

RESEARCH REPORT

JULY 2024



community C mpass

A segmentation of Australia's views and engagement with the community sector





Acknowledgement of Country

89 Degrees East acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We acknowledge and pay respect to Elders past and present and recognise that sovereignty was never ceded. This report was prepared on Bpangerang, Gadigal, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Yorta Yorta Country.



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This report was prepared by 89 Degrees East on behalf of Our Community and the Community Council for Australia.



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Where not-for-profits go for help



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Foreword

From the Assistant Minister for Charities



The Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP
Assistant Minister for Charities

In an era where social cohesion is strained, the community sector plays a vital role. The Community Compass report, commissioned by Our Community and the Community Council for Australia, offers a timely examination of how Australians engage with and perceive the community sector. This research, conducted by 89 Degrees East, provides insights into the sector's role in contemporary Australia.

Over the past generation, participation in civic groups has waned, rates of religious participation and union membership have dropped, and participation in team sport has declined.

Australia faces significant economic and social challenges, from a social media-driven decline in teen mental wellbeing to the nation's poor productivity performance over the past decade.

Amidst these challenges, the community sector continues to play a vital role. The Community Compass sheds light on the diverse ways Australians interact with this sector and highlights the crucial support it provides.

One of the most striking findings of this report is the broad support for community organisations. Most Australians believe that these organisations make the world a better place and are effective in addressing problems overlooked by other sectors. This support is not just passive; many Australians are actively engaged through donations, volunteering, and advocacy. Despite the barriers of time and energy, there is a clear willingness to contribute more, pointing to an untapped potential within our communities.

The report also reveals some divides. Australians are nearly split on whether community organisations should engage in political advocacy or focus solely on service delivery. This division underscores the complex landscape in which these organisations operate, navigating between direct support and broader societal change.



The segmentation analysis presented in the Community Compass is interesting too. Dr Rebecca Huntley and her team discuss six distinct cohorts within the Australian community, with different attitudes and levels of engagement. From the highly supportive *Enthusiastic Engaged* to the more detached *Indifferent Uninvolved*, these segments offer insights for charities seeking to tailor their engagement strategies.

Encouragingly, the research indicates a strong desire among Australians to see a thriving community sector. There is a broad recognition that community organisations are essential for tackling the profound challenges we face. This aligns with the sentiment that community organisations are integral to our social fabric, and are deserving of support and recognition.

The Community Compass report is more than just a collection of data; it is a call to action. It challenges policymakers, community leaders, and citizens alike to recognise the contributions of the community sector.

These findings fit well with the Australian Government's goal of boosting volunteering (through our National Volunteering Strategy), doubling philanthropy (led by the Productivity Commission's milestone report) and strengthening the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (under the leadership of Sue Woodward).

Keen to be part of the *Enthusiastic Engaged*? It's simpler than you think. Local sporting teams, neighbourhood groups, and community support services love welcoming new members. To find your perfect volunteering opportunity, use one of the volunteer match engines, such as GoVolunteer or SEEK Volunteer. And thanks to the magic of 'BYO', hosting an end-of-year street party for your neighbours takes just a few hours.

The findings of the Community Compass highlight both the strengths and areas for growth within the community sector. By understanding and addressing the diverse attitudes of Australians, we can better support community organisations and build a fairer, more cohesive society.

The Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP
Assistant Minister for Charities



Researcher's Note



Dr Rebecca Huntley

Director of Research, *89 Degrees East*

Let me confess something at the outset of this researcher's note.

I wish I had more time to be involved in the many community organisations in my neighbourhood. It's not that I don't value what they do or that I couldn't find them if I wanted to (our local government organisation lists them on their website). It's the usual dilemma of a full-time working mother of three children. I am pulled into various volunteer activities through my children and I donate money here and there. But giving chunks of 'free' time to a community organisation gets pushed way down on the to-do list, towards things I might do during retirement. So, while, in the language this segmentation, I wish I was in the Enthusiastic Engaged segment, I am probably more likely to be in the Positive Preoccupied.

As the Community Compass research shows, when it comes to attitudes to the community sector, values can often be at odds with behaviour.

Like any research which entails a deeper exploration of attitudes, values, behaviour and barriers to future behaviour, the picture that emerges is a mixed one, with cause for both celebration and concern for anyone in the sector or invested in its future.

The good news is there is broad support for the community sector and those that are part of it. A strong majority of us think community organisations make the world a better place and believe community organisations are good at helping address problems the government and private sector ignore. Very few disagree that the sector should receive more government funding and few believe those working in the community sector do *not* deserve to be paid at the same rate as people working in other sectors.

Encouragingly, most Australians see the sector as important for people like them and are happy to contribute even if it doesn't directly benefit them. Many Australians are also open to getting more involved in their communities and the research shows the barriers to greater involvement and points to ways in which we might encourage people to overcome them.

However, this research reveals a series of tensions across the community - especially in how different values and beliefs inform our diverse views of the sector, its purpose and our beliefs about the people who rely on it.

We are almost evenly divided on the role the sector should play in politics or whether it should speak out about issues of importance or 'stick to serving their community' and not be involved in advocacy of that kind.

It is important to note that broad support for the sector exists even at a time many of us are feeling increasingly disconnected and socially isolated. There are many who value community organisations and want to be more involved, but are unaware of organisations to join, unsure how they could help and lack the confidence to get involved.



The segment that are the greatest contributors and supporters of the sector – the Enthusiastic Engaged – are as big as the segment that are the most disengaged and uninterested – the Indifferent Uninvolved. This doubly disengaged segment are younger overall than the highly involved segment, a red flag for the future of the sector.

That being said there are encouraging overall differences between the generations when it comes to community engagement and attitudes to the sector. Those under 24 years are more likely to consider voting for people with strong community sector policies or encouraging friends or family to vote for a ‘pro-community’ candidate or party. This younger age group are also more like to have studied or looked into issues raised by the community sector. By contrast, community members aged 65 years and above were more likely to contribute by donating money or goods, belonging to a community organisation or volunteering.

The Community Compass also points to a slow but concerning shift in our broader values, reinforced by other recent research such as the Scanlon Social Cohesion Index, namely falling support for the value of ‘fairness and everyone having equal opportunities’.

The most important value to Australians was feeling safe and secure, followed by personal freedom and caring for others. This has implications for a sector that has traditionally leaned into the messages around fairness and equality in its appeals for support from government and the public.

This research has been conducted at a profoundly challenging time for communities around the country. A cost-of-living crisis – particularly in the areas of housing and energy. Growing social polarisation. A decline in social cohesion. Individuals, families, and communities still attempting to recover from the pandemic and extreme weather events. Additionally, other issues – such as mental health and family and domestic violence – are attracting more and more attention from the media and politicians, albeit the problems in these areas will not be easily fixed. The research shows confidence in our future is at a low point, with only a third of us believing things are generally improving.

The research shows that, overall, the public believe that the stronger and more resourced communities and community organisations are, the better equipped we will be to address these issues and turn the tide of pessimism about the future.

Dr Rebecca Huntley is one of Australia’s foremost researchers on social trends and is a Fellow of the Research Society of Australia. Rebecca is also author of *How to Talk About Climate Change in a Way That Makes a Difference* (2020).

Prior to joining 89 Degrees East, Rebecca led research at Essential Media Communications and Vox Populi, part of the CIRCA research group. She was also the Director of *The Mind & Mood Report*, Australia’s longest-running social trends report.

Rebecca has played a central role in the **Climate Compass** (The Sunrise Project) and **Gender Compass** (Plan International Australia) research projects which segmented Australians based on their attitudes to inform strategic engagement with key sections of the community on the issues of climate change and gender equality.



Executive Summary

The Community Compass is a unique audience segmentation that reflects the diversity of Australians' relationships with the community sector.

This report presents findings from a survey of 3,071 members of the Australian community aged 17 years and over that was conducted in February–March 2024. Analysis of 39 diverse attitudinal statements produced six distinct segments who differ in how they think about, value and engage with the community sector. Each segment varies in their attitudes towards the role of the community sector, their experiences of engagement with community organisations, their personal sense of connectedness, as well as their broader views about society.

Mapping these distinct audience cohorts provides the sector with a guide to understand and engage each segment and to encourage greater levels of support and resourcing for the sector from government and other key stakeholders.



Enthusiastic Engaged (20%)

The Enthusiastic Engaged are the strongest supporters of the community sector. They are socially-connected and are active contributors to community organisations. They hold broadly progressive values and believe in caring for others and equal opportunity. They think the sector helps to make the world more equitable and just through advocacy and through service delivery, and strongly support community organisations receiving more government funding.



Positive Preoccupied (16%)

The Positive Preoccupied are broadly supportive of the community sector but contribute less regularly. They are more likely to be juggling work, raising children and other responsibilities and feel they lack the time and energy to be more involved. Despite not seeing the sector as important for 'people like them', they continue to advocate for the sector amongst their family and friends, believing the community sector is a force for good and deserving of government funding.



Isolated Believers (16%)

The Isolated Believers have a positive view of the community sector despite being the most economically and socially vulnerable segment. They think the sector fills critical gaps left by government and the private sector and believe it deserves more government funding. They support community organisations speaking out on social and political issues but believe service delivery should be prioritised. Though they see community and the sector as important, this segment are socially isolated and value personal security and safety above all else. Many would like to be more involved but face barriers to contributing.



Active Traditionalists (17%)

The Active Traditionalists are very community-focused and are actively contributing to the sector at higher rates than average. They hold broadly conservative values and their traditionalist mindset shapes their belief that the role of the community sector is to care for those in need rather than getting involved in politics. They believe in giving back to the community and think the sector should receive more funding (to help those they see as deserving of support). They feel socially connected themselves but worry people are becoming less connected to their communities.



Indifferent Uninvolved (20%)

The Indifferent Uninvolved aren't thinking about the community sector. They hold neutral views or have no opinion about the sector and its impact. The apathy of this segment is reflective of broader disengagement. The Indifferent Uninvolved are relatively socially connected and express insular values such as 'having fun', 'treating and rewarding yourself' and 'being successful and achieving goals'. They don't see the community sector as important for 'people like them' and their contributions to the sector tend to be low-commitment actions such as a one-off donation or signing a petition.



Begrudging Bygones (10%)

The Begrudging Bygones are more likely to be contributing to their community but have a pessimistic view of the community sector and society as a whole. They are concerned society is going downhill and are nostalgic for a time when people were more connected. Their conservative values shape their belief that community organisations are for caring for people and not for promoting equity and advocating on issues of importance. Given their negative view of the sector (and of the people they see as dependent on welfare), they don't think the sector should receive government funding. Despite these views, this cohort contributes to the sector at above-average levels but may see these as individual activities rather than as a 'contribution to the sector'.

An overall picture

In addition to the six unique segments, the Community Compass offers an overall picture of how Australians think about the community sector and maps the various ways they are (and aren't) engaging with community organisations.

This research reveals that Australians recognise the importance of the community sector and believe community organisations make a positive difference in the world. There is broad recognition that community organisations fill critical gaps left by government and the private sector and this is reflected in majority support for increased government funding of the sector.

The findings outlined in this report indicate that despite a broader pessimism and varied experiences of engagement with community organisations, the Australian community value the community sector and the important work of community organisations.



Executive Summary

Most Australians have a reasonable understanding of the types of organisations that make up the community sector, though many seem to conflate the public sector and community sector.

- Sports and recreation clubs are the type of organisations Australians most commonly associated with the community sector (73% identified these clubs as part of the sector).
- However, many conflate the community and public sectors. Many misidentify public sector organisations such as local councils, public schools and public hospitals and health care services as part of the community sector.
- Those with the greatest understanding of which organisations make up the community sector are more likely to be actively contributing to their community.

Australians are contributing to their communities and engaging with the sector in various ways.

- Most Australians believe the more time people have to be involved in community activities, the stronger community is (72%).
- One of the most common actions is donating money or goods. 35% of Australians have donated on a one-off basis while 20% have donated on a regular basis in the past five years. Donating time (volunteering) is another way Australians are contributing, with 18% volunteering regularly and 14% volunteering on a one-off basis in the past five years.
- Others have been engaging with issues raised by community organisations - by reading, watching or listening to content about the sector (29%) and signing petitions about issues raised by the sector (21%).
- Belonging to a community organisation is another common form of engagement, including organisations with membership fees (19%) and without (13%).
- Australians are also talking about their involvement in the community sector with their friends and family (15%).





Executive Summary

Many Australians are also open to getting more involved in their communities, especially low-effort, low-commitment activities.

- In addition to the ways they are already engaging with the sector, Australians are most open to volunteering on a one-off basis (25%), signing a petition (22%), donating money or goods on a one-off basis (21%) or engaging with content about the community sector (20%).
- There are also many Australians open to engaging with the sector on an ongoing basis through regular volunteering (20%), becoming a member of a community organisation (18% no fee, 11% paid membership) and regular donations (16%).
- Only 2 in 10 Australians said they were not open to doing any of these activities in future (22%).

Despite their interest in getting involved, many face barriers to getting more involved or are focussed on other priorities.

- Half of the community said they would like to help out more in their local community but don't have the time (48%).
 - One in four say other activities are a priority for them (24%).
- A lack of confidence is also holding Australians back from getting involved in the community sector – particularly not feeling comfortable getting involved on their own (13%) and doubting if they have the right skills or experience (11%).
 - Others say they aren't aware of community organisations in their local area (55%) or wouldn't feel comfortable approaching an organisation to get involved (45%).
- Regardless of segment, a lack of time or energy, rather than a lack of interest or desire, was the most commonly cited barrier to being more involved in the community sector.



Executive Summary

Australians value the community sector, believe community organisations make a positive impact, and think the sector should receive more funding.

- Most think community organisations make the world a better place (71%).
- The majority of Australians think community organisations are good at helping address problems the government and private sector ignore (62%).
 - Few disagree with calls for the sector to receive more government funding (9% disagree) and most recognise more funding would enable the sector to serve the public more effectively (64%).
- Many Australians see helping people most in need as the main role of the community sector (69%).

Who benefits from the community sector?

- Few Australians think the community sector isn't important for people like them (21%) and most are happy to contribute to their community, even if it doesn't directly benefit them (63%).
- Australians are most likely to think there is enough social and economic support for amateur sports and amateur arts, however, many Australians are concerned there is not enough support for the elderly, people living with disability, and people struggling with their mental health.
 - Views are polarised when it comes to whether First Nations people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities are receiving enough support.

Australians are split on whether the role of the community sector extends to advocating on important social and political issues.

- Core values shape the extent to which people believe community organisations should be working to make the world more equitable and just (55% agree), and whether they see advocacy on social and political issues as an important function of community organisations (56% agree).
 - However, 49% think community organisations should stick to serving their communities and stay out of politics.



Executive Summary

Some Australians feel a sense of community while others feel socially isolated.

- Australians vary considerably in the extent to which they feel socially connected and part of their local community.
- More than half have friends in their local community with whom they can spend time (53%) and would feel comfortable asking my neighbours for help when I need it (52%).
- However, less than half feel connected to their local community (40%) and nearly three quarters believe people are becoming less connected to others and to their community (68%).

Attitudes to the community sector, its role and its impact are shaped by deeply held beliefs about our personal and collective responsibilities and by people's optimism or pessimism about society.

- Most Australians agree you should take care of yourself and your family first before helping other people (65%), though nearly as many also think people who are better off have a responsibility to help those who are less well off (55%).
- Only a third of Australians are optimistic about what the next generation will achieve (35%) and believe things are generally improving in society (27%).
- Meanwhile, half of the community feel people like them don't have a say about what the government does (47%) and are doubtful that political leaders are working in their best interests (46%).
- Perceptions of inequality are mixed, as are beliefs about people who depend on support. Many Australians think differences in income in Australia are too large (63%), though nearly half subscribe to the idea that the social benefits in Australia make people lazy (45%).

Note: While many Australians feel positive about the future and hopeful about what the next generation will achieve, there are also many Australians who feel pessimistic and powerless. This is important context for understanding Australians' views about the community sector.





Reflections

The good news

- Australians value the community sector and believe that community organisations fill critical gaps and make the world a better place.
- There is broad support for more government funding for the sector and recognition that increased funding leads to greater impact.
- Most Australians feel the community sector is important for people like them and are happy to contribute even if they don't directly benefit.
- Australians are engaging with the community sector in a variety of ways, and many are open to getting more involved.

Concerns

- Many Australians face barriers to contributing, particularly a lack of time and energy. Others are not aware of local organisations or lack the confidence to get involved.
- General disengagement and pessimism about the direction society is heading is shaping attitudes and level of engagement with the community sector.
- Australians are not on the same page about the community sector speaking out on social and political issues. Depending on their values, Australians either strongly support community organisations speaking out or think these organisations should stay out of politics.
- Perceptions of inequality and beliefs about who is deserving of support vary considerably and are shaped by deeply held values.

Opportunities for further research

- Delving deeper into the mindset, beliefs and behaviours of each segment to inform strategies to engage and communicate with different sections of the community.
- Understanding the drivers of disengagement among the most disengaged segments to identify solutions.
- Identifying the messages and values propositions relating to the community sector that resonate with each segment to inform communications and engagement.
- Pulling out key insights for philanthropy and community organisations who are increasingly reliant on bequests and donations.
- Understanding how young Australians feel about the sector and their engagement with it, to identify opportunities and challenges for the future of the sector.





About the Research

In December 2023, Our Community and the Community Council for Australia commissioned 89 Degrees East to generate new knowledge about Australians' attitudes and engagement with the community sector.

Context

Social cohesion in Australia is “under pressure and declining”.¹ Amidst a cost of living crisis and widening economic inequalities, participation in social, community and civic groups has fallen significantly.² Meanwhile, public trust in institutions and not for profits is decreasing,³ and the community sector continues to be impacted by “chronic under-investment”.⁴

Building Australians' sense of community is key to addressing decreasing social cohesion. This requires identifying barriers and drivers of engagement (and disengagement) in order to effectively build participation and support for the sector and to strengthen the social fabric.

