

# IPSOS INDIGENOUS ISSUES 2024

Australians' perceptions  
of First Nation issues

May 2024



ATSIRU

# About this study



- These are the findings of an Ipsos survey conducted via Ipsos's online research panel between 22 – 26 April 2024, 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 2021 ABS census 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](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>.

# Headline findings

1

**Interest in Indigenous issues declined**, with potential fatigue post-2023 Voice to Parliament vote. The surrounding debate appears to have **damaged the consensus on Closing the Gap initiatives**, and that damage seems sustained.

2

**Intergenerational differences** find younger Australians demonstrate a deeper empathy towards Indigenous issues, leading to increased support for reconciliation initiatives, greater racial sensitivity, and advocating for more government action.

3

Opinions vary on the government's role in action for First Nations Peoples; While some believe enough is being done, **twice as many advocate for more over less action**.

4

**Racial slurs/jokes are more common in public and on social media** than at work or school.

# 2024 Context

## 2023 national Voice to Parliament referendum

The 2023 Australian Indigenous Voice referendum was a constitutional referendum held on 14 October 2023 in which the proposed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice was rejected. Campaigning for both sides of the question started in early 2023. Indigenous groups held a week of silence after the outcome of the vote was revealed and faced increased racism throughout the months of the campaign.

## Gradual rise in concern for Indigenous Issues

In the April 2024 Ipsos Issues Monitor\*,

where Australians say what concerns them most, Indigenous Issues was ranked 15<sup>th</sup>, with 6% of those surveyed listing this in their top three concerns. It jumped from 19<sup>th</sup> in 2020 and 2021 to 16<sup>th</sup> in 2022 and 2023.

## National Reconciliation week

The National Reconciliation Week theme for 2024, *Now More Than Ever*, is a reminder to all of us that no matter what, the fight for justice and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will –and must – continue.

\*The Ipsos Issues Monitor is an ongoing quantitative survey of Australians about the issues facing the nation. Data available here: <https://www.ipsos.com/en-au/issuemonitor>

\*\*<https://www.ipsos.com/en/ipsos-generations-report-2024-are-we-prepared-population-decline>

# Interest in Indigenous issues is back to 2021 levels after a peak in 2023

After the Voice to Parliament vote in 2023, interest in Indigenous issues has settled back from the peak, with fewer Australis very interested in 2024 compared to 2023.

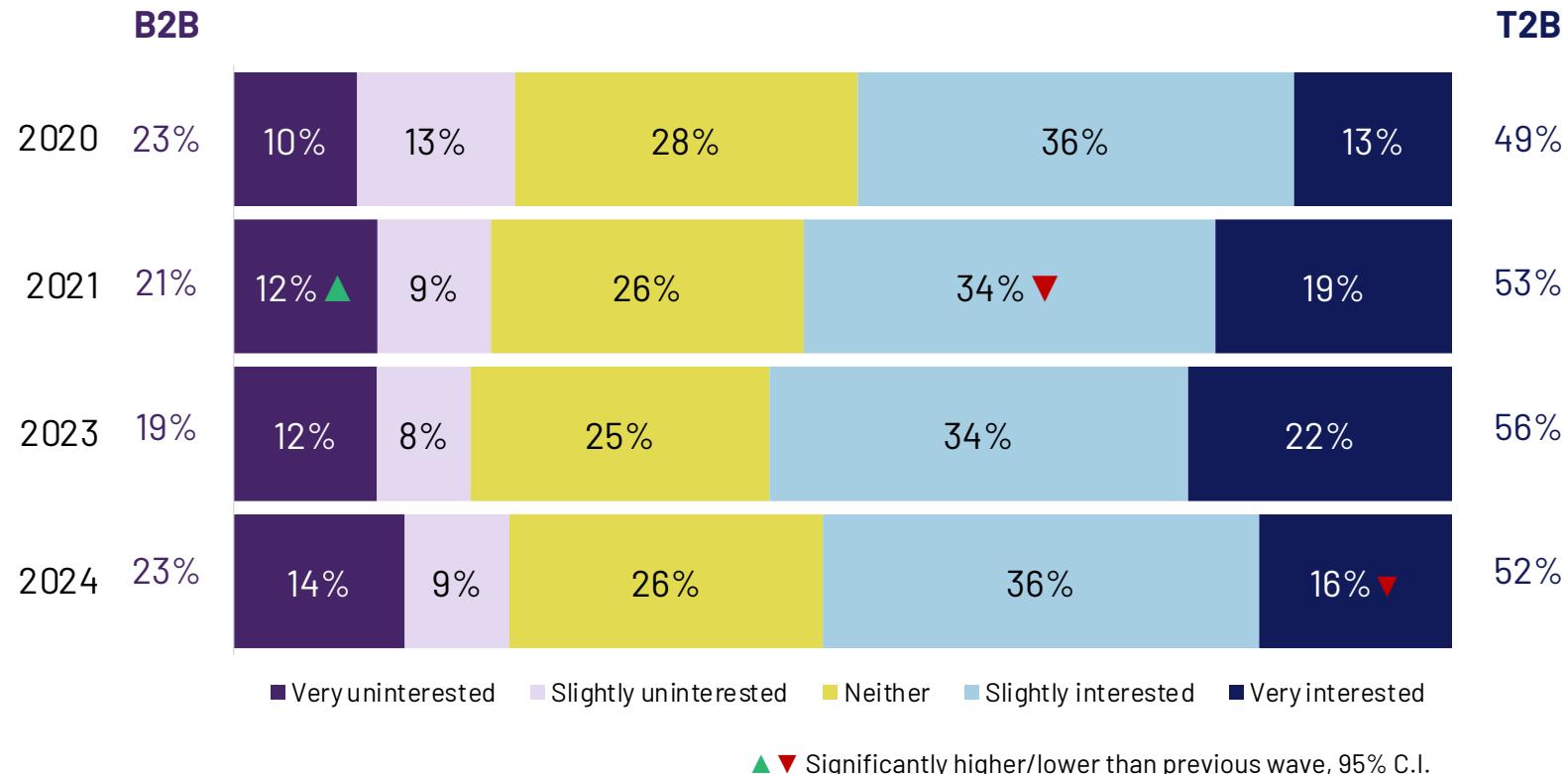
This decrease in interest (T2B) may be driven by less interest among **females** (49% interested in 2024 vs. 55% in 2023) and **regional** Australians (44% interested in 2024 vs. 57% in 2023).

Younger Australians (18-29yrs) are more likely to be interested (59% vs. 50+ys 52%).

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965

Source: Q6 What is your level of interest in Indigenous issues in Australia?

