

ADULT MEDIA LITERACY IN 2024: AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDES, EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS

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AUSTRALIAN
MEDIA
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Australian Government
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Media literacy is widely recognised as a critical form of literacy that is essential for full participation in society. A media literate person is able to create, use and share a diverse range of media while critically reflecting on their media engagement.

In the past year generative artificial intelligence (AI) has been integrated into online environments in ways that challenge our ability to know how information and media are being produced. These developments make it even more difficult for citizens to know who or what to trust online.

The ever-changing digital media landscape emphasises the need for sustained media education in Australia to ensure that citizens can update their critical competencies, knowledge and skills to inform their decisions about their media use.

This report examines adult media literacy abilities, needs and experiences in Australia. Between January and April 2024 we surveyed a representative sample of 3,852 adult Australians, alongside additional booster samples for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Australians and First Nations Australians. This survey repeated questions asked in our inaugural 2021 Adult Media Literacy survey to produce longitudinal data, while also introducing new questions that respond to pressing issues and new digital media developments.

Our survey findings show that most adult Australians use different types of digital media on a regular basis, but their overall confidence in their digital media abilities is quite low, with very little change since 2021. For example, most adult Australians are not confident about their ability to: identify false and misleading information online, create a video and post it online, edit a digital photo, change social media privacy settings, or seek help from relevant authorities if they are being harassed online.

We find that there is overwhelming demand among Australians for adult and school-based media literacy education. However, too many Australians have not received any form of media literacy education or they don't have access to support when they need it.

The results clearly show that media literacy provides a range of benefits. Adults who are more confident about their media abilities are more engaged with a range of media activities, are more likely to know how to proactively respond to online harms, are more confident they can identify misinformation online and are more aware of new technologies that may affect their lives, such as generative AI.

However, the survey findings presented in this report demonstrate there is an urgent need for more media literacy educational resources and support to address the media interests, needs, deficiencies and concerns of adult Australians.

This study also reveals that Australians want action—from governments, media companies and education providers—on issues that concern them such as online misinformation, the exploitation of their private data, racist or racially insensitive broadcast content, and risks to society that are associated with generative AI.

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ADULT MEDIA LITERACY IN 2024: AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDES, EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS

ADULT MEDIA LITERACY IN AUSTRALIA 2024

In January and February 2024 we surveyed a sample of 4,442 adult Australians, selected to be reflective of the Australian population.

THE MOST POPULAR MEDIA FORMATS

The Top 10 MEDIA FORMATS (%)

■ Weekly users ■ Infrequent users ■ Non-users

Media Format	Weekly users (%)	Infrequent users (%)	Non-users (%)
Social media	94	6	
Television	80	13	7
Streaming services	78	8	14
Radio (AM/FM)	72	16	12
News websites/apps	69	16	15
Video games	42	19	39
Podcasts	37	26	37
Radio app/online	29	24	47
Newspapers (print)	28	34	38
Magazines (print)	15	46	39

GENERATIVE AI USE

59% of adults have **not** used generative AI services at all.

■ Not interested

of these adults, 48% have **no interest** in using it

■ Use Regularly
■ Experimented/Tried

39% Have used **text-focused** generative AI services

16% Have used **image-focused** generative AI services

THE GROWING POPULARITY OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

THE TOP 8 SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS USED IN THE PAST WEEK (%)

Platform	2021 (%)	2024 (%)
Facebook	77	80
Facebook Messenger	57	65
YouTube	62	62
Instagram	41	56
WhatsApp	27	37
TikTok	12	28
Snapchat	19	23
LinkedIn	17	22

WHY ARE ADULTS USING GENERATIVE AI?

TOP 3 REASONS (%)

Out of curiosity	65
To make study/work easier	43
For fun/entertainment	38
Want to learn more about generative AI services	46

GENERATIVE AI: AN OVERALL NEGATIVE SENTIMENT (%)

■ Agree ■ Don't know ■ Disagree

"Laws and regulation are needed to manage risks associated with generative AI"	74	22	4
"I worry generative AI is being developed too quickly"	54	33	13
"I think generative AI will harm Australian society"	40	44	16

THE MEDIA LITERACY GAP (%)

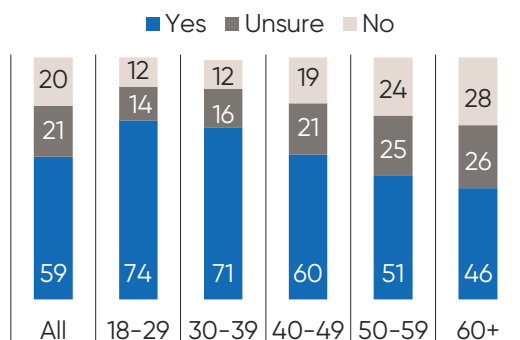
Less than half of adults are confident they can:

Edit a Wikipedia article	15
Edit a video and share online	23
Edit a digital photo	33
Find an online community to get involved with	35
Decide if being harassed online and report to authorities	38
Select an appropriate video game for an 8-year-old	39
Check if a website can be trusted	39
Check if information found online is true	42

MISINFORMATION IS A GROWING CONCERN

Six in ten (59%) adults saw false or misleading information online in the past week. Younger Australians were more likely to report seeing misinformation online.

Have you encountered misinformation online in the past week? (%)



4 in 5 adult Australians



“the spread of misinformation on social media needs to be addressed”

STRONG SUPPORT FOR MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION (%)

■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

Should children receive media literacy education at school?



Is there is a need for media literacy education for adults?



We defined media literacy as **the ability to access, use, create and analyse media**

WHAT DO AUSTRALIANS WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT? (%)

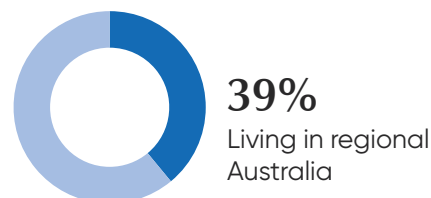
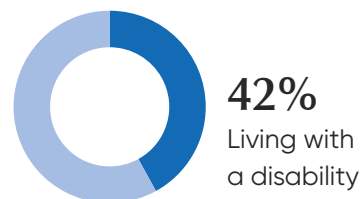
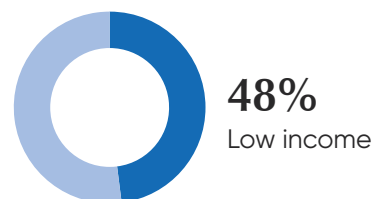
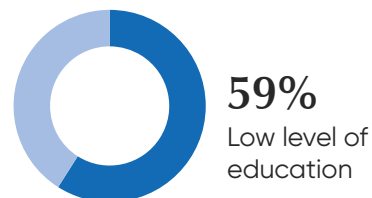
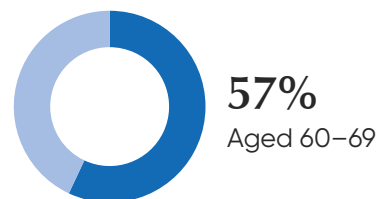
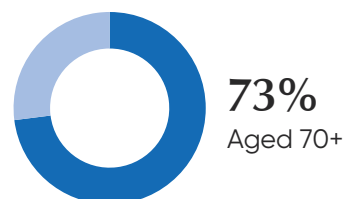
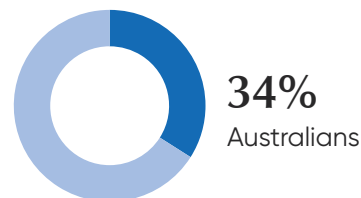
How to protect myself from scams and predators	60
How to find news that is reliable and trustworthy	51
How to identify and respond to misinformation	51
How to use new technologies like AI	41
Relevant media laws and policies	33

CONFIDENCE IN MEDIA ABILITIES

We split respondents into low/medium/high based on their level of confidence with 11 tasks.

Some groups are much more likely to have low confidence.

■ Low confidence



WHY WE UNDERTOOK THIS RESEARCH

In 2021 we released our first Australian adult media literacy survey report.¹ The survey was informed by consultations with diverse stakeholders who shared the view that adult media literacy education and support is important because information and communication technologies are now deeply entwined in just about every aspect of our lives. Our survey was designed to respond to knowledge gaps, so that discussions could move from conjecture and assumptions, to evidence-based action.

Since we published our first report, we have seen some progress made in relation to supporting young people's media literacy. Updates to the Australian Curriculum mean that the focus on critical media literacy has been strengthened for students from Foundation to Year 10.² High quality curriculum-aligned news literacy resources have been produced by public cultural institutions such as ABC Education, the Museum of Australian Democracy and the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia as well as by commercial enterprises such as Squiz Kids.³ However, progress has been much slower when it comes to adult media literacy.

In September 2021, after we published our first survey report, we partnered with the Australian Media Literacy Alliance (AMLA) to consult with 89 organisations from every state and territory in Australia. Through six workshops, we developed consensus about the key tenets for a national strategy for media literacy, which are outlined in the report, *Towards a National Strategy for Media Literacy*.⁴ However, there is still no Federal Government-level national media literacy strategy, unlike in many advanced democracies around the world.

Some progress is on the horizon. In 2023, the Federal Government provided \$2.5 million in funding for the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) to lead misinformation-focused media literacy initiatives with CALD communities.⁵ In 2023, members of our survey research team received funding from the Australian Research Council to carry out national research that will inform a series of misinformation-focused adult media literacy initiatives developed by public cultural institutions and will be used to produce a toolkit to support the efforts of organisations and groups across the country.⁶ Prior to these announcements, the Australian Associated Press (AAP) received funding from Meta Australia to implement a citizen fact-check social media campaign before the 2021 Federal election, which reached millions of adult Australians.⁷ In addition, public cultural institutions like ABC Education, the Museum of Australian Democracy and the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia have provided training and events for thousands of teachers, while library peak bodies have been providing media literacy training and support to librarians—both of whom act as important media literacy mediators.

All of this shows promise and progress. But it is not enough.

A healthy democracy relies on informed and active citizens. For citizens to be informed and active members of society, they need the requisite skills, knowledge and capabilities to access, analyse, critique, share and create media about politics, social issues and news events. Citizens must also be able to recognise when information is misleading or deliberately deceptive.

Media also plays an important role in allowing people to flourish: we use it to broaden our horizons, learn new skills, challenge our thinking, extend our knowledge, connect with friends and communities, have fun and be entertained. Entertainment media is often dismissed as merely for passive consumption, and therefore overlooked in discussions of media literacy. However, our findings highlight the need to ensure media literacy efforts address entertainment media, not only informational media.

Unfortunately, our survey findings show that most Australians have a low level of confidence in their media abilities. The good news is that they want to learn more. Ever evolving media technologies and practices mean that media literacy is a lifelong pursuit and interventions are required throughout a person's life to ensure they are capable of using media to participate in society in diverse ways. We hope that our survey report can inspire and inform significant and sustained action in Australia to meet people's needs and ensure that all citizens are able to avoid media harms, while they benefit from the many opportunities media engagement can enable.

¹ https://westernsydney.edu.au/ics/news/news_archive/2021/report_adult_media_literacy_in_australia

² <https://medialiteracy.org.au/new-australian-curriculum-released/>

³ These resources are listed here <https://medialiteracy.org.au/international-fact-checking-day/>

⁴ Dezuanni, M., Notley, T., Di Martino, L. (2021). *Towards a National Strategy for Media Literacy*. Research report. Australian Media Literacy Alliance

⁵ <https://fecca.org.au/media-releases/fecca-welcomes-budget-measures-for-multicultural-communities-but-more-is-needed/>

⁶ <https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/addressing-misinformation-with-media-literacy>

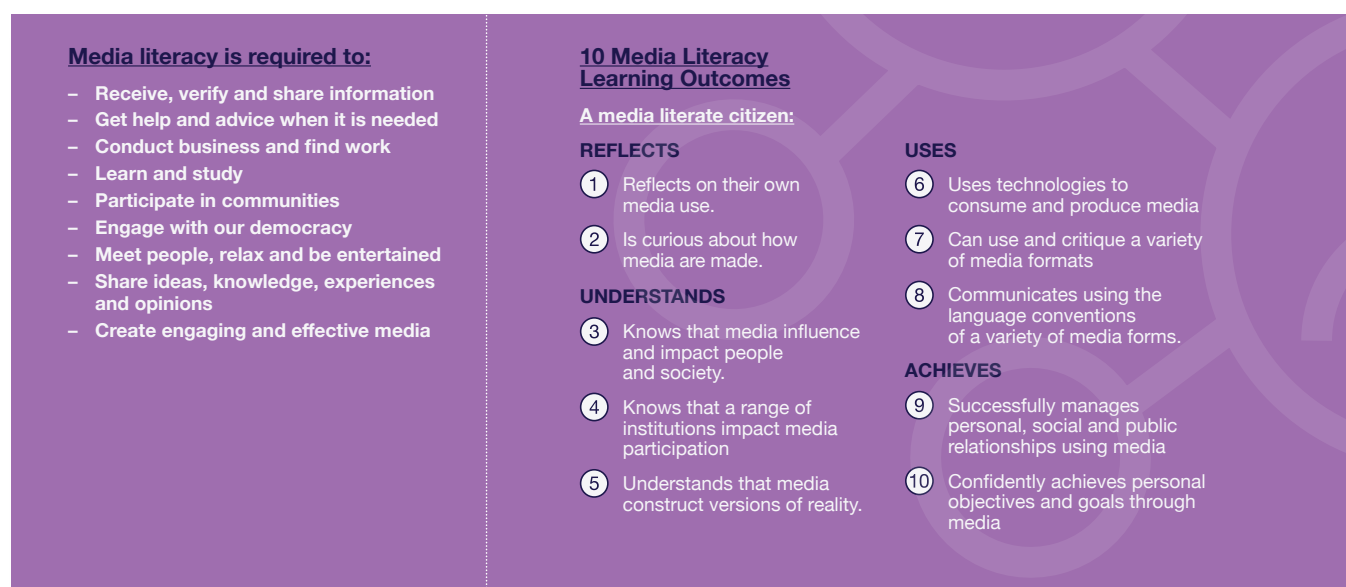
⁷ <https://www.aap.com.au/factcheck-resources/>

DEFINING AND MEASURING MEDIA LITERACY

This report is informed by the media literacy framework that has been adopted by the Australian Media Literacy Alliance (AMLA). This framework defines media literacy as ‘the ability to critically engage with media in all aspects of life. It is a form of lifelong literacy that is essential for full participation in society’.

The AMLA media literacy framework outlines ten competencies and six key concepts as fundamental aspects of media literacy (see **figure A**). These competencies and key concepts have informed the design of our survey.

► **Figure A**
Media Literacy Framework



The Key Concepts

Frame the scope of learning



Media technologies are used to access, create and circulate media.

A media literate citizen: Uses a variety of technologies for media consumption and production, with awareness of the personal, social and ethical impacts of their choices.



Media representations portray people, places and ideas.

A media literate citizen: Engages with media representations with an understanding of how processes of selection and construction have been used to create stories according to particular points of view.



Media audiences are the people who use and respond to media.

A media literate citizen: Recognises their own role as an audience member across multiple media forms, and the processes used by media producers to invite particular consumption practices.



Media institutions are different types of organisations that produce, distribute, regulate and educate about media.

A media literate citizen: Understands that economic, social and ethical processes inform the production, distribution and regulation of media content.



Media languages create meaning, communicated through images, sound and text.

A media literate citizen: Uses and critiques media languages in images, sounds and text to communicate and analyse how meaning is constructed across multiple media forms.



Media relationships provide a key motivation for the production, use and circulation of media.

A media literate citizen: Is aware and critiques the various kinds of relationships that can be formed within and with various media forms.

It is difficult to estimate a definitive and conclusive measure of people's individual media literacy through online surveys. However, survey questions can be used to generate data on particular aspects of media literacy. This survey was designed to collect data about the following aspects of media literacy.

Media use

We asked the respondents if they use a range of both digital and traditional media and we asked how frequently they use them. We used people's responses to these questions to develop different profiles of media users and to categorise people as having a low, medium or high overall level of traditional/digital media use.

Attitudes towards media activities

Our survey draws on the AMLA media literacy framework to identify a set of 16 ways people can use media to support a range of social, economic and cultural activities. Ranging from 'using media to stay connected with family and friends' to 'knowing how to recognise and prevent the flow of misinformation', we asked the respondents to tell us how important each of these 16 uses of media is in their lives. In this report, we use these questions to understand whether and how people value the role of media in their lives. Attitudes toward media activities were also measured by directly asking respondents which of ten activities they would like to learn more about (see Media Literacy Education below).

Ability to respond to negative media experiences

We asked the respondents about their experience of having encountered offensive content on social media and on television. Follow-up questions then identified the different actions respondents had taken as a result of seeing offensive content. We used these questions to understand whether people are able to make decisions about how to recognise and deal with offensive content when they encounter it. We also asked people about their experiences of misinformation online.

Knowledge of emerging technologies and ability to use them

Given the increasing role of generative artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithms in how people engage with and create media, we asked a series of questions focused on these new technologies. We asked people about the extent to which they used generative AI services, why they did or did not use them, and gauged their overall sentiment toward generative AI. Our questions on algorithms focused on people's understanding of how algorithms influence the visibility of news on social media.

Media abilities

We asked the respondents if they were able to help a friend to perform a set of 11 media activities, such as 'change their privacy settings on social media' and 'edit a video and share it online'. This set of questions was used to help us identify people's media abilities, based on their level of confidence in their ability to teach an activity to someone else. This technique is often used in technology surveys as it helps minimise the social desirability bias which can result from asking respondents to self-report their own ability level. Our analysis of the media abilities of Australians can be used to inform media literacy programs by identifying areas of weakness and strength.

Media literacy education

We asked the respondents if they had received support to use and create media from any of eight sources (e.g. friends, family, online resources) across their lifetime and whether they currently had access to support when 'stuck' using media. We defined media literacy as the ability to access, use, understand or create media and asked if they believe children should receive media literacy education in school and if there is a need for media literacy education for adults. We also asked respondents what, if any, media literacy topics they are interested in learning more about and then asked them how they would like to learn about these topics. We asked these questions to directly inform policies and programs that aim to increase adult media literacy.

Entertainment media

The survey included five questions designed to elicit the extent to which respondents engage with entertainment media in a critical and reflective manner. We asked these questions to counterbalance the typical emphasis on news and information media found in media literacy policy and research, and to support a richer understanding of the role entertainment media plays in people's lives.

In many cases we have cross-tabulated the findings from individual questions to provide richer insights about people's media use, needs, experiences and literacy.

KEY FINDINGS

1. AUSTRALIANS REGULARLY USE MANY TYPES OF MEDIA, BUT SOCIAL MEDIA IS THE MOST POPULAR

Most adult Australians use several forms of media on a weekly basis. Online sources have become a significant part of Australians' daily lives. Since 2021, there has been considerable growth in the use of digital media such as podcasts (+20%), online TV (+14%), online radio (+13%) and video games (+11%). Social media is now the most frequently used media format and this use has also increased since 2021 (+3%).

- » Two thirds of adult Australians (65%) use three or more different media formats on a daily basis
- » The types of media most used on a regular basis (weekly or more) are social media (94%), traditional television (80%) and streaming television (78%)
- » Almost half (48%) of adult Australians had used five or more social media platforms in the week before they completed the survey
- » Facebook is used by eight in ten (80%) adults on a weekly basis, with 65% using Facebook Messenger and 62% using YouTube
- » Almost two-thirds (62%) of adults agree that entertainment media helps them to learn more about the world around them
- » The number of regular users of traditional television has dropped significantly since 2021 (80%, -7%), while regular use of streaming television (e.g. Netflix, iView) has increased (78%, +15%) to be almost level with traditional TV
- » Around half of adults (50%) agree that we can learn as much about the world around us from entertainment media as from informational media
- » Almost nine in ten (88%) adults have used one or more online sources to search for information to make a decision in the past month

2. AUSTRALIANS HAVE A LOW LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE IN THEIR OWN MEDIA ABILITIES

We asked respondents about their level of confidence to perform a series of 11 media-related tasks. These tasks required critical and technical abilities and/or knowledge. Overall, adult Australians have a low confidence in their own media abilities. On average, respondents reported they could do four out of the 11 tasks with confidence. Age and household income are strongly correlated with media ability. People who regularly consume a diverse range of media have far more confidence in their media abilities.

- » Adults are most confident they can find information they need online (60%)
- » Four in ten (42%) adults are confident they can check a website to see if it can be trusted, but this falls to 25% for people with a low level of education
- » Just over half (52%) of adults are confident they can change privacy settings on social media
- » Only one in five (22%) adults are confident they can edit a video and share it online, but this increases to more than one third (38%) for adults aged 18–29
- » Only 35% of adults are confident they can seek help from the right authorities if they are being harassed online, but this correlates with age ranging from 53% for 18–29 to 16% of adults aged 70+

3. MOST ADULT AUSTRALIANS WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT GENERATIVE AI SERVICES BUT THEY ARE ALSO WORRIED

Four in ten adult Australians have experimented with generative AI services but there is a strong overall negative sentiment towards this technology, with most adults wanting regulation to mitigate possible harms.

- » Almost four in ten (39%) adult Australians have experience using text-focused generative AI services, but this correlates with age and rises to 70% for 18–29 year olds
- » Less than one in five (16%) have used image-focused generative AI services, but this correlates with age and rises to 31% for 18–29 year olds
- » Four in ten (40%) adults believe that generative AI will harm Australian society
- » Almost three quarters (74%) of adult Australians believe that laws and regulations are needed to manage risks associated with generative AI
- » Almost half (46%) of adults want to learn more about generative AI services

4. AUSTRALIANS ARE INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT MISINFORMATION ONLINE AND WANT ACTION TAKEN TO ADDRESS IT

Many adults say they encounter misinformation on a regular basis and there is strong support for action to address this problem. People who use more social media platforms are more likely to report seeing misinformation online.

- » Almost half of adult Australians (47%) reported that they encountered false or misleading information online in the week prior to the survey, but this correlates with age reaching 56% for those aged 18–29
- » Adults who regularly used six or more social media platforms were more than twice as likely to have reported seeing misinformation online in the past week (60%), when compared to those who used only one social media platform (25%)
- » Four in ten adult Australians (39%) are confident they can check if information they found online is true, though this figure is much lower for adults with a low education level (25%) and for adults aged 60+ (24%)
- » Four in five (80%) adults want the spread of misinformation in Australia to be addressed, a 6% increase since 2021
- » Almost everyone (94%) who wants misinformation to be addressed agrees that people need to be taught how to identify misinformation

5. AUSTRALIANS WANT MEDIA LITERACY SUPPORT TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO ALL CITIZENS

Most Australians value media literacy and they want support to be provided to both children and adults. People prefer learning media literacy skills and knowledge from online tutorials, although one in five want to access media literacy support in libraries.

- » Two thirds of adult Australians (67%) have used online resources as a source of support to help them use media at some point in their life, closely followed by help from friends (63%) and family (59%)
- » There is strong support for media literacy education in schools (84%), and a similar level of support for media literacy programs to be available for adults (82%)
- » The three top media abilities people want to learn more about are: 'Protecting oneself from scams and predators' (60%), 'Learning how to find news that is reliable and trustworthy' (51%), and 'How to identify and respond to misinformation' (51%)
- » Adults prefer to develop their media literacy through online tutorials (52%), short videos (28%), friends (27%) and libraries (26%)

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THERE IS A NEED FOR A SUSTAINED NATIONAL MEDIA LITERACY ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

While most Australians (68%) have heard of the term media literacy, only one third (33%) have some understanding of what it means. Older adults, those with a lower level of education and lower household income are less likely to know what media literacy means. It is important to note that significant progress has been made since 2021 with a 9% increase in adults who have some understanding of media literacy. This is likely the result of the advocacy efforts of the Australian Media Literacy Alliance (AMLA) and the work of Australian organisations who have implemented media literacy programs for young people, or training for teachers and librarians in recent years. We recommend that 'media literacy' should be more actively promoted by governments, public institutions, education providers, policymakers, and the corporate sector.

2. A NATIONAL MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION STRATEGY IS REQUIRED

Most advanced democracies around the world have a government media literacy strategy or policy, and we believe this is urgently needed for Australia. There is very strong support for media literacy in schools (84%) and similar support for media literacy programs to be available for adults (82%). The overall low level of confidence adult Australians have in their media ability demonstrates the clear need for media literacy education. A national media literacy strategy can be used to ensure there is: a shared, strategic vision for media literacy education; clarity on priority groups and issues; a plan for funding media literacy research and initiatives; and measurable targets to track change and impact. A consultation process should be used to ensure this strategy reflects the needs and expectations of diverse groups. Without a national strategy, media literacy initiatives are likely to be disconnected or piecemeal, with some groups likely to miss out on receiving the targeted support they want and need.

3. RESEARCH SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE NATIONAL BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH MEDIA LITERACY

We recommend that Australian governments and philanthropic organisations partner with university-based researchers to investigate the most effective media literacy pedagogical and outreach approaches to align media literacy with people's needs and interests. Our survey shows there is a high level of concern about misinformation, online privacy and digital security, while there is a strong desire to learn more about these topics. At the same time, the survey shows that Australians value the role entertainment media plays in their lives and they see this engagement as being influential. Therefore, adult media literacy research should not only focus on understanding harms and informational forms of media, but also on the cultural and social benefits that can be associated with media use such as civic engagement, connection with friends and family, and the ability to learn and be creative online.

4. EVERYONE NEEDS ACCESS TO MEDIA LITERACY SUPPORT, BUT SOME GROUPS SHOULD BE PRIORITISED

The survey shows that adult Australians living in regional areas, less educated Australians, older Australians, people living with a disability, and Australians living in lower income households use fewer media, have less experience and knowledge of emerging technologies like generative AI, and are more likely to have lower levels of confidence in their own media ability. Media literacy programs for adults in the community should prioritise these groups who are, for all of these reasons, likely to have lower levels of media literacy.

At the same time, media literacy education must also be provided to all school students. Our survey shows that adults strongly support this. Australia is fortunate to have a world-leading media literacy curriculum in the form of Media Arts in the Australian national curriculum, which provides a scope and sequence for media teaching from preschool to Year 10.¹ Media literacy can also be taught in other areas of the curriculum such as English and Digital Technologies. However, research shows that only a minority of students experience media literacy lessons in the classroom, while teachers struggle to use these curriculum documents to develop rich learning experiences for their students.² More needs to be done to ensure teachers are well trained and have access to adequate media literacy professional development. In addition, the curriculum should be presented in a way that makes it easy to interpret and implement to ensure media literacy is addressed in classrooms, while government education departments should fund and promote high-quality evidence-based media literacy resources.

5. MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION IS URGENT WITH THE PERVASIVE USE OF AI AND ALGORITHMS

Almost all Australians use social media and digital platforms in their everyday lives. Technologies such as generative AI and algorithms are now used pervasively by social media platforms. Many Australians are concerned about how these emerging technologies are used in delivering information and content to them. Australians have an overall negative sentiment towards AI, with four in ten (40%) who are familiar with generative AI believing it will harm Australian society. In addition, some 70% of those familiar with algorithms are worried about the data algorithms collect about them. We find that people's level of awareness and use of emerging technologies is directly related to their media literacy confidence level. Without intervention, emerging technologies like generative AI technologies are likely to widen existing gaps between those with a low and high level of confidence in their media ability. Furthermore, many respondents in this study are unsure about these technologies or do not know enough to make an assessment about their use. It is imperative to consider emerging technologies when developing media literacy educational programs and tools. In a positive light, there is an appetite among Australians to learn more about these emerging technologies; 46% of adult Australians want to know more about generative AI, while 70% of those who are familiar with algorithms want to know more about them.

¹ See <https://medialiteracy.org.au/new-australian-curriculum-released/>

² See the News and Young Australians in 2023 survey <https://apo.org.au/node/324686> and News and Teachers Australian teachers survey <https://apo.org.au/node/306894>

READING THE DATA

The following key terms and phrases should be noted when reading the data presented in the following pages.

Age Group

People were grouped into decadal age groups. The youngest group also includes those aged 18–19 and the oldest group includes all respondents aged 70 and over.

Age	Proportion of Sample
18–29	20%
30–39	20%
40–49	15%
50–59	16%
60–69	15%
70+	14%

Critical disposition toward entertainment media

We asked five questions about people's attitude towards entertainment media. We added the raw scores of the responses to the five statements ranging from one to five, one being 'strongly disagree' and five being 'strongly agree'. The aggregate score ranges from five to 25. This aggregate score was then coded into three quantiles to represent a *low* (38%), *medium* (35%) and *high* (27%) level of critical disposition toward entertainment media.

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Australians

This category was applied to respondents who were recruited from a booster panel that specifically targeted people with linguistically diverse backgrounds, together with people who self-identified in response to the question 'Do you identify as ethnically or culturally diverse?'. As CALD groups are often underrepresented in online surveys, we used a booster sample (N = 295) to achieve greater representation. Our booster sample recruited from people who regularly spoke one of the six most common languages used in Australia after English. To support participation, the survey was offered in some of these languages (Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic, Vietnamese) and it was offered as a telephone survey as well as online.

Digital and traditional media use

The frequency of respondents' media use across different media types was aggregated to provide a score reflecting the overall frequency with which they consumed each of digital and traditional media. The digital media score aggregates the use of social media, streaming TV (e.g. Netflix, iView), news websites or apps, radio using an app or online, podcasts and video games. The

traditional media score aggregates the use of newspapers (print), magazines (print), radio using an AM/FM radio, free-to-air or pay television, and movies in a cinema. Each score is normalised to be out of 100.

Disability

We asked the respondents 'Do you have a long-term health condition or impairment/disability?' Those who answered 'Yes', were then asked whether any of their impairments limit their everyday activities. A total of 15% responded in the affirmative, and were correspondingly categorised as living with disability. This is comparable to the national figure of 18%, as measured by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

Education level

Respondents were asked to select the highest level of education they had completed from nine options, ranging from not having completed any formal education through to having a postgraduate degree. This was then coded into categories of:

- » Low (22%): did not complete secondary school
- » Medium (46%): completed high school or a certificate/diploma/associate level qualification; and
- » High (32%): completed a bachelor degree or higher

First Nations Australians

This term is used to define people who self-identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. First Nations Australians are typically underrepresented in online surveys. We used a booster sample (N = 275) to minimise the effect of this misrepresentation. The survey was also offered online and via telephone. However, we acknowledge this booster sample is not representative of First Nations Australians. About two-thirds (64%) of the First Nations survey respondents were living in major cities which is in contrast to the national distribution of 41%. The average education level and household income levels in our First Nations sample were also higher than the corresponding national averages for First Nations adults.

Gender

We asked respondents 'How do you currently describe your gender identity?',

with options of Female/woman, Male/man, Gender diverse and the option to self-describe. Under 1% of responses were non-binary (n = 18). Due to the small sample size, our analysis of responses to questions by gender only considers differences among Women and Men.

Income

Respondents were asked to select their gross household income from six income ranges. Each range covers approximately 17% of the population, based on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Pairs of ranges were combined to provide a simpler categorisation of *low* (under \$65,000), *medium* (\$65,000 to \$129,999) or *high* (over \$130,000) household income.

Media ability

We estimated the overall level of media ability by assigning a score of between one ('Not confident at all') and five ('Extremely confident') to each respondent's level of confidence across each of the 11 items in our set of media activities. This provides a total media ability score for each respondent ranging from 11 to 55. Aggregate scores were divided into three quantiles representing low (34%), medium (36%) and high (30%) levels of confidence in their media ability.

Overall media use

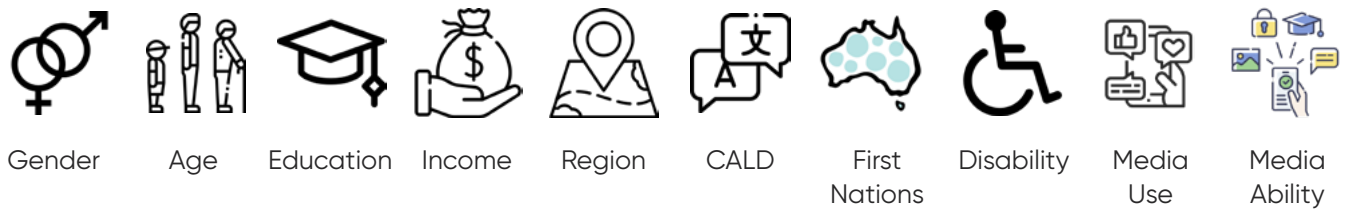
This measure reflects both diversity and frequency of media use. It is calculated using the frequency with which people reported using eleven different types of media: newspapers (print), magazines (print), radio (AM/FM), television channels (free-to-air, pay television), cinema, news websites or news apps, radio (using a mobile app or smart speaker), video games, video streaming services (e.g. Netflix, iView), podcasts and social media. Aggregate scores were divided into three quantiles representing *low* (35%), *medium* (34%) and *high* (31%) levels of overall media use.

Region

The postcode of each respondent was classified as falling into either a *metropolitan* (45%), *major regional* (29%) or *regional* (25%) area based on the most recent classification published by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.

DIMENSIONS OF ANALYSIS

When analysing the survey data, we considered the results for all Australians as well as the results for diverse number of groups. See reading the data (p18) for more detail on each of these groups.



In the report we present the results for different groups when these were statistically significant and notable—that is, when we consider the different results for this group warrant further consideration.

