

# AUSTRALIANS PERCEPTIONS OF INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Ipsos Omnibus data

16 December, 2020



ATSIRU

GAME CHANGERS



# ABOUT THIS STUDY

## Methodology

- All findings in this report are based on an online survey of n=2,069 Australian residents undertaken during June 2020. It was carried out via the Ipsos Issues Monitor and collected over two waves.
- The Ipsos Issues Monitor is conducted monthly via online panel. Each month approximately 1000 Australian adults aged 18+ are asked to select the top three issues facing the nation, their state and their local area from a list of nineteen potential concerns. Data is weighted to match the profile of the population.
- Where results do not sum to 100% or the 'difference' appears to be +/-1 more/less than the actual, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of don't knows or not stated responses.
- The precision of Ipsos online polls are calculated using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points and of 500 accurate to +/- 4.8 percentage points. For more information on the Ipsos use of credibility intervals, please visit [www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/2017-03/IpsosPA\\_CredibilityIntervals.pdf](http://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/2017-03/IpsosPA_CredibilityIntervals.pdf)

# SUMMARY

## Context

Only a quarter of non-Indigenous Australians have regular contact with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island people, while three quarters of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island people have regular contact with non-Indigenous Australians. Interest in Indigenous issues is mixed for non-Indigenous Australians, with 49% interested and 23% not interested. Only two fifths (40%) of Australians believe they have enough information on Indigenous issues to take into account a candidate's position about treaty when voting in elections.

## Issues

When asked about a **treaty**, the majority of Australians (57%) understand what a Treaty would mean for Australia, and two thirds (67%) consider a treaty as important for **reconciliation**. Those that don't think a treaty is important believe Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island people get more than their fair share, and that it's 'time to move on'.

Perceptions of current relations between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island people and non-Indigenous Australians is mixed, with three in ten (29%) Australians unsure if relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island people have changed recently. There is still a way to go in **Closing the Gap** with cultural integration, with some activities such as Acknowledging Country and Indigenous place names gaining more favour, while others such as Indigenous culture and language poorly integrated.

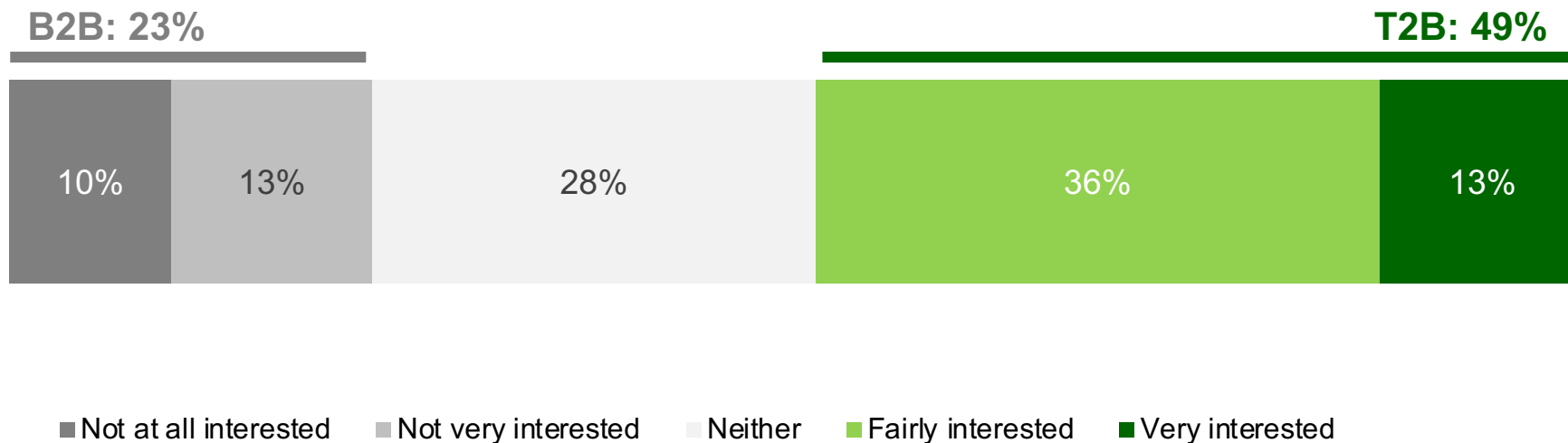
Half of Australians disagree with changing the date of **Australia day**, citing that it is always been the 26<sup>th</sup> of January, it's a historically important date, and it should be kept as is. Those that agree with changing the date believe that the current date is offensive and Australia day should be for everyone.

We can measure modern racism in Australia, and this varies across demographics and correlates with many of the other questions, suggesting there is still a racism problem holding many of these issues back.

# INTEREST IN INDIGENOUS ISSUES IS MIXED

Overall more Australians are interested in Indigenous affairs than are disinterested. This is higher for Australians with at least a diploma-level education (T2B 57%).

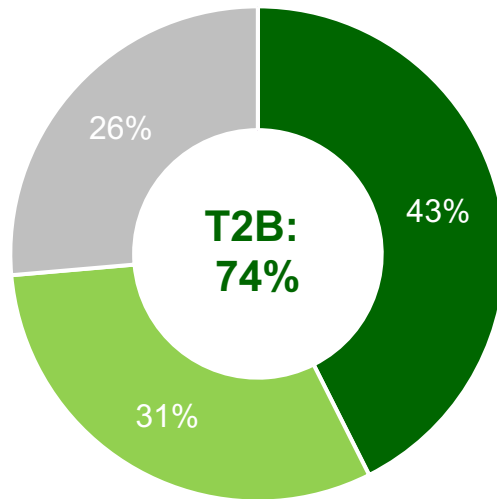
## What is your level of interest in Indigenous issues?