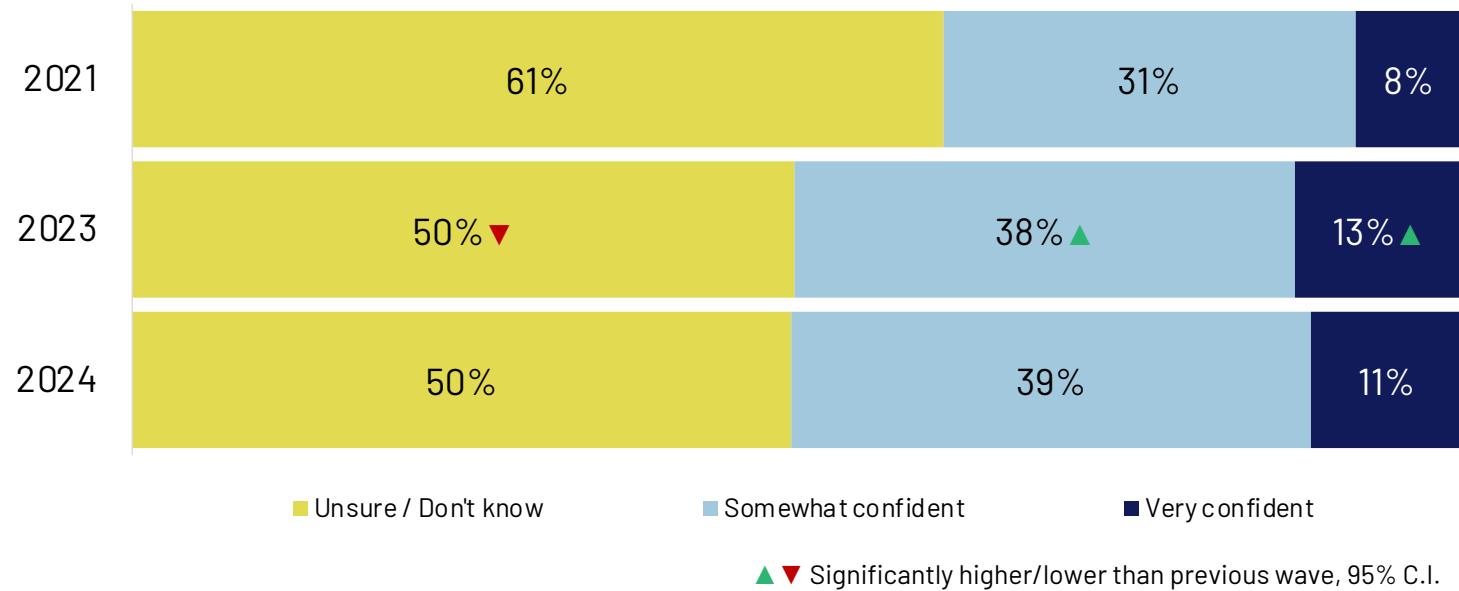
## Interest in Indigenous issues in Australia



# Claimed knowledge of Traditional Owners remains stable

Non-Indigenous Australians more likely to be confident in this knowledge are **males** (54% vs. females 47%) and **younger** Australians (18-29yrs 64% & 30-49yrs 58% vs. 50+yrs 39%).

*Confidence in knowledge of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Country*



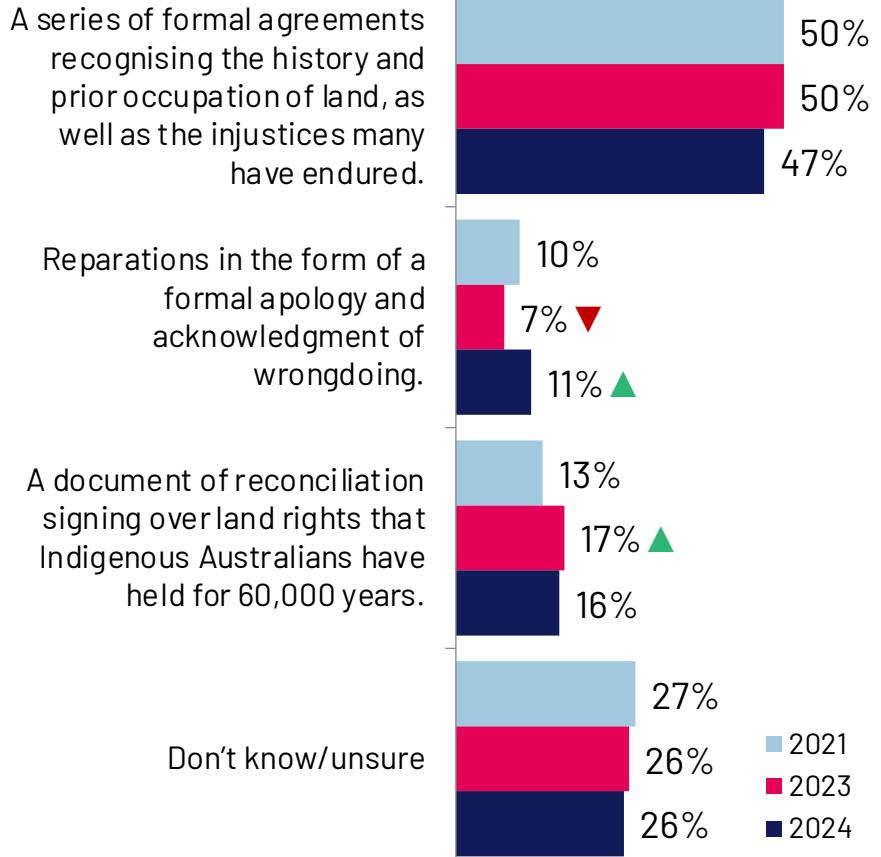
Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965

Source: 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?

# Knowledge of Treaty also remains stable

Those aware of what a Treaty means are more likely to be interested in Indigenous issues (64% interest vs. 52% average interest).

## Knowledge of Treaty



Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965

Source: Q7. 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.



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

# As does knowledge of the Uluru Statement of the Heart

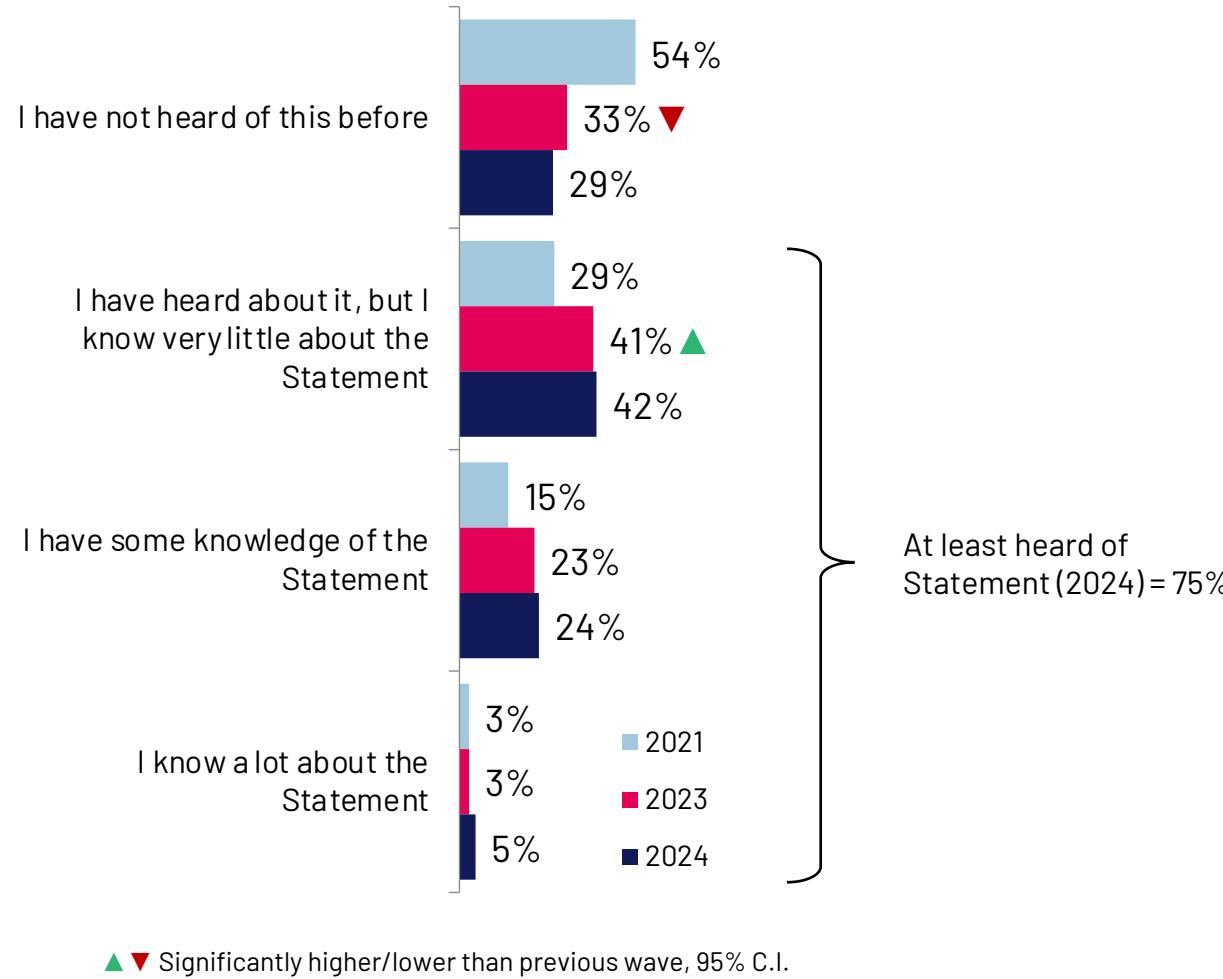
Knowledge has stabilised after an increase in 2023 due to the Voice to Parliament and its link to the statement.

