



Wilkinson Butler Communicator of the Year

Australia's Best Communicators

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METHODOLOGY STATEMENT

Publication date: 10 December 2025

Methodology Statement

Research company	DemosAU
Client commissioning the research	Wilkinson Butler
End client	Wilkinson Butler
Fieldwork dates	13–17 November 2025
Mode of data collection	Internet Panels
Target population	Australian residents 18+ who pay attention to news
Sample size	1,103
Is voting intention published?	No
Effective sample size after weighting applied	636
Margin of error associated with effective sample size	+/-3.8%
Variables used in weighting	Age x gender, education, income, residential tenure, region, 2025 Federal Election vote.
Weighting method used	Rim Weighting
Full question text, responses categories and randomisation	See page 11.
Source of sample	Online Panels (100%)
Positioning of voting intention questions in questionnaire?	N/A
How were undecided voters handled?	N/A
2PP calculation method	N/A

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

A Note on the Methodology

DemosAU was commissioned by Wilkinson Butler to conduct public research to determine who Australians considered the best communicator of 2025.

This was a somewhat novel brief, with no established industry approach to answering a question of this nature. The closest examples from overseas involved surveys of communications' practitioners – experts in the field – whereas in this case, we wanted the perspectives of the general public.

There were two primary options available: a close-ended question where we would ask respondents to select a name from a list of pre-selected high profile names; or an open-ended approach, where respondents were free to list whichever names came to their mind. The shortcoming of the former approach was in putting together the shortlist of names, and the risk it would be tainted by our own biases and knowledge. With the latter approach, the risk was that no individual would garner enough responses to be rightfully be considered the leader.

After much discussion among our team and with Wilkinson Butler, we selected the open-ended approach. As expected, this resulted in a large number of names being mentioned – however, crucially, a handful stood out from the crowd, with two in particular well ahead of the pack and one clear leader. This allowed us to provide a clear answer to satisfactorily address Wilkinson Butler's question.

Respondents were asked two substantive questions for this research. The first asked them to identify the names of any prominent Australians who they believed were great communicators. The second asked them to explain why that person or persons were a great communicator.

To ensure an engaged audience, respondents were also asked where they got their news from, with a substantial list of sources, including TV stations, websites and social media platforms provided. Those who selected "I don't pay attention to the news" were excluded from the survey.

Fieldwork was carried out between November 13 and 17, with 1,103 people surveyed. After weighting respondents for age, gender, education, residential tenure, income, location and voting intention, the effective margin of error was +/- 3.8%.

Note: The summaries and explanations contained across the following pages represent the views of respondents, not of DemosAU or Wilkinson Butler.

RESULTS

The Communicator of the Year: Anthony Albanese (Prime Minister)

Mentioned by: 17% of respondents



Most Cited Traits

1. Clarity and simplicity of language
2. Authenticity and relatability
3. Calm, measured demeanour
4. Leadership/Role on the world stage

Indicative Respondent Verbatims/Quotes

"He speaks about politics in a way that's easy to understand for others"

"He has a calm demeanour and ensures he speaks thoroughly"

"He's not pretending to be upper class, he is working class and represents me"

"As PM Albanese has done a great job on the world scene talking to other leaders of countries."

Respondents who selected Anthony Albanese as the best communicator most often cite his clarity and plain speaking style. In general, they appreciate that he avoids jargon, explains complex issues — such as the economy, housing and international relations — in simple, accessible terms, and “speaks clearly” using language “everyone understands.”

A second major theme is authenticity and relatability: people describe him as honest, down-to-earth and connected to ordinary Australians, often referencing his working-class background and upbringing in public housing.

Many also highlight his calm, consistent demeanour, saying that he remains composed under pressure and comes across as credible and reassuring.

Finally, some point to his leadership presence as Prime Minister, arguing that his visibility on the national and international stage and his ability to handle media, diplomacy and policy explanations demonstrate strong communication skills.

RESULTS

The Runner Up: Pauline Hanson (One Nation Leader)

Mentioned by: 11% of respondents



Most Cited Traits

1. Straight-talking
2. Authenticity and relatability
3. Relatable communication style
4. Courage and toughness

Indicative Respondent Verbatims/Quotes

"Outspoken; Unafraid ; Not scared to tell the truth"

"Being honest and straight to the point"

"Makes complex problems easy to understand"

"She identifies with the people. Listens to us and fights to make changes"

Respondents who identified Pauline Hanson as the best communicator generally view her as direct and truthful, with participants emphasising her blunt, unfiltered communication in contrast to other politicians seen as evasive.

She is described as representing "everyday Australians", listening to people who feel overlooked and advocating on issues including affordability, families, low incomes and social challenges.

Many respondents also value her communication style, which they see as clear, simple and characterised by plain language and accessible explanations of complex topics.

Lastly, many admire her confidence and toughness, interpreting her willingness to speak openly and challenge others as evidence of authenticity, determination and commitment to her stated positions.