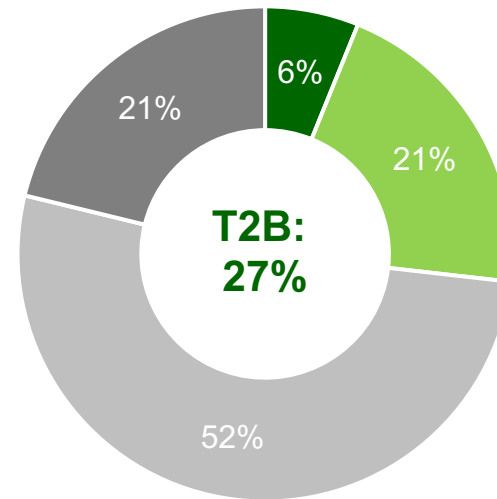
# NON-INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS HAVE LITTLE INTERACTION WITH ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLAND PEOPLE

While three quarters of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island people say they have at least a fair bit of interaction with non-Indigenous Australians, only a quarter of non-Indigenous interact with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island people. This is higher for rural Australians (T2B 35%).

## How often do you interact with Indigenous/non Indigenous Australians?



**Indigenous interaction with Non-Indigenous**  
(n=51)



**Non-Indigenous interaction with Indigenous**  
(n=2018)

- A lot
- A fair bit
- Not very much
- Not at all

# THE MAJORITY OF AUSTRALIANS UNDERSTAND WHAT A TREATY WOULD MEAN FOR AUSTRALIA

## To the best of your knowledge, what does a treaty mean between the Australian Government and Indigenous Peoples?



Base Non-Indigenous Australians Sample n=2018  
Sources: Q3. To the best of your knowledge, what does a treaty mean between the Australian Government and Indigenous Peoples?

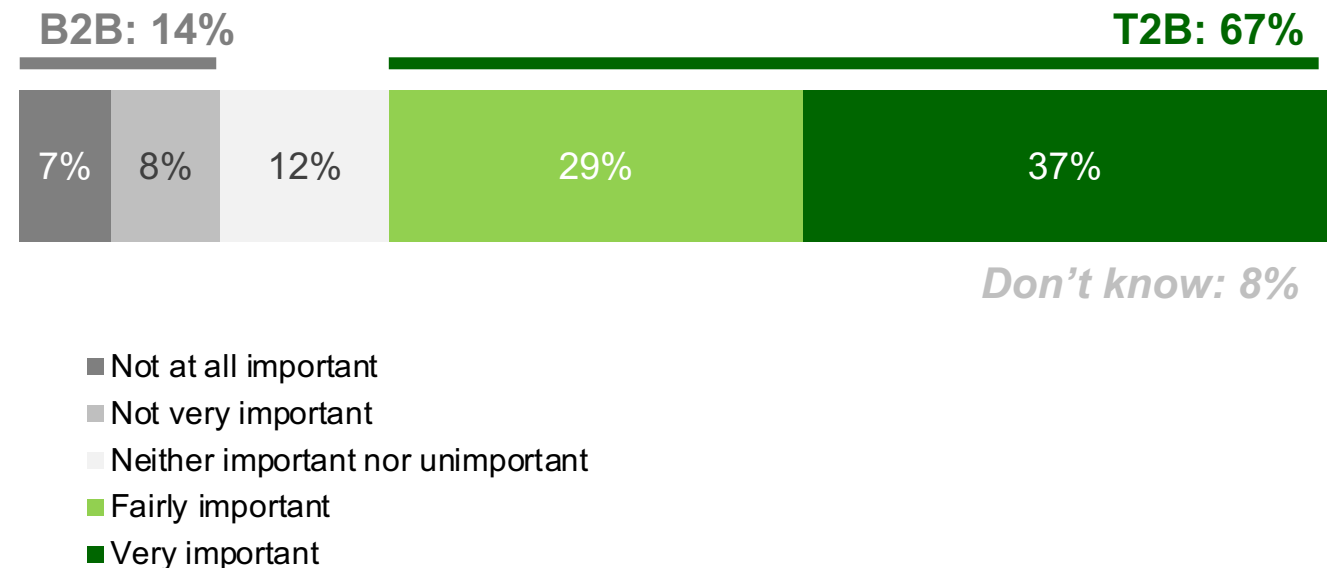
# TWO THIRDS OF AUSTRALIANS CONSIDER A TREATY AS IMPORTANT FOR RECONCILIATION

This is higher for females (T2B 72%), younger Australians (18-39: T2B 71%) and those living in metro areas (T2B 69%).



A treaty between the Australian government and Indigenous people would mean a series of formal agreements with legal outcomes, recognising our history and prior occupation of land, as well as the injustices many have endured. A treaty would establish a platform for addressing those injustices and help create a path forward based on mutual goals rather than ones imposed upon Indigenous people.

## How would you rate the importance of discussing a treaty as a way forward for reconciliation?



# AUSTRALIANS WHO THINK A TREATY IS NOT IMPORTANT BELIEVE ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLAND PEOPLE GET MORE THAN THEIR FAIR SHARE

Why do you think it is **Not Important or Not at all Important\*** to discuss a treaty as a way forward for reconciliation?

Why should they be treated more favourably / We are all equal/Australian	18%
Aboriginals get too much already	17%
It's time to move on / it's all in the past	17%
It's not needed/important	9%
Treaties don't work	5%
Why should I say sorry	5%
We have other problems	5%
We have already said sorry	3%
There is already a treaty	3%
It's divisive	3%
There is no need for reconciliation	2%
Every country has had a war	2%
It won't make a difference	2%
We just need to show more respect for each other	2%
Waste of money	1%



The aboriginal people will never be happy no matter what is offered to them.

I don't think a treaty would resolve any issues, it would merely widen racial divisions within the population, and increase resentments of both Indigenous and non Indigenous Australians.

We are not at war with Indigenous Australians. We do not have to have a treaty.



Base Those consider treaty discussion as Not Important (B2B) n=293

Sources: Q4a. Why do you think it is Not Important / Not at all Important to discuss a treaty as a way forward for reconciliation?

\*Question Q4 only asked of those who responded 'Not Important' or 'Not at all important' to Q4. How would you rate the importance of discussing a treaty as a way forward for reconciliation?