“Charity and community-based organisations, and their volunteers, are critical to the social fabric of Australian communities”.

Andrew Leigh | Assistant Minister for Competition, Charities and Treasury

¹ Scanlon Foundation Research Institute, *Mapping Social Cohesion 2023*, 2023.

² Nicholas, Josh. “Australians aren't joining in anymore – and it appears to be having big political consequences.” *The Guardian*, 12 November 2023.

³ Edelman, *Edelman Trust Barometer. Australia Country Report*, 2022.

Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), *Australian Community Sector Survey: Carrying the costs of the crisis*, 2022.

The Research

Our Community and the Community Council for Australia (CCA) sought to generate new knowledge about community attitudes and interactions with community organisations to support the sector in its strategic, advocacy and communications goals.

89 Degrees East were engaged to paint a nuanced picture of these attitudes across distinct cohorts through delivery of a unique audience segmentation and a baseline measure of community attitudes and contributions to the sector.

The Community Compass adds depth to our understanding of how Australians think about and engage with the community sector. A ‘Compass’ is an audience segmentation, a well-utilised tool across the private sector that has traditionally been used to better understand, engage, target and mobilise audience cohorts, particularly when it comes to advocacy, action and behaviour change campaigns.

Segmentations establish what different people care about and believe in and identify specific opportunities and challenges for engaging and communicating with each segment.

Impact

Our Community and the CCA hope that the findings of this research will provide guidance for the sector and will equip Our Community and CCA's members, supporters and partners with the evidence they need to advocate for resources and reform, to cultivate greater levels of support from government and key stakeholders, and to support Australians to connect with and engage with their community.



Methodology

This research was designed to facilitate development of a unique segmentation of the Australian community based on their attitudes to, and engagement with, the community sector.

Sampling and data collection

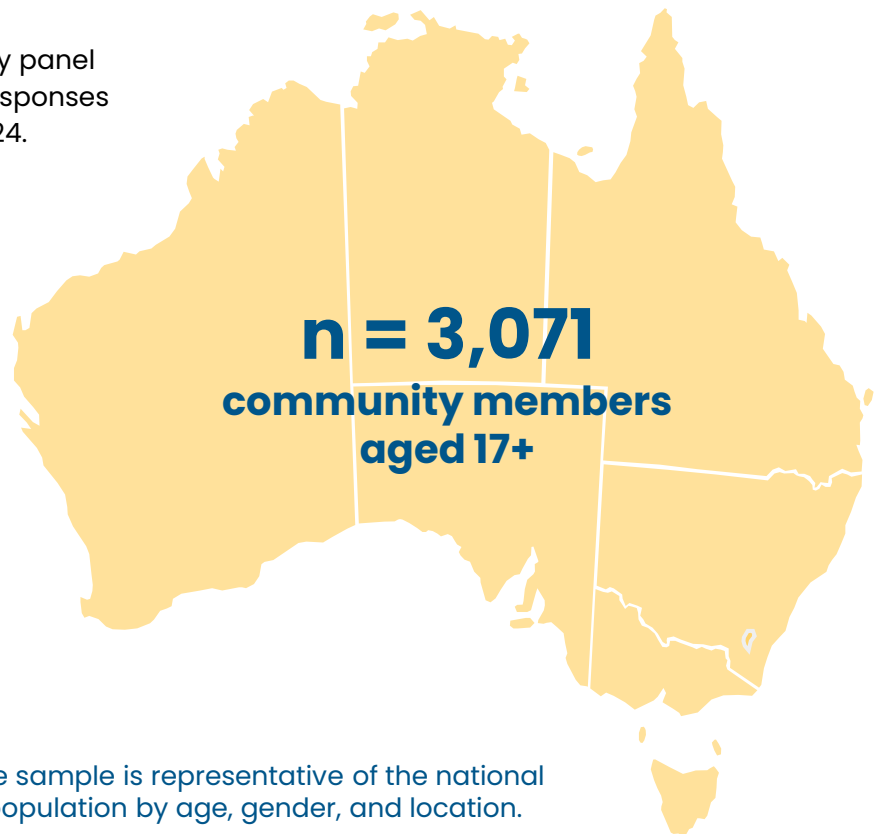
The survey instrument was designed to cover a range of topics relevant to the community sector, including engagement with and understanding of the sector, attitudes towards the community and social engagement, as well as media consumption habits and a range of demographic data.

The sample size for this study was $n=3,071$, representative of the Australian population in terms of age, gender, and location. The responses of 11 people who identified as non-binary / gender diverse have been weighted into the total sample.

The data was collected by the Online Research Unit (ORU) using their survey panel and was analysed by CPS Insights. Responses were collected in February–March 2024.

Survey design

The component of the survey used for the segmentation comprised of 39 Likert-scale attitudinal questions covering a range of community and social engagement-related topics. These questions (see page 13) were developed by adapting previous studies conducted by 89 Degrees East, adapting questions from the Australia Survey of Social Attitudes and brainstorming questions to cover additional community and social engagement-themes.





Key terms

After being asked to identify which types of organisations they thought were part of the community sector, participants were shown key definitions to ensure they had an understanding of the terms used throughout the survey.

Community sector

The community sector is a broad category of organisations and initiatives that operate for the benefit of a particular community or the public. Not-for-profits, charities and community-based organisations are examples of organisations that operate within the community sector.

Community organisation

A community organisation is any group or entity formed by individuals for a shared purpose. They are typically non-profit and operate to improve the well-being of the community they serve. Some examples include cultural/ethnic groups, local sports clubs, and aid/welfare groups.

Not-for-profit

The not-for-profit sector consists of organisations that operate for a purpose other than profit and serve a public interest of the community. Some examples include charities, foundations, advocacy groups, social service agencies, religious organisations, and educational institutions. They differ from community organisations in that they typically have paid employees and management structures.

Principal Component Analysis

The responses to the 39 attitudinal questions underwent a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to identify underlying 'factors' or themes. PCA is a statistical technique used to reduce the dimensionality of data while preserving trends and patterns. In this study, seven distinct factors were extracted from the responses. Examining each factor and the responses which were associated with them led to the following 'themes' being identified:

- 1. Level of community engagement** – Associated with positive feeling towards the community sector and a desire to contribute to one's own community.
- 2. Individualistic mindset** – Associated with a belief that enough help already exists for those who need it, and a lack of belief in the utility of the sector.
- 3. Sense of isolation** – Associated with a belief that they lack control over their lives, are not strongly connected to their community and lack strong relationships.
- 4. Sense of optimism** – Associated with a belief that society is improving and that our institutions are working as intended.
- 5. Disillusionment** – Associated with a belief that the sector is not performing its role effectively in addressing society's challenges.
- 6. Appetite for advocacy** – Associated with a belief that the sector should be encouraged and supporting in speaking out and campaigning on issues relevant to their mission.
- 7. Desire for more funding for sector** – Associated with a belief that community sector organisations deserve and would be more effective if they were to receive additional public funding.





Segmentation

A K-Means Clustering was performed on the resulting factor loadings for each respondent, grouping them into clusters ('segments') based on how similar their scores were across each of the factors (specifically, by minimising the 'distance' between respondents within each cluster). After experimenting with differing numbers of clusters, it was determined that grouping respondents into six clusters provided the optimal balance between complexity and explanatory power.

Profile construction

Once the segments had been constructed, each segment was examined to understand its demographic composition and differences across attitudinal questions. The following section describes these profiles.

Literature review

The research objectives and methodology were informed by an initial literature review, conducted in December 2023. 89 Degrees East mapped key insights from publicly available research and reports in order to understand where sentiment towards the community sector and organisations was well-established and to identify knowledge gaps. The attitudinal statements and segmentation model were developed so as to offer new insights about Australians' relationships with the community sector.





Attitudinal statements used in this analysis

Respondents were asked *How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?* 5-point scale: Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (5).

- I feel connected with my local community.
- I sometimes feel like I lack companionship / friendship / relationships.
- I would feel comfortable approaching a community organisation if I wanted to.
- I am aware of the community organisations in my local area.
- People have become less connected to others and their community.
- I would feel comfortable asking my neighbours for help when I need it.
- I would like to help out more in my local community but don't know how.
- I would like to help out more in my local community but don't have the time.
- I have friends in my local community whom I can spend time with.
- The main role of the community sector is to help people who are most in need of support.
- The community sector isn't really important for people like me.
- The community sector should speak out on social and political issues of importance.
- Community organisations should stick to serving their community and stay out of politics.
- The more time people have to be involved in community activities the stronger the community is.
- The community sector should work towards reforming our society to make it more equitable and just.
- Community organisations are good at helping address problems that the government and private sector ignore.
- Overall, the world is a better place because of the work done by community organisations.
- People in the community sector (often working in not-for-profits) should be paid the same as if they were working at a similar level outside the sector.
- The community sector should receive more public funding from the government.
- There are too many community organisations with little impact/results to show for it.





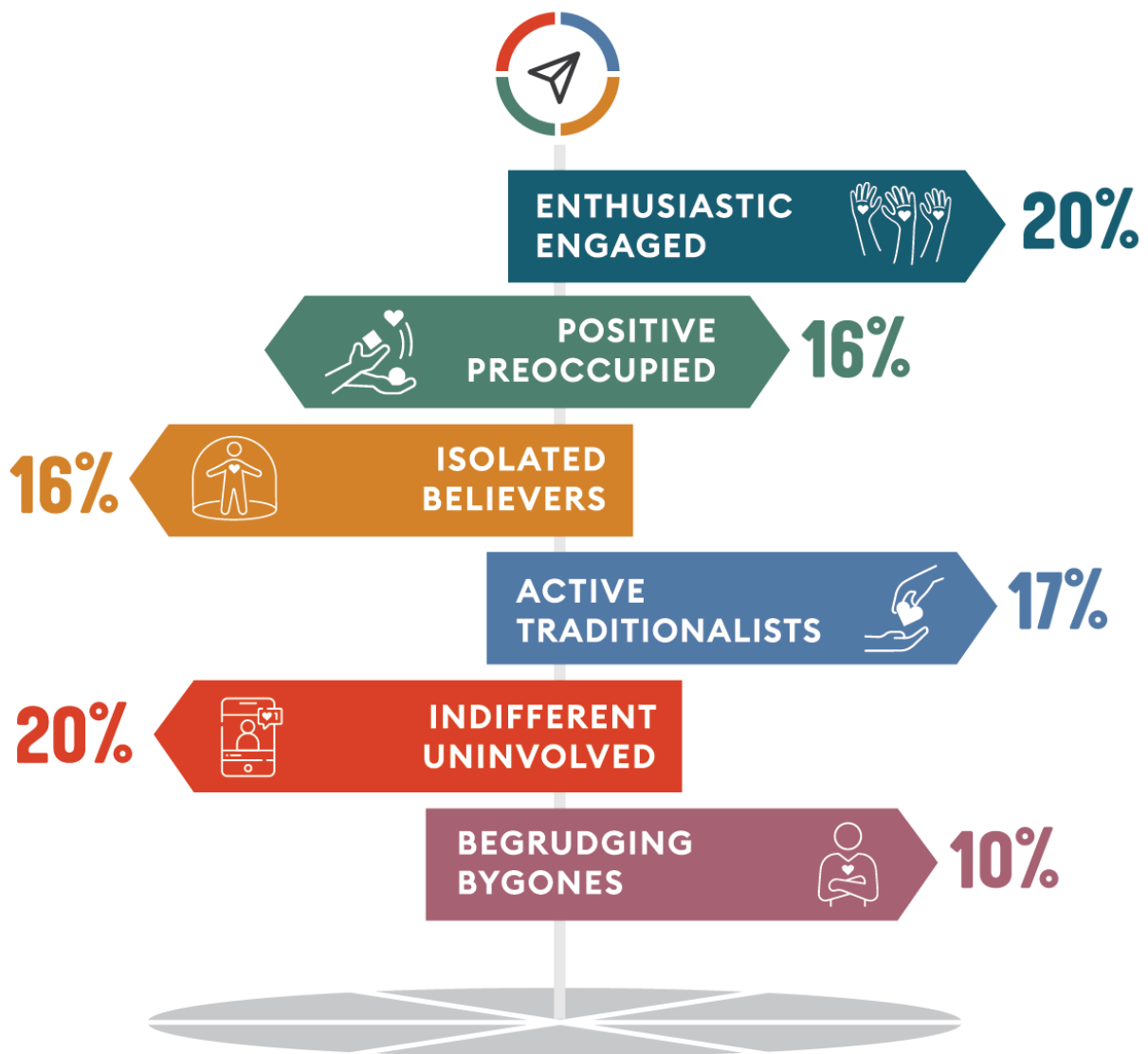
Attitudinal statements used in this analysis (cont.)

- Community organisations should be able to fund themselves without government help.
- The community sector would be able to serve the public more effectively with more government funding.
- The community sector would be able to serve the public more effectively with more government funding.
- I am happy to contribute to my community, even if it doesn't directly benefit me.
- People who are better off have a responsibility to help those who are less well off.
- I contribute more to my community than I get back from it.
- Things are generally improving in society.
- I feel optimistic about what the next generation will achieve in this world.
- I have faith that our political leaders are working in my best interests.
- You should take care of yourself and your family first, before helping other people.
- There is enough social and economic support in my community for the elderly.
- There is enough social and economic support for amateur sports in my community.
- There is enough social and economic support for amateur arts in my community.
- There is enough social and economic support in my community for people with a disability.
- There is enough social and economic support in my community for people who speak languages other than English and/or have recently arrived in Australia.
- There is enough social and economic support in my community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- There is enough social and economic support for people struggling with their mental health in my community.
- Differences in income in Australia are too large.
- The social benefits in Australia make people lazy.
- People like me don't have any say about what the government does.





The Six Segments





ENTHUSIASTIC ENGAGED

20%
of the
community

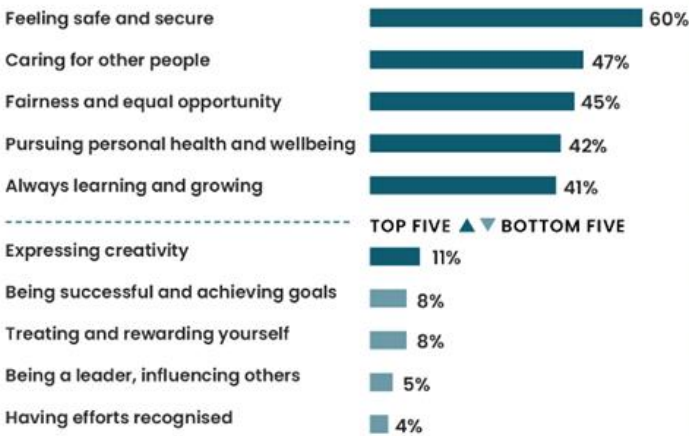
The Enthusiastic Engaged are the strongest supporters of the community sector and are actively involved in their local community. They believe the sector plays a very important role and consider the sector to be making a positive impact and deserving of more funding from the government. They see advocacy as an important part of the work of community organisations and believe the sector helps to create a more just and more equitable world.

They hold broadly progressive values and most value caring for others, fairness and equal opportunity alongside personal health and safety. They are less likely to place

value in having influence over others, being successful and being recognised for their efforts. They are more likely to feel connected to their community and to be actively contributing to their local community. People in this segment also have a good understanding of the types of organisations that make up the sector.

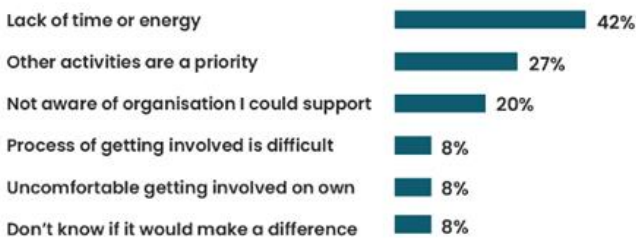
This segment are more engaged with the news (online, TV and radio) and regularly use social media (mostly Facebook and YouTube). Women and older people are overrepresented in the Enthusiastic Engaged, as are people with a university education.