CONSUMING, USING AND CREATING MEDIA

01

MEDIA CONSUMPTION

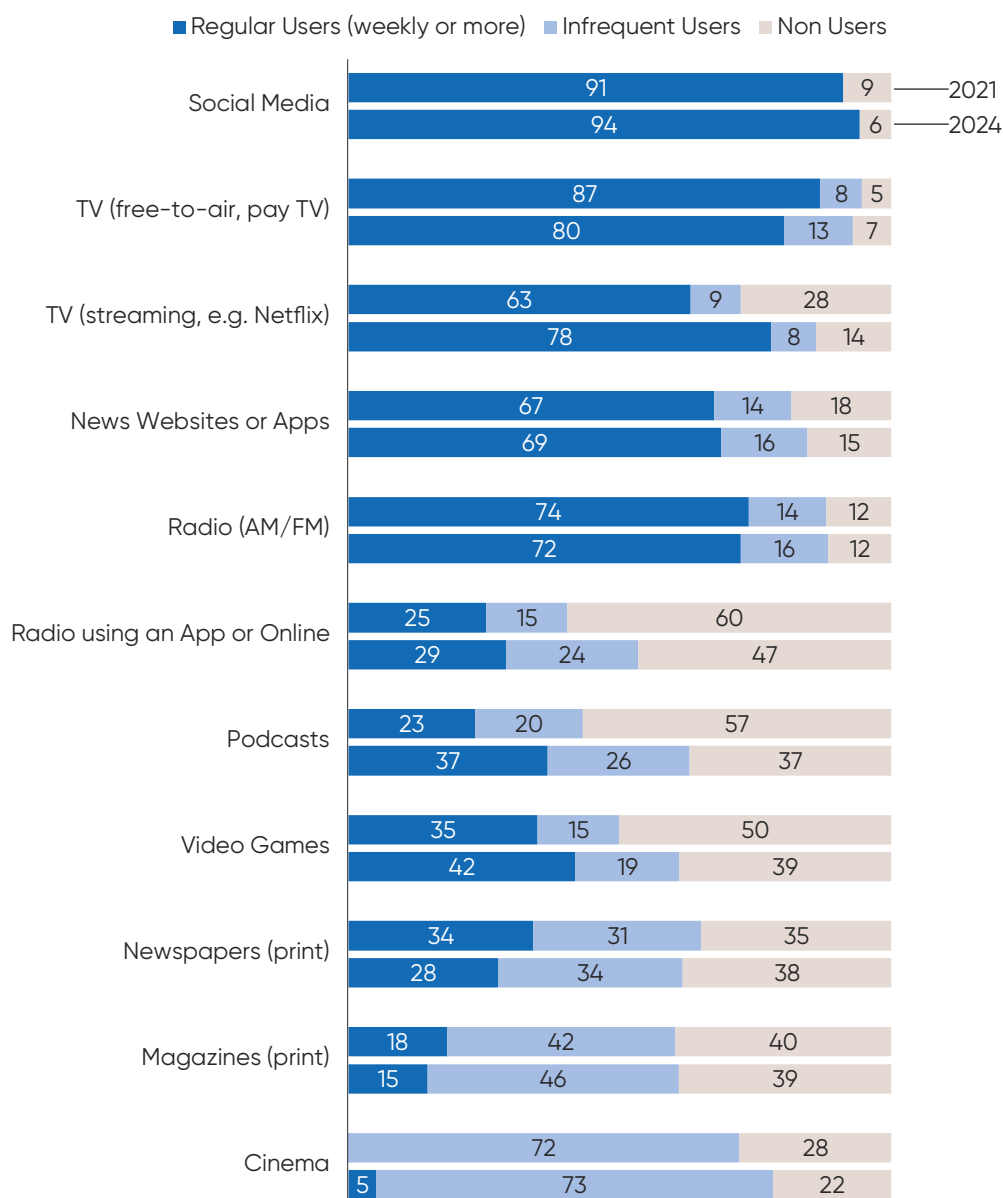
- » Social media is the type of media used most regularly by adult Australians (94% using at least once a week), followed by traditional TV (80%) and video streaming services (78%)
- » There has been considerable growth in the use of digital media since 2021, including podcasts (+20%), online TV (+14%), online radio (+13%) and video games (+11%)
- » Two-thirds (69%) of adult Australians use five or more different types of media on a regular basis (at least once a week)
- » Overall media use is lower among adults who live in a regional area, have low levels of education, have a low household income or who are living with a disability
- » Almost half (48%) of adult Australians used five or more different social media platforms in the past week

SOCIAL MEDIA IS USED MORE THAN ANY OTHER TYPE OF MEDIA

Social media dominates the media practices of Australians, with more than nine in ten (94%) using this type of media weekly (at least once a week) (see **figure 1.1**). This is an increase of 3% since 2021. Traditional television is used by four out of five (80%) adults at least once a week and by a further 13% on a less frequent basis. This compares to 2021 when overall use of traditional TV (95%) was still higher than use of social media (91%). In 2024, however, more adults are using social media than are using traditional TV.

The number of regular (weekly) users of traditional television has dropped significantly since 2021 (80%, -7%), while regular use of streaming television (e.g. Netflix, iView) has increased (78%, +15%) to be almost level with traditional TV. This mirrors other significant increases in the overall use of digital media (either regularly or less frequently). Podcasts (37%, +20%) online radio (29%, +13%) and video games (42%, +11%) are all being used by a larger number of adults in 2024 than in 2021.

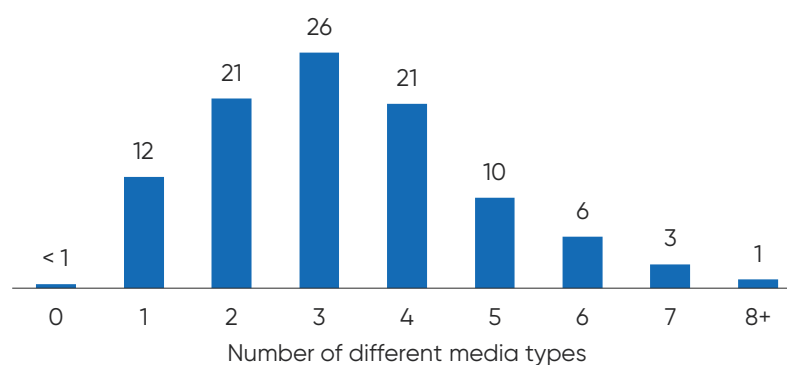
► **Figure 1.1**
Frequency of media usage, by media type and year (%)



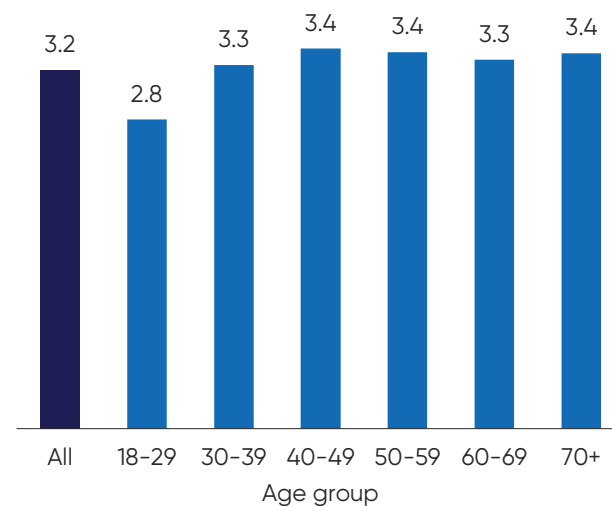
YOUNGER ADULTS USE FEWER TYPES OF MEDIA ON A DAILY BASIS

Two-thirds (67%) of Australian adults use between two and four different media on a daily basis (see **figure 1.2**), with an average of 3.2 types of media (see **figure 1.3**). The only group to use significantly fewer types of media is the youngest group of adults, aged 18–29, who use an average of 2.8 different types each day.

► **Figure 1.2**
Number of different media types used on a daily basis (%)



► **Figure 1.3**
Number of different media types used on a daily basis, by age (average)



SOME GROUPS USE LESS MEDIA

Adults who are living with a disability, live in a regional area, have a low level of education or who have a low household income are all more likely to use fewer media overall (see **figure 1.4**).

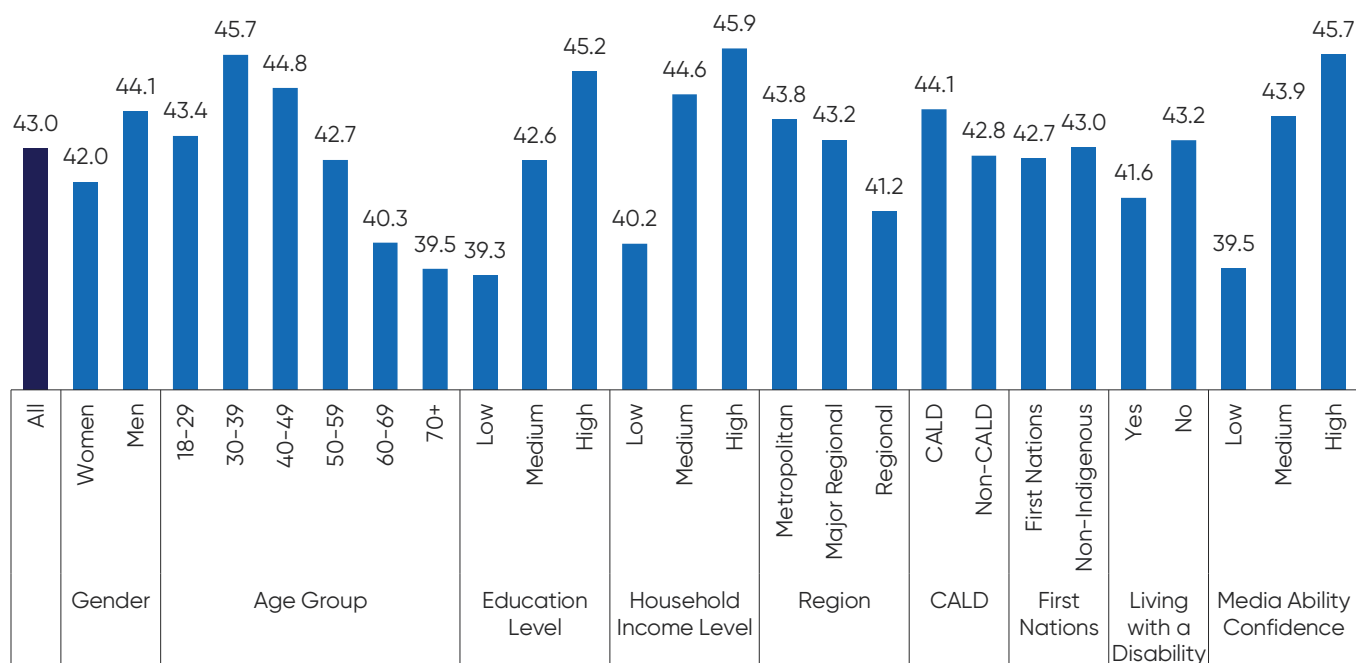
Our scale of media usage is based on the frequency of using the 11 different media types (see **figure 1.1**). We assigned each adult an aggregate score between 8 and 86. The average score for adult Australians was 43.0 (SD = 10.6).

Adults with a low level of education have the lowest media usage score of 39.3, compared to a score of 45.2 for those with a high level of

education. Household income shows a similar correlation, with low income households having an average score of 40.2 compared to 45.9 for those living in high income households. Adults living in regional areas (41.2) and those living with a disability (39.5) also use less media overall (39.5) than the national average.

There is also a strong correlation between the amount of media adults use and their level of media ability confidence. Adults with the highest level of confidence have an average media use score of 45.7, compared to a score of just 39.5 for those with the lowest level of media ability confidence.

► **Figure 1.4**
Overall media use score, by demographics and media ability confidence (average)

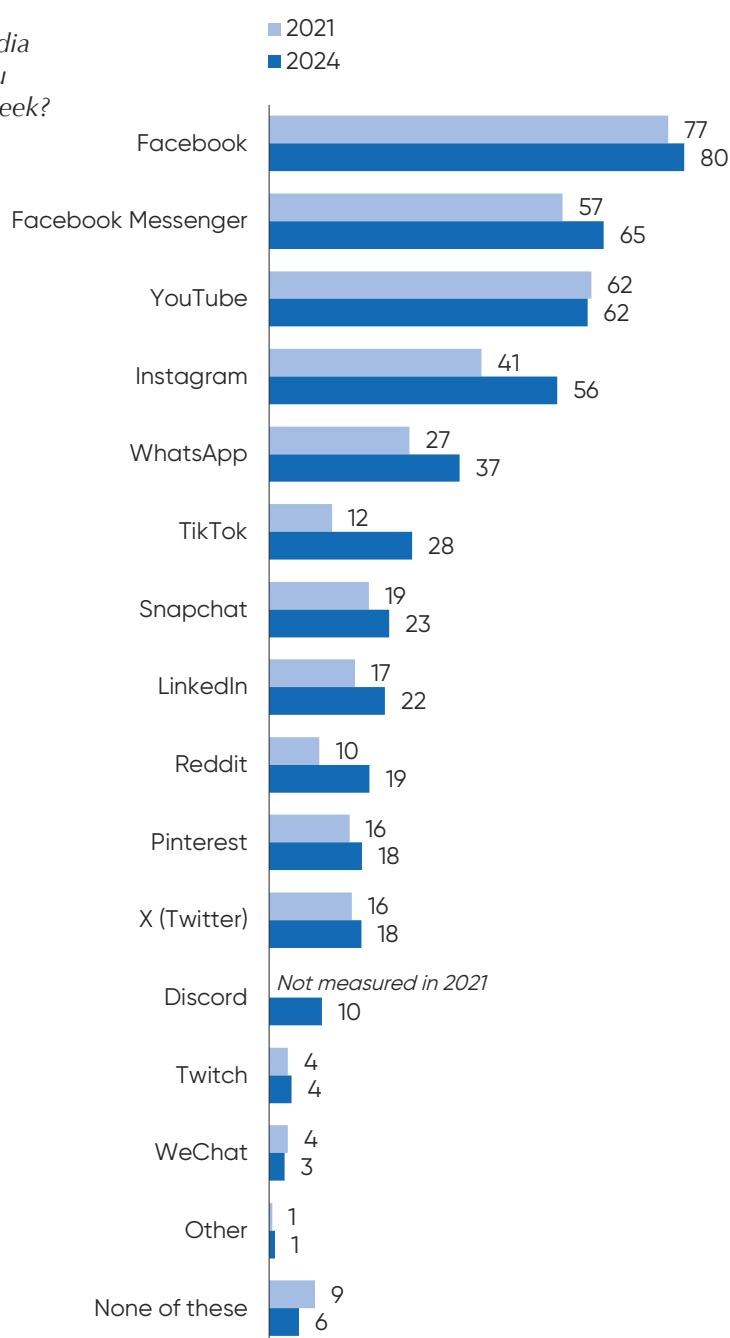


FACEBOOK, YOUTUBE AND INSTAGRAM DOMINATE AMONG SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Facebook remains the most used social media platform (80%), with YouTube (62%) and Instagram (56%) being the only other platforms used by more than half of Australian adults in the past week (see **figure 1.5**). A number of platforms saw significant increases in usage since 2021. The

proportion of adults using TikTok more than doubled (28%,+16%), with Reddit recording a similar proportional increase (19%, +9%). Instagram saw the largest increase among the dominant platforms, rising from 41% of adults in 2021 to 56% in 2024.

► **Figure 1.5**
Which social media platforms did you use in the past week?
By year (%)



AUSTRALIANS ARE USING A WIDER RANGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

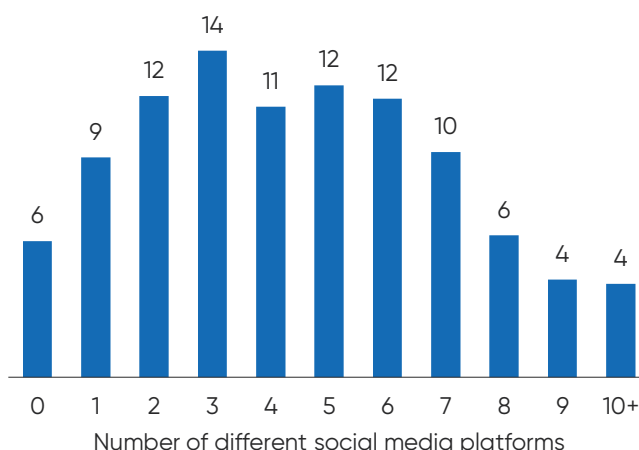
Almost half (48%) of adults used five or more different social media platforms in the past week (see **figure 1.6**), with Australians using an average of five different platforms (see **figure 1.7**). This reflects a significant increase compared to 2021, when adults reported using an average of 3.7 different platforms in the past week.

Younger adults are using the widest range of social media platforms, with those aged 18–29 using an average of seven different platforms. Use of a wider range of social media platforms

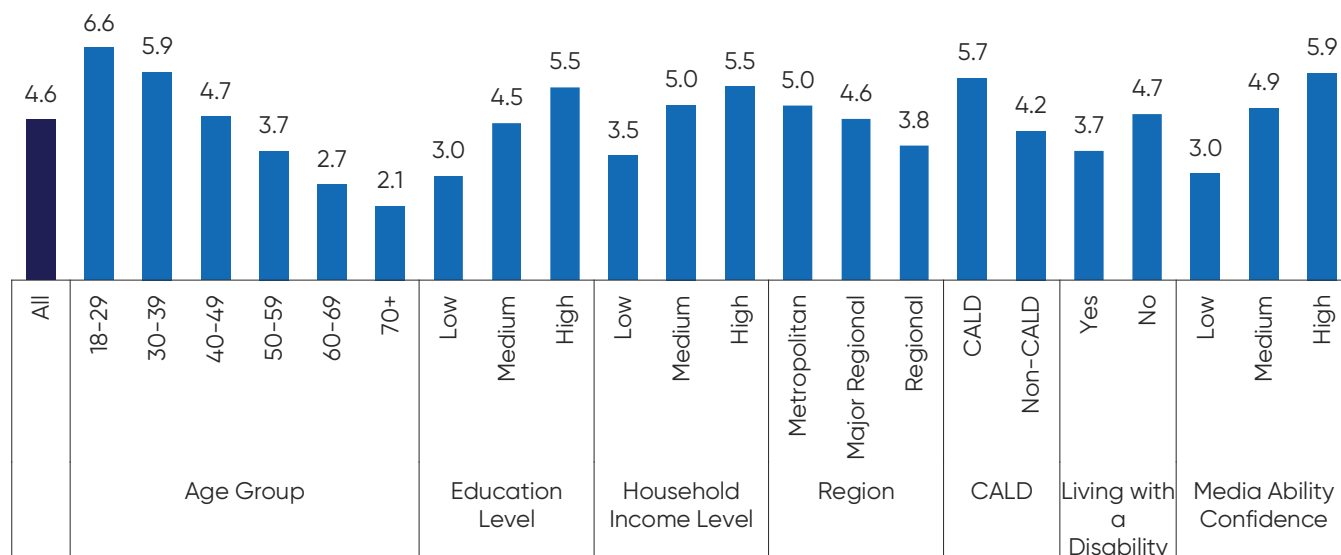
is also more common among adults who have a higher level of education, a higher household income level, live in metropolitan areas, are from CALD communities and who are not living with a disability (see **figure 1.7**).

More diverse use of social media is also associated with higher levels of media literacy ability. Adults with the highest level of media literacy ability used an average of 5.9 social media platforms in the past week, compared to just 3.0 platforms for those with the lowest level of media literacy ability.

► **Figure 1.6**
Number of social media platforms used in the past week (%)



► **Figure 1.7**
Number of social media platforms used in the past week, by demographics and media ability confidence (average)



SUMMARY

More adult Australians use social media than use traditional television. This reflects a significant change from the 2021 survey and represents a milestone in the way in which Australians are consuming media. The shift towards social media also reflects a broader increase in the use of digital platforms, including streaming television services, podcasts, online radio and video games.

In offering a far more diverse array of content, digital platforms provide audiences with expanded choice and content on demand. However, digital content is mediated through the logic of algorithms, pointing to the need for audiences to develop new forms of media literacy to effectively and critically engage with these platforms.

Adult Australians are using approximately three different types of media each day. This figure is largely consistent across all Australian adults, with the youngest group of adults (18–29 years) the only age group to use fewer types of media. However, this younger age group uses more social media platforms. When considering the overall amount of media consumed—measured as both the number of types of media people use and the frequency of using them—strong associations with socio-economic factors do emerge. People living with a disability, who have low levels of education, low household incomes and who live in regional areas are all likely to consume less media.

While use of social media is nearing saturation, the number of different platforms used has also risen since 2021. Half of Australian adults have used five or more different social media platforms in the past week, with this figure much higher among younger adults.

The high number of social media platforms being used on a regular basis further exacerbates media literacy challenges. Each platform operates differently in terms of how users encounter, create, share media and make changes to their privacy and security settings. Media literacy efforts need to consider if focusing on specific platforms makes sense or if it's better to speak about best practices, risks and opportunities across platforms.

Our findings also show that people's confidence in their media abilities is associated with higher levels of overall media consumption and with the use of more social media platforms. While we cannot demonstrate a causal relationship, this association suggests that the development of media abilities is likely to facilitate adults engaging with and consuming a more diverse range of media.

MEDIA CONSUMPTION PROFILES

- » Patterns of media use show strong associations with age, education level and household income
- » Higher levels of digital media use are found among adults who are younger, more educated and who live in households with higher income
- » Higher levels of traditional media use are found among older adults and those with low levels of media literacy ability
- » Adults aged 70+ are more than twice as likely to read print newspapers on a daily basis compared to the Australian population (20% versus 8%)

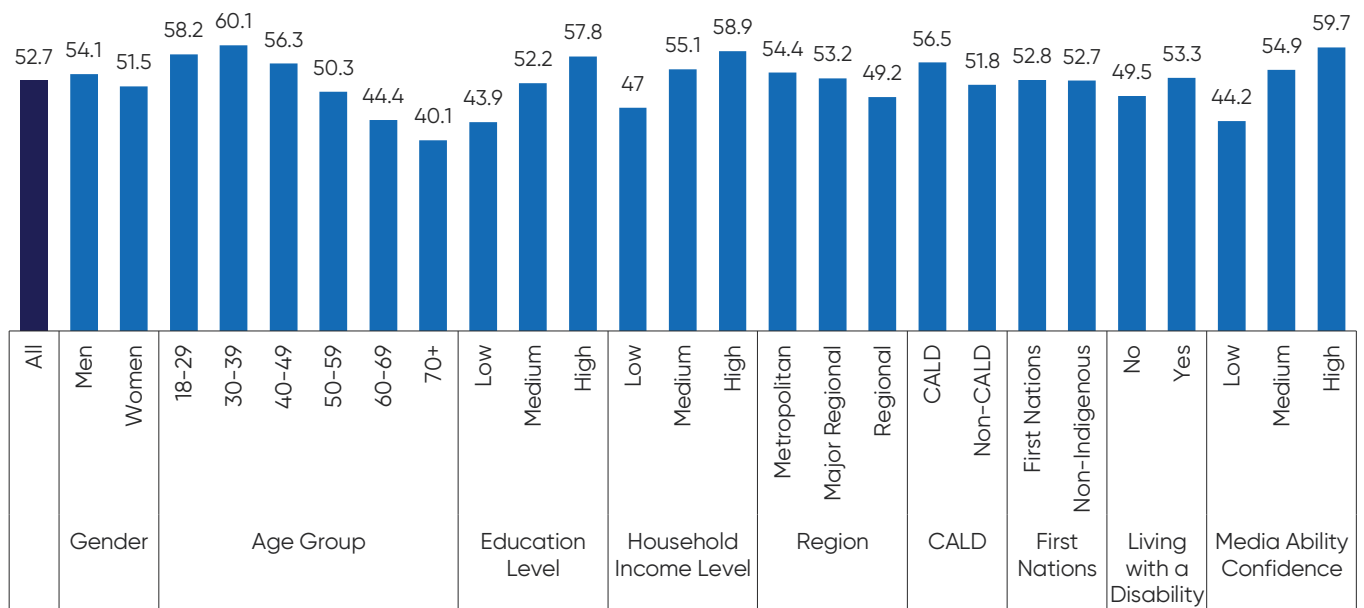
DIGITAL MEDIA USE HIGHER AMONG YOUNGER AND MORE AFFLUENT ADULTS

We used a score¹ out of 100 based on the aggregate use of digital media including social media. The digital media use score is highest among young adults aged 30–39, who score an average of 60.1 (see **figure 2.1**). This compares to a score of 40.1 for adults aged 70 and over. Education level is also strongly correlated with digital media use, ranging from an average score of 43.9 for those with a low level of education through to 57.8 for those with a high level. Household income shows a similar correlation, with scores ranging from 47 for adults living in low income households, through to 58.9 for those in high income households.

A smaller but significant trend can be seen based on where people live. Adults living in metropolitan areas are more likely to make use of digital media (average score of 54.4) compared to those living in regional parts of Australia (average score of 49.2).

Higher digital media use is also correlated with people's confidence in their own media abilities. Those with a high confidence had an average digital media usage score of 59.7, compared to just 44.2 for those with a low level of confidence in their digital media ability.

► **Figure 2.1**
Digital media use score, by demographics and media ability confidence (average)



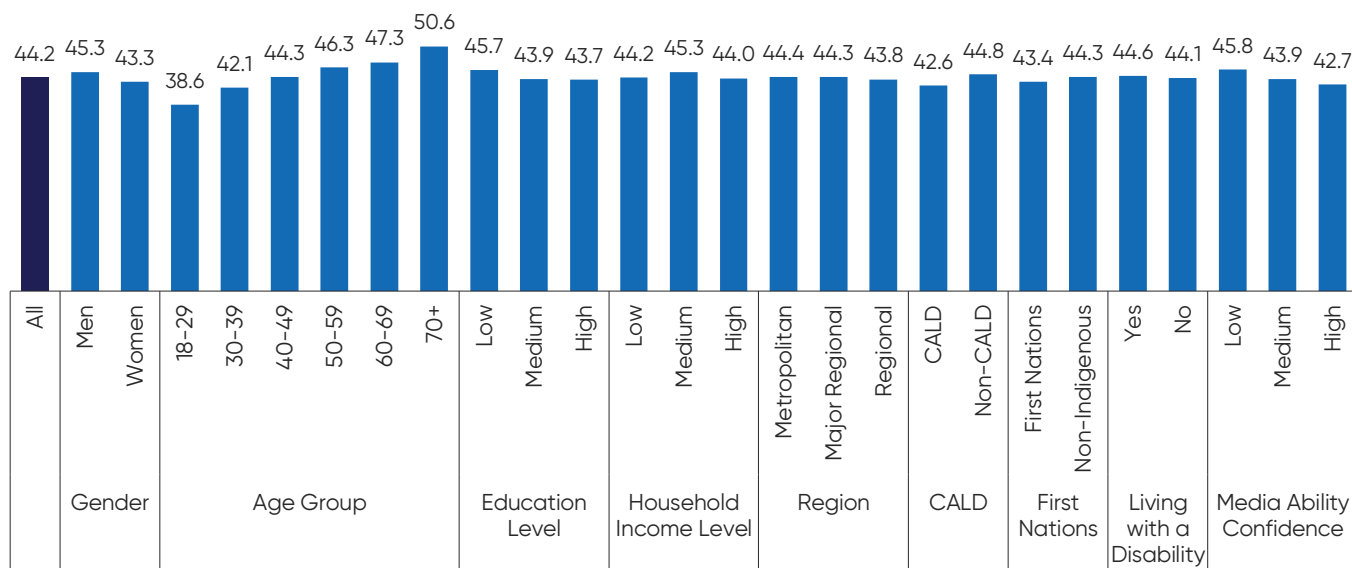
TRADITIONAL MEDIA USE HIGHER AMONG OLDER ADULTS

Compared to digital media, use of traditional media² is much more consistent across different groups of Australian adults (see **figure 2.2**). Differences in level of education, household income and region all show little variation in how often people use these media.

In contrast to digital media’s increased usage among younger adults, however, use of traditional media increases with age. People aged 70 and over have an average traditional media use score of 50.6 compared to an average score of just 38.6 among those aged 18–29.

Furthermore, whereas adults with low levels of confidence in their media literacy ability use less digital media, this group uses more traditional media. Adults with the lowest level of confidence in their media ability have an average traditional media use score of 45.8 compared to a score of 42.7 for those with the highest ability level.

► **Figure 2.2**
Traditional media use score, by demographics and media ability confidence (average)

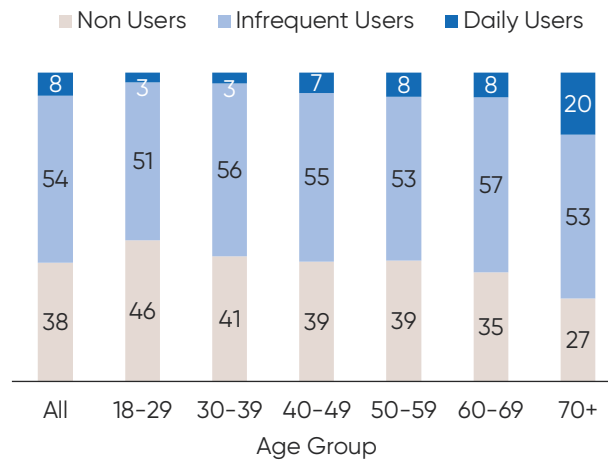


DAILY PRINT NEWSPAPER USE CONCENTRATED AMONG ADULTS AGED 70 AND OVER

Within traditional media, the daily use of print newspapers is highly concentrated in the oldest cohort of Australians (see **figure 2.3**). While one-fifth (20%) of adults aged 70 and over made daily use of newspapers,

this figure shrinks to just 3% of adults aged 18–39. Even among older Australians in the 60–69 age group, only 8% made daily use of print newspapers.

► **Figure 2.3**
Frequency of using Newspaper
(print) media, by age (%)



SUMMARY

Our findings show distinct patterns of media usage based on age, education level and household income. Higher levels of digital media use are found among younger adults, those with a higher level of education and those living in high income households. Furthermore, people who have a higher level of confidence in their media abilities are also more likely to be heavier users of digital media.

Whereas younger adults are more likely to make greater use of digital media, the opposite is true for traditional media. Older Australians are more likely to use traditional media sources, more often. This is particularly pronounced for print newspapers, whose daily readership is particularly concentrated among those aged 70 and over. People who have a lower level of confidence in their media abilities are more likely to be heavier users of traditional media.

These findings provide insights into the overall media use patterns of different groups which can inform the design of media literacy initiatives so that they connect with everyday media use. At the same time, the findings highlight that certain groups of Australians are less likely to be engaging with and participating in the increasingly digital media landscape. Older Australians, those with low education and low household incomes are all less likely to be consuming digital media. People with a low level of confidence in their media ability are less likely to use different forms of digital media. Media literacy can therefore be used to increase people's confidence so they are able to use and benefit from diverse forms of digital media.

¹ Digital media use score is a score out of 100 based on aggregate frequency of using social media, streaming TV (e.g. Netflix, iView), news websites or apps, radio using an app or online, podcasts and video games.

² Traditional media use score is a score out of 100 based on aggregate frequency of using newspapers (print), magazines (print), radio using an AM/FM radio, free-to-air or pay television, and movies in a cinema.

03

USING MEDIA FOR DECISION MAKING

- » Almost nine in ten (88%) adults reported using at least one online source to search for information to make a decision in the past month
- » Search engines are the most common source of information (used by 76% of adults), followed by YouTube (39%), user reviews (36%) and social media (34%)
- » Generative AI was used by 11% of adults as a source of information for decision making
- » Adults used an average of 2.9 different online sources for decision-making in the past month
- » Use of online sources is strongly correlated with age, with those aged 18–29 using an average of 3.7 different sources compared to just 1.9 for those aged 60+

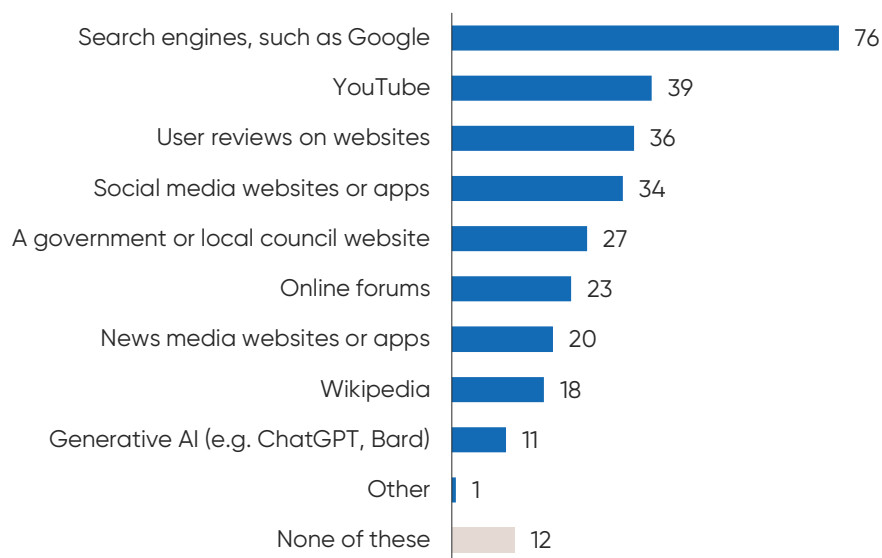
ONLINE SOURCES USED FOR DECISION MAKING

We asked respondents which, if any, of nine different online sources they had used to search for information in the past month when they needed to make a decision. Almost nine in ten (88%) adult Australians report having

used one or more of these sources (see **figure 3.1**). Search engines are the most popular source, being used by three-quarters (76%) of all adults. The next most popular options include YouTube (39%), user reviews

(36%) and social media (34%). One in ten adults (11%) had used generative AI to find information when they needed to make a decision in the past month.

