

# Living with COVID survey

FINAL REPORT  
16 November 2021



**YOUR SAY**  
PANEL



ACT  
Government

YOUR SAY  
PANEL

## Background

In the third stage of research related to the ACT's lockdown and subsequent easing of restrictions, the YourSay Panel has been engaged to gauge community perspectives as restrictions are lifted and the ACT adapts to 'living with COVID'.

The research will be used to help inform ongoing planning and communications around the public health response to COVID-19 in the ACT, along with steps to support economic and community recovery.

### Methodological notes:

- All YourSay Panel members were invited to participate (n=5,757)
- The results have been weighted to reflect relative population proportions based on the ABS Census
- The methodology is biased towards those with internet and computer literacy
- In single choice questions, results may not add up to 100% due to rounding



How many?

**2,105**

Who?

**Canberrans 16+**

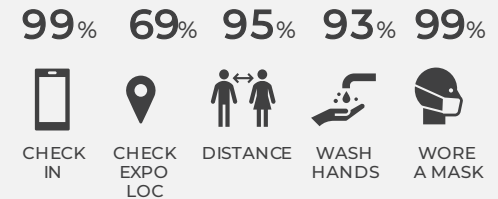
When?

**09 – 14 Nov 2021**

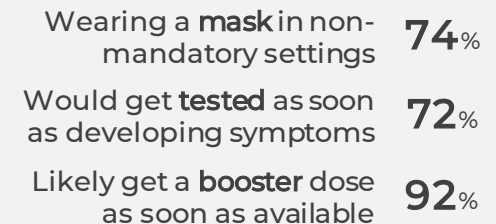
## In summary: health response

- The majority of Canberrans are in a **positive frame of mind** now that further restrictions have been eased, with seven in ten feeling current settings are about right
- On the whole, most Canberrans continue to **feel well-informed** about COVID-19 by the ACT Government and that the Government are responding appropriately
- Many Canberrans continue to **take steps themselves** to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission, including wearing face masks outside of required settings
- However, almost three in ten **wouldn't necessarily get tested for COVID-19** as soon as they develop symptoms, with this primarily contingent on the type, duration and severity of symptoms experienced
- Additionally, **vaccination is a factor dissuading testing** for some, with around four in ten saying they wouldn't get tested straight away because they are vaccinated
- Sticking with vaccination, the high uptake achieved in the ACT translates across to **intent to get a booster dose**, with older residents in particular highly likely to get one as soon as it is available to them

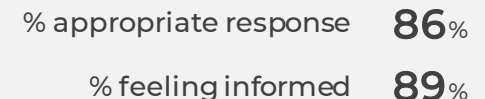
### Steps in past week



### Extra protections



### ACT Government response



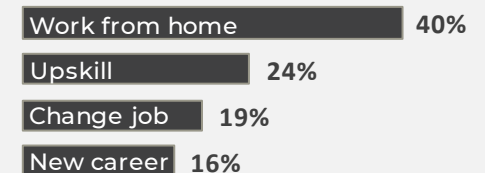
## In summary: outlook and recovery

- Almost one half of Canberrans feel that their **life will get 'back to normal'** in the next twelve months, a figure more than double that provided back in February
- While not necessarily widespread, there is some evidence of Canberrans **re-assessing their work situation**, with two in ten considering changing jobs
- There is some **uncertainty about the prospect of economic recovery** however, with just four in ten believing the ACT economy would have recovered from the pandemic within a year
- Supporting the economy, eight in ten Canberrans say they are likely to **spend more at local businesses** in the next few months, though many will also travel interstate
- The majority of Canberrans are **supportive of the promotion of the ACT to visitors**, though around three in ten are uncomfortable about overseas visitors coming to the ACT due to potential COVID-19 spread and risk
- There is more comfort around people from overseas coming to the ACT to live, work or study and a majority of Canberrans are **supportive of immigration** as one means to address potential skills gaps

### Personal outlook



### Work & career plans



### Travel & migration

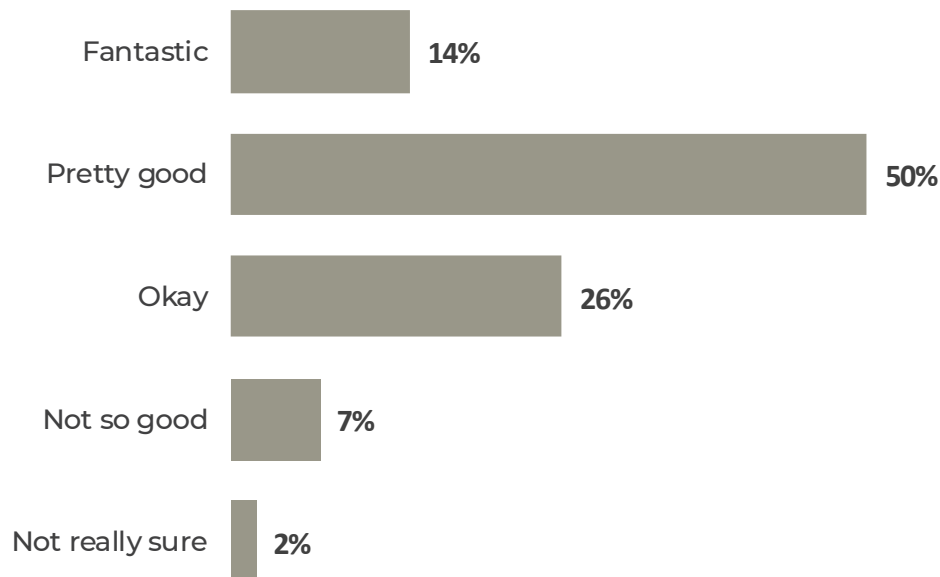


# Current settings and steps



## The majority of Canberrans are in a positive frame of mind following the further easing of COVID-19 restrictions

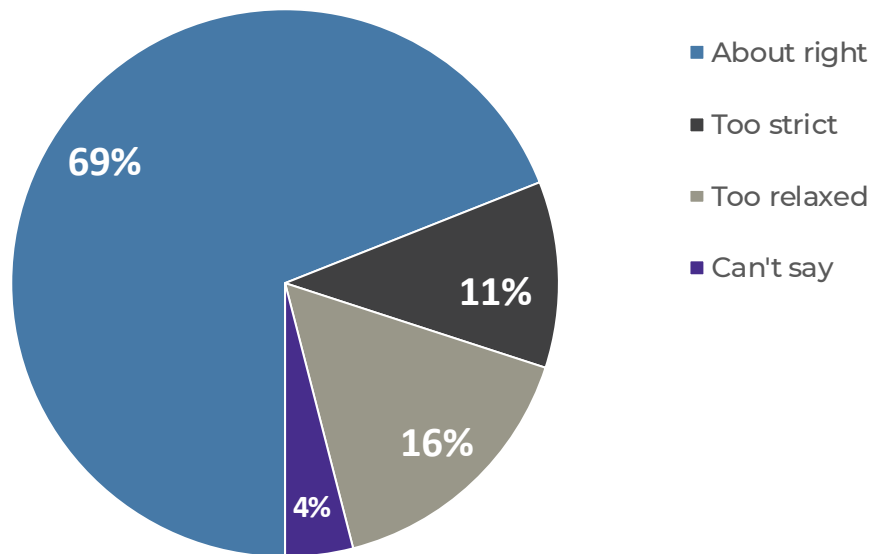
*Q. How are you feeling now that many restrictions have been eased across the ACT?*



Business owners are significantly more likely to say they feel 'fantastic' (25%)

## Seven in ten Canberrans feel that the current health settings in place in the ACT are about right

*Q. And do you think the current settings in place in the ACT regarding restrictions are...*



## More than nine out of ten Canberrans are engaging in key precautions to help reduce the spread of COVID-19

*Q. Have you taken any of the following precautions in the last week to help reduce the spread of COVID-19?\**