WHAT THEY VALUE



*% selected in top 5 values

BARRIERS TO SECTOR CONTRIBUTION

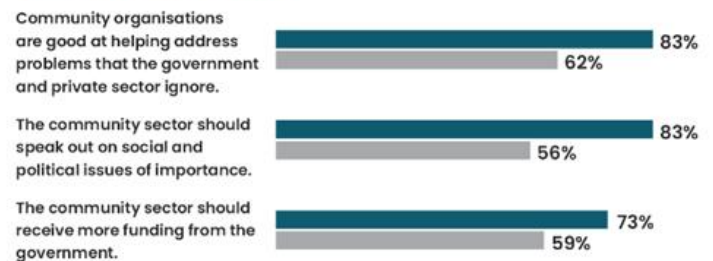


TOP MEDIA SOURCES

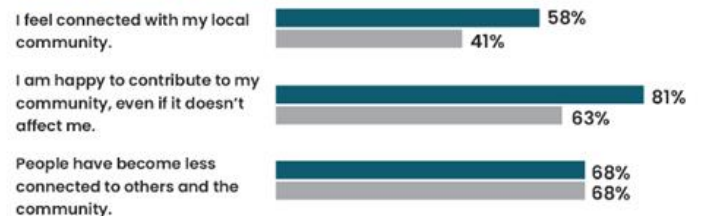


ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

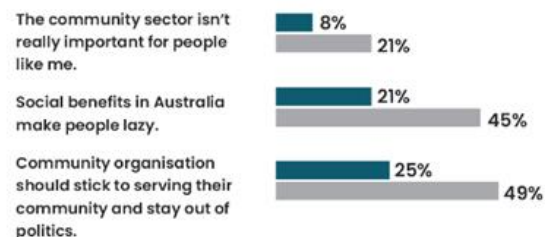
ATTITUDES TOWARDS SECTOR



CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY



NEGATIVE SENTIMENTS

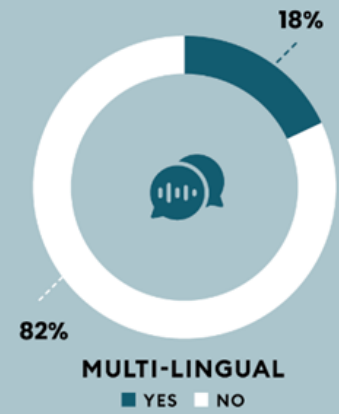
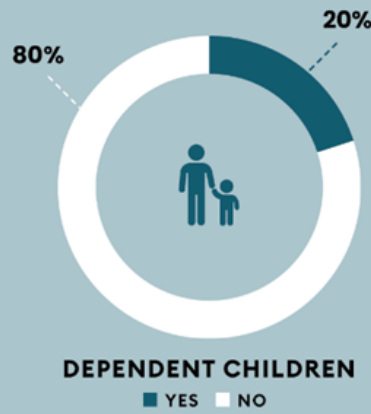
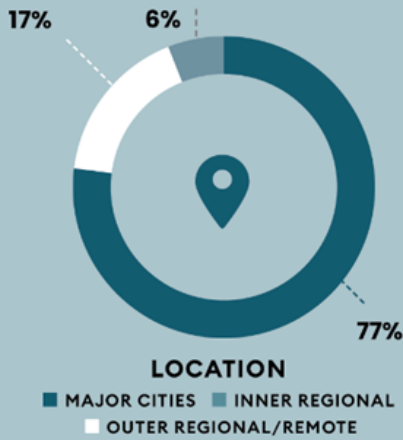
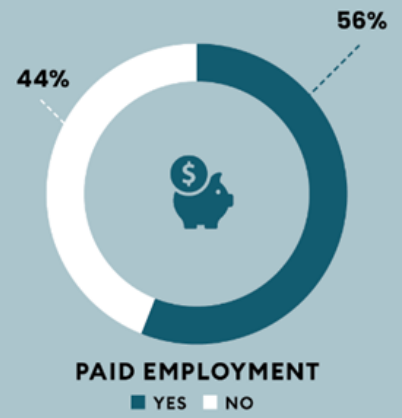
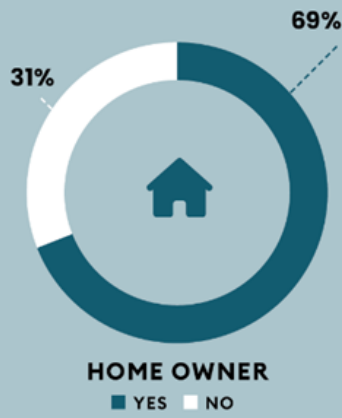
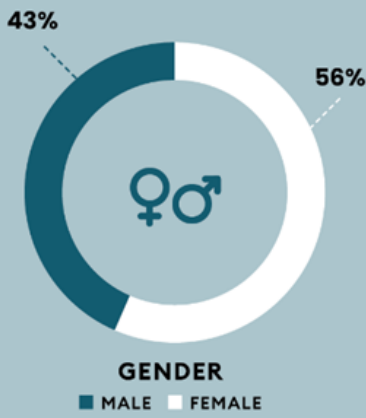


----- *% agree

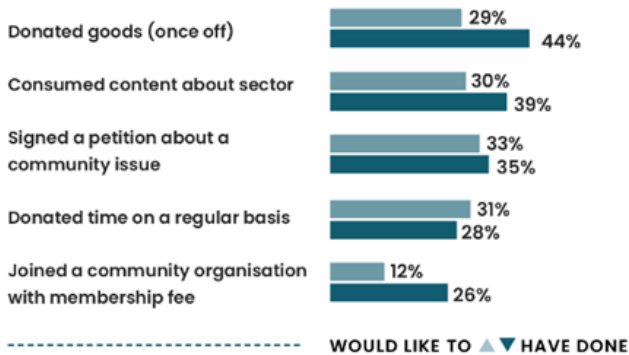
ENTHUSIASTIC ENGAGED ▲ ▼ TOTAL SAMPLE



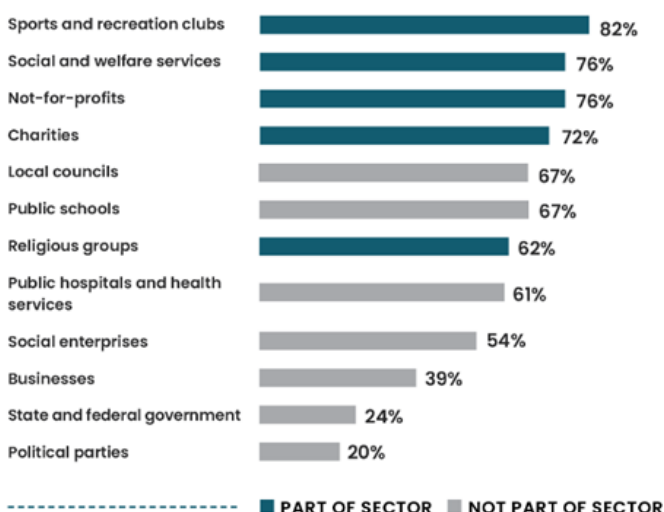
*% of segment who use on a weekly or more basis



CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR



WHO THEY THINK IS PART OF THE COMMUNITY SECTOR



AGE



7% Person with a disability

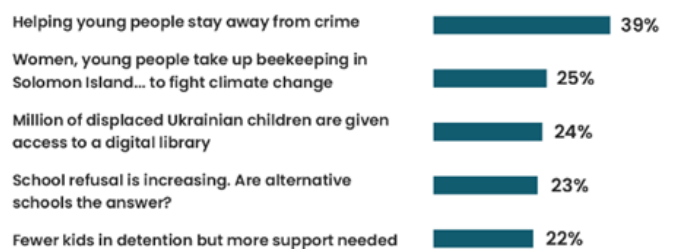
6% LGBTQIA+



EDUCATION



"MOST LIKELY TO CLICK ON"*



*Most likely to click on from a list of news articles



POSITIVE PREOCCUPIED

16%
of the
community

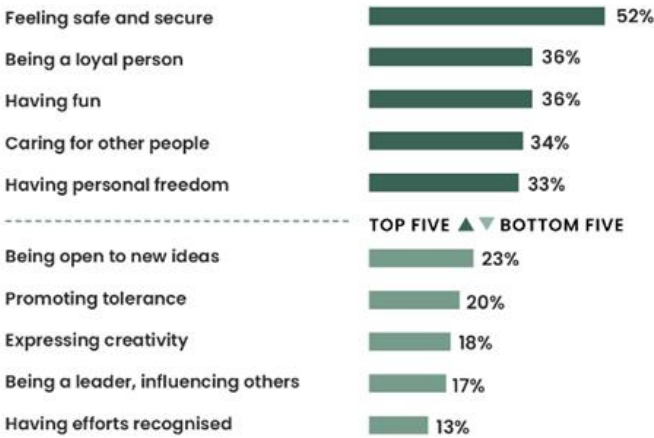
The Positive Preoccupied are broadly supportive of the community sector but are less likely to be active contributors. They believe the community sector is a force for good and that it deserves more funding, and support community organisations speaking out on important issues. They feel connected to their own community, but are less likely to see the community sector as important for people like them.

This segment are more likely to be people with young families juggling work, raising children and other responsibilities. As a result, they are less likely to be

contributing directly but continue to advocate for the sector amongst their family and friends. Typically, they feel time-poor and lack the resources or capacity to do as much as they would like in their community.

This group is highly media-literate, engaging with both traditional and social media at above-average levels. They are younger on average, more likely to be university educated and more likely to be in paid work and living in major cities. They are also slightly more likely to have worked in the community sector.

WHAT THEY VALUE



*% selected in top 5 values

BARRIERS TO SECTOR CONTRIBUTION

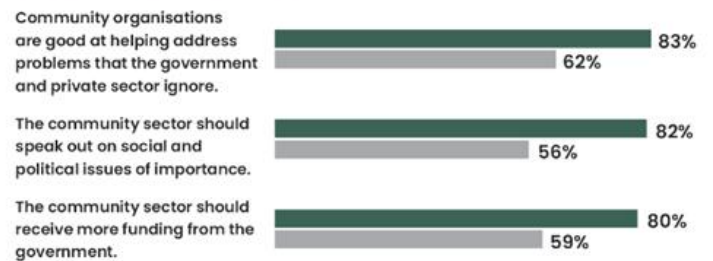


TOP MEDIA SOURCES

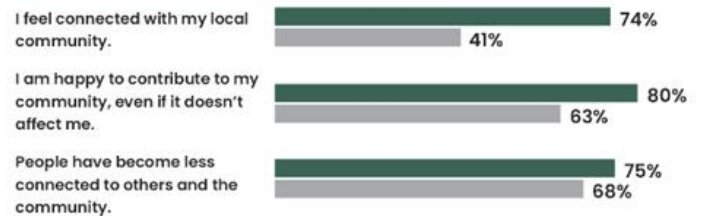


ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

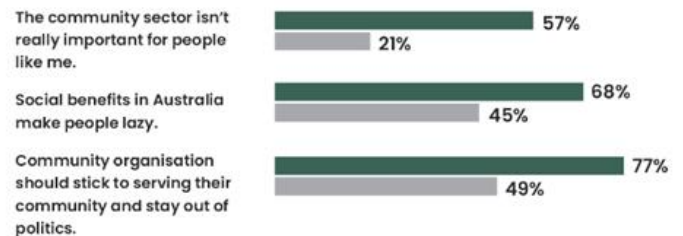
ATTITUDES TOWARDS SECTOR



CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY



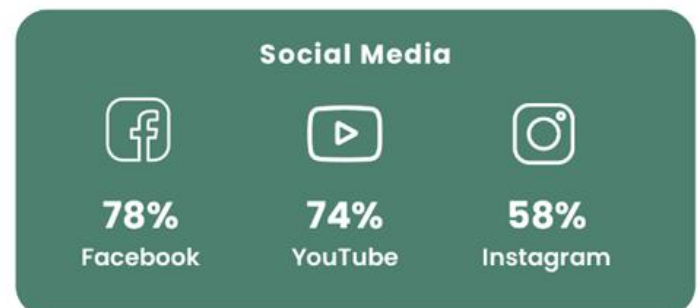
NEGATIVE SENTIMENTS

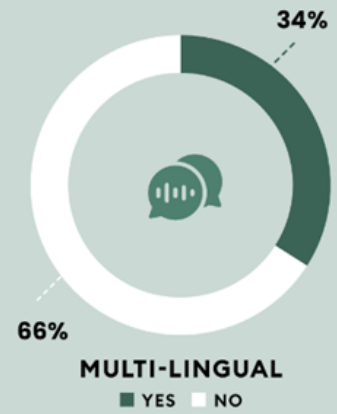
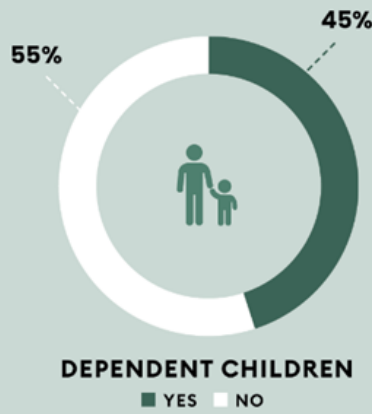
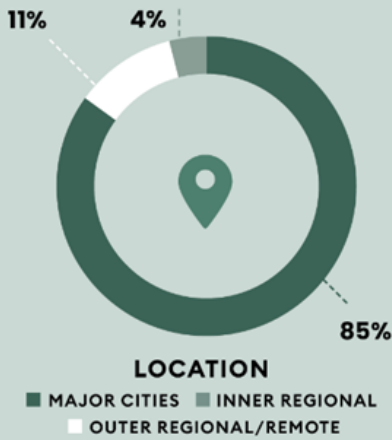
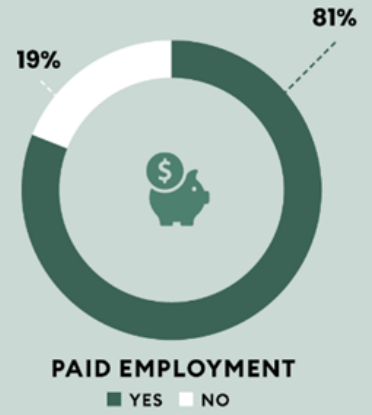
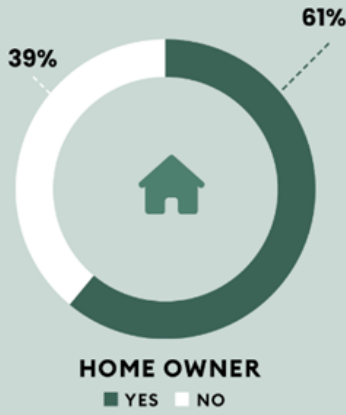
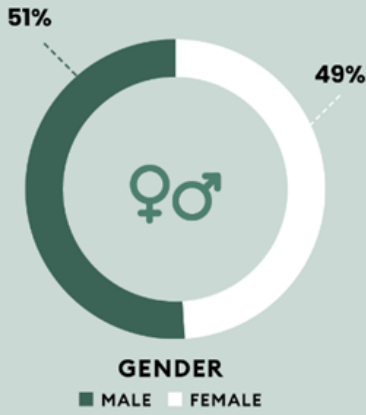


----- *% agree

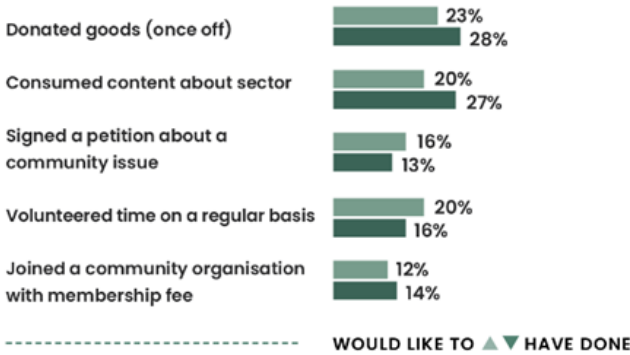
POSITIVE PREOCCUPIED ▲ ▼ TOTAL SAMPLE

*% of segment who use on a weekly or more basis

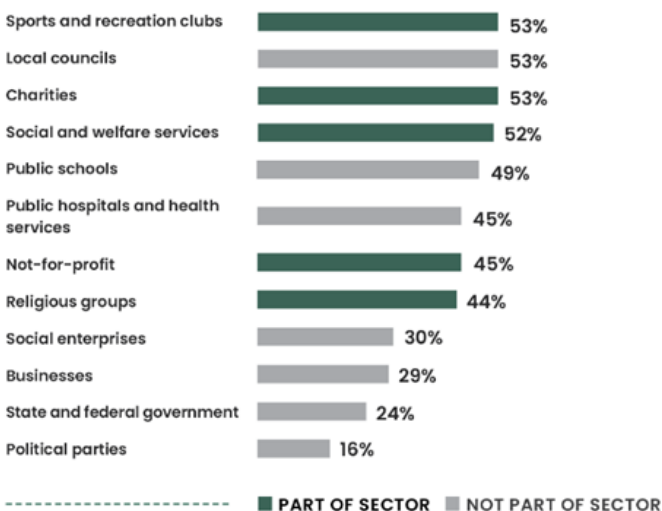




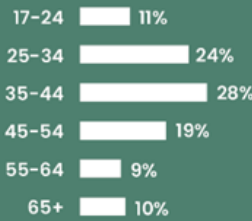
CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR



WHO THEY THINK IS PART OF THE COMMUNITY SECTOR



AGE



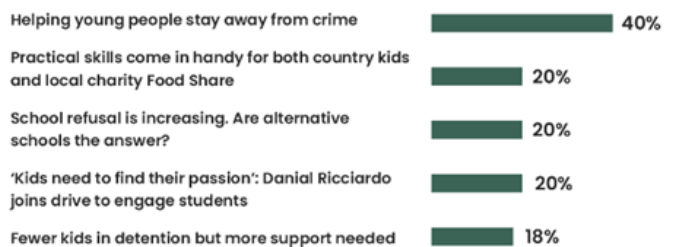
9% Person with a disability

9% LGBTQIA+

EDUCATION



"MOST LIKELY TO CLICK ON"



*Most likely to click on from a list of news articles



ISOLATED BELIEVERS

16%
of the
community

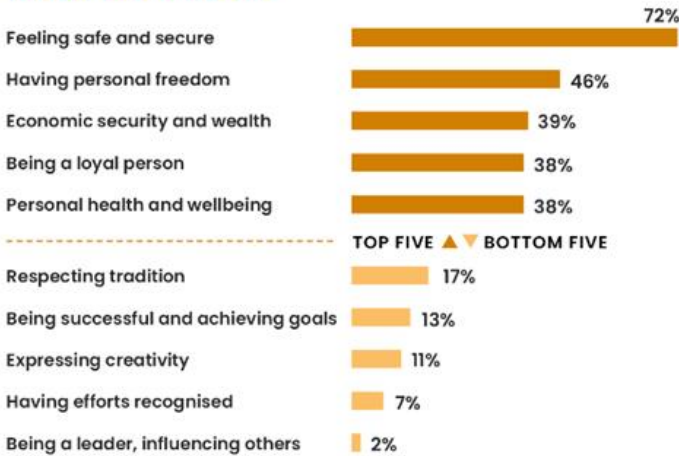
The Isolated Believers are broadly supportive of the community sector despite being the most economically and socially vulnerable segment. They think the community sector should receive more government funding as it fills critical gaps left by government and the private sector. They are supportive of community organisations speaking out on social and political issues but believe service delivery should be the primary focus.