**Older** Australians are more likely to have at least heard of the Statement in 2024 (75% vs. 67% in 2023), as are **females** (67% vs. 60% in 2023) and **regional** Australians (75% vs. 65% in 2023)

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965

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

## Knowledge of Uluru Statement from the Heart



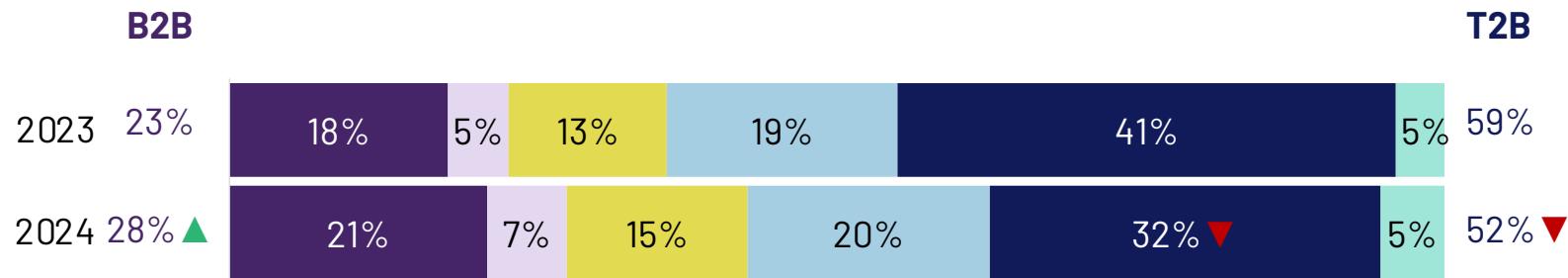
# Downward trend in perceived importance of Treaty and Voice to Parliament for reconciliation

Older Australians (53%), males (58%) and regional Australians (56%) are less likely to consider Treaty as an important way forward for reconciliation.

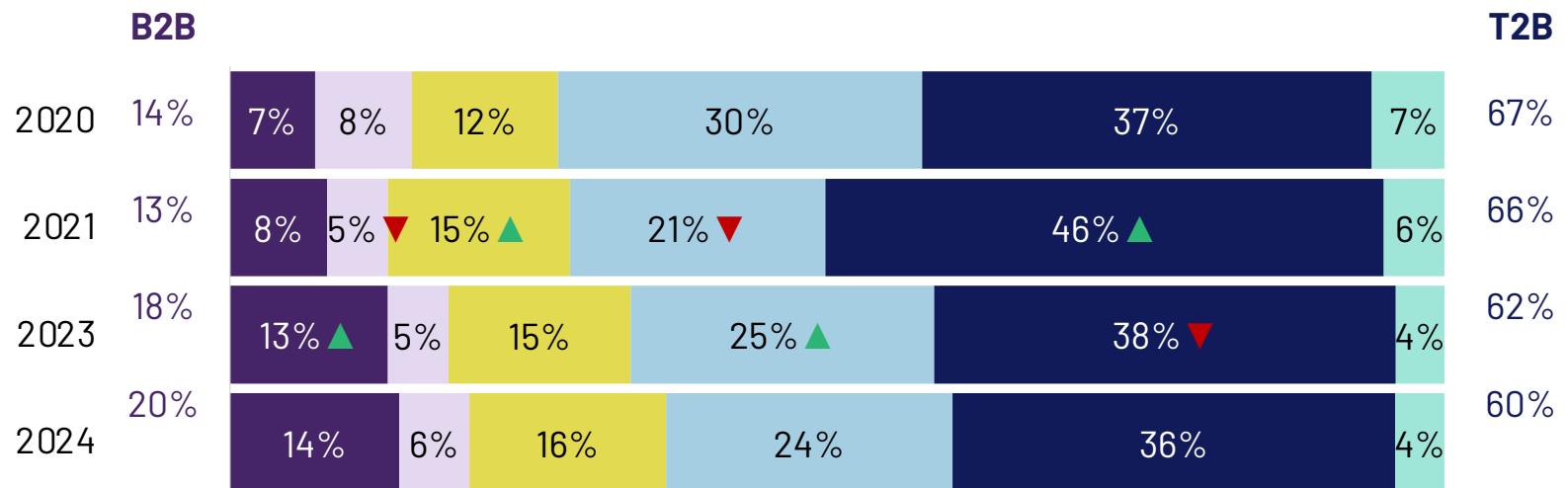
Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2020 n=1,986; 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965

Source: Q3. How would you rate the importance of discussing a treaty as a way forward for reconciliation? Q4. How would you rate the importance of including an Indigenous Voice to Parliament as a way forward for reconciliation?

## Importance of Voice to Parliament as a way forward for reconciliation



## Importance of Treaty as a way forward for reconciliation



■ Not important at all ■ Slightly unimportant ■ Neither ■ Slightly important ■ Very important ■ Don't know

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

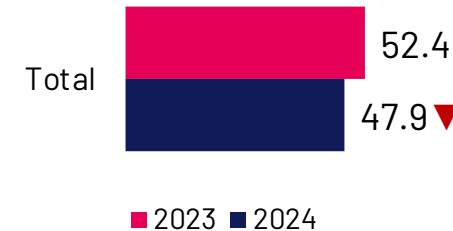
# Non-Indigenous Australians who don't prioritize Treaty for reconciliation believe their perspective is widely shared

This likely follows on from the Voice to Parliament having a 'no' outcome, with those non-Indigenous Australians who feel these actions are less important seeing that their values are in the majority.

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965

Source: Q3. How would you rate the importance of discussing a treaty as a way forward for reconciliation? Q10. How much of the Australian public would you guess holds your views on Voice to Parliament, Treaty, and the Uluru statement?

Perception of Australian public who share views on Treaty (/100)



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

# Support for closing the gap continues trending downwards

The Voice and surrounding debate appears to have damaged the consensus on closing the gap initiatives, and that damage seems sustained.