RESULTS

Other Prominent Names

Robert Irwin (Conservationist + Media Personality)

Mentioned by 4% of respondents



Most Cited Traits

1. Passionate
2. Authenticity
3. Kind and relatable
4. Confidence

Indicative Quotes

"He speaks clearly and with energy; Makes us happy and interested"

Penny Wong (Labor Senator)

Mentioned by 3% of respondents



Most Cited Traits

1. Clear and Articulate
2. Calm and measured
3. Authoritative
4. Honest and trustworthy

"She seems the most trustworthy of all current politicians and always speaks well."

Jacinta Nampijinpa Price (Liberal Senator)

Mentioned by 2% of respondents



Most Cited Traits

1. Honest and Trustworthy
2. Clear and articulate
3. Courage
4. Uses plain language

"She explains things so we can understand what is going on. She is not afraid to speak her mind"

RESULTS

All Communicators mentioned by ~1% of respondents or more

Cohort	Yes
Anthony Albanese	17%
Pauline Hanson	11%
Robert Irwin	4%
Penny Wong	3%
Jacinta Price	2%
John Howard	2%
Dylan Alcott	1%
Carrie Bickmore	1%
Hamish Blake	1%
Mark Bouris	1%
Michelle Bullock	1%
Jim Chalmers	1%
Abby Chatfield	1%
Roger Cook	1%
Peta Credlin	1%
Pat Cummins	1%
Andrew Forrest	1%
Julia Gillard	1%
Stan Grant	1%
Andrew Hastie	1%
Chris Hemsworth	1%
Hugh Jackman	1%
Barnaby Joyce	1%
Bob Katter	1%
Paul Keating	1%

Cohort	Yes
Justin Langer	1%
Sussan Ley	1%
Peter Malinauskas	1%
Eddie McGuire	1%
Chris Minns	1%
Scott Morrison	1%
Paul Murray	1%
Peter Overton	1%
David Pocock	1%
Kevin Rudd	1%
Dick Smith	1%
All Others not listed (individually polling under 1%)	31%

Note: Total responses may exceed 100% as respondents could nominate more than one name

THEMES

What makes someone a great communicator?

From respondents' open-ended responses, we have identified six general themes below:

1. Honesty & trustworthiness

Mentioned by ~26% of respondents

The most common reflection of a great communicator is someone who is honest, straight, and can be trusted. In other words, someone who "tells it like it is", "doesn't BS", and whose words line up with their actions over time.

Keywords: honest, truth, no bullshit, trust, authentic, genuine, not hiding anything.

For some respondents, honesty is the minimum bar: if a person isn't truthful, they cannot be a great communicator, no matter how polished they are.

2. Clarity, plain language & simplicity

Mentioned by ~22% of respondents

The next big theme is clarity – using plain, simple language and explaining things in a way that's easy to follow. This theme includes both clarity of content (explaining complex issues clearly) and clarity of structure (being concise, not waffling, not using jargon).

Keywords: clear, straight to the point, simple, easy to understand, no nonsense.

Clarity and honesty are often mentioned together – being "clear" and "straight" is part of what makes someone feel honest.

3. Listening, empathy & caring about people

Mentioned by ~20% of respondents

A large group emphasise that great communicators don't just talk – they listen and show empathy. They're seen as people who understand "ordinary Australians", care about others, and take the time to listen rather than lecture.

Keywords: listen, good listener, empathy, cares, compassionate, understands people, hears us.

For many, empathy + listening is what differentiates someone who is just a good speaker from someone who is a genuinely good communicator.

THEMES

4. Strong delivery, speaking style & body language

Mentioned by ~15% of respondents

Another large cluster of comments focus on how people speak as much as what they say – articulation, tone, poise, and body language.

Keywords: articulate, eloquent, well spoken, good tone of voice, maintains eye contact.

This theme overlaps with confidence (below), but is distinct: it's about technical speaking skill and physical presence.

5. Knowledgeable & informed

Mentioned by ~14% of respondents

A significant share explicitly want communicators who know their stuff – people who are well-informed, experienced, and can back up what they say with facts or expertise.

Keywords: knowledgeable, informed, expert, experienced, research, facts, evidence.

For these respondents, credibility comes partly from substance: it's not enough to sound good; communicators must be across the detail.

6. Confidence, conviction & passion

Mentioned by ~12% of respondents

Many respondents describe great communicators as confident, passionate and decisive. They value communicators who genuinely believe in what they're saying and project that belief without being overbearing.

Keywords: confidence, strong, passionate, inspiring, conviction.

Confidence and passion are most positively viewed when paired with honesty and clarity; over-confidence without substance isn't seen as desirable.

QUESTIONS ASKED

Q. In general, where do you get your news from?

- News websites and newspapers
- Commercial TV news (7,9,10, Sky News)
- ABC
- Instagram
- Tiktok
- Facebook
- X
- Other
- I don't pay attention to the news - (*leave survey*)

Q. For the purposes of this discussion, let's define a great communicator as someone who comes across as trustworthy, expresses ideas clearly, connects authentically with others, or inspires audiences.

Name the Australians, with a public profile, who you think are great communicators in 2025?

You can name one person, or up to five. They may be in politics, in business, in the media, in sport or well-known in the community.

- Open-ended response

Q. What has one or more of these people said or done that makes them such a great communicator?

- Open-ended response + Follow up prompt for more detail.



LET'S TALK ABOUT HOW WE CAN HELP YOU

Get in Touch

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