

IPSOS INDIGENOUS ISSUES 2025

Australians' perceptions
of First Nation issues

July 2025



ATSIRU

About this study



- These are the findings of an Ipsos survey conducted via Ipsos' online research panel between 23 – 27 April 2025, with 942 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
- 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

Reconciliation efforts face headwinds

Despite stable levels of claimed knowledge about key concepts like Treaty and traditional owners, declining interest in Indigenous issues and a decreasing perception of the importance of Treaty suggest that reconciliation efforts are facing significant headwinds. This indicates a need to re-evaluate strategies and messaging to reignite public engagement.

2

"Modern racism" and the illusion of shared opinion

The persistence of attitudes associated with "modern racism" remains a significant obstacle. These beliefs, more commonly held by males and older Australians, not only fuel resistance to initiatives supporting First Nations people but also create a distorted perception. Individuals holding these views tend to overestimate how widely shared their opinions are, potentially amplifying their opposition and hindering constructive dialogue.

3

Symbolic gestures losing favour

While support remains strong for initiatives that focus on education and historical understanding, the decline in support for Acknowledgements of Country suggests a growing scepticism towards symbolic gestures. Among those who want change, there is a desire for focus on tangible actions and policies that deliver real benefits to First Nations communities, with a third of Australians wanting the government to do more to support First Nations people.

4

Generational divide in attitudes

There is a clear generational divide in attitudes towards Indigenous issues. Younger Australians are more likely to be interested, supportive of government action, and in favour of changing the date of Australia Day. This suggests that future reconciliation efforts should focus on engaging and empowering younger generations.

2025 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. From our sample of Non-Indigenous Australians, 40% say they voted in support of a Voice, 39% voted against, with the remainder refusing or didn't vote.

National Reconciliation week

The National Reconciliation Week

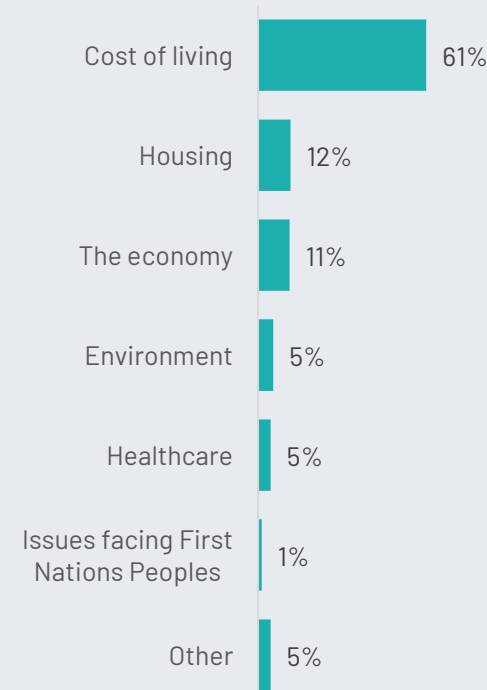
theme for 2025, *Bridging Now to Next*, emphasised the ongoing connection between past, present, and future, and encourages Australians to build respectful relationships and move forward together in the reconciliation journey.

Concern for Indigenous Issues peaked in 2023

The Ipsos Issues Monitor¹, where Australians say what concerns them most, finds that concern for Indigenous Issues peaked in 2023 at 6%, increasing from 2% in 2015. It is now at 4% in April 2025.

Only 1% of our sample Non-Indigenous Australians chose issues facing First Nations peoples as the top issue facing Australia today.

Top issues facing Australia



¹The 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/issuesmonitor>
Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2025 n=900. Source: TOPISSUE. What would you say is the top issue facing Australia today?



Australians still over-estimate Indigenous population, but the gap is closing

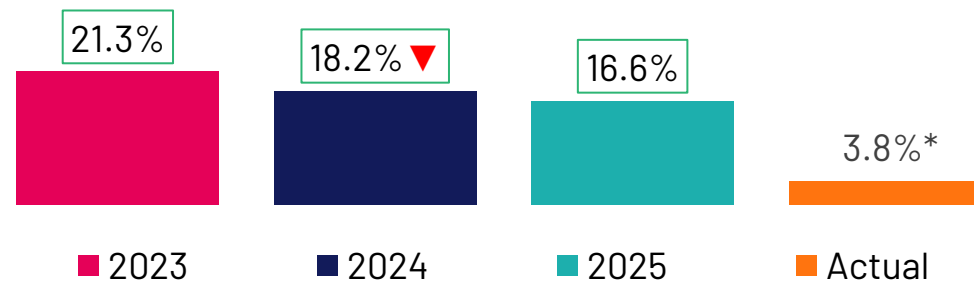
Fewer Australians are over-estimating the size of the Indigenous population each year, though the perceived number remains over four times the actual figure.

This persistent over-estimation reflects common mental shortcuts (heuristics) and cognitive biases, – such as our tendency to over-estimate things we worry about or that are top of mind.

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965; 2025=900

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



* Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au, 21 September 2021)

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

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



Claimed knowledge of Traditional Owners remains stable

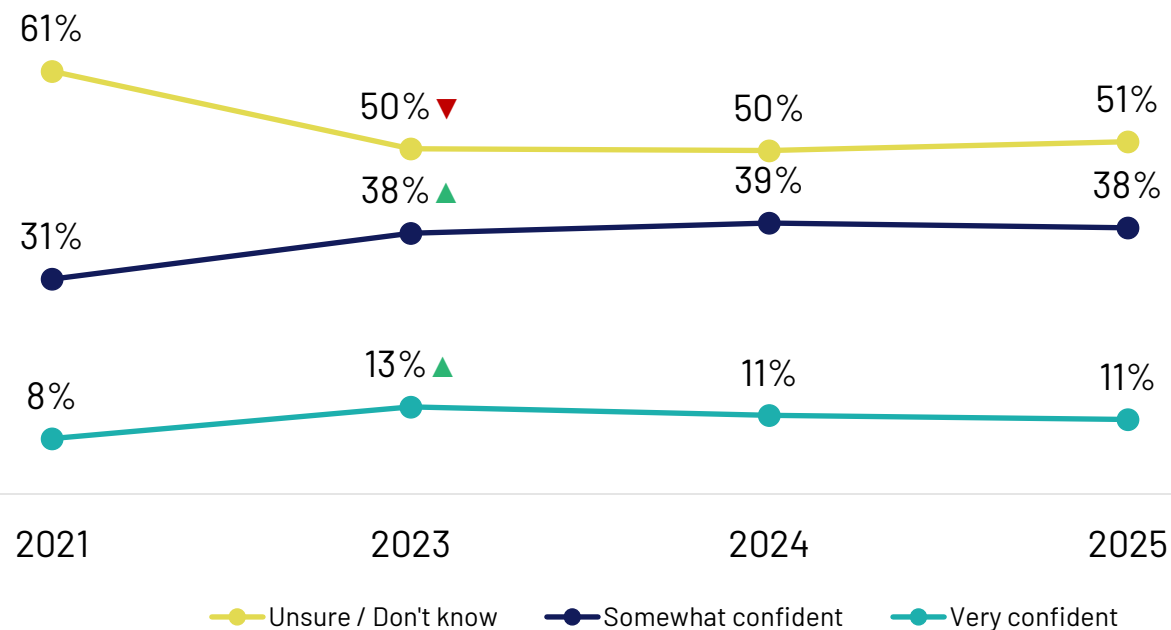
Half of Australians feel at least somewhat confident they know about their local First Nations country (49%), with this confidence higher among **younger** Australians (18-29 years: 68%).

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965; 2025 n=900

Source: Q14How confident are you that you know about the traditional owners where you live (e.g. the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Country, language group, or community)?*

*Question wording updated in 2025

Confidence in knowledge of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Country