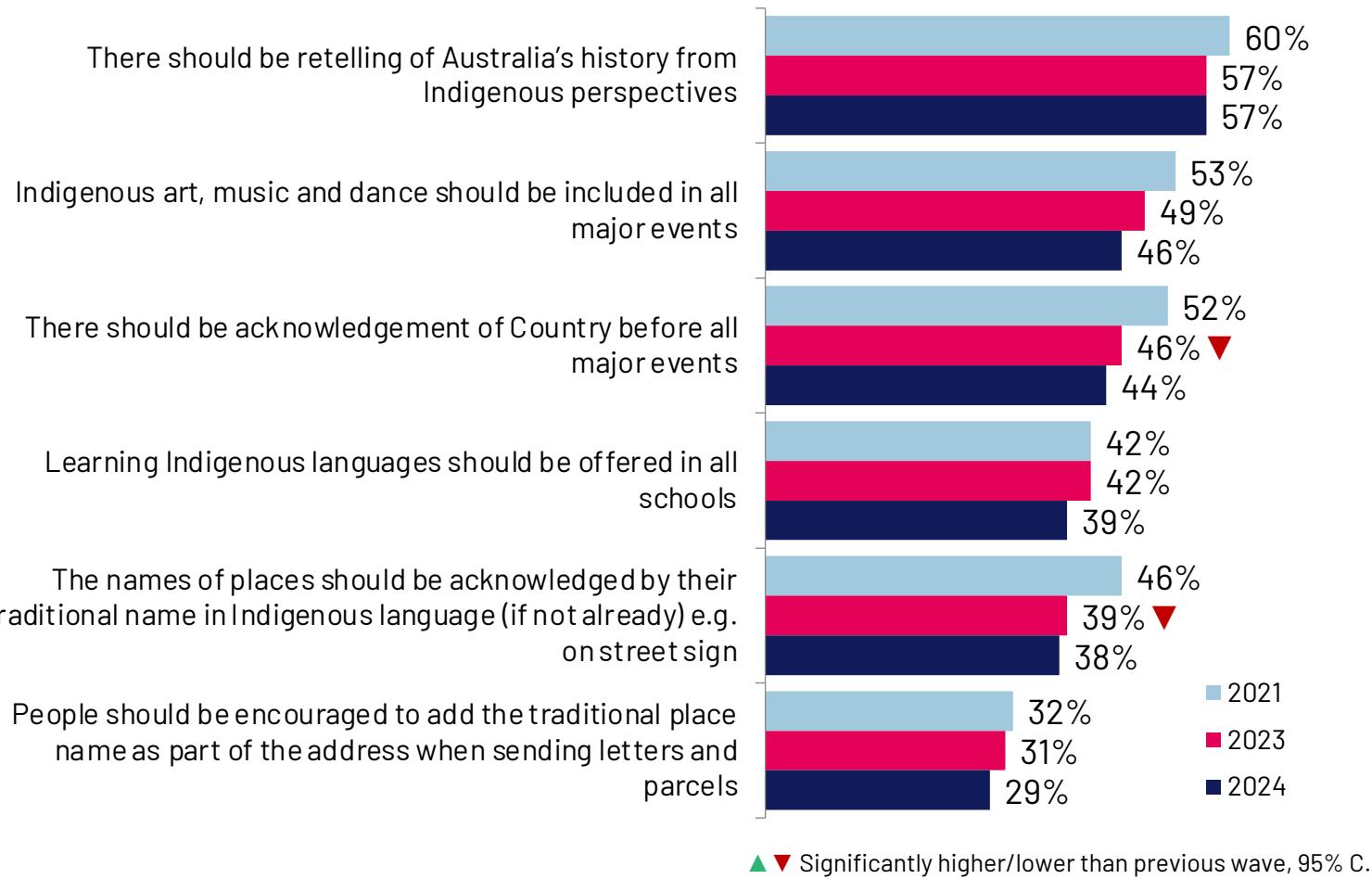
Those more likely to support these initiatives include **younger** Australians (18-49yrs), **females** and Australians living in **metro** areas.

Support is highest for a retelling of Australia's history from Indigenous perspectives.

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965

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

## Support for closing the gap initiatives in Australia



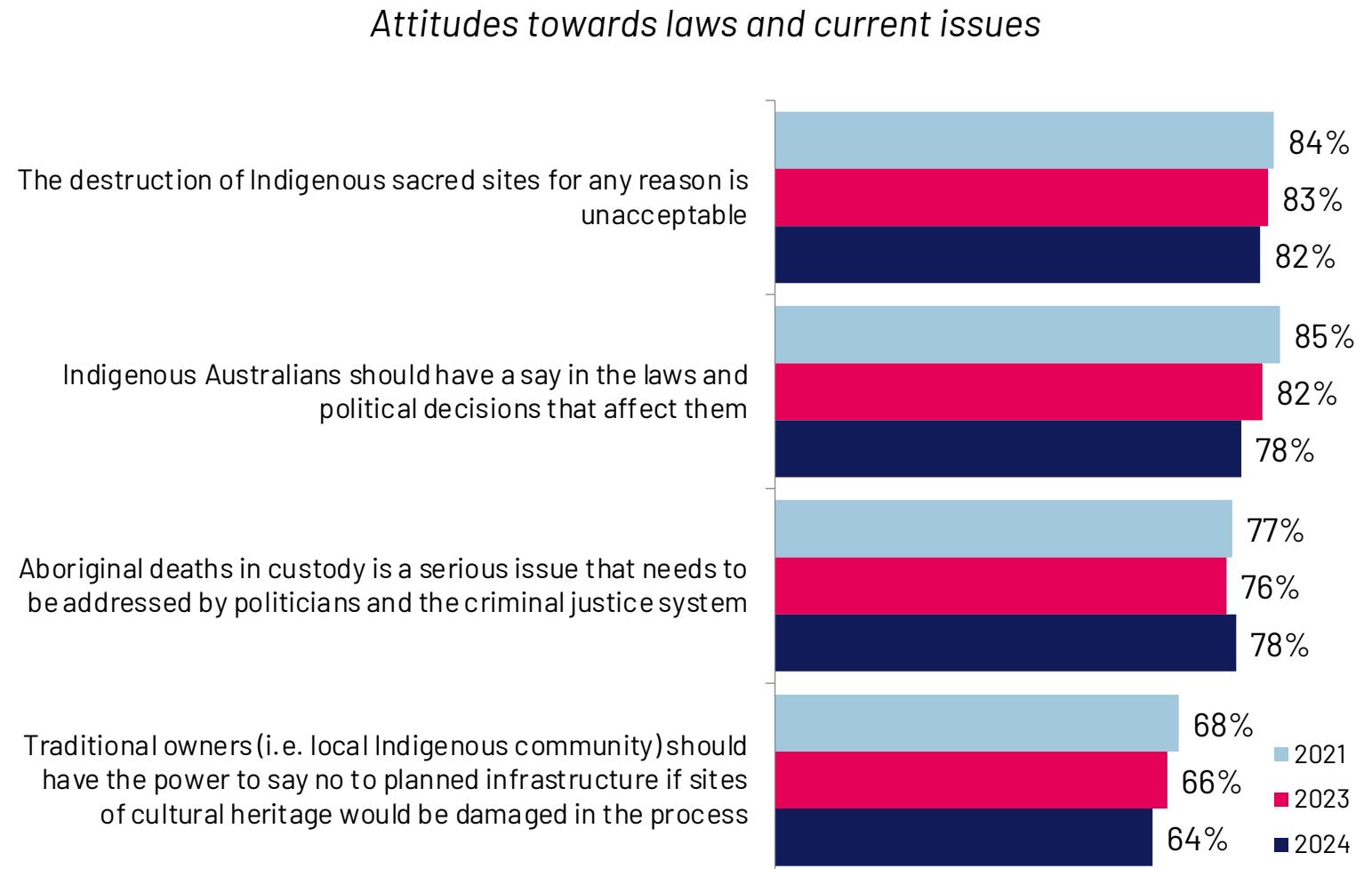
# Despite slight softening, there is still strong support for Indigenous laws and current issues

While **females** and Australians living in **metro** are more likely to agree with these statements, opinions differ by age:

**Older** Australians are more likely to feel that the destruction of Indigenous sacred sites is unacceptable (50+ yrs 87% vs. 18-49 yrs 79%), and **younger** Australians are more likely to feel that Traditional owners should have the power to say no to planned infrastructure (18-29 yrs 73% vs. 50+ yrs 59%).

