

2023 IPSOS INDIGENOUS ISSUES

**Australians' perceptions
of First Nations Peoples**

Prepared by Nonie Finlayson

10 August, 2023



ATSIRU

GAME CHANGERS



Ipsos

Headline findings

Upward trend in Indigenous Issues knowledge and interest

Knowledge of Traditional Owners is increasing among Australians, with 50% of Non-Indigenous Australians somewhat confident they know about their local Traditional Owners (compared to 39% in 2021). Interest in Indigenous issues is also trending upwards (56% vs. 53% in 2021 and 49% in 2020). After a dip in 2021, interaction between Non-Indigenous Australians and First Nations Peoples has increased, returning to 2020 levels.

Views fitting into the concept of modern racism remain steady

While knowledge of and interest in Indigenous issues has increased, perceptions and behaviours around inclusion and cultural recognition are relatively stable overall.

There is less support for initiatives around acknowledgement of Country and Indigenous place names compared to 2021, and while most Non-Indigenous Australians view Indigenous sacred site destruction as unacceptable, there is less agreement on a First Nations voice in infrastructure planning.

85% of Non-Indigenous Australians agree that 'New migrants from other cultures should be willing to adapt to the mainstream cultural values of Australia', and 55% agree that 'If Aboriginal people would only try harder, they could be as well off as other Australians', significantly up from 50% in 2021. The majority (59%) of Non-Indigenous Australians disagree with changing the date of Australia day.

Non-Indigenous Australians report lower incidence of racial slurs in the workplace

Hearing racial slurs at work is less common, with 35% of Non-Indigenous Australians indicating they had heard any racial slurs or jokes at work in 2023 compared to 52% in 2021. Combined with this, there is increasing recognition of the upsetting impact of racial slurs, with Non-Indigenous Australians more likely to report and informally challenge racial slurs in 2023 compared to 2021.

Majority would vote 'yes' to Voice to Parliament referendum question

Nationally, in early May this year, 60% of Non-Indigenous Australians indicated support for a Voice to Parliament (40% 'no'). Compared with 'yes' voters, a greater proportion of those intending to vote 'no' were certain of their position. Knowledge of what Voice to Parliament means is important, with those unsure more likely to vote 'No' (48%), and those who are more certain in their vote are more likely believe a larger portion of the public share their beliefs.

50% of Non-Indigenous Australians stated they understand what a Treaty would mean for Australia (unchanged since 2021). However, fewer Non-Indigenous Australians consider Treaty important for reconciliation compared to past years (59% vs. 66% in 2021). There is a preference for Voice to Parliament before Treaty, although 9% of Non-Indigenous Australians would prefer Treaty but not Voice to Parliament, and this increases to 15% looking at "no" referendum voters.

About this study

Methodology

- These are the findings of an Ipsos survey conducted via Ipsos's online research panel between 4 – 8 May 2023, with 1,000 people representing the adult Australian population. Data is weighted to match the profile of the population to best reflect the demographic profile of the adult population according to the most recent ABS data.
- 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. For more information on the Ipsos use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website: https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/publication/documents/2021-03/credibility_intervals_for_online_polling_-_2021.pdf
- This study did not have any external sponsors or partners. It was initiated and run by Ipsos, because we are curious about the world we live in and how citizens in Australia and around the globe think and feel about their world.
- This research is compliant with the Australian Polling Council Quality Mark standards: <https://www.australianpollingcouncil.com> A long methodology disclosure statement is available here: <https://www.ipsos.com/en-au/polling-methodology-disclosure-statements>.

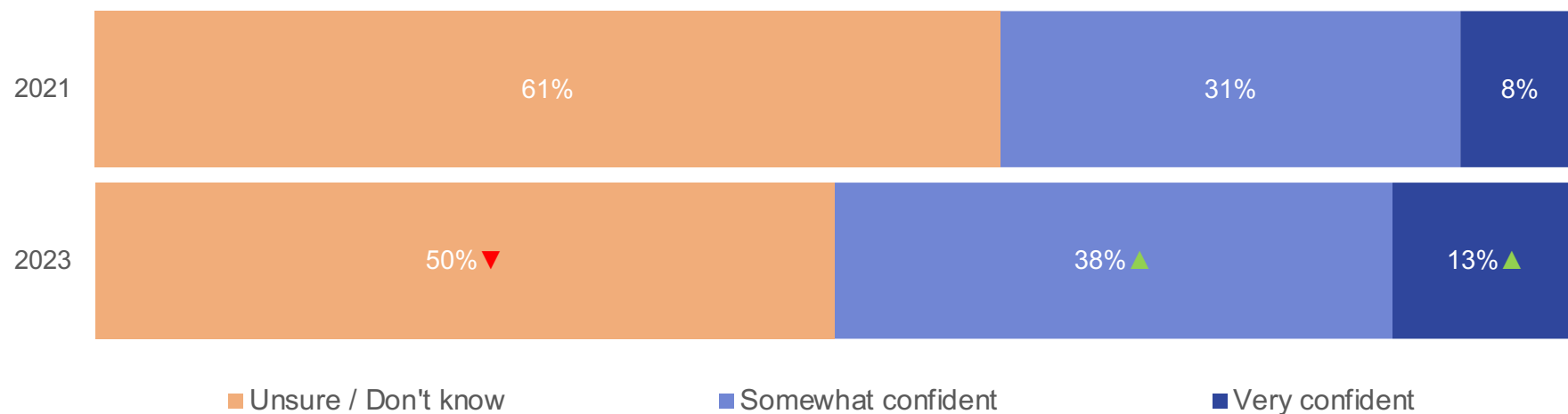


**Australian
Polling Council
Quality Mark**

Claimed knowledge of Traditional Owners is increasing

Half of Non-Indigenous Australians (50%) have some confidence they know about their local traditional owners, compared to 39% in 2021. Those more likely to be 'Very confident' are those aged 30-49 years (18%), those with education beyond high school (15%), parents (14%), and those with an income \$80k+ (18%).

Which of the following best describes your knowledge about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Country, language group or community who are the traditional owners where you live?



New question in 2021

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Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2023 n=946; 2021 n=911.

Sources: Q14. Which of the following best describes your knowledge about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Country, language group or community who are the traditional owners where you live?

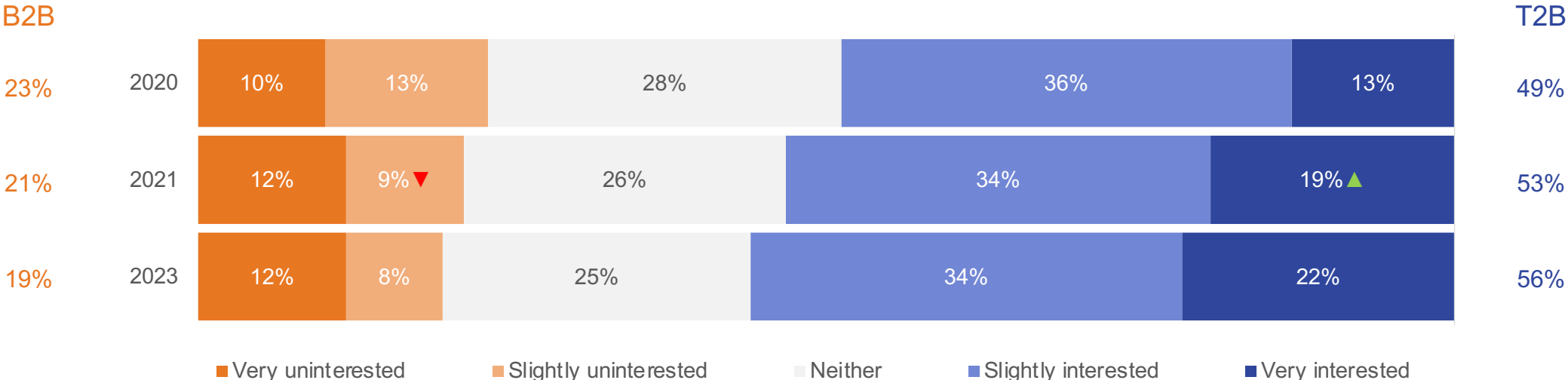
▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than previous wave, 95% C.I.