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

Knowledge of Treaty also remains stable

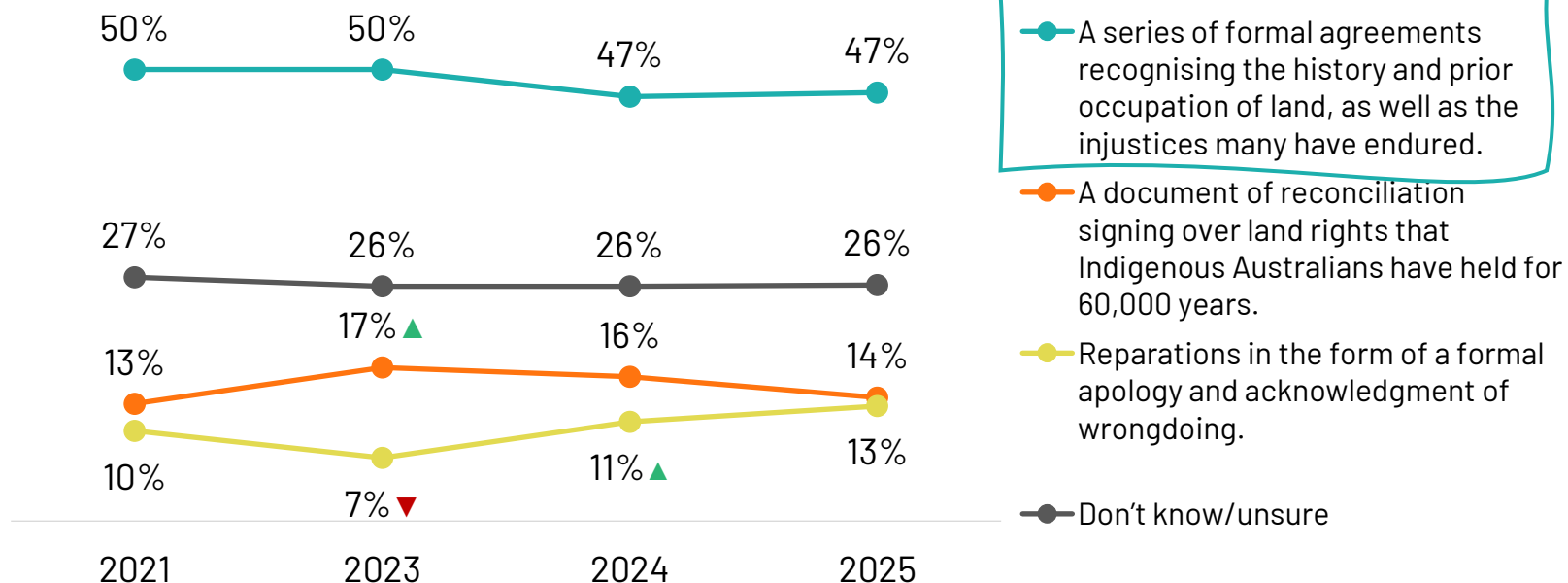
Knowledge of Treaty is higher among younger Australians (18-29 years: 55%), with those 60+ years more likely to be unsure (33%).

There is an increasing trend for Australians to associate Treaty with a formal apology and acknowledgement of wrong-doing. This is higher in **Victoria** (17%), with **Queenslanders** less likely to be sure (34%).

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965; 2025 n=900

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

Knowledge of Treaty



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.

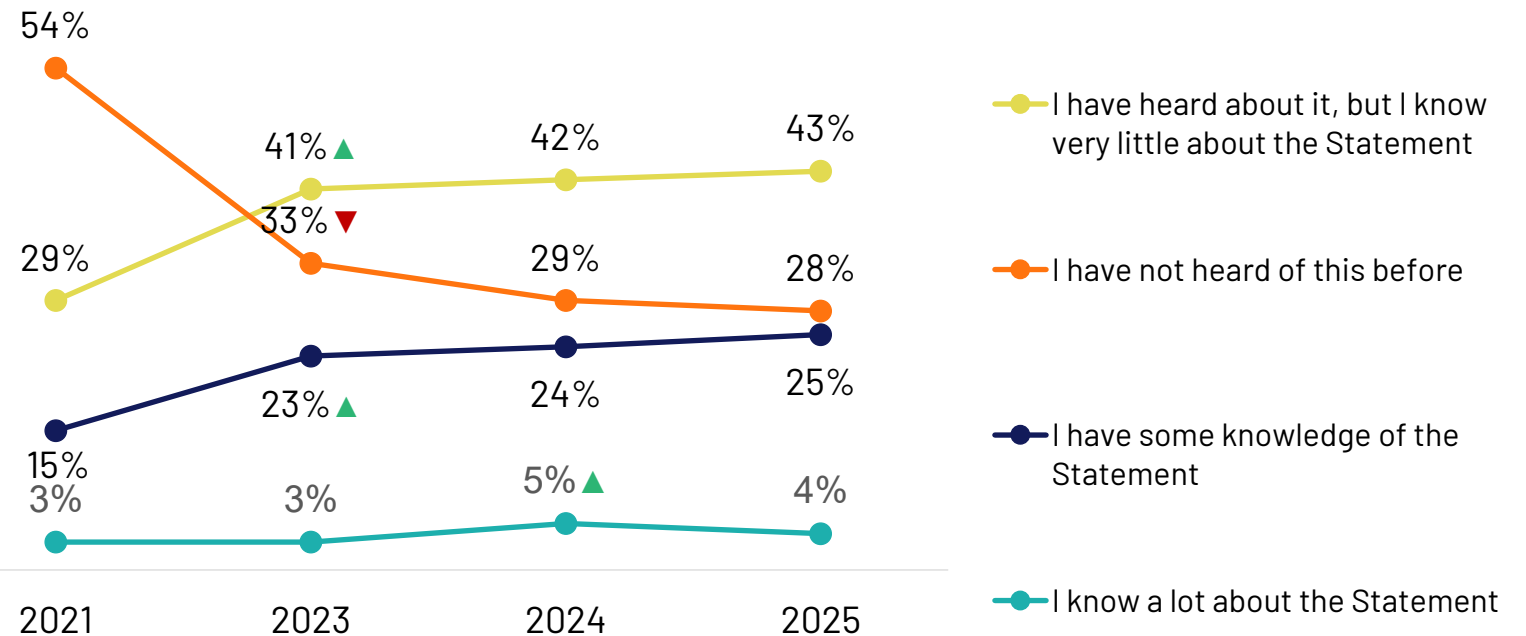
▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than previous wave, 95% C.I.

As does knowledge of the Uluru Statement of the Heart

However, there are some positive trends, with more Australians having at least heard of the Statement since 2023.

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965; 2025 n=900
Source: Q9. Which of the following best describes your knowledge of the Uluru Statement from the Heart?

Knowledge of Uluru Statement from the Heart



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

However, interest in Indigenous issues is declining

As with concern for Indigenous issues, interest peaked in 2023 during the Voice to Parliament vote and has seen a decline over the past two years.

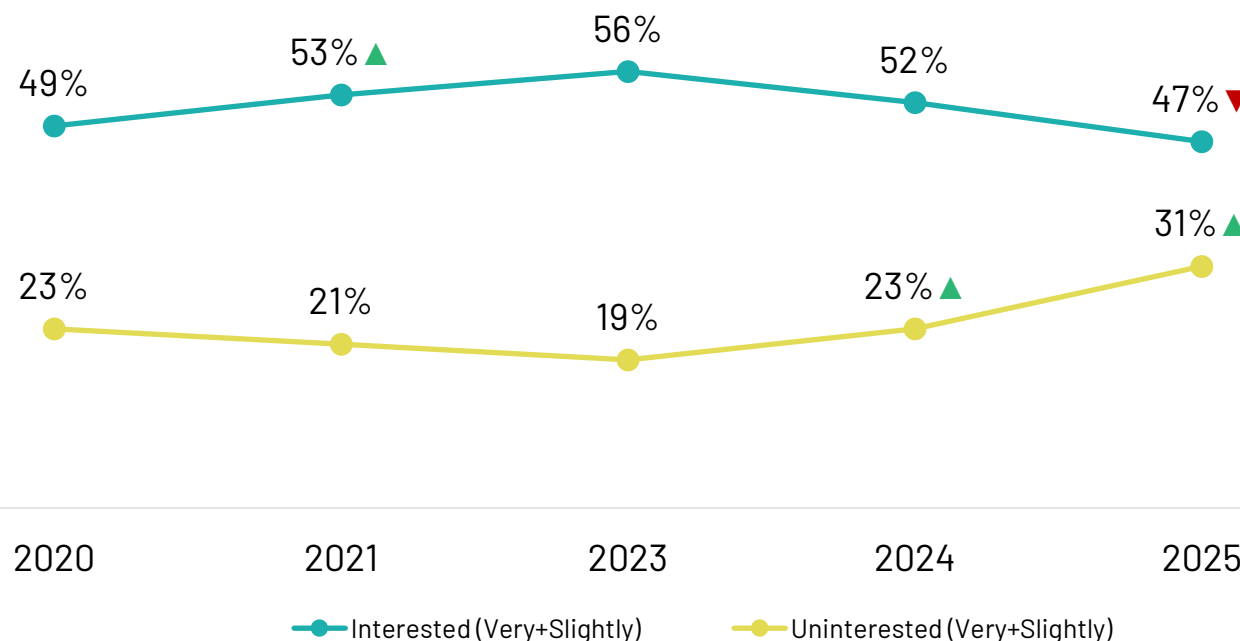
Where previously this decline was driven by females and regional Australians, the past year has seen more decline from males (55% in 2024 to 43% in 2025) and metro Australians (54% to 48%), suggesting a slight lag in decline among different audiences.

Females (51%) and **young** Australians (18-29 years: 57%) are more interested, with those in **South Australia** (36%) and **Western Australia** (40%) are less interested.

