

# Maintaining the Social Licence to Operate

The “*Maintaining the social licence to operate: 2018 KPMG – AICD trust survey*” shows that directors are acutely aware of the need for their organisations to maintain trust with stakeholders. The [Edelman Trust Barometer report](#) clearly found a declining trust across media, government, NGOs and commercial organisations.

About 62% of directors surveyed consider they can challenge management on issues of trust in their organisation. This alarmingly leaves about 38% who do not. Also the survey disclosed that only a meagre 23% of directors believe they receive ‘meaningful’ metrics on trust in their organisations. So it seems that now trust is an asset of questionable value for companies.

With apologies to Groucho Marx, but trust seems to have joined those other words – values, culture, ethics and principles.

“Those were our company’s trust issues, and if they are going to embarrass or trip us up .... well, we have others.”

With the exception of high performance organisations, it appears too little governance is exercised when it comes to the management of trust. It is viewed as good window dressing.

Of course we all know that stakeholders are now “over-the-words”. They would rather have the evidence of authentic actions.

So every board ought to be asking “what is it I need to do as the organisation’s leaders in governance to retain our social licence?”