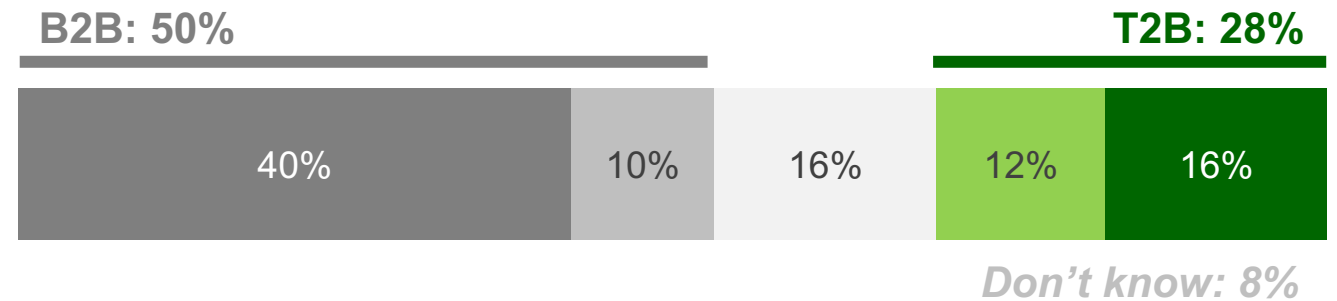
# HALF OF AUSTRALIA DISAGREES WITH CHANGING THE DATE OF AUSTRALIA DAY

Agreement with a date change is higher for females (T2B 30%), younger Australians (18-39: T2B 39%), cultural and language diverse Australians (T2B 36%) and those living in metro areas (T2B 30%).



The campaign to change the date of Australia Day revolves around the sentiment that a growing number of Australians see it as a day that celebrates the invasion of the Indigenous people's land rather than uniting a nation."

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the campaign to change the date of Australia Day from the 26th January



- Strongly disagree
- Slightly disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Slightly agree
- Strongly agree

Base Non-Indigenous Australians Sample n=2018

Sources: Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the campaign to change the date of Australia Day from the 26th January?

# AUSTRALIANS SUPPORT A DATE CHANGE BECAUSE THE CURRENT DATE IS OFFENSIVE AND AUSTRALIA DAY SHOULD BE FOR EVERYONE



## Why do you agree with the campaign change date?

It's offensive	23%
Invasion day	15%
Make it for everyone	15%
The date has no importance	12%
It's the right thing to do	12%
Reconcile with past hurt	7%
The current date has no true historical significance	6%
It should not be celebrated	4%
This is Aboriginal land	2%
It does not represent modern thinking	1%



It is completely arbitrary currently and would be good to move it to another day that we can all agree is about unity.

It's an insult to aboriginal people as it represents that day that the invasion of their lands started.

Because as a country and as a society it we should have a day to celebrate all the people especially the Indigenous. We have a day to celebrate sporty events but lack a day to celebrate the heritage or Australia.

The racism and invasion causes suffering, but, there are also many other days that cause issues with different parts of society. Maybe it should become a remembrance day style.



Base: Those who Agree (T2B) with a date change n=541.

Sources: Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the campaign to change the date of Australia Day from the 26th January?

# THE REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING A DATE CHANGE INCLUDE BELIEF THAT IT'S A HISTORICALLY IMPORTANT DATE, AND IT SHOULD BE KEPT AS IS



## Why do you disagree with the campaign change date?

This is when Australia was formed/discovered	29%
It's not important to change the date	28%
We are all Australians	21%
It's always been on the 26th of January	19%
Shouldn't pander to a vocal minority	11%
It's time to move on	8%
It's not invasion day	6%
Any date would have issues	5%
Acknowledge another day recognising Indigenous Australians	3%
General negative comments e.g. Stupid idea, what a joke etc	3%
Just causes more of a division	2%



Because it has ALWAYS been that date celebrated.

Because it has never upset people until recently because the media is fuelling the debate.

It could be any day but that is the day the country was civilised and we moved forward.

It is an important day in our history but would acknowledge another day recognising Indigenous day.



Base: Those who Disagree (B2B) with a date change n=1039.

Sources: Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the campaign to change the date of Australia Day from the 26th January?

# THOSE UNSURE ABOUT A DATE CHANGE ARE OFTEN UNINTERESTED IN THE TOPIC



## Why do you neither agree nor disagree/unsure with the campaign change date?

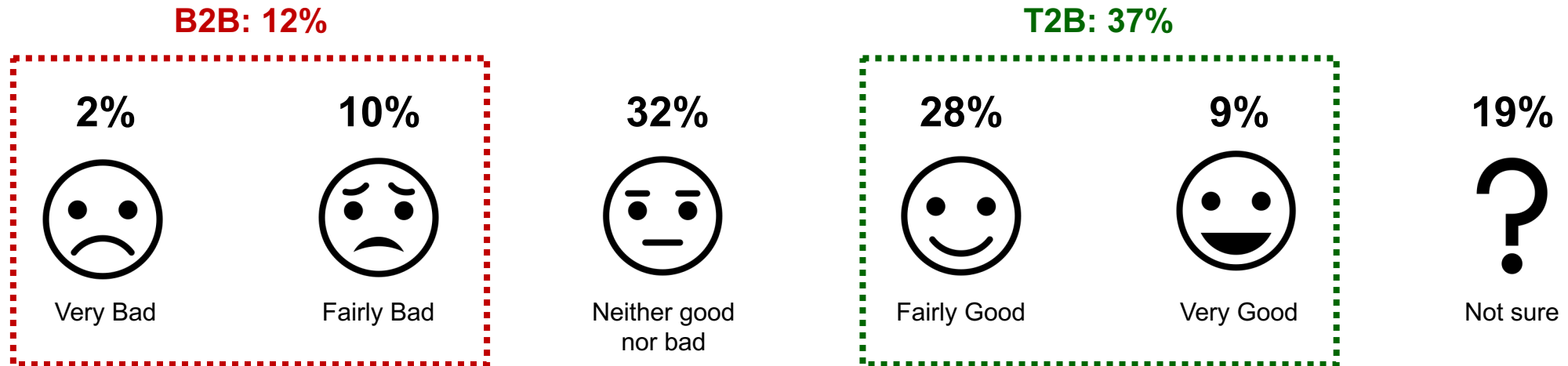
Not interested	25%
Both sides have valid points	14%
It is a very controversial topic and needs more discussion	6%
It won't make any difference	3%
I'm not from Australia	2%
As long as it stays a public holiday	2%
I think there are bigger issues	1%
That's how I feel	0%

Base: Those who neither agree nor disagree, or are unsure about a date change n=438.  
Sources: Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the campaign to change the date of Australia Day from the 26th January?