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2020 n=1,986; 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965; 2025 n=900

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

Interest in Indigenous issues in Australia



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

Perceived importance of Treaty and Voice also declining

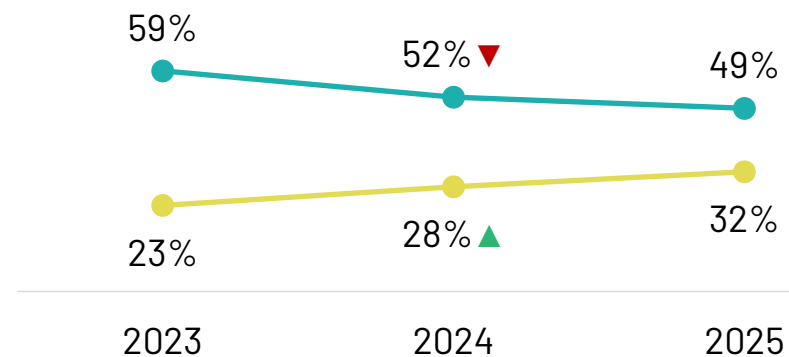
In addition to declining interest in Indigenous issues, there is a downward trend over the past few years in the perceived importance of Treaty and Voice to Parliament as a way forward for reconciliation. However, despite this downward trend, nearly 3 in 5 Australians still consider Treaty as important for reconciliation, particularly the younger generation (18-29 years: 73%).

As seen last year, **older** Australians (50+ years: 48%), and **males** (53%) are less likely to consider Treaty as an important way forward for reconciliation.

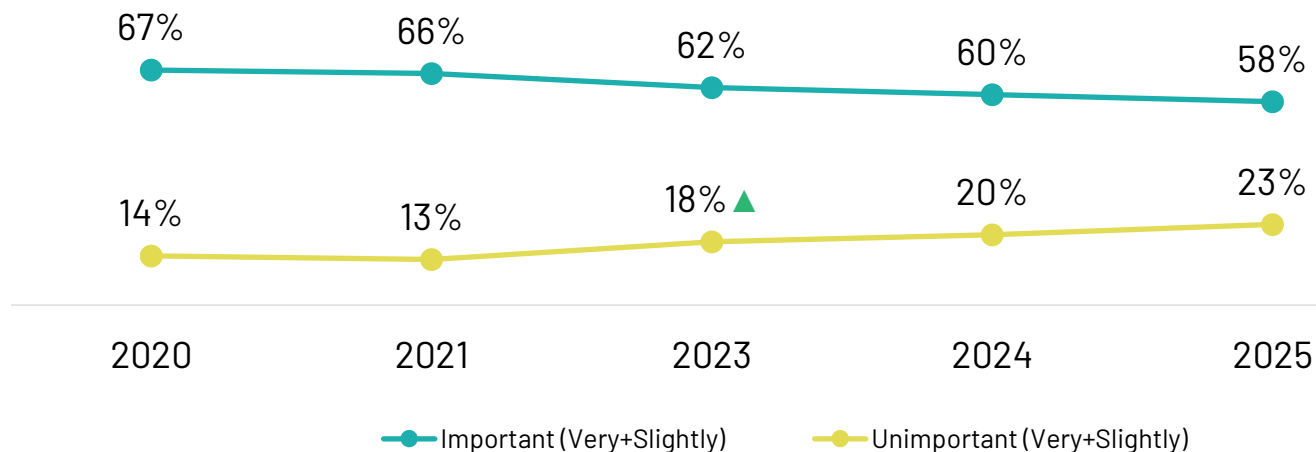
Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2020 n=1,986; 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965; 2025 n=900

Source: Q3. How would you rate the importance of 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



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

False consensus bias among those who consider Treaty unimportant

Australians who consider Treaty unimportant for reconciliation are more likely to believe their view is widely held by Australians, despite making up just 23% of the population, and this gap has widened in the last few years.

Younger Australians (18-29 years: 45%) are less certain that others share their view on the importance of Treaty, unlike **older** Australians (50+ years: 53%) who are more confident others feel the same way.

This reflects the Ipsos Global Trend¹ 'Splintered Societies', where societies are seeing heightened stress and a splintering of traditional structures, with new ideologies emerging, and immigration arising as a dividing line.

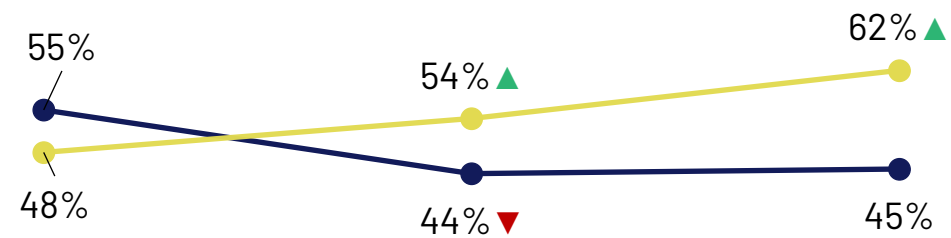
¹<https://www.ipsos.com/en/global-trends-2024>

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965; 2025 n=900

Source: Q3. How would you rate the importance of treaty as a way forward for reconciliation? Q10. How much of the Australian public would you guess holds your views on Treaty?*

*Question wording updated in 2025

How much of the Australian public would you guess holds your views on Treaty?



● Australians who consider Treaty important for reconciliation
● Australians who don't consider Treaty important for reconciliation

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

Almost half of Australians oppose changing date of Australia Day

Disagreement with changing the date of Australia Day remains unpopular, and opposition has grown in Victoria (42% in 2025, 39% in 2024, 34% in 2023).

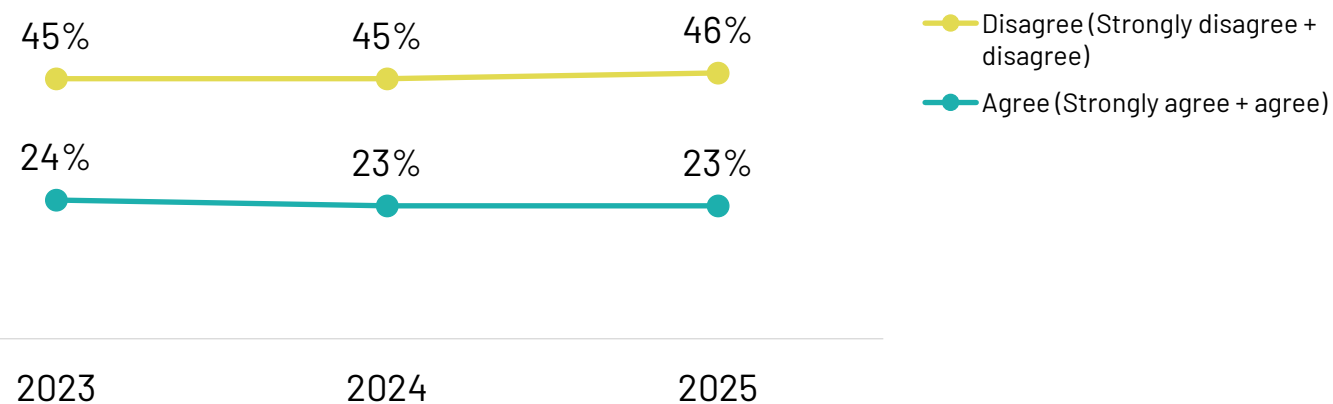
In contrast, support is higher among **younger** Australians and has increased (18–29 years: 35% in 2025 vs 26% in 2024), while support has decreased among the **older** generation (50+ years: 12% in 2025 vs 17% in 2024).

*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, 2025 N=900

Source: Q13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the campaign to change the date of Australia Day from the 26th January?

Attitude towards changing the date of Australia Day



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

Support for retelling of Australian history, but fall in support for Acknowledgements of Country and use of traditional place names