Figure 3.1
In the past month, which of these online sources (if any) have you used to search for information when you needed to make a decision? (%)

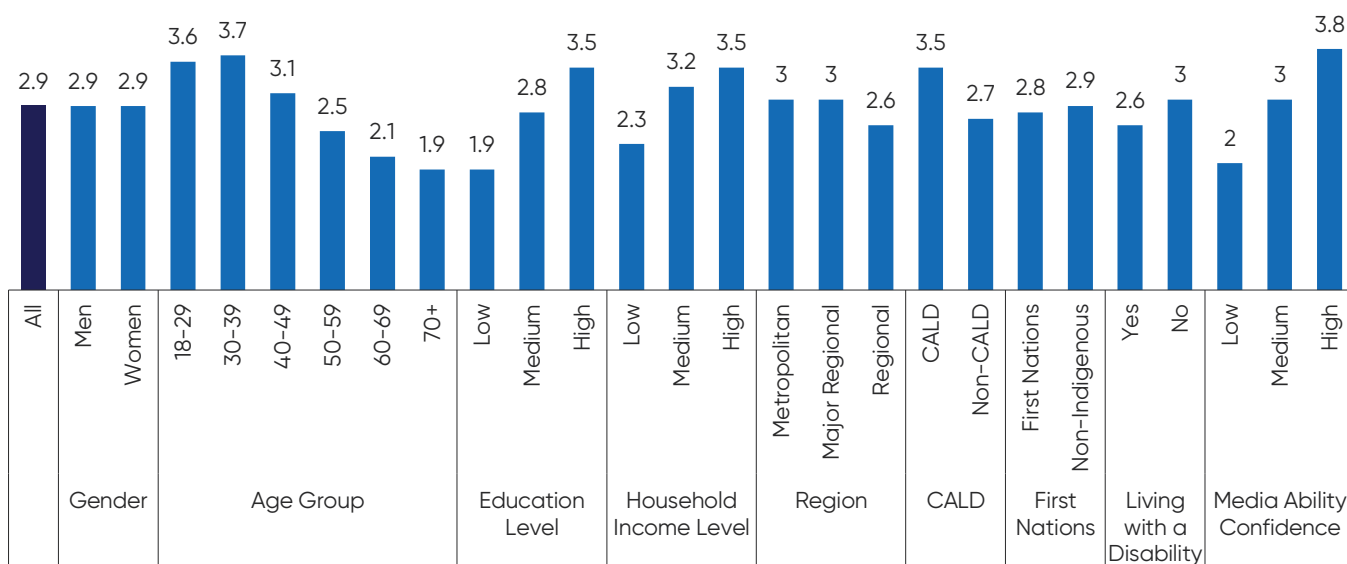


The number of online sources used by adults is closely correlated with age (see **figure 3.2**). Adults aged 18 to 39 used an average of 3.6 different sources, whereas those aged 70 and over used an average of just

1.9 sources. Adults are also more likely to make use of a more diverse range of sources to support their decision-making if they have a high level of education (3.5 sources), a high household income (3.5 sources),

are from CALD communities (3.5 sources) or have a high level of confidence in their media ability (3.8 sources).

Figure 3.2
Number of online sources used for decision making, by demographics and media ability confidence (average)



SUMMARY

For many adult Australians, digital media provide information that they use to inform their day-to-day decision-making. On average, adults report using almost three different digital sources of information when making a decision in the past month. Search engines are by far the most commonly used source, but video content is also popular, with YouTube cited as the second most used source. While generative AI was the lowest ranked out of the nine options presented, it was twice as likely to be used for decision-making by those aged 18–29. This suggests that media literacy educators need to consider the ways that generative AI may become increasingly integrated into people's information seeking and decision-making processes, and the challenges associated with this.

Our findings also show that some groups of Australians are less likely to be making use of digital sources for decision-making. Older adults, those with a low level of education, and those with a low household income are all using a significantly lower number of sources. These groups are therefore less likely to have access to the same diversity of information than other Australians. Adults who use a more diverse range of digital media sources to inform their decision-making are more likely to have a high level of confidence in their own media ability. This underscores the need for media literacy initiatives to improve the capacity of all Australians to engage with and participate in an increasingly digital media environment. It also shows the need for media literacy initiatives to provide critical analysis skills to ensure people are able to make informed decisions about who and what to trust across digital media environments.

04 DIGITAL MEDIA CREATION

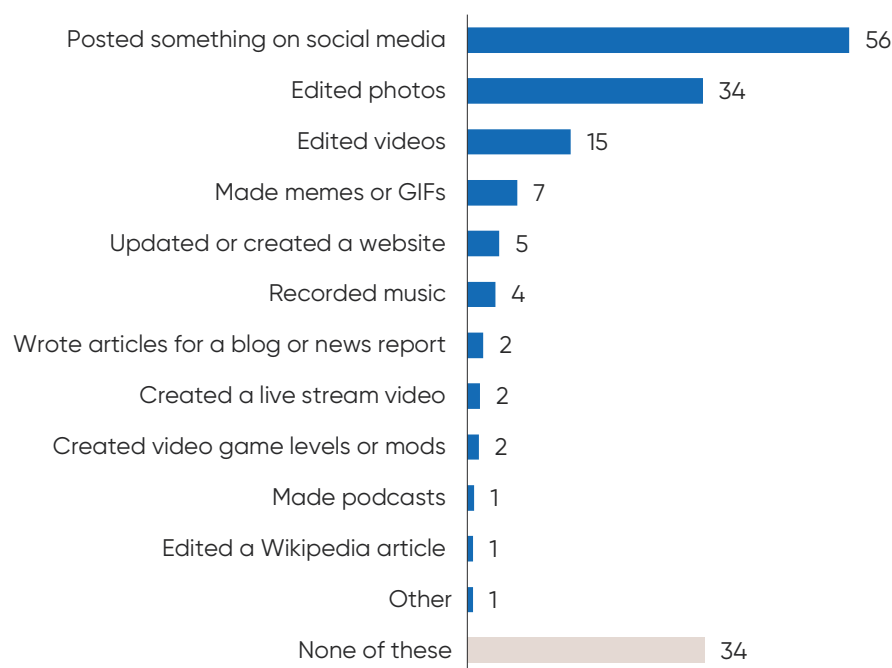
- » More than half (56%) of adult Australians created a social media post in the past month
- » One-third (34%) of adults had not done any of the 11 digital media creation activities in the past month
- » Adults have completed an average of 1.4 digital media creation activities in the past month, with greater activity among younger adults, CALD and First Nations adults, and those with a higher level of education
- » The most common reasons for creating digital media are to share content with others (60%) and for fun (57%)

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS AND PHOTO/VIDEO EDITING DOMINATE DIGITAL MEDIA CREATION

We asked respondents which of 11 digital activities relating to the creation of content they had done in the past month, with participants also able to nominate an ‘other’ option. The activity done most frequently was ‘Posted something on social media’, which over half (56%) of adults had

done (see **figure 4.1**). The only other two items carried out by more than one in ten adults are editing photos (34%) and videos (15%). More than one-third (34%) of adults had not done any of the 11 digital media creation activities.

► **Figure 4.1**
Which of the following digital activities have you done in the past month? (%)



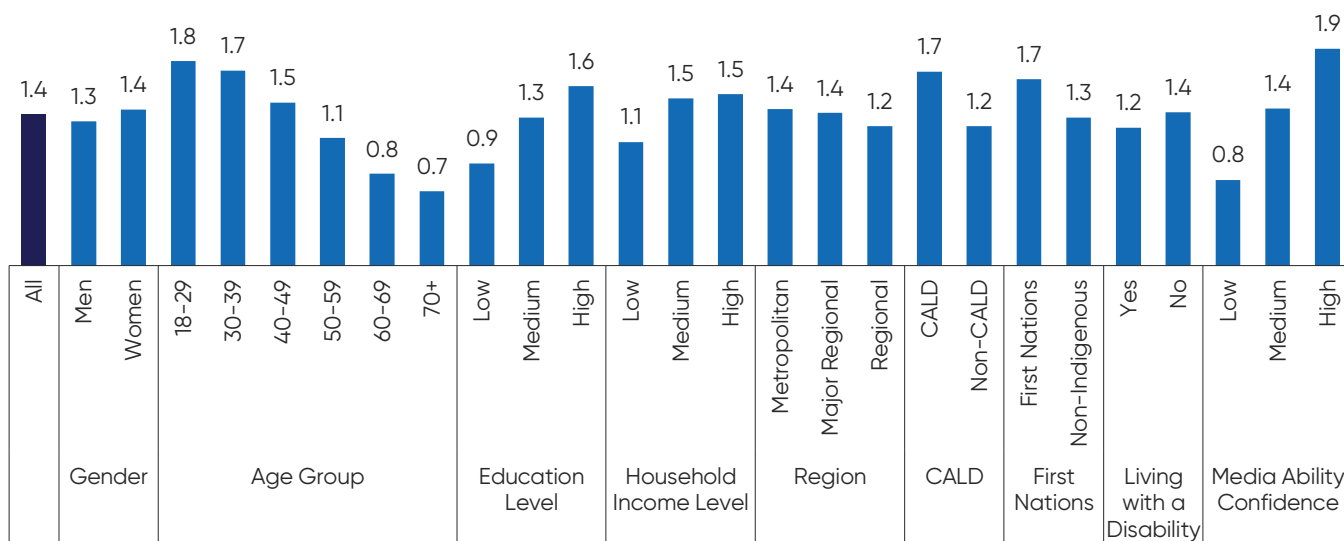
NOT ALL ADULTS PARTICIPATE EQUALLY IN DIGITAL MEDIA CREATION

Of the 11 digital media creation activities in our survey, adult Australians had undertaken an average of 1.4 activities in the past month (see **figure 4.2**). The average number of activities undertaken steadily declines with age. Adults aged 18–29 reported an average of 1.8 activities, falling to an average of just 0.7 activities for those aged 70 and over. Adults with a high level of education (1.6 activities), together with adults who are culturally and linguistically diverse (1.7 activities)

or First Nations (1.7 activities), are all more likely to have undertaken a higher number of digital media creation activities.

Digital media creation is also closely correlated with adults’ confidence in their own media literacy ability. Adults with low confidence in their ability had undertaken an average of just 0.8 activities, with this figure more than doubling to 1.9 activities for those with a high level of confidence in their media literacy ability.

► **Figure 4.2**
 Number of digital media creation activities completed in the past month, by demographics and media ability confidence (average)



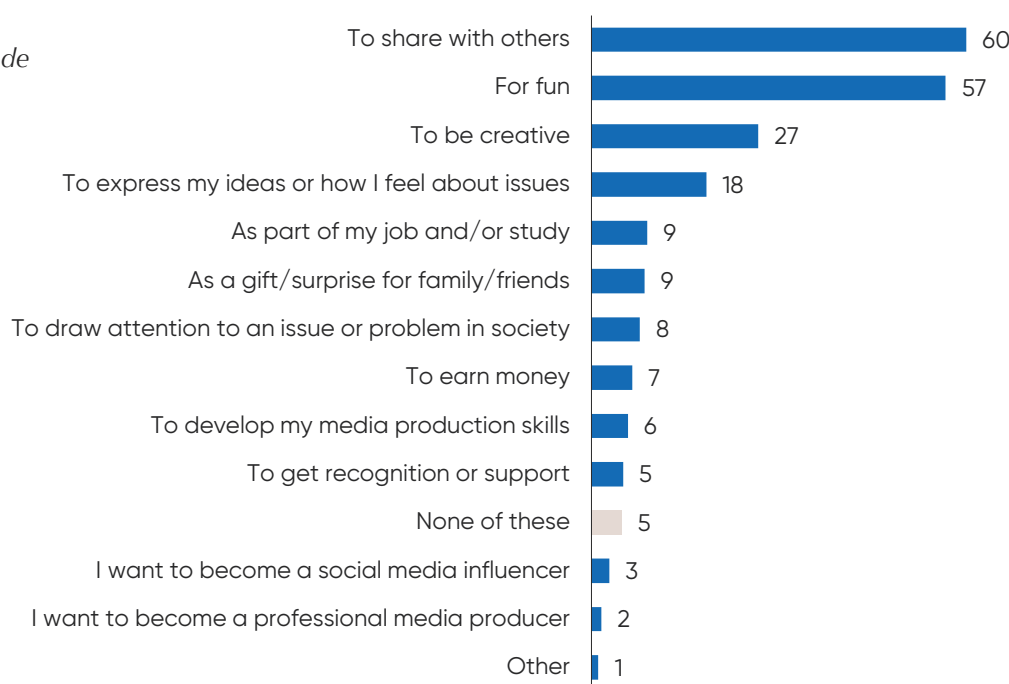
ADULTS PRIMARILY CREATE DIGITAL MEDIA FOR SHARING WITH OTHERS AND FOR FUN

For respondents who indicated they had undertaken one or more digital media creation activity in the past month, we asked them which of 12 reasons applied to why they had made the media (see **figure 4.3**). Respondents could also select 'none' or supply their own 'other' reason.

The most cited reason for creating digital media was to share the content with others, with this option selected by almost two-thirds of respondents (60%). The second most cited reason was that content was created 'for fun' (57%). Fun was a reason more likely to be chosen by younger adults, with

two-thirds (67%) of those aged 18-39 selecting this reason compared to just one-third (36%) of those aged 60+.

► **Figure 4.3**
 What are the reasons you made these media? (%)



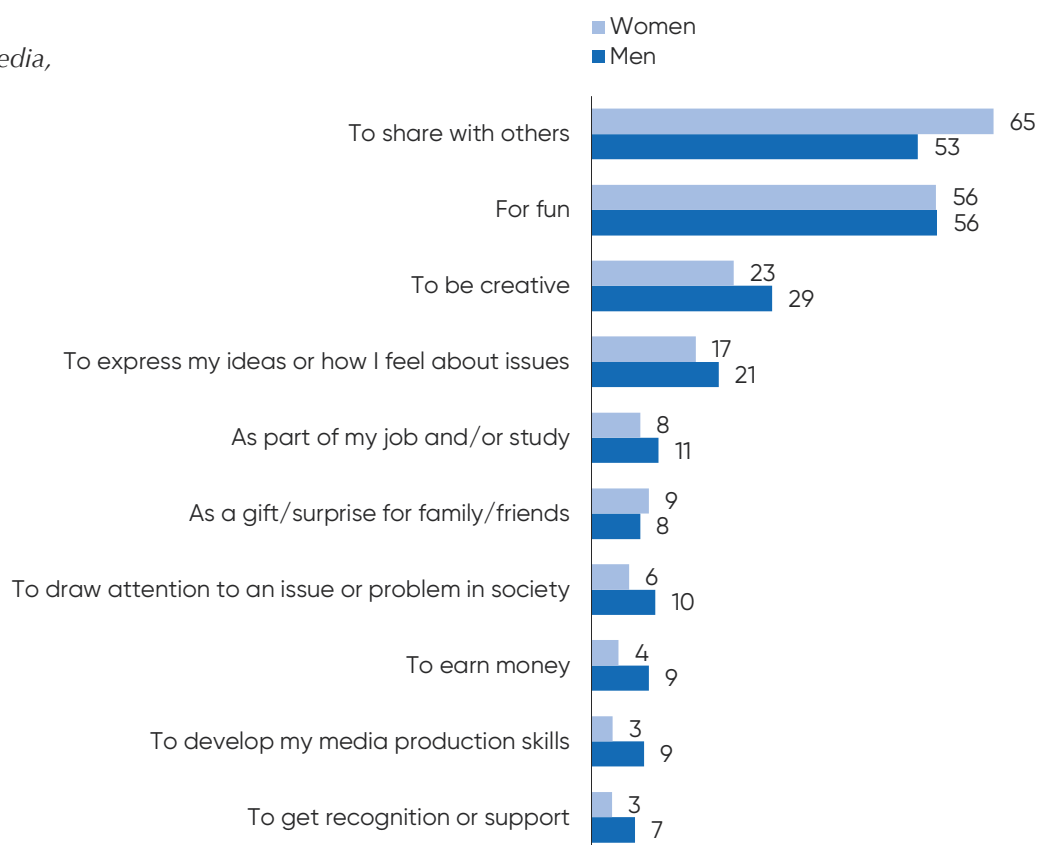
N = 2,528 (respondents who had done one or more media creation activities in the past month)

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN WHY ADULTS CREATE DIGITAL MEDIA

For many of the reasons given for creating media there is a significant association with gender (see **figure 4.4**). Sharing with others, for example, is more commonly selected by women (65% versus 53% for men). Most options, however, are significantly more likely to be selected

by men, including: being creative (29% for men vs 23% for women), drawing attention to social issues (10% men versus 6% women), to earn money (9% men vs 4% women), developing media production skills (9% men versus 3% women), and to get recognition (7% men vs 3% women).

► **Figure 4.4**
Reasons for making digital media,
by gender (%)



N = 2,528 (respondents who had done one or more media creation activities in the past month)

SUMMARY

Most adult Australians are not regularly engaging in content production, with activities mostly being limited to posting on social media or editing photos. However, participation in digital media creation is not uniform across all demographics. First Nations adults, those from CALD communities, and individuals with higher education levels are all more active in creating digital media. The frequency of digital media creation declines with age, with older adults participating significantly less than younger adults.

The most common motivation for creating digital content is to share this with others and for fun. Men are more likely to report that they create digital content for reasons including expressing creativity, raising awareness of social issues, earning money, gaining recognition, and developing media production skills.

As with media consumption, digital media creation is also strongly correlated with people's confidence in their own media abilities. Adults with a low level of confidence in their media ability are much less likely to create digital media. Media literacy initiatives can address this by supporting adults to learn how to create digital content so they can choose to participate online in a more diverse range of ways.

05 THE ROLE OF ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA IN PEOPLE'S LIVES

- » Almost two-thirds (62%) of adults agree that entertainment media helps them learn more about the world around them, with just 11% disagreeing
- » Around half of adults (50%) agree that we can learn as much about the world around us from entertainment media as from informational media, with just 21% disagreeing
- » Adults from CALD communities are more likely than non-CALD respondents to critically reflect on the role of entertainment media

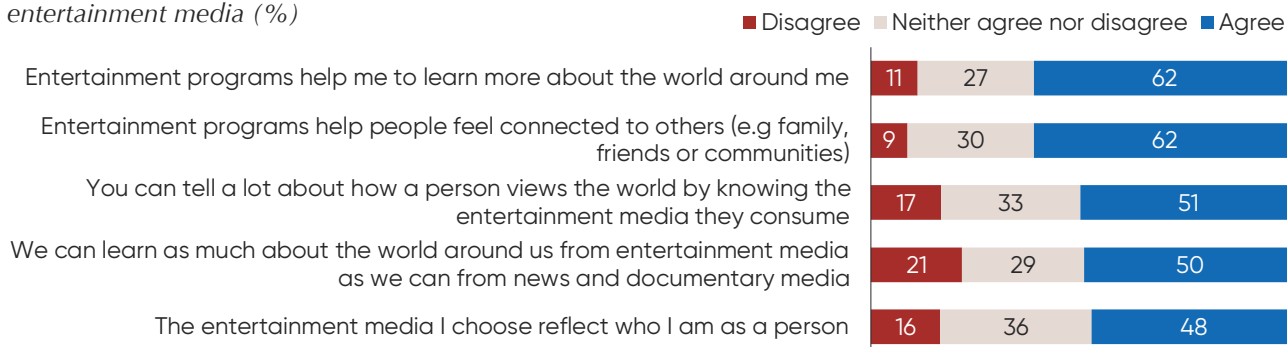
ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA SHAPE IDENTITY, LEARNING AND SOCIAL CONNECTION

We asked respondents about their level of agreement with five statements that explore the role entertainment media plays in shaping their identity, connection with others and worldview (see **figure 5.1**).

Almost two-thirds (62%) of adults agree that entertainment media helps them both to learn more about the world around them and to feel connected to others. Around half agree that entertainment media choices reflect their self-identity

(48%) as well as other people's identity (51%). Half of adults (50%) also agree that we can learn as much about the world around us from entertainment media as informational media, compared to just 21% who disagree.

Figure 5.1
Level of agreement with five statements about entertainment media (%)



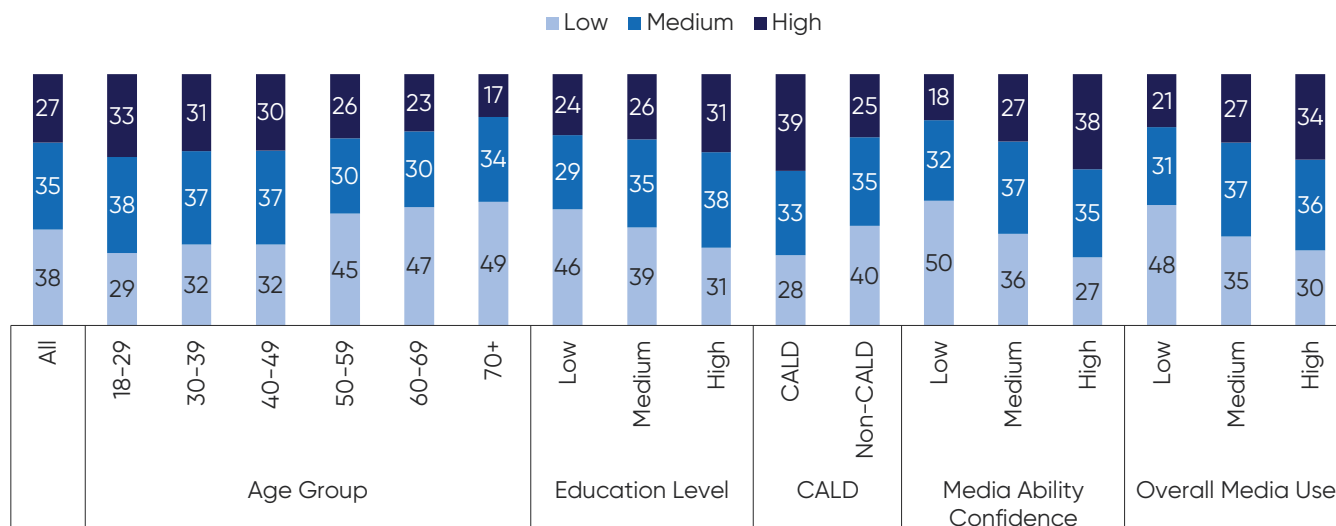
CRITICAL DISPOSITION TOWARDS ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA

By aggregating the agreement scores to the five statements above, we assigned respondents a score to reflect the degree to which they critically reflect on the role of entertainment media (see **figure 5.2**). These scores show that people aged

18–29 are almost twice as likely to have a high critical disposition about entertainment media (33%) when compared to people aged 70 and over (17%). A more critical disposition toward entertainment media is also found among those from CALD

communities (39%), those with a high level of education (31%), those with a high level of confidence in their media ability (38%) and those who consume a high overall level of media (34%).

Figure 5.2
Level of critical disposition about entertainment media, by demographics, media ability confidence and overall media use (%)



SUMMARY

Entertainment media is often dismissed as merely for passive consumption and therefore is often overlooked in discussions of media literacy, while media literacy initiatives often focus on news and information. However, our findings highlight the need to reconsider this. A majority of Australian adults believe that entertainment media contributes to both their understanding of the world around them and to their connection with others. Moreover, about half see entertainment choices as reflective of people's self-identity. The findings may also reflect increasingly blurred lines between entertainment and informational media, with half of adults agreeing they learn as much from entertainment media as they do from news and documentaries. This emphasises the need to ensure that people are supported to think critically about the entertainment media they consume, create and share, so they are able to reflect on how this media is shaping their own life and those around them.

Some groups were more likely to have a critical disposition toward entertainment media—that is, they perceive this media as playing an important role in their own life and in society. CALD communities, for example, are more likely to perceive this, as are younger adults, those with a higher level of education, those more confident in their media literacy ability and those who consume more media. This may reflect that these groups perceive greater benefits and opportunities associated with their engagement with entertainment media. Media Literacy responses should acknowledge and reflect this.

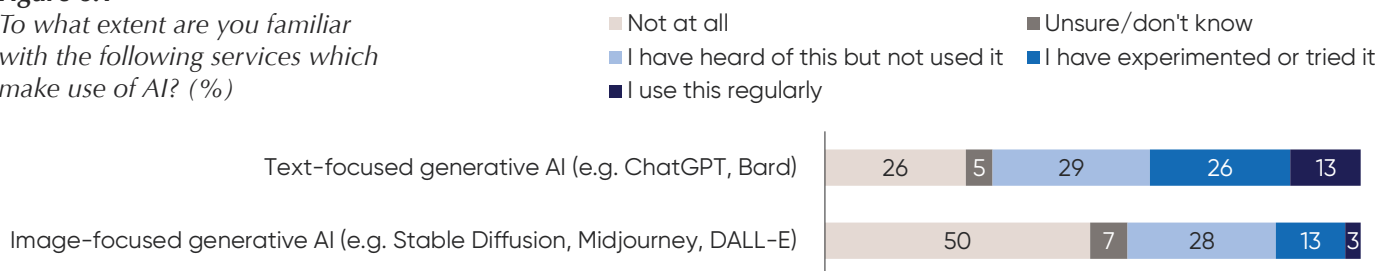
EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

06 GENERATIVE AI: USE AND ATTITUDES

- » 39% of adults have used text-focused generative AI services
- » 16% of adults have used image-focused generative AI services
- » The top three reasons why people use generative AI are: out of curiosity, to make study/work easier and for fun/entertainment
- » There is a strong overall negative public sentiment toward generative AI
- » Almost three quarters (74%) of adult Australians believe that laws and regulations are needed to manage risks associated with generative AI
- » 46% of adults want to learn more about generative AI services

We asked adult Australians about their use of text-focused and image-focused generative AI and we asked them why they have used these services or why not. We also asked adults about their knowledge of how algorithms are used in relation to the delivery of news on social media and their attitudes toward the use of algorithms to deliver news.

► **Figure 6.1**
 To what extent are you familiar with the following services which make use of AI? (%)



TEXT-FOCUSED GENERATIVE AI SERVICES

Just under four in 10 (39%) adults have experience using text-focused generative AI services: 13% of adults are using these services regularly and 26% have experimented/tried them (see **figure 6.1**). An additional three in 10 (29%) adults have heard of text-focused generative AI services but have not used them, while 26% are not at all familiar with these services.

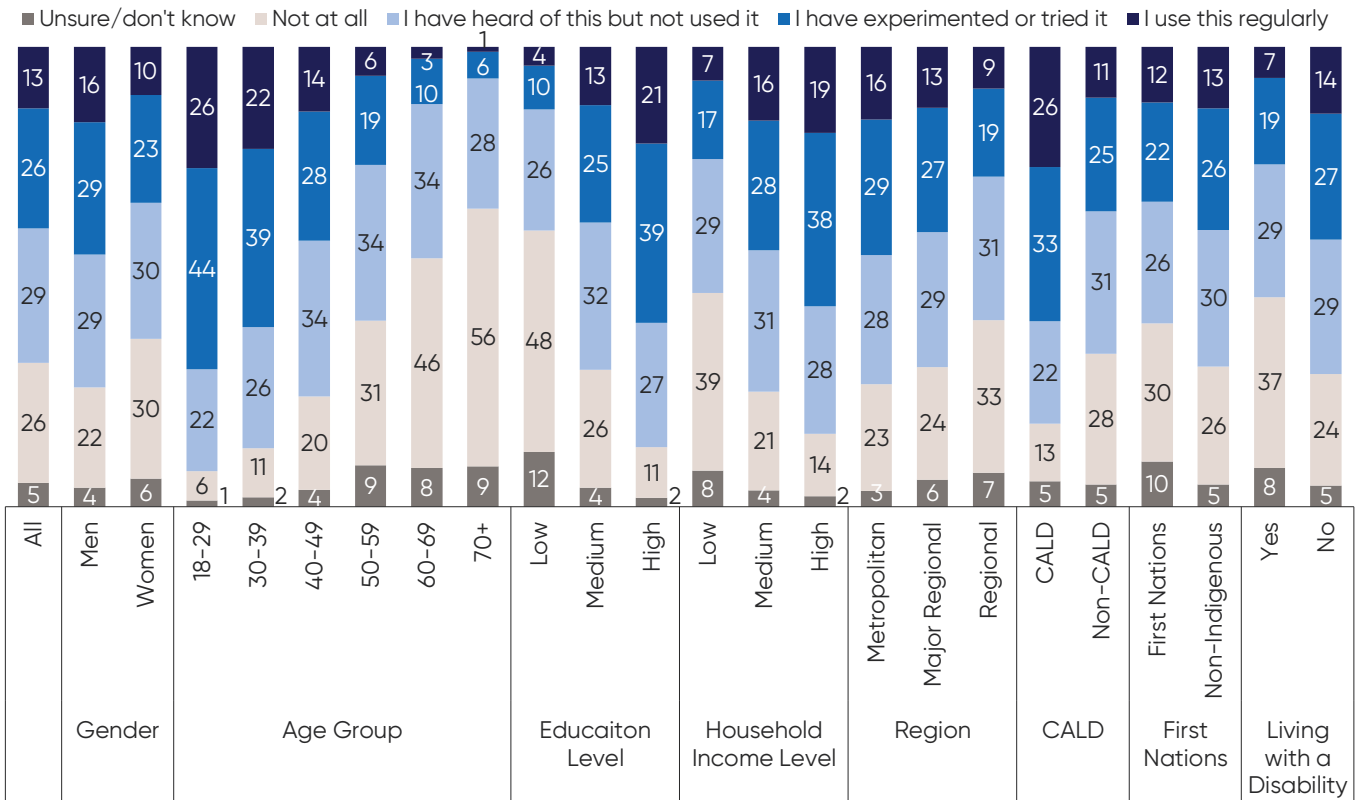
Some groups are much more likely to be regularly using text-focused generative AI (see **figure 6.2** and **figure 6.3**).

Men are more likely to be regular users than women (16% versus 10%). Regular use of AI text-focused services is strongly correlated with age with more than one quarter (26%) of 18–29 year olds regularly using AI compared to 1% for those aged over 70 years. Adults with a high level of education are much

more likely to be using AI regularly (21% versus 4% among those with low education), as are people with a high household income (19% versus 7% for people living in low income households). Adults in metropolitan areas are much more likely than those in regional areas to be using text-focused AI services regularly (16% versus 9%). CALD respondents are more than twice as likely to be using text-focused AI regularly when compared to non-CALD respondents (25% versus 11%). People with a high level of confidence in their media literacy ability are eight times more likely to be using AI regularly than those with a low level of confidence (24% versus 3%). Adults with the highest level of media use are twice as likely to be using text-focused AI regularly when compared to those with a low level of use (18% versus 9%).

► **Figure 6.2**

To what extent are you familiar with text-focused generative AI (e.g. ChatGPT, Bard)? By demographics (%)



► **Figure 6.3**

To what extent are you familiar with text-focused generative AI (e.g. ChatGPT, Bard)? By media ability confidence and overall media use (%)

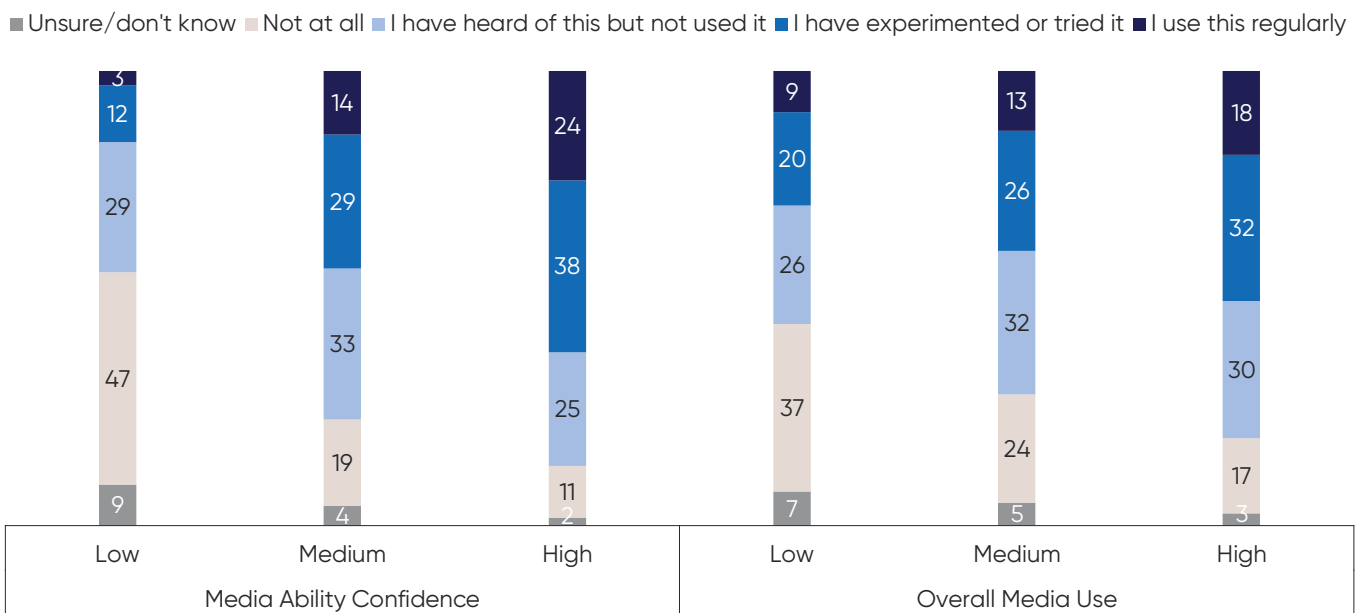


IMAGE-FOCUSED GENERATIVE AI SERVICES

Far fewer Australians are using image-focused generative AI services (see **figure 6.1**): only 3% are using these services regularly and 13% have experimented or tried using them. Half (50%) of adults are not familiar with image-focused AI services while 28% heard of these services but not used them.