# PERCEPTION OF CURRENT RELATIONS IN THEIR LOCAL AREA BETWEEN ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLAND PEOPLE AND NON-INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS IS MIXED

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to say current relations in their local area are very bad (12%). Those in Western Australia are more likely to very or fairly bad (B2B 24%), whereas those in Victoria are more unsure (24%).

**How do you rate current relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in your local area?**



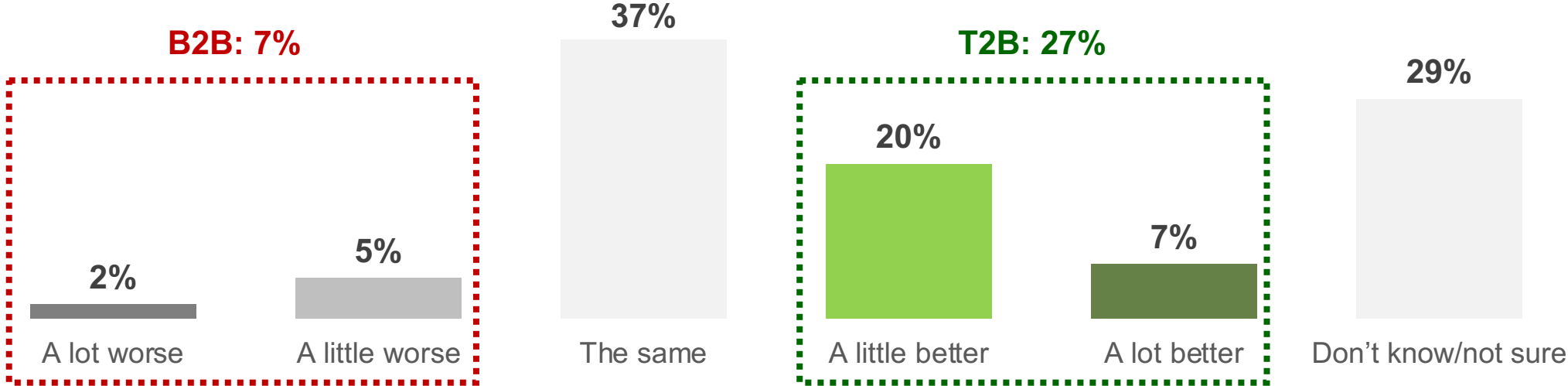
Base Non-Indigenous Australians Sample n=2018

Sources: Q6a. How do you rate current relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in your local area?

# THREE IN TEN AUSTRALIANS ARE UNSURE IF RELATIONSHIPS WITH ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLAND PEOPLE HAVE CHANGED RECENTLY

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to say relationships are worse (B2B 20%), as are people from Western Australia (B2B 15%).

**Have relationships with Indigenous people where you live become better or worse in the past 10 years?**



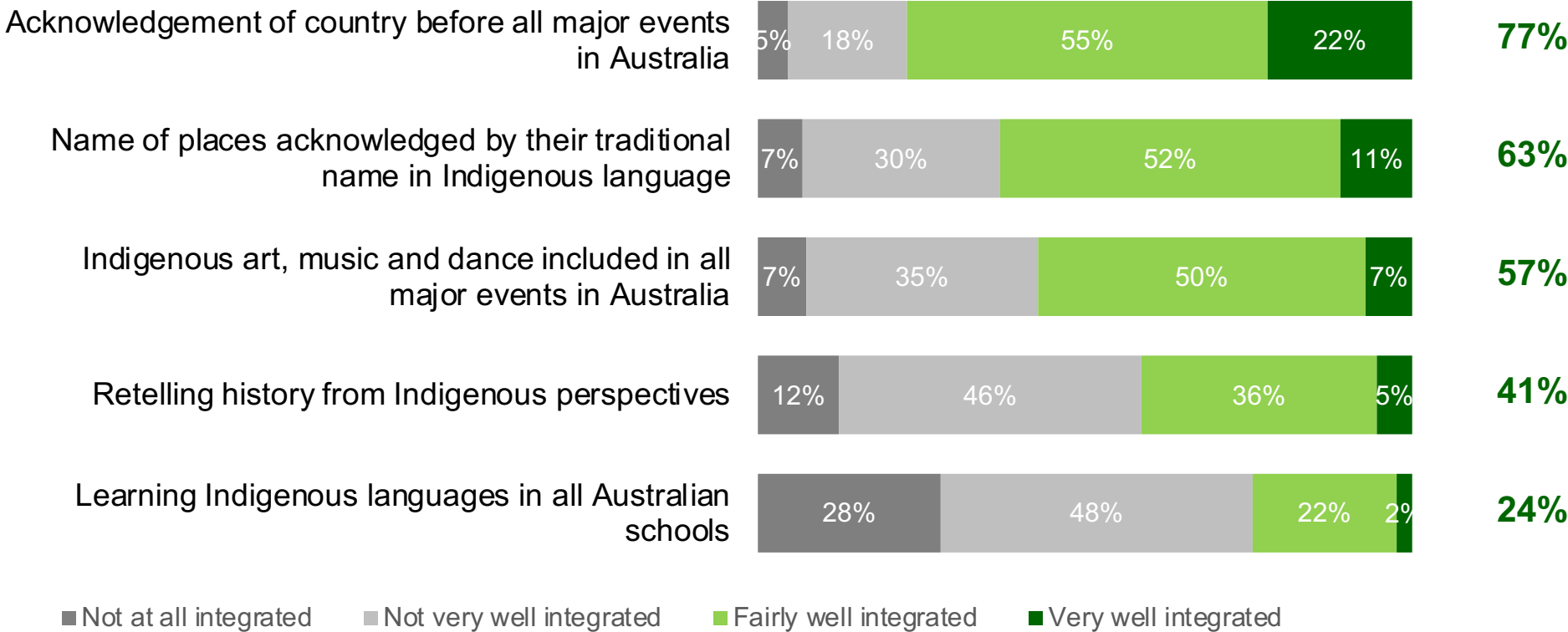
Base Non-Indigenous Australians Sample n=2018  
Sources: Q6b Have relationships with Indigenous people where you live become better or worse in the past 10 years?