Despite their positive feelings towards the sector, this segment are socially isolated and lack a sense of community. They do not feel represented by decision makers and, given their circumstances, value personal

security and safety above all else. They believe differences in income in Australia are too large and that those who are better off have a responsibility to help others. Many in this segment would like to be more involved in the sector than they are but face barriers to contributing – particularly a lack of time and energy and not feeling comfortable getting involved.

People in this segment are more likely to be unemployed and looking for work, more likely to be living with a disability, and more likely to be renting. Women are also overrepresented, while people with a university education are underrepresented.

WHAT THEY VALUE



*% selected in top 5 values

BARRIERS TO SECTOR CONTRIBUTION



TOP MEDIA SOURCES

Traditional Media

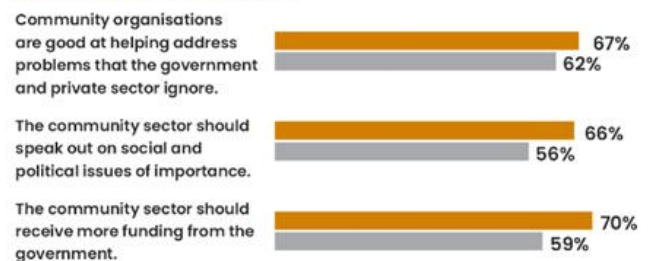


Social Media

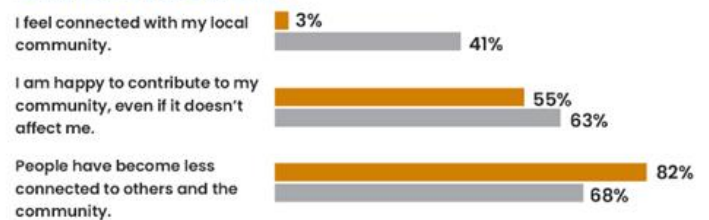


ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

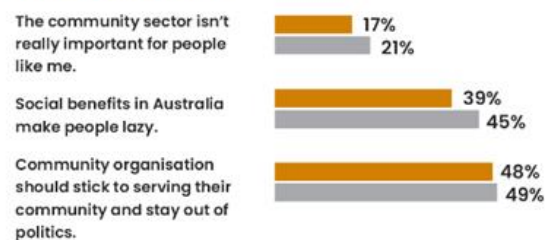
ATTITUDES TOWARDS SECTOR



CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY

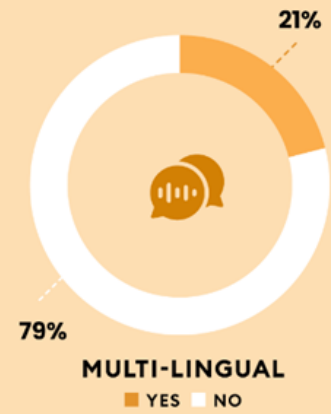
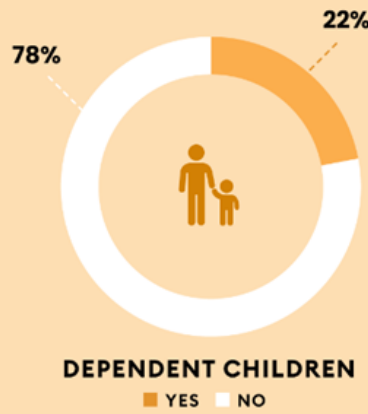
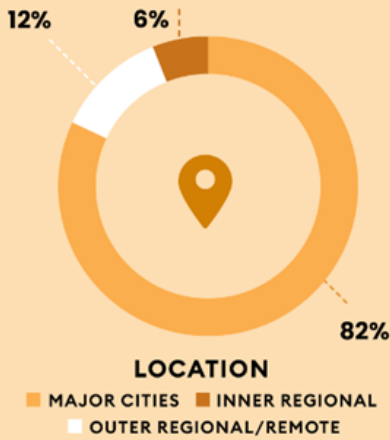
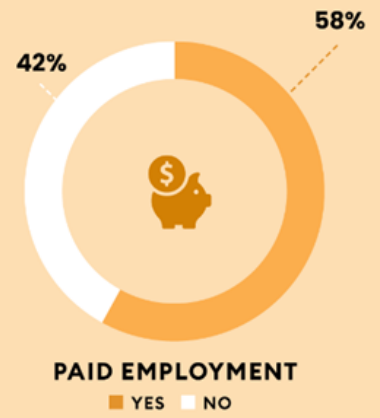
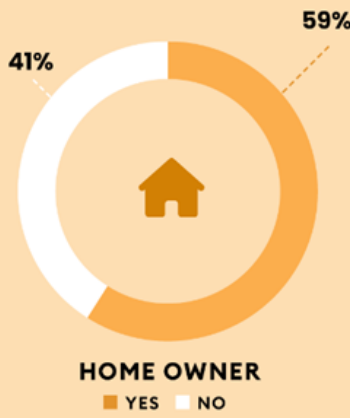
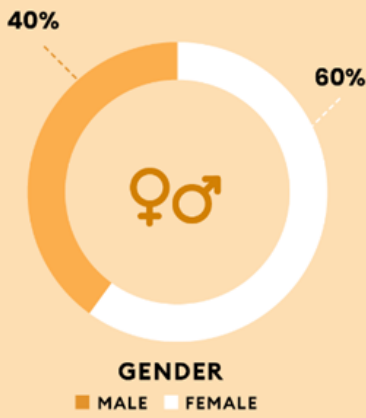


NEGATIVE SENTIMENTS

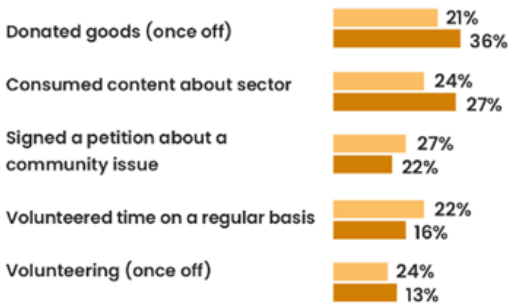


----- *% agree ENTHUSIASTIC ENGAGED ▲ ▼ TOTAL SAMPLE

*% of segment who use on a weekly or more basis

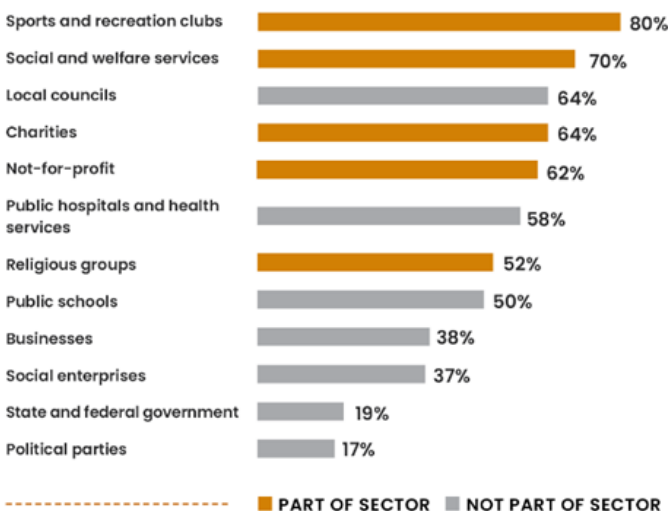


CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR

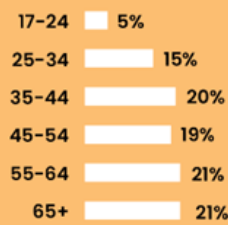


--- WOULD LIKE TO ▲ ▼ HAVE DONE

WHO THEY THINK IS PART OF THE COMMUNITY SECTOR



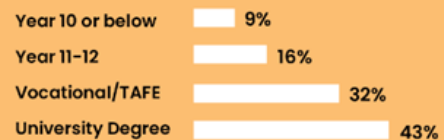
AGE



16% Person with a disability

10% LGBTQIA+

EDUCATION



"MOST LIKELY TO CLICK ON"



*Most likely to click on from a list of news articles



ACTIVE TRADITIONALISTS

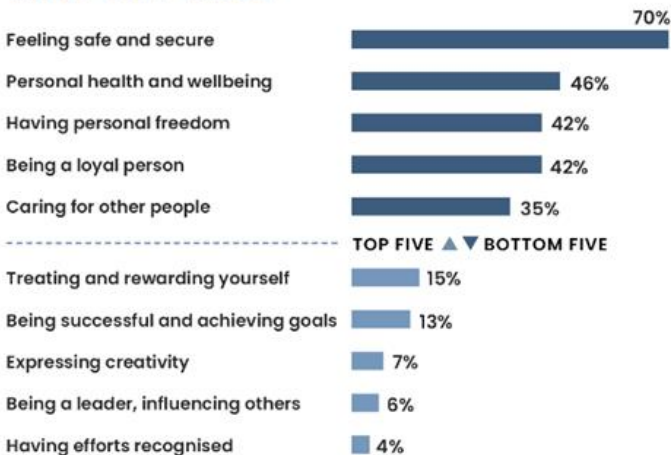
17%
of the
community

The **Active Traditionalists** are one of the most community-focused segments, actively contributing through donations and volunteering at much higher rates than average. They have a traditionalist mindset which shapes their belief that the role of the community sector is to care for those in need rather than getting involved in politics. They are big believers in giving back to the community and believe the sector should receive more funding to help those they see as deserving of support (this segment are more likely to believe social benefits make people lazy and that people need to take more responsibility for themselves).

This segment feel very connected to their community and the people around them, but are worried that in general people are less connected than they used to be. They are more likely to prefer conservative values: security, freedom, loyalty but also highly value caring for others.

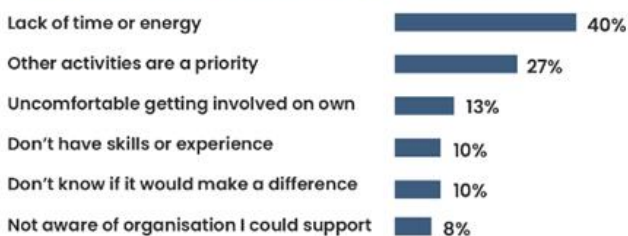
Active Traditionalists tend to be older and are more likely to live in regional areas, to own their own home, and are less likely to have dependent children. They gravitate towards traditional media, including TV, radio and newspapers, and make limited use of social media other than Facebook (reflective of the older profile of this segment).

WHAT THEY VALUE



*% selected in top 5 values

BARRIERS TO SECTOR CONTRIBUTION



TOP MEDIA SOURCES

Traditional Media



70%

Radio
Broadcasts



67%

Online news



67%

Commercial
TV (7, 9, 10)

Social Media



71%

Facebook



61%

YouTube



44%

Instagram

ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

ATTITUDES TOWARDS SECTOR

Community organisations are good at helping address problems that the government and private sector ignore. **69%** (vs 62%)

The community sector should speak out on social and political issues of importance. **39%** (vs 56%)

The community sector should receive more funding from the government. **82%** (vs 59%)

CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY

I feel connected with my local community. **51%** (vs 41%)

I am happy to contribute to my community, even if it doesn't affect me. **76%** (vs 63%)

People have become less connected to others and the community. **78%** (vs 68%)

NEGATIVE SENTIMENTS

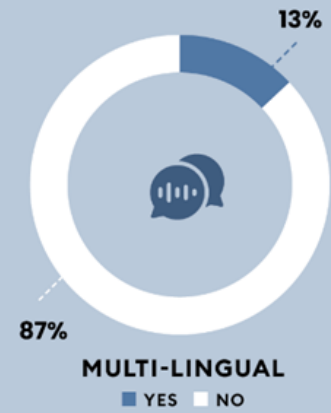
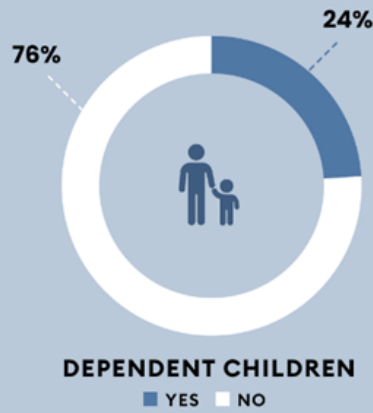
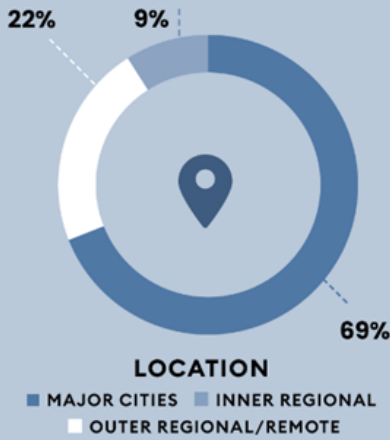
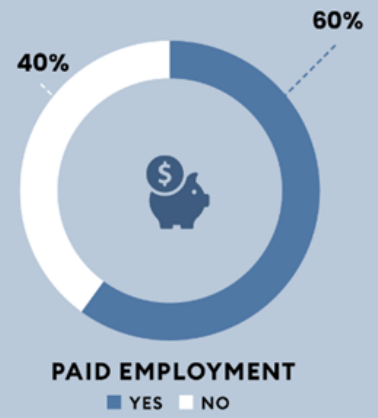
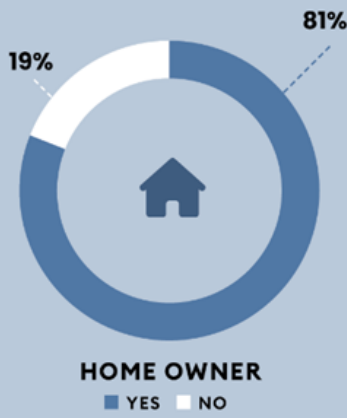
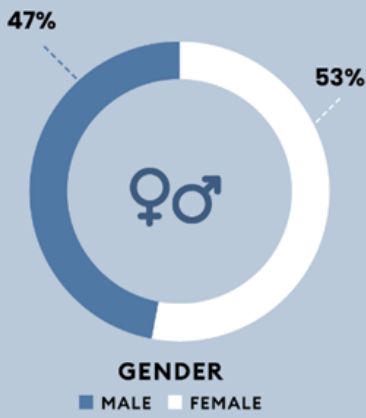
The community sector isn't really important for people like me. **7%** (vs 21%)

Social benefits in Australia make people lazy. **66%** (vs 45%)

Community organisation should stick to serving their community and stay out of politics. **70%** (vs 49%)

----- *% agree ENTHUSIASTIC ENGAGED ▲ ▼ TOTAL SAMPLE

*% of segment who use on a weekly or more basis

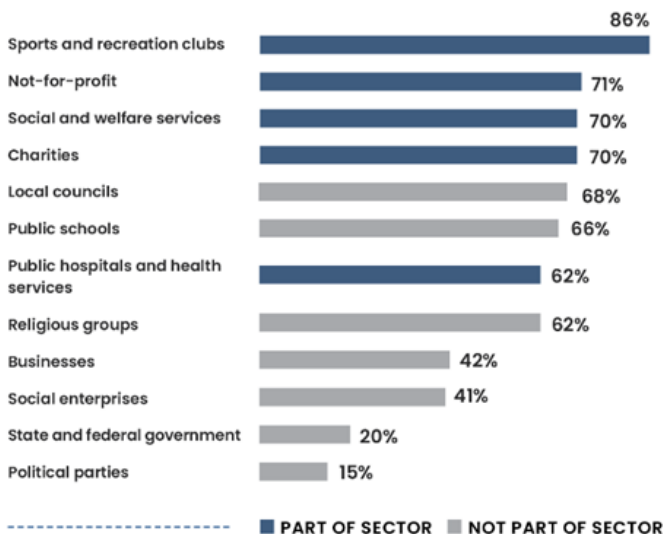


CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR



WOULD LIKE TO ▲▼ HAVE DONE

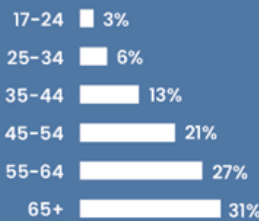
WHO THEY THINK IS PART OF THE COMMUNITY SECTOR



■ PART OF SECTOR ■ NOT PART OF SECTOR



AGE



8% Person with a disability

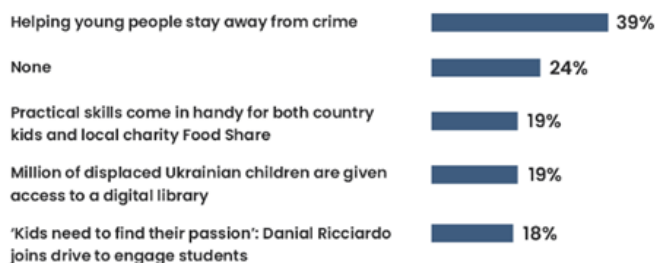
5% LGBTQIA+



EDUCATION



"MOST LIKELY TO CLICK ON"



*Most likely to click on from a list of news articles



INDIFFERENT UNINVOLVED

20%
of the community

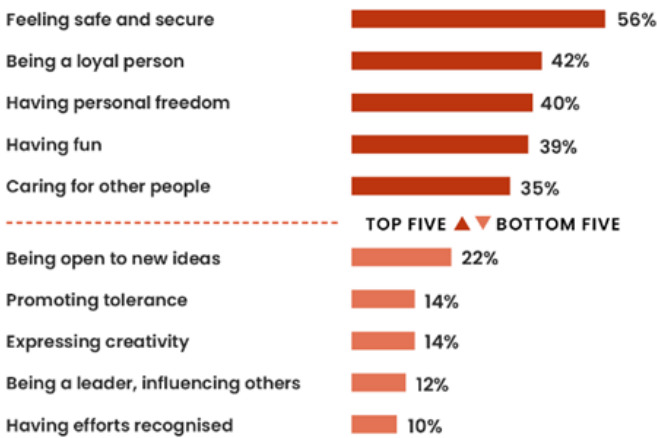
The Indifferent Uninvolved aren't thinking about the community sector. They hold neutral views or have no opinion about community organisations and their impact and have a limited relationship with the sector. The apathy of this segment is reflective of broader disengagement rather than disinterest in the community sector specifically.

