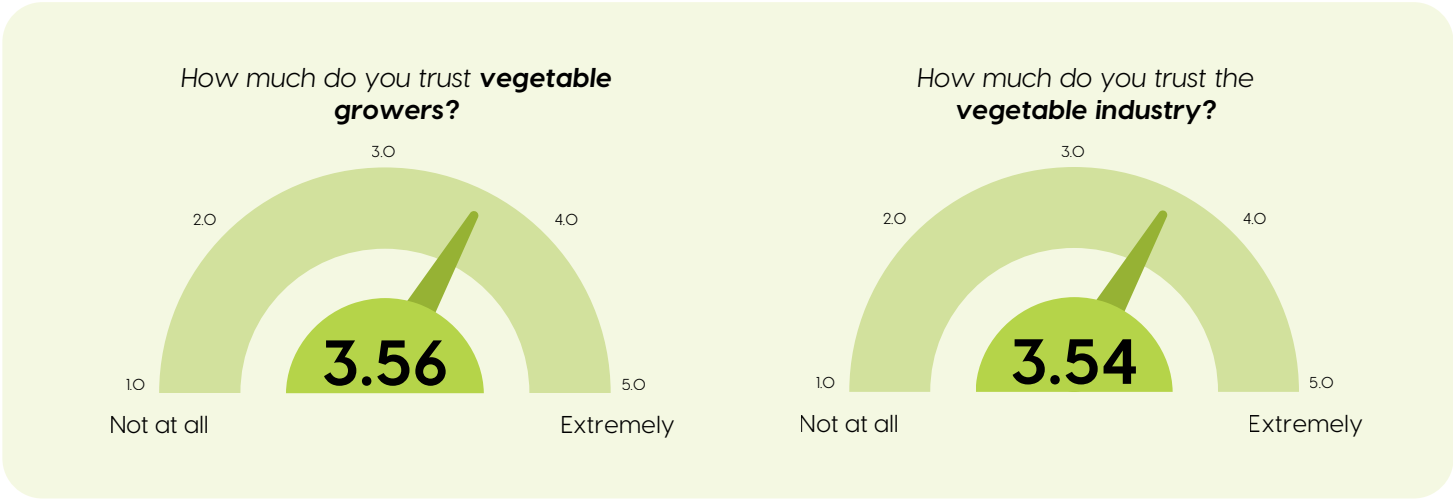
Community Trust in Australian Vegetable Growers

The Community Trust in Australian Horticulture project surveyed 1,791 Australians to understand community perceptions of vegetable growers and the vegetable industry. By measuring trust in both growers and the broader industry, this research helps identify whether community perceptions are driven by individual farming practices or broader industry issues. This allows growers to better target communication and engagement where it will have the greatest impact.

Encouragingly, **88% of community members agreed that the vegetable industry is important to Australia**, while 85% say they have at least some knowledge of the industry.



What drives community trust in vegetable growers?

The strongest driver of trust in vegetable growers relate to environmental and sustainable practices, food safety and responsible water use. While these same factors also influence trust in the vegetable industry overall, Australians additionally consider whether the broader industry is innovative and operates fairly.



Figure 1: Drivers of community trust in vegetable growers.

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How can vegetable growers strengthen trust?

Continue demonstrating ethical and responsible production

- **63% of Australians agree vegetable growers are committed to ethical and sustainable production**, while 31% remain neutral. Increasing the visibility of existing practices can help build confidence among those who are uncertain.

Increase visibility of environmental management

- **55% of Australians agree vegetable growers manage environmental impacts effectively,** while 38% remain neutral. This suggests many Australians are uncertain rather than critical, creating an opportunity to build understanding through practical examples of environmental stewardship.

Continue reinforcing food safety standards

- Food safety is an area of strength, with **73% of Australians agreeing the industry adheres to strict food safety standards.** Continuing to communicate these practices helps maintain confidence in both growers and the broader industry.

Showcase responsible water management

- **56% of Australians agree vegetable growers use water responsibly,** while 37% remain neutral. Sharing how water is managed efficiently and responsibly may help strengthen community confidence.

Does age matter?

Australians of all ages recognise the importance of the vegetable industry. However, **younger Australians report slightly lower levels of agreement** than older age groups, suggesting there may be opportunities to strengthen awareness and engagement with younger audiences.

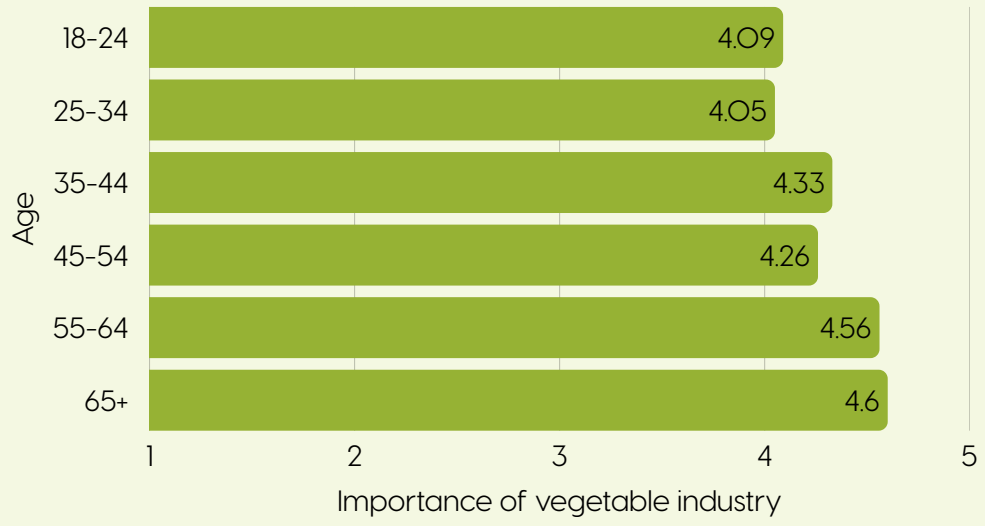


Figure 2: Correlation between age and importance scores in the vegetable industry.

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What does this mean for vegetable growers?

Australians already recognise the importance of the vegetable industry and generally trust vegetable growers. Trust is shaped most strongly by confidence that growers operate responsibly through ethical and sustainable production, effective environmental management, responsible water use and strong food safety practices.

Importantly, many responses relating to environmental management and water use were neutral rather than negative. This suggests that uncertainty, not concern, is the greater challenge. For growers, this presents an opportunity to increase the visibility of the work already being done through practical examples of sustainable farming, environmental stewardship and responsible water management.

Maintaining strong communication around food safety and ethical production can help reinforce existing confidence, while broader industry initiatives that demonstrate innovation and fairness can continue to strengthen trust in the vegetable industry as a whole.

CITATION
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