# THERE IS STILL A WAY TO GO CLOSING THE GAP WITH CULTURAL INTEGRATION

## How integrated would you say Indigenous cultures are with mainstream Australian culture?

T2B:

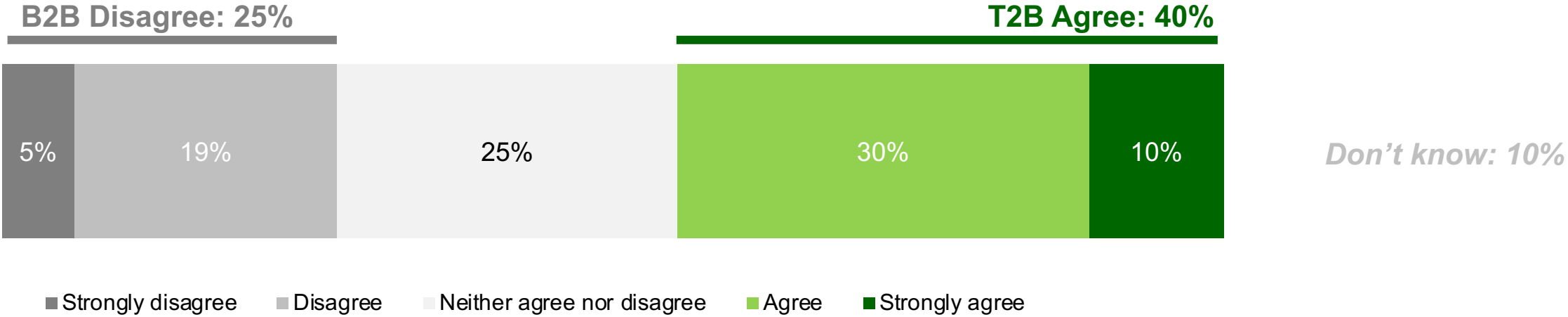


Base Non-Indigenous Australians Sample n=2018  
Sources: Q6c. How integrated would you say Indigenous cultures are with mainstream Australian culture?



# ONLY TWO FIFTHS OF AUSTRALIANS HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES TO CONSIDER A CANDIDATE'S POSITION ABOUT TREATY WHEN VOTING

**I feel like I have enough information on Indigenous issues to take into account a candidate's position about treaty when voting in a Federal or State election.**



Base Non-Indigenous Australians Sample n=2018  
Sources: Q7. I feel like I have enough information on Indigenous issues to take into account a candidate's position about treaty when voting in a Federal or State election

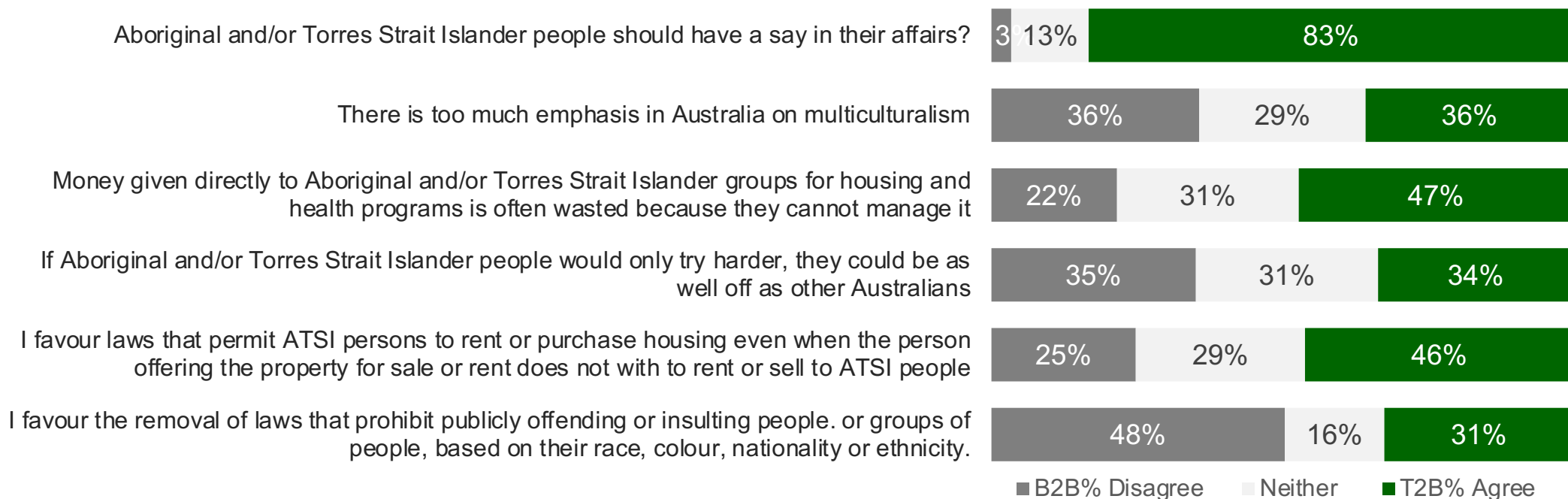




# MANY NON-INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS HOLD VIEWS FITTING INTO THE CONCEPT OF MODERN RACISM

We asked people a range of questions to explore the concept of modern racism. While the majority of Australians agree that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people should have a say in their affairs, many still hold views that would be considered 'modern racism', including almost half of respondents (47%) indicating that money given to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander groups for housing and health programs is often wasted because they cannot manage it.

## Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements



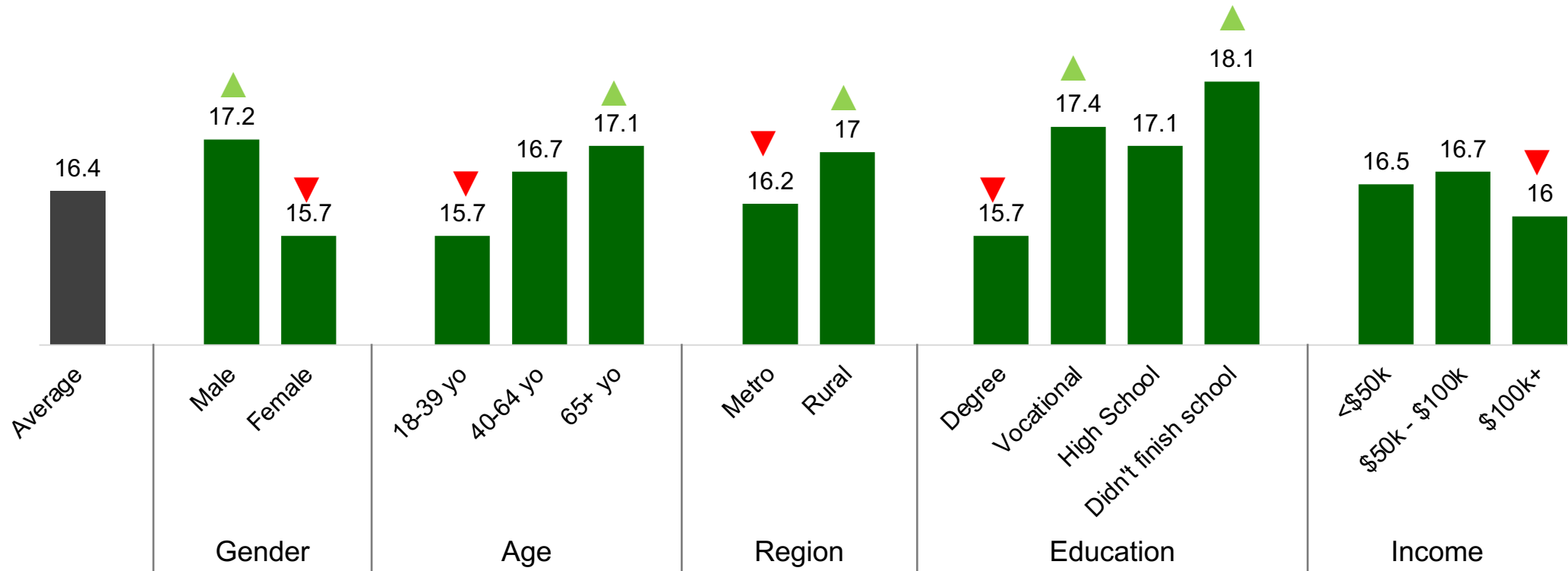
Base Non-Indigenous Australians Sample n=2018

Sources: Q2. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements; Q2a. I favour the removal of laws that prohibit publicly offending or insulting people, or groups of people, based on their race, colour, nationality or ethnicity

# MODERN RACISM SCORE

A 'Modern Racism Score' was calculated by summing the responses to the six items shown on the previous slide, adapted from the Symbolic Racism Extended Scale<sup>1,2</sup>. Items 1 and 5 were reverse scored. Higher scores represent modern racist attitudes, and can range from 6 to 30.

There were some differences between demographics, with lower Modern Racism Scores seen for females, younger Australians (18-39), metro Australians, those with higher education and higher incomes.



<sup>1</sup>Fraser, C. O., & Islam, M . R. (1997b). Symbolic Racism in Australian Politics: Explaining the rise of Pauline Hanson. Unpublished manuscript. Fraser, C. O., & Islam, M . R. (2000). Social Identification and Political Preferences for One Nation: The Role of Symbolic Racism. Australian Journal of Psychology, Vol. 52 No. 3, 131 — 137.

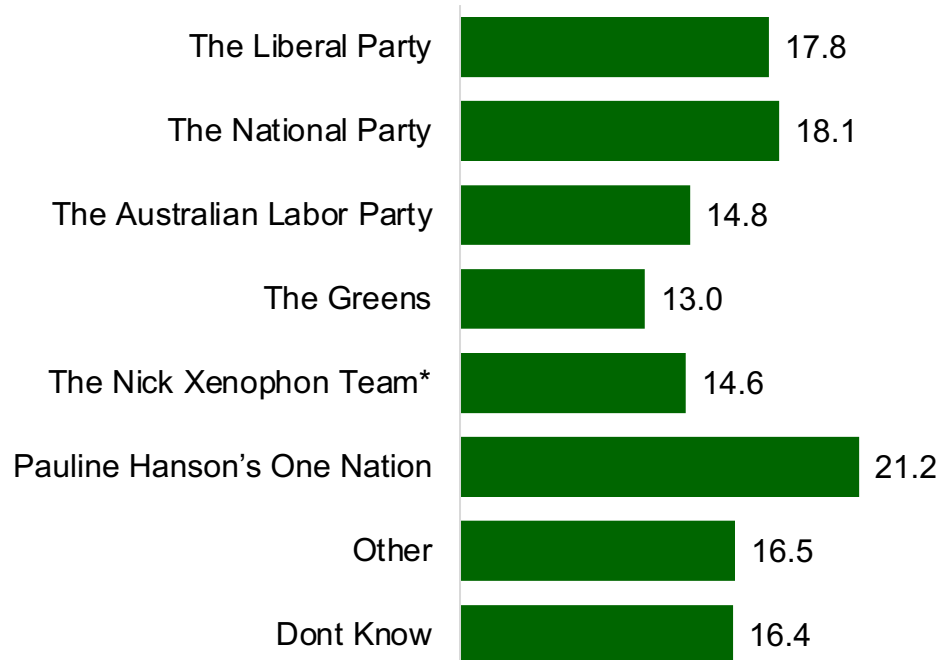
<sup>2</sup>Fraser, Christopher O.; Islam, Mir Rabiul (2000). "Social Identification and Political Preferences for One Nation: The Role of Symbolic Racism". Australian Journal of Psychology. 52 (3): 131–7. doi:10.1080/00049530008255380.

