

Ad Standards Community Sentiment Tracker Report

Quarterly Deep Dive: Health & Safety in Advertising
Wave 4 – Q1 FY27



ROY
MORGAN



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Executive Summary

Executive Summary



Most Australians (71%) are concerned about unsafe or unhealthy behaviour in advertising on social media, the top platform of concern.

Smoking and vaping (62%) and not wearing a seatbelt in a moving vehicle (59%) had the highest percentage saying it is never acceptable to show in advertising.



Over a third (36%) of Australians have seen an advertisement that promoted unsafe or unhealthy behaviour in the last 3 months

Over half of Australians say they see unsafe or unhealthy behaviour in advertising at least sometimes.



55% of Australians believe it is very important to show safe and healthy behaviours in advertising

‘Unsafe or unhealthy behaviours being portrayed as fun, cool or desirable’ was the issue of most concern regarding health and safety in advertising. This was a higher concern for older Australians aged 65+.

Executive Summary



Net sentiment towards advertising (% total positive minus % total negative) has declined since Wave 1 (-20% down from -12%).

More Australians agree than disagree that advertising is in line with community standards and expectations (38% vs 30%).



Social media (55%) remains the platform of most concern for Australians regarding advertising.

Gambling advertising continues to be the issue of most concern to Australians with 27% saying it is the issue of most concern (up from 23% last quarter).



There was a significant increase, compared to last quarter, in those who strongly agree that advertising reinforces harmful stereotypes (55% up from 50% last quarter).

More Australians disagree this quarter that the advertising I see and hear is responsible and appropriate (33% up from 29% last quarter) however, this is still outweighed by those who agree (36%).

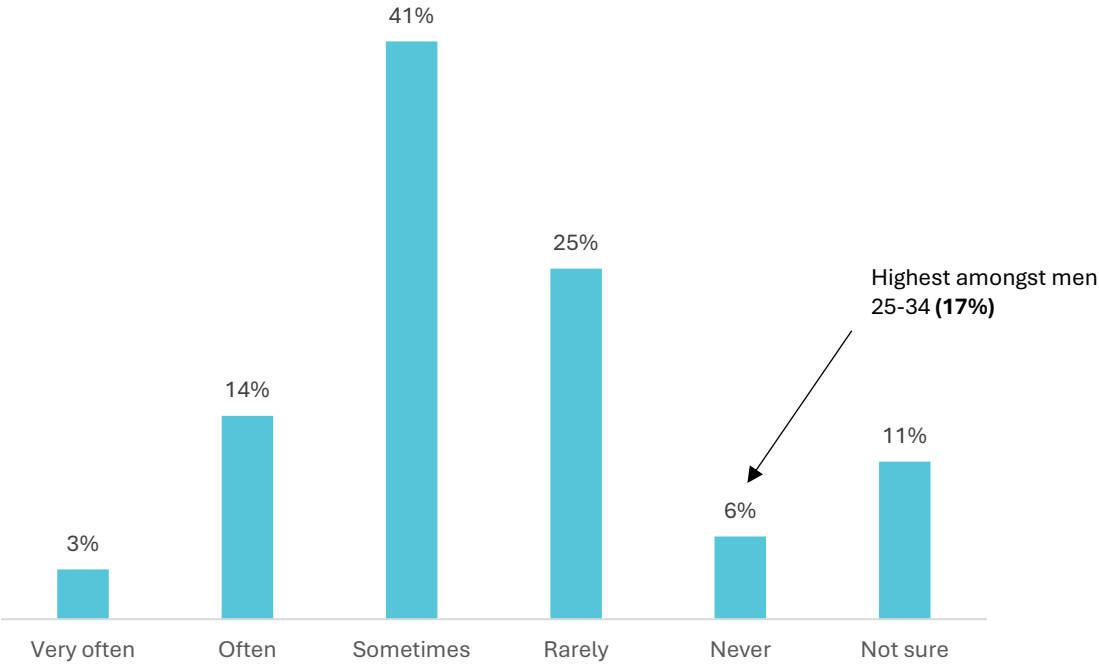


Quarterly Deep Dive: Health and Safety

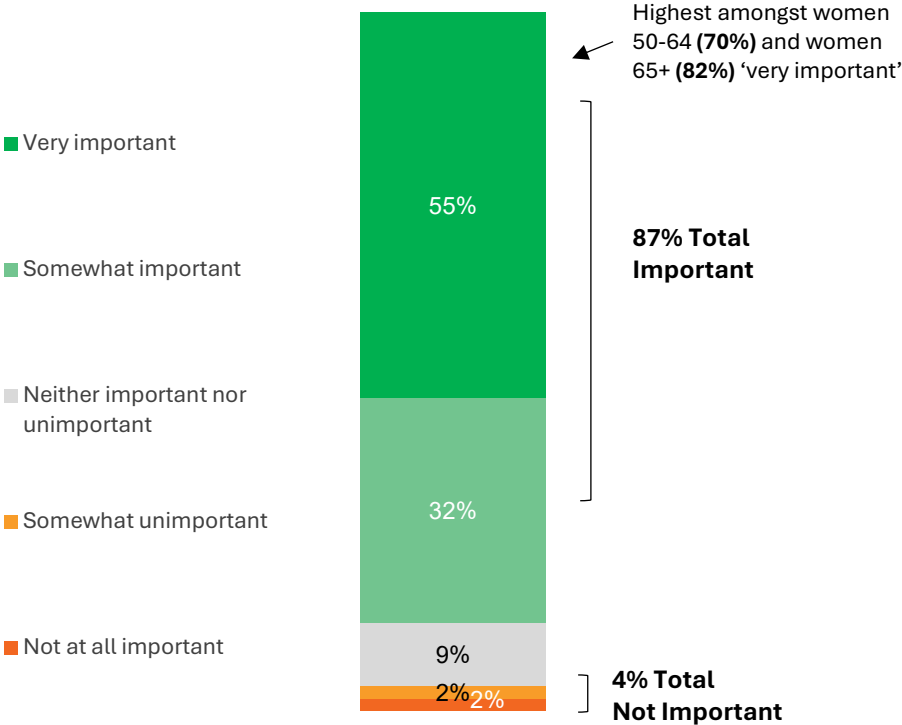
Over half of Australians say they see unsafe or unhealthy behaviour in advertising at least sometimes, with nearly 1 in 5 seeing it often or very often

Most Australians (87%) think that it is important that advertising shows safe and healthy behaviours with 55% thinking it is ‘very important’. This was higher amongst women over 50 and lowest amongst men aged 35-49, with only 39% of this age group thinking it is ‘very important’.

How often do you see advertising that shows unsafe or unhealthy behaviours?