This segment are somewhat socially connected – they just don't see the community sector as particularly important for people like them. They are less likely to contribute to the sector but when they do engage it tends to be in easy,

time-friendly ways such as one-off donations or signing a petition. This segment are more likely to express insular values like 'having fun', 'treating and rewarding yourself' and 'being successful and achieving goals', and less likely to value 'fairness and equal opportunity'.

This group skews younger and is highly concentrated in major cities. Their media preferences reflect this age skew: less likely to engage with 'traditional' media sources, more likely to be regular users of social media (particularly newer platforms such as TikTok and Snapchat).

WHAT THEY VALUE



*% selected in top 5 values

BARRIERS TO SECTOR CONTRIBUTION

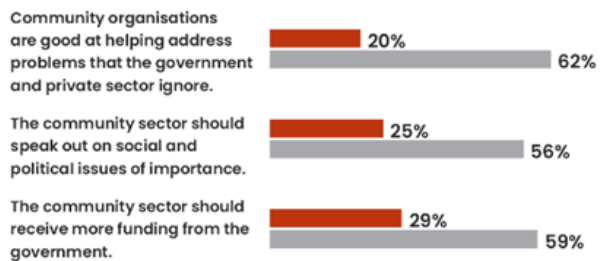


TOP MEDIA SOURCES

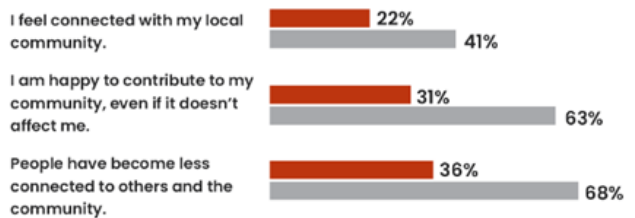


ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

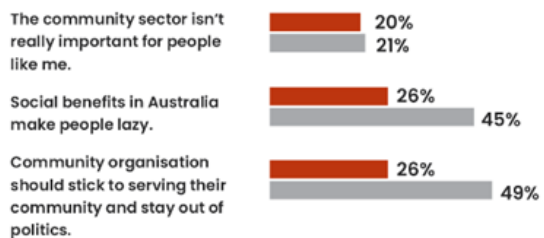
ATTITUDES TOWARDS SECTOR



CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY



NEGATIVE SENTIMENTS

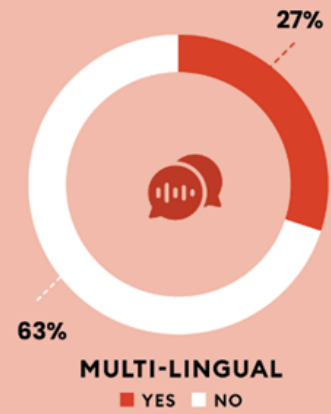
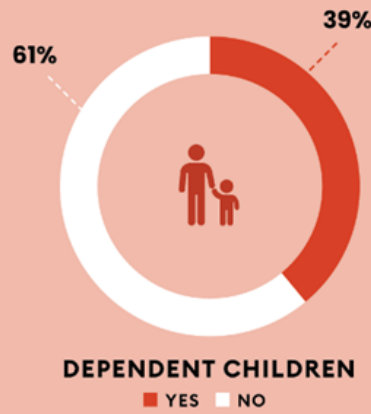
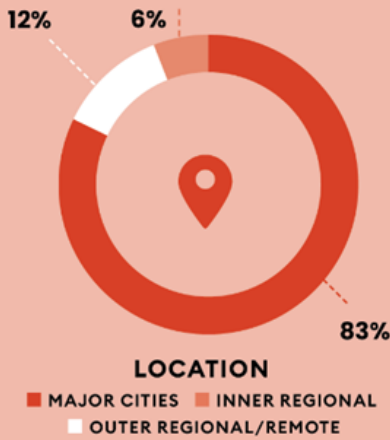
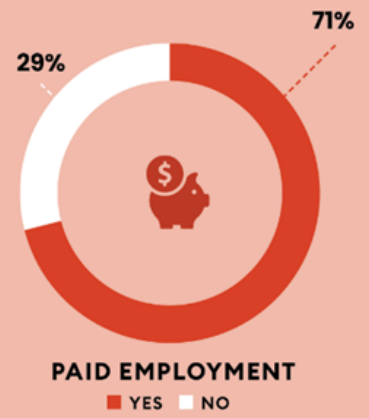
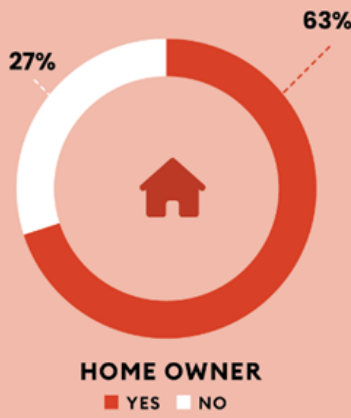
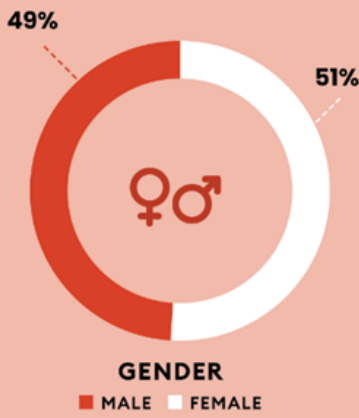


----- *% agree

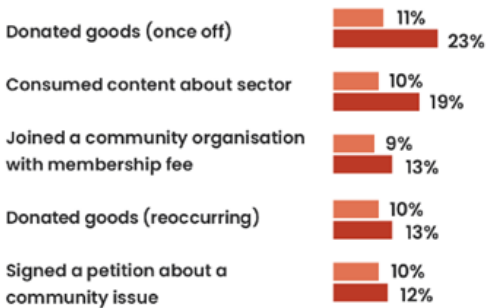
ENTHUSIASTIC ENGAGED ▲ ▼ TOTAL SAMPLE

*% of segment who use on a weekly or more basis



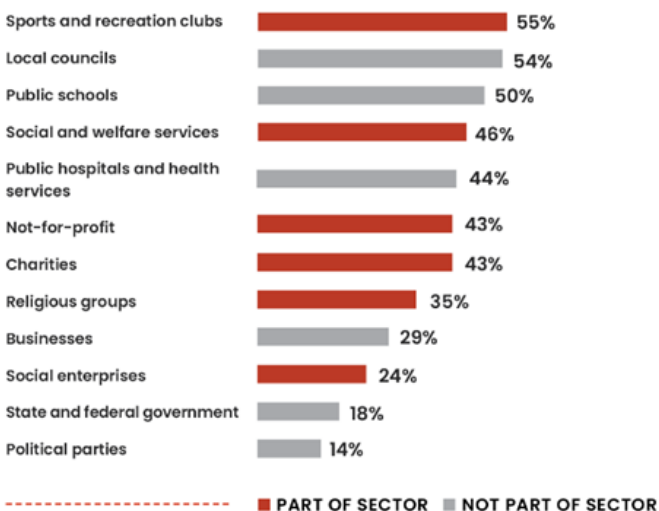


CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR



WOULD LIKE TO ▲ ▼ HAVE DONE

WHO THEY THINK IS PART OF THE COMMUNITY SECTOR



AGE



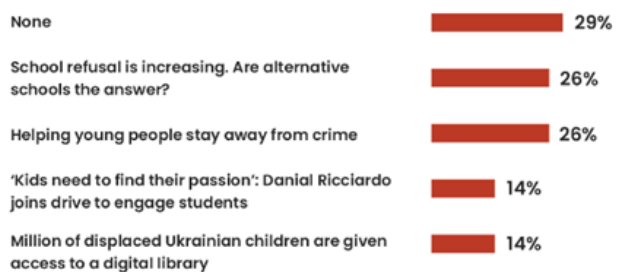
9% Person with a disability

6% LGBTQIA+

EDUCATION



"MOST LIKELY TO CLICK ON"



*Most likely to click on from a list of news articles



BEGRUDGING BYGONES

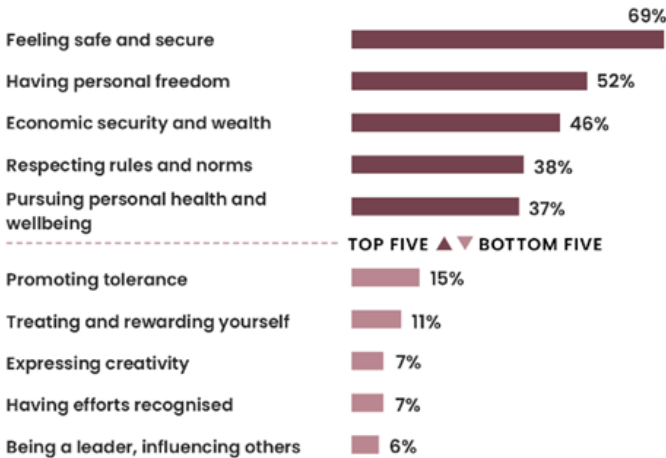
10%
of the
community

The **Begrudging Bygones** contribute to the community at above-average levels but have a pessimistic view of the community sector and society as a whole. This segment are concerned society is going downhill and are nostalgic for a time when people were more connected to their communities. They express more conservative values, particularly personal freedom, security, and adherence to rules and norms. Their values shape their belief that community organisations are for caring for people and not for promoting equity and advocating on social and political issues. Given their negative view of the sector (and of people they see as dependent on welfare), they don't

think the sector should receive government funding.

Despite these views, this cohort are regular contributors to the community sector, particularly through donations, volunteering and by being members of community organisations. Demographically, the Begrudging Bygones are more likely to be older and male, and they are slightly more likely to live in a regional area. Their information comes primarily from commercial TV and online news websites, and they generally have an above average understanding of the types of organisations that make up the community sector.

WHAT THEY VALUE



*% selected in top 5 values

BARRIERS TO SECTOR CONTRIBUTION

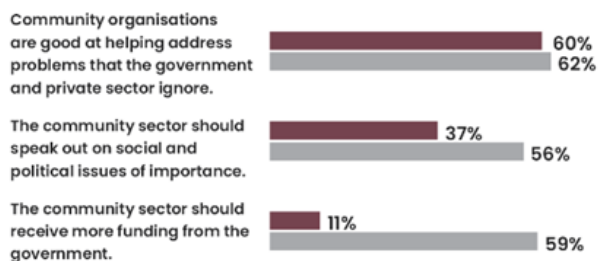


TOP MEDIA SOURCES

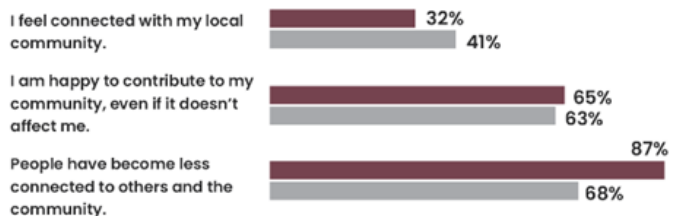


ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

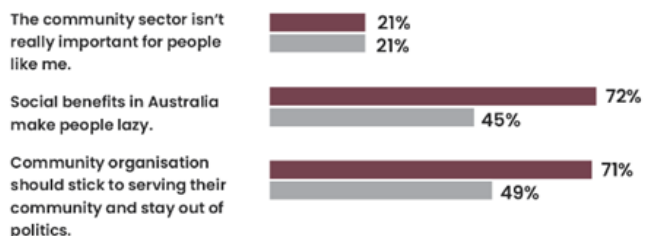
ATTITUDES TOWARDS SECTOR



CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY



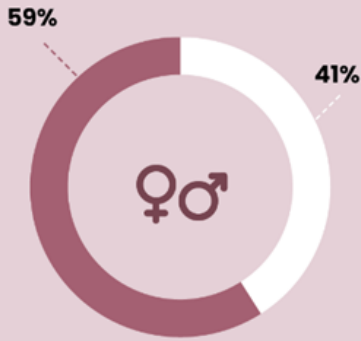
NEGATIVE SENTIMENTS



----- *% agree

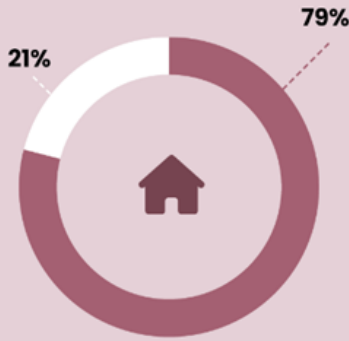
ENTHUSIASTIC ENGAGED ▲ ▼ TOTAL SAMPLE

*% of segment who use on a weekly or more basis



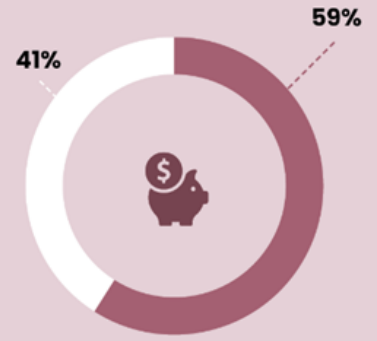
GENDER

MALE FEMALE



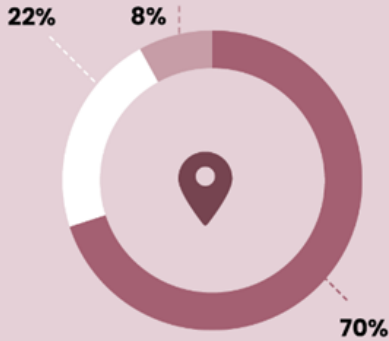
HOME OWNER

YES NO



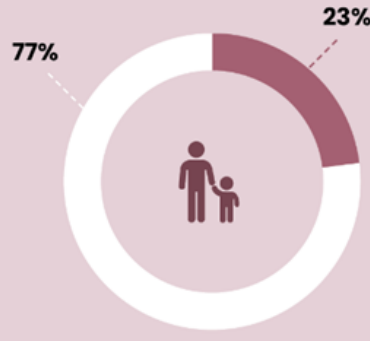
PAID EMPLOYMENT

YES NO



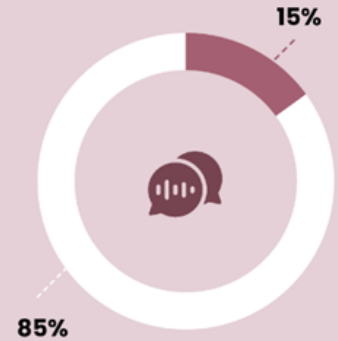
LOCATION

MAJOR CITIES INNER REGIONAL OUTER REGIONAL/REMOTE



DEPENDENT CHILDREN

YES NO



MULTI-LINGUAL

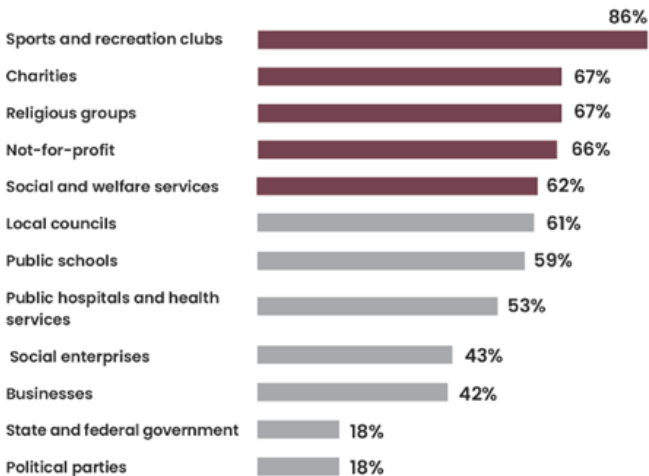
YES NO

CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR



WOULD LIKE TO ▲ ▼ HAVE DONE

WHO THEY THINK IS PART OF THE COMMUNITY SECTOR



PART OF SECTOR NOT PART OF SECTOR



AGE



9% Person with a disability

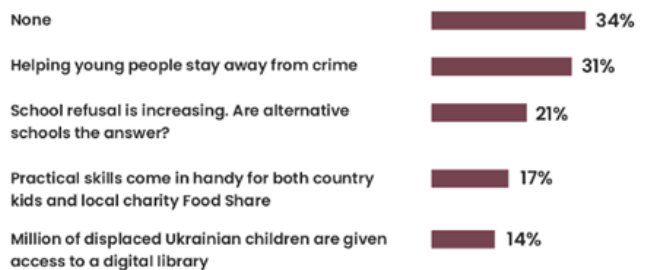
4% LGBTQIA+



EDUCATION



"MOST LIKELY TO CLICK ON"



*Most likely to click on from a list of news articles



Detailed Findings | Awareness

This section reflects Australians' awareness of the types of organisations that make up the community sector.

Conflating the community sector and the public sector

Australians have a mixed understanding of the types of organisations that are part of the community sector. This may reflect a limited understanding of the sector as well as a conflation of the *community* and *public* sectors in people's minds. Note, this question was asked before respondents were shown definitions of the community sector, community organisations and not-for-profits.

- **Sports and recreation clubs** are the type of organisation most commonly associated with the community sector (73% think they are part of the community sector).
- The next most commonly identified are **social and welfare services** (62%), **charities** (61%) **not-for-profits** (60%) and **religious groups** (53%). Fewer identified **social enterprises** as part of the community sector (38%).
- Public sector organisations such as **local councils** (61%), **public schools** (59%) and **public hospitals and health services** (54%) are commonly misidentified as being part of the community sector.
- A substantial number of Australians also misidentified **businesses** (36%), **state and federal government** (21%) and **political parties** (17%) are part of the community sector.