Base Non-Indigenous Australians Sample n=2018

# MODERN RACISM SCORE

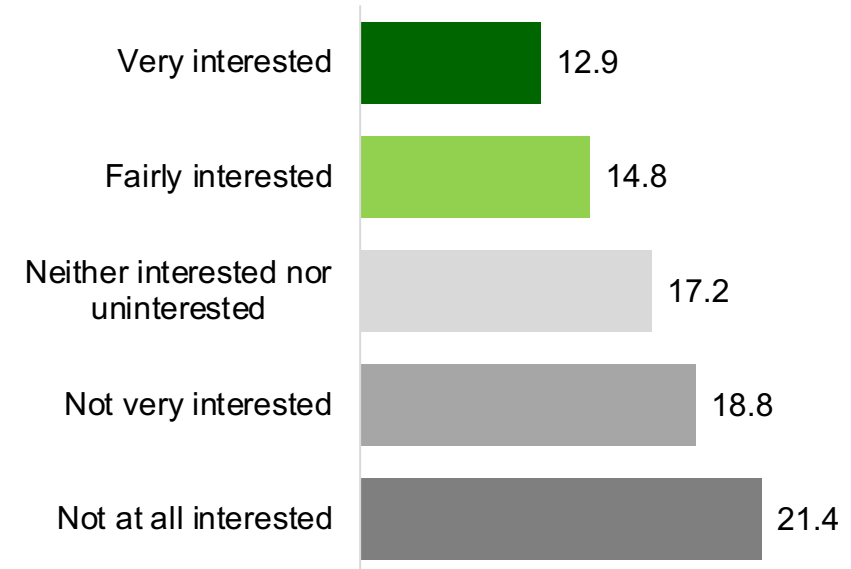
This score can be used to cross with many questions, to help explain where some of the perceptions are coming from, and to determine how easy or difficult it may be to shift certain issues.

For example, when crossed with political party preference, we can see the Modern Racism Score varies across the parties.



Base Non-Indigenous Australians Sample n=2018

When paired with interest in Indigenous issues, we can see that those with higher Modern Racism Scores are less likely to be interested in Indigenous issues.



Base Non-Indigenous Australians Sample for Q1 n=1004

Sources: Q1 What is your level of interest in Indigenous issues? Q2. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements; Q2a. I favour the removal of laws that prohibit publicly offending or insulting people, or groups of people, based on their race, colour, nationality or ethnicity; Q9 Which political party do you affiliate with?

\*Low base (n<30)

# DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE

Two waves of omnibus data n=2069

# DEMOGRAPHICS (WEIGHTED)

GENDER	Male	49%
	Female	51%

AGE	18-29 yo	22%
	30-49 yo	35%
	50+ yo	43%

LIFESTAGE	Married	47%
	Single/Never married	25%
	Divorced/Separated	11%
	Others	16%
	DK	2%

STATE	NSW	32%
	VIC	26%
	QLD	20%
	SA	7%
	WA	10%
	TAS / ACT / NT	5%

ATSI	Aboriginal	2%
	Torres Strait Islander	0%
	Both	1%
	No	96%
	Prefer not to say	2%

CALD	CALD	21%
	Non-CALD	77%

	ATSI languages	1%
	Italian	8%
	Mandarin	8%
	Cantonese	7%
	Spanish	6%
	Italian	8%
	Filipino/Tagalog	4%
	Greek	4%
	Hindi	4%
	Arabic	3%
	Vietnamese	2%
	Others	44%
	Prefer not to say	10%

EDUCATION	Bachelor & higher	41%
	Diploma (Undgrad , Ass., Skilled)	15%
	Skilled/Basic Vocational	20%
	High School	14%
	Did not complete school / DK	10%

EMPLOYMENT	Full Time	38%
	Part Time	21%
	Not employed	40%
	DK	1%

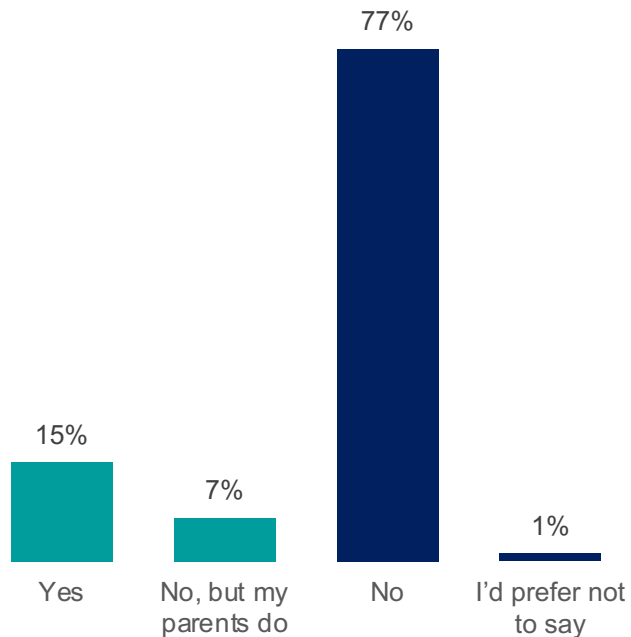
HIGHEST INCOME	\$50K or less	31%
	\$50K to just under \$100K	30%
	\$100K and above	29%
	Refused	10%

