

WHO DO WE TRUST?

READER'S
DIGEST
TRUST
POLL
2011

The results of the Reader's Digest annual Most Trusted People survey are in, and again this year they shine a revealing light on the mood and mindset of the nation

BY MATT PHILP

Could New Zealand's love affair with sportspeople be over?

On the basis of your picks for this year's Most Trusted People poll, it may be time to think the unthinkable.

In 2009, eight of the top ten spots were occupied by current or former champs. This year, sports doesn't get a look-in until All White Ryan Nelsen's appearance at No. 15, with only Sir Brian Lochore and Brad Thorn joining him in the top 30.

Perhaps even more surprising is who has replaced them in your estimation of trustworthiness. Scientists are first, second and third in this year's poll.



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Sir Ray Avery (above) tops our Trust List, with fellow scientists Sir Peter Gluckman (far left) and Sir Paul Callaghan taking out second and third spots

Given that New Zealand scientists have for years complained of feeling undervalued – a gripe borne out by historically meagre funding levels and the longstanding “brain drain” of our best researchers overseas – the turnaround is doubly startling.

But there they are. Sir Raymond Avery, inventor of low-cost intraocular lenses for cataract sufferers, occupies the top rung. At No. 2, Professor Sir Peter Gluckman, the inaugural Chief Science Advisor to the PM. And below

him, Professor Sir Paul Callaghan, physicist and 2011 New Zealander of the Year.

“I have to say I’m surprised by these results,” says Emanuel Kalafatelis, social commentator and Director of Research New Zealand. “Historically, New Zealanders haven’t had a love affair with scientists, and sportspeople always rate highly – we like that the Kiwi international sports star could be the kid from around the corner. So this is difficult to explain.”

AND THE WINNER IS...

No 1. SIR RAY AVERY

Sir Ray Avery’s hardscrabble London childhood was of the type that tends to either kill people or send them down the path of crime and punishment. In his case, an almost Dickensian upbringing of orphanages and foster homes produced not only a man of intellect and vision, but also of great humanitarianism.

It’s that latter quality you emphasised when choosing him as New Zealand’s most trusted. “A genius. Has done great good for millions in the third world,” was a typical response.

Avery, whose love of science began in London’s libraries during a period in his teens when he was sleeping rough, would take issue with the genius tag – he’s always downplayed the clever man image. But his record speaks for itself. A founding member of Auckland University’s Department of Pharmacology, and technical director for Douglas Pharmaceuticals,

Avery has managed to combine scientific smarts with undoubted entrepreneurial talents in order to help millions.

After meeting Fred Hollows and being challenged to “stop making money out of sick people”, Avery set up two labs in Eritrea and Nepal capable of manufacturing intraocular lenses at a fraction of the usual cost. Having collapsed the international market to the benefit of cataract sufferers, he then invented a \$5 reusable medical device to tackle the problem of over- and under-administration of IV drugs, a particularly life-threatening issue in the developing world.

Both projects were driven by Avery’s pragmatic brand of smarts, fired by a belief that “a project has to be based on business DNA, otherwise it won’t work”. And maybe that’s what inspires so much of your trust. He might have been born a Pom, but there’s a lot of our country’s “can do” attitude about Sir Ray Avery.

McCrindle Research surveyed a national sample of 735 adult New Zealanders in March 2011.

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PEOPLE

1. **Sir Ray Avery**, scientist, inventor, New Zealander of the Year 2010
2. **Sir Peter Gluckman**, Chief Science Advisor to the Prime Minister
3. **Sir Paul Callaghan**, physicist, New Zealander of the Year 2011
4. **The Hon. Justice Helen Winkelmann** Chief High Court Judge
5. **Roger Hall**, film, TV and theatre actor, playwright
6. **Bret McKenzie**, comedian, actor, musician
7. **Denise L'Esrange-Corbet**, fashion designer
8. **Jemaine Clement**, comedian, actor, musician
9. **Simon Gault**, celebrity chef, MasterChef judge
10. **Tony Kokshoorn**, Grey District Mayor
11. **Lt. Gen. Jerry Mataparae**, Governor-General designate
12. **Jay-Jay Feeney**, morning radio host for The Edge FM
13. **Nigel Latta**, psychologist, host of *The Politically Incorrect Parenting Show*
14. **Cpl. Willie Apiata**, Victoria Cross recipient for bravery in Afghanistan
15. **Ryan Nelsen**, All Whites captain
16. **Kim Hill**, journalist, presenter for Radio NZ National
17. **Gareth Morgan**, businessman, philanthropist, Morgan Foundation trustee
18. **Jim Mora**, radio broadcaster
19. **Matt McCarten**, union head, columnist
20. **Kevin Milne**, former TV presenter of *Fair Go*
21. **Sir Brian Lochore**, former All Black player and coach
22. **Garth McVicar**, Sensible Sentencing Trust spokesman
23. **Margaret Mahy**, award-winning children's author
24. **Peter Williams**, sportswriter, TV presenter
25. **Annabel Langbein**, celebrity chef, TV presenter
26. **The Rt. Hon. Sir Anand Satyanand**, 19th Governor-General
27. **Dame Malvina Major**, opera singer
28. **Leighton Smith**, talkback host on NewstalkZB radio
29. **Te Radar**, comedian, filmmaker, TV host of *Radar's Patch*
30. **Brad Thorn**, All Blacks player
31. **Michael Jones**, former All Blacks player
32. **Rhys Darby**, actor, comedian
33. **Ruben Wilki**, former rugby league player