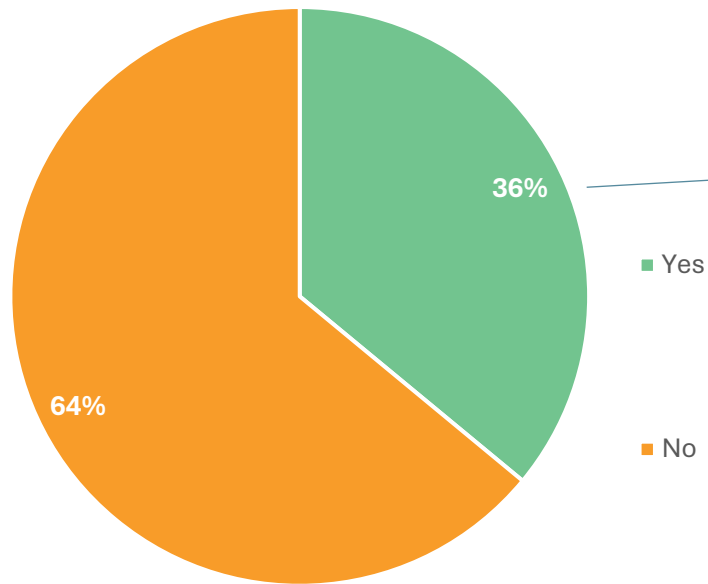
How important or unimportant do you think it is for advertising to show safe and healthy behaviours?



Over a third (36%) of Australians had seen advertising that they thought promoted unsafe or unhealthy behaviours within the last 3 months

Many Australians cited gambling advertising generally as the type of specific advertising content that they had seen and thought promoted unsafe or unhealthy behaviours.

Seen advertising that promoted unsafe or unhealthy behaviours in the last 3 months?



Influencer on YouTube promoting peptides.



AI scam created content using well known recognised people's faces & endorsements to promote unsafe products & investment schemes.



I have seen frequent gambling advertising, particularly around sport and online. I think the constant promotion of betting can normalise gambling and encourage people to see it as harmless entertainment, despite the potential for financial and addiction-related harm.



Restrictive diets, weight loss medications.



All fast food ads should be banned. Fast foods are killing us. We don't allow cigarette advertising and neither should we allow fast food companies to advertise. Highly processed foods are utterly unhealthy and are designed to be moreish.



One advert of a young boy picking his nose, wiping it on an ipad/phone (or something along those lines) that someone else was about to use.



Riding scooters without safety equipment.



Social influencers advertising clothing with unrealistic body image.

Source: Ad Standards Community Sentiment Tracker Wave 4 Q1 FY27

Base: Australians 18+ n=1,032

HS1a. Have you seen any advertising that you thought promoted unsafe or unhealthy behaviours in the last 3 months?

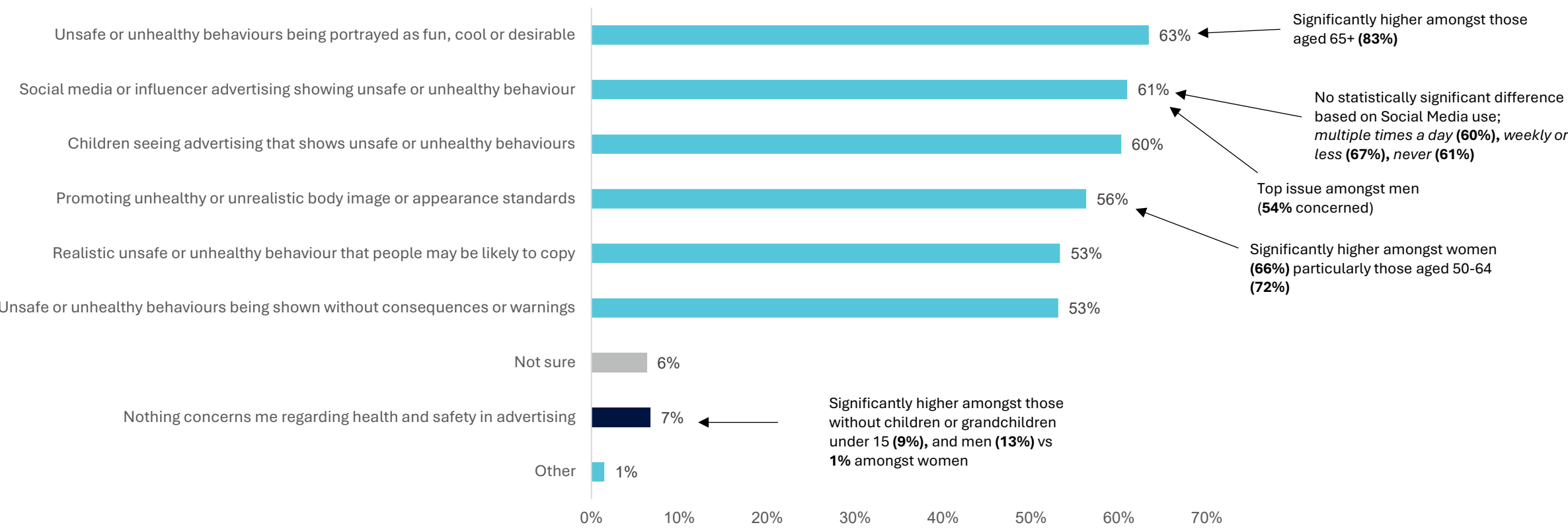
HS1b. Please describe in as much detail as possible, the advertising content that you thought promoted unsafe or unhealthy behaviours?

Note: Values may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Australians are most concerned about unsafe and unhealthy behaviours being portrayed as fun, cool or desirable in advertising (63% concerned)

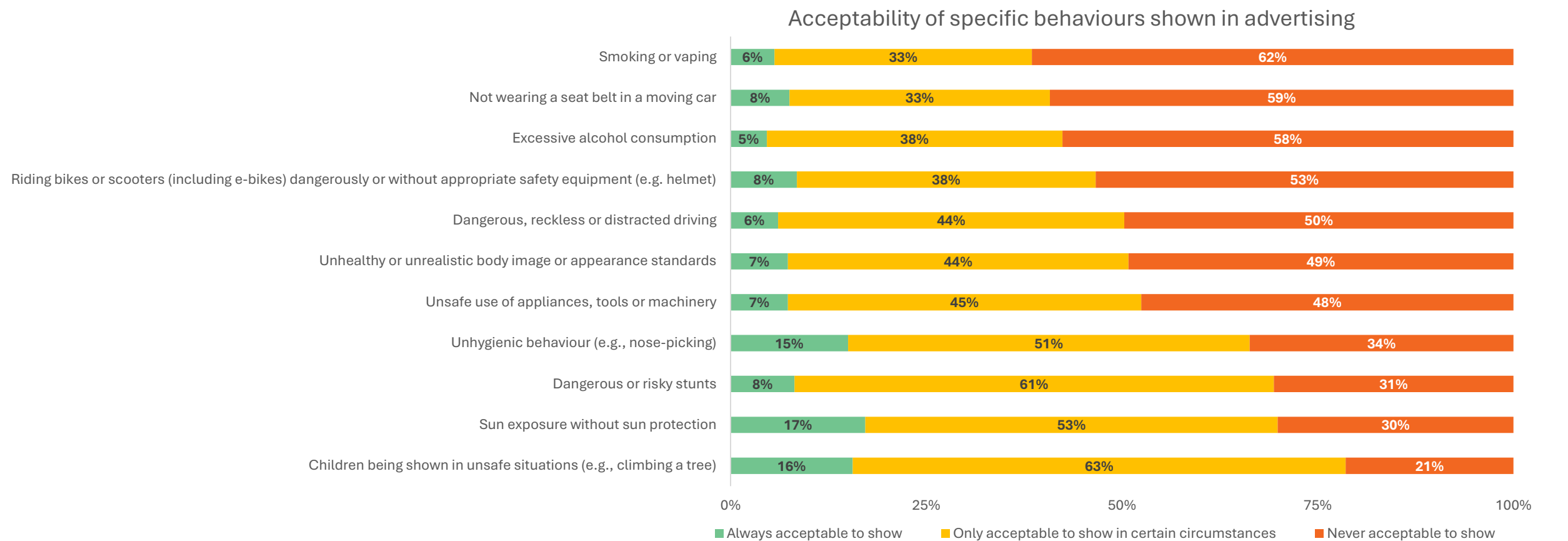
Only 7% of Australians are not concerned about anything regarding health and safety in advertising. Men were much more likely to say nothing concerned them about health and safety in advertising (13%) compared to women (1%).