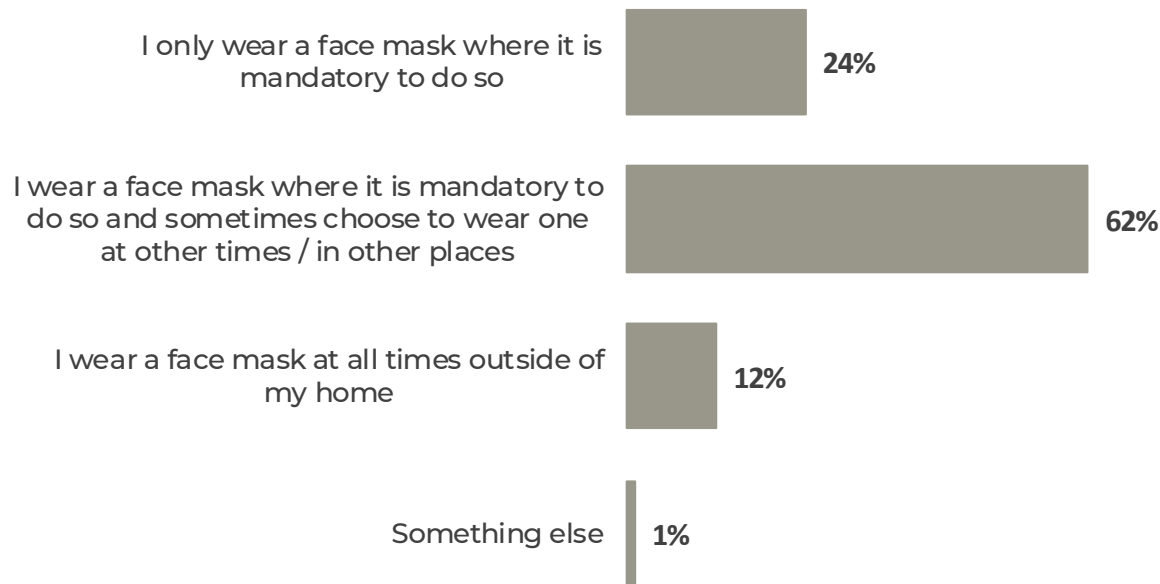
	Nov 2021	Change from May	May 2021	Feb 2021
Wore a face mask	99%	↑	27%	31%
Signed in using Check In CBR	99%	↑	94%	87%
Kept physical distance from people	95%	↑	83%	87%
Washed / sanitised hands regularly	93%		94%	95%
Limited number of home visitors	78%	↑	38%	61%
Checked health / travel advice interstate	76%	↑	66%	n/a
Checked exposure locations	69%		n/a	n/a
Hosted outdoors / increased ventilation	56%	↑	25%	48%
Changed travel plans	36%	↑	28%	n/a
Asked someone to take precautions	22%	↑	17%	n/a



# Mask wearing

## Many Canberrans are engaged in discretionary mask wearing beyond that which is mandated

*Q. Which of the following best applies to you?*



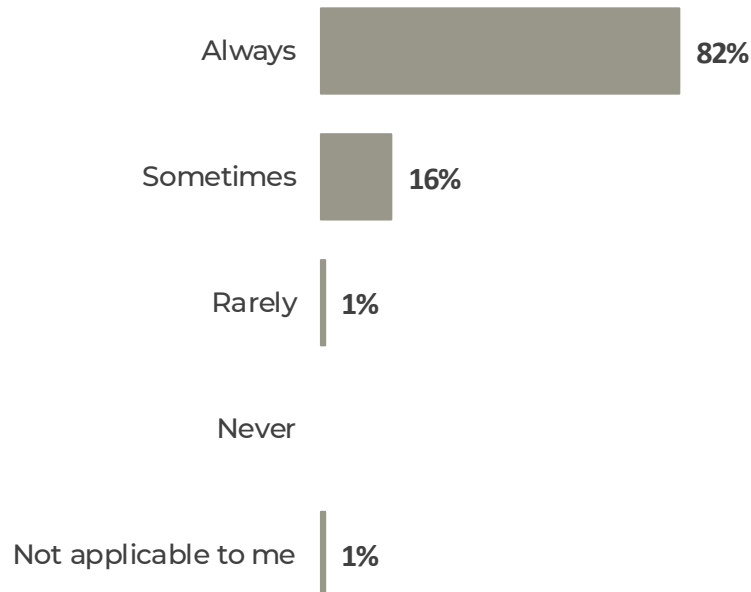
Males are more likely than females to only wear a mask in mandated settings

CALD Canberrans are more likely to wear a mask all the time outside of the home (23%)

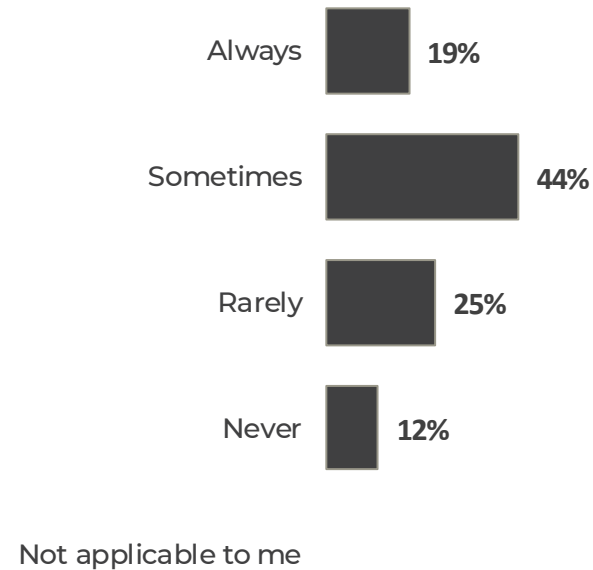


## More than six in ten people say they are still frequently wearing a mask in outdoor settings

*Q. How often in the past week have you worn a face mask when in indoor settings?*



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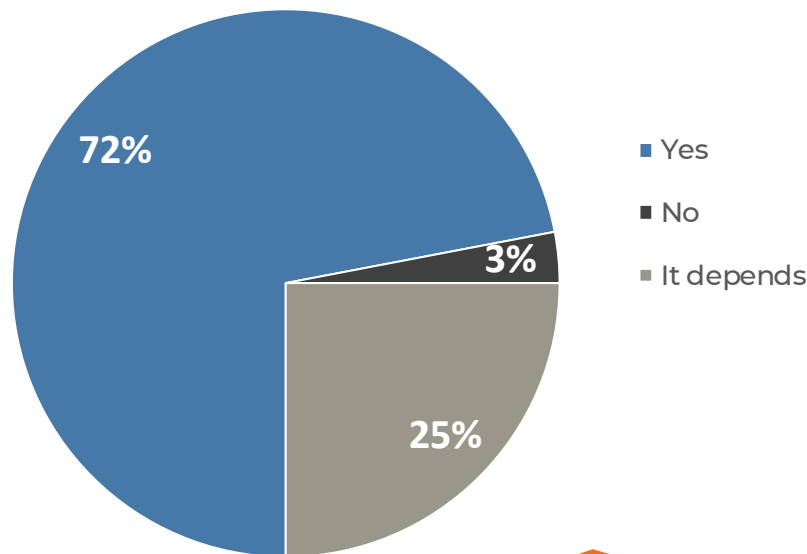


# COVID-19 testing



## Almost three in ten people say they wouldn't necessarily get tested for COVID-19 as soon as developing symptoms

Q. *Would you seek to get tested for COVID-19 as soon as you develop any symptoms?*



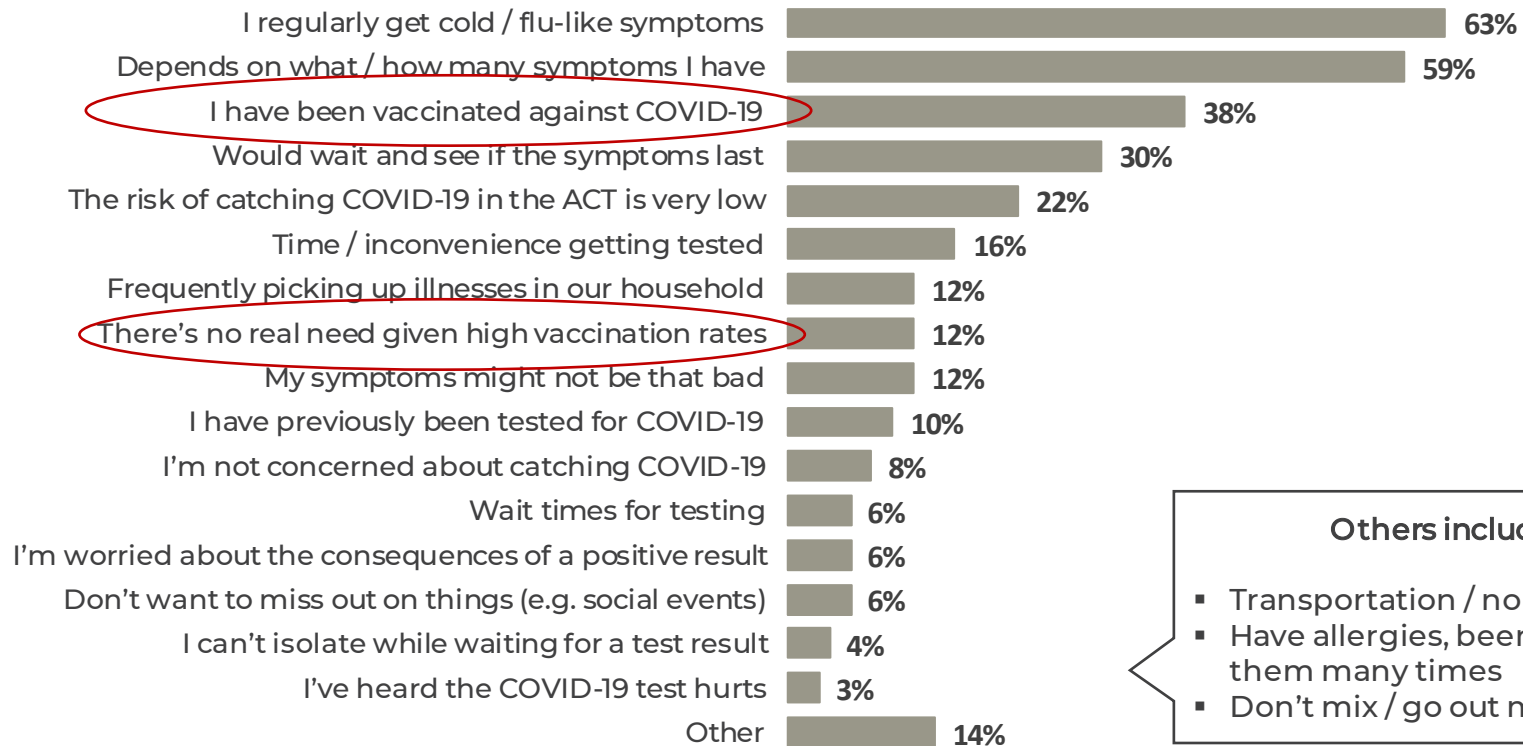
Groups more likely to say no or it depends include:

- 25-34 year olds (36%)
- Those in full time employment (33%)
- CALD Canberrans (33%)
- Those who feel current COVID settings are too strict (37%)

Proportion saying 'no' or 'it depends' is lower than in October 2020 (39%)

# Consideration of symptoms is the biggest factor deterring testing, but vaccination also emerging as an issue

*Q. Why do you say that (No or It depends in relation to getting tested)?*



**Others include:**

- Transportation / no car
- Have allergies, been tested for them many times
- Don't mix / go out much



## Convenience for testing and timeframes for results are raised as aspects which might encourage testing

*Q. What, if anything, would encourage or help you to get tested straight away for COVID-19 if you develop any symptoms?*

Quicker results

Rapid Antigen  
Testing at home  
(especially if free)

Accessibility of  
testing – public  
transport, home  
visits etc

An indication /  
guarantee of how  
long results will  
take to come  
through

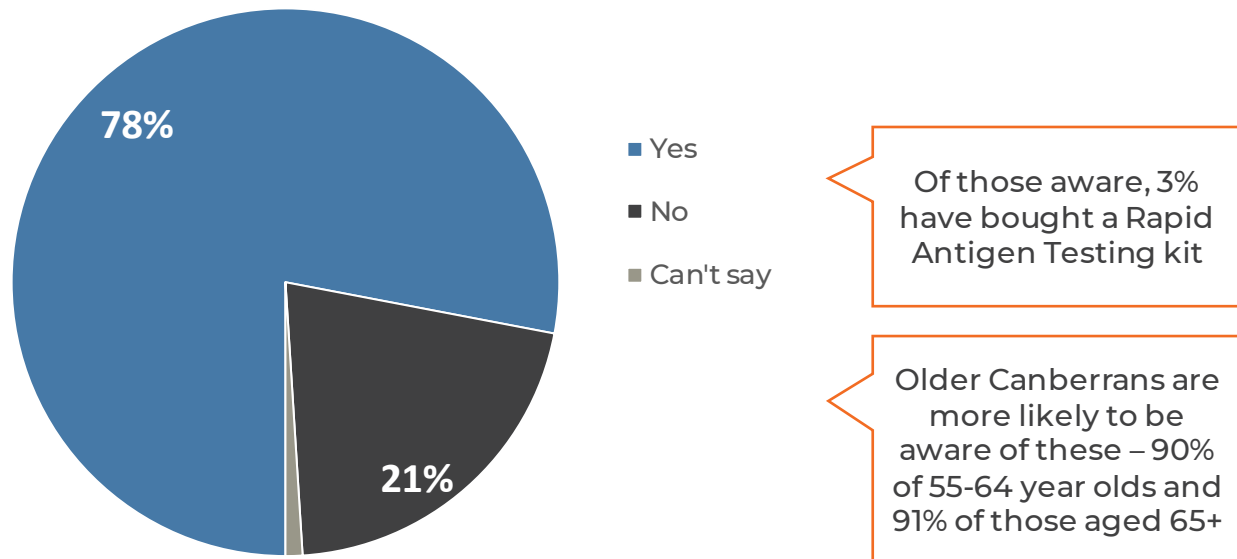
Money,  
incentives,  
lollies etc

General  
severity /  
persistence of  
symptoms

If been  
exposed, at  
risk, close  
contact

## Around eight in ten Canberrans are aware of the approval of Rapid Antigen Testing for self-use

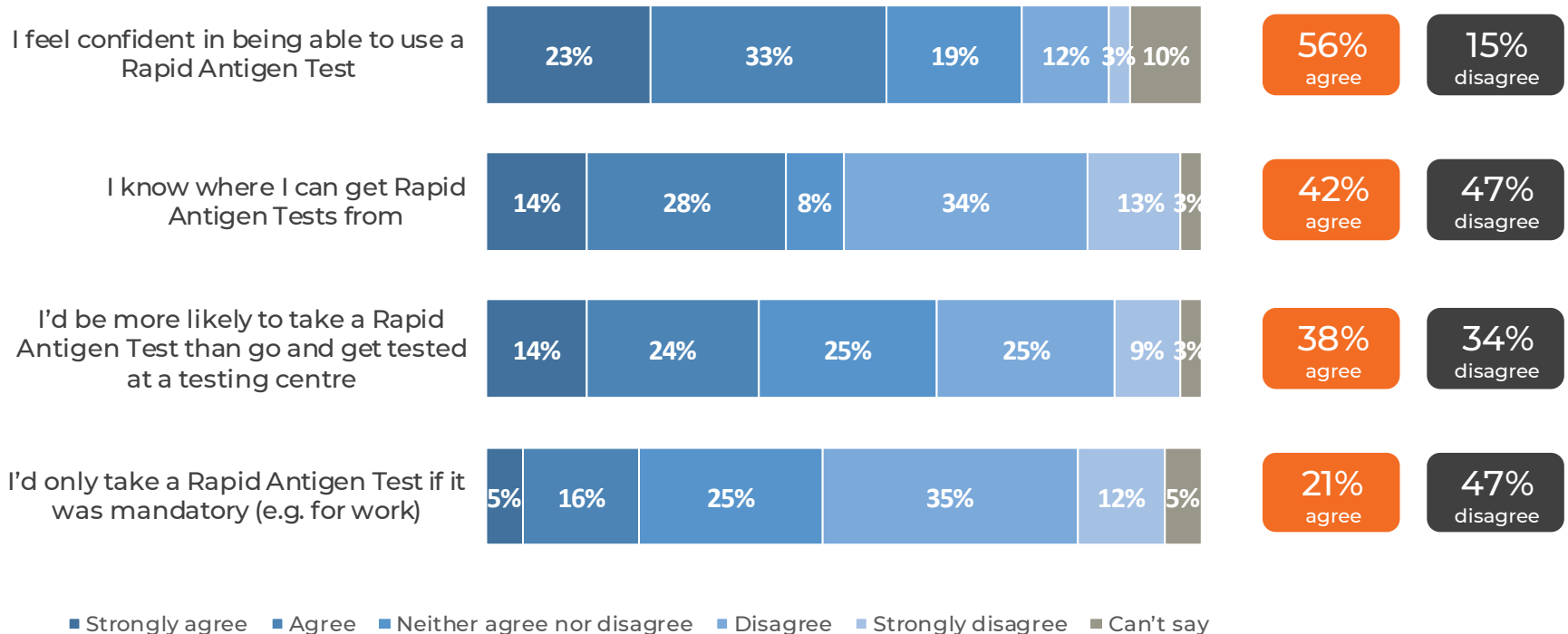
*Q. Before today, were you aware that Rapid Antigen Tests had been approved for self-use?*





# Knowledge and views around the use of Rapid Antigen Tests are somewhat mixed at this stage

*Q. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following?*





## Additional questions or comments on Rapid Antigen Tests

*Q. Do you have any questions or comments about the use of Rapid Antigen Tests?*

Concerns  
regarding cost  
and affordability

Where can you  
get them?

How do they  
work?