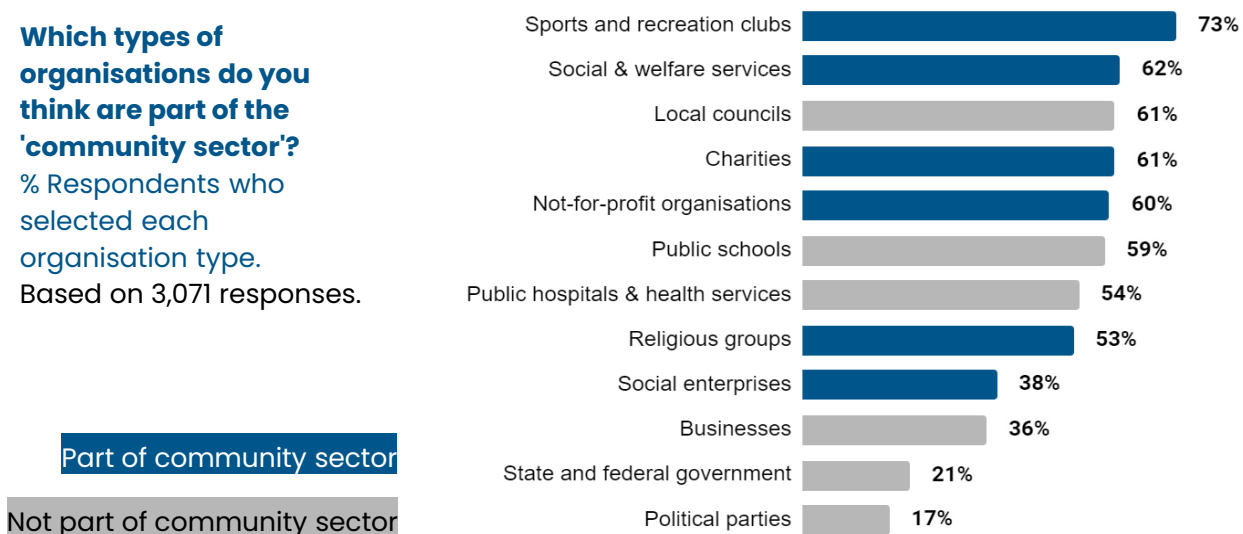


Researchers' comment

Segments who contribute most to their local community have the greatest understanding of which types of organisations make up the sector.

Which types of organisations do you think are part of the 'community sector'?

% Respondents who selected each organisation type.
Based on 3,071 responses.





Detailed Findings | Attitudes

This section outlines the Australian community's responses to attitudinal Likert-scale questions about the community sector, respondents' sense of connectedness and connection to their local community, their experience and views towards contributing to the sector and their beliefs about society more broadly.

The community sector plays an important role

Most Australians believe community organisations make a positive difference in the world and help to fill critical gaps left by government and the private sector. They see helping people in need as the primary role of the community sector.

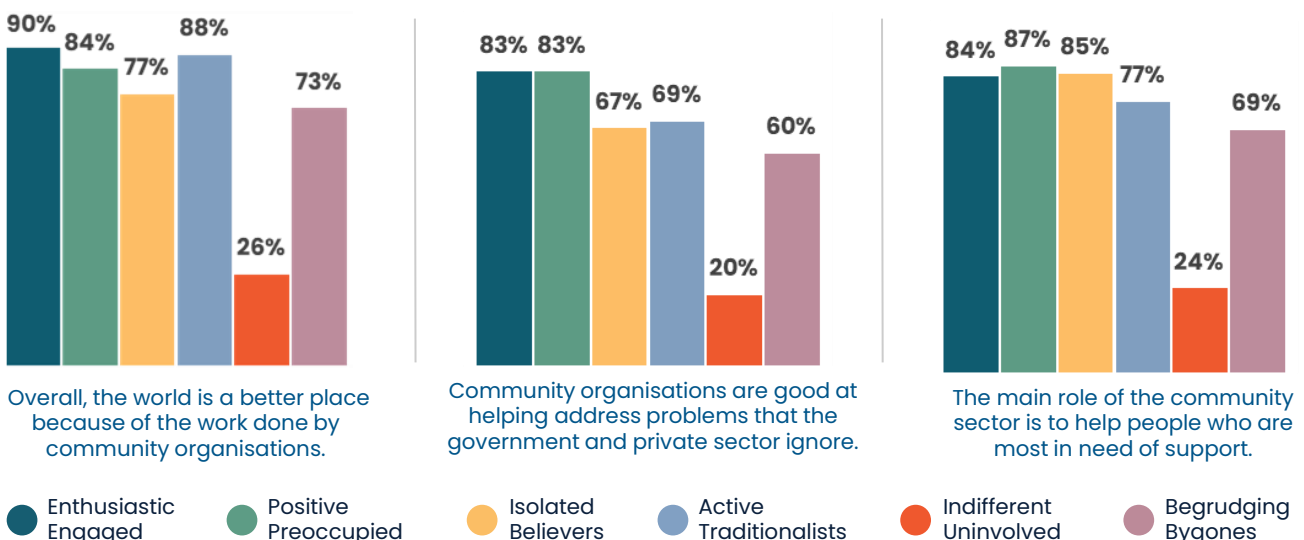
- **7 in 10** believe the world is a better place because of the work done by community organisations (71%).
- **6 in 10** think community organisations are good at helping address problems that the government and private sector ignore (62%).
- **7 in 10** think the main role of the sector is to help people most in need of support (69%).

Low agreement from Indifferent Uninvolved

On average, 59% of the Indifferent Uninvolved select *neither agree nor disagree* with statements about the community sector, its impact and society more broadly. Their characteristic lack of engagement means few in this segment agree or disagree with our statements, hence the low % total agree across the charts in this report.

Attitudes: The role and importance of the community sector

% total agree





Government should fund the community sector

Australians' recognition of the value of the community sector is reflected in the broad support for the sector receiving more funding from government. The majority acknowledge this funding enables the sector to serve the public more effectively. Very few disagree that people working in the community sector deserve to be paid the same as people working in other sectors.

- **6 in 10** Australians believe the community sector should receive more government funding (59%). Few disagree (9%).
- **More than 6 in 10** believe the community sector would be able to serve the public more effectively if there was more government funding (64%). Few disagree (7%).
- **Only 1 in 10** Australians say people working in the community sector (often working in not-for-profits) should **not** be paid the same as if they were working at a similar level outside the sector (14%). Most think they should be paid the same (46%) or don't have a view (40%).
- Views are mixed when asked if community organisations should be able to fund themselves without government help. 3 in 10 agree with this (26%). 4 in 10 aren't sure (40%) and 3 in 10 disagree (34%).

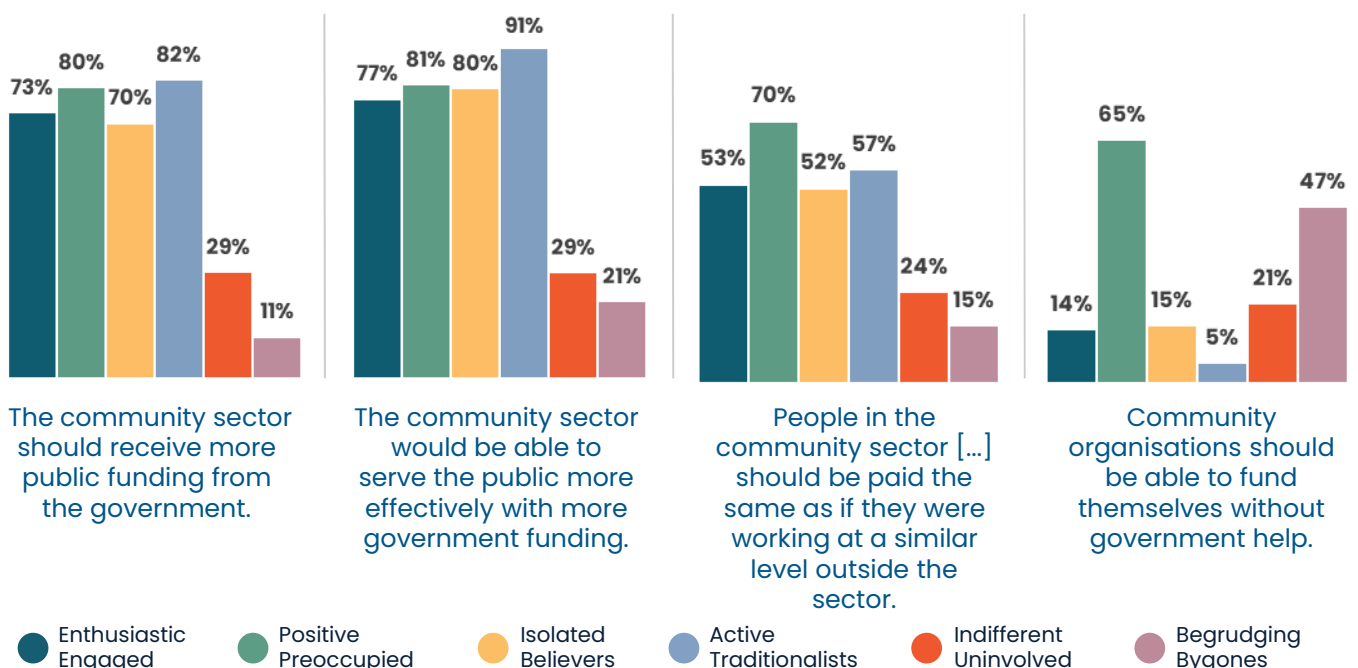


Researchers' comment

Those who think community organisations should fund themselves may include a mix of people who do not think organisations should receive government funding as well as people who believe that community organisations are stronger (financially and in their advocacy) when they are independent of government.

Attitudes: Support for funding

% total agree





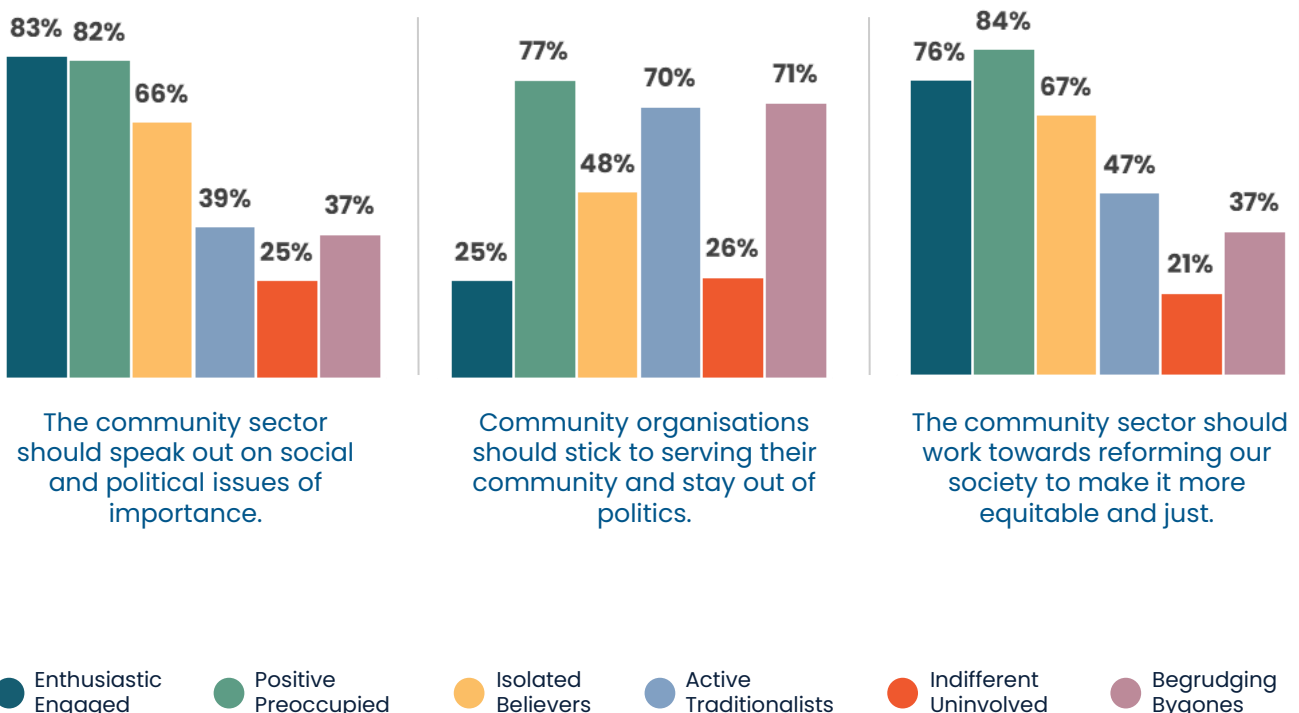
Support for sector advocacy is shaped by core values

Views are mixed on whether the role of the community sector extends to advocating on important social and political issues. The core values someone holds shape the extent to which they believe community organisations should be working to make the world more equitable and just, and their impression of the impact that community organisations are having.

- **Australians are split** on whether community organisations should speak out on social and political issues of importance.
 - **More than 5 in 10** support this (56%), but a similar proportion believe community organisations should stick to serving their community and stay out of politics (49%).
- **More than 5 in 10** (55%) think the community sector should work towards reforming our society to make it more equitable and just.
- **4 in 10 Australians** think there are too many community organisations with little impact or results to show for it (38%). More than 4 in 10 neither agree nor disagree (44%).

Attitudes: Support for sector speaking out

% total agree





Influential beliefs

Australians' attitudes to the community sector are shaped by deeply held beliefs about personal vs collective responsibility and about who is deserving of care and support.

- Nearly **7 in 10 Australians** believe you should take care of yourself and your family first before helping other people (65%). Very few disagree (7%).
- Nearly **6 in 10** also think differences in income in Australia are too large (63%) and believe people who are better off have a responsibility to help those who are less well off (55%). Few disagree (11% and 13% respectively).
 - However, nearly 5 in 10 Australians believe the social benefits in Australia make people lazy (45%). Note, people are most likely to disagree with this compared to the statements above (25%).

Attitudes: Responsibility and sense of inequality

% total agree





Broader pessimism

While many Australians feel positive about the future and hopeful about what the next generation will achieve, there are also many Australians who feel pessimistic and powerless. This is important context for understanding Australians' views about the community sector and the impact of community organisations.

- **3 in 10 Australians** believe things are generally improving in society (27%) and feel optimistic about what the next generation will achieve in this world (35%).
 - However, 3 in 10 don't think things are improving in society (34%) or feel optimistic about what the next generation will achieve (29%).
- **5 in 10 Australians** think people like them don't have a say about what the government does (47%) and that political leaders are not working in their best interests (46%).
 - Only 2 in 10 Australians think people like them have a say (22%) and have faith political leaders are working in their best interests (22%).



Researchers' comment

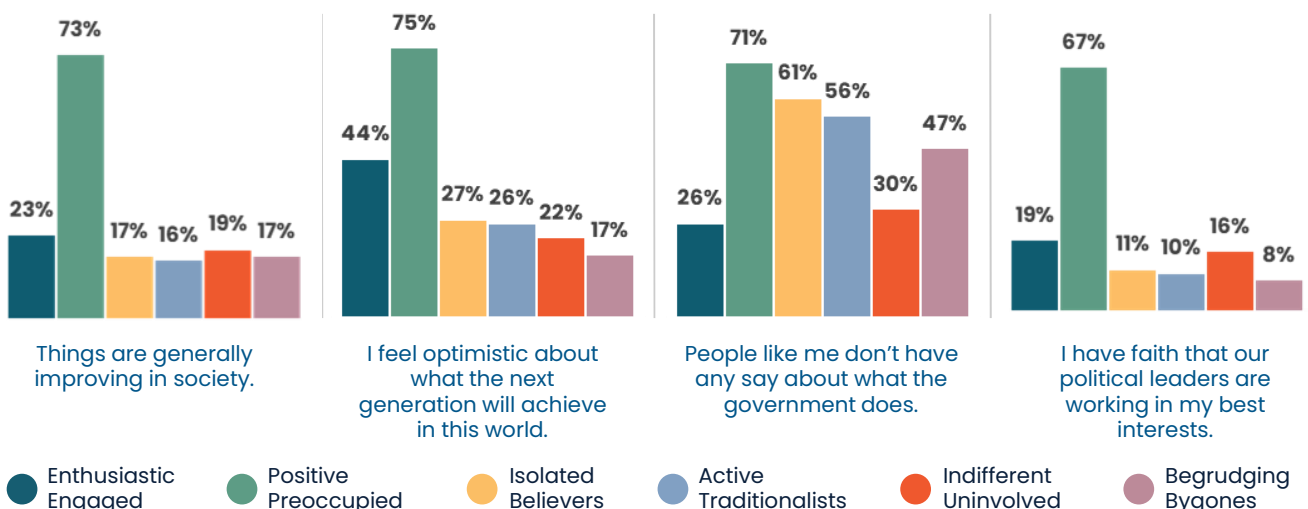
A lack of engagement with the community sector and pessimism about its impact are likely reflective of a broader apathy and disillusionment. Building support for, and engagement with, the sector among people with this mindset is a key challenge for the sector.

Contradictions in the consistent agreement of the Positive Preoccupied

Living up to their name, the Positive Preoccupied have an optimistic view of the sector and society as a whole. Their responses convey their confidence and positive mindset but sometimes this broad agreement with propositions results in seemingly contradictory responses, for example, thinking elected representatives are working in their interests but also feeling they don't have a say in what the government does.

Attitudes: Society and the future

% total agree





Sense of community

While many Australians feel a sense of community and belonging, others feel they lack social connection. It is also a commonly held view that communities are less connected than they used to be. While many feel they have friends within their community and neighbours they could ask for help, it is not uncommon for Australians to say they sometimes lack companionship, friendship or relationships.