Issues of most concern regarding health and safety in advertising



Most Australians (62%) believe it is never acceptable to show smoking or vaping in advertising

Those aged 65+ were more likely to respond with ‘never acceptable to show’ across all behaviours. Men aged 18-24 were the demographic most likely to answer ‘always acceptable to show’ for any of the specific behaviours.

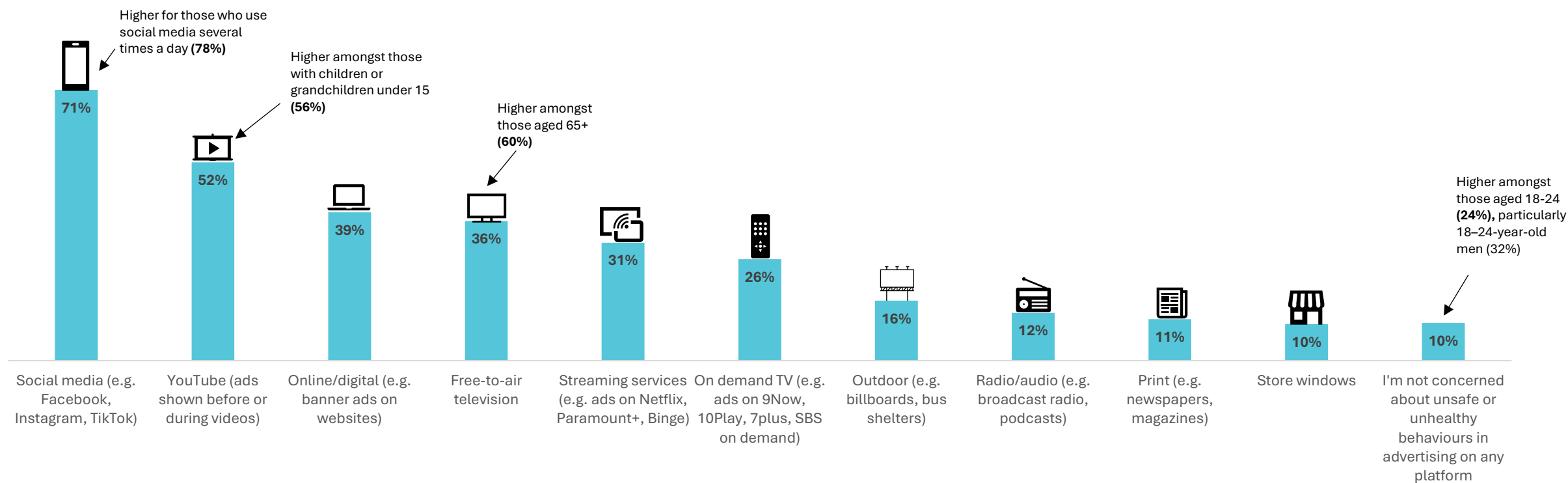


Source: Ad Standards Community Sentiment Tracker Wave 4 Q1 FY27
Base: Australians 18+ n=1,032.
We would now like to ask about some specific examples of behaviours that may be shown in advertising that promotes a product, brand or service. For each of the examples, please state whether you think the behaviour would always be acceptable to show, would only be acceptable to show in certain scenarios (such as where it's clearly exaggerated or humorous) or would never be acceptable to show in advertising
Note: Values may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Most Australians (71%) are concerned about unsafe or unhealthy behaviour in advertising on social media

Those who reported seeing unsafe or unhealthy behaviours in advertising in the last 3 months were more likely to report concern across all platforms.