Question marks  
over accuracy  
and reliability

Would prefer  
to get a PCR  
test

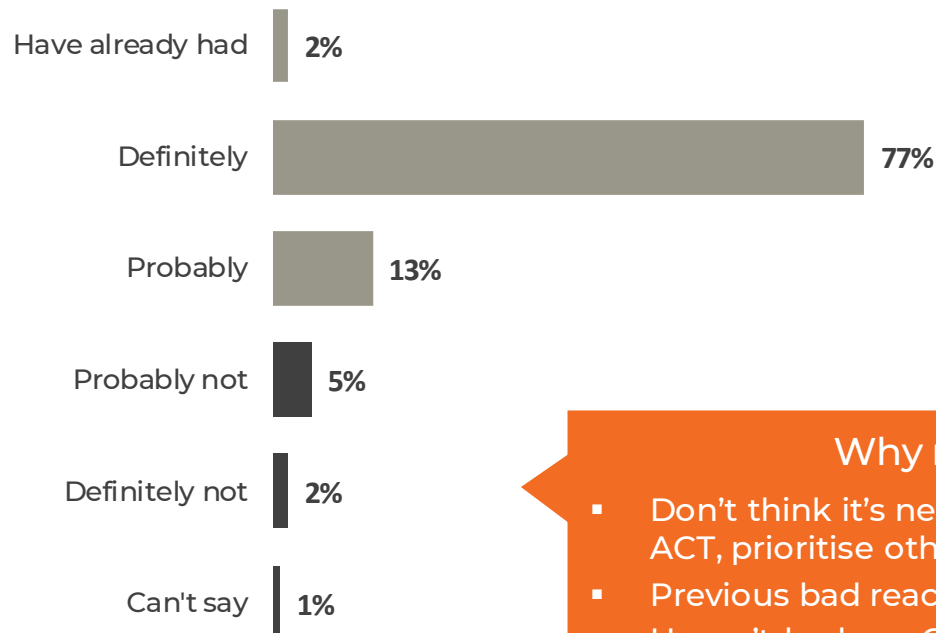
Should be used  
in specific  
settings – e.g.  
schools,  
workplaces

# COVID-19 vaccine boosters



## High vaccine uptake in the ACT is reflected in intent to get a booster dose as soon as available

*Q. Would you get a booster dose of a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it was available to you?*



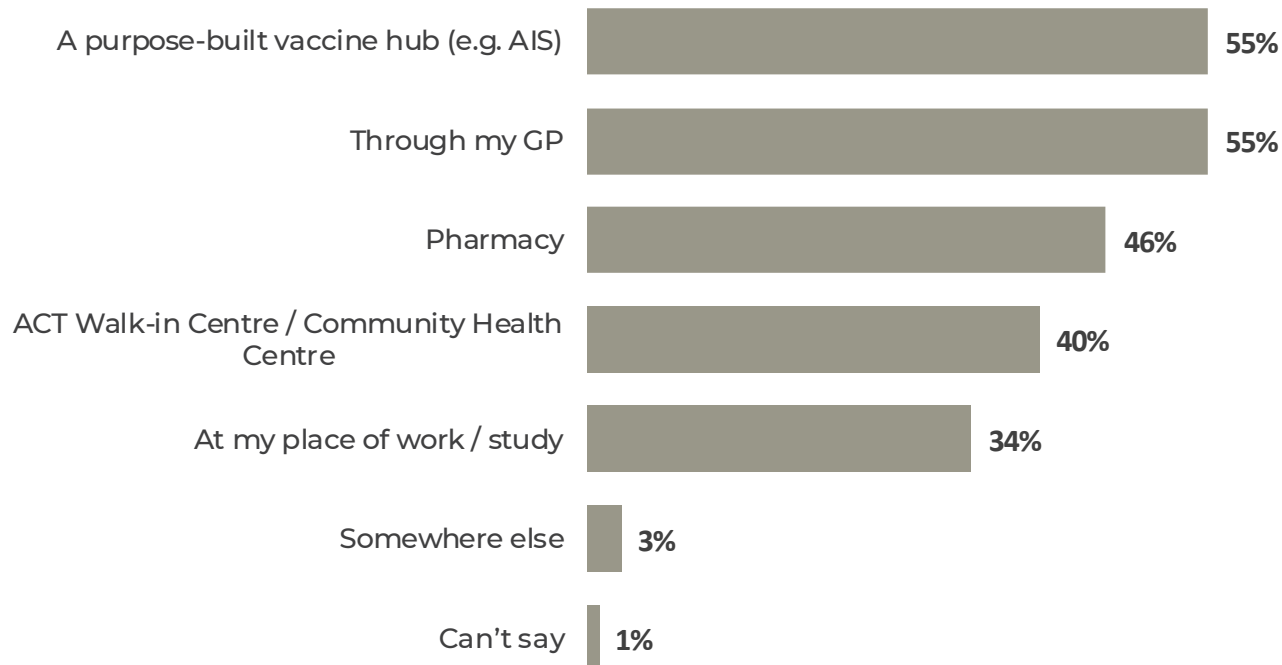
Proportion saying 'definitely' increases with age, from 64% of 16-24 year olds to 85% of those aged 65 or older

### Why not?

- Don't think it's needed – low risk in ACT, prioritise other countries first
- Previous bad reaction to vaccine
- Haven't had any COVID-19 vaccine

## Canberrans are open to receiving a booster dose at multiple locations, with preferences varying by age

*Q. Where's your preferred place to get a booster dose?*



Older Canberrans (55+) are more likely to say GP whereas younger groups are more likely to say hubs and other 'walk in' venues



## Questions and comments concerning booster doses

*Q. Do you have any questions or comments about getting a booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine in the ACT?*

Who initiates booking – am I notified when available?

Would be good to have local / easy access

Questions about mixing brands – especially if had AZ initially

Weighing up when to have it – optimum timing for protection, winter etc

Promote when and where you can get it

Continue with the mass vaccine hubs

Doses should be prioritised elsewhere (overseas)

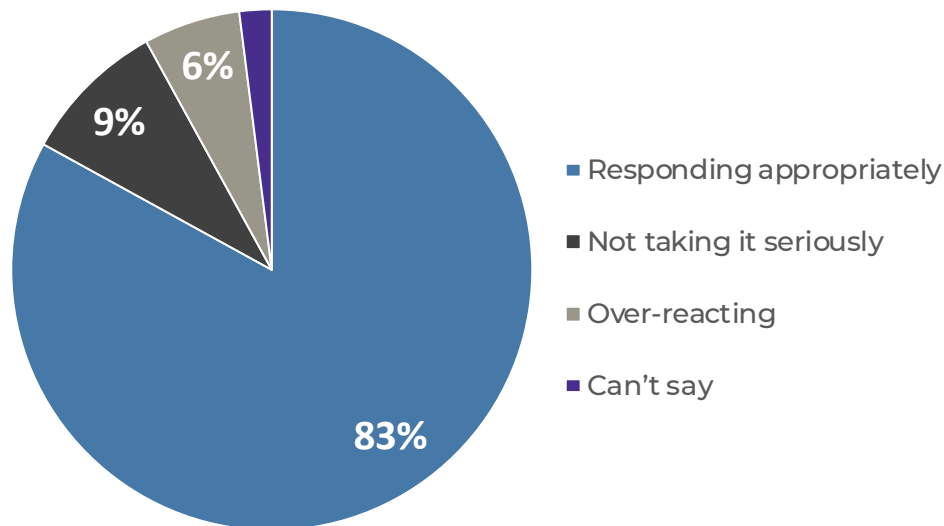
Bring it on!

