CCC.

The survey found that levels of trust and confidence in government has been in decline since 2008.

Project leader Professor A J Brown, of Griffith University’s Centre for Governance and Public Policy, said the results show “a stronger correlation between trust and action against corruption. Well over a third of citizens’ total trust and confidence is now explained by whether they feel the government is doing a ‘good job in fighting corruption’ (37% at the federal level, 25% state)”.

This short report is a Queensland-specific snapshot of corruption perceptions and experiences, based on the overall survey findings. Read more information about the 2018 Global Barometer Survey (Australia).
Survey results

Degree of trust and confidence in government (local, state, federal)

Queenslanders have slightly more trust and confidence in their local government than the rest of the country, and more confidence in the local government than either the state government or federal government.

Notwithstanding, less than half of Queensland respondents have trust and confidence in the federal or state government, and only just over half have trust and confidence in local government.

Percentage of respondents who have confidence by level of government

Survey year

Federal State Local

2008 82 57 57
2009 56 58 57
2010 53 58 57
2011 53 59 57
2012 49 53 59
2013 46 46 51
2014 46 53 59
2015 46 57 59
2016 49 53 59
2017 46 46 51
2018 46 46 51

Percentage of respondents who have a great deal/fair amount of trust and confidence in each level of government to do a good job in carrying out its responsibilities (Queensland compared with national average)

Federal 45 46
State 46 46
Local 53 51

National average
Nearly one in five Queensland respondents believe that using political connections for personal gain and public servants helping friends or family to get a job without an appropriate process are acceptable behaviours.

One-quarter of Queenslanders believe that police officers using more force than necessary is acceptable.

A significant proportion of Queenslanders surveyed believe that a range of negative behaviours frequently occur.

While the Queensland results are largely on par with the national average, they confirm there is more work to do to increase the community’s confidence in government, reduce tolerance for corruption and reduce perceptions that corruption is occurring in Queensland.
Corruption: areas of focus 2017–18

The CCC works to reduce the incidence of major crime and corruption in Queensland. Each year it identifies particular areas of concern on which to focus its resources. In 2017–18, our areas of focus were corruption involving elected officials, excessive use of force and misuse of confidential information.

What you told us

We mapped your survey responses to these topics against our activities.

Have you witnessed or suspected:

- 55% bribe, gift or favour for a service or decision
- 60% making a decision in favour of a donor
- 61% Using their position to benefit themselves or family
- 48% having unexplained income beyond public salary

How many of these are involved in corruption:

- 20% thought all or some councillors were corrupt
- 21% thought all state members were corrupt

What we’ve been doing

This year, the CCC conducted a range of activities that seek to prevent and deal with corruption involving elected officials, excessive use of force and misuse of confidential information.

- 31 recommendations from Operation Belcarra
- Changes to donor legislation resulting from Operation Belcarra
- 4 recommendations from Operation Windage
- 15 people charged with 93 offences from Operation Windage
- Investigated complaints of high level elected officials including complaints against the Premier and Cabinet ministers
- 12 recommendations to improve document management and audit trails
- 492 complaints with 762 allegations
- 15 investigations commenced for misuse of confidential information
- Complaints about misuse of confidential information made up 9% of all corrupt conduct
- Prevention in Focus - Improper access to public sector databases: what you should know

- Received 648 allegations of police excessive use of force = 13% of all police allegations
- Finalised 3 investigations and reviewed another 62
- public report, Police use of force in Queensland watch-house including six recommendations and the response by the QPS
Tackling corruption in Queensland

We work in collaboration with our public sector partners. In 2017-18 the CCC employed the following strategies to tackle corruption.

- **63** days of hearings
- **56** corruption investigations finalised
- **38** people charged with **176** offences
- **25** corruption prevention recommendations
- **31** recommendations from Operation Belcarra
- **74%** of complaints referred back to relevant agency (consistent with the devolution principle)
- Partnering with State Government departments to build capacity in Ethical Standards Units

- **Prevention in focus series:**
  - Publicly funded research
  - Access to public sector databases
  - Risks in recruitment
  - Failure of duty by police officers
  - Conflicts of interest

- **5** corruption audits:
  - Corruption risk management
  - Police corruption assessment
  - Secondary employment
  - Chemical management
  - Conflicts of interest in local government

For detailed information about our corruption prevention activities and publications, go to: [www.ccc.qld.gov.au/corruption-prevention](http://www.ccc.qld.gov.au/corruption-prevention)