34. **Sir Peter Snell**, three-time Olympic athletics gold medalist
35. **Dame Susan Devoy**, former squash player, charity worker
36. **Scott Dixon**, race car driver
37. **Sir John Walker**, Olympic athletics gold medalist
38. **Dame Alison Holst**, food writer, celebrity chef
39. **Bob Parker**, Christchurch Mayor
40. **Colin Meads**, former All Black, NZ Player of the Century
41. **Sarah Ulmer**, Olympic track cycling gold medalist
42. **Louise Nicholas**, rape victim advocate
43. **Rob Fyfe**, CEO Air New Zealand
44. **Graeme Hart**, businessman
45. **Peta Mathias**, chef, author, broadcaster
46. **Hayley Westenra**, singer/songwriter, UNICEF ambassador
47. **Jo Seager**, celebrity chef
48. **John Kirwan**, former All Black, mental illness spokesperson
49. **Mike McRoberts**, journalist, presenter of *60 Minutes*
50. **Pete Bethune**, conservationist, alternative fuel advocate
51. **Irene van Dyk**, former netball world champion
52. **Greg Murphy**, race car driver
53. **Simon Barnett**, TV and radio host
54. **Valerie Adams (Vili)**, Olympic shot-put gold medalist
55. **Richie McCaw**, current All Blacks captain
56. **Robyn Malcolm**, award-winning film and TV actor
57. **Sir Richard Hadlee**, former cricketer, ICC Hall of Famer
58. **Daniel Vettori**, New Zealand cricket captain
59. **Sir Peter Leitch**, businessman, charity worker, "The Mad Butcher"
60. **Tana Umaga**, former All Black
61. **Jim Hickey**, TV weatherman
62. **Joe Karam**, former All Black, entrepreneur
63. **Simon Dallow**, journalist, presenter of *One News*
64. **A.J. Hackett**, tourism entrepreneur, bungy jumping pioneer
65. **Sir Stephen Tindall**, founder of The Warehouse retail stores
66. **Dave Dobbyn**, musician
67. **Sam Neill**, award-winning actor
68. **Peter Whittall**, Pike River Coal CEO
69. **Howard Broad**, New Zealand Commissioner of Police
70. **Alan Bollard**, governor of the Reserve Bank of NZ
71. **Dick Hubbard**, former Auckland City Mayor, founder of Hubbard Foods
72. **Marcus Lush**, TV and radio host
73. **The Topp Twins**, entertainers, breast cancer activists
74. **Sir Peter Jackson**, director, screenwriter, three-time Oscar winner
75. **Sir Bob Jones**, businessman
76. **Graham Henry**, All Blacks coach
77. **Dame Kiri Te Kanawa**, opera singer
78. **Mark Sainsbury**, *Close Up* host
79. **Russel Norman**, Green Party co-leader
80. **Len Brown**, Auckland Mayor
81. **Tim Shadbolt**, Invercargill Mayor
82. **Allan Hubbard**, financier
83. **Sir Michael Hill**, jeweller, entrepreneur, philanthropist
84. **The Rt. Hon. Lockwood Smith**, Speaker of the House of Reps
85. **The Rt. Hon. Helen Clark**, former Prime Minister
86. **Keisha Castle-Hughes**, actor, Oscar nominee for *Whale Rider*
87. **Rachel Hunter**, model, actor
88. **John Campbell**, TV presenter, host of *Campbell Live*
89. **Marc Ellis**, former All Black and rugby league player, businessman
90. **The Rt. Hon. John Key**, 38th and current Prime Minister
91. **Paul Holmes**, broadcaster
92. **Paul Henry**, journalist, radio and TV presenter
93. **Jim Anderton**, Progressive Party leader
94. **The Hon. Bill English**, Deputy Prime Minister
95. **The Hon. Pita Sharples**, Minister of Maori Affairs
96. **The Hon. Phil Goff**, Labour Party leader
97. **The Hon. Tariana Turia**, Maori Party co-leader
98. **The Rt. Hon. Winston Peters**, New Zealand First leader
99. **The Hon. Rodney Hide**, Minister of Local Government
100. **The Hon. Hone Harawira**, activist, Member for Te Tai Tokerau

SCIENCE IN THE LIMELIGHT

Professor Keith Hunter loves that three scientists top the Most Trusted poll. The marine and freshwater chemist regularly takes up the cudgels in the media with climate change sceptics, some of whom could clearly trust scientists as far as they could throw them. “It’s a heartening result because there’s that element in society... who don’t trust scientists at all – mostly because they don’t like the message.”