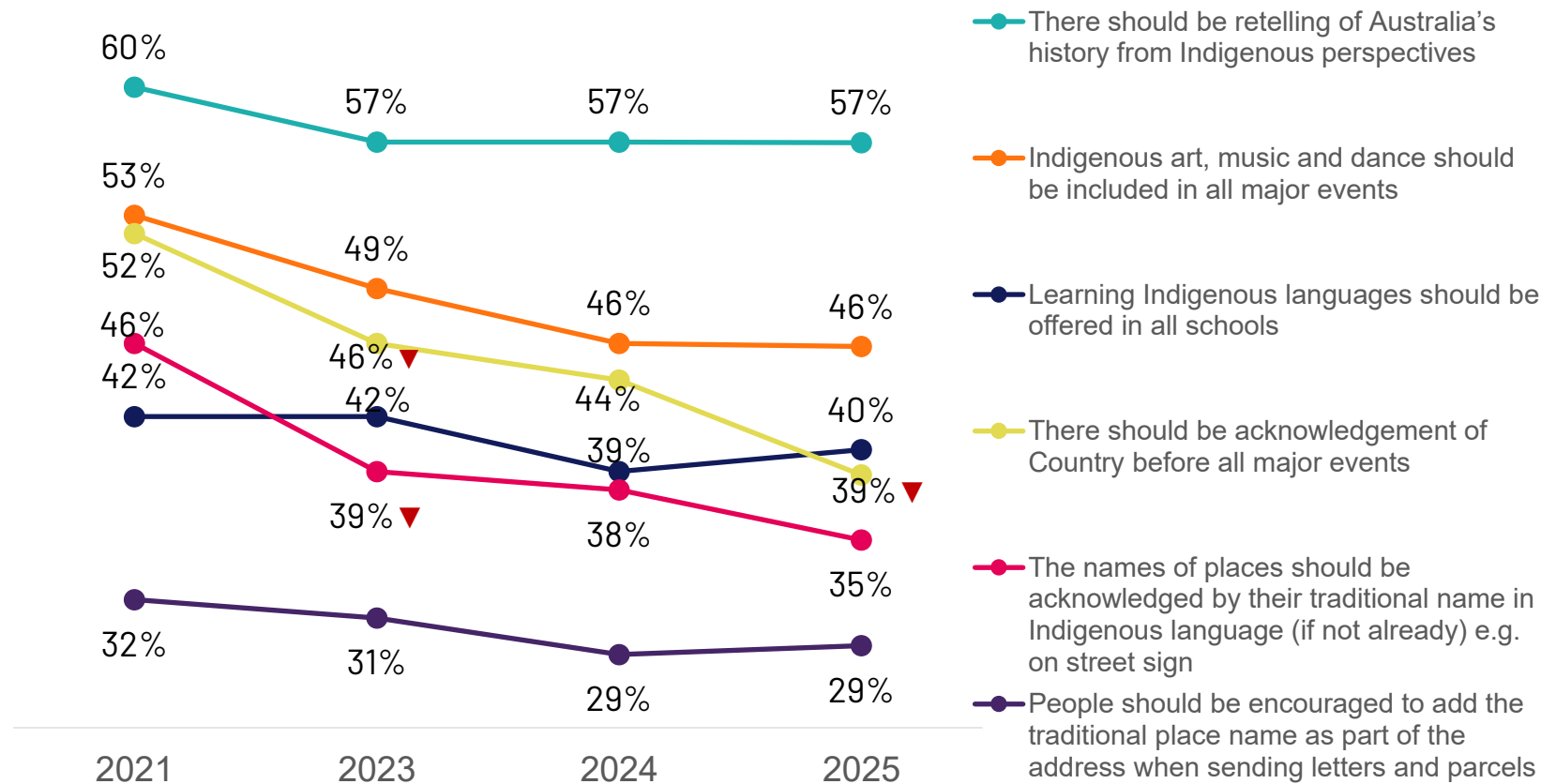
In general, support for Closing the Gap initiatives remains steady. Support continues to be highest for initiatives that focus on retelling Australia's history through Indigenous perspectives, with a rise among those aged **30-49** (61% in 2024 to 66% in 2025).

However, support for acknowledgement of Country before major events has dropped (44% to 39%), particularly among **males** (44% to 35%) and **older** Australians (50+ years: 35% to 27%).

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965; 2025 n=900

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

Support for closing the gap initiatives in Australia (Strongly support + tend to support)



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

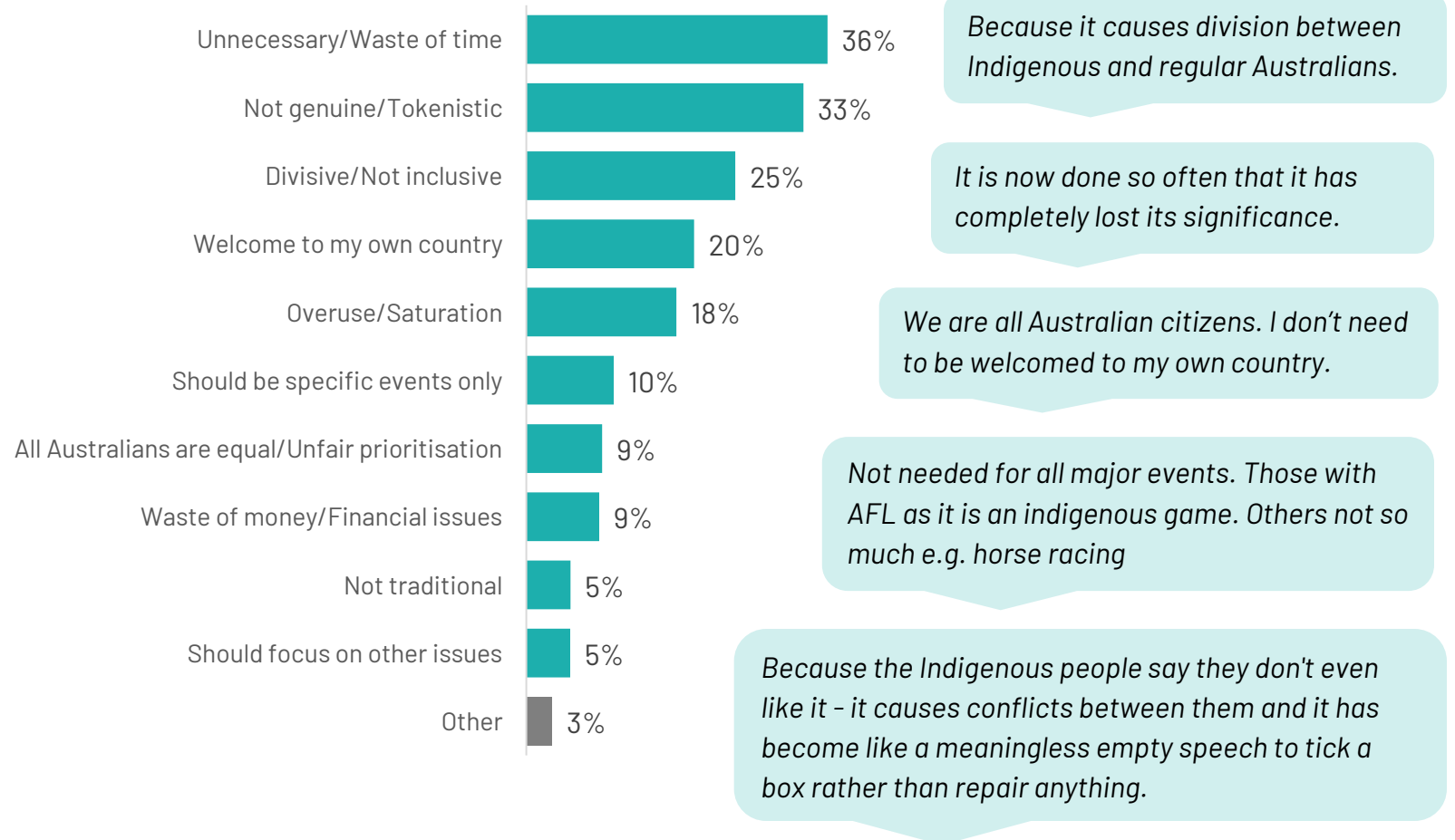
Doubts over value and symbolism top opposition to acknowledgement of Country

Among those opposing acknowledgements of Country at all major events, the leading reason was that it's seen as an unnecessary waste of time. This was closely followed by views that it feels insincere and that it divides rather than unites Australians.

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians who responded Tend to Oppose or Strongly Oppose to Q11, n=351.

Source: Q8. You said that you oppose acknowledgements of Country before all major events. Can you tell us more about why you oppose this in Australia?

Reasons for Opposition to Acknowledgements of Country at Major Events in Australia



Racial 'jokes' still common in public, on social media, and in social contexts

There's a slow downward trend in how often racial or ethnic jokes/slurs about Indigenous peoples are heard, in public, social contexts and at work.