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965

Source: Q12. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:



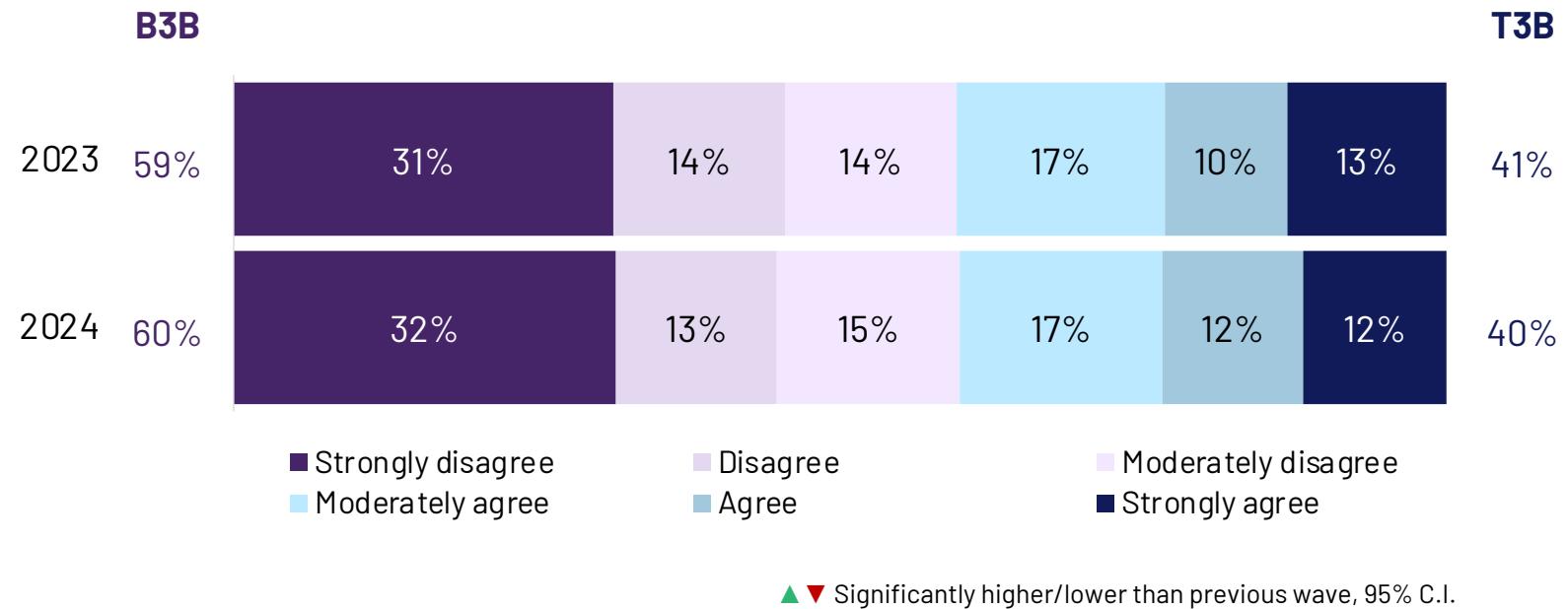
▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than previous wave, 95% C.I.

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

However, there has been a shift in ages:

While **younger** Australians are still more likely to support a change of date compared to **older** Australians, **younger** Australians (18-29yrs) are less likely to support this change compared to last year (2024 50% agree vs. 2023 60% agree), and **older** Australians (50+yrs) are more likely to support the change (2024 30% vs. 2023 25%).

Attitude towards changing the date of Australia Day\*



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

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965

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

# Views fitting into the concept of modern racism remain steady

Statements with an (R) are where disagreement correlates with racism, for all other statements it is agreement.

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.

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965

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

## Agreement with Modern Racism statements

New migrants from other cultures should be willing to adapt to the mainstream cultural values of Australia



Money given directly to Aboriginal groups, for example on housing and health programs is often wasted because they cannot properly manage it



New migrants to Australia receive benefits which other Australians must work for



I favour laws that permit Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons to rent or purchase housing even when the person offering the property for sale or rent does not wish to rent or sell it to them (Reverse scored / % disagree)



If Aboriginal people would only try harder, they could be as well off as other Australians



There is too much emphasis in Australia on multiculturalism



Aboriginal people are given unfair advantages by the Government



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



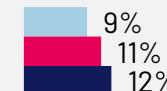
It is respectful to update place names and brands that have racist connotations or connections (Reverse scored / % disagree)



Racial prejudice still exists in Australian society (Reverse scored / % disagree)



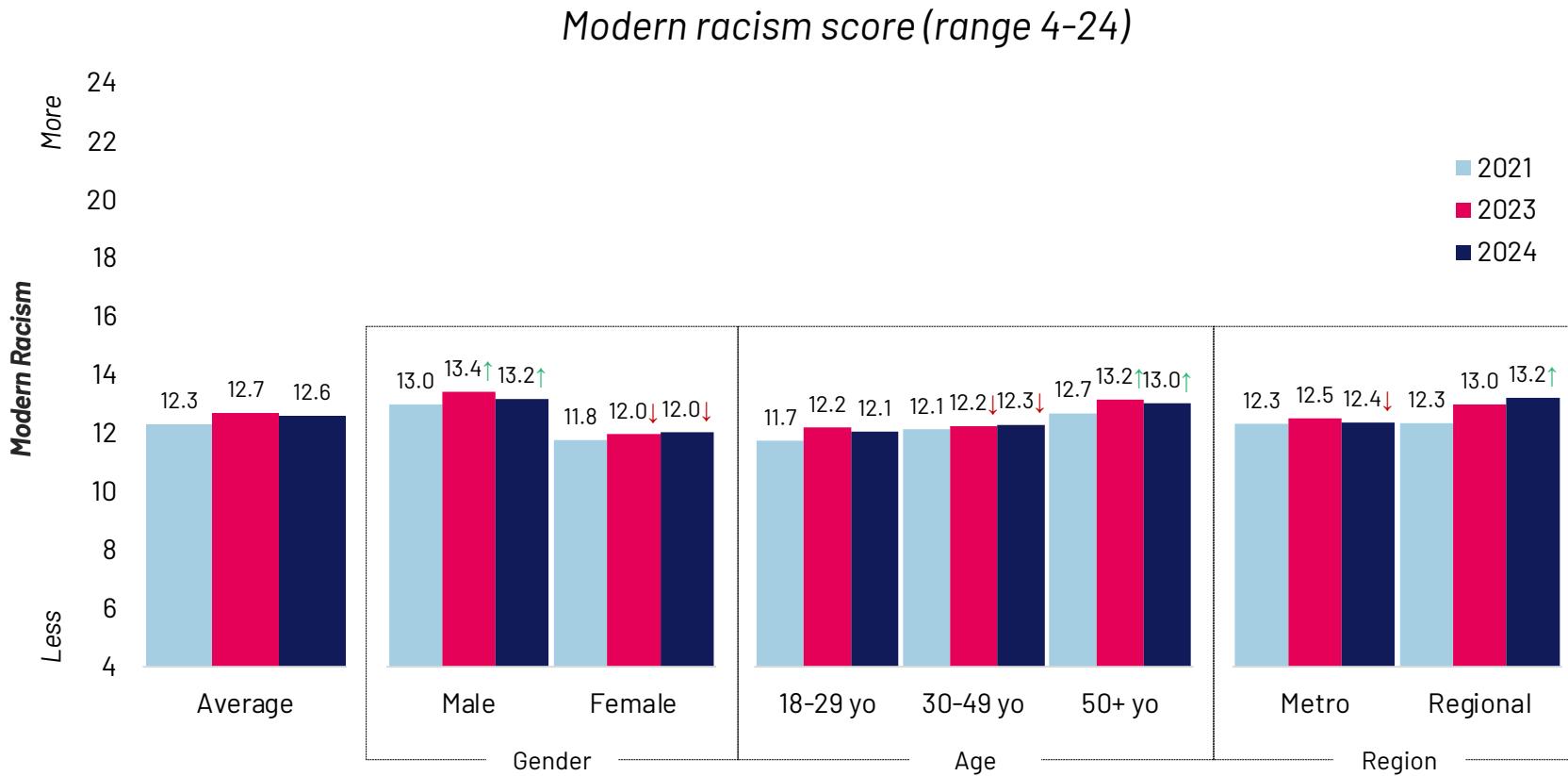
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people should have a say in their affairs (Reverse scored / % disagree)