Interest in Indigenous issues continues to rise

Overall, 56% of Non-Indigenous Australians are interested in Indigenous issues. When we look this by the previous question, those interested in Indigenous issues tend to have higher confidence in their knowledge of traditional owners (64% vs. 33% not interested) and more interaction with First Nations Peoples (37% vs. 20%) compared to those less interested.

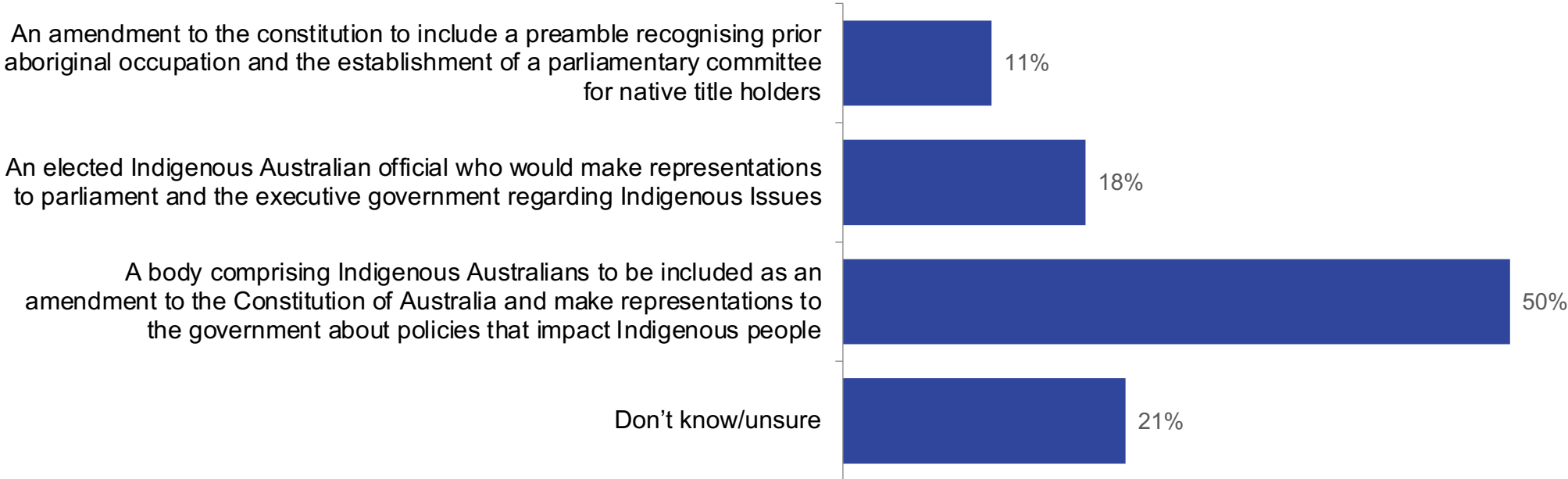
What is your level of interest in Indigenous issues in Australia?



Only half of Non-Indigenous Australians understand the underlying concept of the Voice to Parliament

One in five (21%) Non-Indigenous Australians are unsure what a Voice to Parliament means. Those more likely to know include older Australians 55+ years (57%) and those with education beyond high school (53%).

To the best of your knowledge, what does an Indigenous Voice to parliament mean?



New question in 2023

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Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2023 n=946.

Sources: Q1. To the best of your knowledge, what does an Indigenous Voice to parliament mean?

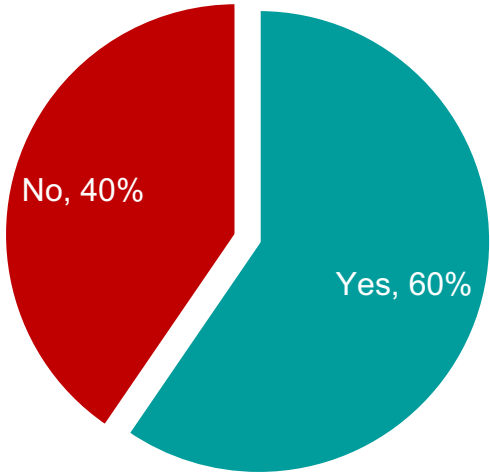


3 in 5 Non-Indigenous Australians support a Voice to Parliament

When voters were asked if they approve of the Voice to Parliament alteration to our constitution, those more likely to say ‘Yes’ include younger Australians (18-29: 85%, 30-49: 70%), females (65%), Victorians (76%), those in metro locations (66%), non-parents (66%), those with an income \$80k+ (70%), and CALD Australians (78%).

Those who are unsure of what a Voice to Parliament means are more likely to vote ‘No’ (48%).

Voice to Parliament vote*



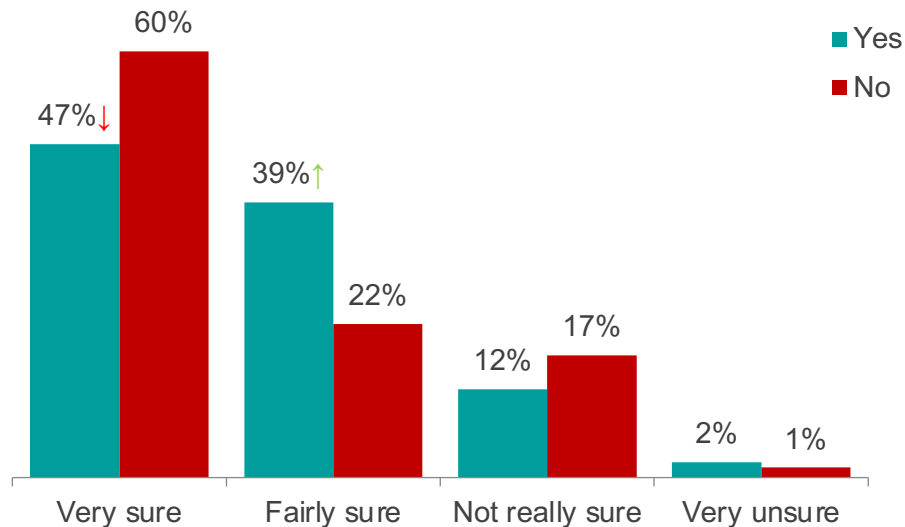
*There shall be a body, to be called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.
The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice may make representations to the Parliament and the Executive Government of the Commonwealth on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws with respect to matters relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, including its composition, functions, powers and procedures.*

*Filtered by those who can vote (Australian citizens).
New question in 2023

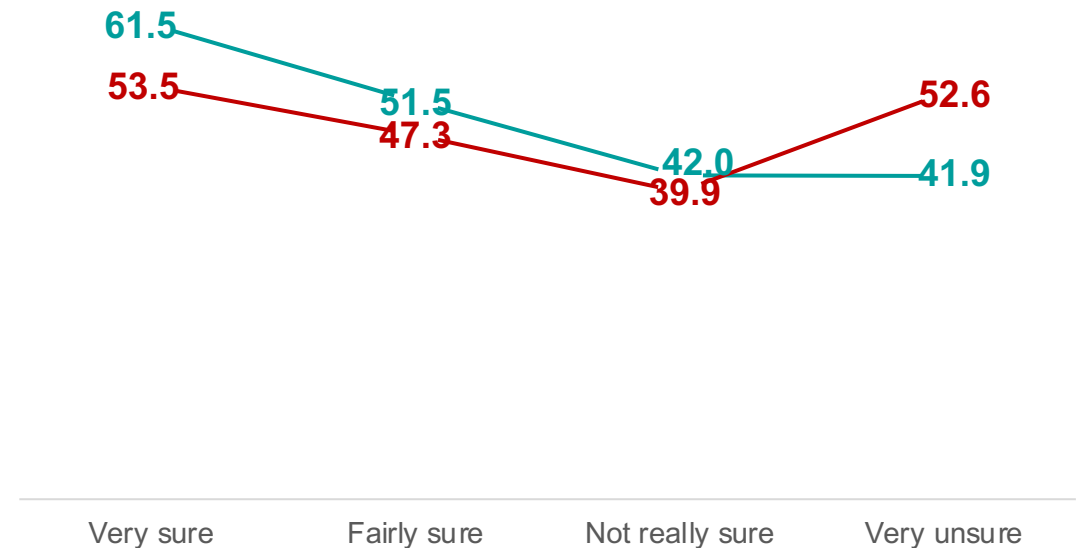
Those indicating a 'no' vote are more certain about their vote than 'yes' voters

Non-Indigenous Australians who are more certain in their vote are more likely believe a larger portion of the public share their beliefs.