- More than **5 in 10** have friends in their local community with whom they can spend time (53%) and would feel comfortable asking my neighbours for help when they need it (52%).
- Only **4 in 10** feel connected with their local community (40%).
- Many Australians, **7 in 10**, think people have become less connected to others and their community (68%).
- Nearly **4 in 10** people say they sometimes feel like they lack companionship, friendship, or relationships (35%). Only 4 in 10 disagree (39%).

Attitudes: Sense of community

% total agree





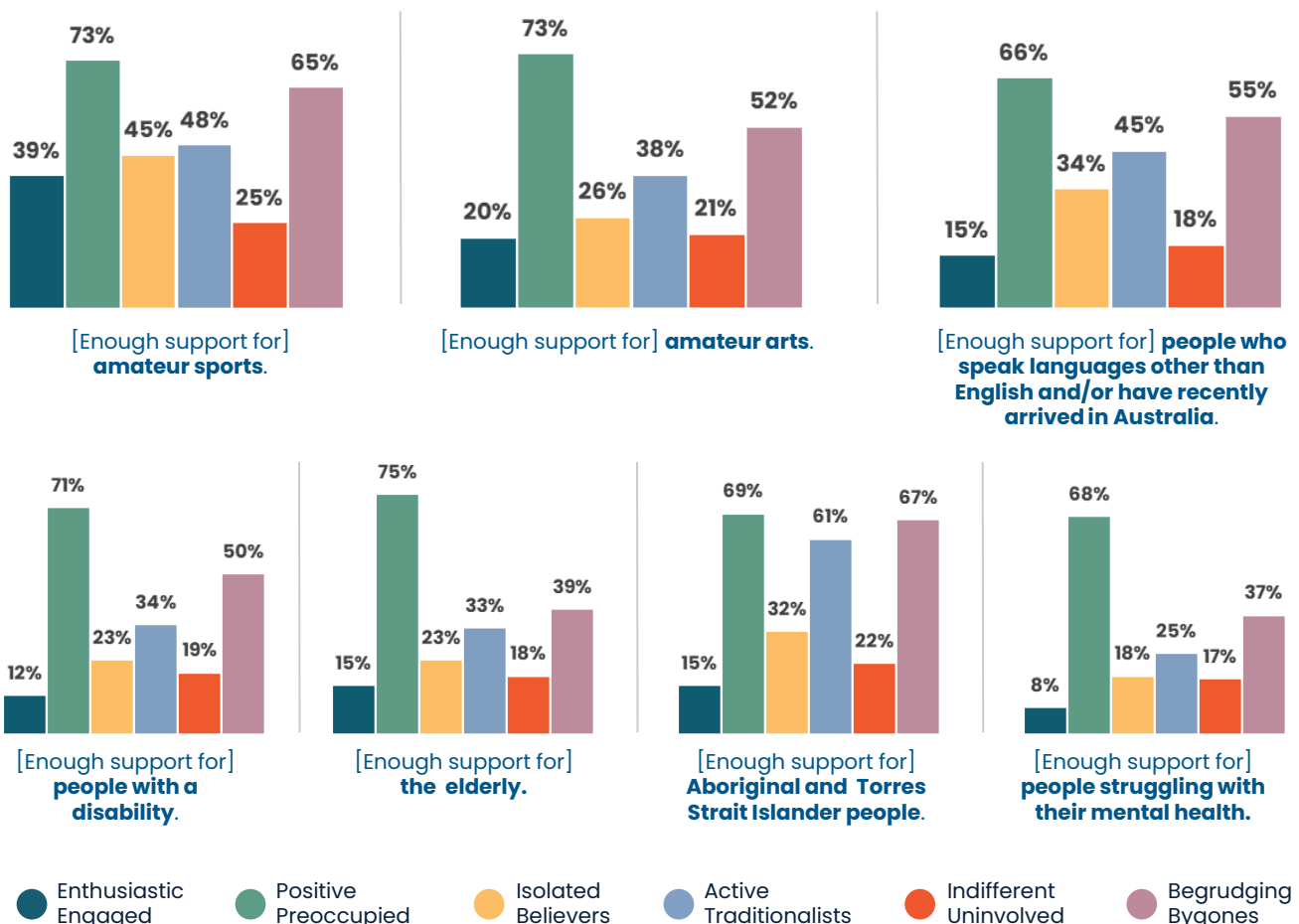
Who is well supported by the community sector?

Australians are most likely to think there is enough social and economic support for amateur sports in their community, followed by amateur arts. However, many Australians are concerned there is not enough support for the elderly, people living with disability, and people struggling with their mental health. Polarised views about whether First Nations people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities are receiving enough support is likely reflective of the different values of each segment and their beliefs of about who is deserving of support.

- Nearly 5 in 10 Australians think there *is* enough social and economic support in their community for **amateur sports** (46%) while only 1 in 10 disagree (15%). Nearly 4 in 10 think there is enough support in their community for **amateur arts** (36%) and only 2 in 10 disagree (17%).
- Only 3 in 10 think there *is* enough support in their community for the **elderly** (32%), **people with a disability** (32%) and **people struggling with their mental health** (27%).
 - However, 3 in 10 think there *is not* enough support for the **elderly** (31%) or **people with a disability** (27%). Nearly 4 in 10 say there is not enough **mental health** support (37%).
- 4 in 10 think there *is* enough support for **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people** (41%) and for **people who speak languages other than English and/or have recently arrived in Australia** (36%). 2 in 10 think there *is not* enough support (20% and 21% respectively).

Attitudes: There is enough social and economic support for [...] in my community.

% total agree





Detailed Findings | Engagement

This section demonstrates the various ways Australians are engaging with the community sector, their beliefs about who the sector is for, and their attitudes towards getting involved.

Contributions strengthen community

There is broad agreement that the more opportunities people have to engage with their community, the stronger the community is. Most are happy to contribute and few think the community sector isn't important for people like them.

- **7 in 10** believe the more time people have to be involved in community activities, the stronger community is (72%).
- **6 in 10** are happy to contribute to their community, even if it doesn't directly benefit them (63%).
 - Only 3 in 10 feel they contribute more to their community than they get back from it (30%).
- While **2 in 10** Australians believe the community sector isn't really important for people like them (21%), 4 in 10 (43%) disagree with this (43%) and 4 in 10 neither agree nor disagree (36%)

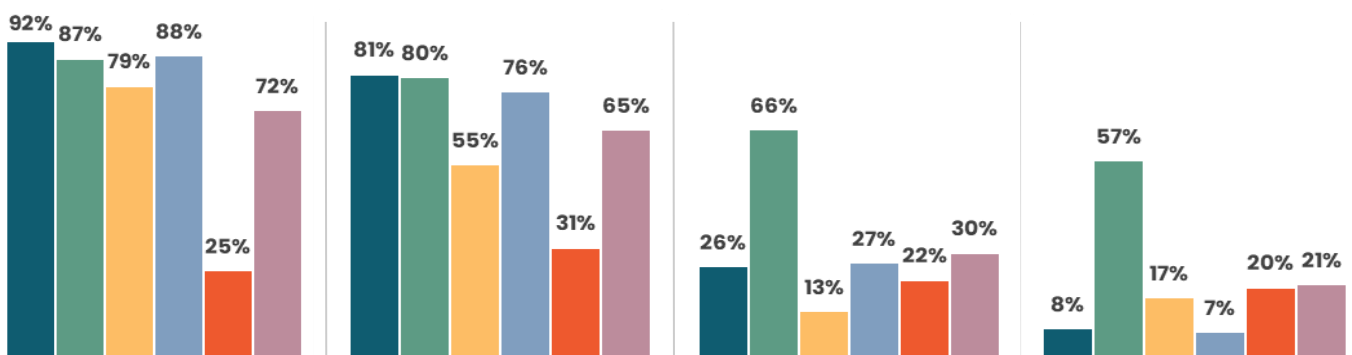


Researcher's comment

Despite broad acknowledgement of the benefits and importance of contributing to one's community, many Australians face barriers to getting involved or do not consider engaging with the community to be a priority.

Attitudes: Contributing to the community

% total agree



The more time people have to be involved in community activities the stronger the community is.

I am happy to contribute to my community, even if it doesn't directly benefit me.

I contribute more to my community than I get back from it.

The community sector isn't really important for people like me.

● Enthusiastic Engaged

● Positive Preoccupied

● Isolated Believers

● Active Traditionalists

● Indifferent Uninvolved

● Begrudging Bygones





Engagement with the community sector

In the past five years, Australians have contributed to the community sector in a variety of ways.

- One of the most common actions is **donating money or goods**. 35% of Australians have donated on a one-off basis while 20% have donated on a regular basis.
 - Donating time (**volunteering**) is another way Australians are contributing, with 18% volunteering regularly and 14% volunteering on a one-off basis.
- Others are engaging with issues raised by and relating to community organisations. 3 in 10 Australians say they have **read, watched or listened to content about the sector** (29%) and 2 in 10 have **signed a petition** about an issue raised by the sector (21%).
- **Belonging to a community organisation** is another common form of engagement, including organisations with membership fees (19%) and without (13%). Australians are also **talking about their involvement in the community sector** with their friends and family (15%).
- Nearly 1 in 10 respondents had been **employed in a community organisation** (7%).

Which of the following things have you done in the past 5 years in Australia?

% Respondents who selected the following actions.

Based on 3,071 responses.





Open to contributing more

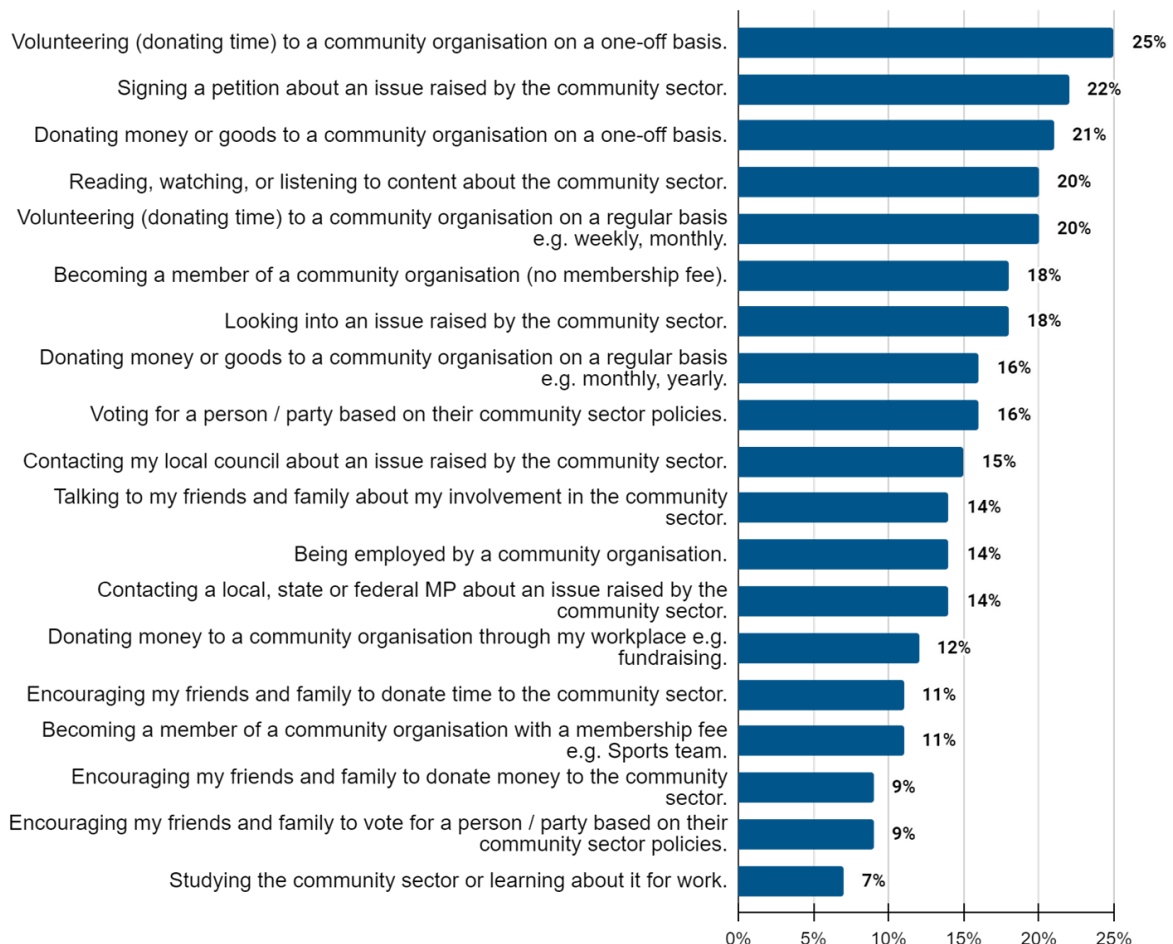
Many Australians are open to contributing more or engaging with the sector in different ways than they already are. Of the community members who had not taken these actions in the past 5 years, the activities they were most likely to be open to were low-commitment, one-time contributions.

- 2 in 10 or more said they would be open to **volunteering on a one-off basis** (25%), **signing a petition** (22%), **donating money or goods on a one-off basis** (21%) or **engaging with content about the community sector** (20%).
- There are also many Australians open to engaging with the sector on an ongoing basis through **regular volunteering** (20%), **becoming a member of a community organisation** (18% no fee, 11% paid membership) and **regular donations** (16%).
- Others are open to **voting based on community sector policies** (16%) and **speaking out on issues raised by the sector** (15% contacting local council, 14% contacting elected representatives).
- 2 in 10 Australians said they were **not open to doing any of these activities** in future (22% None of these).

Thinking about the future, what are the activities you are not currently doing that you would be open to doing? (Respondents were only asked about actions they have not taken in the past 5 years.)

% Respondents who selected the following actions.

Based on 3,071 responses.





Detailed Findings | Barriers

Lack of time, energy and awareness standing in the way

Many Australians would like to contribute more to their local community but face various barriers to doing so.

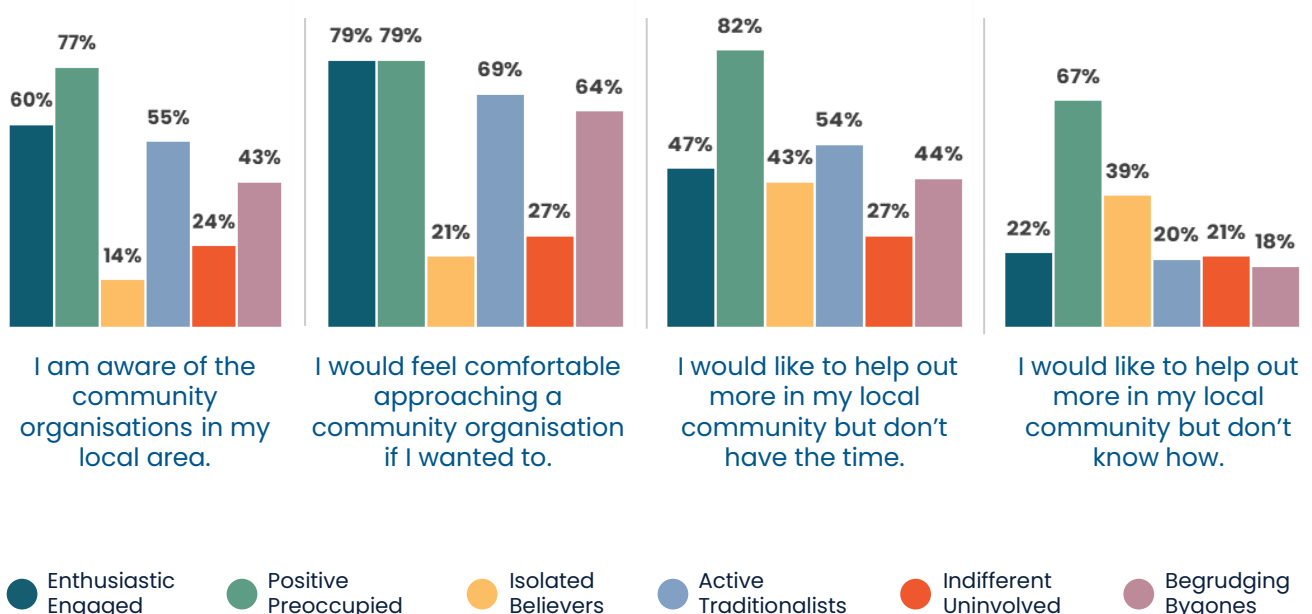
- Nearly **5 in 10 Australians** said they would like to help out more in their local community but don't have the time (48%). 3 in 10 would like to help out more in their local community but don't know how (31%).
- However, only **4 in 10 people** said they were aware of community organisations in their local area (45%), and only 5 in 10 would feel comfortable approaching a community organisation (55%).

Different segments experience similar barriers to participation

Across each segment, a lack of time or energy, rather than a lack of interest or desire, is the most commonly cited barrier to being more involved in the community sector. However, there are some trends in specific segments - see page x.