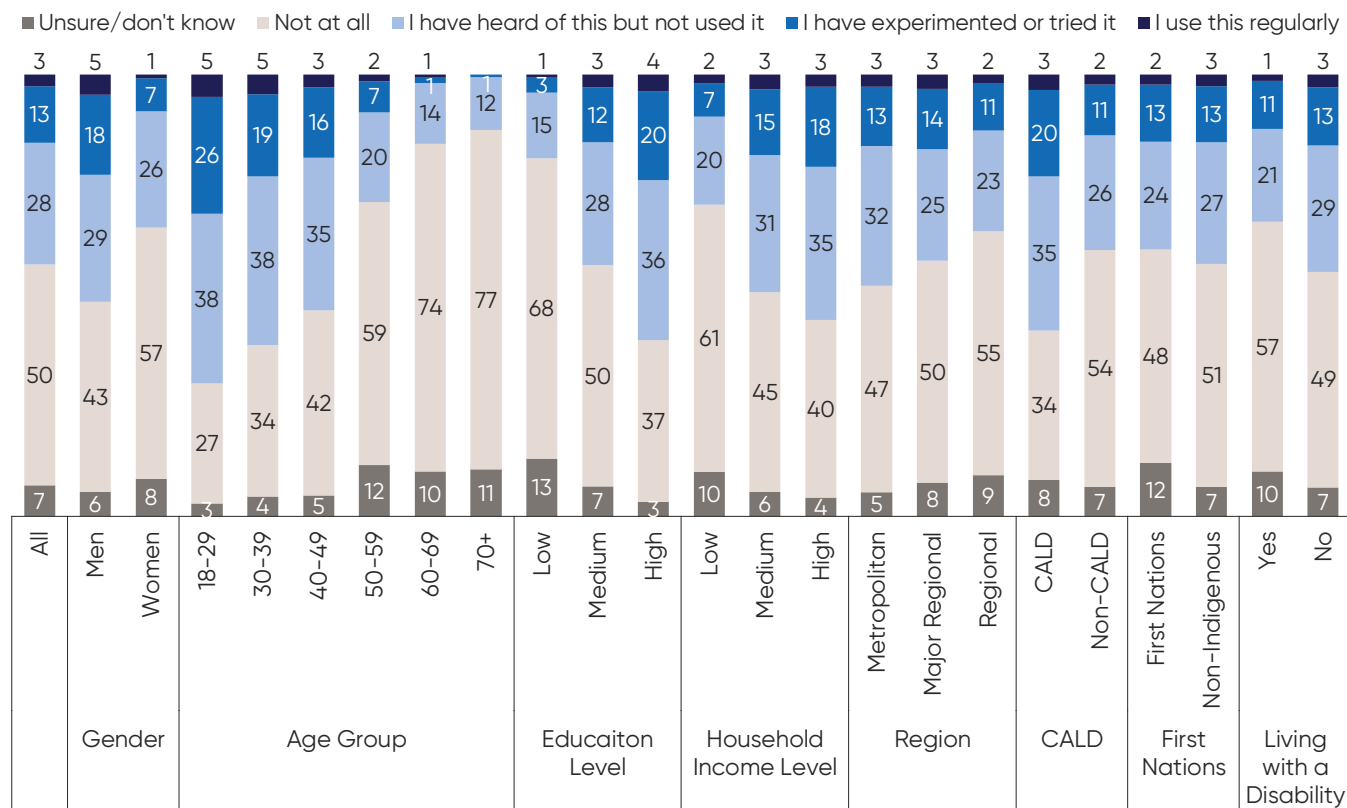
There are differences among groups (see **figure 6.4** and **figure 6.5**) that are similar to those detailed above with text-focused generative AI. Men are more likely to have used generative AI services when compared to women (23% versus 8%). There is a strong correlation with age and use of these services with use ranging from 31% of 18-29 to 1% for 70 and over.

People with a high level of education are six times more likely to have used image-focused generative AI services compared to those with a low level of education (24% versus 4%).

CALD respondents are much more likely to have used image-focused AI when compared to non-CALD respondents (24% versus 14%).

People with a high level of confidence in their media ability are ten times more likely to have used image-focused AI (30% versus 3%) and adults with a high level of media use are more than twice as likely to have done so (25% versus 10% for people with a low level of media use).

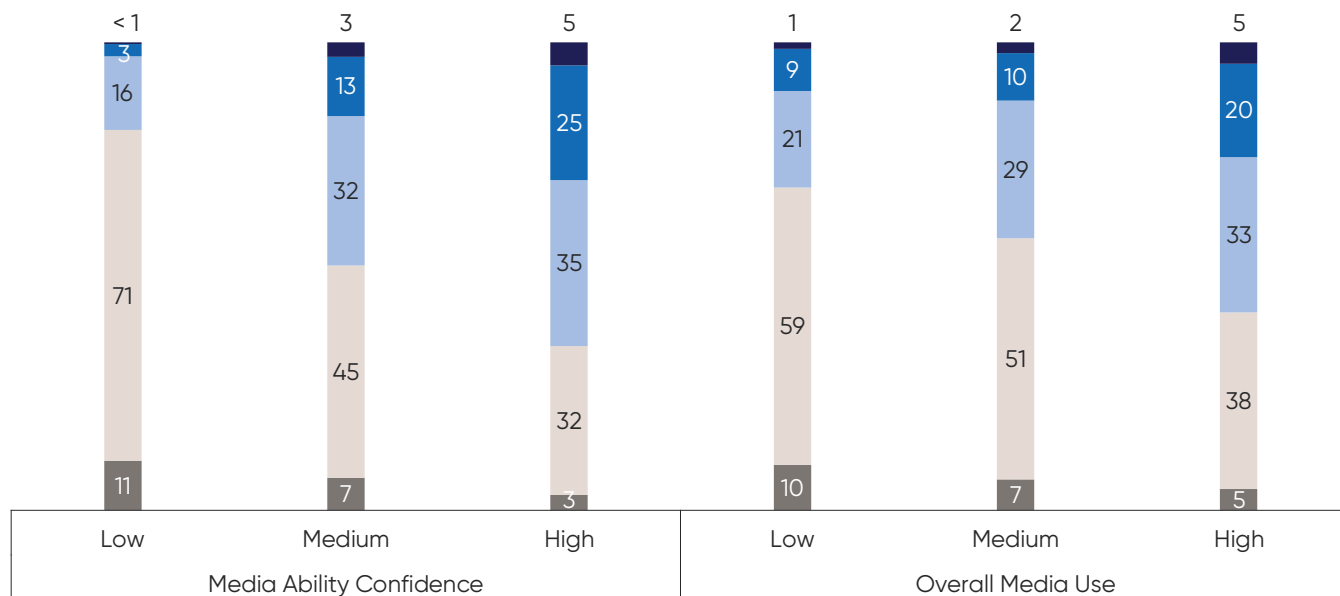
Figure 6.4
To what extent are you familiar with image-focused generative AI (e.g. Stable Diffusion, Midjourney, DALL-E)? By demographics (%)



► **Figure 6.5**

To what extent are you familiar with image-focused generative AI (e.g. Stable Diffusion, Midjourney, DALL-E)? By media ability confidence and overall media use (%)

■ Unsure/don't know ■ Not at all ■ I have heard of this but not used it ■ I have experimented or tried it ■ I use this regularly

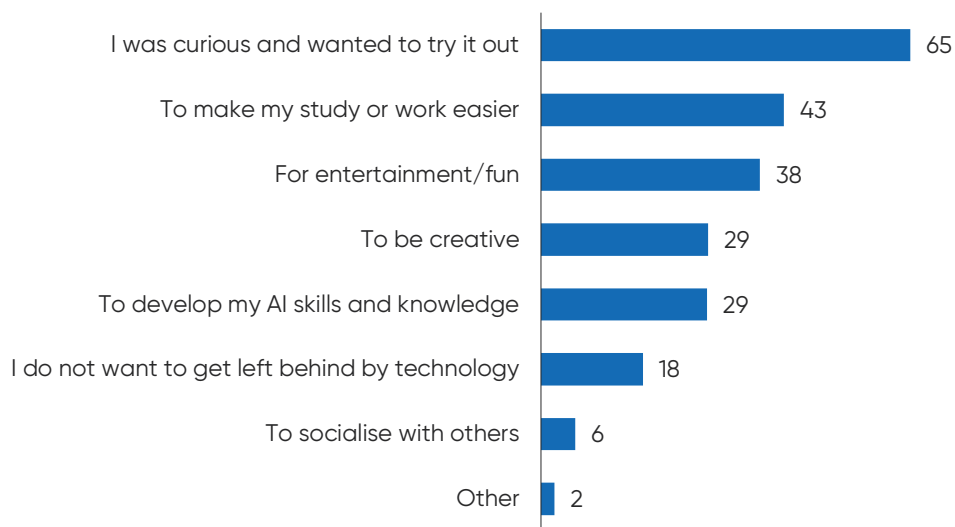


WHY ARE PEOPLE USING GENERATIVE AI SERVICES?

We asked adults who had used generative AI services (41%), why they had done this (see **figure 6.6**).

► **Figure 6.6**

Why have you used these generative AI services? (%)



N = 1,584 (respondents who have used either text-focused or image-focused generative AI)

The top three reasons people cited for using generative AI are: out of curiosity (65%), to make study/work easier (43%) and for fun/entertainment (38%).

Men are more likely than women to say they are using generative AI for fun/entertainment (41% vs 33%), developing AI skills (32% versus 26%), for creativity (32% versus 24%) and for socialising (8% versus 3%). Women are more likely to say they are using AI for study/work (47% versus 41%).

Older adults are more likely to cite not wanting to be left behind by technology as a reason for using generative AI: (30% for 60+ versus 14% for 18–29) and curiosity (72% for 60+ versus 51% for 18–29).

Younger adults are more likely than older adults to use generative AI for creativity: 31% of 18–29 year olds versus 16% for adults aged 60 and above. They were also more likely to use it for fun/entertainment: 43% for 18–29 versus 24% for 60 and over.

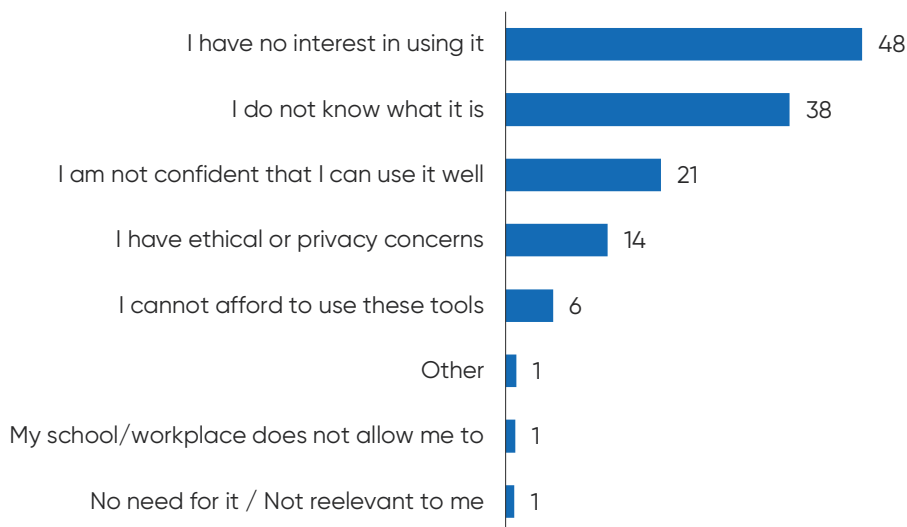
People with a high level of education are more likely to use generative AI for study/work (49% versus 23% for those with a low level of education) and to develop AI skills (31% versus 21% for those with a low level of education).

WHY PEOPLE DON'T USE GENERATIVE AI SERVICES

More than half (59%) of adults have not used generative AI services at all. Almost half (48%) of these adults have no interest in using generative AI services (see **figure 6.7**). More than one-third (38%) report not

knowing what generative AI services are. More than one in five (21%) say it is because they lack confidence, while 14% reported ethical or privacy concerns.

► **Figure 6.7**
What are your reasons for not using generative AI? (%)



N = 2,268 (respondents who have not used either text-focused or image-focused generative AI)

More women than men report not knowing what generative AI is (43% versus 32%). Older adults are more likely to report this as well (48% for those aged 70+ compared to 24% for young people aged 18–29).

Younger adults are more likely to report they have ethical/privacy concerns about generative AI (21% for 18–29 versus 13% for all older age categories).

More than half of those with a low level of education report not using generative AI because they don't know what it is (52%) compared to one-quarter (24%) of those with a high level of education (see **figure 6.8**). Those with a high level of education were more likely to report a lack of confidence as their reason for not using generative AI (27%

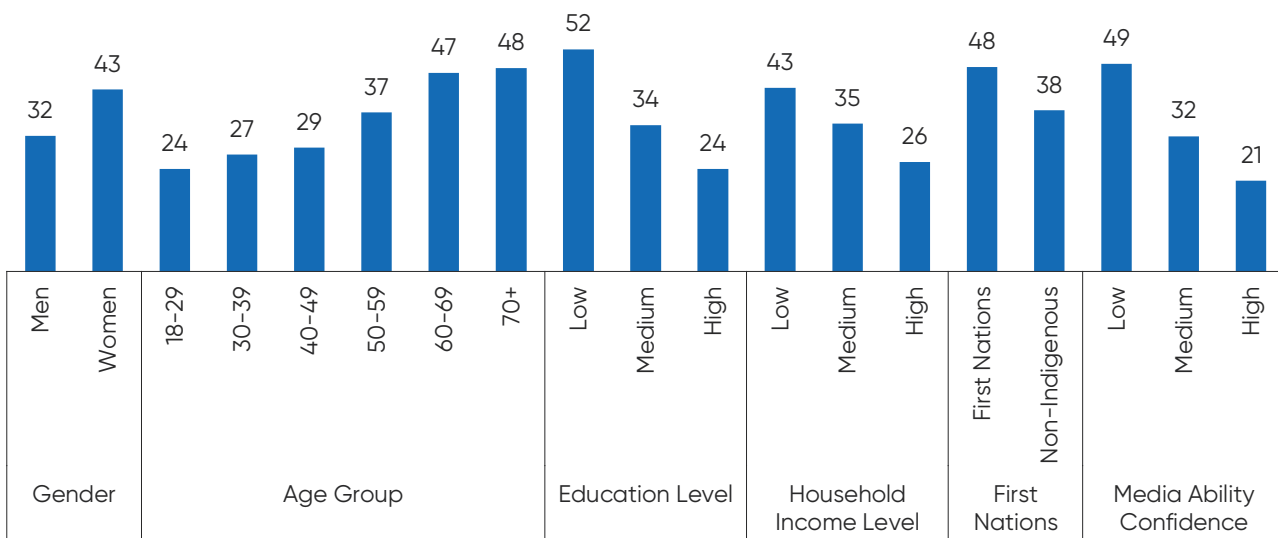
versus 17% for those with a low level of education) as well as ethical concerns (20% versus 10% for those with a low level of education).

Adults living in low income level households are more likely to report not knowing what generative AI is (43% versus 26% for high income households).

Respondents who identify as First Nations are more likely to report not knowing what generative AI is (48% versus non-Indigenous 38%).

People with a low level of confidence in their media literacy ability are much more likely to report not knowing what generative AI is (49% versus 21% for those with a high media literacy confidence).

► **Figure 6.8**
I don't use generative AI because I don't know what it is. By demographics and media ability confidence (%)



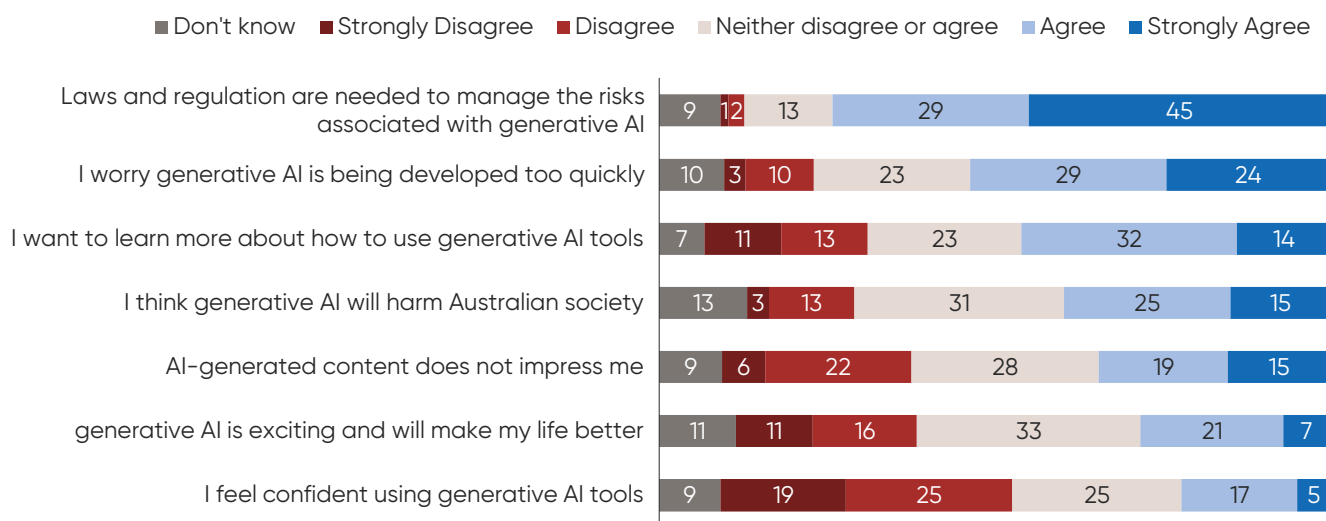
N = 990 (respondents who do not use generative AI because they do not know what it is)

AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD GENERATIVE AI

Almost three quarters (74%) of adult Australians believe that laws and regulations are needed to manage risks associated with generative AI:

45% strongly agree with this; 29% agree and only 4% disagree (see **figure 6.9**).

► **Figure 6.9**
How do you feel about generative AI (%)



More than half (54%) of adults agree/strongly agree that they are worried that generative AI is being developed too quickly, while only 13% disagree with this. Older adults are more likely to strongly agree generative AI is being developed too quickly (ranging from 17% for adults aged 18–29 to 31% for adults aged 50–59 and 32% for those aged 70+). People living with a disability are also more likely to strongly agree (31%).

More Australians agree that generative AI will harm Australian society (40%) than those who disagree with this (16%). Older adults are more likely to strongly agree with this (20%) compared to 10% for those aged 18–29 years. First Nations respondents are also more likely to strongly agree (19%) as are people living with a disability (19%), with a low household income (18%) and from regional areas (18%).

More Australians are unimpressed by generative AI content (34%) than are impressed by it (28%). Older Australians are much more likely to strongly agree they are not impressed, ranging from 9% for 18–29 year olds to 26% for those aged 70 and over.

There is an even split among adults when it comes to deciding whether generative AI is ‘exciting’ and will make their lives better: 28% agree with this but 27% disagree. Older adults are more likely to disagree (42% for adults 70+) as are people with a low confidence in their media ability (35%).

Just one in five (22%) adults are confident about using generative AI tools, while twice as many (44%) are not confident. However, 46% want to learn more while only 24% are not interested in learning more.

Overall, there is a large proportion of ‘neither disagree or agree’ and ‘don’t know’ responses for each question—ranging from 45% of all answers for ‘generative AI is exciting and will make my life better’ through to 22% for ‘laws/regulations are needed to manage risks’.

We coded people’s overall sentiment toward generative AI into 4 categories: strongly negative, moderately negative, indifferent or positive (see **figure 6.10** and **figure 6.11**). Overall, most adults have a negative sentiment (52%) toward AI, with just one in five (20%) being positive and one-quarter (28%) being indifferent.

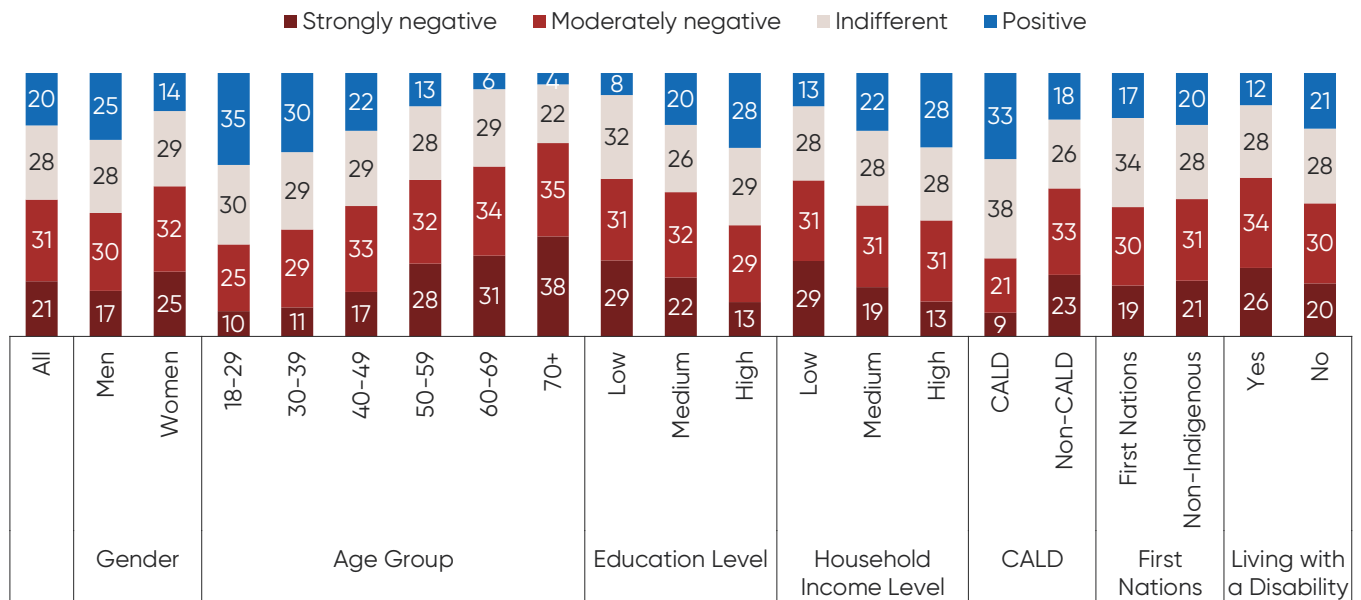
Men were more likely to have an overall positive sentiment than females (25% versus 14%). Young adults were also more likely to have a positive sentiment when compared

to older adults (35% for adults aged 18–29 versus 5% for adults aged 60+). Adults with a high level of education were much more likely to have a positive sentiment: 28% positive versus 8% for people with a low level of education, as were people living in a high income household (28% positive versus 13% for people in a low income household). Regional Australians are less likely to be positive versus metro/major regional (16% versus 21%), as are people living with a disability less likely to be positive (12% versus 21% for those not living with a disability). CALD

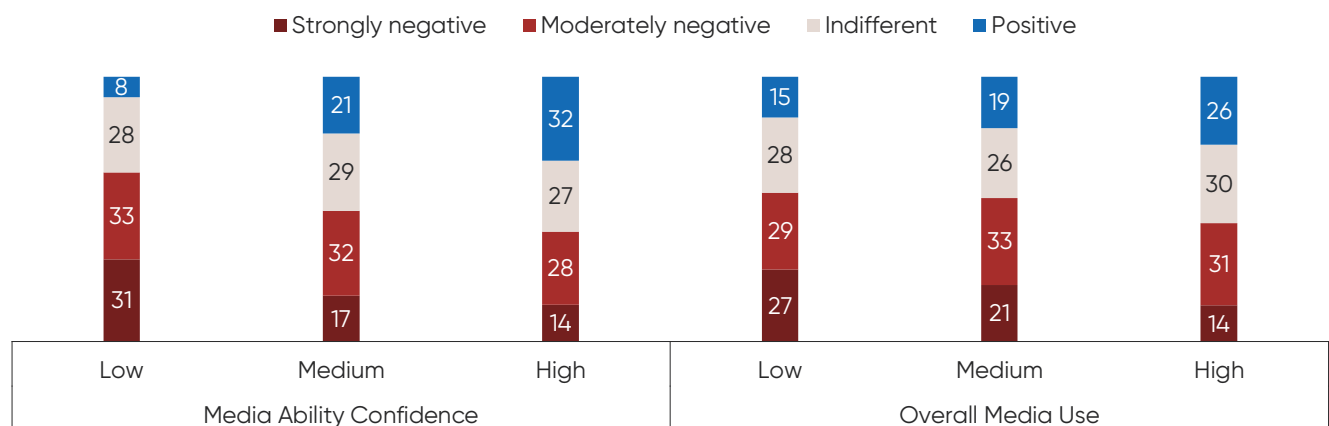
respondents are more likely to be positive about AI than non-CALD respondents (32 versus 18%).

A positive sentiment toward generative AI is strongly associated with people’s confidence in their media literacy abilities: 32% of people with a high level of confidence in their media ability are positive versus 8% for people with a low confidence. People with a high level of media use are also more likely to be positive (26%) when compared to adults with a low level of media users (15%).

► **Figure 6.10**
Overall sentiment toward generative AI, by demographics (%)



► **Figure 6.11**
Overall sentiment toward generative AI, by media ability confidence and overall media use (%)



N = 3,852 (people who have at least heard of generative AI)

SUMMARY

There has been sustained media coverage about the use of generative AI services over the past 12 months, but few Australians are using these services regularly. People with a high level of confidence in their media ability are ten times more likely to use image-focused generative AI and eight times more likely to use text-focused generative AI on a regular basis. Younger adults are far more likely to be regularly using AI. However, there is a strong desire to learn more about generative AI across different groups.

At the same time, concern about the use of generative AI is high. More than half of adults are worried that generative AI is being developed too quickly and many believe this technology will harm Australian society. Almost three quarters of adult Australians believe that laws and regulations are needed to manage risks associated with these technologies. However, there are many Australians who 'neither disagree or agree' or 'don't know' how they feel about AI risks and issues. This suggests many people are still unsure about the future implications of this technology or they don't feel they know enough to make an assessment, showing a clear need for more public discussion and media literacy education around generative AI.

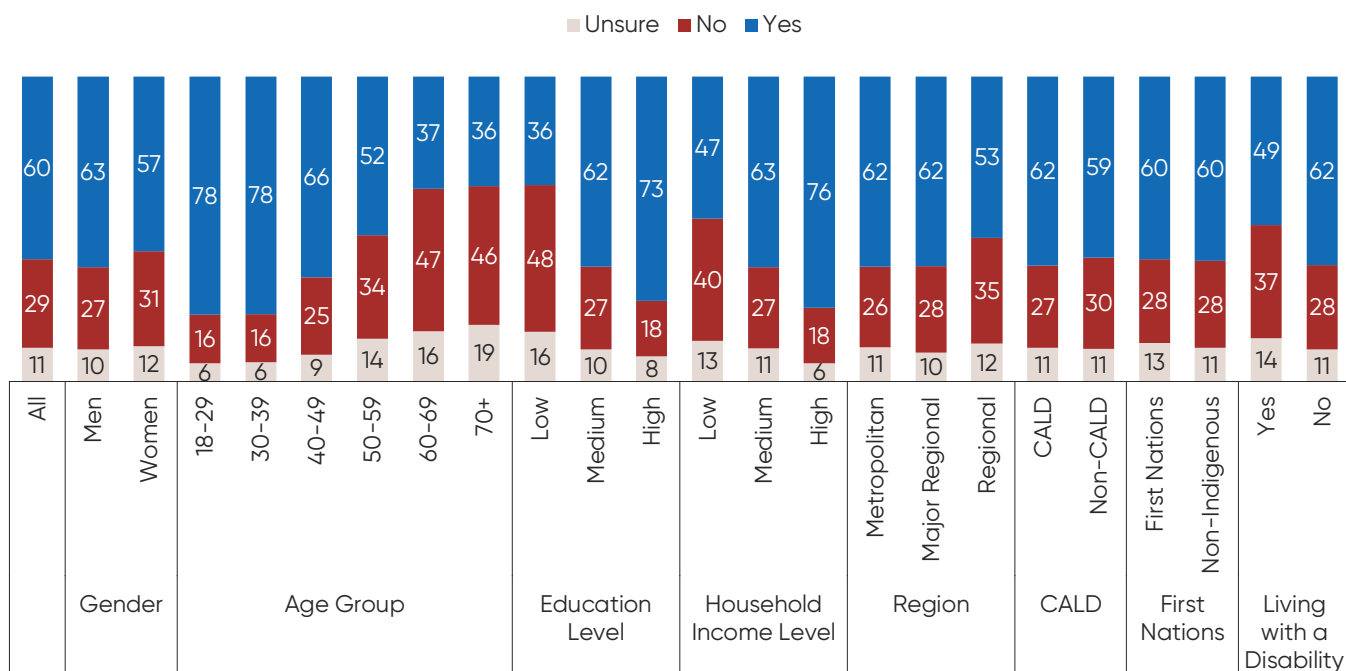
07

ALGORITHMIC CONTENT: USE AND ATTITUDES

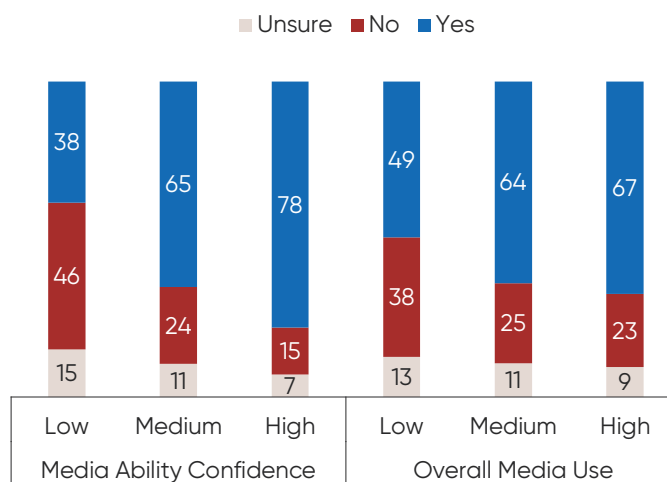
- » 69% of adults agree/strongly agree that they understand how algorithms work to determine information they see on their social media news feeds
- » Only one in four (25%) adults who are familiar with algorithms trust them to present balanced and accurate news on social media
- » 70% of adults who are familiar with algorithms want to learn more about how algorithms determine the news they see on their social media news feeds

Since algorithms play such an influential role in determining how and when news is made visible on social media we asked respondents about their knowledge of algorithms in relation to news. Almost two-thirds (60%) of adults have heard of algorithms in relation to news; just under one-third (29%) have not and 11% are unsure if they have (see **figure 7.1** and **figure 7.2**).

► **Figure 7.1**
Have you heard of the term 'algorithms' in relation to online news? By demographics (%)



► **Figure 7.2**
Have you heard of the term 'algorithms' in relation to online news? By Media ability confidence and overall media use (%)

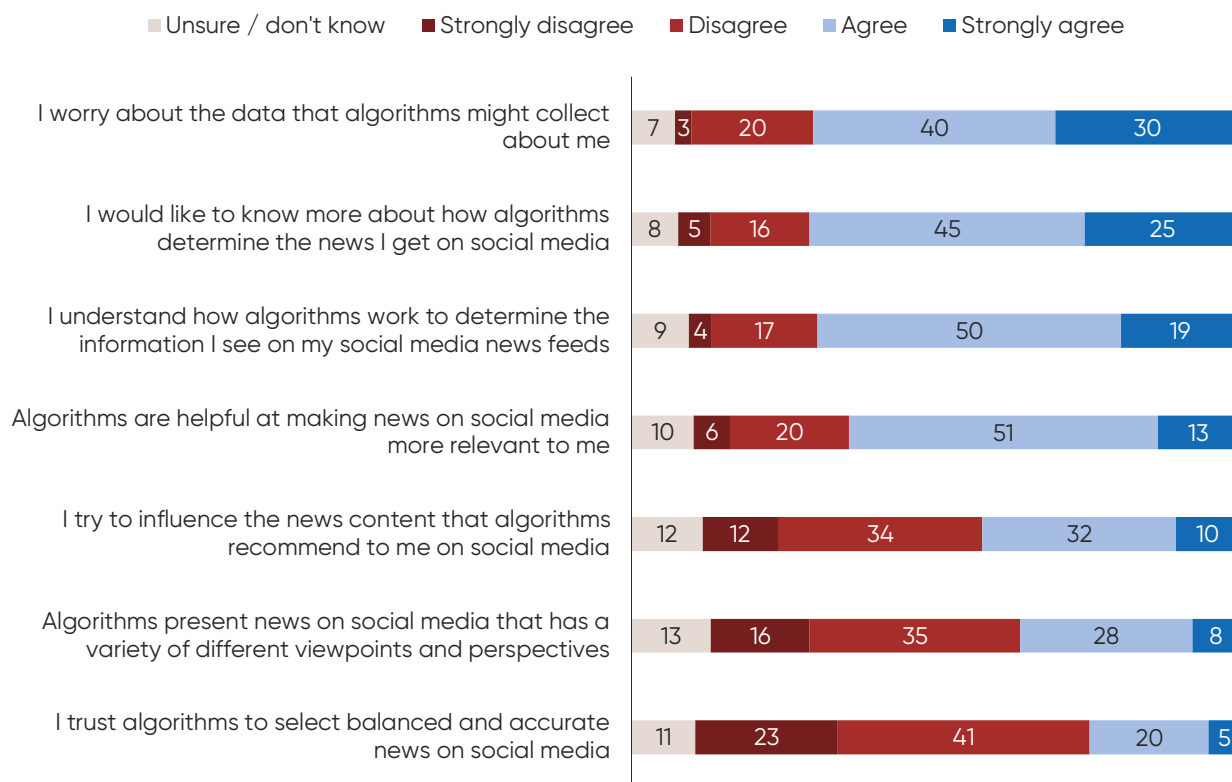


People's self-reported knowledge of how algorithms work is high: 69% agree or strongly agree that they understand how algorithms work to determine information they see on their social media news feeds (see **figure 7.3**). Only one in five (21%) say they don't know how algorithms determine what they see in their feed.

About two-thirds (64%) agree that algorithms are helpful at delivering them news that is relevant to them.