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Sciences at the University of Otago and a lifelong Labour voter, he gives due credit to the national government for bringing science to the forefront. He noticed his own friends becoming more interested in science, and more appreciative of its role.

In fact, when the Ministry of Science, Research & Technology commissioned Nielsen to research this very question, it got a mostly positive, if ambiguous, response. Many Kiwis extend a “halo of trust” to government and other New Zealand science, although they also feel it lacks relevance and is elitist. They’re more sceptical when it comes to commercialised science, believing the profit motive can override public good.

Still, says Hunter, the fact is that Kiwis are coming around. “The idea is finally sheeting home that New Zealand can’t exist on cheese and milk powder forever, and that the future of this country is about having smart people, rather than lots of sheep and cows.”

Perhaps the best place to start is by acknowledging that these are difficult days for many New Zealanders. Recession, a mining tragedy and the Christchurch earthquake have cast a pall and many Kiwis are struggling for answers. Notwithstanding the odd comedian, the placings in the this year’s Most Trusted poll reflect that mood. It’s a serious list for serious times.

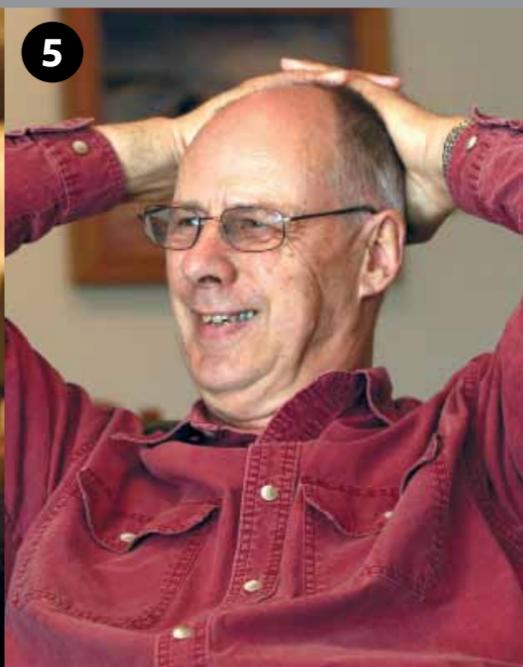
As well as scientists, among those you most trust is a Chief High Court Judge, a veteran playwright, an ex-Head of Defence and Governor-General designate, an old-school unionist, and a tough-talking economist – all people of substance and lifelong achievement, rather than fleeting success. Even the jocks named are cut from that same cloth. No quicksilver wingers here, but a doughty defender and a 36-year-old All Black lock seemingly chiselled from granite.

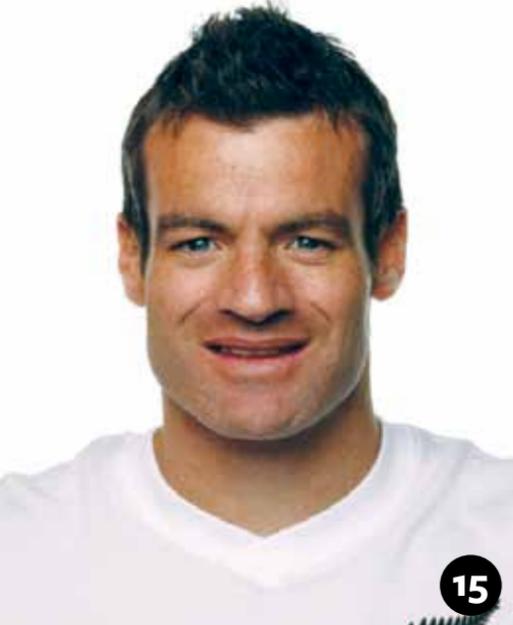
Granite is not a bad metaphor, as it happens. “In serious times, you look to people who are rocks,” says Kalafatis. In fact, the two men most

**KIWIS HAVE
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WARMLY
TOWARDS
WEALTH
CREATORS**



Clockwise from above: Comedic Conchord Jemaine Clement ranked No.8 on our Trust List; Te Radar, host of *Radar's Patch*, came in at No.29; actor and playwright Roger Hall finished a very high 5th; while actor and comedian Rhys Darby chimed in at No. 32





Clockwise from above: All Whites captain Ryan Nelsen ranks No. 15 on our list; Olympic shot-put gold medallist Valerie Adams (Vili) is at No. 54; current All Blacks captain Richie McCaw is No. 55; and Olympic track cycling gold medallist Sarah Ulmer is No. 41



closely associated in the public eye with the response to recent tragedies feature strongly in this list. Tony Kokshoorn, Grey District Mayor and every inch the West Coaster in his plainspoken advocacy on behalf of the Pike River families, is there at No. 10. His big-city counterpart, Bob Parker, also earned your trust by being everywhere at once during the crisis in Christchurch. “Works at the scene and tells the truth,” was a typical response.