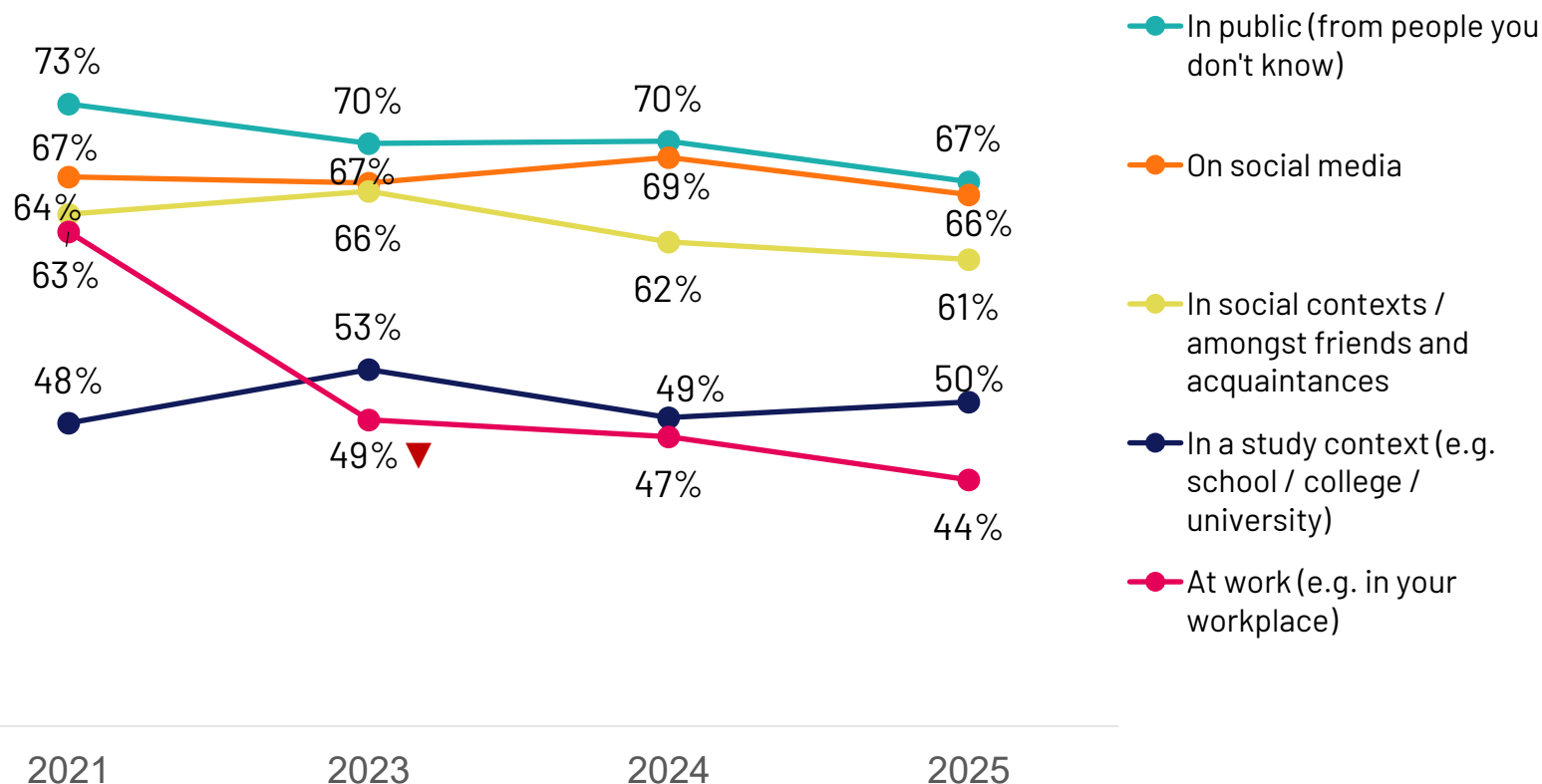
Younger Australians (92%) are more likely to report hearing slurs compared to older Australians (71%), with **Victorians** less likely to hear slurs (74%) compared to other states.

Non-Indigenous Australians who have little day-to-day interaction with First Nations peoples are also less likely to report hearing racial slurs or jokes (74% heard any, vs. 91% heard any for those with at least a fair bit of interaction with non-Indigenous Australians).

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965; 2025 n=900

Source: Q16. 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 (NET Heard)



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

Drop in perception that racial 'jokes' upset others, following 2024 peak

Reactions to hearing racial slurs or jokes have stayed steady since last year, with the most common response being that it upset the person who heard the slur/joke.

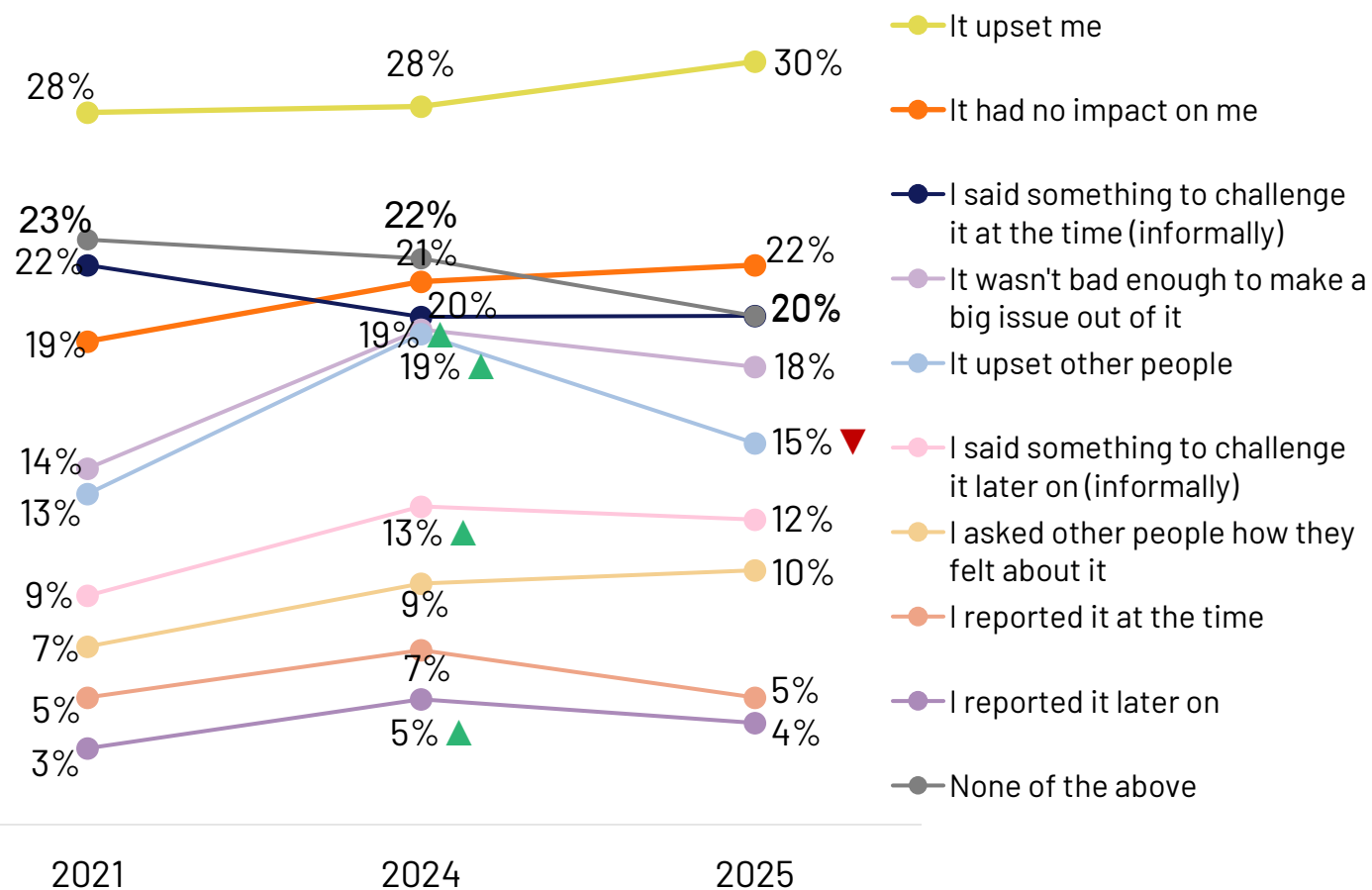
Males were more likely than females to say hearing racial jokes or slurs had no impact (31% vs 14%), while more **females** reported that hearing the slurs upset them (37% vs 22%).

Younger Australians tended to have stronger reactions in any direction than older Australians ('none of the above' 18-29 years 8% vs. 23% for 30+ years).

Regional Australians were more likely to view these comments as not serious enough to address (26% vs. 14% in metro areas).

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians who heard a racial slur 2021 n= 725; 2024 n=764; 2025 n=701
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



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

Views tied to the concept of modern racism remain steady

Despite high awareness of racism in Australia, **3 in 5** non-Indigenous Australians (60%) believe new migrants should adapt to mainstream Australian cultural values.

Regional Australians are more likely to feel there is too much focus on multiculturalism (36% vs 27% in metro areas). **Queenslanders** and **South Australians** are more likely to believe that funding provided to Aboriginal groups is often wasted (48% and 58%, respectively).