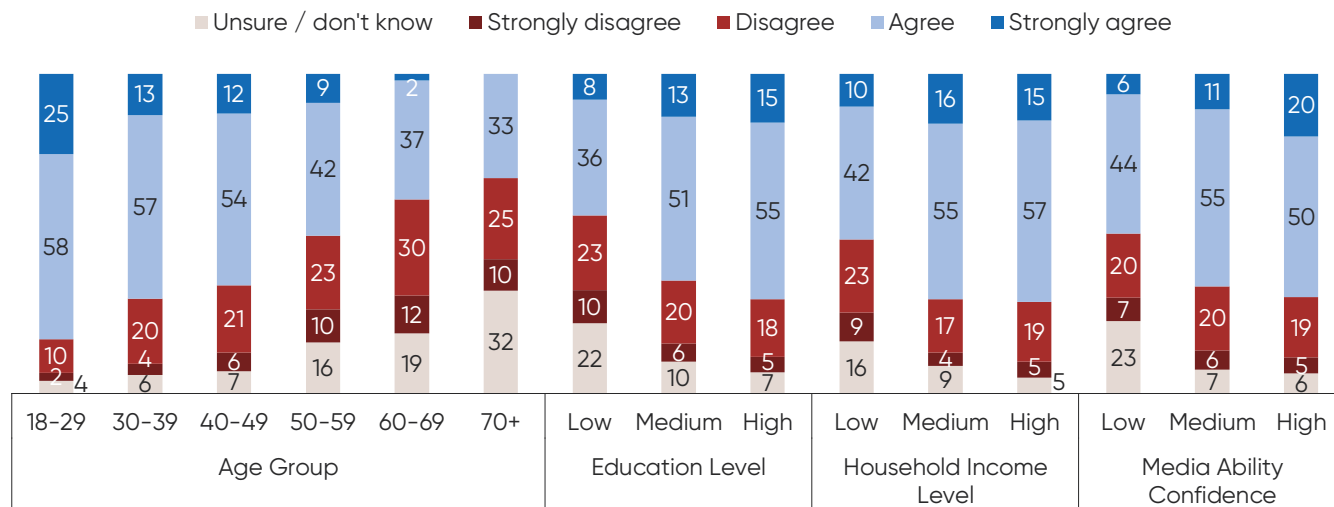
Agreement is strongly correlated with age: 83% of 18–29 year olds agree algorithms make news more relevant to them versus 33% of those aged 70 and over (see **figure 7.4**). People with a low level of education are less likely to agree with this (44%), as are people living in a low income household (52%) and people with a low level of confidence in their own media ability (50%).

► **Figure 7.3**
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (%)



N = 2,308 (respondents who answered 'Yes' to having heard of algorithms in relations to online news)

► **Figure 7.4**
Algorithms are helpful at making news on social media more relevant to me, by demographics and media ability confidence (%)

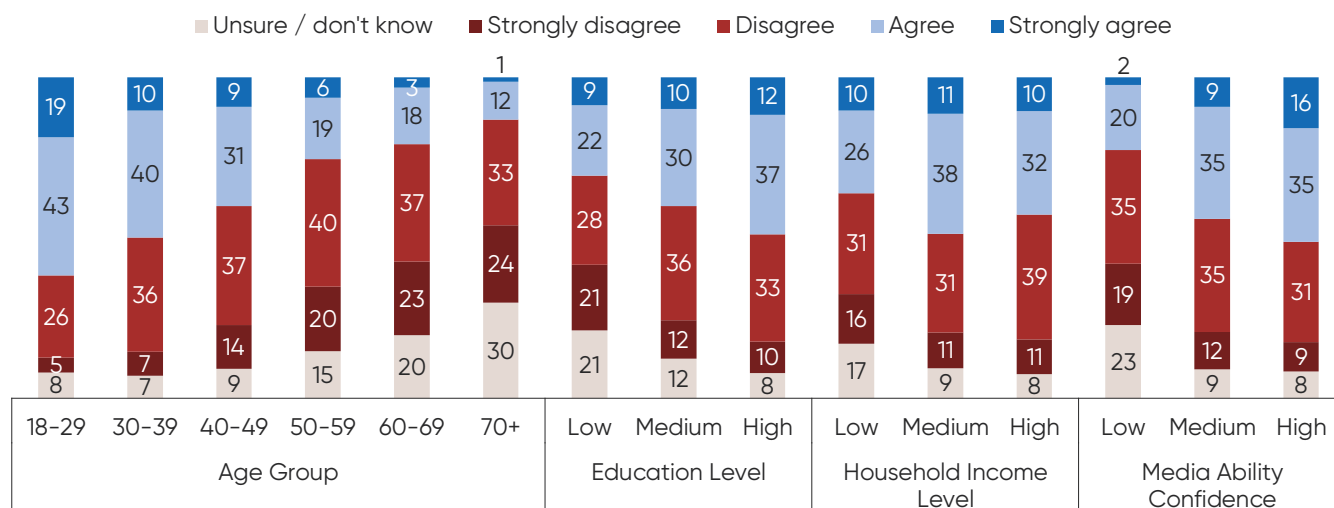


N = 2,308 (respondents who answered 'Yes' to having heard of algorithms in relations to online news)

However, people's agency in relation to algorithms is limited: just 42% of adults agree that they try to influence the news content that is recommended to them and 46% disagree. Younger adults are much more likely to try to influence algorithms: 62% for 18-29 year olds

versus 25% for adults aged 50-59 and 13% for those aged 70 and over (see **figure 7.5**). Adults with a higher level of education are much more likely to try to influence the news content that is recommended to them (49% versus 31% for people with a low level of education).

► **Figure 7.5**
I try to influence the news content that algorithms recommend to me on social media, by demographics and media ability confidence (%)

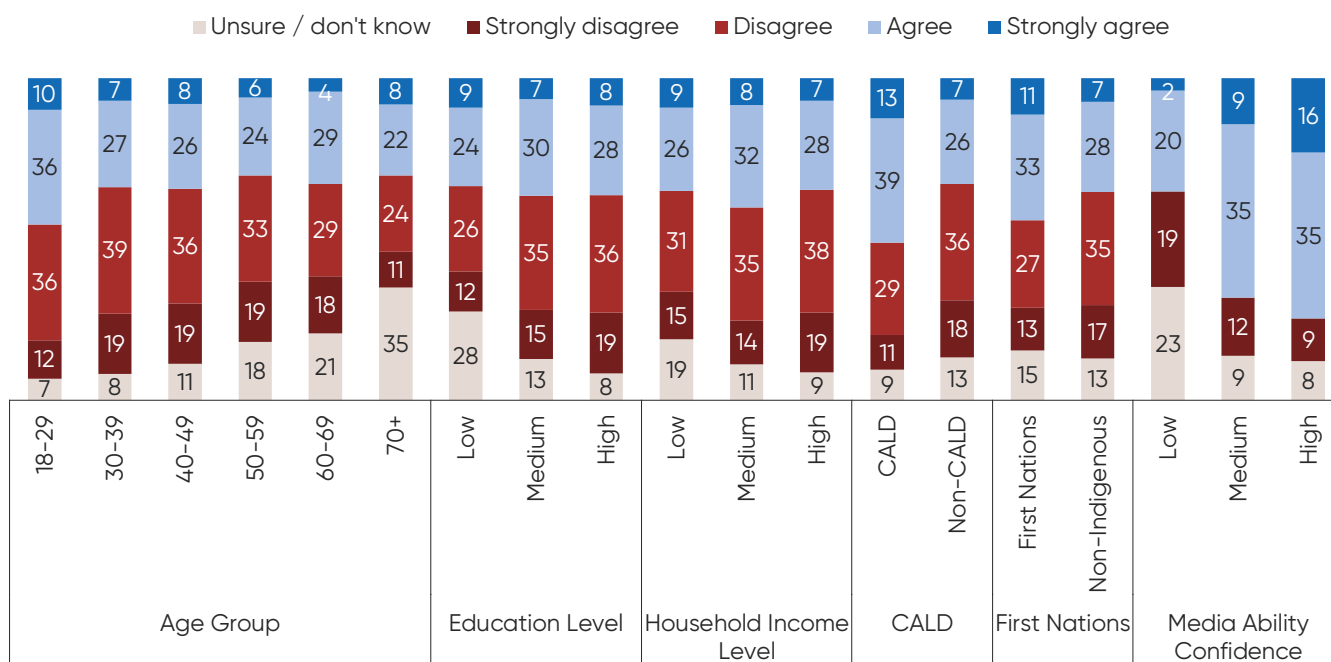


N = 2,308 (answered Yes to having heard of algorithm in relations to online news)

Adult Australians are critical about the quality of algorithmically selected content. Just 36% agree that algorithms on social media present a variety of viewpoints and perspectives (versus 51% who disagree). Younger adults were more likely to believe social media algorithms present a variety of viewpoints and perspectives: 46% of 18–29 agree this is the case

compared to 30% for 50–59 or 70 and over (see **figure 7.6**). CALD respondents are more likely to agree social media present a variety of viewpoints and perspectives (46% versus 34% for non-CALD adults), as is the case with First Nations respondents (44% versus 35% for non-Indigenous adults).

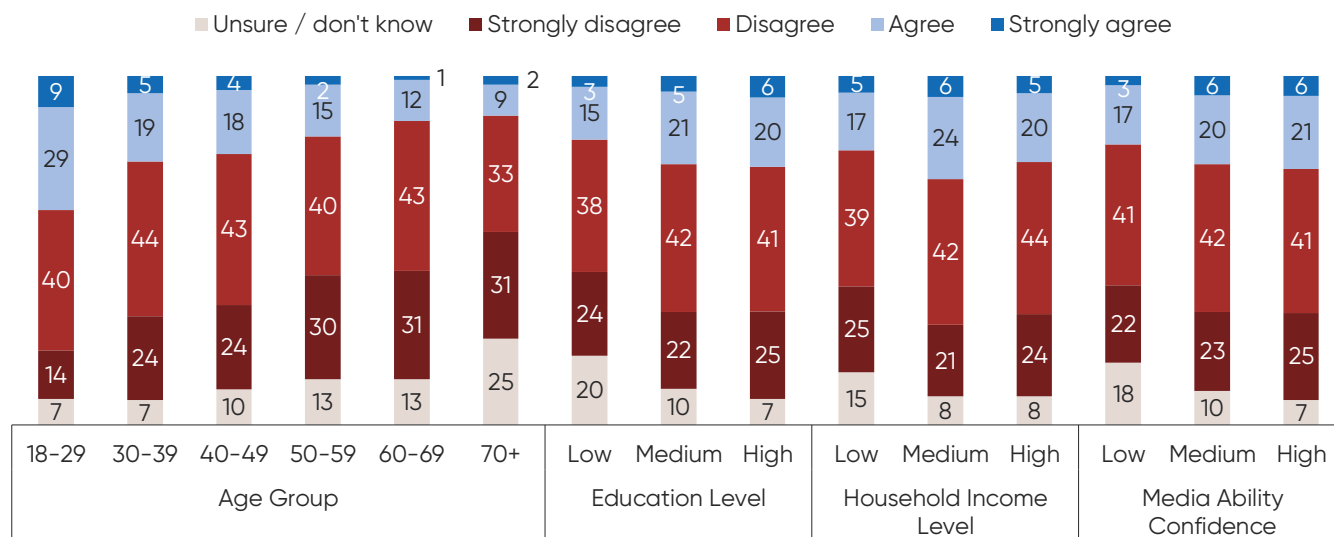
► **Figure 7.6**
Algorithms present news on social media that has a variety of different viewpoints and perspectives, by demographics and media ability confidence (%)



N = 2,308 (respondents who answered 'Yes' to having heard of algorithms in relations to online news)

Only one in four (25%) adults trust algorithms to select balanced and accurate news, while 65% do not trust algorithms to do this. Young adults are more likely to agree they trust algorithms (38%) to select balanced and accurate news as are high level media users (32% versus 18% for people with a low level of media use) (see **figure 7.7**).

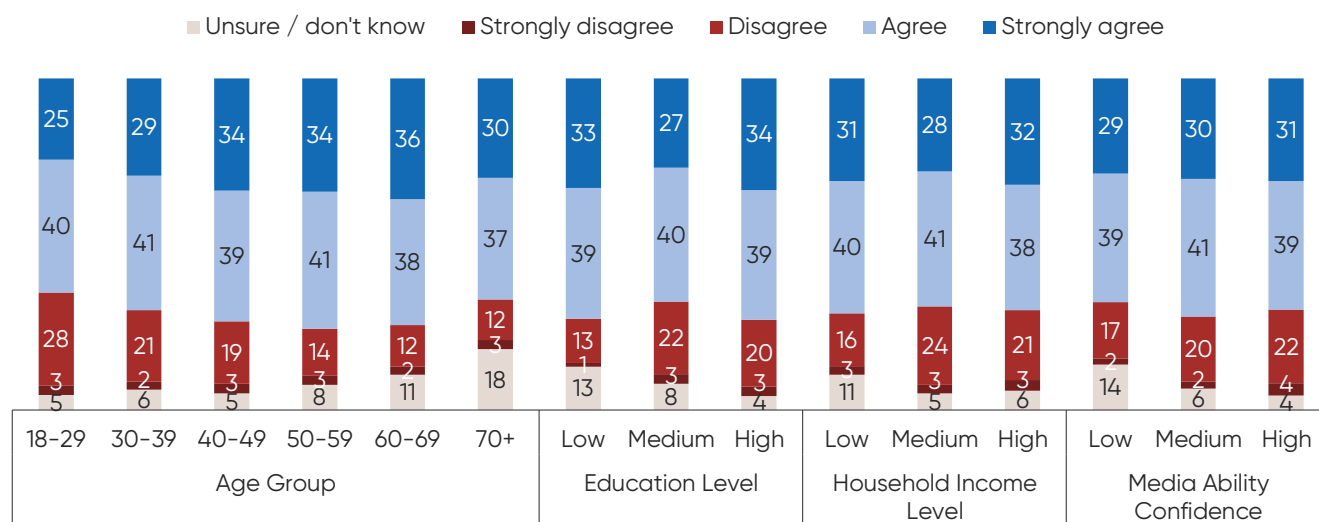
► **Figure 7.7**
I trust algorithms to select balanced and accurate news on social media, by demographics and media ability confidence (%)



N = 2,308 (respondents who answered 'Yes' to having heard of algorithms in relations to online news)

Concerns about the data collected by algorithms is high among adult Australians, with 70% agreeing they are worried about the data algorithms collect about them. This concern is fairly evenly distributed among all groups (see **figure 7.8**).

► **Figure 7.8**
I worry about the data that algorithms might collect about me, by demographics and media ability confidence (%)

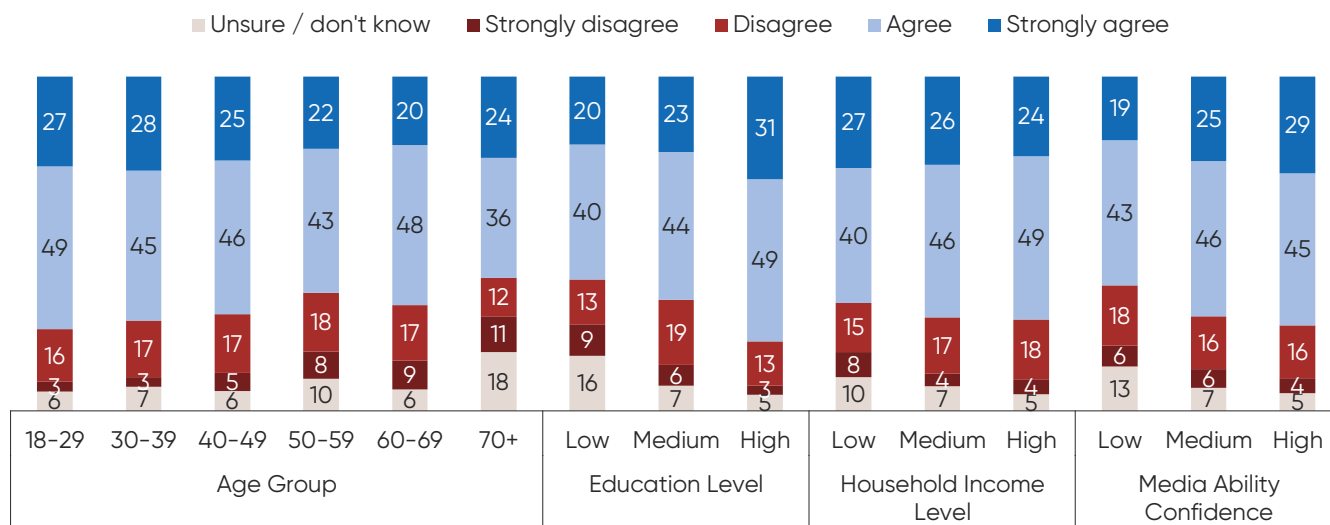


N = 2,308 (respondents who answered 'Yes' to having heard of algorithms in relations to online news)

There is a strong level of interest in learning more about how algorithms determine the news content people get on social media (70%). This interest is highest for younger adults: 77% of those aged 18–29 agree compared to 41% for those aged 70 and over (see **figure 7.9**).

► **Figure 7.9**

I would like to know more about how algorithms determine the news I get on social media, by demographics and media ability confidence (%)



N = 2,308 (respondents who answered 'Yes' to having heard of algorithms in relations to online news)

SUMMARY

By comparing the findings with our survey of young people,¹ we can see that more adults are confident in their knowledge of how algorithms work in relation to news than teenagers are with three in five adults saying they have heard of algorithms in relation to news. However, people's agency in relation to algorithms is limited with only two in five of these adults agreeing that they try to influence the news content that is recommended to them, although there is a strong level of interest in learning more about how algorithms determine the news people receive on social media. Many Australians believe that algorithms are helpful at delivering news that is relevant to them. However, there is a high level of concern about the way algorithms collect people's personal data and deliver unbalanced, false and inaccurate news. This highlights the need for media literacy education efforts to consider how adults can exert more influence and control over algorithms and to increase awareness about how and why algorithms are used to collect personal data.

¹ Only four in ten teenagers aged 13–16 years say they are familiar with the term algorithm in relation to news (see <https://apo.org.au/node/324686>) compared to six in ten adults for this survey

MEDIA LITERACY AWARENESS, ABILITIES AND PERCEPTIONS

08

FAMILIARITY WITH THE TERM MEDIA LITERACY

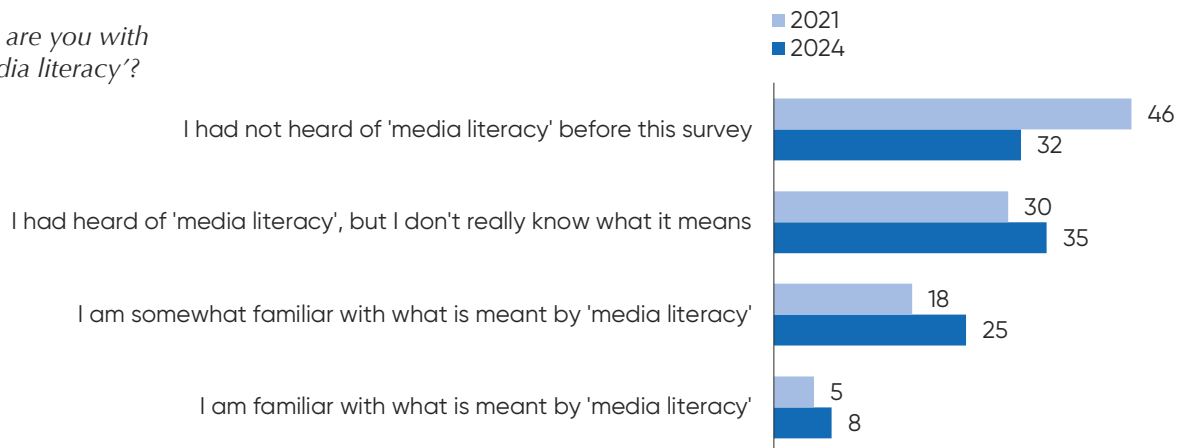
- » Most Australians (68%) are familiar with the term media literacy but only one third (33%) have some understanding of what it means
- » The socioeconomic groups most familiar with the term media literacy are: younger adults (aged 18–29), adults with a high level of education and adults living in a high income household
- » Adults who use more media and/or have a high level of confidence in their media abilities are also more likely to be familiar with the term media literacy

FAMILIARITY WITH THE TERM MEDIA LITERACY IS GROWING

More than two thirds (68%) of adults have heard the term media literacy, up from 53% in 2021. The proportion of adults either 'familiar' or 'somewhat familiar' with the term, increased from

23% in 2021 to 32% in 2024 (see **figure 8.1**). At the same time, the proportion of adults who had not heard of the term 'media literacy' dropped from 46% to 32%.

► **Figure 8.1**
How familiar are you with the term 'media literacy'?
By year (%)



Familiarity with the term media literacy is strongly correlated with age (**figure 8.1**): 18–29 year olds are most likely to be familiar (11%) or somewhat familiar (33%), compared to those aged 70 and over (5% familiar and 16% somewhat familiar).

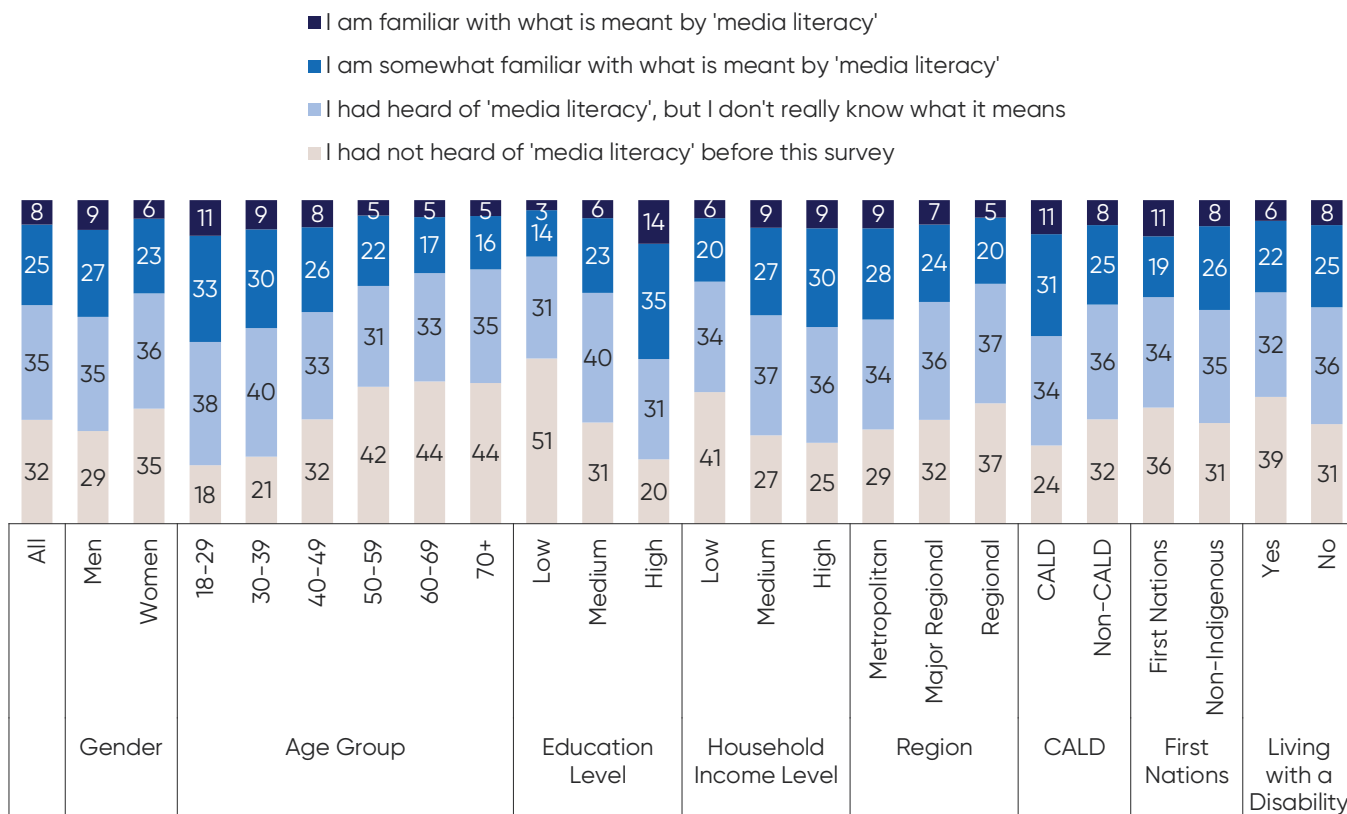
Familiarity with media literacy is also strongly correlated with education and household income levels (**figure 8.2**). Just one in five (20%) people with a high level of education have not heard of media literacy compared to over half (51%) for people with a low level of education.

There is a slightly weaker correlation when it comes to household income level. One quarter (25%) of adults

with a high level of education have not heard of media literacy compared to 41% of adults with a low level of household income.

There are smaller but still significant associations related to gender, geography and disability. People living in regional areas are more likely to have not heard of media literacy compared to those living in metropolitan areas (37% versus 29%). People living with a disability are less likely to have heard of the term media literacy (39% versus 31% compared to those not living with a disability). Women are more likely than men to have not heard of this term (35% versus 29%).

► Figure 8.2
How familiar are you with the term 'media literacy'? By demographics (%)



PEOPLE WHO USE MORE MEDIA OR ARE MORE CONFIDENT ABOUT THEIR MEDIA ABILITY ARE MORE FAMILIAR WITH MEDIA LITERACY

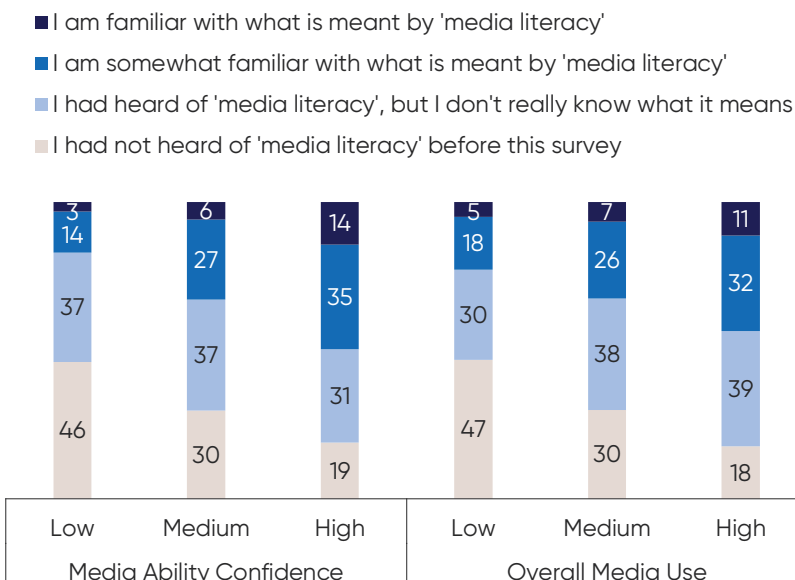
People who use more media are more likely to be familiar with media literacy: 43% of those with the highest level of media use are familiar with the term compared to 23% for those with

the lowest level of consumption (see **figure 8.3**).

People with a high level of confidence in their own media abilities are much

more likely to be familiar with the term media literacy when compared to those with a low level of confidence in their own media abilities (49% versus 17%).

► Figure 8.3
How familiar are you with the term 'media literacy'? By media ability confidence and overall media use (%)



SUMMARY

Global interest in media literacy has grown significantly in recent years. This is likely related to advocacy efforts, such as the promotion of global Media Literacy Week in October each year, alongside an increasing number of media literacy initiatives. Media literacy also appears to be receiving more attention in Australian news and media—seemingly in part fueled by growing interest and anxieties around generative AI and the increasing prevalence of disinformation. The Australian Media Literacy Alliance (AMLA) partners have also made significant progress reaching key intermediaries such as teachers and librarians via public events and outreach initiatives. These developments are all likely to be contributing to growing awareness of media literacy among Australians.

Our results show that more than two thirds of adult Australians have at least heard of the term ‘media literacy’. However, only one third of adults have an understanding of what this term means, suggesting more advocacy and education are required. Awareness has grown significantly in just a few years though, with a 9% increase in those at least somewhat familiar between 2021 and 2024. Younger adults are more likely to be familiar with media literacy along with adults with a higher level of education suggesting that many people are encountering media literacy as part of their studies. Adults who use more media and those who are more confident in their media abilities are also more likely to be familiar with this term.

The findings suggest that awareness raising about media literacy is yielding results and should continue, but there should be a specific focus on awareness raising among older adults and adults with a lower level of education.

09

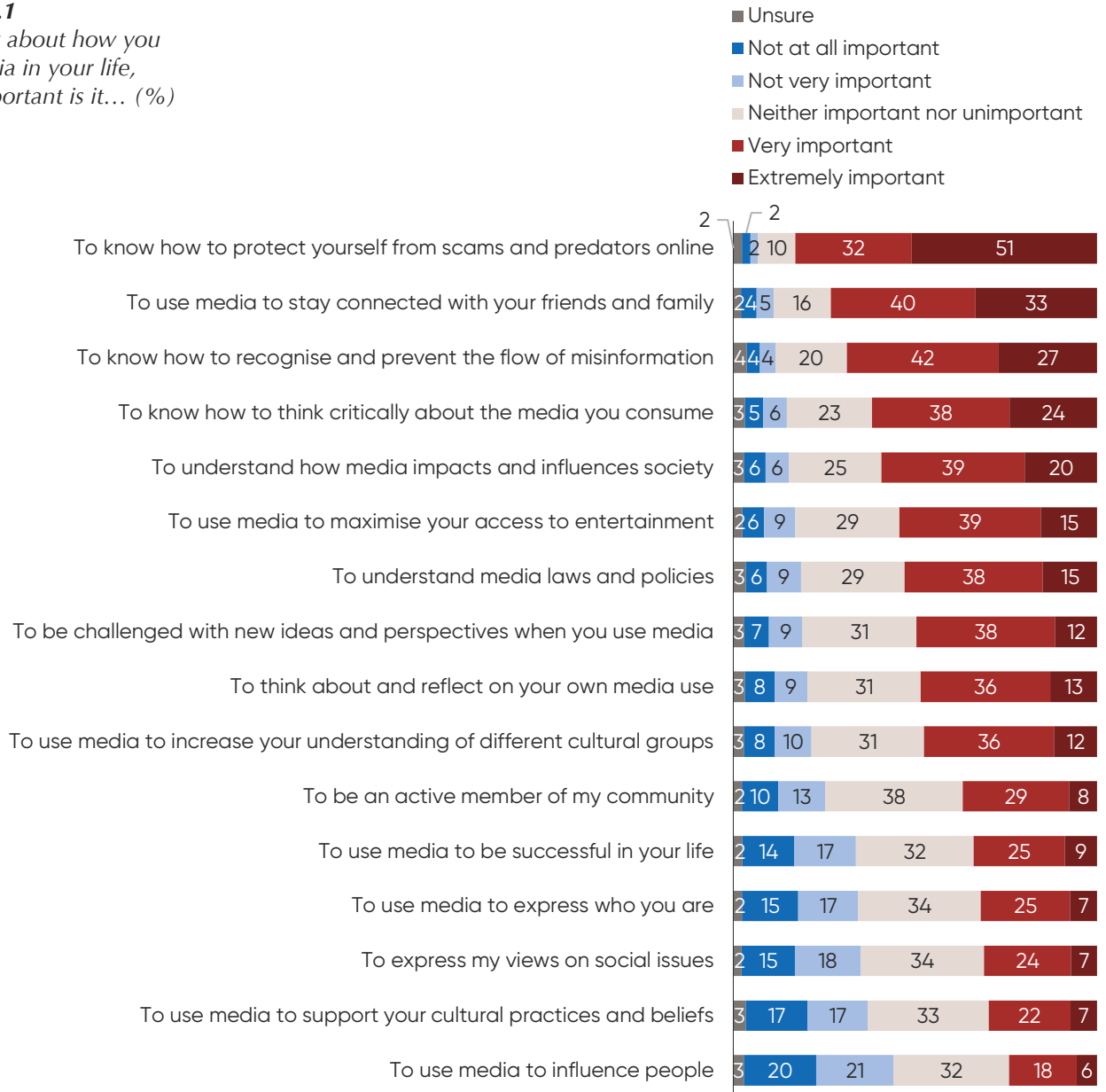
THE MEDIA ABILITIES PEOPLE VALUE

- » 83% of adults said knowing how to protect themselves from online scams and predators is very/extremely important, though this is +6% higher for women than men
- » 73% of adults said knowing how to use media to connect with friends and family is very/extremely important, though this is +13% higher for women than men
- » 69% of adults said knowing how recognise and prevent the flow of misinformation is very / extremely important, though this is +16% higher for people with a high versus low level of education
- » More than half (52%) of adults believe 8 or more of the 16 media abilities we listed are very/extremely important in their own lives

We asked people how important they consider 16 different media abilities to be in the context of their own life (see **figure 9.1**). Overall, the results are very similar to those in 2021. More than half (52%) of adults believe eight

or more of the 16 media activities we listed are very important or extremely important (see **figure 9.2**). Only one in 20 (6%) think none of the 16 media activities are important or extremely important in their lives.

► **Figure 9.1**
Thinking about how you use media in your life, how important is it... (%)



► **Figure 9.2**
Number of items ranked very or extremely important (average)

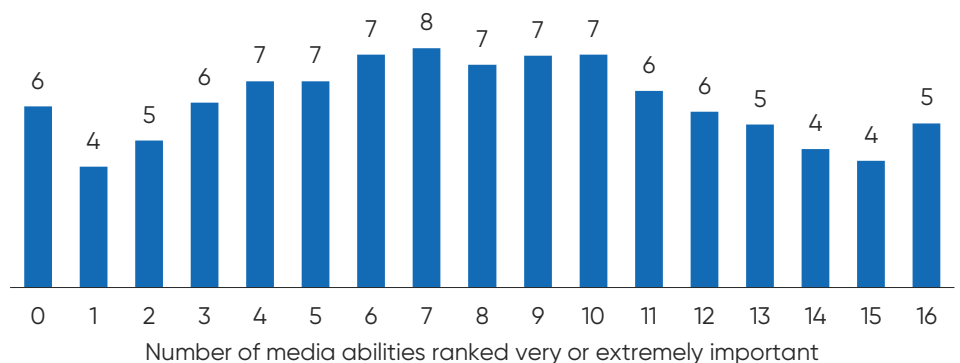
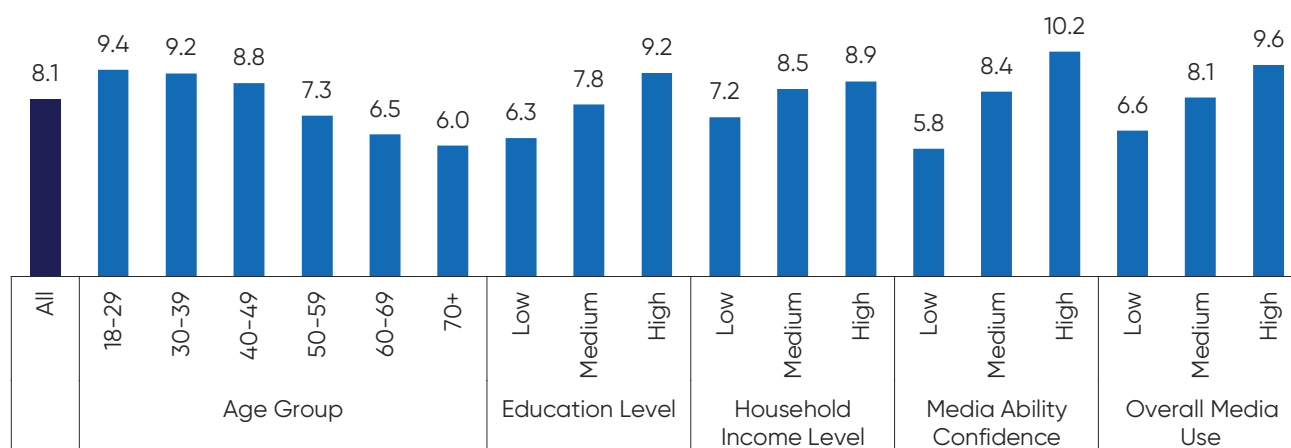


Figure 9.3 shows that adults in the youngest age category (18–29 years) selected more media literacy abilities as being important to them than those in the oldest age category of 70 and above (9.4 items versus 6.0 items). Adults with a high level of education chose more activities than those with a low education level (9.2 versus 6.3 items). Adults with a high household income chose more items than those with a low household income (8.9 versus 7.2).