2021 2023 2024

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

# Males, older and regional Australians score higher on Modern Racism

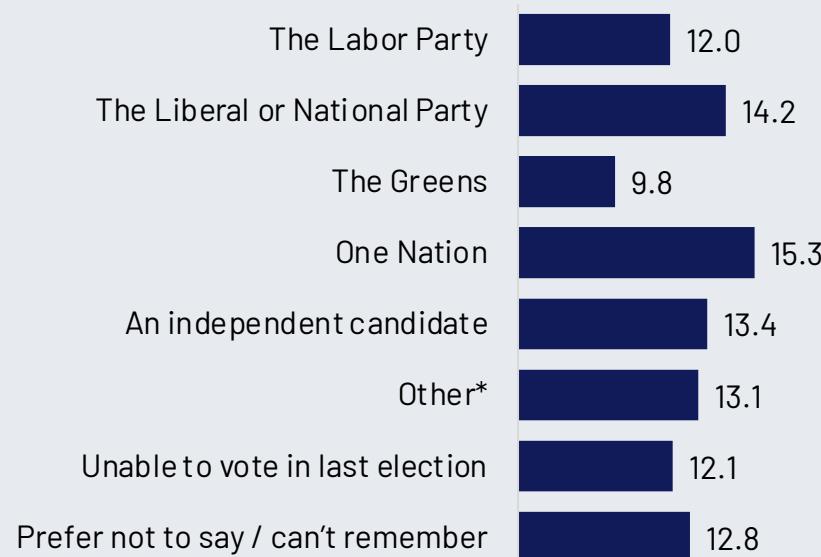


A 'Modern Racism Score' was calculated by summing the responses to four items shown from our racism question (Q6), adapted from the Symbolic Racism Extended Scale<sup>1,2</sup>. This includes items 4 ('If Aboriginal people would only try harder, they could be as well off as other Australians'), 9 ('Aboriginal people are given unfair advantages by the Government'), 10 ('Racial prejudice still exists in Australian society')<sup>12</sup> ('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.



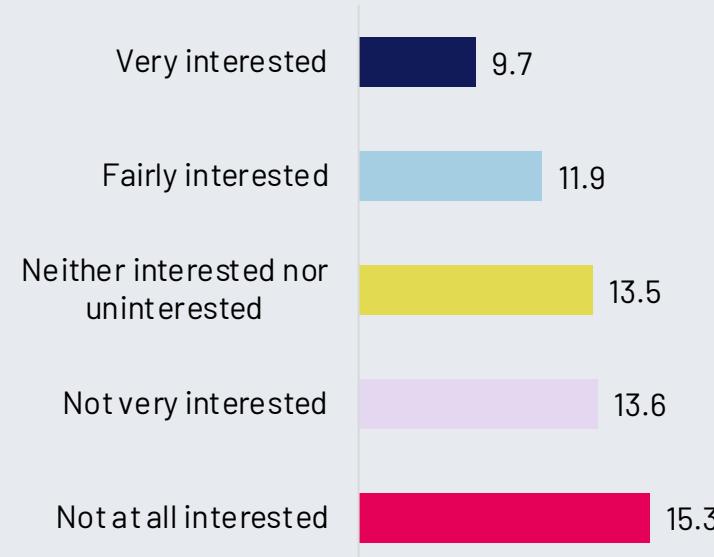
# The Modern Racism score can assist in exploring underlying perceptions and to determine which attitudes may be difficult to shift

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



\*Low base (n<30)

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.



# Non-Indigenous Australians over-estimate the First Nations population by a factor of 5

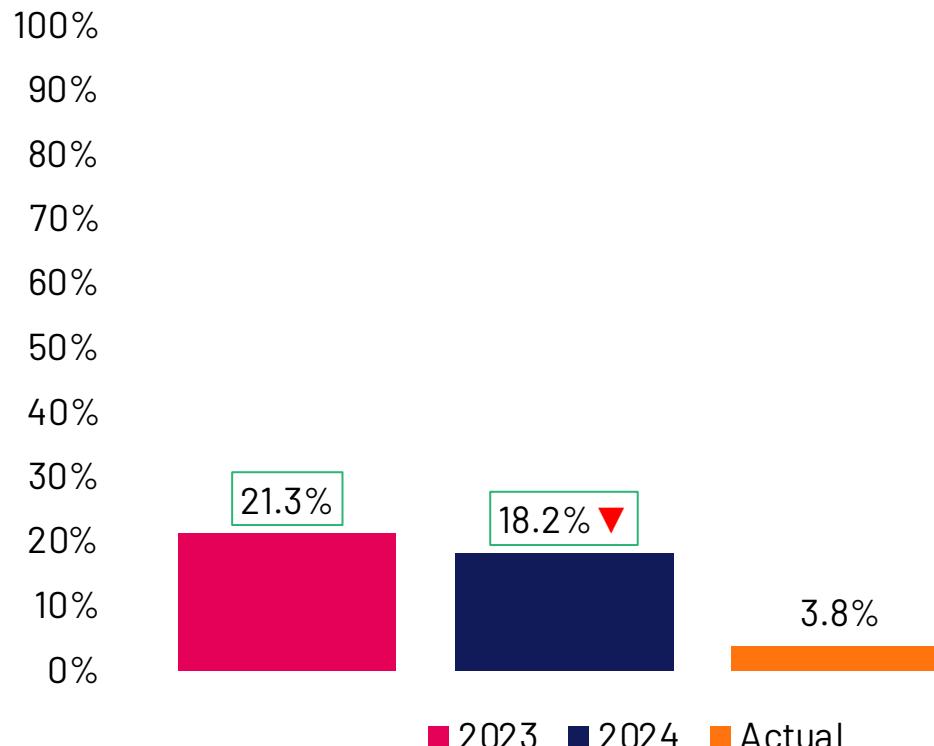
While this is a smaller over-estimation than in 2023, this is consistent with cognitive biases and heuristics, where humans tend to over-estimate things we worry about, and over-estimate the importance of things we recall (availability heuristic).

Those who underestimate (0-2%) are more likely to have a higher Modern Racism score (13.8) compared those who were accurate (3-4%: 12.2), or small (5-10%) or large (11-50%) overestimation (12.4 & 12.3 respectively). Massive overestimation (50%+) was also higher (13.4).

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965

Source: Q19. Out of every 100 people in Australia, approximately how many do you think are Indigenous Australians? Please enter the number below.