# COVID-19 Response



## More than eight in ten Canberrans feel that the community is responding appropriately to the current COVID-19 situation

*Q. Overall, how would you describe the Canberra community's response to COVID-19?*



### Why not taking seriously?

- Lack of adherence to protective measures – masks, distancing, gatherings etc
- People have become complacent / too relaxed
- Need to consider vulnerable / children not protected

### Why over-reacting?

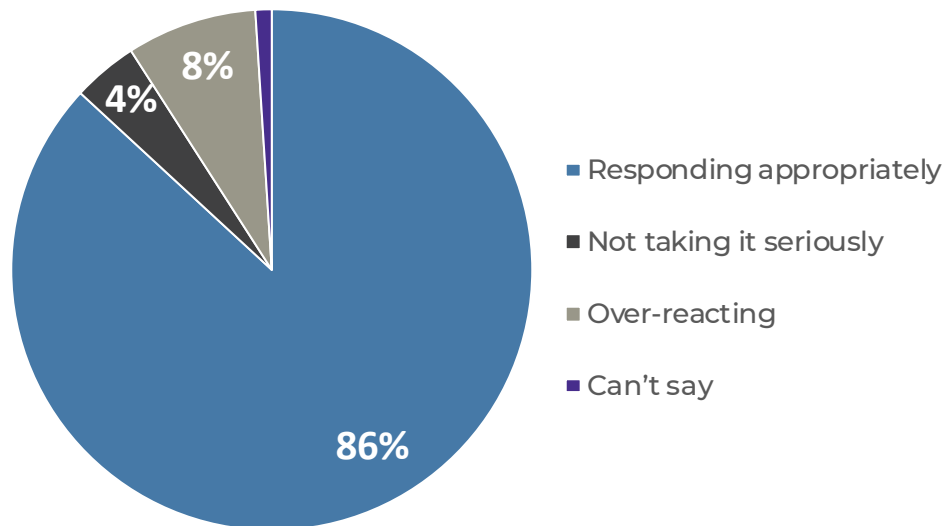
- Low risk / high vaccination
- Economic and social impacts
- Need to get on with life / move on





## Almost nine in ten feel that the ACT Government is responding appropriately to COVID-19

Q. Overall, how would you describe the ACT Government's response to COVID-19?



### Why not taking seriously?

- Opened up too quickly, rapid easing of restrictions
- School opening / outbreaks
- Free movement, borders
- Not enforcing rules

### Why over-reacting?

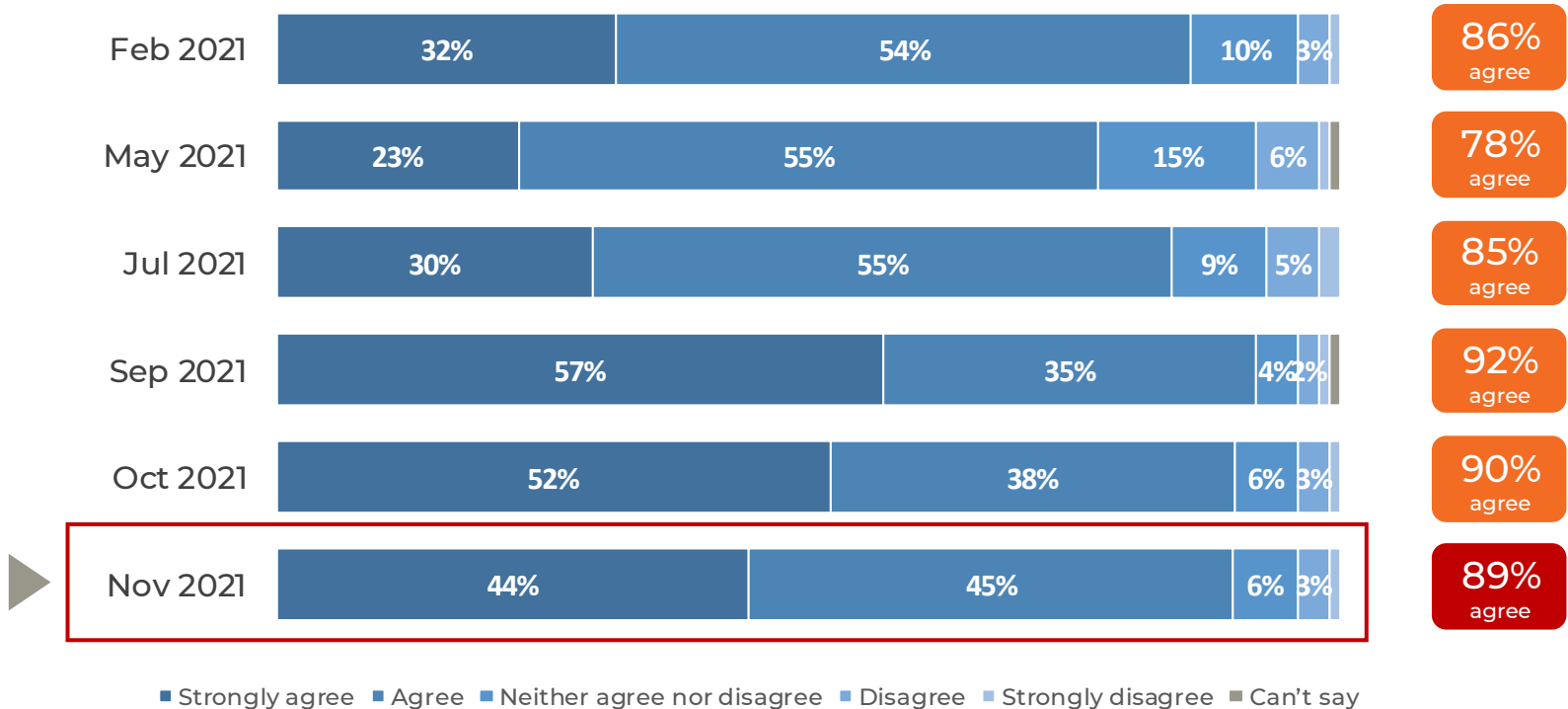
- Not commensurate to risk
- Too slow to ease restrictions / unaligned to NSW
- Onerous requirements – e.g. quarantine, business closures
- Telling us what to do



# A high proportion of the community continue to feel informed about COVID-19 from the ACT Government

*Q. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?*

*Overall, I feel I am being kept well informed about COVID-19 by the ACT Government.*

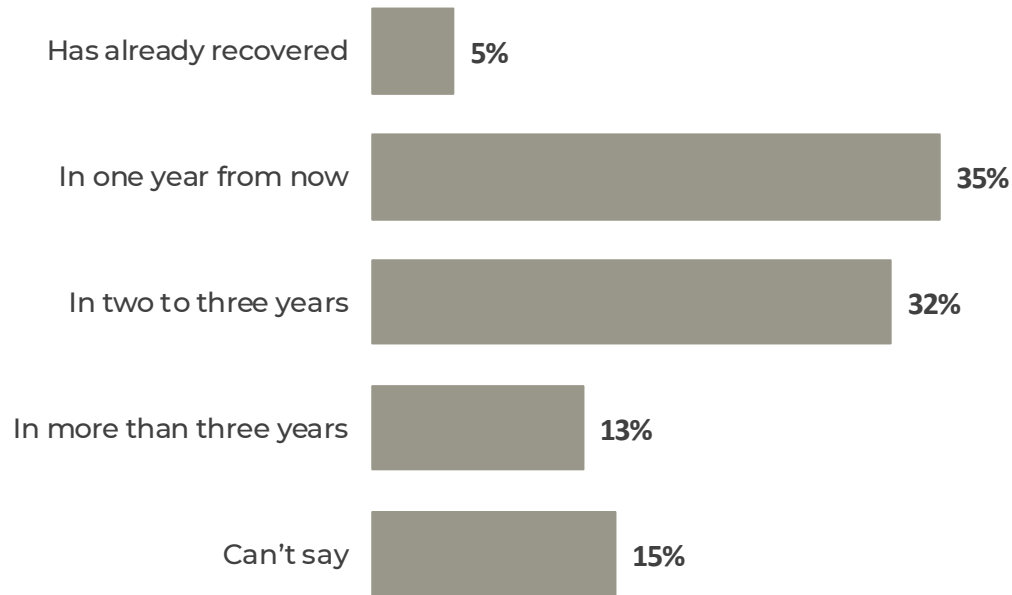


# Economic recovery and growth



## Four in ten Canberrans are of the view the ACT economy will have recovered from the pandemic within a year

*Q. When do you think the economy in the ACT will have recovered from the pandemic?*