Platform of most concern regarding unsafe or unhealthy behaviours in advertising



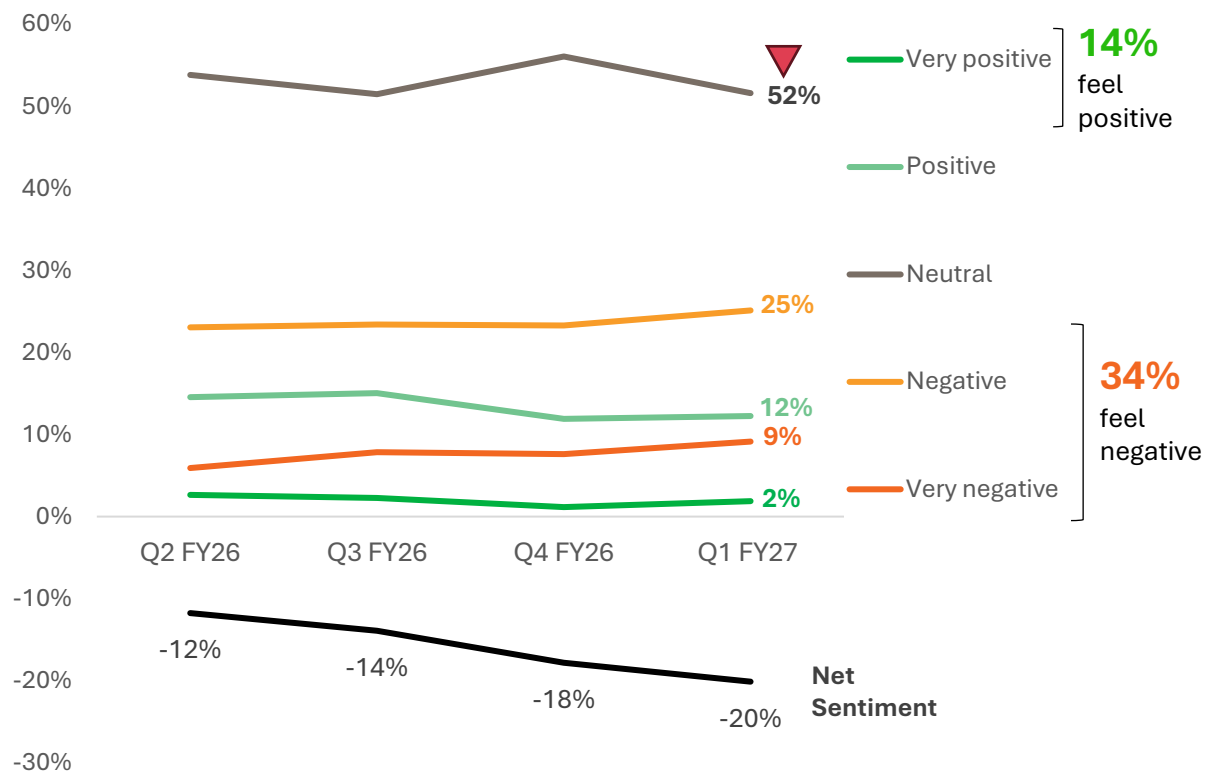


Attitudes towards advertising in Australia

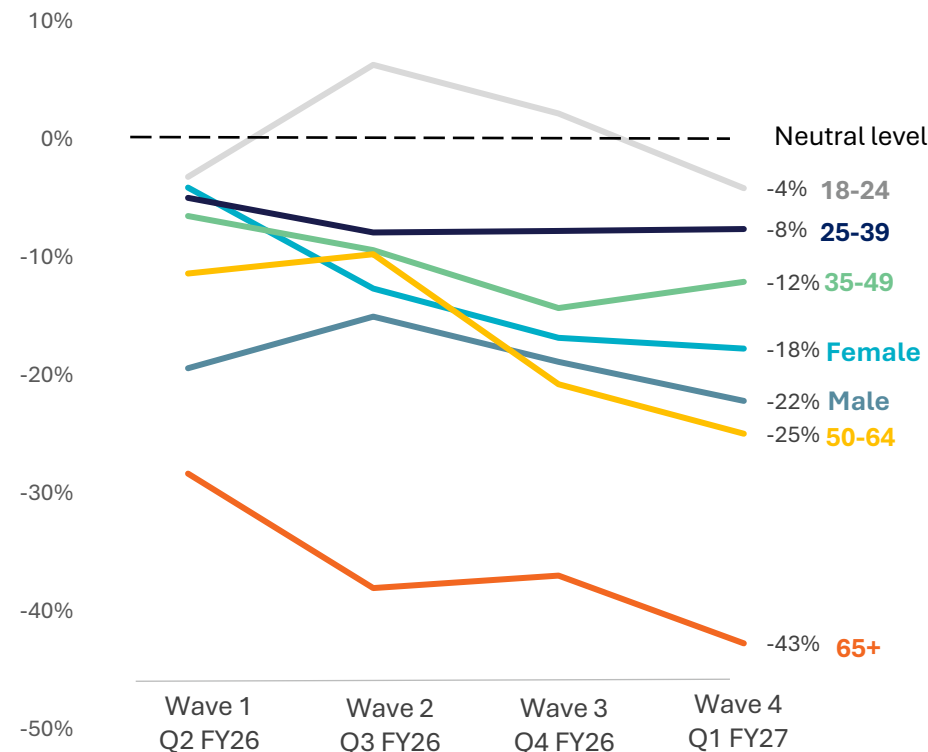
Only about 1 in 7 Australians feel positive about advertising in general; neutral sentiment significantly decreased since last quarter

Since tracking began, net sentiment (% total positive minus % total negative) amongst Australians has consistently decreased, driven by declining positive sentiment and increased negative sentiment. Australians 65+ hold the lowest net sentiment which has continued to decline. Sentiment amongst those aged 25-39 has remained stable in slightly net negative. Sentiment amongst women has dropped, mostly driven by decreased positive sentiment.

General sentiment towards advertising

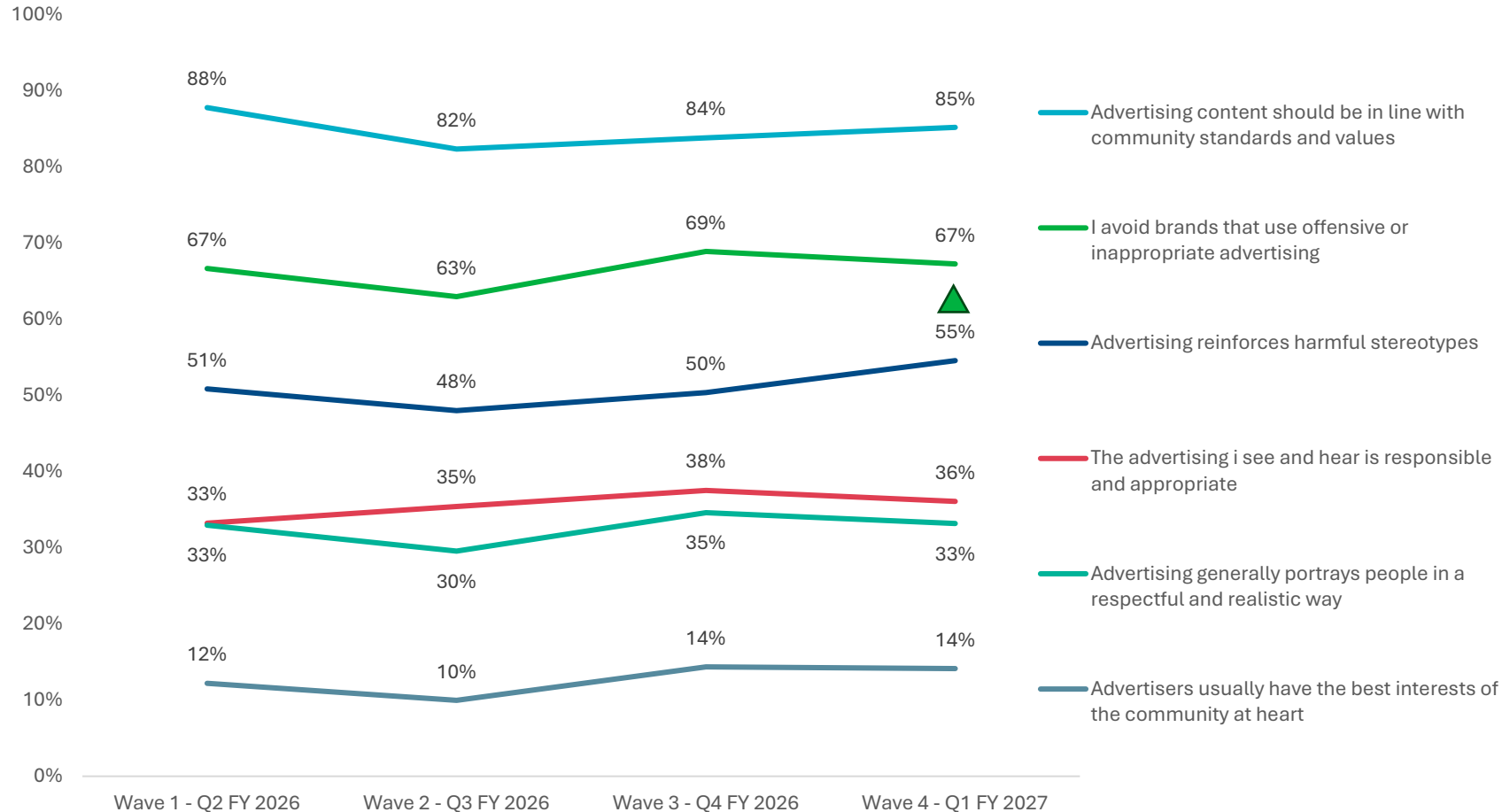


Net sentiment towards advertising by key demographics



The majority of Australians (55%) agree that advertising reinforces harmful stereotypes, a significant increase from last wave