Figure 9.3 shows that people with a high level of confidence in their own media abilities are far more likely to rate the listed media literacy activities as being important compared to those with a low level of confidence (10.2 versus 5.8) and people with a high level of media consumption are more likely to rate abilities as being important when compared to people with a low media use (9.6 versus 6.6).

► **Figure 9.3**
Number of items ranked very or extremely important, by demographics, media ability confidence and overall media use (average)



Australians rated ‘to know how to protect yourself from scams and predators online’ as the most important of the 16 media abilities we asked them about. More than four in five (83%) said this is either very important or extremely important.

Other media abilities that more than half of adults ranked as important are: ‘to stay connected with your friends and family’ (73%), ‘knowing how to recognise and prevent the flow of misinformation’ (69%), ‘thinking critically about the media

you consume’ (62%), ‘to understand how media influences society’ (59%), ‘to know how use media to maximise your access to entertainment’ (54%) and ‘to understand media laws and policies’ (53%).

Australians are least likely to think it is important to ‘use media to express my views on social issues’ (31%), ‘use media to support cultural practices and beliefs’ (30%) or ‘to use media to influence people’ (24%).

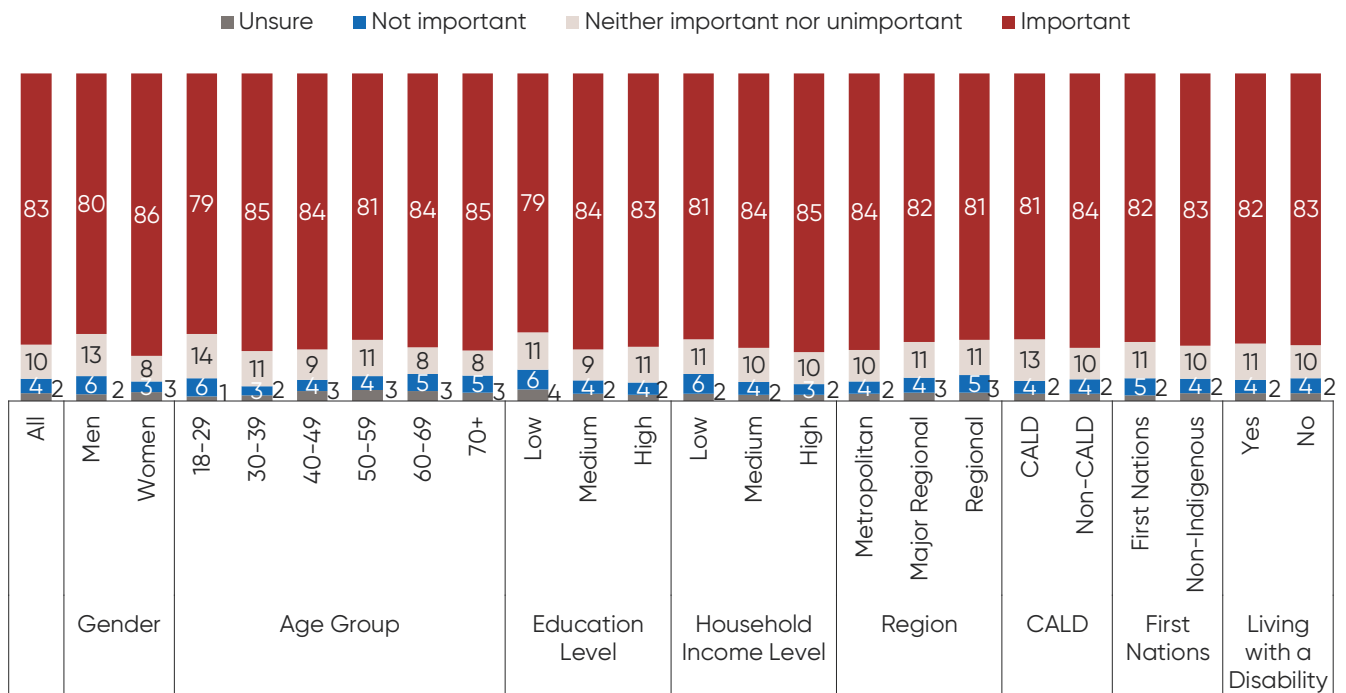
PRIORITY #1: STAYING SAFE ONLINE

Using media to ‘protect yourself from scams and predators online’ was ranked as the most important of the 16 media abilities we listed by adult Australians with 83% saying it was very/extremely important to their media use (see **figure 9.4**). While there are no substantial differences among age groups, women are more likely to rate staying safe online as being very/extremely important when

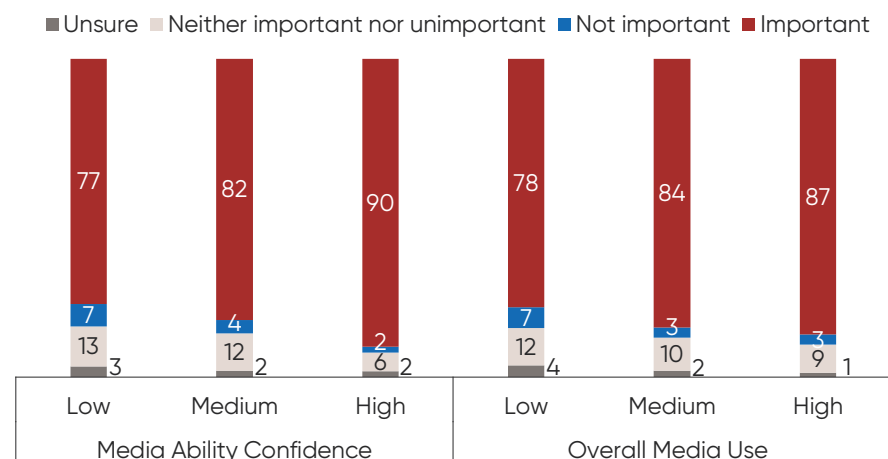
compared to men (86% versus 80%). People with a high level of education are slightly more likely to consider this important when compared to those with a low level of education (83% versus 79%) as is the case for people with a high level of household income when compared to those with a low level of household income (85% versus 81%).

People with a high level of confidence in their media abilities are much more likely to rate staying safe online as being very/extremely important when compared to those with a low level of confidence in their own media ability (90% versus 77%) (see **figure 9.5**).

► **Figure 9.4**
How important is it to know how to protect yourself from scams and predators online? By demographics (%)



► **Figure 9.5**
How important is it to know how to protect yourself from scams and predators online? By media ability confidence and overall media use (%)



PRIORITY #2: CONNECTING WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

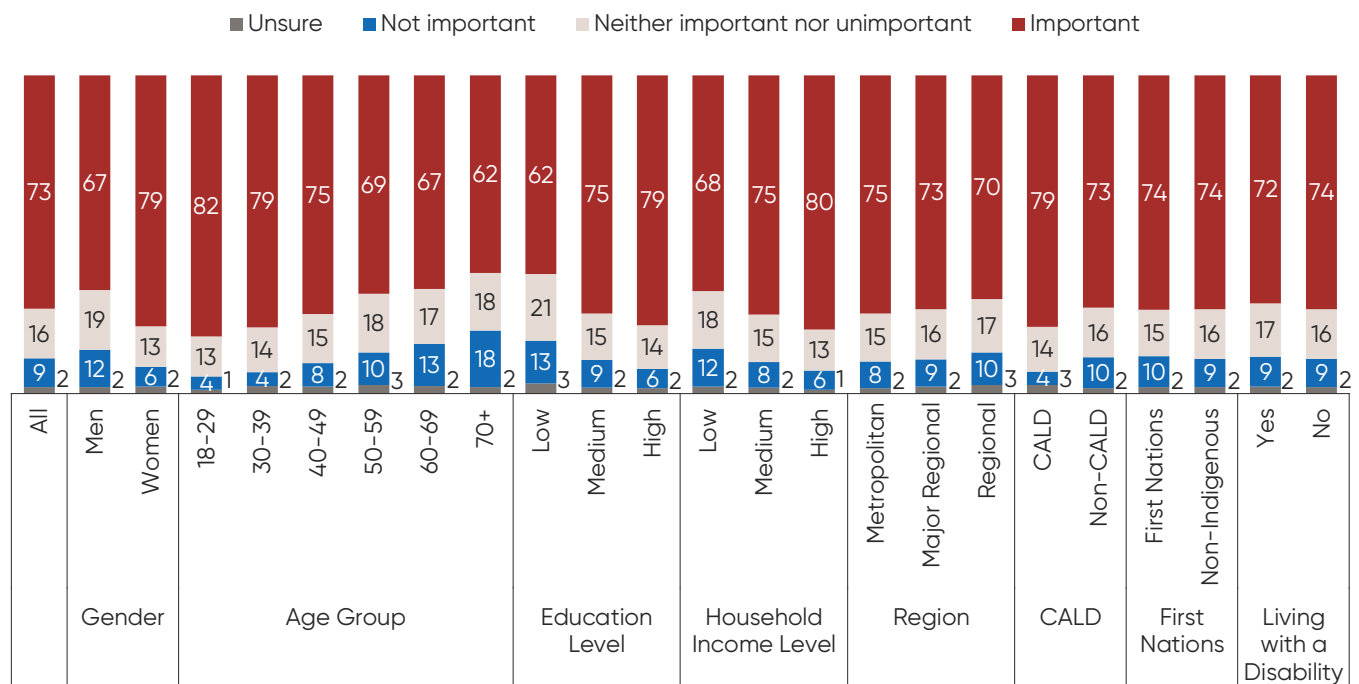
Adult Australians ranked knowing how to use media to connect with friends and family as the second most important of the activities we listed, with 73% saying it was very/extremely important to the way they use media in their life (see **figure 9.6**). Women are much more likely than men to regard staying connected with friends and family as very/extremely important (79% versus 67%). Adults under 40 years are also much more

likely to rate this as important when compared to those aged over 40 years (81% versus 68%). People with a high level of education are more likely to consider this important when compared to those with a low level of education (79% versus 62%) as is the case for people with a high level of household income when compared to those with a low level of household income (80% versus 68%). People with a high level of confidence in their

media abilities are much more likely to regard staying connected with friends and family as important when compared to those with a low level of confidence in their media abilities (84% versus 61%) (see **figure 9.7**). People who use media the most are far more likely to regard staying connected with friends and family as important when compared to those who use media the least (79% versus 64%).

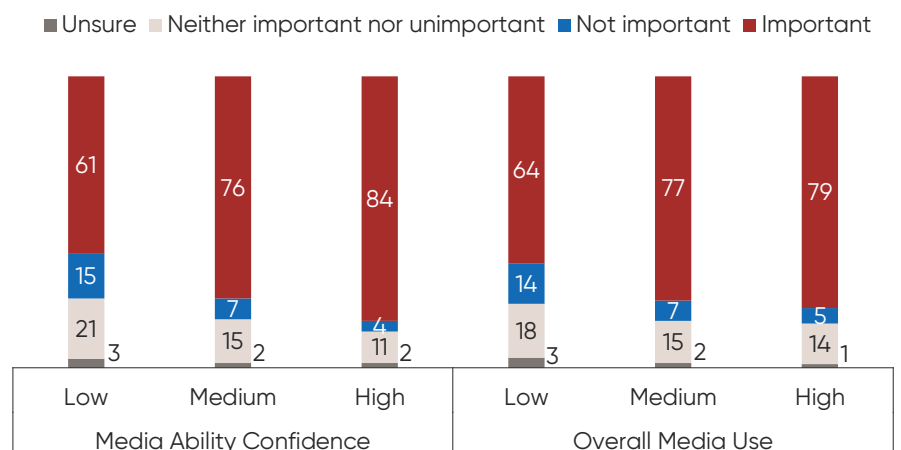
► Figure 9.6

How important is it to use media to stay connected with your friends and family? By demographics (%)



► Figure 9.7

How important is it to use media to stay connected with your friends and family? By media ability confidence and overall media use (%)



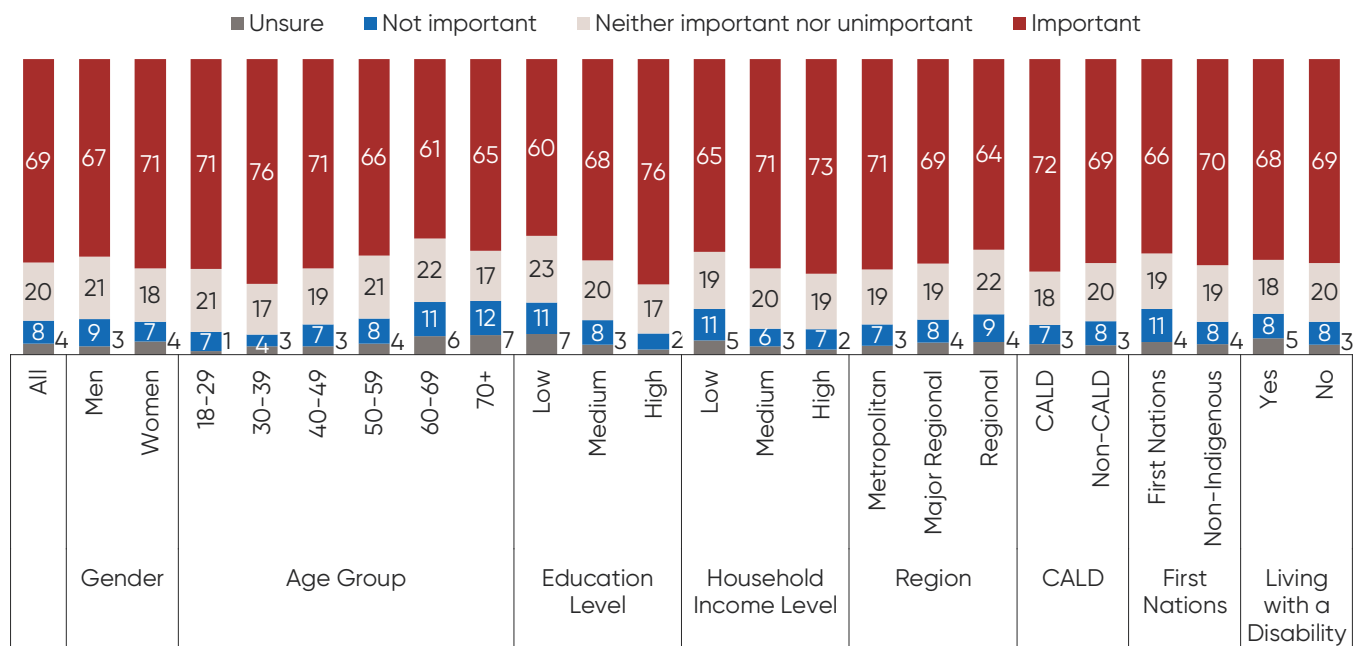
PRIORITY #3: RECOGNISING MISINFORMATION

Knowing how to recognise and prevent the flow of misinformation is ranked as the third most important media literacy ability for adult Australians, with 69% saying it was very/extremely important to the way they use media in their life (see **figure 9.8**). Adults are more likely to say recognising misinformation is extremely important to them when compared to 2021: this increased from 21% to 27% (**figure 9.10**). Adults aged 30–39 were most likely to rate this as important (76%), while adults aged over 70 years were the age group least likely to rate this as important

(65%). Adults with a high level of education are more likely to consider this important when compared to those with a low level of education (76% versus 60%), as is the case for adults with a high level of household income when compared to adults with a low level of household income (73% versus 65%). Adults in metropolitan areas were more likely to consider this important when compared to people in regional areas (71% versus 64%). CALD respondents were slightly more likely to rate this as important when compared to non-CALD (72% versus 69%), as was the case with non-

Indigenous adults compared to First Nations respondents (70% versus 66%). Adults with a high level of confidence were far more likely to rate identifying misinformation as being an important ability when compared to those with a low level of confidence (82% versus 55%) (see **figure 9.9**). Adults who have the highest level of media use are also much more likely to consider identifying misinformation as being an important ability when compared to low media users (76% versus 62%).

► **Figure 9.8**
How important is it to know how to recognise and prevent the flow of misinformation? By demographics (%)



► **Figure 9.9**
How important is it to know how to recognise and prevent the flow of misinformation? By media ability confidence and overall media use (%)

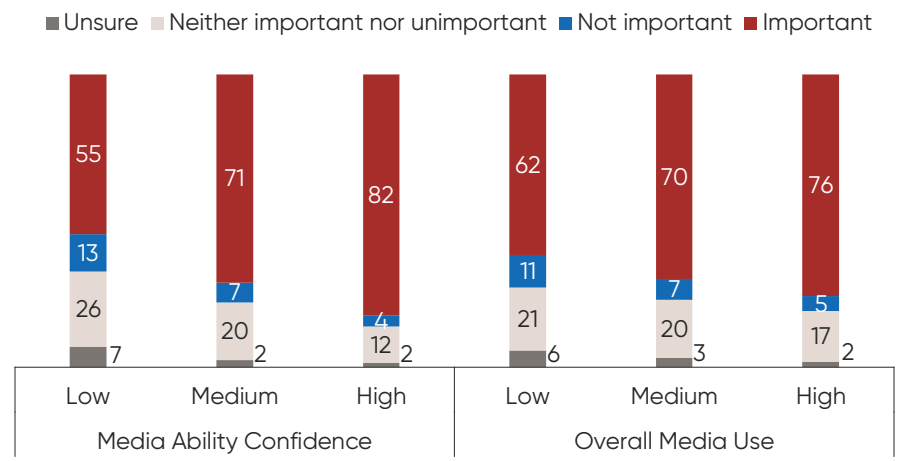
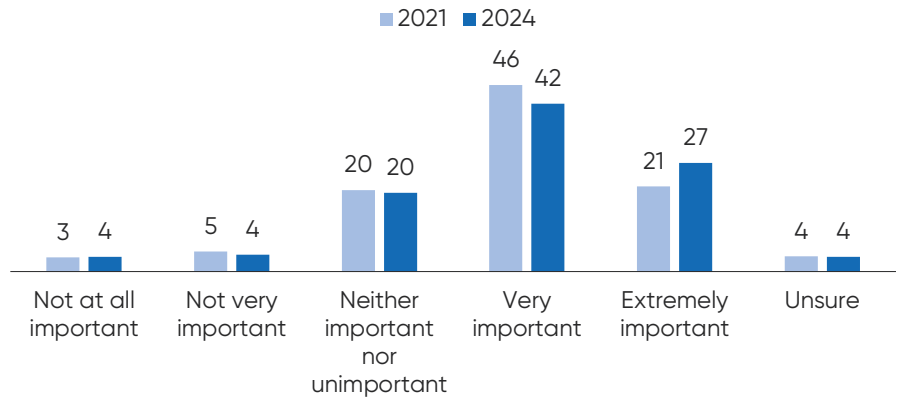


Figure 9.10
How important is it to know how to recognise and prevent the flow of misinformation?
By year (%)



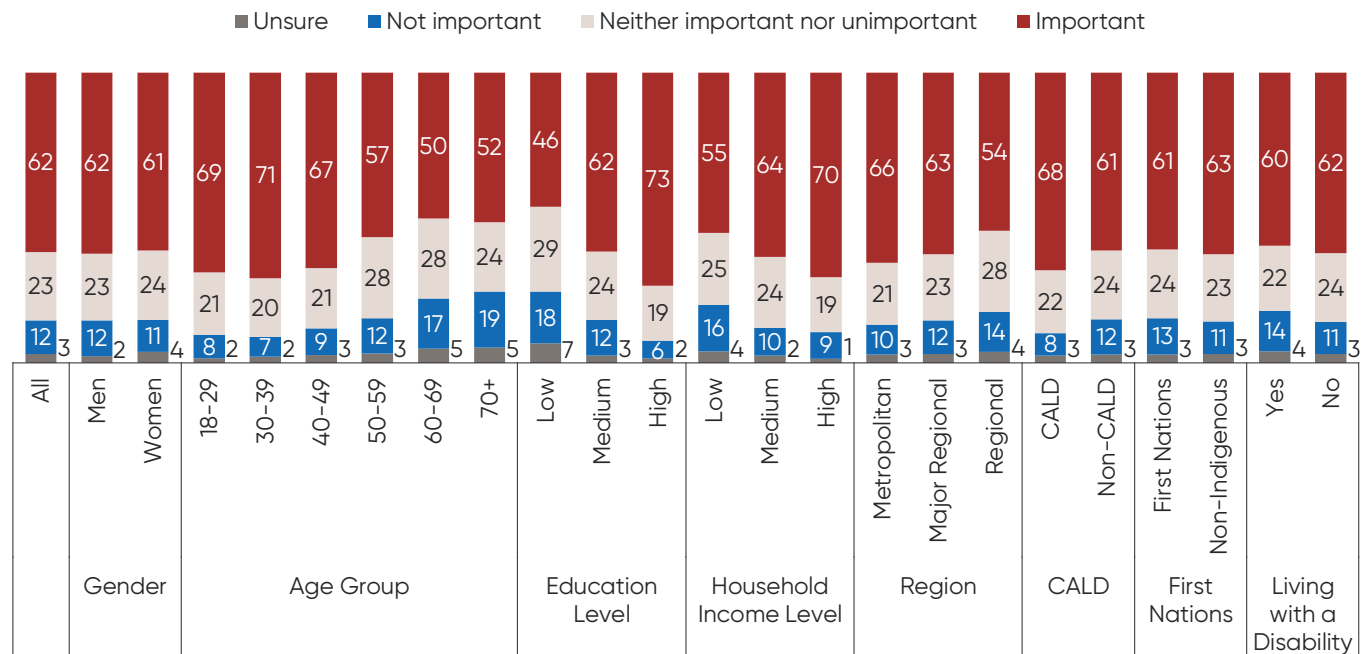
PRIORITY #4: THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT THE MEDIA YOU CONSUME

Almost two thirds (62%) of adults believe it is very/extremely important to know how to think critically about the media you consume, with just 12% saying this is not important. Younger adults aged 30–39 are most likely to believe this (71%). This belief strongly

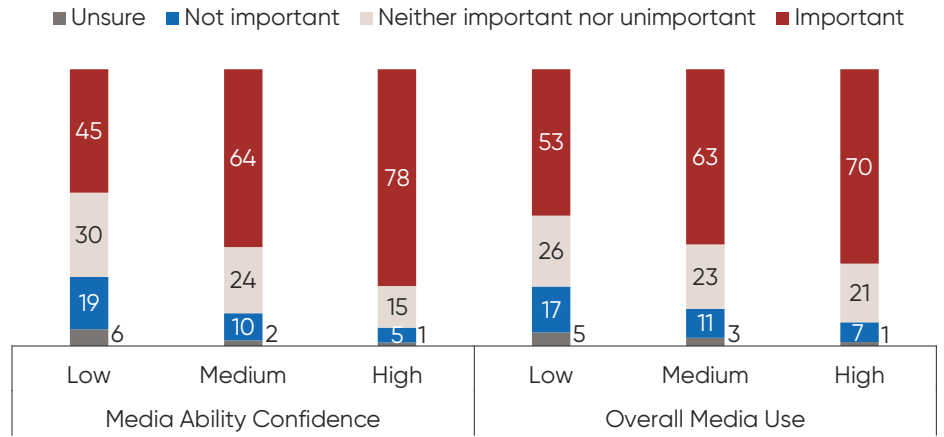
correlates with education level (73% for high education versus 46% for low education) and to a lesser degree with household income level (70% for high household income versus 55% for low household income). People in metropolitan areas are more likely to

think it is important to think critically about media consumption than those in regional areas (66% versus 54%). CALD adults are slightly more likely to think this is important (68% versus 61%) (see **figure 9.11**).

Figure 9.11
How important is it to know how to think critically about the media you consume? By demographics (%)



► **Figure 9.12**
How important is it to know how to think critically about the media you consume? By media ability confidence and overall media use (%)



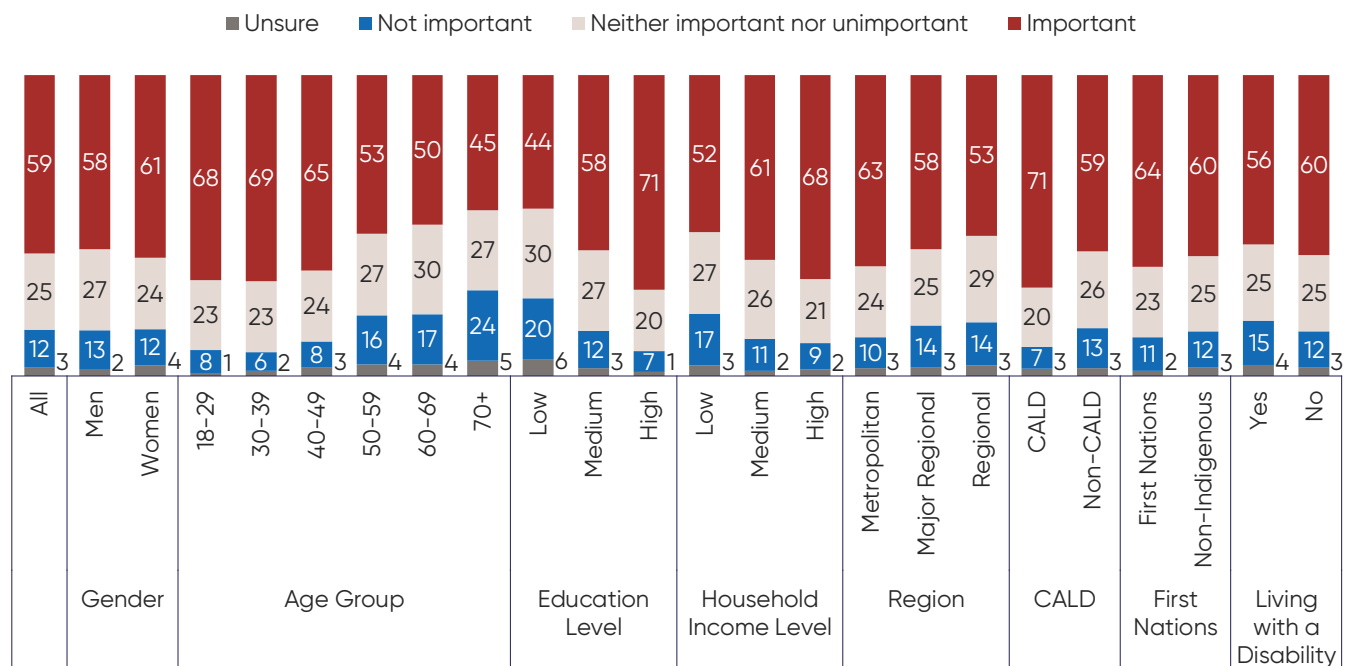
PRIORITY #5: UNDERSTAND HOW MEDIA IMPACTS SOCIETY

Understanding how media impacts society is the media ability ranked as fifth in importance with 59% saying this is very or extremely important to the way they use media (see **figure 9.13**). Adults with a high level of education are much more likely to consider this as important when compared to those with a low level of education (71% versus 44%), as is the case for people with a high level of household income when compared to

adults with a low level of household income (68% versus 52%). Women are slightly more likely to consider this important than men (61% versus 58%). Adults aged 18–40 years are far more likely to think this is ‘extremely important’ compared to those over 70 years (26% versus 16%). CALD adults are more likely than non-CALD adults to believe it is important to understand how media impacts society (71% versus 59%) while First Nations

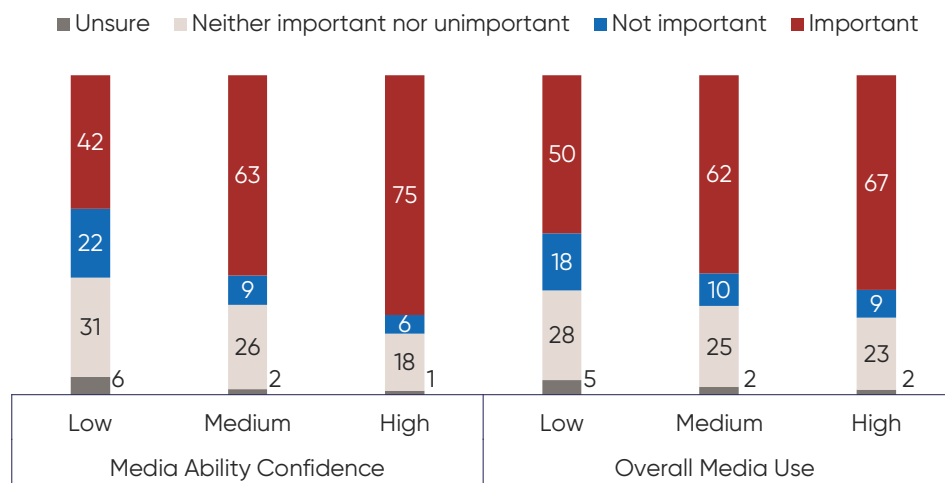
respondents are slightly less likely than others to believe this is the case (60% versus 64%). Adults with a high level of confidence in their media ability are far more likely to say it is important to understand how media impacts society (75% versus 42%) (see **figure 9.14**). Adults who have a high level of media use are also much more likely to say it is important to understand how media impacts society (67% versus 50%).

► **Figure 9.13**
How important is it to understand how media impacts and influences society? By demographics (%)



► **Figure 9.14**

How important is it to understand how media impacts and influences society? By media ability confidence and overall media use (%)



SUMMARY

Most Australians believe that a diverse range of media literacy abilities are relevant to their lives and they consider them to be important. More than half believe that eight or more of the 16 media activities we listed are very important or extremely important to their own life. The three media literacy activities that are considered most important by the highest number of adult Australians are: 1) being able to protect themselves from online scams and predators, 2) knowing how to use media to connect with friends and family, and 3) knowing how to recognise and respond to misinformation. These findings highlight key media literacy concerns and needs for adult Australians and emphasise the need for media literacy education and resources to align with the abilities different groups of Australians value the most. Some groups are more likely to believe particular abilities are important. Media literacy educators can consider these variations when they design media literacy initiatives.

10

CONFIDENCE IN MEDIA ABILITIES

- » Adults are confident they can do 4.3 of the 11 media tasks we listed, on average
- » Most adults are confident they can find information they need online (60%)
- » Less than half of adults (39%) are confident they can check if information they found online is true, though this figure is much lower for adults with a low education level (25%) and for older adults (24% for those aged 60+)
- » Those who consume a diverse range of media and do so more regularly have more confidence in their ability to perform the media tasks
- » Young adults, men and those with a higher education level have more confidence in their media ability

AUSTRALIANS HAVE A LOW LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE IN THEIR MEDIA ABILITIES

We asked respondents about their level of confidence to perform a series of 11 media-related tasks to help assess people's media ability. These tasks required critical, technical and knowledge abilities. To help address biases associated with some groups being more likely to inflate their confidence in their own abilities, we asked respondents to imagine that a friend needs help with each task. We then asked them how confident they would be to provide immediate help to their friend with each task.