How sure are you about voting YES/NO?*



How much of the Australian public would you guess holds your views on Voice to Parliament, Treaty, and the Uluru statement?



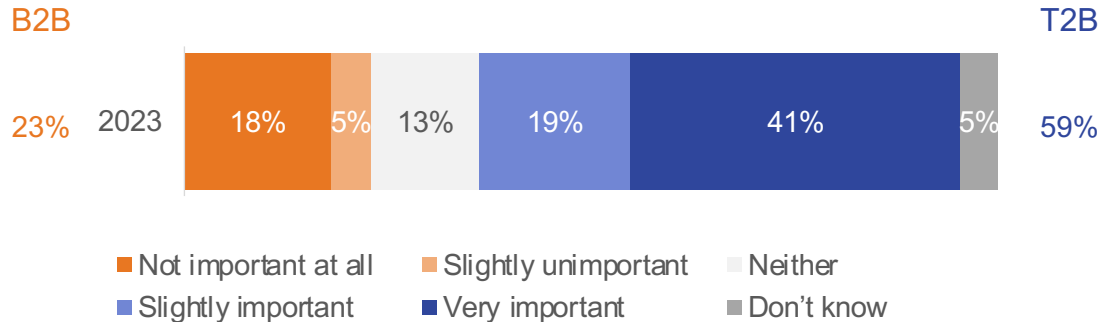
*Filtered by those who can vote (Australian citizens).
New question in 2023

3 in 5 Non-Indigenous Australians believe a Voice to Parliament is important for reconciliation

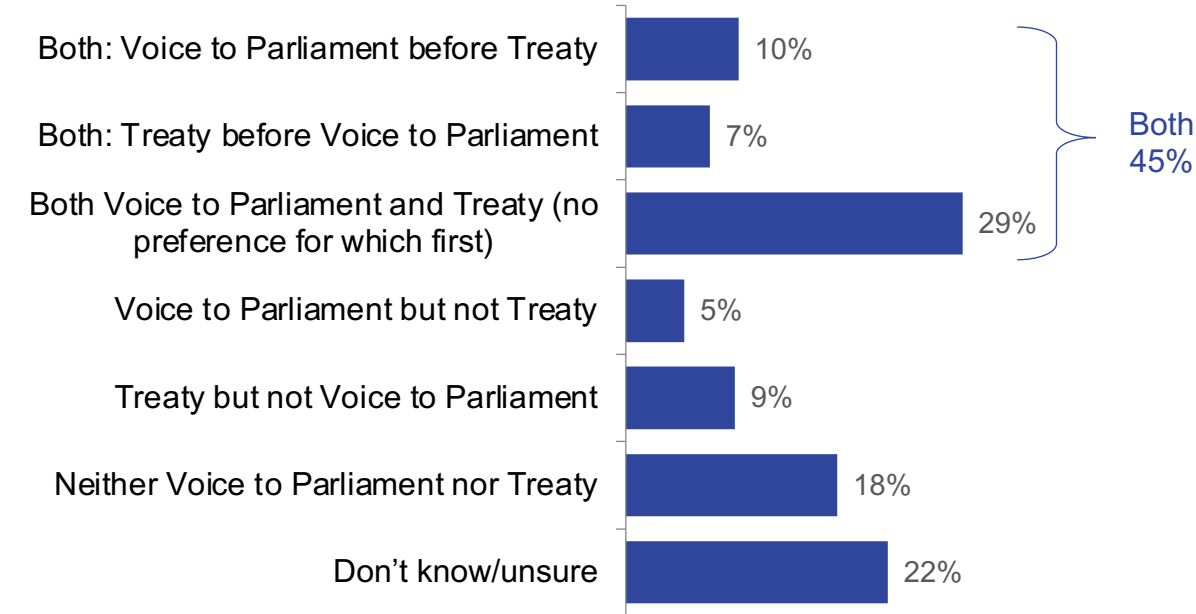
Those more likely rate Voice to Parliament as an important step forward for reconciliation include younger Australians (18-29: 75%, 30-49: 67%), Victorians (68%), those from metro locations (62%), non-parents (64%), those with incomes \$80k+ (66%), and CALD Australians (70%).

There is a preference for Voice to Parliament before Treaty, although 9% of Non-Indigenous Australians would prefer Treaty but not Voice to Parliament, and this increases to 15% looking at “no” referendum voters.

How would you rate the importance of including an Indigenous Voice to Parliament as a way forward for reconciliation?



Which of the following scenarios would you prefer?



New questions in 2023

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Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2023 n=946.

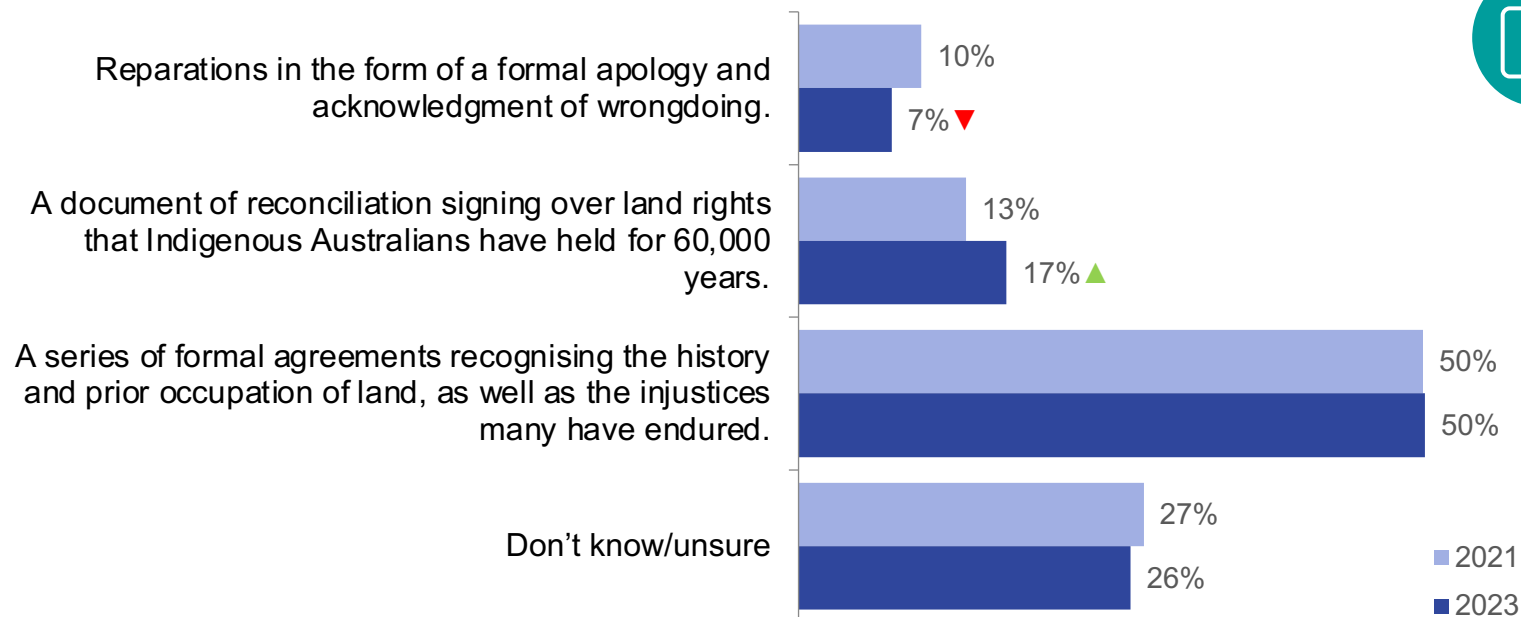
Sources: Q4. How would you rate the importance of including an Indigenous Voice to Parliament as a way forward for reconciliation? Q5. Which of the following scenarios would you prefer?