Attitudes towards advertising - % Total Agree



- Women are more likely to agree that *advertising reinforces harmful stereotypes* (58% vs 51% of men) as well as agreeing that they *avoid brands that use offensive or inappropriate advertising* (73% agree vs 62% of men)
- Older age groups were more likely to agree that they *avoid brands that use offensive or inappropriate advertising* (80% agree for those 65+) compared to younger age groups (54% for those aged 18-24)
- Those with children or grandchildren under 15 were more likely to agree that *advertising content should be in line with community standards* (91% agree compared to 82% for those without children or grandchildren under 15)

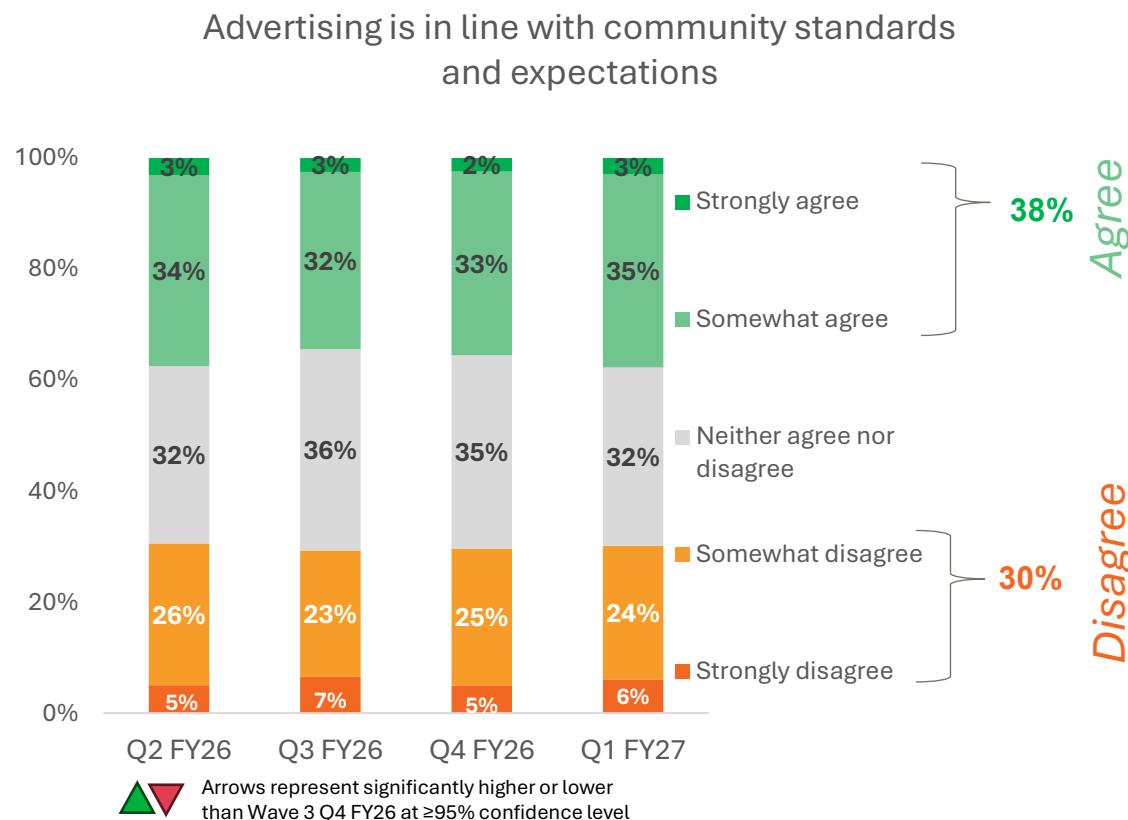
▲ ▼ Arrows represent significantly higher or lower than Wave 3 Q4 FY26 at ≥95% confidence level



Community standards and responsible advertising

More Australians agree than disagree that advertising in Australia is in line with community standards

Over one third of Australians (38%) agree that advertising is in line with community standards and expectations, while just under a third (30%) disagree, with 32% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Those aged 65+ were significantly more likely to disagree (40% total disagreed for men over 65, 46% for women over 65).