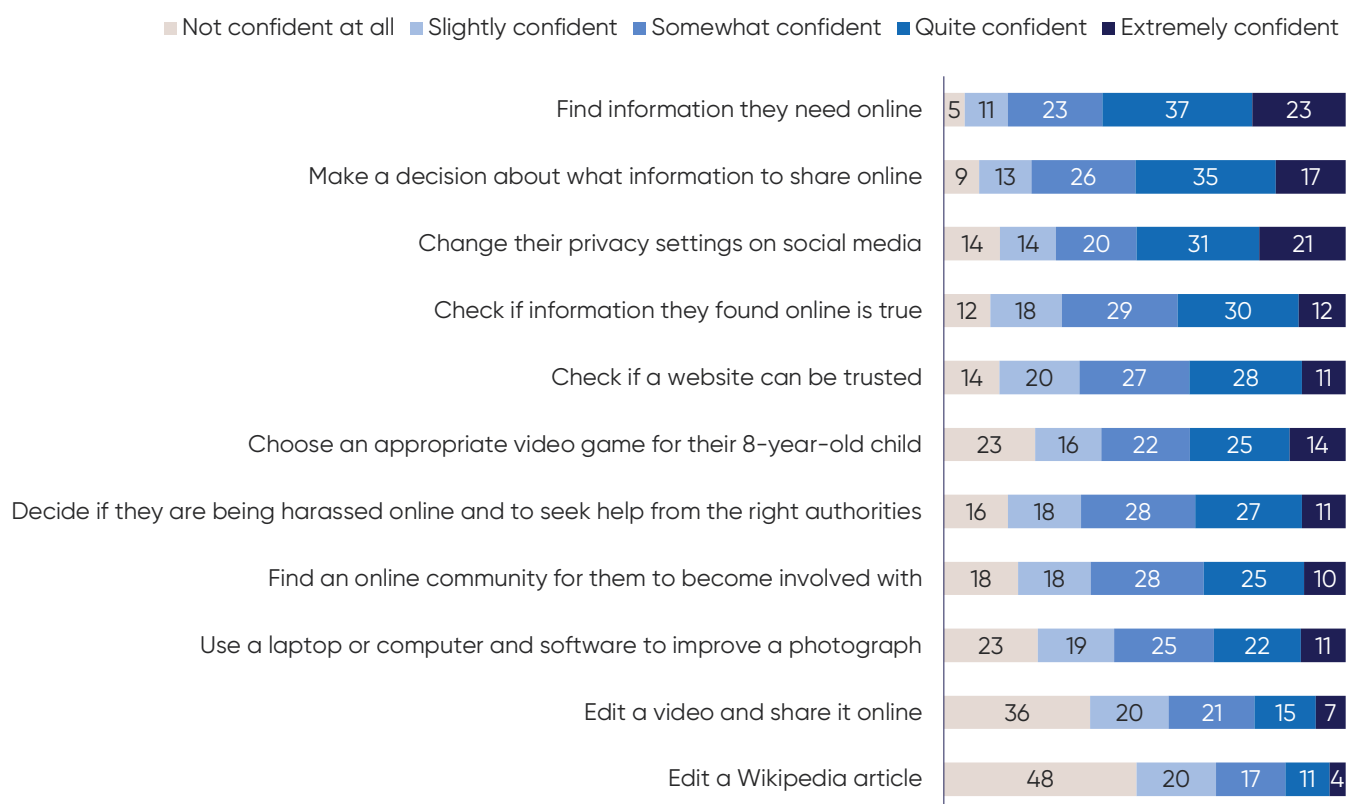
Adult Australians were confident they could perform 4.3 of the 11 listed

media tasks, on average. There were three tasks that more than half of adults were confident they could do: find information they need online (60%), change their privacy settings on social media (52%) and make a decision about what to share online (52%) (see **figure 10.1**).

Overall, the findings remain largely unchanged since 2021. The largest increase in confidence is for those who are 'extremely confident' they can find information online: this increased from 18% in 2021 to 23% in 2024.

► **Figure 10.1**

A friend needs help doing the tasks below. How confident are you in helping them with these tasks? (%)



YOUNGER ADULTS ARE MORE CONFIDENT IN THEIR MEDIA ABILITIES

There is a strong correlation between age and media ability (see **figure 10.2**). Younger adults are more likely to be confident in their media ability. For example, adults aged 18–29 are confident they can perform an average of 5.5 of the media tasks we listed but this decreases to 4.0 activities for 50–59 year olds and then to just 2.0 activities for those aged 70 and over.

More than half (54%) of younger adults aged 18–29 years are quite/extremely confident about checking if information found online is true

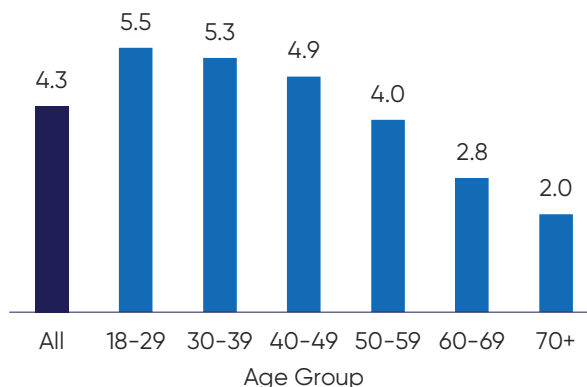
compared to 38% for 50–59 year olds and 20% for adults aged 70 and over (see **figure 10.3**).

More than half of adults aged 18–29 (53%) years are quite/extremely confident they can decide if they are being harassed online and could seek help from the right authorities compared to just over one third (36%) of 50–59 year olds and 16% of adults aged 70 and over (see **figure 10.4**).

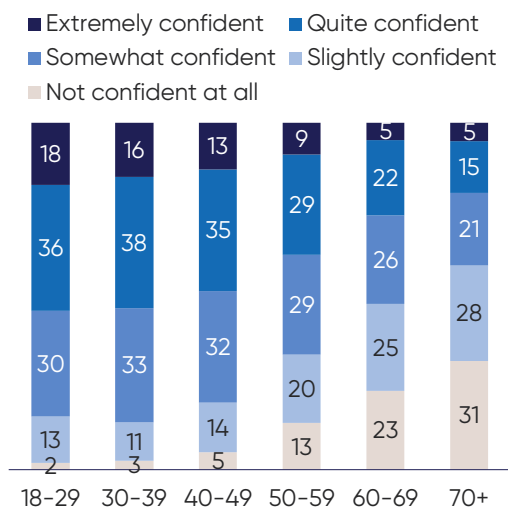
Confidence levels are overall much lower for media production tasks. More than one third (36%) of adults

have no confidence at all that they can use software to improve a video, almost half (48%) don't think they can edit a Wikipedia page and almost one in five (23%) are not confident they can edit a photo. Age plays a significant role across these items. For example, just over one third (38%) of adults aged 18–29 are quite/extremely confident they can edit a video and share it online compared to 18% for adults 50–59 and just 5% of adults aged 70 and over (see **figure 10.5**).

► **Figure 10.2**
Number of 11 media tasks rated 'Quite confident' or 'Extremely confident', by age (average)

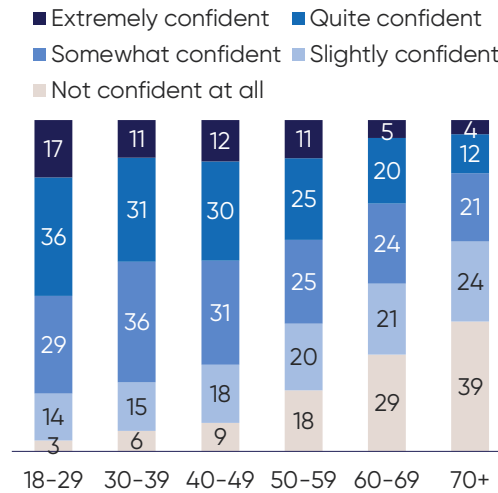


► **Figure 10.3**
How confident are you helping a friend check if information they found online is true? By age (%)

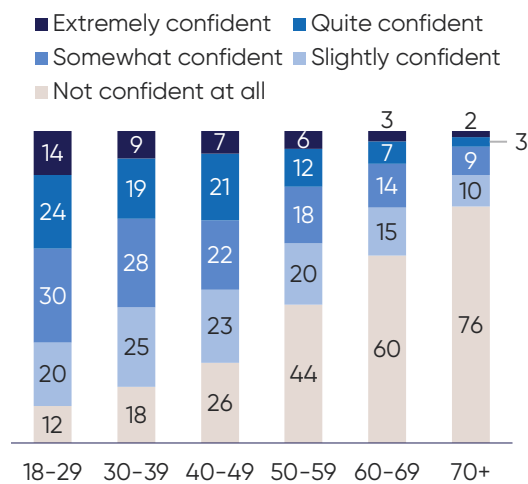


► **Figure 10.4**

How confident are you helping a friend decide if they are being harassed online and to seek help from the right authorities? By age (%)

► **Figure 10.5**

How confident are you helping a friend edit a video and share it online? By age (%)

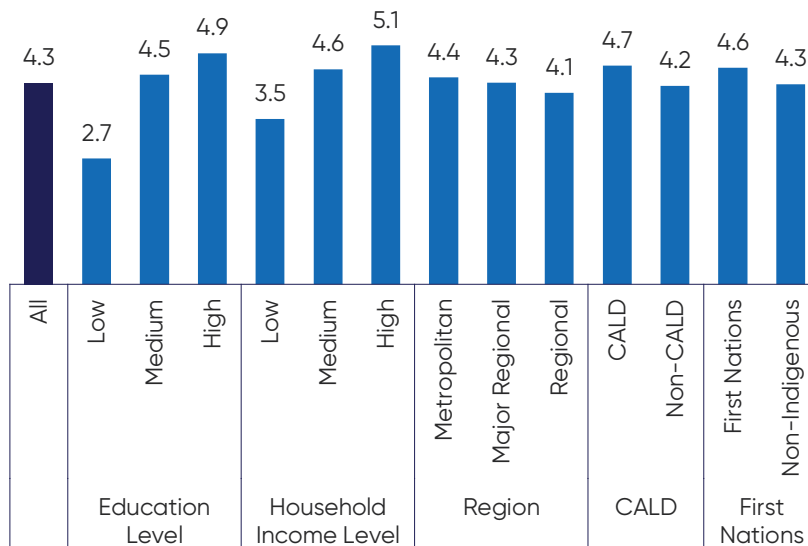


MEDIA ABILITY BY DEMOGRAPHICS

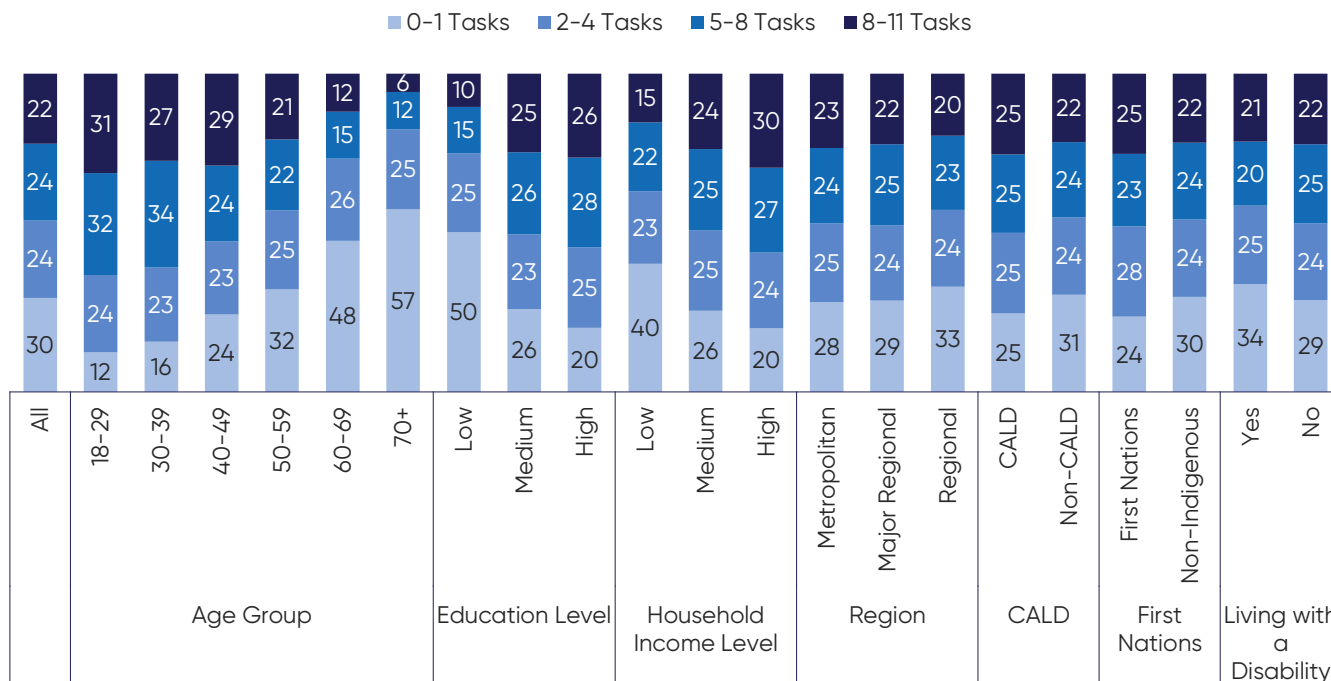
There is a strong correlation between media ability and income level (see **figure 10.6** and **figure 10.7**). Adults who live in high income households are quite/extremely confident they can perform 5.1 media tasks on average, while 20% can't do any activity or only one. For adults in low income households this falls to 3.5 tasks, while 40% can only do one task or none.

Education has an even greater impact with people on a low income confident they can do 3.5 media tasks and 40% are able to perform zero or one compared to 5.1 items for those on a high income with 20% able to perform zero or one.

► **Figure 10.6**
 Number of 11 media tasks rated 'Quite confident' or 'Extremely confident', by demographics (average)



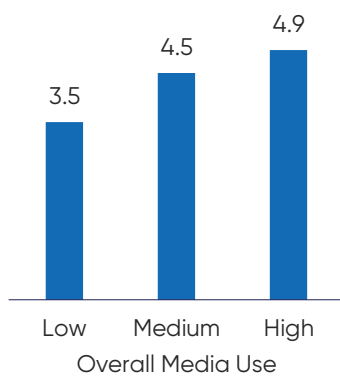
► **Figure 10.7**
 Number of tasks rated 'Quite confident' or 'Extremely confident', by demographics (%)



PEOPLE WHO CONSUME MORE MEDIA ARE MORE CONFIDENT IN THEIR OWN ABILITIES

Adults who are high media users are confident they can perform 4.9 of the tasks listed compared to 3.5 items for those who have the lowest level of media use (see **figure 10.8**).

► **Figure 10.8**
Number of 11 media tasks rated 'Quite confident' or 'Extremely confident', by overall media use (average)



SUMMARY

Overall adult Australians have a low level of confidence in their own media ability and there has been very little change since our 2021 survey. Adults are most confident they can find information they need online. However, less than half of adults are confident they can check if information they found online is true, and this drops to one quarter for adults with a low education level and for older adults. Adults are least confident about their media production abilities. Just one third are confident they can edit a photo and one in five are confident they can edit a video and post it online.

The findings show that many adults have a reduced capacity to use media to participate in society. The findings are also at odds with the value people place on media literacy abilities (see Chapter 9) and with people's interest in increasing their own media ability (see Chapter 15). This suggests that far more media literacy education and support is required to ensure adults are able to use media in their lives and to address inequities in terms of which groups are able to achieve this.

MISINFORMATION AND OFFENSIVE CONTENT

11

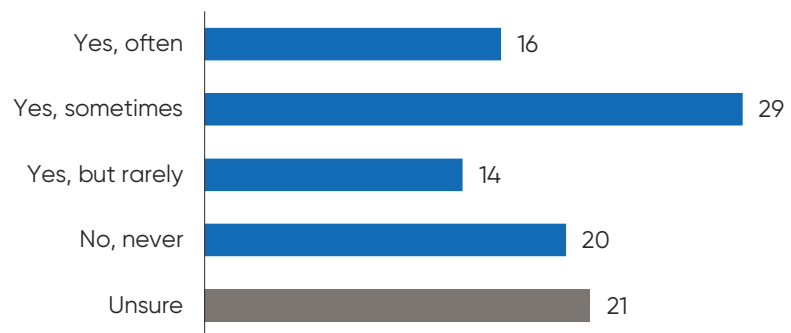
MISINFORMATION AND TRUST

- » Nearly half (45%) of adult Australians say they encountered false or misleading information
- » Those with high confidence in their media ability (68%) and high education attainment (54%) are more likely to report higher misinformation experience
- » Nearly two-thirds (60%) of those who regularly use six or more social media platforms have seen misinformation online in the past week
- » Australians are most likely to place trust in information from people they know and the lowest trust in social media.

EXPERIENCE OF ONLINE MISINFORMATION IS HIGH

Nearly half (45%) of adult Australians say they encountered false or misleading information online either sometimes or often in the past week (see **figure 11.1**). Only 20% did not see any misinformation online. One in five (21%) were unsure about whether they had seen any misinformation online.

► **Figure 11.1**
Have you seen any misleading or false information online in the past week? (%)

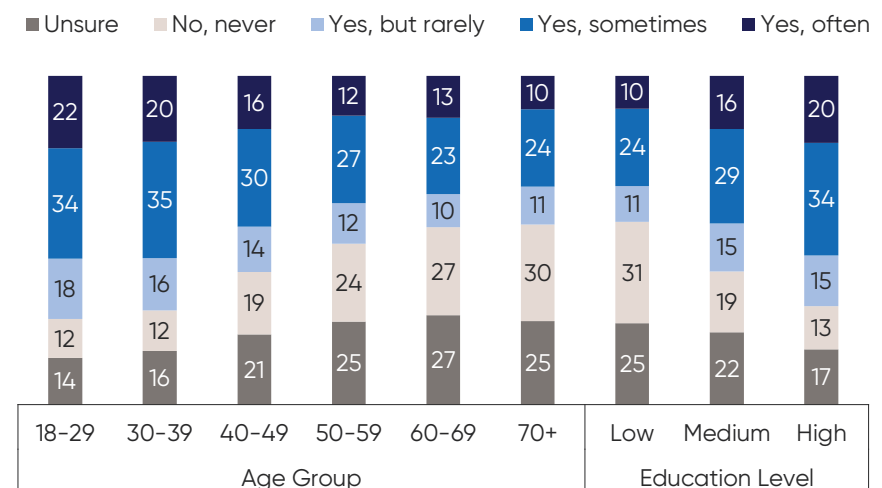


EDUCATION AND MEDIA ABILITY ARE RELATED TO MISINFORMATION EXPERIENCE

Exposure to misinformation differs by age group. Younger adults are much more likely to have experienced online misinformation in the past week. More than half (56%) of those aged 18–29 say they often or sometimes see online misinformation, whereas

only 36% of those aged 60–69 say they do. Similarly, a higher proportion of those with high levels of education attainment tend to experience misinformation (54%) compared to those with low levels of education (34%) (see **figure 11.2**).

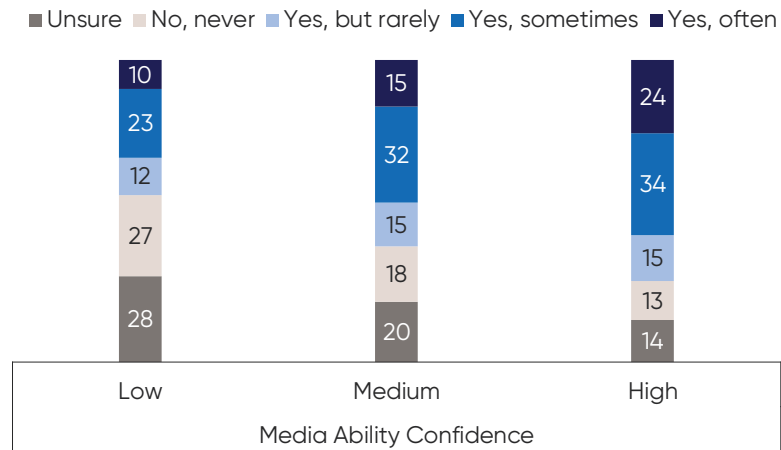
► **Figure 11.2**
Have you seen any misleading or false information online in the past week? By age and education (%)



We found that people's level of confidence in media ability is related to their experience of encountering misinformation online (**figure 11.3**). Those with high confidence in their media ability report higher misinformation experience (68%) in the past week compared to those with

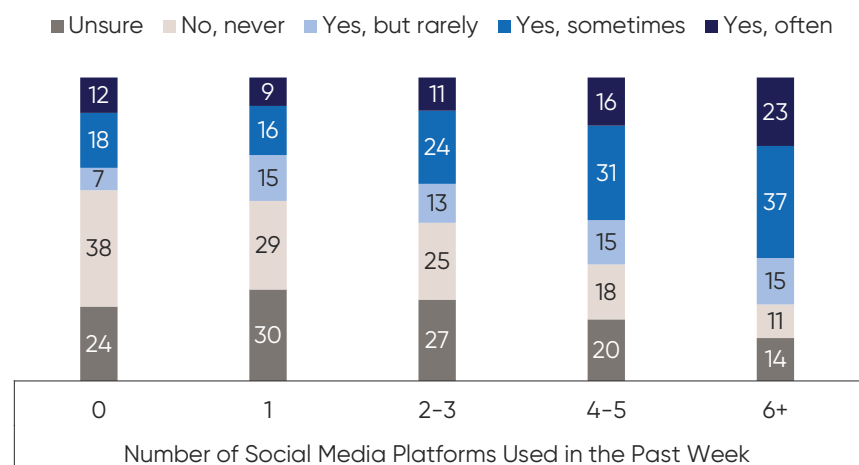
low confidence (33%). Those who have low confidence in media ability are twice as likely (28%) to say they are unsure whether they encountered misinformation or not, compared to those with high confidence (14%) (see **figure 11.3**).

► **Figure 11.3**
Have you seen any misleading or false information online in the past week? By media ability confidence (%)



The use of social media seems to be related to people's encounters with misinformation. Nearly two-thirds (60%) of those who regularly use six or more social media platforms have seen online misinformation in the past week, whereas only 25% of those who use only one social media platform say they did (see **figure 11.4**).

► **Figure 11.4**
Have you seen any misleading or false information online in the past week? By social media use (%)

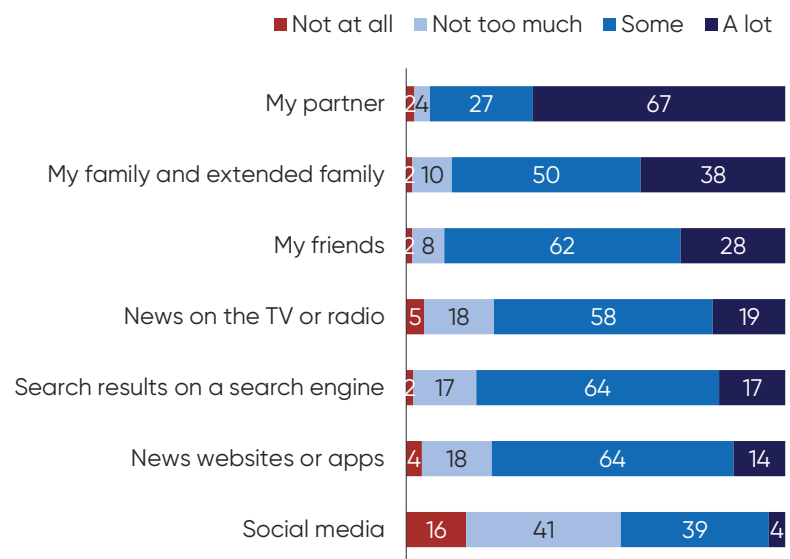


AUSTRALIANS ARE MORE LIKELY TO TRUST OTHER PEOPLE THAN THE MEDIA

We gave respondents a list of seven different sources of information and asked them about their level of trust in each of those sources. Australians are most likely to place ‘a lot’ of trust in information from their partner (67%) followed by family (36%) and friends (26%). The lowest level of trust was

for social media where 15% say they don’t trust it at all and 39% say ‘not too much’, and only 4% say they trust it ‘a lot’. News on TV/radio, news on sites/apps and search results all had similar levels of trust, with between 13–19% saying they trust each of these sources a lot (see **figure 11.5**).

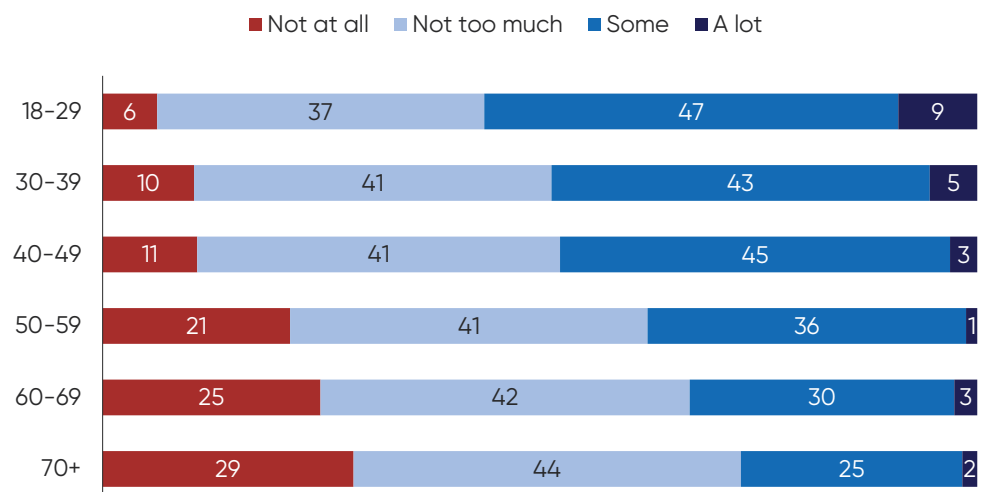
► **Figure 11.5**
How much do you trust information from the following sources? (%)



While social media are the least trusted source of information among Australians, there are generational differences (see **figure 11.6**). Younger adults (18–29) tend to have an overall higher trust in news found on social

media, compared to older cohorts. Approximately 37% of those aged 50–59 say they trust information from social media, whereas 56% of those aged 18–29 say they do.

► **Figure 11.6**
How much do you trust information from social media? By age (%)



SUMMARY

Exposure to misinformation online is high. Almost half of adult Australians report having seen misinformation online in the past week. The experience of misinformation is closely related to the types of media people use and their level of confidence in their own media ability. Heavy social media users and those who have higher confidence in their media ability are more likely to report having seen misinformation. This suggests the ability to identify misinformation is related to a person's media ability and how often they engage with online platforms. Younger generations are also more likely to have experienced misinformation online. This is mainly because they are more frequent users of online and social media platforms.

People's level of education attainment is related to whether they reported encounters with misinformation. Adults with a low level of confidence in their own media ability are much more likely to say they are unsure whether they encountered misinformation or not, compared to those with high confidence. This suggests that when people have a higher media ability this increases their ability to discern misinformation, which is supported by academic literature.¹

Generally, Australians have a low trust in information they find on online platforms, especially on social media, but a high level of trust for news they get from their family. People's trust in their close family and friends for trustworthy information and news, may be a response to the online environment where there is an overabundance of information. This is a potential problem if people are not fact-checking and verifying the information.

Many Australians are aware of and experience misinformation online. However, they lack confidence in the ability to discern trustworthy information. This gap can be addressed by providing media literacy educational programs for adults, focusing on how to find, verify and understand online media content.

¹ For example, <https://www.lse.ac.uk/business/consulting/reports/rapid-evidence-assessment-on-online-misinformation-and-media-literacy>

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OFFENSIVE CONTENT

- » More than one-third (34%) of respondents report having seen offensive content on social media in the past year that they thought should have been taken down
- » Nearly half (43%) of those exposed to offensive content on social media reported this to the social media company, which is a dramatic increase (+24%) since 2021
- » Only 15% of adults reported having seen offensive content on television that they believe should not have been broadcast
- » The most popular response (43%) for those who saw offensive content on TV was to do nothing

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ADULT MEDIA LITERACY IN 2024: AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDES, EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS

SIX IN TEN HAVE SEEN OFFENSIVE CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Most (60%) adults report having seen offensive content on social media 'sometimes' or 'often' in the past year that they thought should have been taken down. This is an increase of

9% from 2021. There has been a 5% increase in the number of people who encountered offensive content 'often' on social media since 2021 (12%). There has been a significant decrease

(-10%) in the percentage of people who say they 'never' encounter offensive content on social media: decreasing from 41% in 2021 to 31% in 2024 (see **figure 12.1**).

► **Figure 12.1**
In the last 12 months, have you seen anything offensive that you think should have been taken down on any of the social media platforms you use? By year (%)

Response	2021 (%)	2024 (%)
No, never	41	31
Yes, but rarely	25	26
Yes, sometimes	19	22
Yes, often	7	12
Unsure	7	8

Younger people are much more likely to report being exposed to offensive content on social media that they thought should have been taken down. Only 14% of those aged 18–29 say they have never seen offensive content in the past year, compared to 45% of those aged 70 and above. Education was a strong predictor

of people's experience of offensive content on social media. Those with low education were much less likely to report having seen offensive content on social media (22%) compared to those with high education (45%). Among metropolitan respondents, 39% have seen offensive content, while only 29% of regional Australians

have seen offensive content on social media. CALD respondents report a much higher level of exposure to offensive content that they believe should have been taken down (52%) compared to non-CALD (33%) (see **figure 12.2**). First Nations respondents also report a much higher exposure to offensive content (49%).

► **Figure 12.2**
In the last 12 months, have you seen anything offensive that you think should have been taken down on any of the social media platforms you use? By demographics (%)

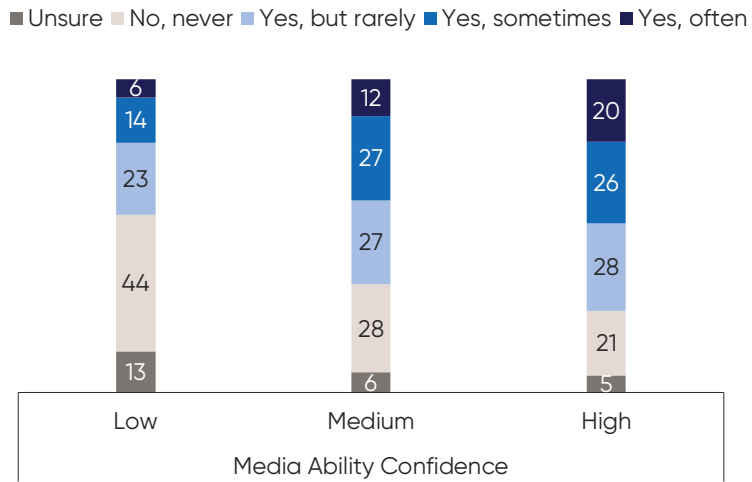
Demographic	Unsure	No, never	Yes, but rarely	Yes, sometimes	Yes, often
Men	8	33	26	21	12
Women	9	30	26	24	12
18-29	5	14	30	29	21
30-39	4	22	28	32	14
40-49	9	28	27	23	12
50-59	11	38	22	19	10
60-69	11	45	24	13	7
70+	12	49	22	12	5
Low Education	11	45	22	14	8
Medium Education	9	29	27	22	13
High Education	6	24	27	30	13
Low Income	11	40	22	16	12
Medium Income	7	27	27	25	14
High Income	5	27	30	27	11
Metropolitan	8	29	25	26	13
Major Regional	7	32	27	22	12
Regional	11	33	27	17	12
CALD	7	23	22	32	16
Non-CALD	8	33	27	21	11
First Nations	6	24	21	24	25
Non-Indigenous	9	31	26	23	12
Living with a Disability - Yes	12	32	23	15	17
Living with a Disability - No	8	31	26	24	11

Confidence in media ability is strongly related to people's experience of offensive social media content. Those with high confidence report a much

higher exposure (46%) than those with low confidence (20%) (see **figure 12.3**).

► **Figure 12.3**

In the last 12 months, have you seen anything offensive that you think should have been taken down on any of the social media platforms you use? By media ability confidence (%)



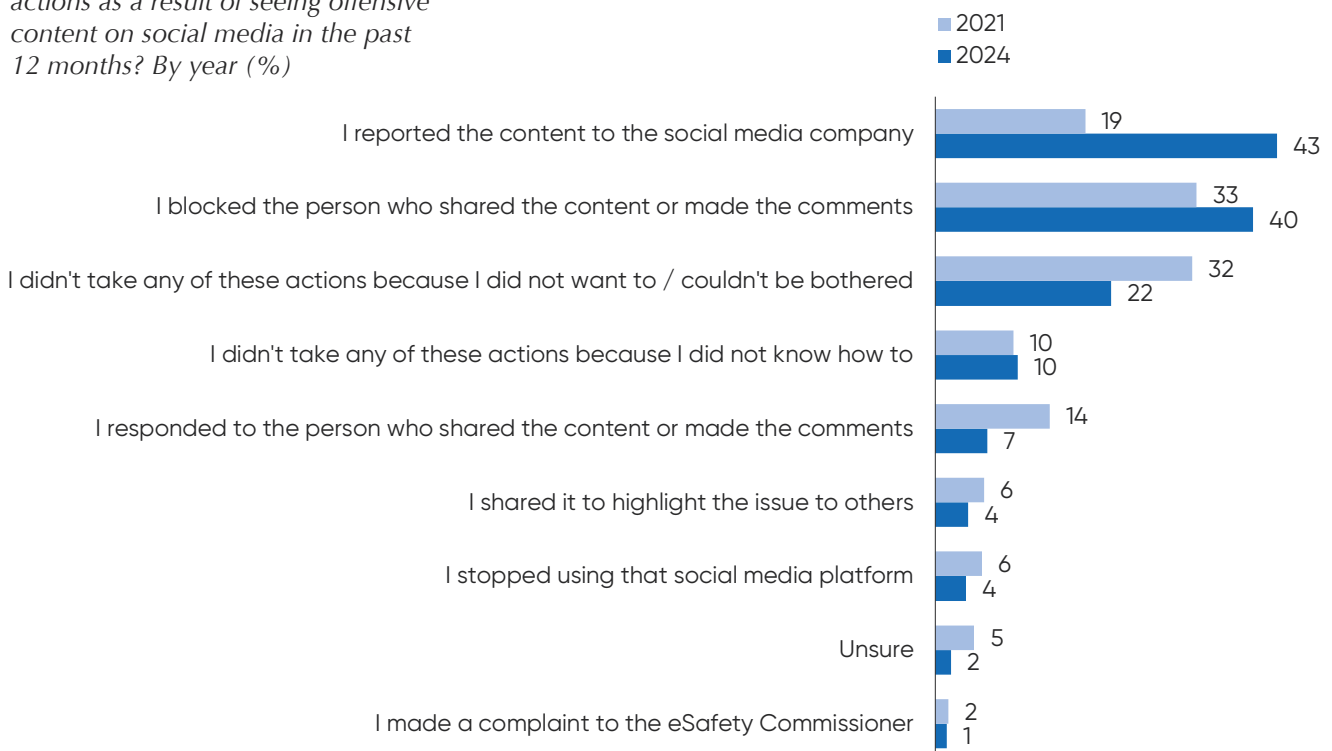
We asked people who experienced offensive content on social media, if they have taken any action afterwards. Nearly half (43%) say they reported it to the social media company, which is a dramatic increase since 2021, when only 19% reported it. A similar number

of people (40%) blocked the person who posted the content. However, 22% did not take any action because they couldn't be bothered, but this is a 10% point drop since 2021. One in ten say they did not take any action because they did not know how, which

remains unchanged since 2021. Only 1% made a complaint to the e-Safety Commissioner. The proportion of people who responded to the person directly halved since 2021 (14% to 7%) (see **figure 12.4**).