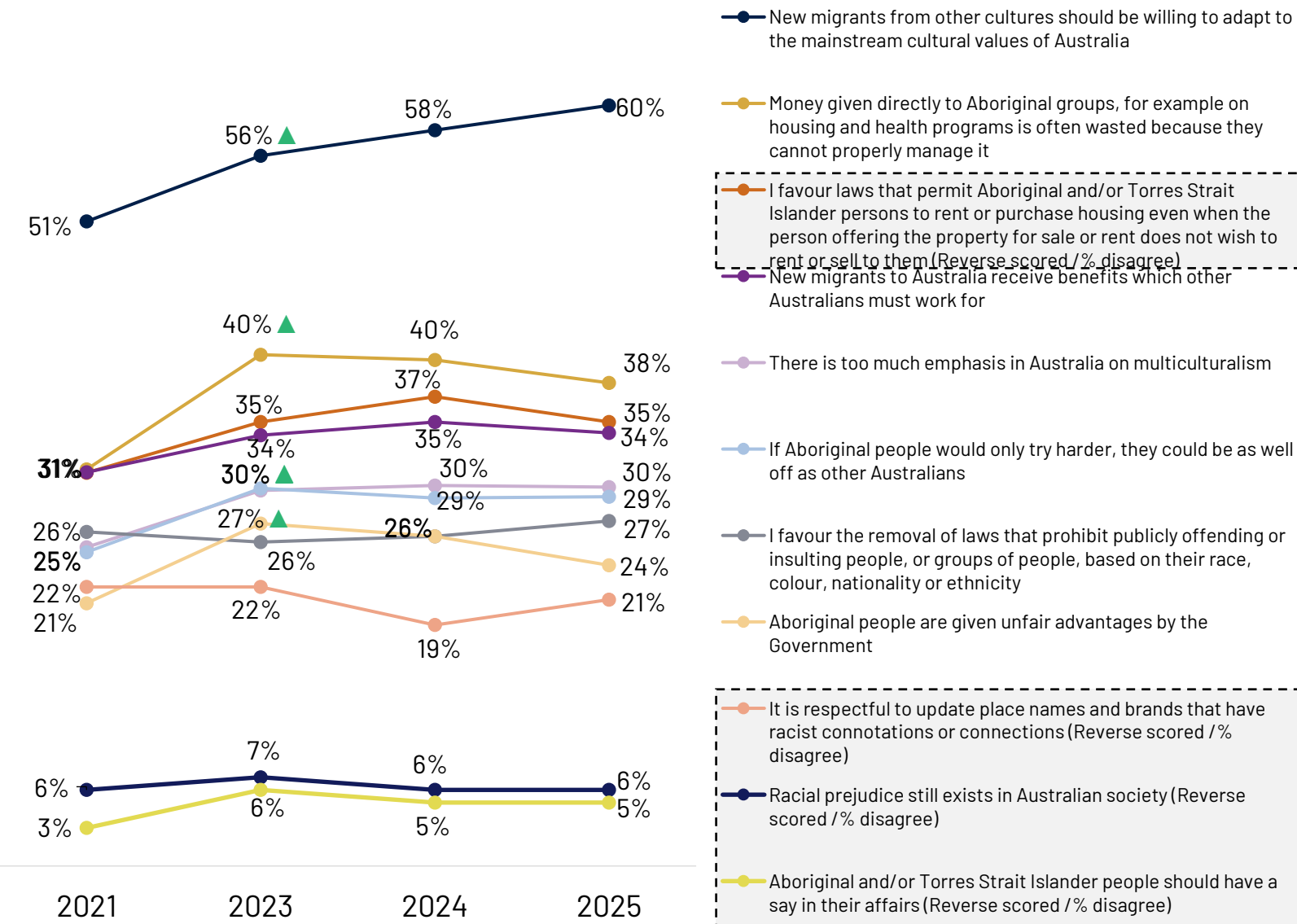
Younger Australians are less likely to agree across all statements.

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

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2021 n=911; 2023 n=946; 2024 n=965; 2025 N=900

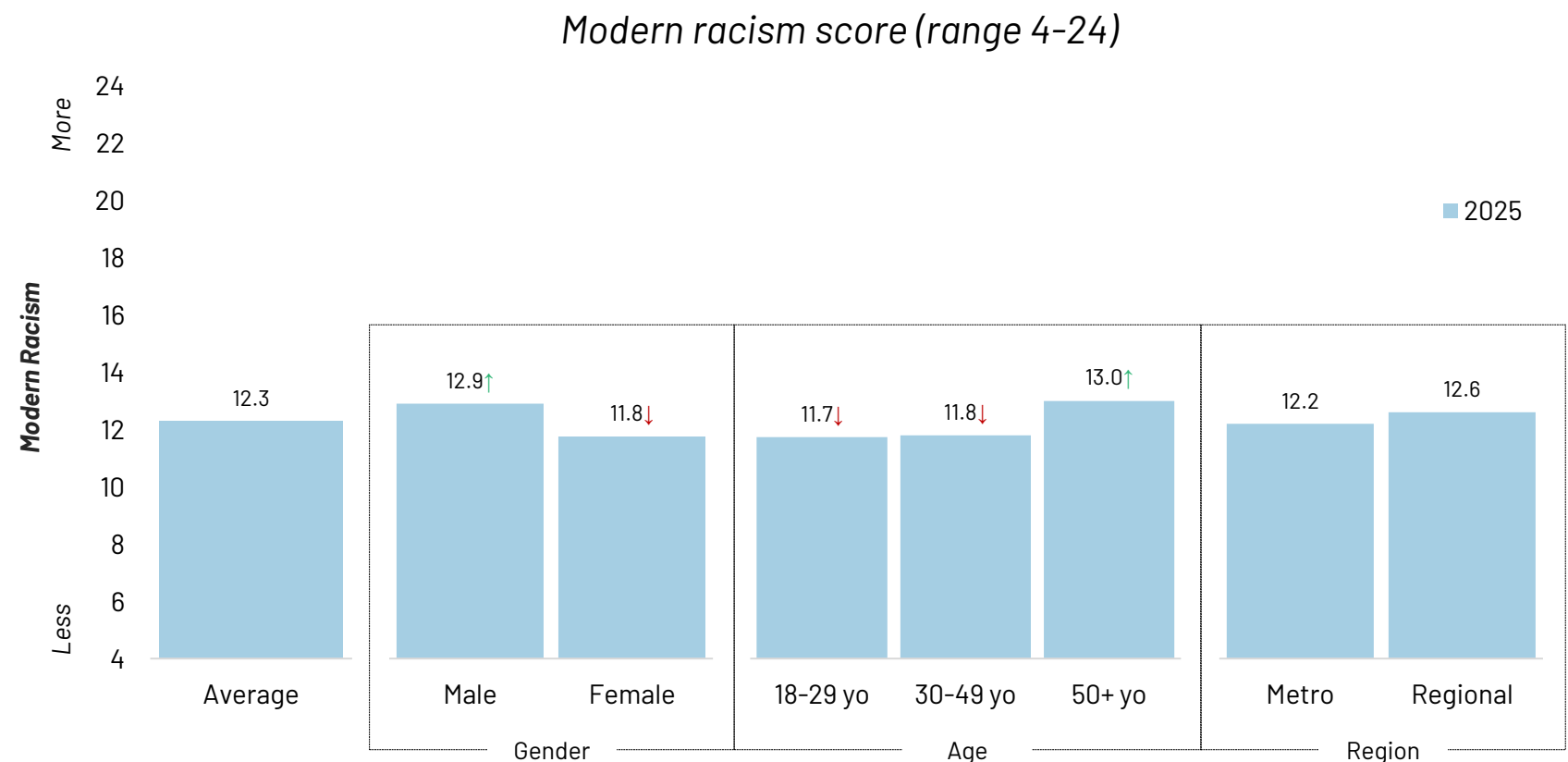
Source: Q13. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Agreement with Modern Racism statements (Strongly agree + agree)



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

Males and older Australians score higher on Modern Racism

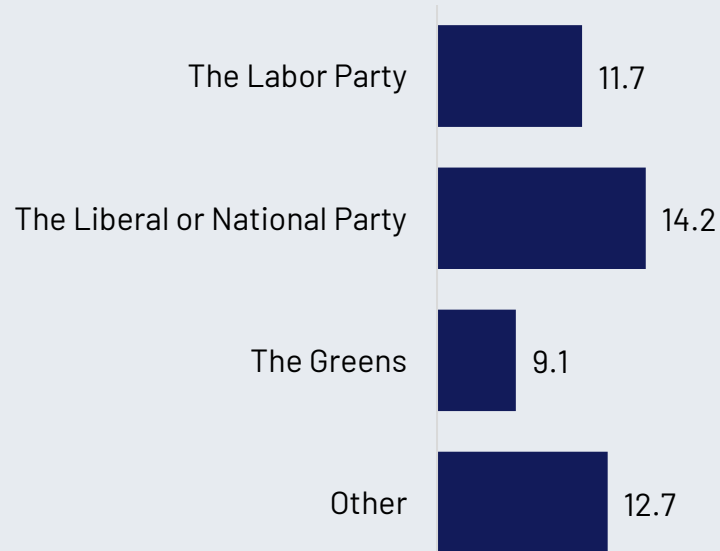


A 'Modern Racism Score' was calculated by summing the responses to four items shown from our racism question (Q6), adapted from the Symbolic Racism Extended Scale^{1,2}. This includes items 4 ('If Aboriginal people would only try harder, they could be as well off as other Australians'), 9 ('Aboriginal 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.