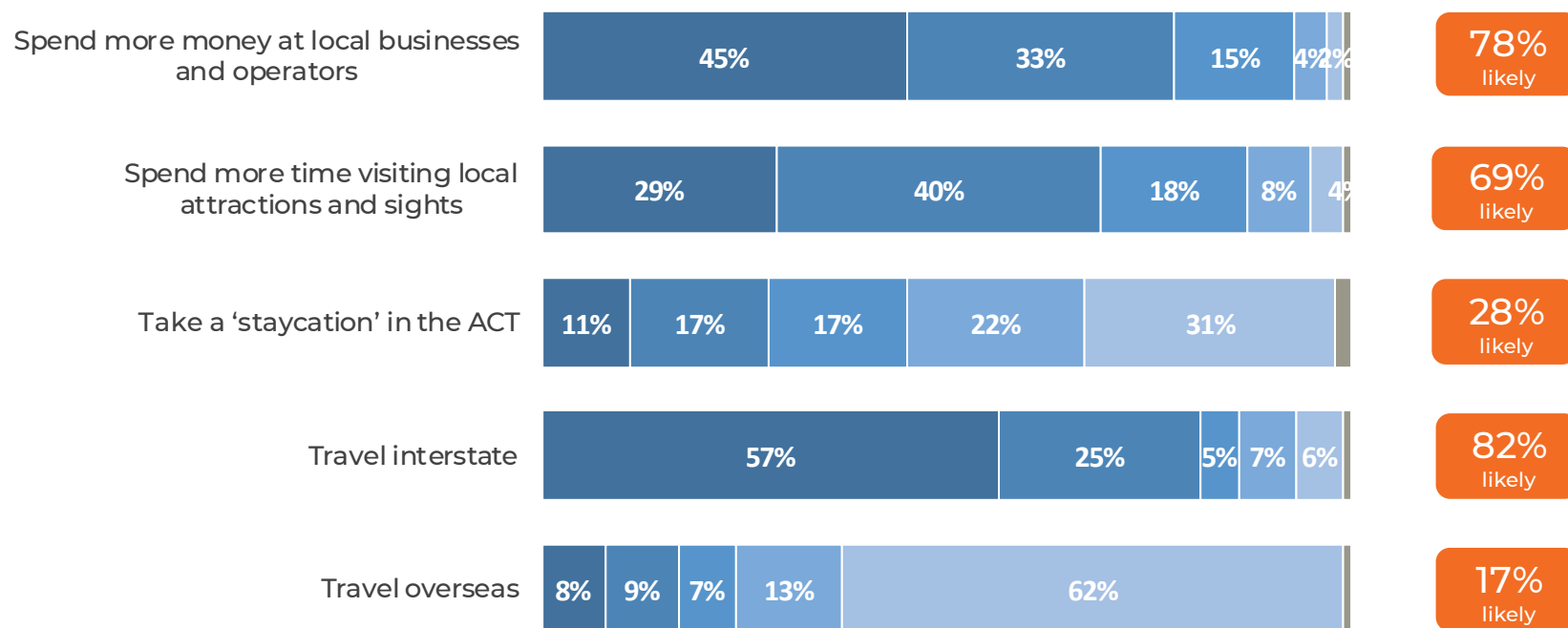


Responses from business owners on the Panel show very similar results to those overall

Comparative international research suggests Canberrans are expecting a quicker economic recovery in the ACT than Australians are for the country as a whole\*

## Eight in ten say they are likely to spend more money at local businesses in the next few months

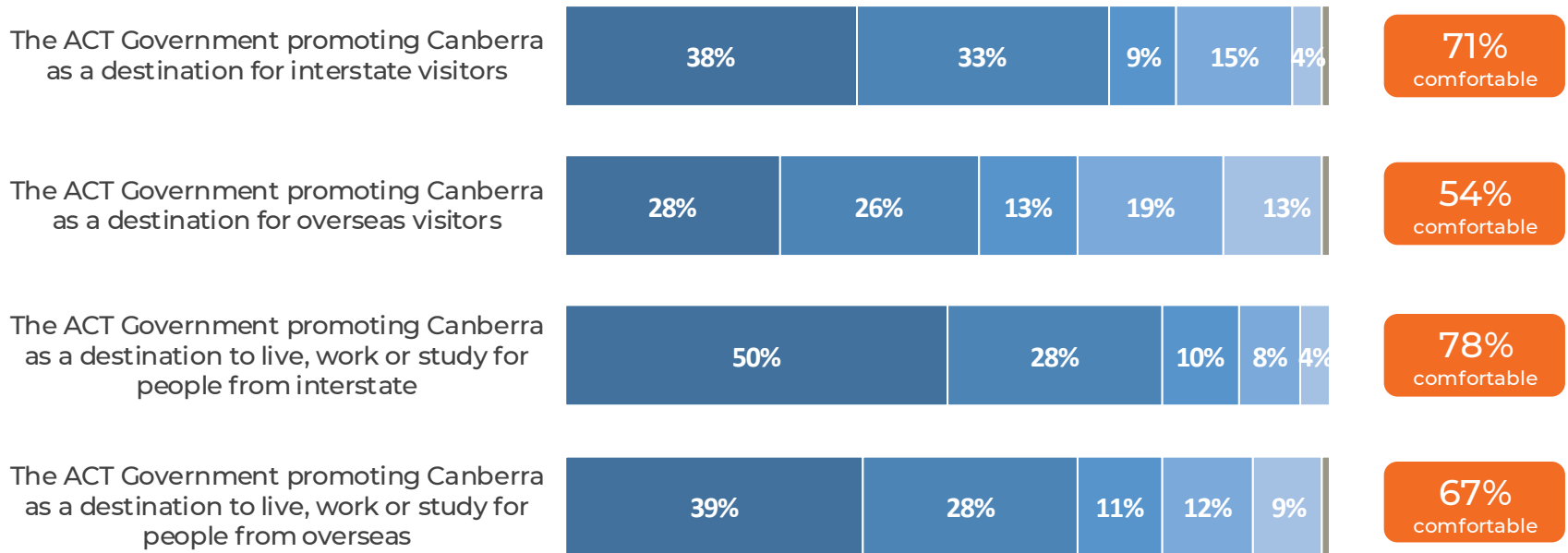
*Q. How likely are you to do each of the following in the next three months?*



■ Very likely 
 ■ Somewhat likely 
 ■ Neither likely nor unlikely 
 ■ Somewhat unlikely 
 ■ Very unlikely 
 ■ Can't say

# There are some reservations about attracting people from overseas to the ACT, particularly if not settling here

*Q. And when it comes to people travelling into the ACT as borders re-open, how comfortable are you about each of the following?*



■ Very comfortable 
 ■ Somewhat comfortable 
 ■ Neither 
 ■ Somewhat uncomfortable 
 ■ Very uncomfortable 
 ■ Can't say



## Discomfort around the return of overseas visitors to the ACT clearly stems from concerns for the health situation

*Q. Why are you uncomfortable about promoting Canberra to people from overseas at the moment?*

Risk of new variants entering the community

People coming from countries with high rates of COVID

Don't have to quarantine or isolate on arrival

Uncertain about efficacy of border screening

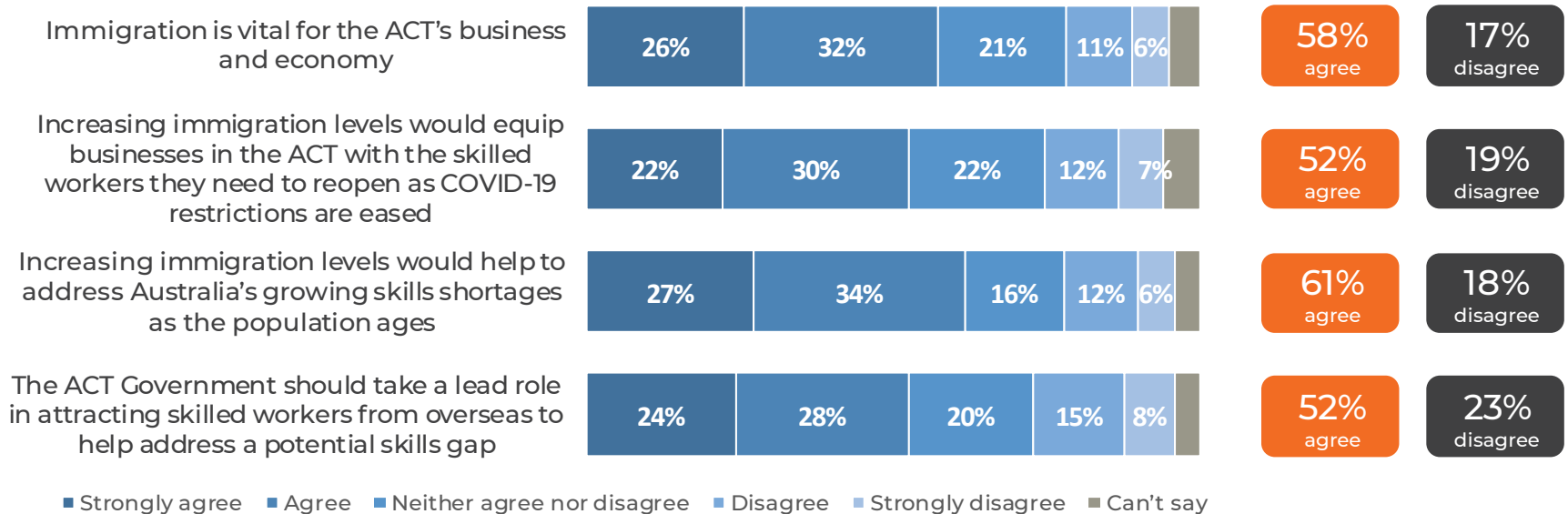
Don't want rampant spread like in other countries