*Perceived proportion of the Australian population that are Indigenous Australians*



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

□□ Significantly higher/lower than actual population, 95% C.I.

# Non-Indigenous Australians are most likely to hear racial slurs/jokes in public or on social media

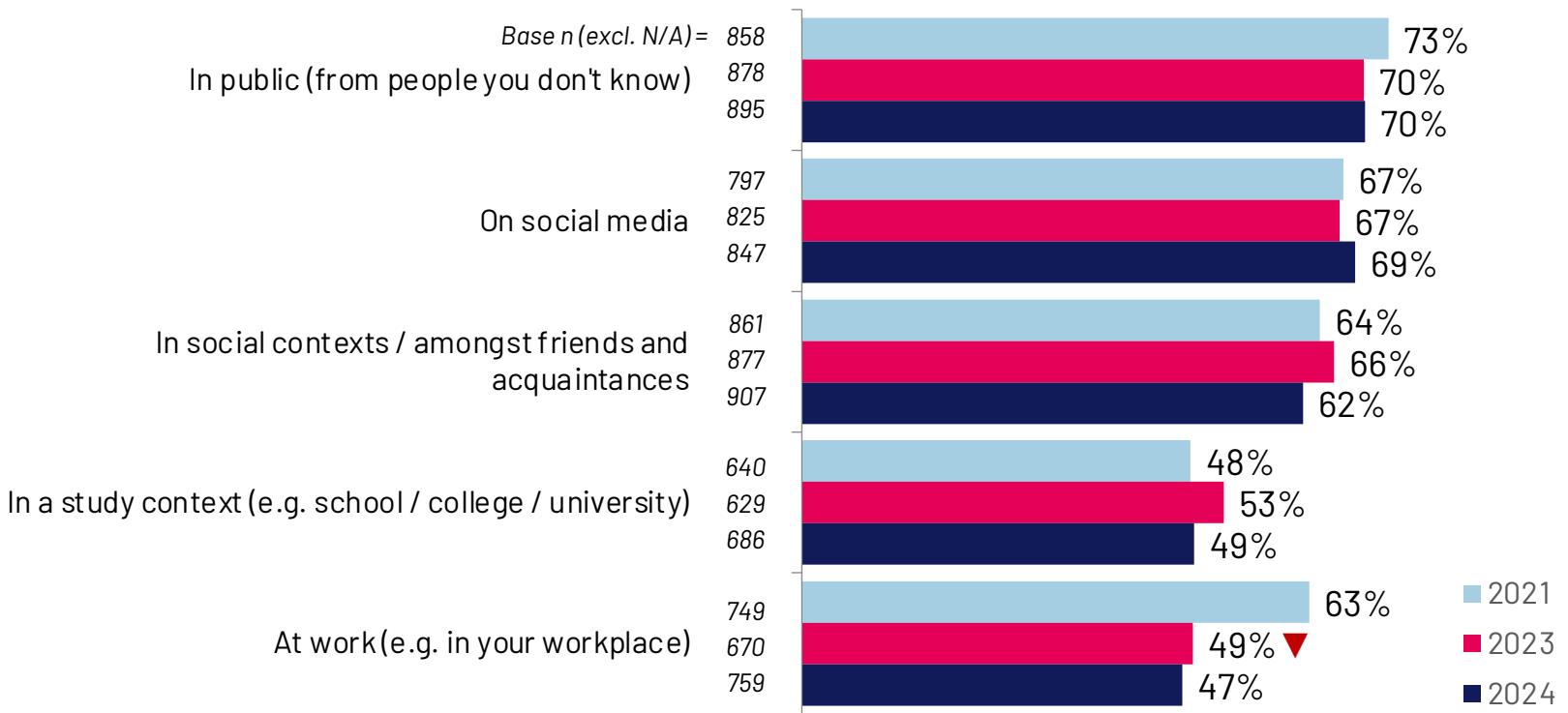
These instances of racial slurs/jokes remains stable from 2023.

Non-Indigenous Australians less likely to interact with First Nations Peoples in their daily lives are less likely to have heard any racial slurs/jokes.

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965

Source: Q17. How often do you hear / see racial or ethnic slurs or jokes about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people...

Proportion of Non-Indigenous Australians who have heard racial or ethnic slurs/jokes about First Nations Peoples



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

# There was a greater perception that racial slurs/jokes upset other people in 2024

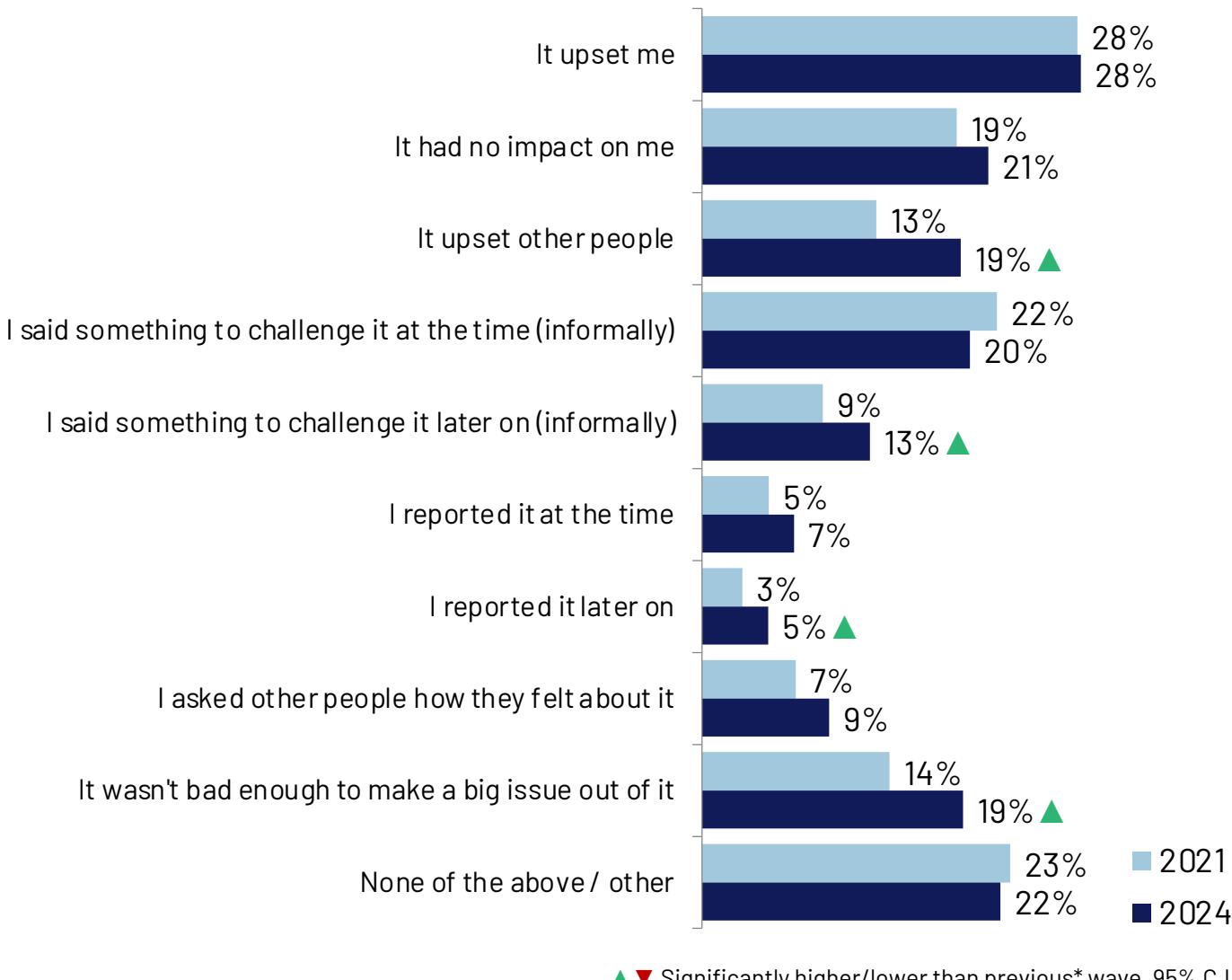
Younger Australians were more likely to say the racial slurs/jokes upset other people (18-29yrs 32% vs. 50+yrs 15%), as were those living in metro areas (21% vs. regional 14%).