Only half of Non-Indigenous Australians understand what Treaty would mean for Australia

This is unchanged since 2021, with no significant subgroup differences.

To the best of your knowledge, what does a treaty mean between Australian governments and Indigenous Australians?



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.

Question wording updated in 2021, not comparable to 2020 data.

10 – © Ipsos | 2023 Ipsos Indigenous Issues - Australians' perceptions of First Nations Peoples

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2023 n=946; 2021 n=911.

Sources: Q7. To the best of your knowledge, what does a treaty mean between Australian governments and Indigenous Australians?

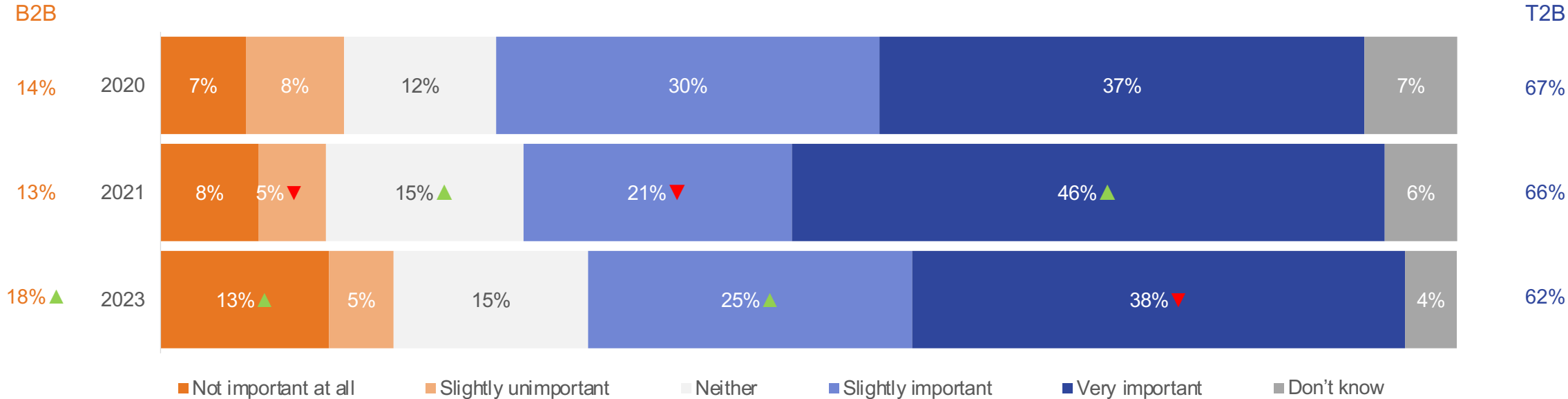
▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than previous wave, 95% C.I.



However, fewer Non-Indigenous Australians consider Treaty important compared to past years

This is driven by a large increase in those who believe Treaty is 'Not important at all' compared to previous years. Those more likely to consider Treaty as important include 30-49 years (70%), females (67%), Victorians (72%) and those with an income \$80k+ (69%).

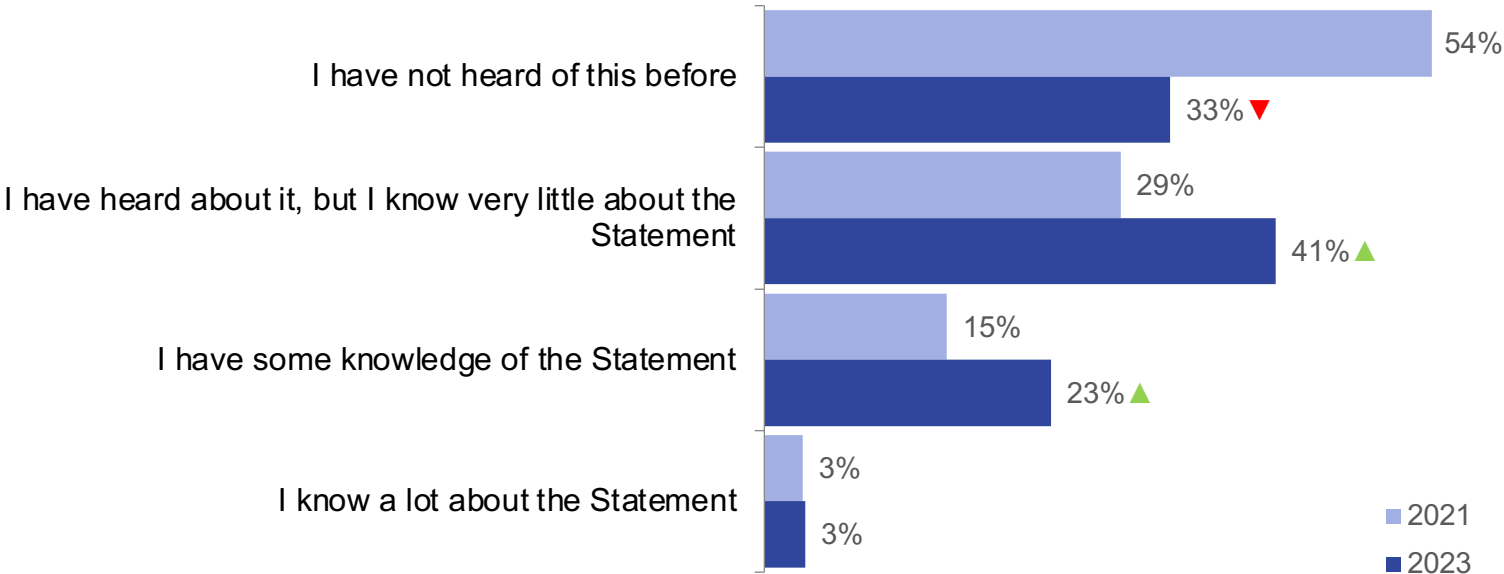
How would you rate the importance of discussing a treaty as a way forward for reconciliation?



There is increasing knowledge of the Uluru Statement from the Heart

Those that have not heard of the Uluru Statement are down from half to a third of Non-Indigenous Australians, with females more likely to say they haven't heard (40%).

Which of the following best describes your knowledge of the Uluru Statement from the Heart?



New question in 2021

12 – © Ipsos | 2023 Ipsos Indigenous Issues - Australians' perceptions of First Nations Peoples

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2023 n=946; 2021 n=911.

Sources: Q9. Which of the following best describes your knowledge of the Uluru Statement from the Heart?