Not convinced on measures in place in other countries

Depends if they are vaccinated or not

# A majority of people tend to support immigration as one way to address potential skills gaps post-pandemic

*Q. The ACT Government is considering ways to attract skilled workers from overseas to help fill a potential skills gap as Canberra's economy continues to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In relation to this, how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following?*



Agreement is higher among younger Canberrans and decreases with age

Business owners on the Panel provide similar views to the overall population



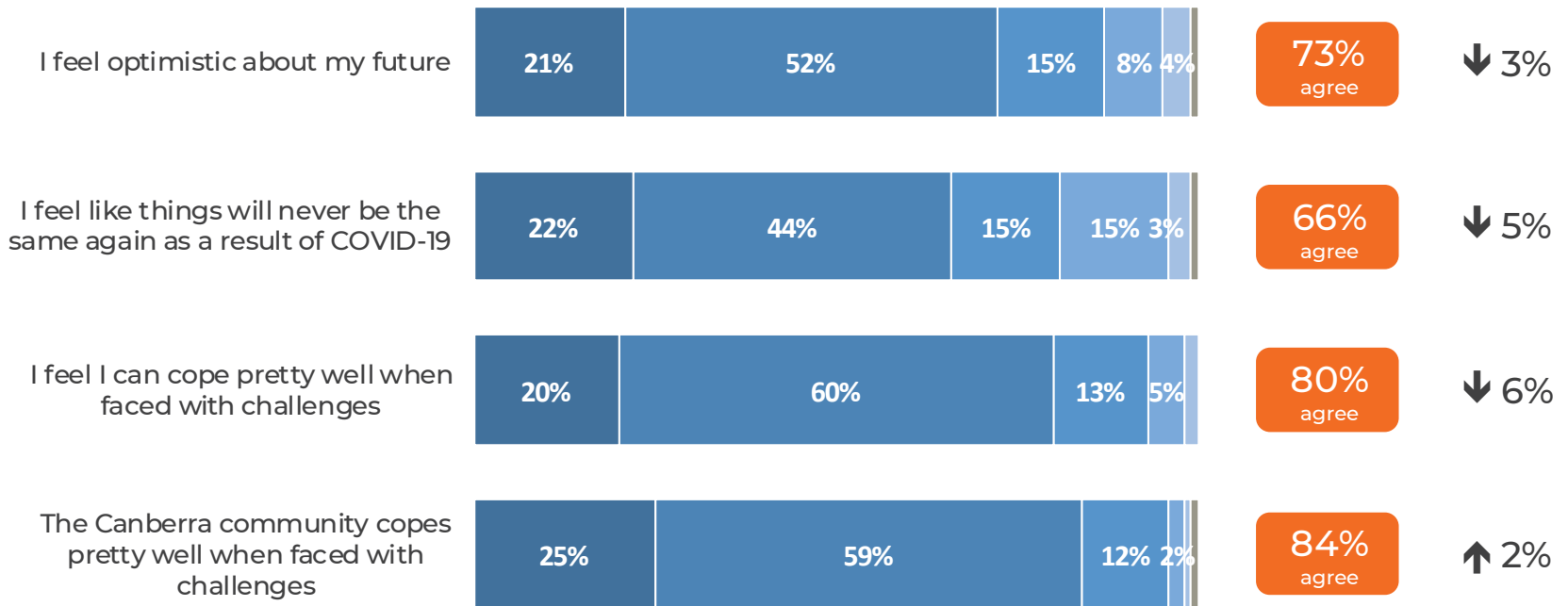
# Future outlook



# While self-optimism and resilience is strong this has fallen slightly from levels reported in February

Q. Thinking about things as we head towards 2022, how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following...

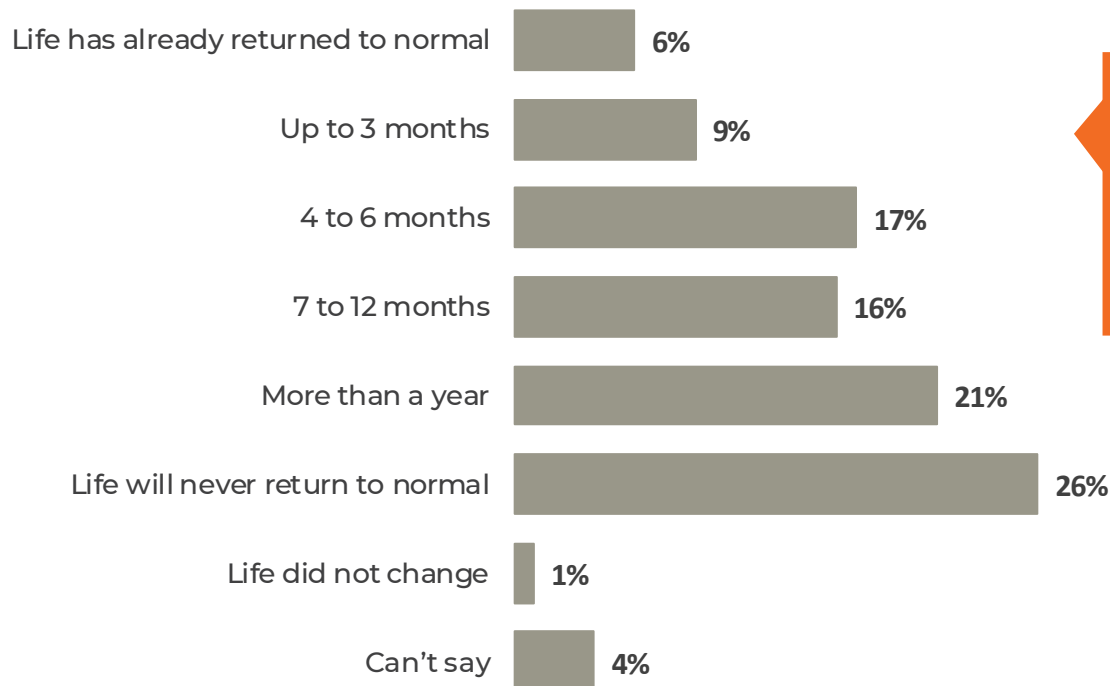
Change from Feb 2021



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Can't say

## Around half of Canberrans expect their life to return to 'normal' within the next year

*Q. And when do you think your life will return to 'normal'?*



Compared to the start of the year, more Canberrans expect life to 'return to normal' in the next year (48% v 21% in Feb 2021)



# Almost six in ten Canberrans say that the pandemic has made them think about or reassess future plans

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following?

The COVID-19 Pandemic has made me think about or re-assess what I want to do in the future

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree   Can't say



58% agree

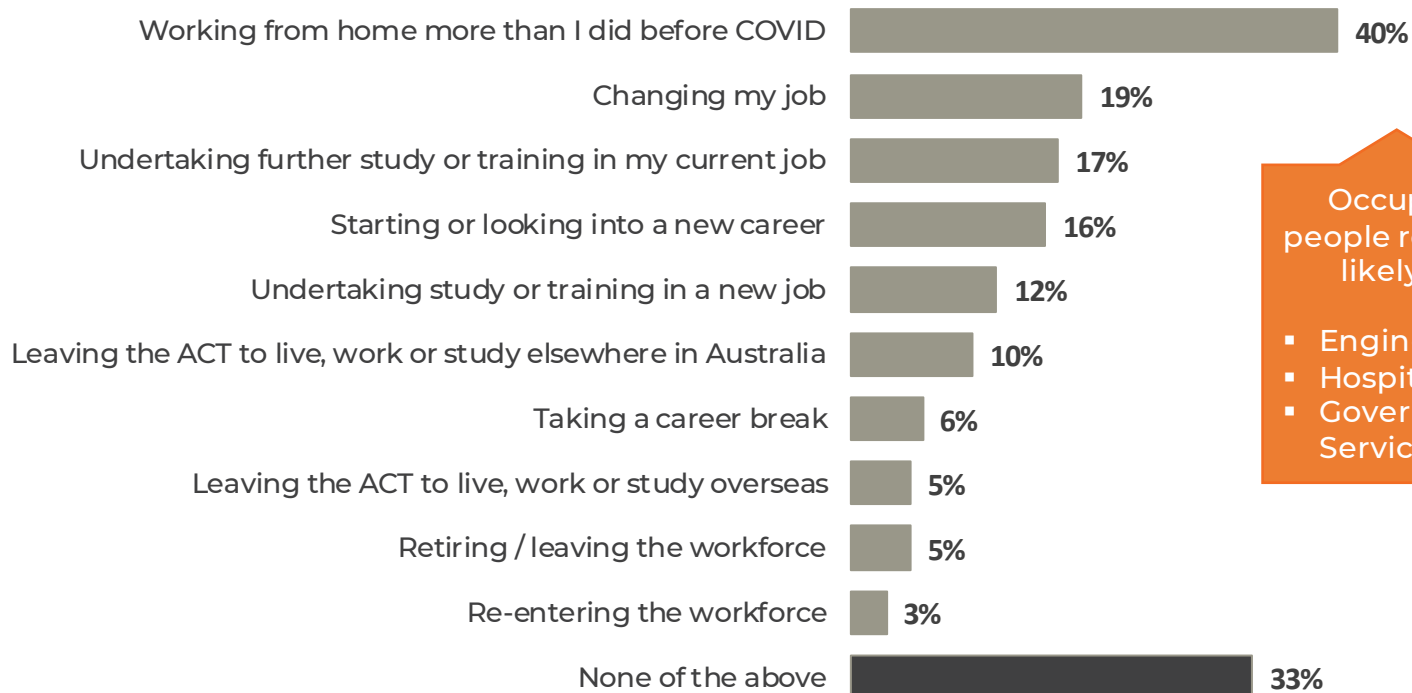
20% disagree

25-34 year olds are the most likely to agree that they have re-assessed what they want to do (66%)