Base Total Sample n=2069, weighted

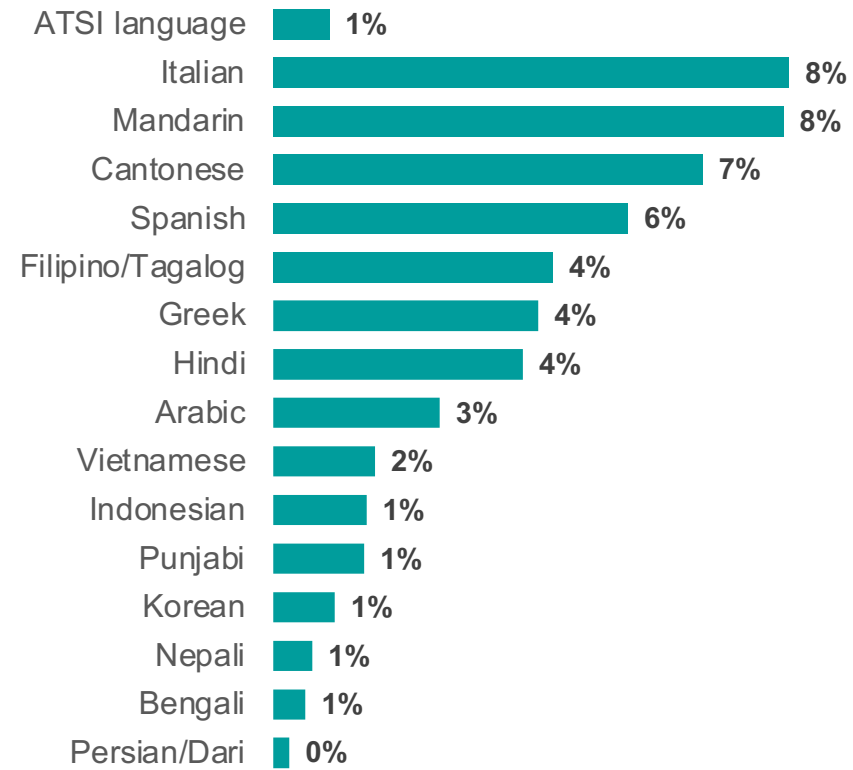


# SPEAK OTHER LANGUAGE

**Do you speak a language other than English at home?**



**What is the main language other than English that you or your parents speak at home?**

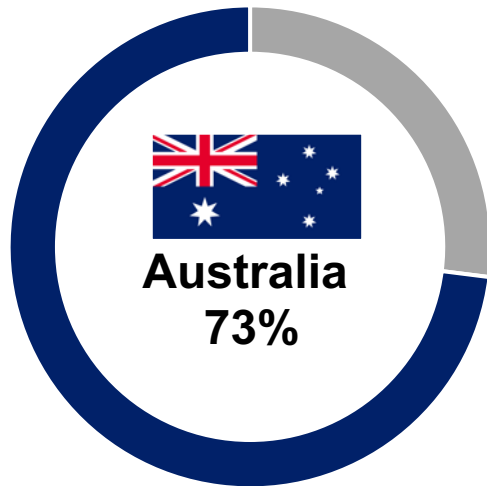


Base Total Sample n=2069, weighted

Sources: Q16. Do you speak a language other than English at home? Q17. What is the main language other than English that you or your parents speak at home? (n=427)

# COUNTRY OF BIRTH AND ANCESTRY

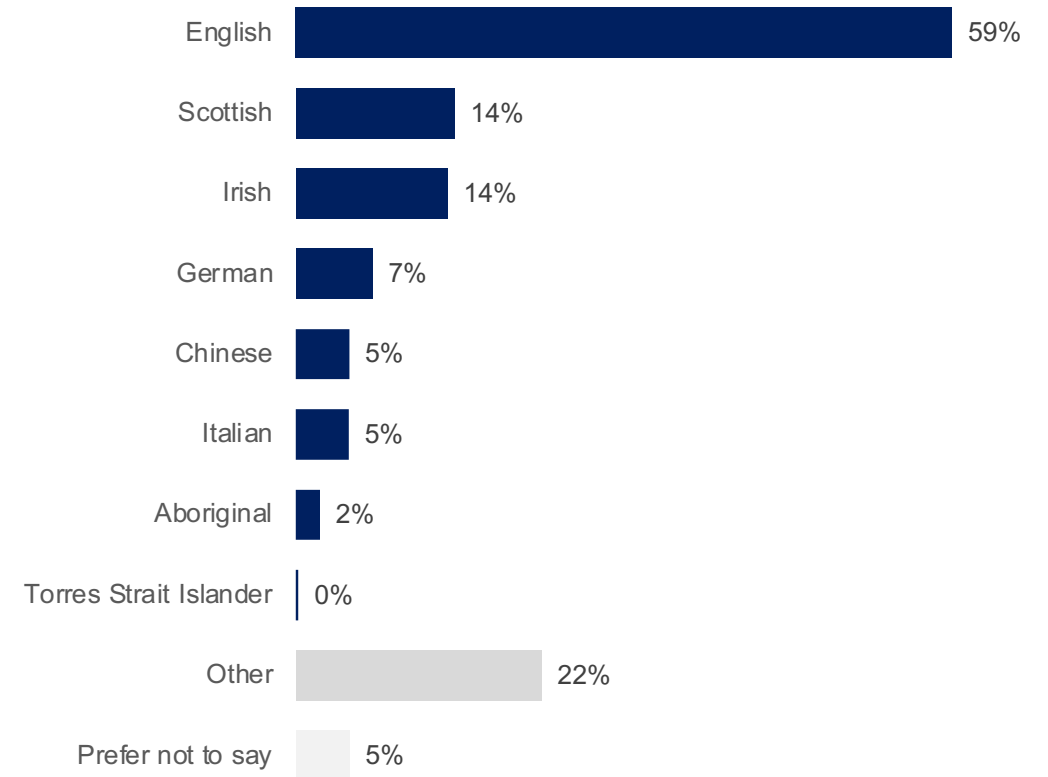
## What is your country of birth?



### Other countries

United Kingdom	8%
New Zealand	2%
India	2%
China	1%
Malaysia	1%
Philippines	1%
South Africa	1%
Italy	1%
Vietnam	0%

## What is your ancestry?



# ABOUT IPSOS

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# GAME CHANGERS

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In our world of rapid change, the need for reliable information to make confident decisions has never been greater.

At Ipsos we believe our clients need more than a data supplier, they need a partner who can produce accurate and relevant information and turn it into actionable truth.

This is why our passionately curious experts not only provide the most precise measurement, but shape it to provide True Understanding of Society, Markets and People.

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So that our clients can act faster, smarter and bolder. Ultimately, success comes down to a simple truth:  
**You act better when you are sure.**



**BE  
SURE.  
GO  
FURTHER.**

**GAME CHANGERS**