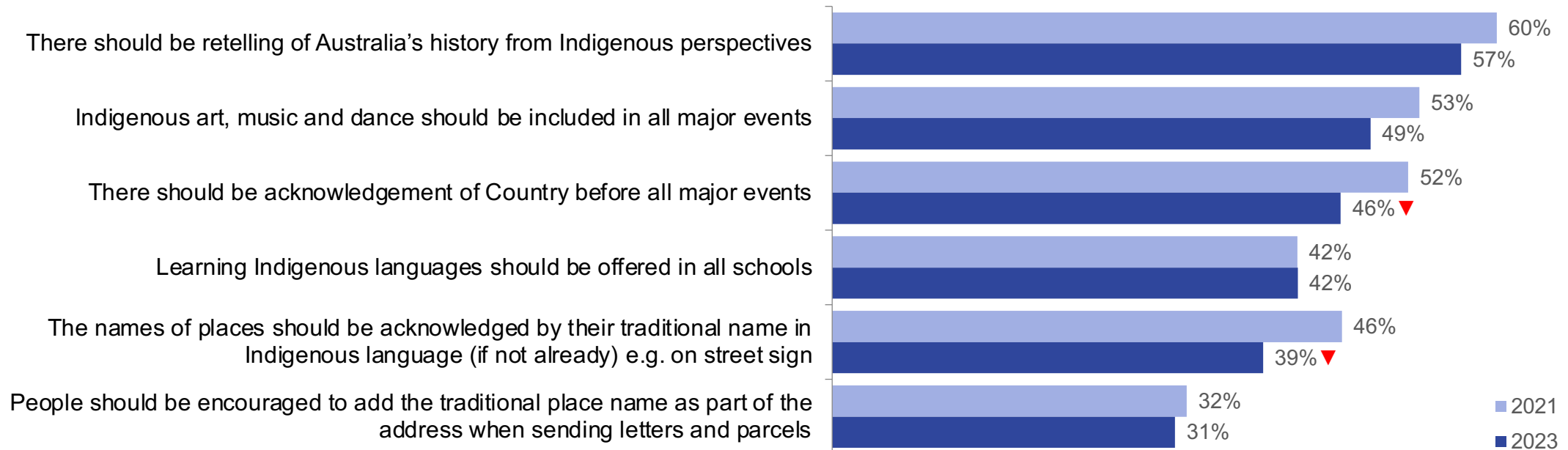
▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than previous wave, 95% C.I.



Initiatives around inclusion and cultural recognition are trending downwards

For the initiative Non-Indigenous Australians most support, 57% agree there should be a retelling of Australia's history from Indigenous perspectives. However, support is significantly lower than 2021 for initiatives around acknowledgement of Country and acknowledgement of Indigenous place names.

Support of closing the gap initiatives in Australia



New question in 2021

13 – © Ipsos | 2023 Ipsos Indigenous Issues - Australians' perceptions of First Nations Peoples

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2023 n=946; 2021 n=911; 2020 n=990.

Sources: Q11. To what extent do you support or oppose the following in Australia?

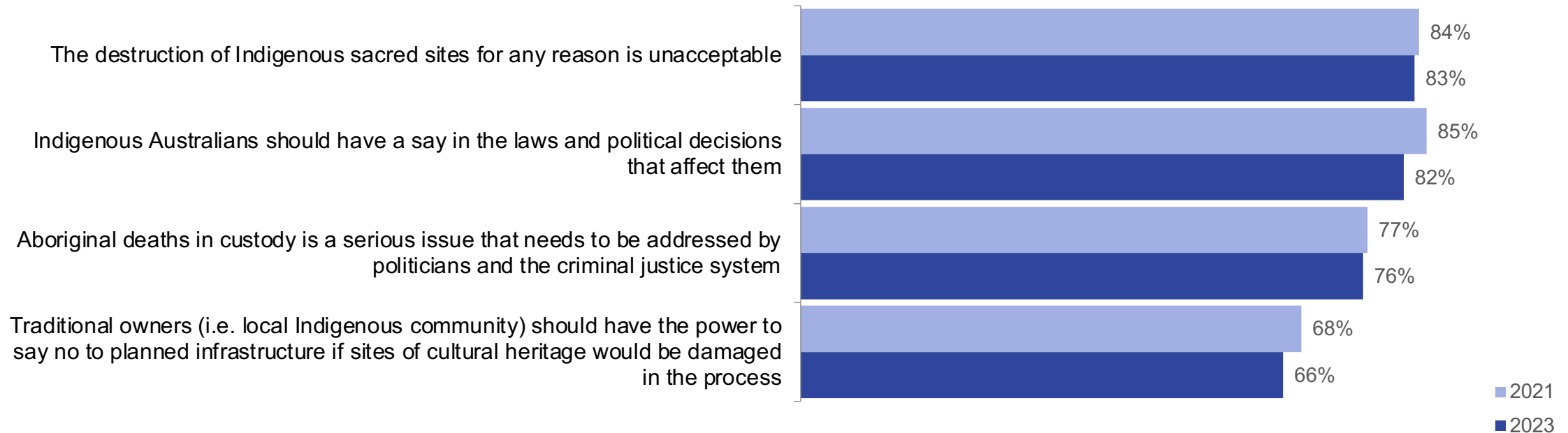
▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than previous wave, 95% C.I.



Strong support for Indigenous Australians to have a say in laws and decisions affecting them

8 in 10 agree sacred site destruction is unacceptable, while 3 in 4 agree Aboriginal deaths in custody needs to be addressed and 2 in 3 believe traditional owners should have a say on infrastructure planning when it impacts sites of cultural heritage.

T3B Agree



New question in 2021

14 – © Ipsos | 2023 Ipsos Indigenous Issues - Australians' perceptions of First Nations Peoples

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2023 n=946; 2021 n=911.

Sources: Q13. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

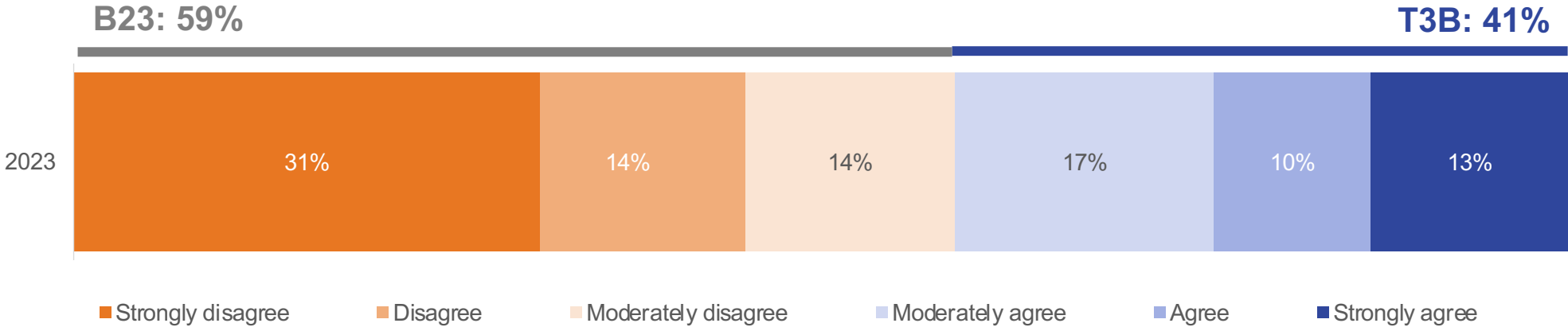
▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than previous wave, 95% C.I.



Changing the date of Australia Day continues to be unpopular – 6 in 10 don't want it to change

Those more likely to agree with changing the date are younger Australians (18-29: 60%, 30-49: 52%), Victorians (49%), those in metro locations (44%), non-parents (47%), those with an income \$80k+ (50%) and CALD Australians (52%).