16-24 year olds are more likely than others to disagree (36%)

## Around two in ten Canberrans are looking at changing their job in the next twelve months

*Q. And in the next twelve months, are you planning on doing any of the following?*

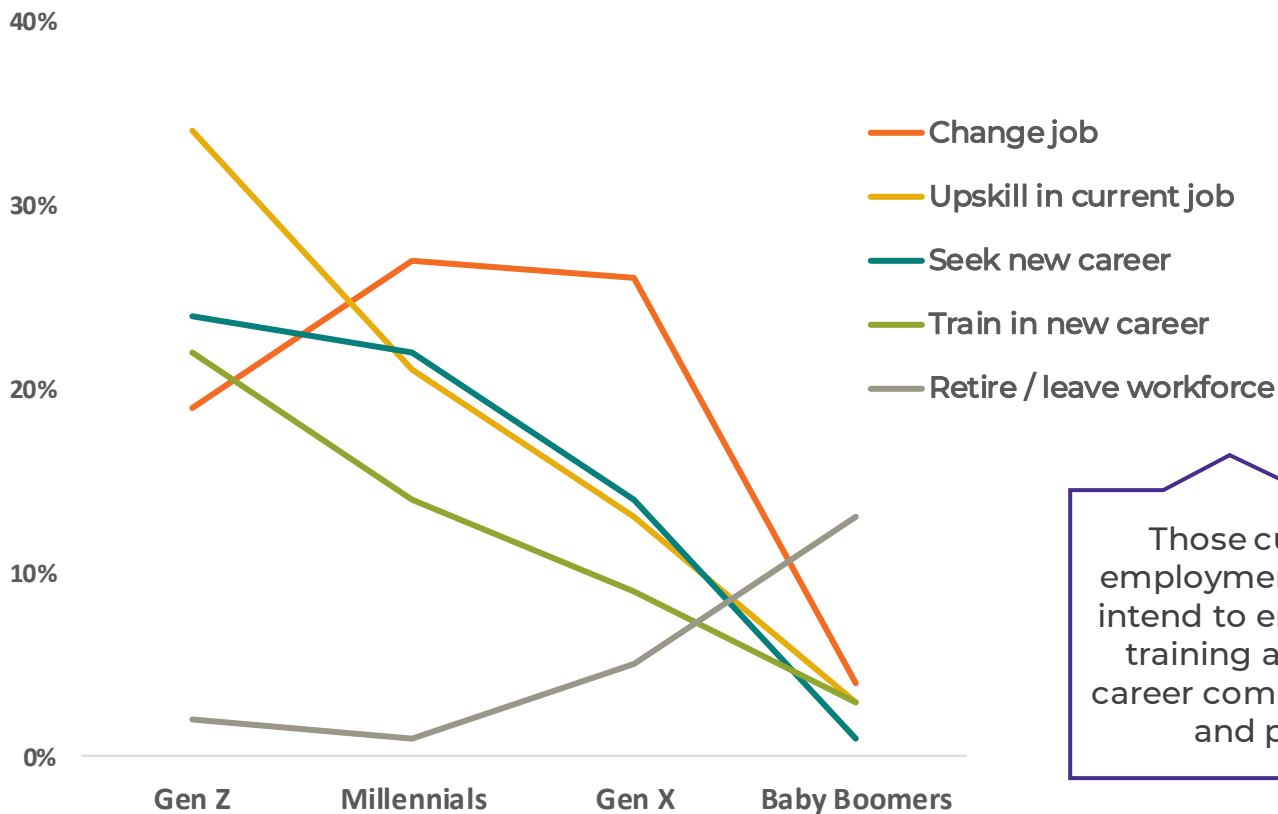


Occupations in which people report they are most likely to change job:

- Engineering (33%)
- Hospitality & Retail (30%)
- Government & Public Service (30%)



## Intent to change job is highest among millennials and Gen X, while training and upskilling a greater focus for Gen Z

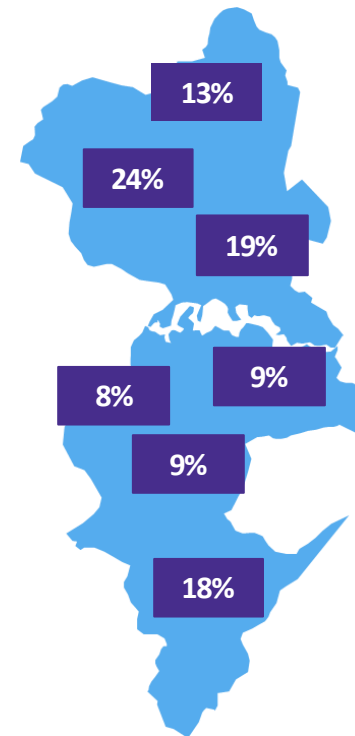
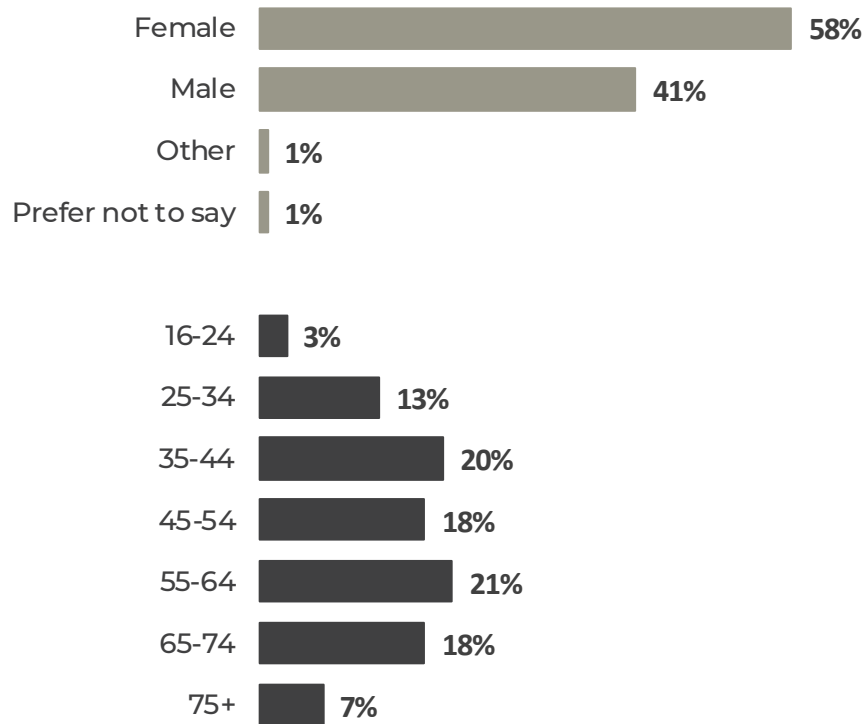


Those currently in casual employment are more likely to intend to engage in upskilling / training and / or seek a new career compared to those in full and part-time roles

# Appendix



## Survey sample profile (unweighted)





## About the YourSay Panel

- Around **6,000** Canberrans have signed up to have their say through the YourSay Community Panel
- The Panel captures the pulse of the community at a given point in time through regular online surveys about a range of topics
- Panellists are recruited through a mix of online and offline channels but must have internet access and an email account to take part
- The Panel closely resembles the overall ACT population by age, gender, region as well as a range of other demographic characteristics
- Members are invited to take part in approximately two activities per month and participation is completely voluntary
- The membership base is highly active with around 4 in 10 members completing each survey on average
- Regular checks are made to ensure results are accurate by comparing them to other independent survey research

5,778

Current members

40%

Survey response rate

40+

Major surveys  
completed

13

Rounds of  
COVID-19  
tracking research



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