

## Can Australians keep a secret?

Ever told a secret to someone and wondered whether or not you could trust them not to tell another soul? Or perhaps you've had someone swear you to secrecy? We asked Australians, 'How capable are you at keeping secrets?'

### Maybe not

Less than 1 in 3 Australians (31.7%) state that they always keep a secret. Worse, 1 in 5 admitted to promising full secrecy to someone, knowing they would pass on what was said at the first available opportunity. Further, more than 1 in 20 (6.1%) are chronic secret sharers- divulging most or all secrets that they are told. More than half of all Australians (51.3%) have had a friend break their promise of secrecy yet two thirds of us (62.5%) have someone in our life that we trust unreservedly.



### Comments from research participants

*"I find it hard to keep secrets when the secret seems trivial and the joy of telling is so intense."*

*"If someone has a secret to tell me, I always let them know that I don't want to hear it if it is not okay for me to share it with my husband."*

*"I think it is heartbreaking to have your trust broken, so it is something I would rather not do to someone."*

***"The emotional need to know and be known is timeless. The relational need to confide in someone is intense and despite the near universal experience of having a confidence broken, our desire to trust again is indefatigable" writes Mark McCrindle.***

### So who do we blab to?

**KISS & TELL:** Australians are most likely to blab secrets to their spouse (55%)  
**FRIENDLY ADVICE:** Best friends come in second (15%)  
**MUM'S THE WORD:** Followed closely by mothers (13%)  
**NOT THE REST:** But not sisters, dads or brothers (all less than 4%)

### Why do we do it?

When exposing a secret, Australians are largely motivated out of "concern for that person's welfare" (75%), "concern for a third party's welfare" (52%) and "concern for their own welfare" (38%). We are least likely to be motivated by blackmail (8%), jealousy/vengeance (8%) and "the fun of it" (5%).

***"Keeping a secret in this era of social networking technology is a challenging character test. The new platforms of connection have simultaneously enhanced the size of social networks and reduced the social risk of interactions" finds Mark McCrindle. "Therefore secrets can be***

***shared or broken in a pseudo-safe world of anonymity, yet this bypassing of traditional social mores often leads to negative consequences and regrets."***

## And what are the consequences?

<b>BIG TROUBLE:</b>	26.8% have landed in serious trouble by betraying a secret.
<b>REJECTION:</b>	17.5% have ended a friendship over spilling a secret.
<b>YET STILL TRUSTING:</b>	94% have one or more people that they would confide in.

## What about keeping secrets?

The flipside of the coin is that Australians' reasons for keeping secrets are noble. Our main motivations for this are love for the person who shares their secret (52%) and listening to their conscience (47%). Meanwhile, fear of the repercussions (35.5%) and fear of getting caught (11.5%) were less of an issue.

***"One of the challenges people have in fast-moving, pragmatic and technological times is changing modes when it comes to relationships. While systems can be made more efficient and many processes can be crammed, friendships grow organically and can't be fast-tracked" states Mark McCrindle. "Our computers have an undo button but our relationships don't and the consequences are not virtual but actual".***

## Who do we trust?

Two thirds of Australians have someone in their life that they can trust unconditionally.

<b>SPOUSE/PARTNER:</b>	For over half, that person is their spouse/partner (55%).
<b>BEST FRIENDS:</b>	Best friends come in second again (33%).
<b>MOTHERS:</b>	Following that, we can always count on mum (23%)
<b>NOT B/Fs or G/Fs:</b>	We're least likely to trust boyfriends and girlfriends (1.5%)

Interestingly, these results are mirrored in our attitudes towards sharing secrets as gossip. Here we are least likely to tell the secrets from our spouse/partner (61.5%), best friend (45.5%) and mother (41.5%) and most likely to tell the secrets of boyfriend and girlfriend (8%).

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