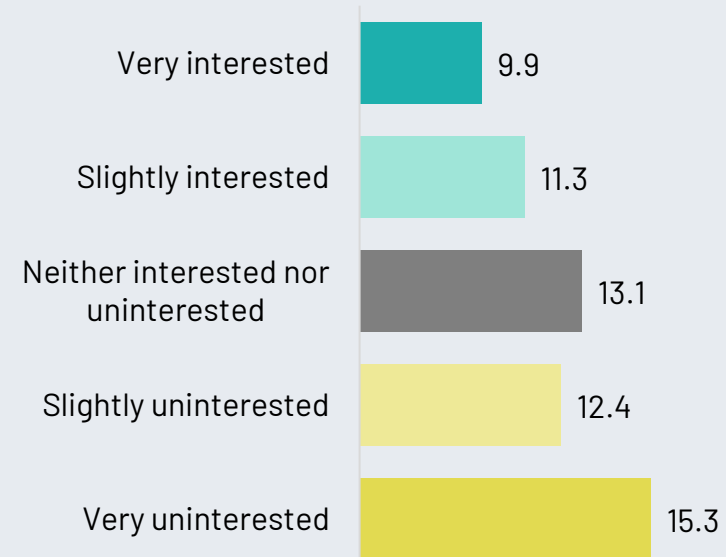
Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2025 n=900

The Modern Racism score can assist in exploring underlying perceptions and 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.



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



Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2025 n=900

Source: Q21. Politically, do you tend to think of yourself as Liberal, National, Labor, Green, or something else? Q2. What is your level of interest in Indigenous issues in Australia?

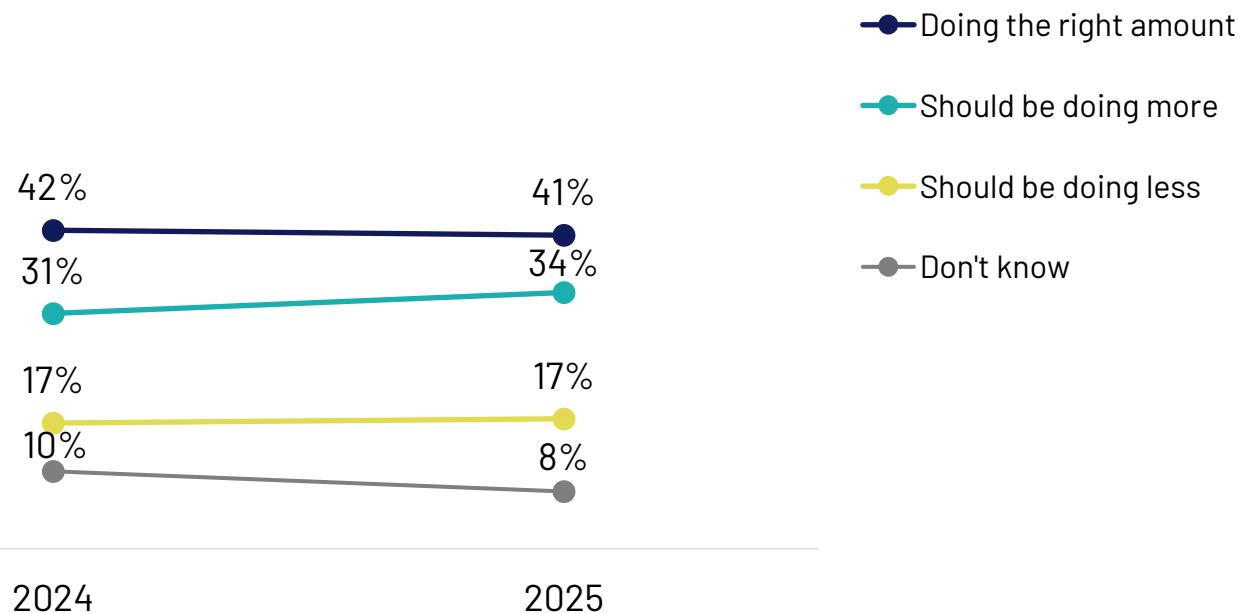
Despite declining interest, government support still desired by many

One in three Australians believe the government should be doing more for First Nations people. This view is stronger among **younger** Australians (18–29 years: 45%, 30–49 years: 38%) compared to older Australians (26%).

Queenslanders (23%) and **Western Australians** (25%) are more likely to say the government should be doing less, which is lower for **NSW** residents (10%).

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians 2024 n=965; 2025 N=900
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



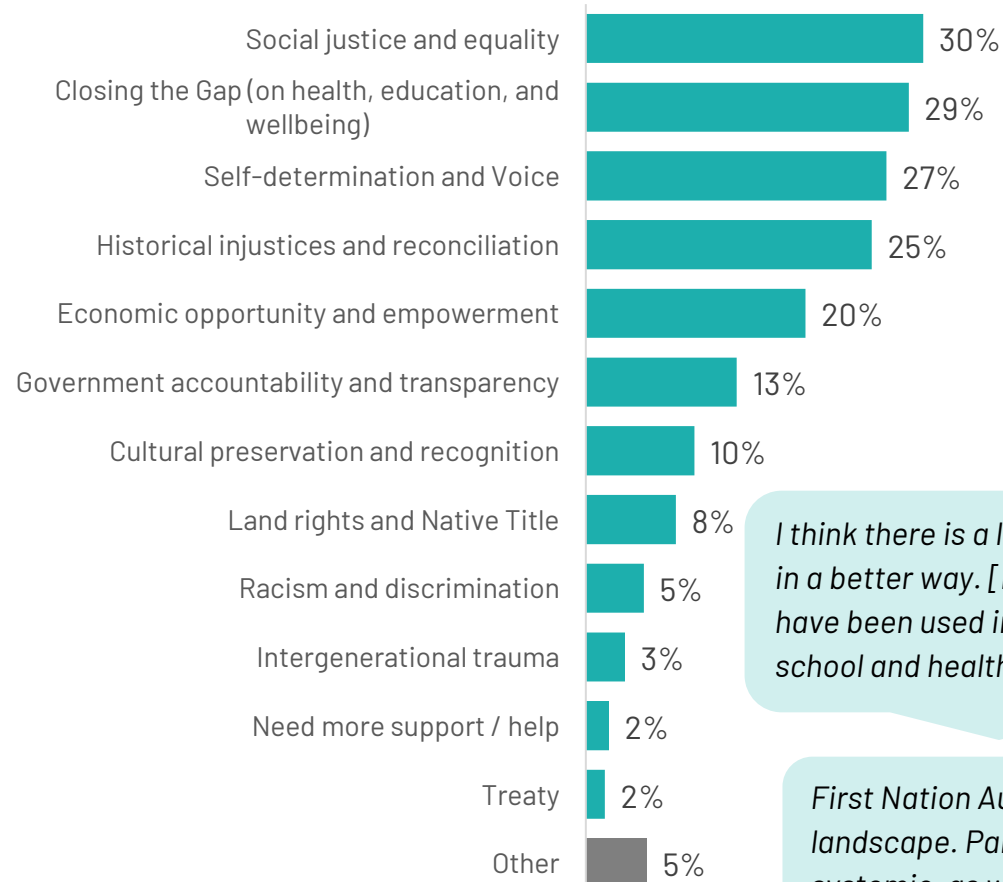
▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than previous wave, 95% C.I.

Social justice and Closing the Gap drive calls for more government support for First Nations peoples

Among those who think the Australian government should do more for First Nations peoples, the top reasons are social justice and followed by increased support to Close the Gap in health, education, and wellbeing and giving Indigenous Australians a Voice and self-determination.

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians who think the Australian Government should be doing more for First Nations peoples to Q14, n=303.
Source: Q12. Why do you think the Australian Government should be doing more for First Nations peoples?

Reasons for **Increased** Government Support for First Nations in Australia



Systemic disadvantage for First Nations people still exists and the government needs to invest more to help close the gap.

They should be letting them decide for themselves with some level of political power and a larger chance to air their grievances in parliament.

I think there is a lot of money that could potentially be used in a better way. [Money] used for voting on the Treaty, could have been used in remote areas to assist with housing, school and healthcare for First Nations peoples.