Parker’s post-quake dedication effectively killed off any lingering perception of him as a glib former TV host; he was, on occasion, quite literally down in the trenches. And that’s important to Kiwis, says Kalafatelis. “We like people who relate well to the common man.”

Just look at some of the others named for proof of that. Governor-General-in-waiting Jerry Mataparae, for example. “A people’s man,” suggested one respondent. “A reliable and decent Kiwi,” said another. Or Kevin Milne, who, in his former role as presenter of TV show *Fair Go*, went in to bat for aggrieved consumers. Rape victim advocate Louise Nicholas also features in the top half of the list. “We love a battler,” affirms Kalafatelis.

And maybe there’s something of that in the mix when it comes to our three list-topping scientists. Sure, the national government’s emphasis on science as a key driver of economic growth will have influenced perceptions. But it’s not a stretch to conclude that these particular three are there because they

also exude a practical, straightforward and inclusive brand of smarts that Kiwis are drawn to. In fact, they enjoy high public profiles compared to their peers precisely because they’ve made it their mission to demystify science.

That’s been needed: when Nielsen researched public attitudes to science a few years ago, it found a strong feeling among New Zealanders that science was “hidden” and lacked everyday relevance. Gluckman, in his official role, and Callaghan, with his regular



radio appearances, have both gone a long way to putting that right. In Avery’s case, he has used his particular genius for philanthropic ends.

And selflessness clearly counts when it comes to who you can trust. “He’s constantly looking to increase knowledge and prosperity for the benefit of society as a whole,” remarked one respondent of Callaghan.

But what about enlightened self-interest? Business people and entrepreneurs are conspicuous by their absence from the ranks of those you trust. You might say that’s to be



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PROFESSIONS

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Firefighters | 21. Hairdressers |
| 2. Rescue volunteers | 22. Plumbers |
| 3. Paramedics | 23. Waiters |
| 4. Pilots | 24. Mechanics |
| 5. Nurses | 25. Builders |
| 6. Medical specialists | 26. Cleaners |
| 7. Pharmacists | 27. Shop assistants |
| 8. Veterinarians | 28. Religious ministers |
| 9. Armed Forces | 29. Charity collectors |
| 10. GPs | 30. Bankers |
| 11. Police | 31. Accountants |
| 12. Teachers | 32. Taxi drivers |
| 13. Scientists | 33. Tow truck drivers |
| 14. Farmers | 34. CEOs |
| 15. Childcare workers | 35. Financial planners |
| 16. Judges | 36. Lawyers |
| 17. Bus/train/tram drivers | 37. Celebrities |
| 18. Chefs | 38. Journalists |
| 19. Dentists | 39. Real estate agents |
| 20. Psychologists/counsellors | |

expected, given our proximity to a major economic meltdown – and note the lowly placing of CEOs and bankers in our most-trusted professions list – but in fact Kiwis have never felt warmly towards our wealth creators.

Kalafatelis says his firm was engaged by New Zealand Trade and Enterprise's predecessor several years ago on a campaign to get New Zealanders to love business. "Clearly that has fallen on deaf ears," he says. "If you look through the list, the first businessman is Sir Stephen Tindall, and I'll bet my bottom dollar he's there for his philanthropy, not his business acumen."

But if this list is light in CEOs and celebrities – another group for whom we don't feel the love during tough times – it's heavy in celebrity chefs. So, OK, Alison Holst (No. 38) is probably going to be canonised one day. But Simon Gault at No. 9? Annabel Langbein at 25th? Is the way to Kiwi hearts through our stomachs?

Maybe, like the colonisation of our TV screens by wannabe cooks and pastry artists, the fact that so many chefs have polled highly reflects this particular moment. We can't afford restaurants, but if you can show us how to cook something other than chops, you have our undying devotion.

And again, they're down to earth, these particular chefs. No airs-or-graces. Real gumboot wearers. Thin, though...

What's that line about never trusting a thin chef? ■



In an uncertain world in which safety is a key issue, it's no surprise that professionals such as firefighters (top left), rescue volunteers (top right), paramedics (below left) and pilots (below right) are seen as such responsible guardians of public trust