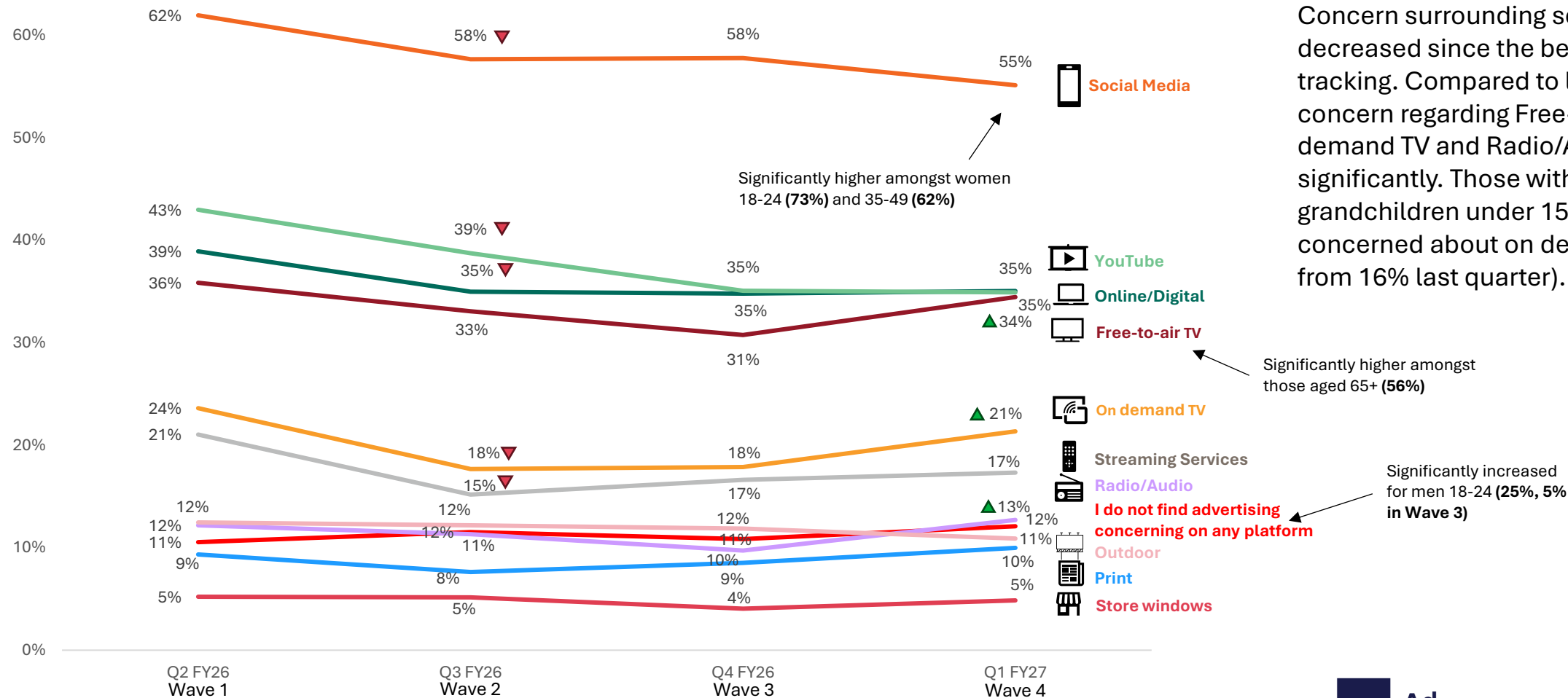


Why do you [agree or disagree] that advertising is in line with community standards and expectations?

- Most ads appeal to consumers and society so that the companies making them do well.*
- There are rules that encourage advertisers to stay within reasonable social boundaries.*
- I think it's well monitored and highly regulated and is of a good standard*
- Many people at present are having financial difficulties. Many advertised products are not necessary and set people up to have unrealistic expectations of life.*
- Betting ads need to be limited or removed altogether. Much of the community agrees it's only the companies and those who profit from it who want it.*
- Much advertising is portrayed from a viewpoint that consuming more, bigger, better will lead to happiness and success. Not sure that this is what people generally believe or expect will happen.*

Social Media continues to be the platform attracting the most concern regarding advertising

Where advertising content is most concerning



Concern surrounding social media has decreased since the beginning of tracking. Compared to last quarter, concern regarding Free-to-air TV, On demand TV and Radio/Audio increased significantly. Those with children or grandchildren under 15 were increasingly concerned about on demand TV (23% up from 16% last quarter).

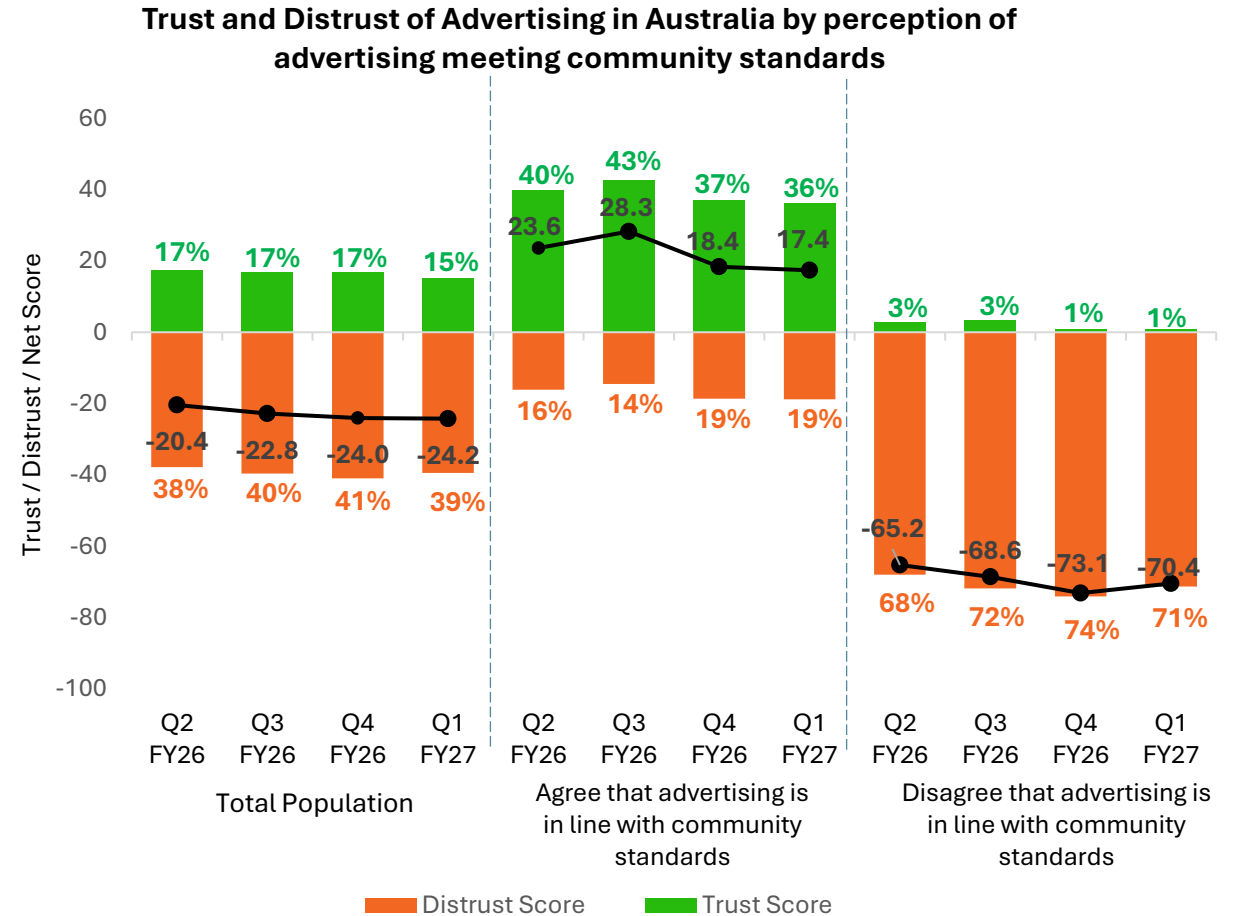
Significantly higher amongst those aged 65+ (56%)

Significantly increased for men 18-24 (25%, 5% in Wave 3)

Arrows represent significantly higher or lower than the previous wave at ≥95% confidence level

Advertising across Australia in general records a Net Distrust Score, with more distrust than trust

- Across the Australian population, 15% said they generally trust advertising in Australia, 39% distrust it, and a sizeable 45% said they neither trust nor distrust it. Subtracting distrust from trust gives a Net Distrust Score of -24. Levels of Distrust and Trust both decreased slightly since last quarter with neutrality increasing slightly.
- The Net Distrust Score for Australians **aged 25-34** has declined since last quarter, with a significant increase in those strongly distrusting advertising (Net Distrust Score of -15.7 compared to -10.1 last quarter [Trust 21%; Distrust 36%]).
- The Net Distrust Score for those who have children and grandchildren under 15 decreased since last quarter (-25.6 compared to -16.7 in Wave 3 (Q4 FY26)). Those who do not have children or grandchildren have a Net Score of -23.3 (up from -27.3 last quarter)
- Net Trust Score is higher amongst those **who agree that advertising is in line with community standards** – indicating that by keeping their advertising in line with community standards, advertisers are more likely to foster trust and minimise distrust (Net Trust Score of +17 [Trust 36%; Distrust 19%], down from +18 last quarter).