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



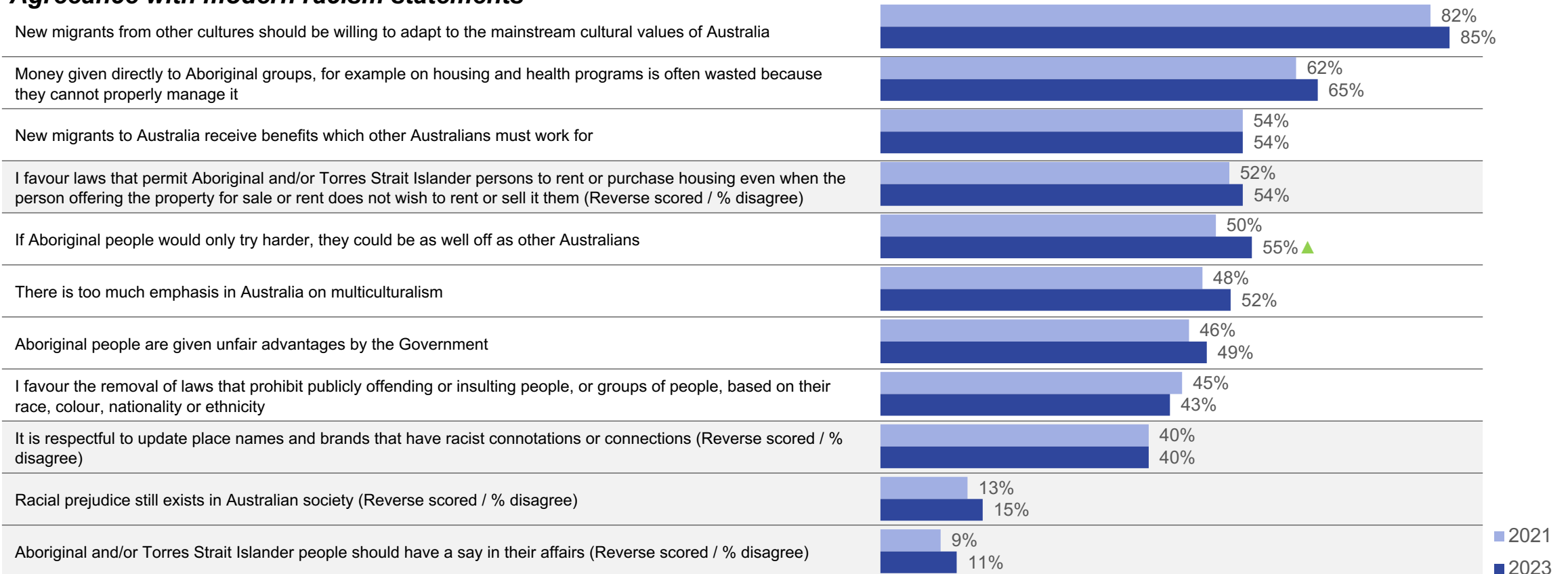
Question not asked in 2021, and asked with a 5-pt scale in 2020 so not directly comparable.



Views fitting into the concept of modern racism remain steady

Statements with an (R) are where agreement correlates with racism, for all other statements it is disagreement. Despite having high awareness of racism in Australia, 85% of Non-Indigenous Australians believe that new migrants from other cultures should be willing to adapt to the mainstream cultural values of Australia.

Agreement with modern racism statements



*Statement used in 'Modern Racism Score' (see next slide for more detail)

New question in 2021.

16 – © Ipsos | 2023 Ipsos Indigenous Issues - Australians' perceptions of First Nations Peoples

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2023 n=946; 2021 n=911.

Sources: Q12. To what extent do you support or oppose the following in Australia?

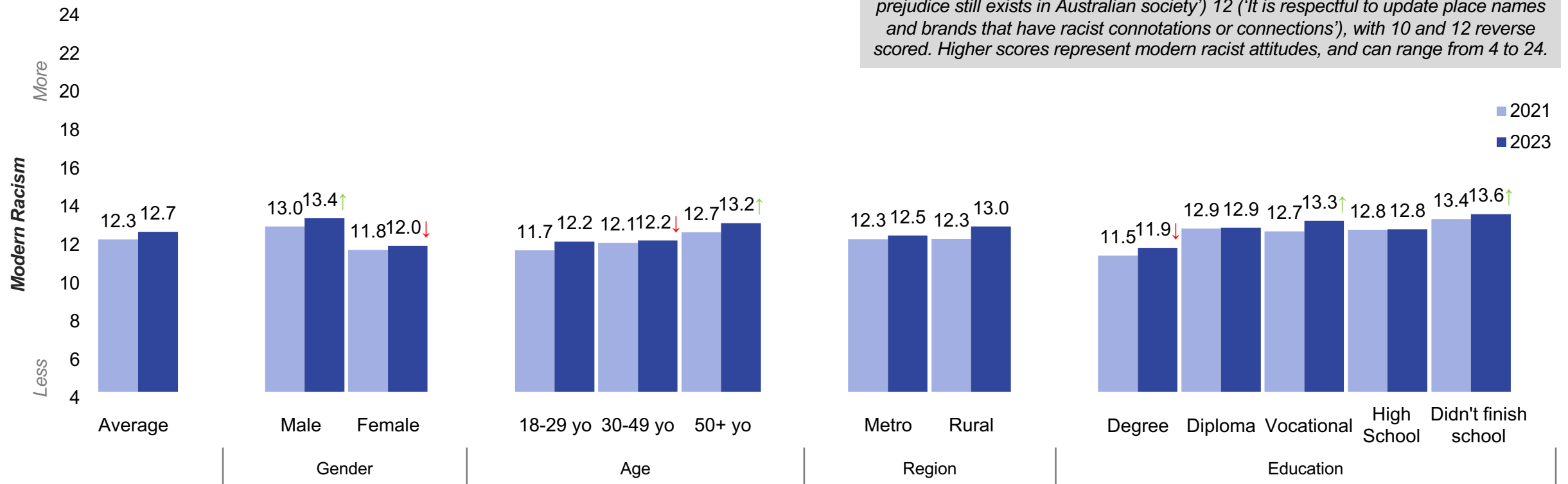
▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than previous wave, 95% C.I.



Modern Racism Score

Australians who scored higher on Modern Racism on average include males, older Australians (50+), and those with less education.

A 'Modern Racism Score' was calculated by summing the responses to four items shown from our racism question (Q6), adapted from the Symbolic Racism Extended Scale^{1,2}. This includes items 4 ('If Aboriginal people would only try harder, they could be as well off as other Australians'), 9 ('Aboriginal people are given unfair advantages by the Government'), 10 ('Racial prejudice still exists in Australian society') 12 ('It is respectful to update place names and brands that have racist connotations or connections'), with 10 and 12 reverse scored. Higher scores represent modern racist attitudes, and can range from 4 to 24.

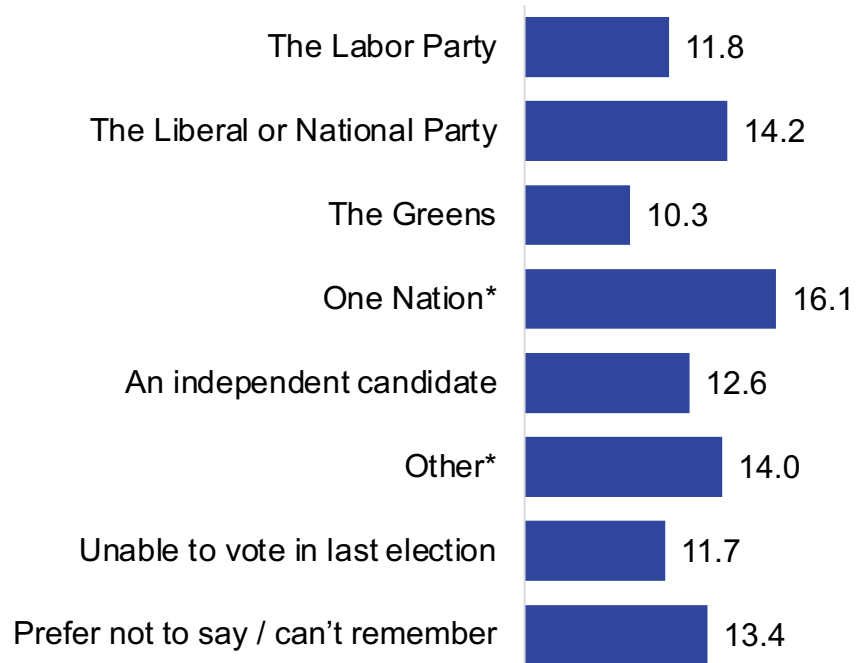


¹Fraser, C. O., & Islam, M. R. (1997b). Symbolic Racism in Australian Politics: Explaining the rise of Pauline Hanson. Unpublished manuscript. Fraser, C. O., & Islam, M. R. (2000). Social Identification and Political Preferences for One Nation: The Role of Symbolic Racism. Australian Journal of Psychology, Vol. 52 No. 3, 131 — 137. ²Henry, P. J., & Sears, D. O. (2002). The symbolic racism 2000 scale. Political psychology, 23(2), 253-283.