Attitudes: Awareness & barriers

% total agree





Barriers

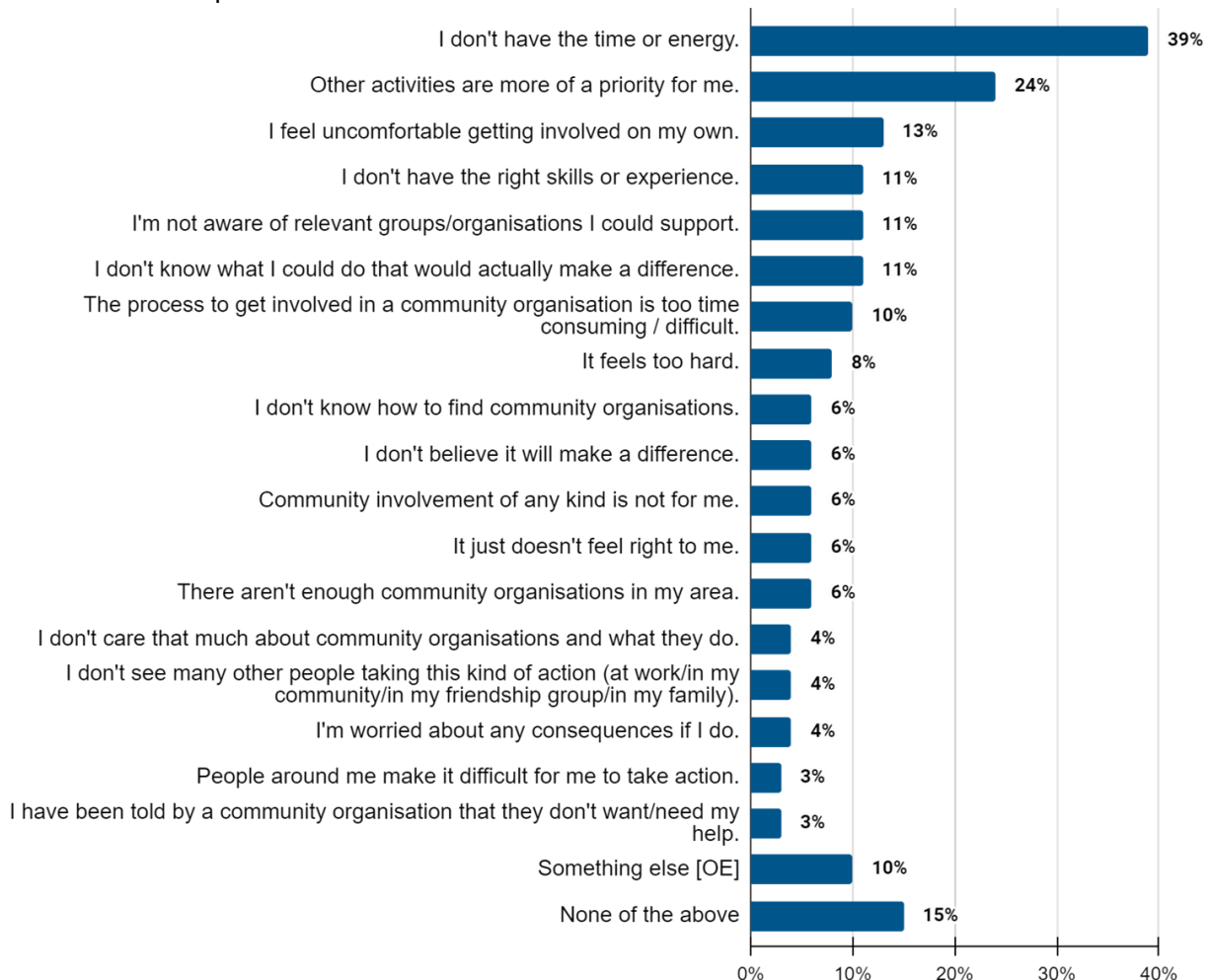
Australians are most likely to identify a lack of time and energy and having other priorities as the reason they aren't able to be more involved in community organisations and activities.

- 4 in 10 Australians say they **don't have the time or energy** (39%) and 2 in 10 say **other activities are a priority** for them (24%).
- A lack of confidence is also holding Australians back from getting involved in the community sector – particularly **not feeling comfortable getting involved on their own** (13%) and **doubting if they have the right skills or experience** (11%).
- Many are also **unsure which organisations they could support** (11%) and **don't know what they can do that will actually make a difference** (11%). 1 in 10 say it feels too hard to get involved (8%).
- Only 15% of Australians say **none of these** barriers make it difficult for them to get involved.

What currently prevents you or makes it difficult for you to be more involved in community organisations and activities?

% Respondents who selected the following 'barriers'.

Based on 3,071 responses.





Barriers continued

Different segments experience similar barriers to participation.

Across each segment, a lack of time or energy, rather than a lack of interest or desire, is the most commonly cited barrier to being more involved in the community sector.

However, some segments are more likely than others to identify with particular barriers.

- The Isolated Believers, the most economically and socially vulnerable of the segments, are much more likely to express discomfort in getting involved by themselves as well as expressing doubt about whether they have the necessary skills or experience to contribute. They are also more likely to be unsure of whether their contributions would make a difference.
- Similarly, the 'Positive Preoccupied', who typically express pro-community views but who are characterised by lower levels of engagement, are more likely to say that they don't believe they have the right skills, or that it 'feels too hard'.

What currently prevents you or makes it difficult for you to be more involved in community organisations and activities?

% Respondents in each segment who selected each 'barrier'.

Based on 3,071 responses.

| | Enth. Engaged | Positive Preoc. | Isolated Believers | Active Trad. | Indif. Uninvolved | Beg. Bygones | Total |
|---|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-------|
| I don't have the time or energy. | 42% | 31% | 49% | 40% | 31% | 44% | 39% |
| Other activities are more of a priority for me. | 27% | 20% | 24% | 27% | 18% | 33% | 24% |
| I feel uncomfortable getting involved on my own. | 8% | 11% | 29% | 12% | 10% | 10% | 13% |
| I don't have the right skills or experience. | 8% | 14% | 16% | 10% | 11% | 10% | 11% |
| I'm not aware of relevant groups/organisations I could support. | 9% | 8% | 19% | 8% | 11% | 7% | 11% |
| I don't know what I could do that would actually make a difference. | 8% | 9% | 19% | 8% | 10% | 11% | 11% |
| The process to get involved in a community organisation is too time consuming / difficult. | 8% | 9% | 14% | 8% | 8% | 14% | 10% |
| It feels too hard. | 6% | 13% | 13% | 5% | 8% | 6% | 8% |
| I don't know how to find community organisations. | 4% | 8% | 12% | 4% | 6% | 4% | 6% |
| I don't believe it will make a difference. | 2% | 7% | 9% | 4% | 8% | 7% | 6% |
| Community involvement of any kind is not for me. | 3% | 6% | 9% | 6% | 6% | 7% | 6% |
| It just doesn't feel right to me. | 2% | 7% | 7% | 3% | 8% | 6% | 6% |
| There aren't enough community organisations in my area. | 4% | 8% | 7% | 3% | 5% | 4% | 6% |
| I don't care that much about community organisations and what they do. | 1% | 4% | 7% | 2% | 6% | 8% | 4% |
| I don't see many other people taking this kind of action (at work/in my community/in my friendship group/in my family). | 2% | 6% | 6% | 3% | 5% | 4% | 4% |
| I'm worried about any consequences if I do. | 2% | 8% | 4% | 2% | 5% | 3% | 4% |
| People around me make it difficult for me to take action. | 4% | 2% | 1% | 5% | 4% | 2% | 3% |
| I have been told by a community organisation that they don't want/need my help. | 3% | 2% | 3% | 5% | 2% | 2% | 3% |



Detailed Findings | Demographic variance

Age

Engagement with the community sector

Generations vary in how they engage with the community sector. Regardless of which segment they fall into, there are key differences in the ways that younger Australians are contributing to and getting involved with the community sector compared to older Australians.

- 17 to 24 year olds are more likely to contribute by voting for people with strong community sector policies or encouraging friends or family to vote for a 'pro-community' candidate or party. This younger age group are also more like to have studied or looked into issues raised by the community sector.
- By contrast, community members aged 65 years and above were more likely to contribute by donating money or goods, belonging to a community organisation, and volunteering.

Age skews within segments

Most of the Community Compass segments are influenced by the intersection of age and values. For example, people in the younger age groups (under 44) are overrepresented in the Indifferent Uninvolved and Positive Preoccupied while the opposite is observed for the Begrudging Bygones, Enthusiastic Engaged and Active Traditionalists which are older on average (45 and above). The Isolated Believers are the only segment with a consistent profile across each age group, reflecting that the members of this group are likely to be more heavily defined by economic circumstances, rather than values.

% of age group in each segment

| | 17-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | Total sample |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|--------------|
| Enthusiastic Engaged | 9% | 15% | 16% | 19% | 19% | 29% | 20% |
| Positive Preoccupied | 30% | 27% | 22% | 15% | 8% | 7% | 16% |
| Isolated Believers | 15% | 18% | 16% | 16% | 19% | 15% | 16% |
| Active Traditionalists | 7% | 7% | 11% | 18% | 25% | 23% | 17% |
| Indifferent Uninvolved | 32% | 29% | 29% | 21% | 16% | 12% | 21% |
| Begrudging Bygones | 7% | 5% | 7% | 12% | 13% | 15% | 10% |





Gender

Spread across the segments

While there are gender skews in the segments, particularly the overrepresentation of women in the Isolated Believers and the overrepresentation of men in the Begrudging Bygones, gender identity is not a predictor of attitudes to the community sector. As illustrated by this table, both men and women vary considerably in their relationships with the community sector.

| How would you describe your gender identity? | Enth. Engaged | Positive Precoc. | Isolated Believers | Active Trad. | Indif. Uninvolved | Beg. Bygones | Total |
|--|---------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-------|
| Woman | 56% | 49% | 59% | 52% | 51% | 40% | 52% |
| Man | 43% | 51% | 40% | 47% | 49% | 59% | 48% |

Gender diverse respondents

11 respondents of the 3,071 identified as non-binary or selected I use another term when asked about their gender identity. Given the small sample size, this commentary on gender variance refers to the difference between people who self-described their gender identity as man or woman.

Women are more 'pro-sector'

There are, however, a few interesting differences when we compare the responses of women and men. Broadly speaking, women express more 'pro-sector' views, are more likely to recognise inequity and see the sector as important for them.

- **7 in 10 women** (68%) believe that differences in income in Australia are too large, compared to 6 in 10 men (58%).
- **5 in 10 women** (48%) reject the idea that the community sector is not important for people like them, compared to 4 in 10 men (37%).
- Only **4 in 10 women** (44%) think community organisations should stick to serving their community and stay out of politics compared to more than 5 in 10 men (55%).
- **5 in 10** (51%) women also think people in the community sector should be paid the same as if they were working at a similar level outside the sector, compared to 41% of men.

Contributing at similar levels

Despite women being more supportive than men on several attitudinal questions, overall the sector contributions of women and men are very similar. The only notable difference is that men are slightly more likely to contribute by being members of a community organisation, while women are slightly more likely to contribute by donating.





Detailed Findings | Values

Values

We asked the Australian community which values were most important to them and best reflected how they lived their lives. While Australians vary considerably in the values they chose, the most commonly selected values include those relating to personal security and wellbeing, and benevolent values such as being a loyal person and caring for others.

- 63% of Australians highly value **feeling safe and secure.**
- 41% highly value **having personal freedom.**
- 38% highly value **caring for others.**
- 37% highly value **pursuing personal health and wellbeing.**
- 36% highly value **being a loyal person.**
- 35% highly value **having economic security and wealth.**
- 34% highly value **always learning and growing.**
- 31% highly value **fairness and everyone having equal opportunities.**
- 29% highly value **having fun.**
- 29% highly value **respecting rules and norms.**
- 23% highly value **being open to new ideas and experiences.**
- 21% highly value **respecting tradition.**
- 20% highly value **promoting tolerance and harmony among all people.**
- 18% highly value **being successful and achieving goals.**
- 17% highly value **treating and rewarding yourself.**
- 12% highly value **expressing creativity and originality.**
- 8% highly value **being a leader, influencing others.**
- 8% highly value **having efforts and accomplishments recognised.**





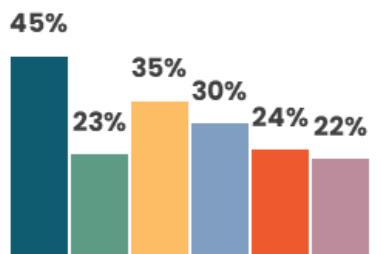
Values *continued*

Key differences in the underlying values expressed by each segment.

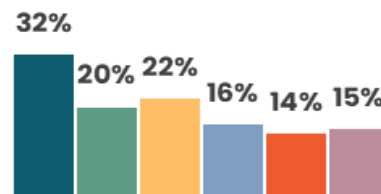
While some values are more universal, those which could be considered progressive and pro-social, such as 'caring for other people' and 'fairness and everyone having equal opportunities' were more popular among the Enthusiastic Engaged. Meanwhile, the more self-oriented values, such as 'being successful and achieving goals' and 'treating and rewarding yourself' were more common among the Indifferent Uninvolved and Positive Preoccupied. Lastly, more traditionally conservative values such as 'respecting rules and norms' and 'having economic security and wealth' were favoured by the *Begrudging Bygones* and *Active Traditionalists*.

Which of these values are most important to you personally and reflect how you live your life? Respondents were asked to select 5 from a list of 18. .

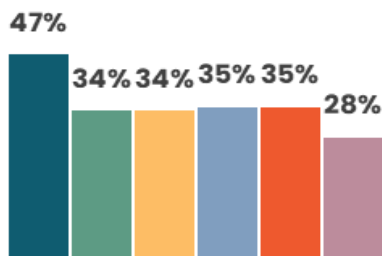
% Respondents in each segment who chose each value as one of their top 5.



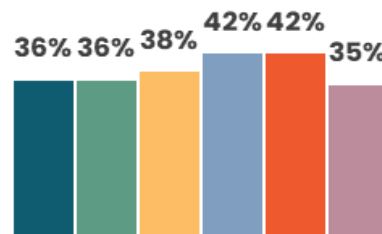
Fairness and everyone having equal opportunities.
(Universalism)



Promoting tolerance and harmony among all people.
(Universalism)



Caring for other people.
(Benevolence).



Being a loyal person
(Benevolence).

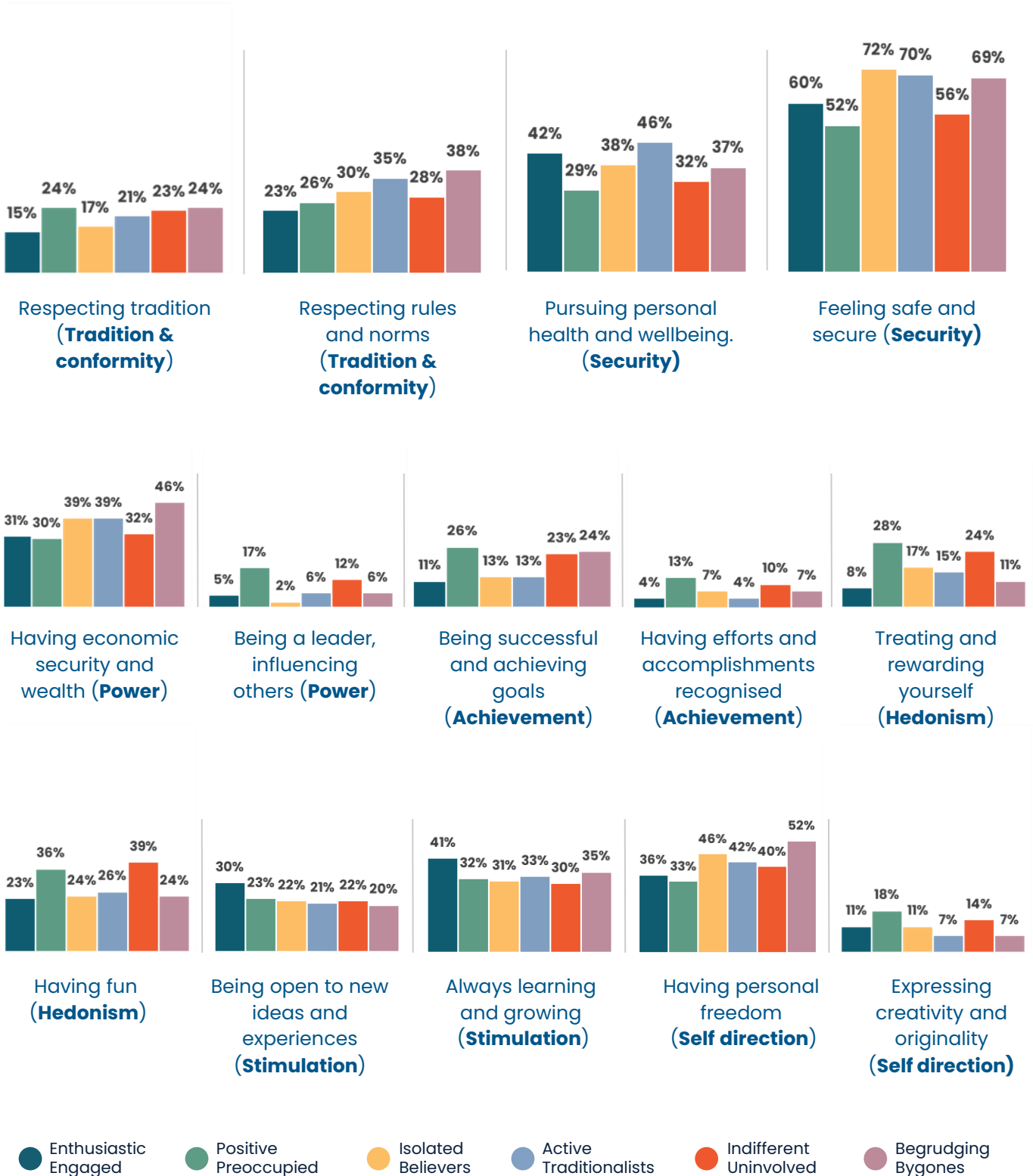




Continued

Which of these values are most important to you personally and reflect how you live your life? Respondents were asked to select 5 from a list of 18.

% Respondents in each segment who chose each value as one of their top 5.





This original research was commissioned by Our Community and Community Council for Australia and was conducted by Dr Rebecca Huntley, Holly McCarthy and Chris Strods (CPS Insights). For more information on how we could help you start a discussion and shape Australia's future, contact research@89degreeseast.com.

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Dr Rebecca Huntley is a fellow of The Research Society (formerly known as the Australian Market and Social Research Society).

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