Many of those who trust advertising believe it is accountable and truthful; many who distrust see it as too focused on commercial interests

Top Reasons for Trust in Advertising

1. Good advertising / Helps me find products – 23%



Advertising in Australia is usually clear and straightforward.



I can usually verify advertised products through reviews and other sources.



I have generally had positive experiences with products I discovered through ads.

2. Strong regulations in place – 21%



There is a lot of compliance and processes in place.



I feel we have good legal guidelines in place.



The ACCC has strict guidelines that can be acted on if a consumer has an issue but also to prevent disingenuous advertising in Australia.

Top Reasons for Distrust in Advertising

1. Too motivated by profit / money – 30%



It is all geared to get you in, create temptation, believe you need things you don't. It is to generate money for big companies.



Because I believe it is only about making big money - I don't believe they have any genuine interest in the person and the real benefits derived from their product, especially the banks.



The core motivation is to take money from you in most advertising. Often advertising that masquerades as education fundamentally is trying to extract money from you.

2. Dishonest and misleading – 29%



Political ads do not have to tell the truth. Many online ads are scams. Supermarket ads have been shown to be misleading. Corporations especially fossil fuel businesses use ads to mislead and whitewash their reputations. Ads create unreasonable expectations, and in general they aren't intended to tell the truth but to sell product.



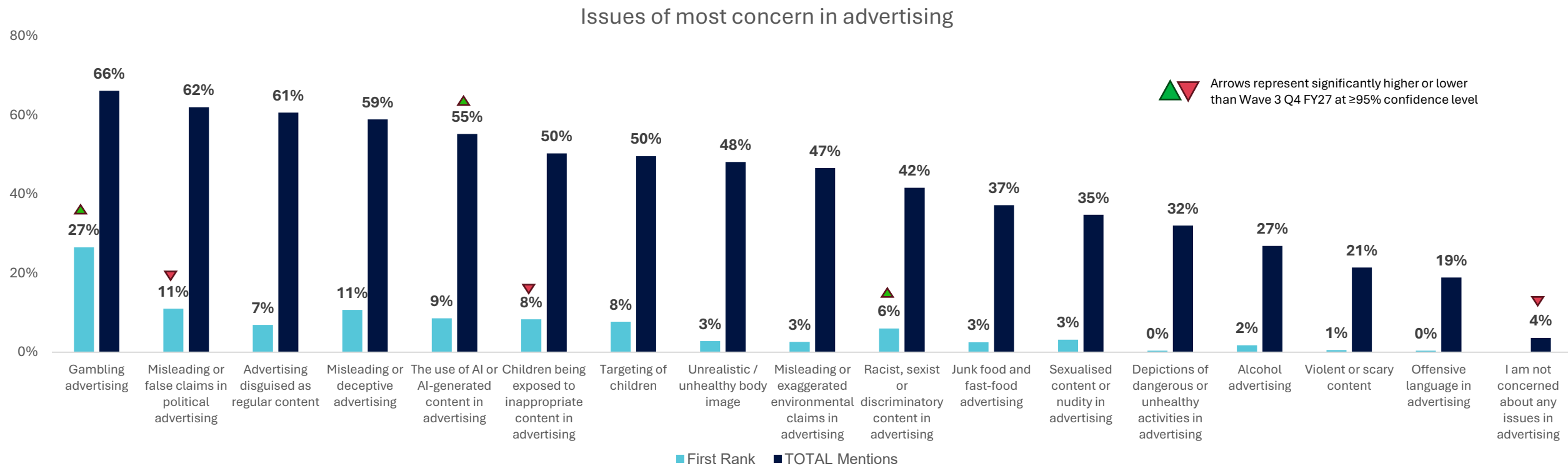
Since the introduction of AI I have become very distrusting of advertising. There seems to be a lot of false or misleading advertising.



Ethics and appropriateness of advertising

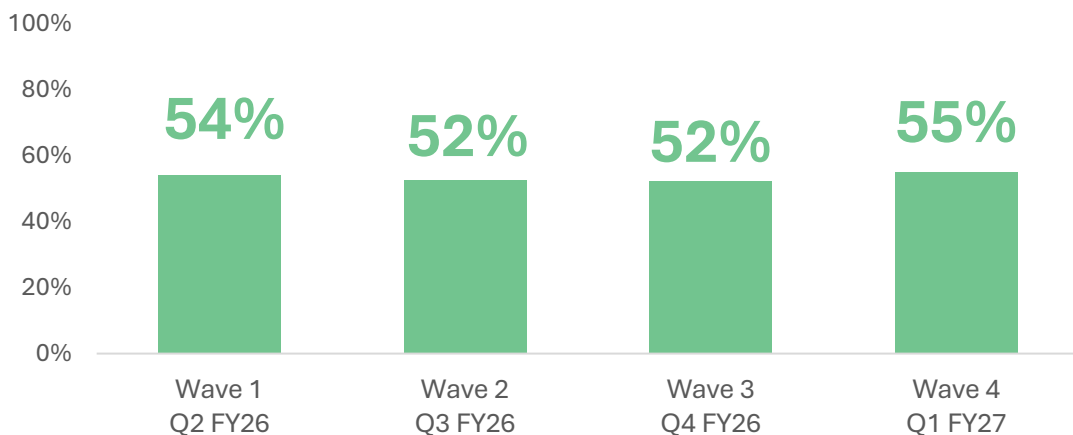
Gambling advertising remains the number one issue of concern followed by misleading claims in political advertising

Australians continue to nominate gambling advertising as the issue of most concern in advertising, with 27% naming it as their top issue, a significant increase from 23% last wave. Concern surrounding AI in advertising increased significantly this wave up to 55% from 50% last wave. Those who expressed they are not concerned about any issues in advertising decreased significantly this wave down to 4% from 6%.



Just over half (55%) of Australians have seen advertising they found inappropriate or offensive in the last 3 months

Seen or heard any advertising that you have found inappropriate or offensive in the last 3 months



More than half (55%) of Australians had seen advertising they found to be inappropriate or offensive in the last 3 months. Those who use social media weekly or less often were more likely to cite seeing inappropriate or offensive advertising (63%) as well as those aged 65+ (60%).



I find the promos on Channel 7 for Home and Away often depict issues of domestic violence and nastiness between characters which are broadcast at early times when many children would have access.



Social media such as Facebook and YouTube showing weight loss results, obviously physically impossible, achieved in 28 days. They show AI generated images of before/after body changes.