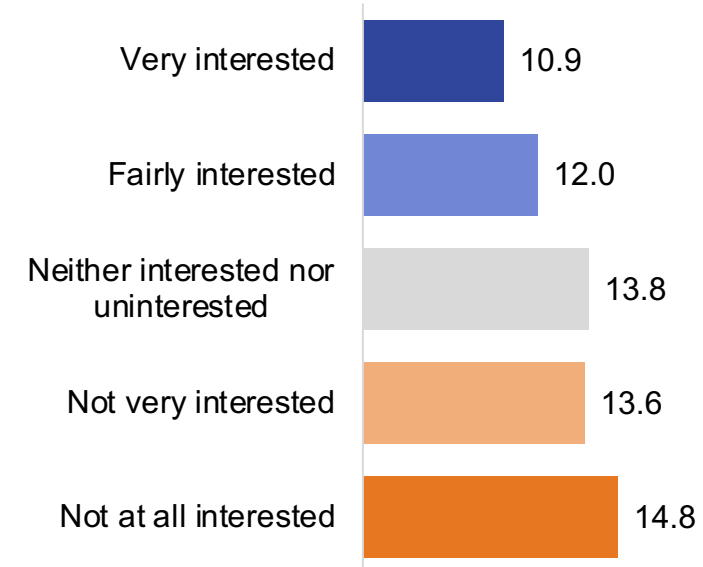
Modern Racism Score (cont.)

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.



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.



*Low base (n<30)

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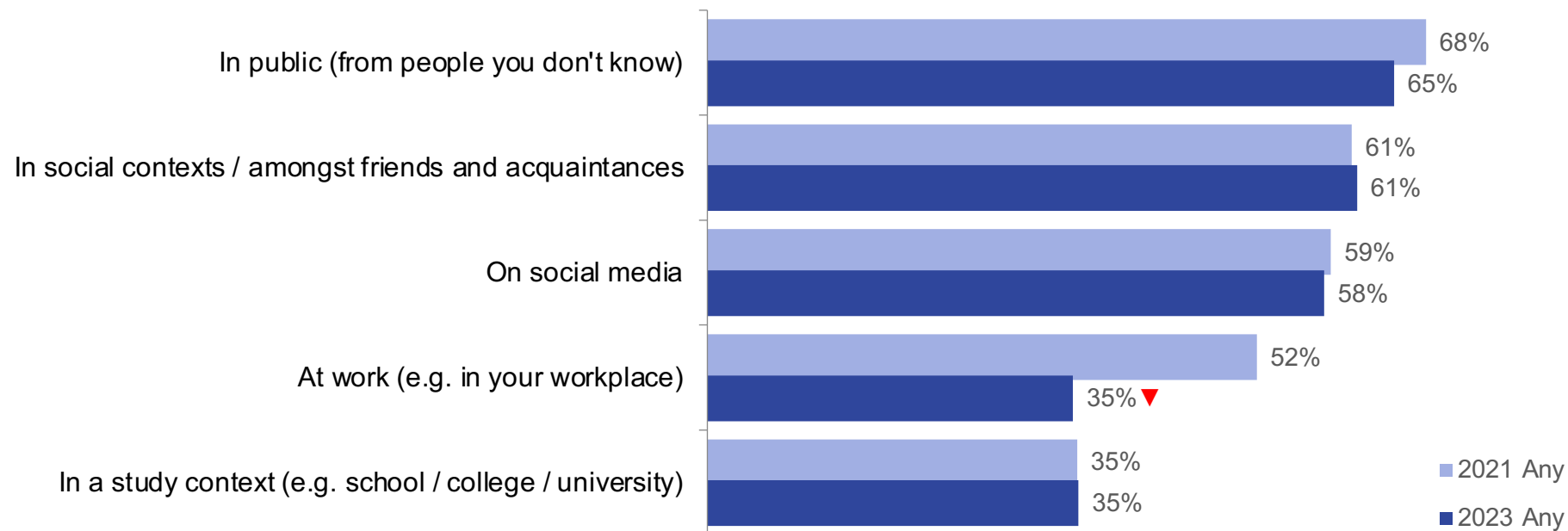
Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2023 n=946.

Sources: Q6. What is your level of interest in Indigenous issues? Q12. To what extent do you support or oppose the following in Australia? Q24. Which political party did you vote for in the last election?

Claims of hearing racial slurs at work are less common in 2023

Non-Indigenous Australians are more likely to report hearing racial slurs in public, followed by social contexts and then on social media. Younger Australians, males, those employed and those with incomes \$80k+) are more likely to report hearing racial slurs or jokes across all contexts, with CALD (46%) and those in Western Australia (47%) more likely to hear at work, and regional Australians more likely to hear in social contexts (68%).

How often do you hear / see racial or ethnic slurs or jokes about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people?



New question in 2021

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Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2023 n=946; 2021 n=911.

Sources: Q16. How often do you hear / see racial or ethnic slurs or jokes about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people...

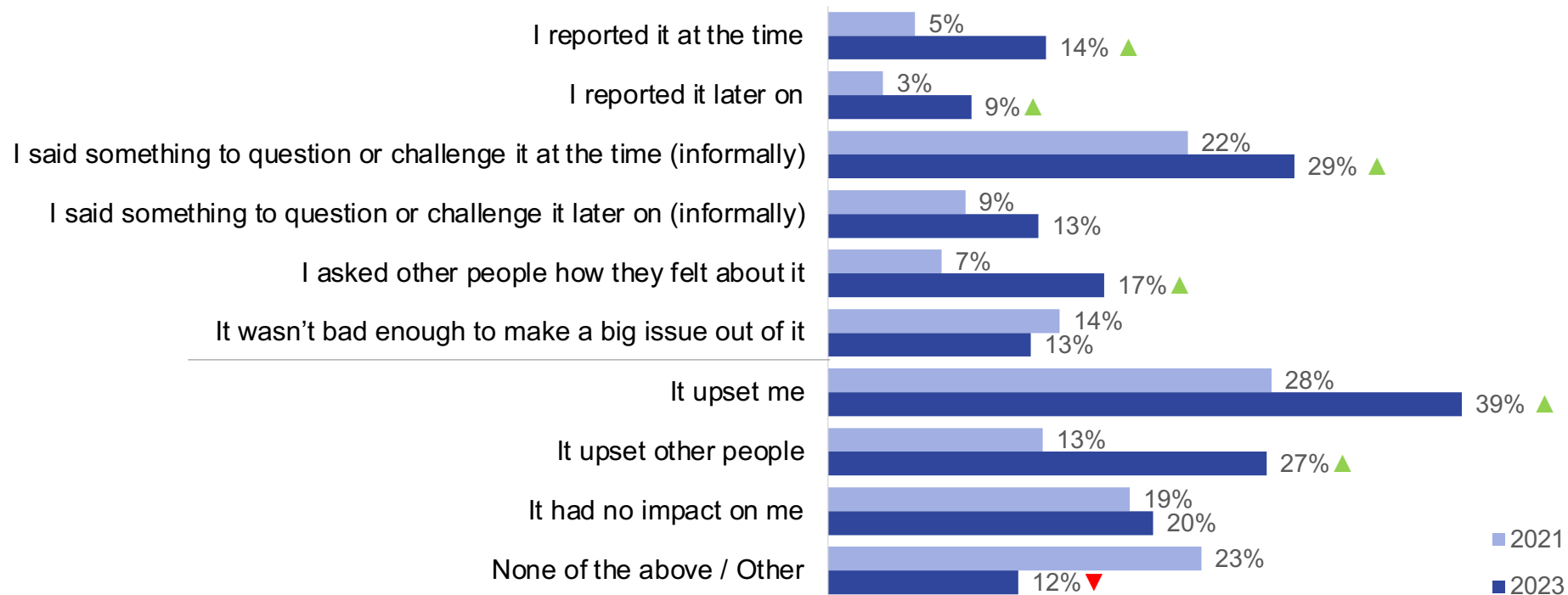
▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than previous wave, 95% C.I.