Males were more likely to say racial slurs/jokes had no impact on them (29% vs. females 14%).

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians who heard a racial slur 2021 n= 725; 2024 n=764

Source: Q18 .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? (select all that apply)

## Outcome of hearing racial slurs/jokes about First Nations Peoples



# 1 in 3 Australians think the government should be doing more for First Nations Peoples

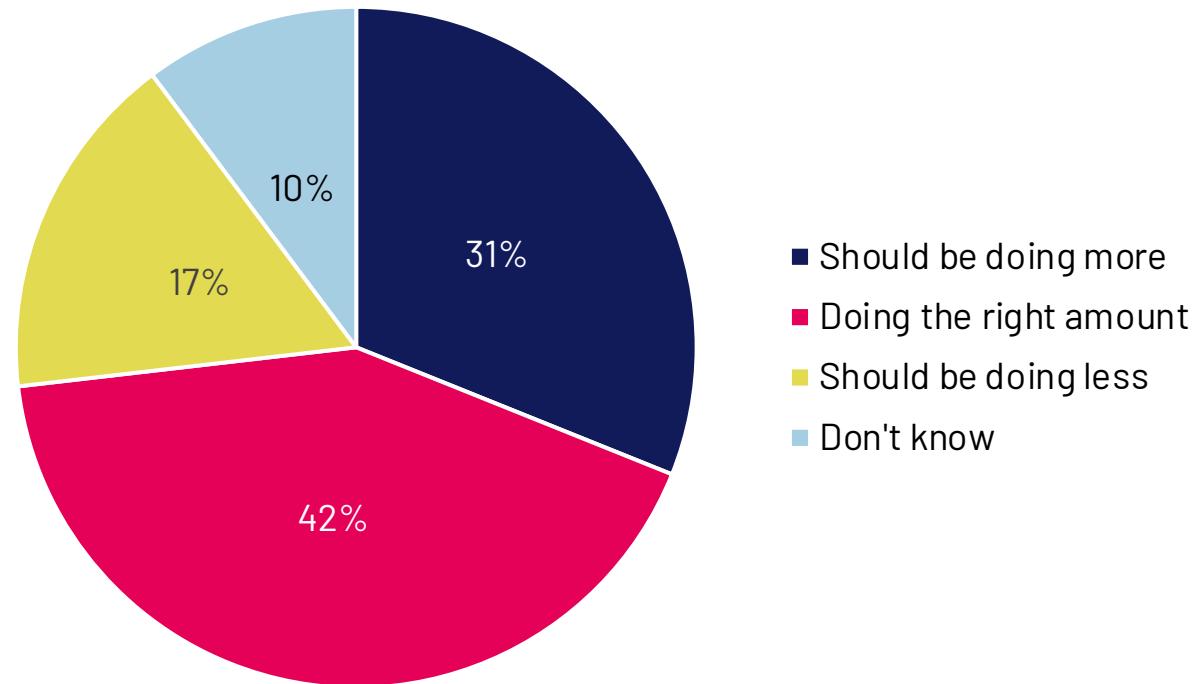
This is higher for **younger** Australians (18-29yrs 37% & 30-49yrs 34% vs. 50+yrs 26%) and those living in **metro** areas (33% vs. regional 25%).

2 in 5 Australians believe the government is doing the right amount for First Nations Peoples. This group are confident in their local knowledge (55% vs. 50% average), interested in Indigenous issues (48% not significantly different from 52% average), but also more likely to score highly on the Modern Racism scale (13.3 'doing the right amount' vs 12.6 average).

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2024 n=965

Source: Q14. Do you think the Australian Government should be doing more or less for First Nations peoples?

*Australian Government action for First Nations Peoples*



# DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE

# Demographics (unweighted)



## Sample

1,000 Respondents were interviewed online in April 2024  
(2,069 in 2020, 1,010 in 2021, 1,000 in 2023)



## Gender

<b>48%</b> Male	2020 48% 2021 49% 2023 49%	<b>52%</b> Female	2020 52% 2021 51% 2023 52%
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## Life stage

**50%** (2023 52%) Parents  
**45%** (2023 41%) Non-parents  
**5%** (2023 7%) Refused

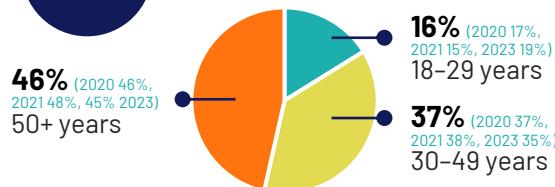


## Background

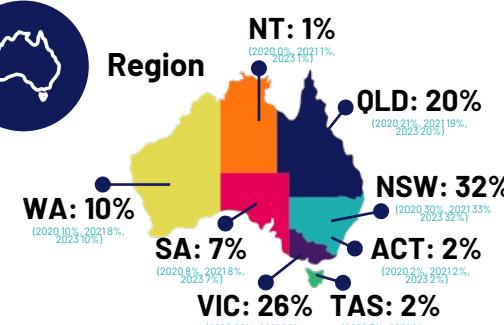
**29%** (2020 27%,  
2021 29%, 2023 24%)  
CALD  
**71%** (2020 73%,  
2021 71%, 2023 75%)  
Non-CALD



## Age group



## Region



## Indigenous Identity

**3%** (2020 2%, 2021 4%, 2023 4%) Aboriginal  
**0%** (2020 0%, 2021 2%, 2023 0%) Torres Strait Islander  
**1%** (2020 1%, 2021 2%, 2023 1%) Both  
**97%** (2020 96%, 2021 90%, 2023 95%) No  
**0%** (2020 2%, 2021 2%, 2023 0%) Refused



## Education

**45%**↑ (2020 41%, 2021 42%, 2023 38%) Bachelor & higher  
**30%** (2020 35%, 2021 31%, 2023 31%) TAFE/Cert  
**24%**↓ (2020 21%, 2021 26%, 2023 30%) High school or less  
**1%** (2020 1%, 2021 1%, 2023 1%) Prefer not to say



## Non-Indigenous Australians' interaction with First Nations Peoples

**4%** (2020 5%, 2021 5%, 2023 6%) A lot  
**21%** (2020 21%, 2021 18%, 2023 23%) A fair bit  
**51%** (2020 53%, 2021 51%, 2023 50%) Not very much  
**22%** (2020 21%, 2021 25%, 2023 21%) Not at all



## Employment

**39%**↑ (2020 37%, 2021 39%, 2023 33%) Full-time  
**18%** (2020 21%, 2021 20%, 2023 16%) Part-time  
**35%**↓ (2020 41%, 2021 40%, 2023 45%) Not employed  
**2%** (2020 1%, 2021 1%, 2023 1%) DK / other



## Combined income

**8%** (2023 9%) Less than \$25k  
**47%** (2023 52%) \$25k to just under \$100k  
**29%**↑ (2023 23%) \$100k to just under \$200k  
**7%** (2023 7%) \$200k and above  
**9%** (2023 10%) Refused

↑/↓ Significantly higher/lower than 2023, 95% C.I.

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