Gambling advertising being depicted as giving people great hopes of winning even right up to the last possible moment / double your money back in certain circumstances and then the token warning at the end of the ad.



On free TV, at Suncorp Stadium... shocking targeting of children! If Broncos score more than 19 points, you can redeem a free Big Mac! Fan placards, digital advertising around field. The shameless plug for sponsors throughout game play, commentators, on the field, action promos, players jerseys... just ridiculous and so irritating!



Honey Birdette advertising in public spaces show that some advertising can still be inappropriate for the general community, particularly when children are exposed to it. I also think some advertising continues to rely on sexualisation and outdated gender stereotypes that don't reflect modern community expectations.



Bankwest advertising that makes a joke of young people having to put up with old neighbours.



Methodology & sample

Methodology



Methodology

Online survey
conducted by Roy
Morgan



Target Audience

Representative
sample of Australian
consumers aged 18+

Weighted to
population figures
from ABS



Sample Size & Source

Roy Morgan
Consumer Panel

Target Sample
n=1,000

Final achieved
sample size: n=1,032



Questionnaire Length

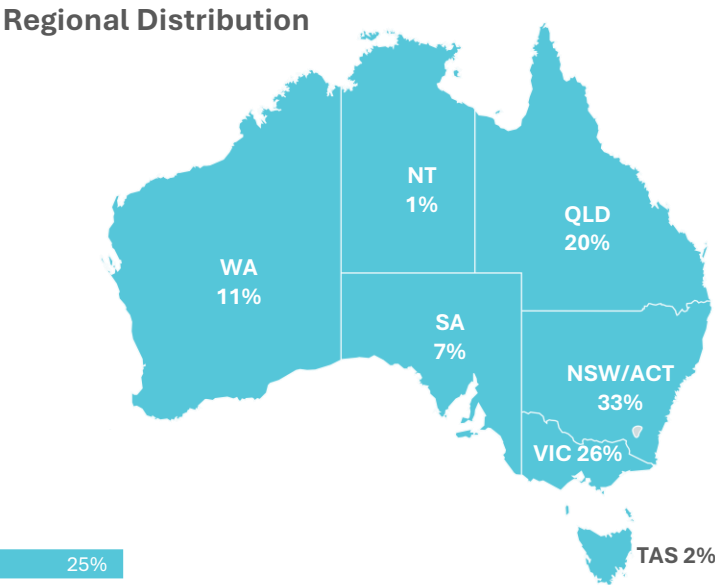
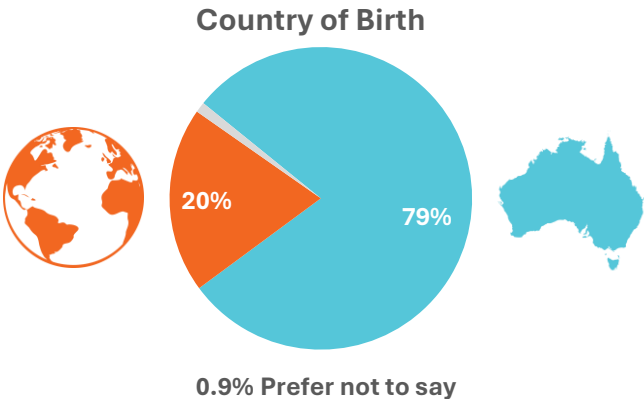
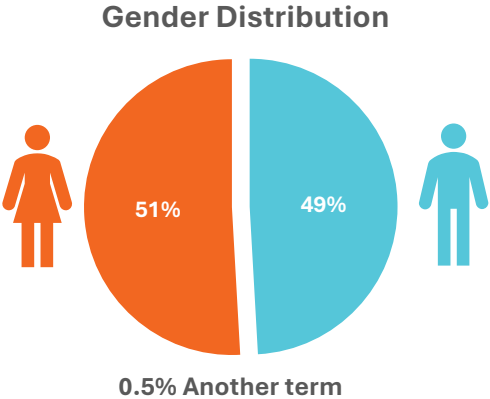
Average
questionnaire length
of 14 minutes



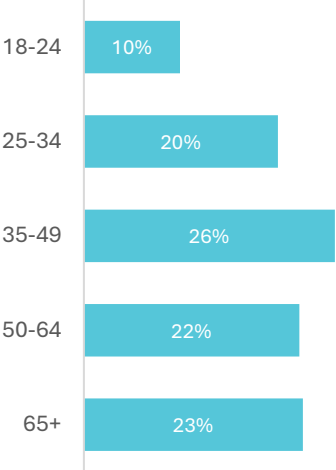
Fieldwork Timing

Fieldwork conducted
17 August to
2 September 2026

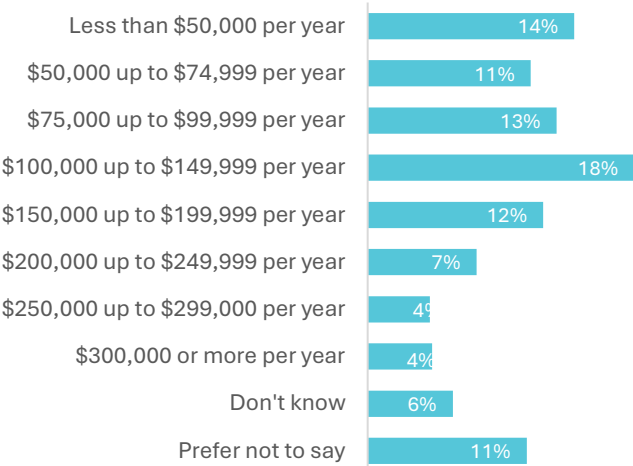
Sample profile



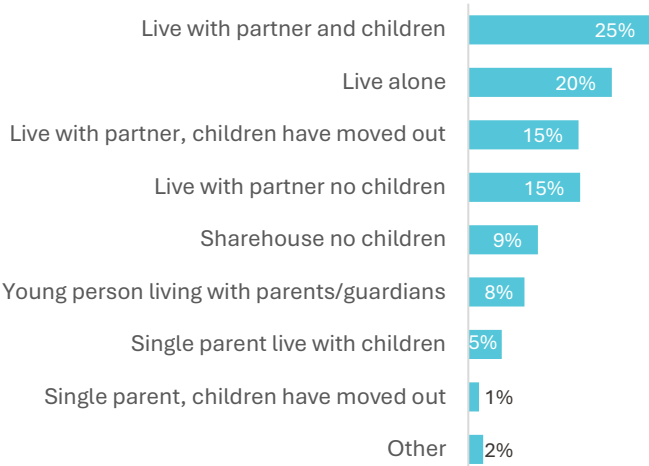
Age Distribution



Gross Household Income



Household Composition





Data in this report are estimates derived from sample surveys carried out in accordance with accepted market research methods and as such are subject to the limitations of such methods. Roy Morgan uses its best and all reasonable endeavours to ensure the accuracy of data and reports but does not warrant or represent the accuracy of any item.