In 2023 we see more Non-Indigenous Australians reporting taking action against racism

Non-Indigenous Australians are also more likely to report being upset by racism and to recognise the impact on others.

When you have heard or seen racial or ethnic slurs or jokes about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, what happened as a result?



New question in 2021

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Base: Those who didn't answer 'never' to all codes at Q16: Non-Indigenous Australians 2021 n=725; 2023 n=192.

Sources: Q17. When you have heard or seen racial or ethnic slurs or jokes about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, what happened as a result?

▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than previous wave, 95% C.I.



Demographics of sample

Demographics (unweighted)



1,000 respondents
 (were interviewed online in May
 2023 (2,069 in 2020, 1,010 in 2021))

49%
 Male

2020 (48%),
 2021 (49%)



52%
 Female

2020 (52%),
 2021 (51%)



Life stage

51% Parents
42% Non-parents
8% Refused

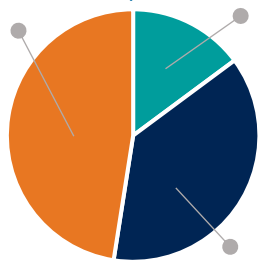


Education

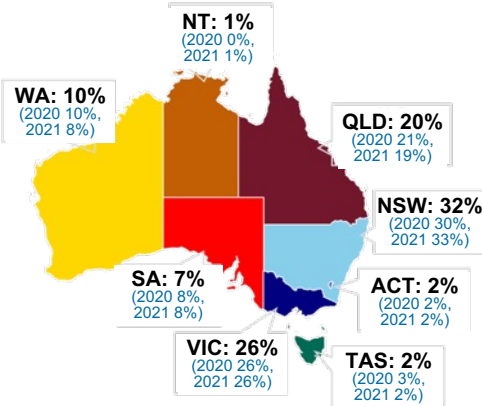
38% (2020 41%, 2021 42%) Bachelor & higher
12% ↓ (2020 15%, 2021 15%) Diploma
19% (2020 20%, 2021 16%) Skilled/Basic Vocational
18% (2020 14%, 2021 15%) High school
12% (2020 9%, 2021 11%) Did not complete school
1% (2020 1%, 2021 1%) Don't know

45% (2020 46%, 2021 48%)
 50+ years

19% ↑ (2020 17%, 2021 15%)
 18–29 years



35% (2020 37%, 2021 38%)
 30–49 years



24% ↓ (2020 27%,
 2021 29%)
 CALD

75% ↑ (2020 73%,
 2021 71%)
 Non-CALD



Employment

33% ↓ (2020 37%, 2021 39%) Full-time
16% ↓ (2020 21%, 2021 20%) Part-time
45% ↑ (2020 41%, 2021 40%) Not employed
1% (2020 1%, 2021 1%) Don't know



Other languages

8% (2020 8%, 2021 10%) Mandarin
8% (2020 9%, 2021 8%) Italian
4% (2020 7%, 2021 7%) Cantonese
4% (2020 5%, 2021 7%) Spanish
5% (2020 4%, 2021 6%) Hindi
3% (2020 1%, 2021 6%) ATSI languages
5% (2020 4%, 2021 3%) Greek
4% (2020 2%, 2021 2%) Vietnamese
4% (2020 3%, 2021 2%) Arabic
5% (2020 4%, 2021 2%) Filipino/Tagalog
35% (2020 44%, 2021 35%) Others
5% (2020 10%, 2021 13%) Prefer not to say



Non-Indigenous Australians' interaction with First Nations Peoples

6% (2020 5%, 2021 5%) A lot
23% ↑ (2020 21%, 2021 18%) A fair bit
50% (2020 53%, 2021 51%) Not very much
21% ↓ (2020 21%, 2021 25%) Not at all



ATSI status

4% (2020 2%, 2021 4%) Aboriginal
0% (2020 0%, 2021 2%) Torres Strait Islander
1% (2020 1%, 2021 2%) Both
95% (2020 96%, 2021 90%) No
0% (2020 2%, 2021 2%) Refused



Combined income

9% Less than \$25k
52% \$25k to just under \$100k
23% \$100k to just under \$200k
7% \$200k and above
10% Refused

Australians over-estimate the First Nations population by a factor of 6

There are greater differences between perception and reality than between perceptions of Non-Indigenous Australians and First Nations Peoples population-level statistics. This is consistent with cognitive biases and heuristics, where humans tend to over-estimate things we worry about, and over-estimate the importance of things we recall (availability heuristic).

		Survey response	ABS/AIHW statistics*	Ratio between survey and ABS/AIHW
Population	<i>Out of every 100 people in Australia, approximately how many do you think are Indigenous Australians?</i>	21.3	3.4	6.26
Life expectancy	...of First Nations Peoples	63.5	73.6	0.86
	...of Non-Indigenous Australians	76.2	81.8	0.93
Deaths due to injury and suicide	...for First Nations Peoples	29.0	5.7	5.09
	...for Non-Indigenous Australians	23.0	1.9	12.11

New question in 2021

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Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2023 n=946; 2021 n=911. Sources: Q18. Out of every 100 people in Australia, approximately how many do you think are Indigenous Australians? Q21. For a child born in 2015, what do you think is the life expectancy is of... Q22. Between 2014-2018, for every 100 deaths, what number do you think were due to injury and suicide for Indigenous Australians? Q23. Between 2014-2018, for every 100 deaths, what number do you think were due to injury and suicide for Non-Indigenous Australians? *Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 census data, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare website data.



Perils perceptions (cont.)

These results suggest that the influence of media and biases on Non-Indigenous Australian's perceptions are stronger at the overall topic level (e.g. over-estimating the number of people in prison) than at the person level (e.g. differentiating between First Nation Peoples and Non-Indigenous Australians in prison).

<i>Out of every 100 adult Indigenous/Non-Indigenous Australians, how many do you think...</i>		Survey response	ABS/AIHW statistics*	Ratio between survey and ABS/AIHW
Are unemployed? (of working age)	First Nations Peoples	46.6	53	0.88
	Non-Indigenous Australians	28.8	28	1.03
Are incarcerated / in prison?	First Nations Peoples	25.8	1.5	17.20
	Non-Indigenous Australians	19.3	0.1	193.42
Smoke cigarettes?	First Nations Peoples	48.7	43.1	1.13
	Non-Indigenous Australians	34.5	15	2.30
Drink alcohol to risky levels (more than two standard drinks per day on average)?	First Nations Peoples	50.6	19.7	2.57
	Non-Indigenous Australians	39.0	16	2.43
Are homeless?	First Nations Peoples	29.8	3.6	8.27
	Non-Indigenous Australians	20.7	0.4	51.69
Have a disability or restrictive long-term health condition?	First Nations Peoples	30.3	44.8	0.68
	Non-Indigenous Australians	22.7	29	0.78
Have completed high school?	First Nations Peoples	35.6	56.5	0.63
	Non-Indigenous Australians	67.9	98.7	0.69

New question in 2021

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Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2023 n=946; 2021 n=911. Sources: Q19. Out of every 100 adult Indigenous Australians, how many do you think... Q20. Out of every 100 adult Non-Indigenous Australians, how many do you think... *Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 census data, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare website data.



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