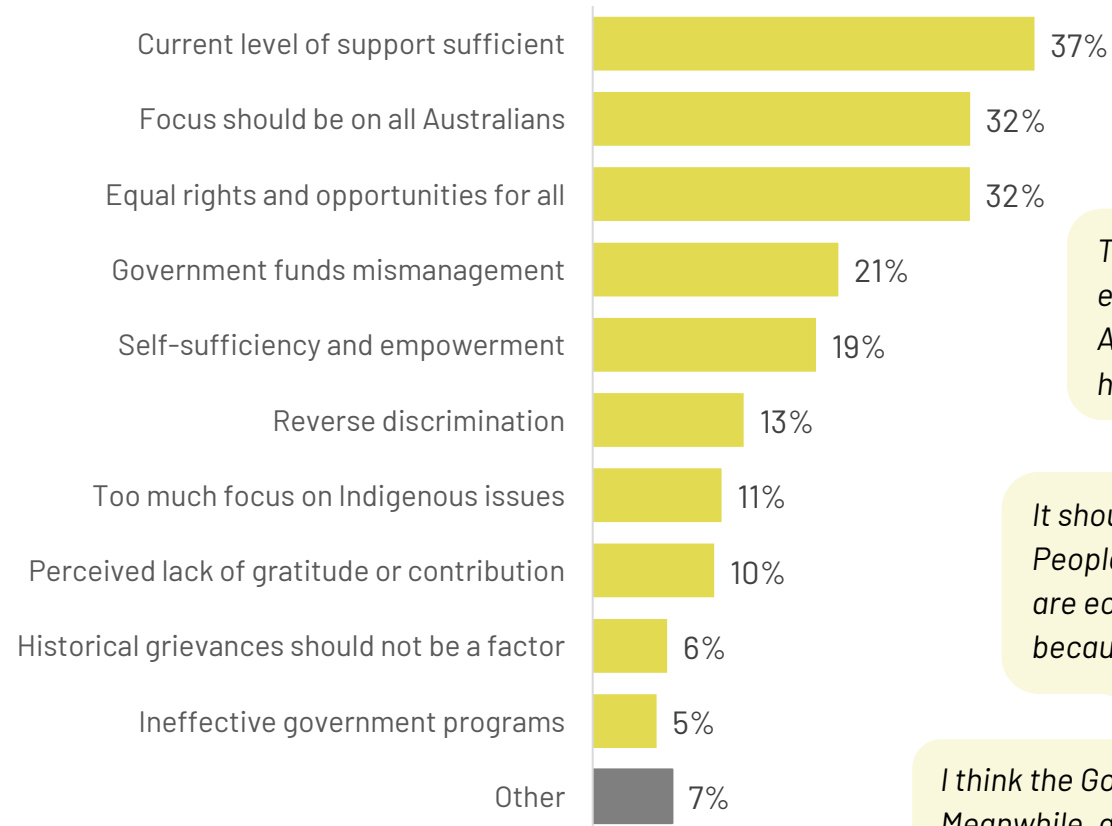
First Nation Australians have it extremely tough in today's landscape. Particularly due to racism, both social and systemic, as well as treatment in the penal system.

Those that want less support for First Nations believe “enough is enough”

Among those who think the government should reduce support for First Nations peoples, the top reason is the belief that the government is already doing enough or too much. This is followed by the view that resources should be focused on supporting all Australians equally.

Base: Non-Indigenous Australians who think the Australian Government should be doing less for First Nations peoples to Q14, n=155.
Source: Q13. Why do you think the Australian Government should be doing less for First Nations peoples?1

Reasons for **Decreased** Government Support for First Nations in Australia



They are already given much more support than other Australians.

They are Australians just like everyone else. No one group should be singled out.

They are given handouts for almost everything that the average Australian has to work extremely hard for, I think enough is enough.

It should be needs based, not race based. People should be helped because they are economically disadvantaged, not because they identify as Aboriginal.

I think the Government is doing too much. Meanwhile, groups like pensioners are getting less than them.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE

Demographics (unweighted)



Sample

942 Respondents were interviewed online in April 2025
(2,069 in 2020, 1,010 in 2021, 1,000 in 2023, 1,000 in 2024)



Gender

47% Male
(2020 48%, 2021 49%, 2023 49%, 2023 48%)

52% Female
(2020 52%, 2021 51%, 2023 52%, 2024 52%)



Life stage

54% (2023 52%, 2024 50%) Parents
41% (2023 41%, 2024 45%) Non-parents
4% (2023 7%, 2024 5%) Refused

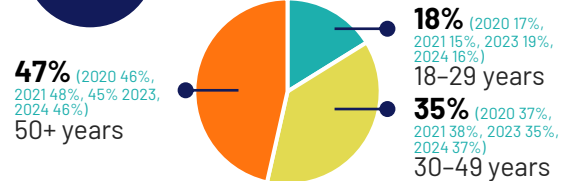


Background

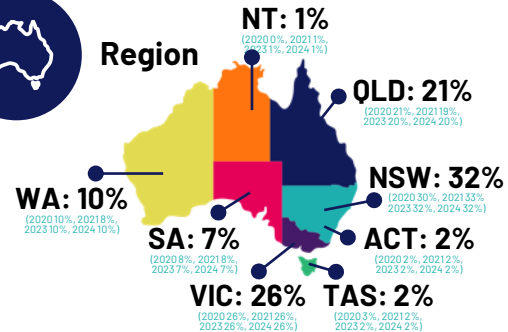
30% (2020 27%, 2021 29%, 2023 24%, 2024 29%) CALD
70% (2020 73%, 2021 71%, 2023 75%, 2024 71%) Non-CALD



Age group



Region



Indigenous Identity

3% (2020 2%, 2021 4%, 2023 4%, 2024 3%) Aboriginal
0% (2020 0%, 2021 2%, 2023 0%, 2024 0%) Torres Strait Islander
1% (2020 1%, 2021 2%, 2023 1%, 2024 1%) Both
96% (2020 96%, 2021 90%, 2023 95%, 2024 97%) No
0% (2020 2%, 2021 2%, 2023 0%, 2024 0%) Refused/ DK



Education

48% (2020 41%, 2021 42%, 2023 38%, 2024 45%) Bachelor & higher
30% (2020 35%, 2021 31%, 2023 31%, 2024 30%) TAFE/Cert
21% (2020 21%, 2021 26%, 2023 30%, 2024 24%) High school or less
1% (2020 1%, 2021 1%, 2023 1%, 2024 1%) Prefer not to say



Non-Indigenous Australians' interaction with First Nations Peoples

5% (2020 5%, 2021 5%, 2023 6%, 2024 4%) A lot
19% (2020 21%, 2021 18%, 2023 23%, 2024 21%) A fair bit
53% (2020 53%, 2021 51%, 2023 50%, 2024 51%) Not very much
23% (2020 21%, 2021 25%, 2023 21%, 2024 22%) Not at all



Employment

41% (2020 37%, 2021 39%, 2023 33%, 2024 39%) Full-time
17% (2020 21%, 2021 20%, 2023 16%, 2024 18%) Part-time
34% (2020 41%, 2021 40%, 2023 45%, 2024 35%) Not employed
1% (2020 1%, 2021 1%, 2023 1%, 2024 2%) Other



Combined income

6% (2023 9%, 2024 8%) Less than \$25k
29% (2023 33%, 2024 31%) \$25k to just under \$75k
46% (2023 41%, 2024 45%) \$75k to just under \$200k
12% ↑ (2023 7%, 2024 7%) \$200k and above
7% (2023 10%, 2024 9%) Refused/ DK



Citizenship

72% Born in Australia
72% Australian Citizens

55% Arrived 20+ years ago
19% Arrived 11-20 years ago
12% Arrived 6-10 years ago
14% Arrived in the last 5 years

Additional verbatims on need for government action for First Nations

Should be doing more:

Because they are still disadvantaged by the laws and culture that had been imposed on them.

It's a disgrace that that First Nations peoples have lower life expectancies, lower educational outcomes and higher health issues. It shouldn't be this way.

There hasn't been enough done to actually support them and provide education/resources so that they can thrive in modern society. Stop the arrests and actually see what the root problem is.

Statistics clearly show there is generational trauma still in affect that means First Nations people are at a disadvantage in healthcare, education, poverty, criminal incarceration etc.

We still have a long way to go to ensure equity. Education, health and housing for indigenous people are 3rd world. Prejudice remains.

First Nations peoples are stuck in a culture war not of their own making.

They don't have a strong presence in society in general.

There is so much domestic abuse which is generational. Something needs to be done to educate younger generations that this is not acceptable.

Because in the past the government has ignored them, so showing RESPECT, is a much awaited response.

Australia has to accept that it has an obligation to the original inhabitants of our country. We need to improve there standard of living so it is equal to that of all Australians and accept their culture and beliefs.

Allowing them to have a say in things that involve them would allow for greater understanding and allow for both groups to have less separation.

They came first this is their land that was stolen from them. Then their people, culture and way of life have been brutalized, belittles and deeply harmed. It's the governments' responsibility to fix these wrong doings and try to make up for their mistakes.

Should be doing less:

Because there is so much government favouritism to First Nations that its actually caused racial biases to the rest of society.

Everyone should be treated equally.

The funds that have been scooped up by pseudo Indigenous people was more than enough but never reached the people who needed it. Get rid of the corruption and the existing level of help will actually be more than enough.

Handouts will not teach them to help themselves.

They already receive plenty of welfare and preferential treatment.

They already get too many benefits but contribute nothing to the society.

Because aboriginals don't have to work for anything.

We're all Australians, no group should receive more based on their ethnicity.

The benefits offered are being abused by those who do not necessarily need or deserve them.

I believe they should be given more autonomy and respect that the elders know what they are doing.

Would encourage more self sufficiency based on extensive land assets they already have per capita.

They should be governing for all Australians, it just Aboriginals and immigrants.

We are already spending vast amounts of money on these issues with little or no impact. The solution lies in the attitude of Indigenous people.

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