

# Panel on Central Bank Communications

The panel discussion focused on drawing the various themes of the conference together. It began with panellists discussing central bank communication challenges and strategies. Panellists then turned to discussing their respective views on trust, economic literacy, responding to misinformation and political pressures, adapting to new communication landscapes and how central banks can measure successful communication. The discussion was moderated by Jill Forde, Head of Communications at the Bank for International Settlements, and included the following panellists:

- Sally Cray, Reserve Bank of Australia
- Rhonda Lam, Hong Kong Monetary Authority
- Naomi Mitchell, Reserve Bank of New Zealand
- Annie Portelance, Bank of Canada

As the conference and panel discussion were conducted under the Chatham House Rule, no individual comments are attributed.

## Central bank communication challenges and strategies

The panel began by underscoring the critical importance of effective central bank communication, recognising its inherent complexity. A key challenge discussed was the allocation of resources between public engagement and communication with other stakeholders, such as markets and policymakers. The panellists acknowledged that central banks employ varying strategies, with some focusing heavily on public outreach, while others prioritise communication with market participants and policymakers. Despite these differences, all panellists agreed on the growing importance of public communication and the need for central banks to adopt inclusive, accessible, and clear language to ensure broad understanding.

## Trust, education, and transparency

Trust in central banks was a central theme, with panellists emphasising the pivotal role of accessible messages together with economic education in cultivating public confidence. Research demonstrates a positive correlation between economic literacy and trust in central banks. Public information initiatives – such as clear and accessible explanations of monetary policy and inflation targets aimed at the public – help to demystify complex concepts and foster greater understanding. Transparency, including public reports and hearings, is also critical to bolstering credibility. However, panellists noted the need for central banks to carefully balance transparency with the risk of politicisation or misinterpretation of their actions. While progress has been made in engaging with the public, panellists highlighted that improving economic literacy remains a long-term objective. Future efforts must focus on engaging diverse audiences, including under-represented groups, and adapting to demographic shifts to ensure successful communication.

## Responding to misinformation and political pressures

The rise of misinformation, particularly on social media, emerged as a growing concern for central banks. Panellists emphasised the importance of assessing whether misinformation undermines central bank mandates and developing clear, simple counter-messages when necessary. Political pressures, such as public criticism from elected officials, further complicate the communication environment. In these contexts, reinforcing institutional independence and demonstrating accountability were identified as key strategies. Panellists cited instances where central banks effectively addressed public concerns, thereby enhancing trust.

## **Adapting to new communication landscapes**

The transition from traditional to digital and social media as primary communication channels was another focal point of discussion. Many central banks have made significant strides in adopting social media, utilising innovative content formats and strategic collaborations to increase their reach and impact. Social media has proven invaluable for delivering real-time responses to misinformation and public concerns, particularly during crises. However, panellists also noted challenges, including managing negative online commentary and maintaining the professionalism and accuracy of messaging.

## **Measuring successful communication**

Panellists highlighted that both quantitative and qualitative tools – such as surveys, focus groups, and content testing – are critical in measuring the effectiveness of communication strategies. While transparency remains a cornerstone of central bank credibility, it must be adapted to meet the public's expectations. Central banks must not only explain policy decisions but also ensure that their messages are relevant and relatable to the daily lives of the public.