► **Figure 12.4**

Did you take any of the following actions as a result of seeing offensive content on social media in the past 12 months? By year (%)



N = 2330 (those who report seeing offensive content)

WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MORE PROACTIVE IN REPORTING OFFENSIVE CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

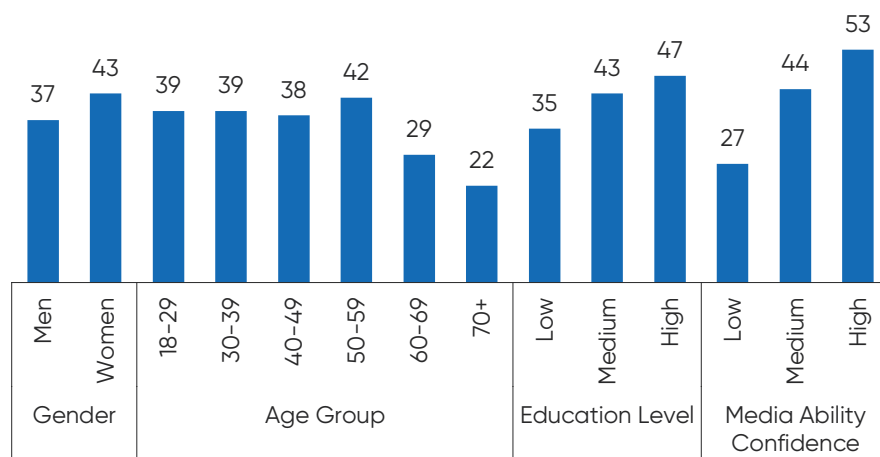
Women (49%), young people aged 18–29 (51%) and those with high education (47%) are much more likely to report offensive content to social media companies compared to men (37%), older people (22% of those aged 70+), and those with low education (35%) (see **figure 12.5**). Men are also more likely to say they

took no action because they couldn't be bothered (26%) compared to women (19%). However, men are slightly more likely than women to directly respond to the person who posted the material (8% versus 5%). Older groups, aged 60 and over, are much more likely (21%) to report not taking any action because they

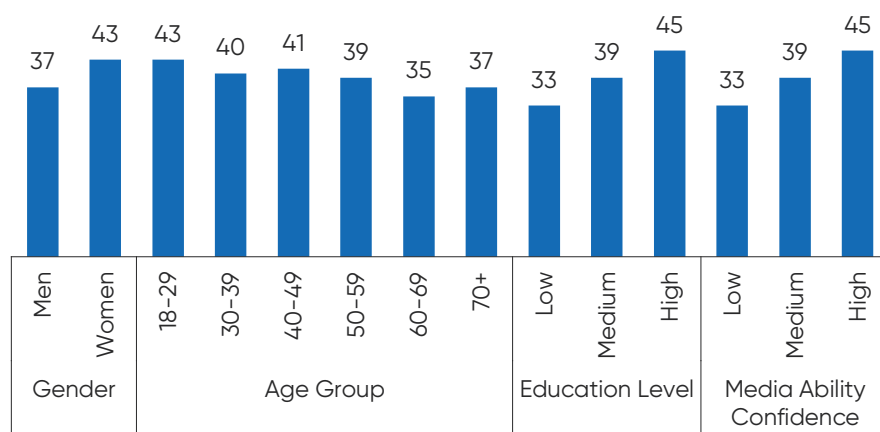
didn't know how to when compared to younger groups (for example 6% for 18–29 year olds). Those with high levels of confidence in their media ability (53%) are much more likely to report to the social media company than those with low levels of confidence (27%).

► **Figure 12.5**
Actions taken after seeing offensive content on social media, by gender, age, education level and media ability confidence (%)

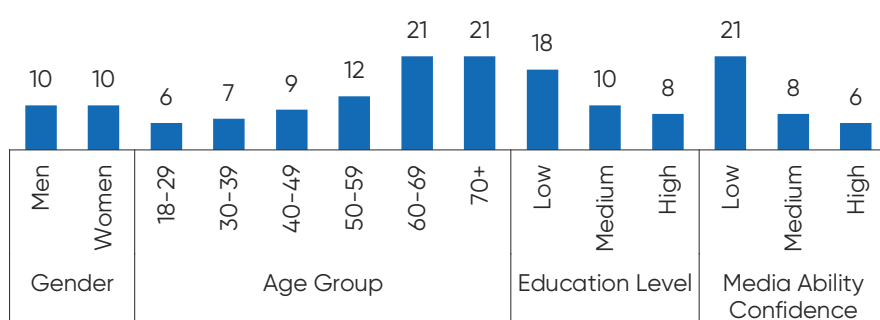
(a) I reported the content to the social media company



(b) I blocked the person who shared the content or made the comments



(c) I didn't take any of these actions because I did not know how to



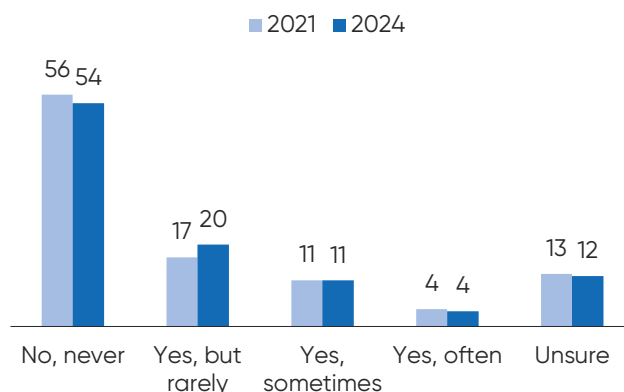
N = 2330 (those who report seeing offensive content)

FEWER PEOPLE EXPERIENCE OFFENSIVE CONTENT ON TV COMPARED TO SOCIAL MEDIA

In contrast to the high proportion of people seeing offensive content on social media, only 15% of adults report having seen offensive content on television that people believe should not have been broadcast, of which

only 4% reported seeing this 'often'. More than half (54%) of Australians have never seen offensive content on TV. There were no significant changes between 2021 and 2024 (see **figure 12.6**).

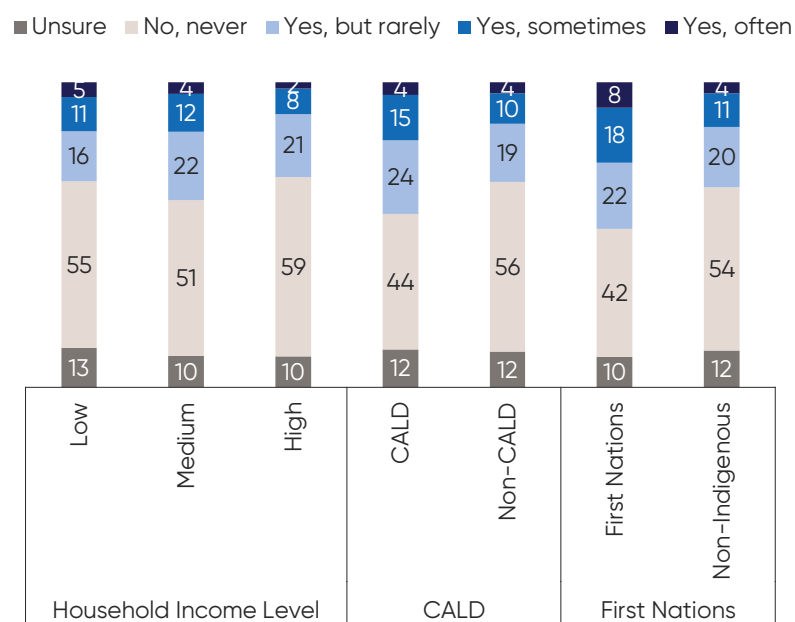
► **Figure 12.6**
In the past 12 months, have you seen anything offensive that you think should not have been broadcast on television (free to air or pay television only)? By year (%)



However, there are differences across demographics. People with a low level of household income (16%) are more likely to say they have seen offensive content than those in high income households (10%). First Nations respondents were more likely

to report having seen offensive TV content (26%) than non-Indigenous Australians (15%). Those from CALD backgrounds were also more likely to report having seen offensive TV content (20%) (see **figure 12.7**).

► **Figure 12.7**
In the past 12 months, have you seen anything offensive that you think should not have been broadcast on television (free to air or pay television only)? By household income level, CALD and First Nations (%)



N = 1,220 (those who reported having seen offensive content)

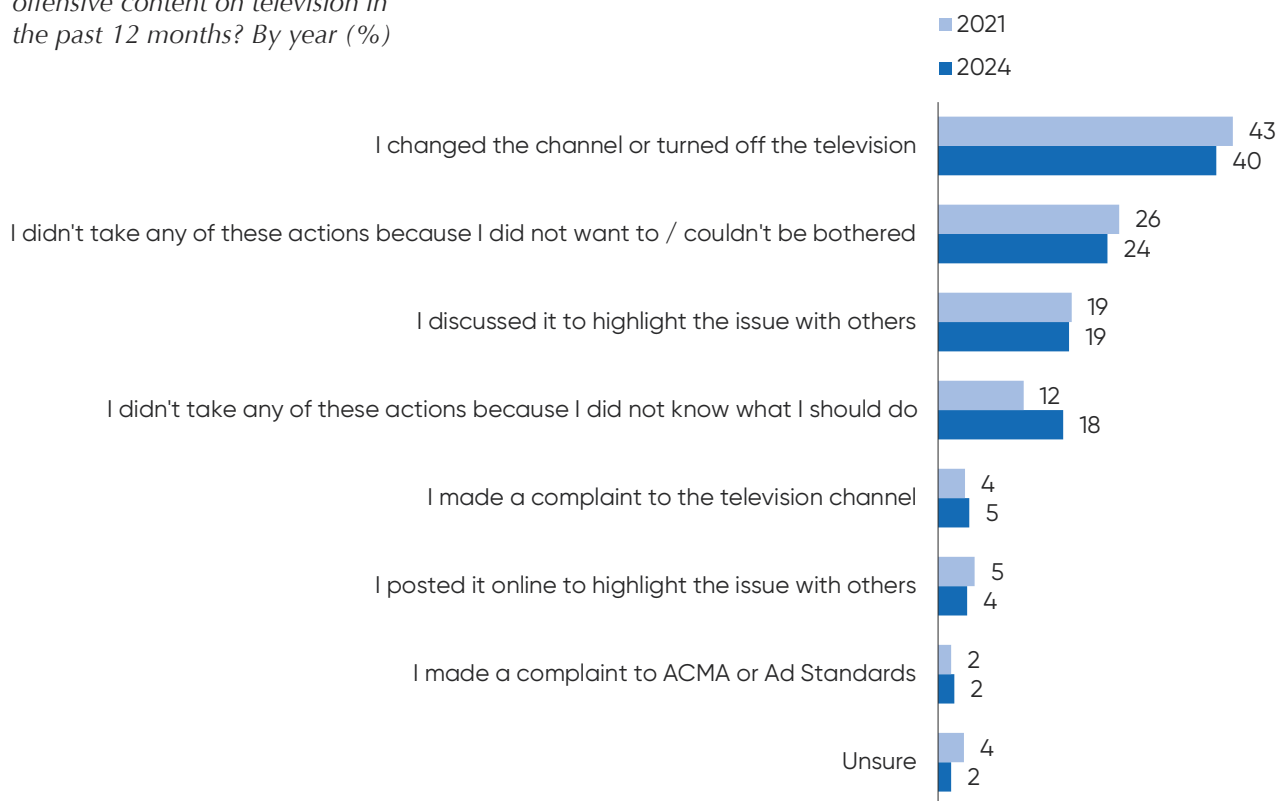
For those who did encounter offensive content on TV, the most common response was to switch channels or turn off the TV; 40% say they have done so. Almost one quarter (24%) say they didn't

do anything because they couldn't be bothered, but many adults did nothing because they didn't know how to (18%). One in five (19%) discussed the content with others to highlight the issue. Only 2% made

a complaint to ACMA. There was an increase in the number of people who did not take action because they didn't know how (12% in 2021 vs 18% in 2024) (see **figure 12.8**).

► **Figure 12.8**

Did you take any of the following actions as a result of seeing this offensive content on television in the past 12 months? By year (%)



N = 1,220 (respondents who reported having seeing offensive content on television)

Responses to offensive content on TV differed by gender, education and income (see **figure 12.9**). Women are more likely to change channels or turn off the TV (43%) than men (37%). Men are more likely to say they didn't take action because they couldn't be bothered (30%) compared to women (19%). However, women are more likely to say they didn't take action because they didn't know how (22% versus 14% for men 14%). Those with high education are more likely to discuss it with others to highlight the issue (23%) compared to those with low education (10%). Those with low

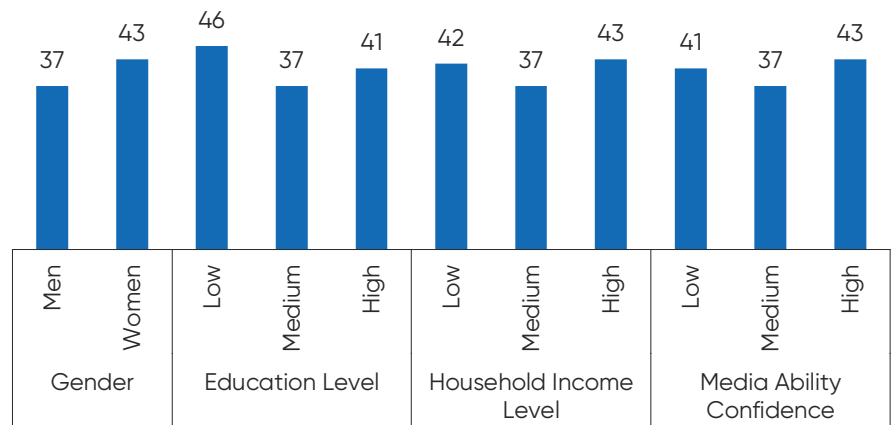
household incomes are more likely to choose to change channels or turn off the TV (44%), whereas only 34% of those with high household incomes say they do this.

Those with high levels of confidence in their media ability are less likely to say they didn't take action because they don't know how (13% versus 19% for those with low confidence).

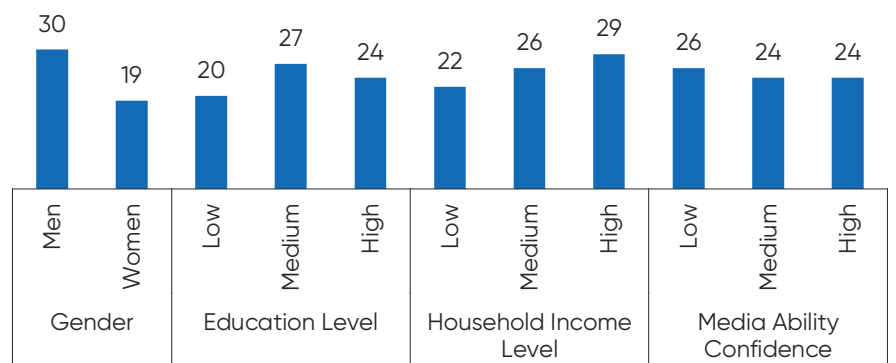
► **Figure 12.9**

Actions taken after seeing offensive content on television,
by gender, education, household income and media ability confidence (%)

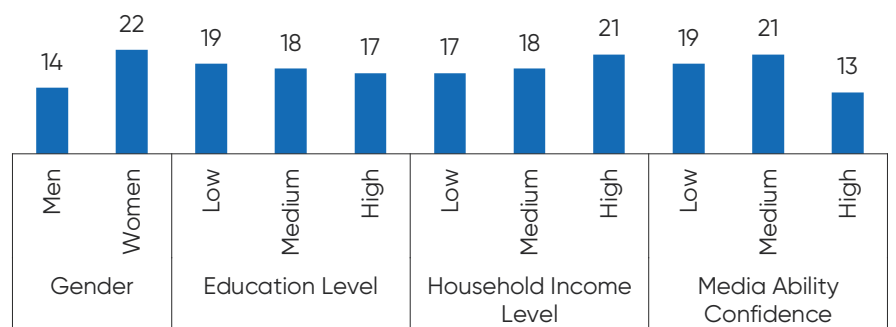
(a) I changed the channel or
turned off the television



(b) I didn't take any of these
actions because I did not want to /
couldn't be bothered



(c) I didn't take any of these
actions because I did not know
what I should do



N = 1,220 (respondents who reported having seeing offensive content on television)

SUMMARY

First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) respondents report a much higher experience of offensive content on both social media and television, when compared to other Australians. This could mean that these groups are more frequently subjected to offensive content, or that they are more aware of—and impacted by—these issues.

There is a strong correlation between media ability and the identification of offensive content on social media. Media literacy is also related to how people react to offensive content on social media. Adults with a higher level of media ability are much more likely to report this content to the social media platform where they encountered this content. This indicates the role of media literacy in helping people to identify and respond to problematic information online. The findings show that some groups in the population, such as older Australians, may benefit from media literacy education to develop skills so they know how they can respond to offensive content on social media.

Overall, far fewer people report seeing offensive content on TV compared to social media. Those who did report seeing offensive content on TV took a less proactive approach, compared to the responses people had to offensive content on social media. This more passive response is likely to be related to a lack of media literacy. Those who report high confidence in their media ability are less likely to say they did nothing compared to those with low media ability when it comes to offensive TV content.

Compared to TV viewers, people are taking more proactive actions when they encounter offensive content on social media by reporting this content to the platform or responding to the person who posted it. However, the number of people saying they don't know how to respond to offensive content on social media remains unchanged since 2021. The number of people who don't know how to report offensive content on TV has increased since 2021. This highlights the need for media literacy education to show Australians how they can report and respond to offensive content when they believe it is important and appropriate to do so.

ATTITUDES TOWARD ADDRESSING MEDIA ISSUES

- » The vast majority (80%) of Australians say the spread of misinformation on social media needs to be addressed in Australia, while 12% are unsure
- » Three quarters (73%) of adults believe that data privacy online is an issue that needs to be addressed, while 18% are unsure
- » Four in ten (42%) Australians agree that racially insensitive content on TV is an issue that needs to be addressed, while a further 24% say they are unsure

We asked respondents about three current issues relating to the media, whether they think these issues need to be addressed and if so, what measures are needed to address the issues.

FOUR IN FIVE AUSTRALIANS WANT TO SEE ACTION TO MITIGATE MISINFORMATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

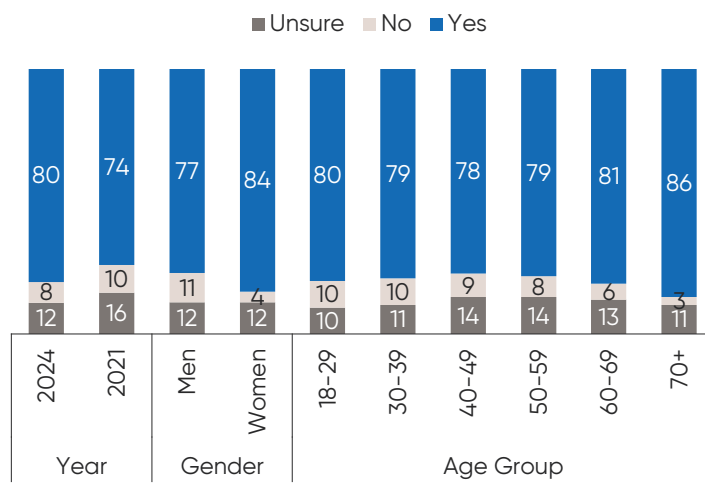
The vast majority (80%) of Australians say the spread of misinformation on social media needs to be addressed in Australia. This is a 6% increase in the number of people agreeing this is required since 2021.

Only 8% say it is not something that needs to be addressed and 12% are unsure (see **figure 13.1**).

There are significant differences in views on this issue among different

demographics. Men are more than twice as likely than women to say it is not an issue (11% versus 4%). Younger people are also more likely to think this is not an issue: 10% for 18–29 versus 3% for 70+ 3%).

► **Figure 13.1**
Social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X (Twitter)) are sometimes associated with the spread of misinformation (misleading or false information). Do you think this is an issue that needs to be addressed in Australia? By year, gender and age.

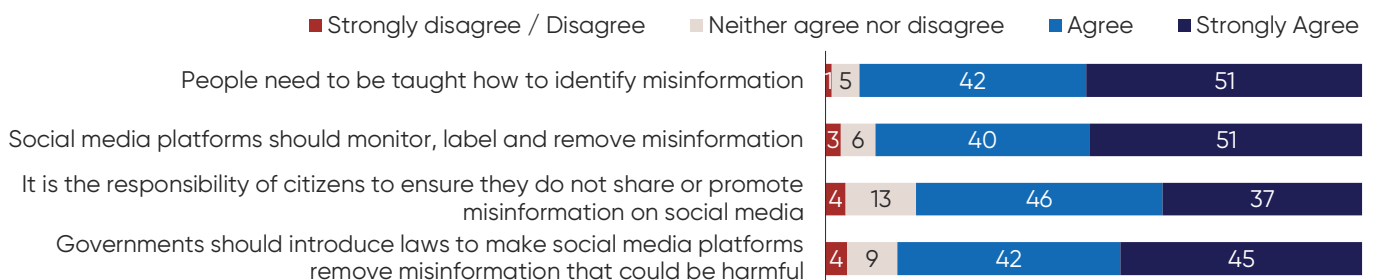


We asked adults who think the issue of misinformation on social media is something that needs to be addressed, which measures are needed (see **figure 13.2**). Almost all of these adults (94%) agree that people need to be taught how to identify misinformation. The vast majority (91%) also think that social media platforms should monitor, label and remove misinformation.

On this, older Australians are much more likely to ‘strongly’ agree (62% for 60+ versus 37% for 18–29). There is a high consensus (87%) that governments should introduce laws to make social media platforms remove misinformation that could be harmful. Again, older adults aged 60–69 years are more likely (59%) to be strongly in favour than younger adults aged

18–29 (27%). Similarly, 83% agree that it is the responsibility of citizens to ensure they do not share or promote misinformation on social media. Older Australians aged 60–69 are much more likely (44%) to strongly agree with this method than younger adults aged 18–29 (26%) (see **figure 13.3**).

► **Figure 13.2**
Do you agree that the following measures are needed to address the issue of misinformation on social media? (%)

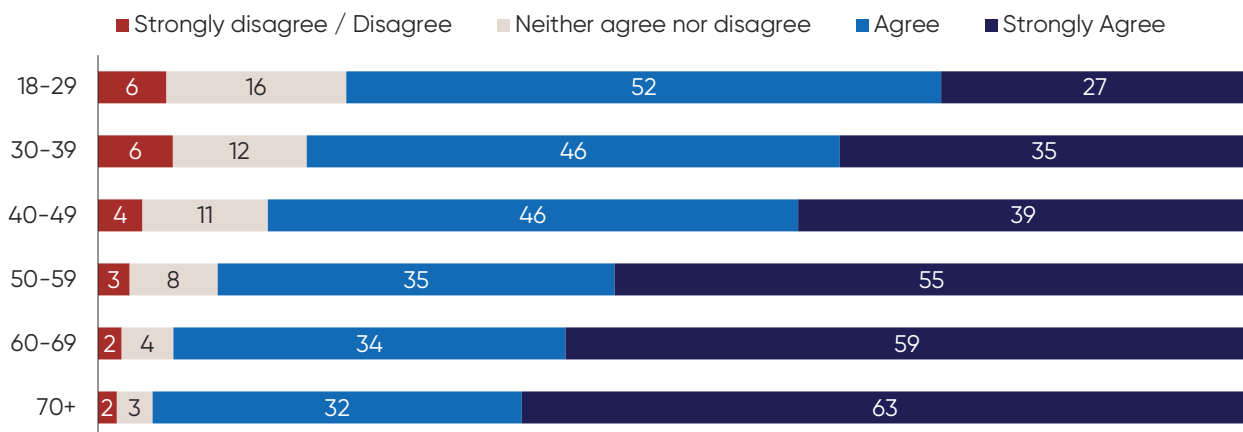


N = 3,094 (respondents who answered ‘Yes’ that action is needed to address this issue)

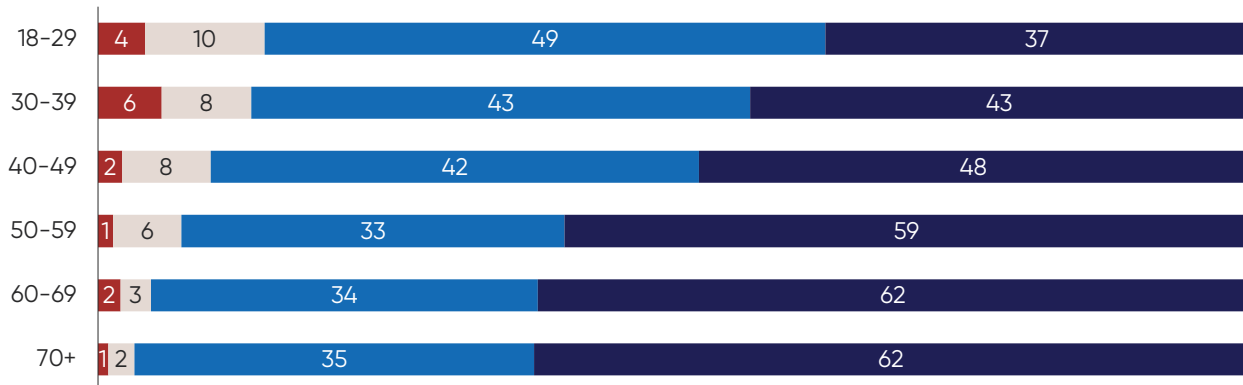
► **Figure 13.3**

Do you agree that the following measures are needed to address the issue of misinformation on social media? By age (%)

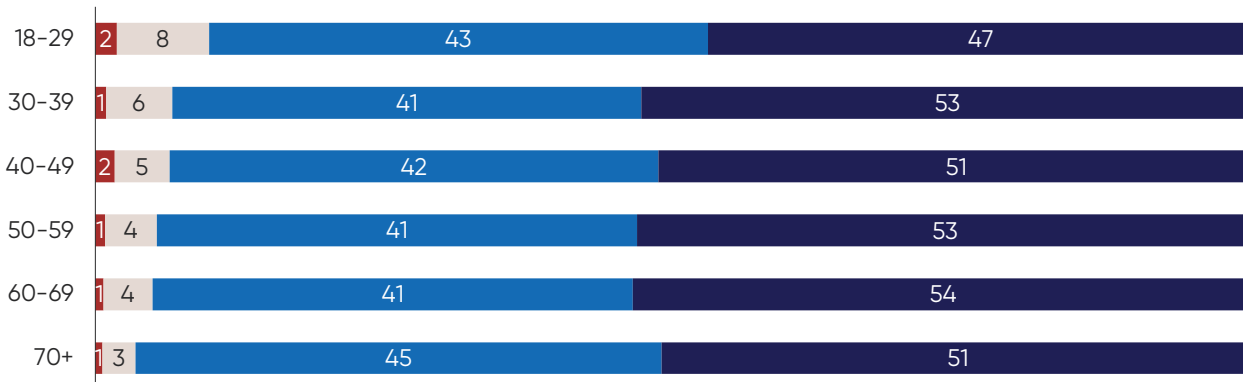
(a) Governments should introduce laws to make social media platforms remove misinformation that could be harmful



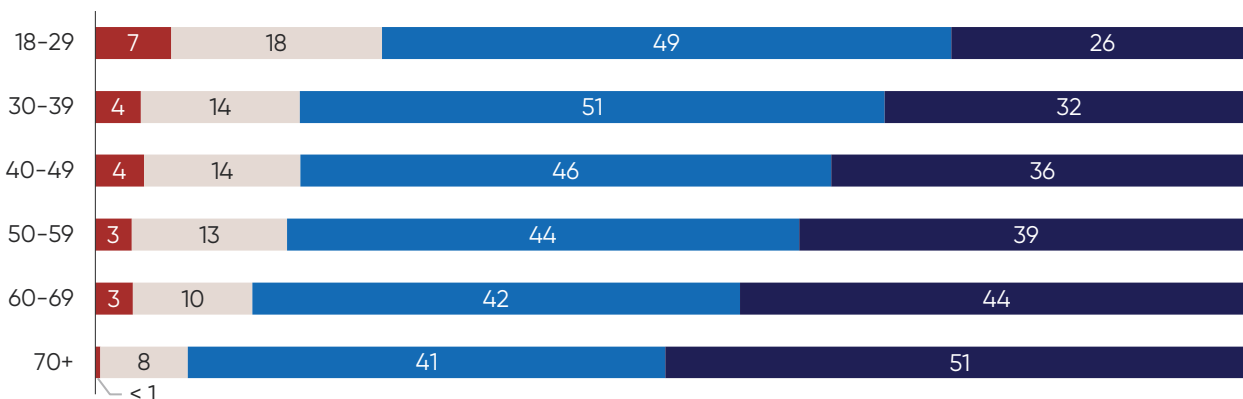
(b) Social media platforms should monitor, label and remove misinformation



(c) People need to be taught how to identify misinformation



(d) It is the responsibility of citizens to ensure they do not share or promote misinformation on social media



N = 3,094 (respondents who answered 'Yes' that action is needed to address this issue)

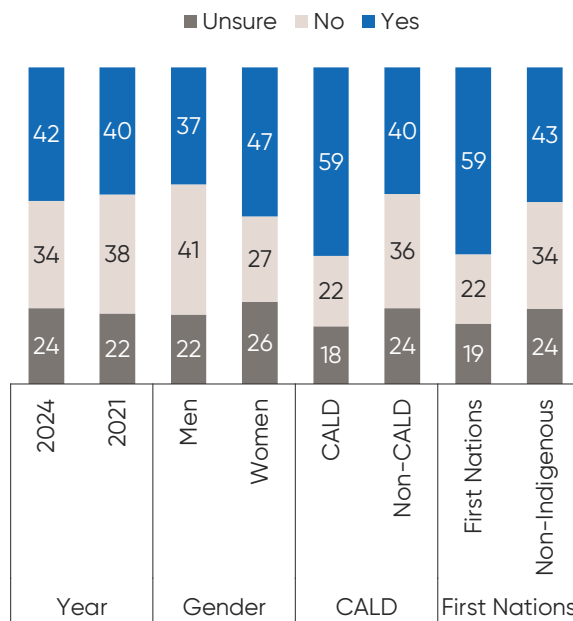
MORE THAN HALF OF CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE AUSTRALIANS HAVE SEEN OFFENSIVE CONTENT ON TV

Compared to the spread of misinformation, a much smaller proportion of Australians agree that racially insensitive content on TV is an issue that needs to be addressed (42%). Of those who reported seeing racially insensitive content on television, one-third (34%) disagree

that it is an issue to be addressed and one-quarter (24%) of respondents say they are unsure, indicating a disagreement around this issue among Australians. There were no significant changes since 2021 (see **figure 13.4**).

However, we found significant differences between different groups. Men (41%) are more likely to say this is not an issue compared to women (27%). On the other hand, most CALD Australians think it is an issue (59%), as do most First Nations respondents (59%).

► **Figure 13.4**
Television programs sometimes receive complaints for being racist or racially insensitive. Do you think this is an issue that needs to be addressed in Australia? By year, gender, CALD and First Nations.

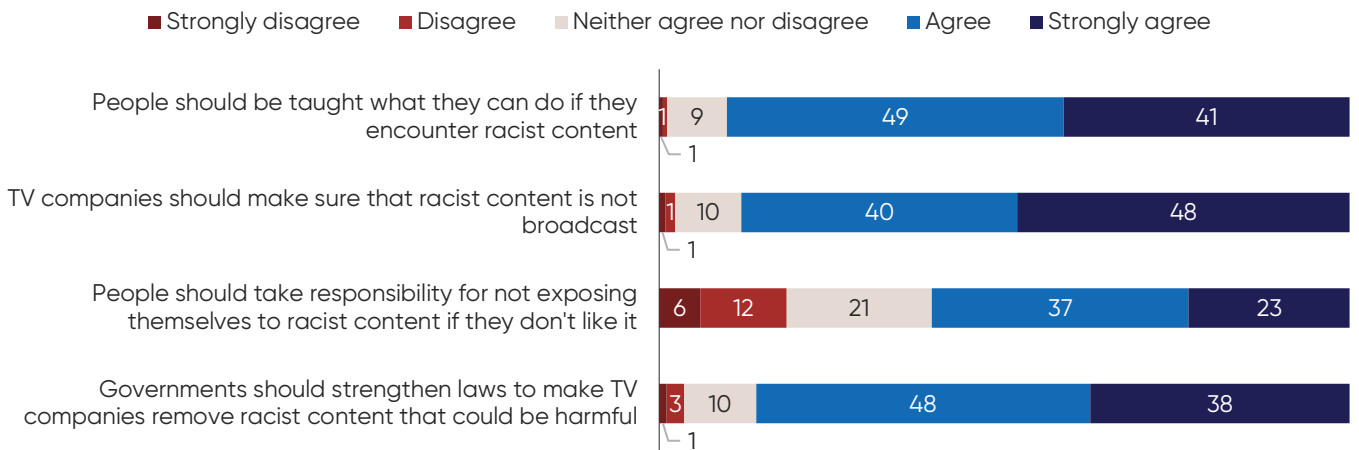


For those who think racially insensitive content on television is something that needs to be addressed, we asked about the measures that are needed (see **figure 13.5**). Some 90% of these respondents said that people should be taught what they can do if they encounter racist content. Those with high confidence in their media ability are more likely to strongly agree (53%) this measure is needed compared to those with low confidence (34%).

A similar proportion (88%) think that 'TV companies should make sure that racially insensitive content is not broadcast' and 86% agree that governments should strengthen

laws to make TV companies remove racist content that could be harmful. Women are more likely to strongly agree (40%) with this measure than men (34%). Fewer people agreed that it is the audiences' responsibility: 61% agree that people should take responsibility for not exposing themselves to racist content if they don't like it. This suggests strong support for the idea that governments and media companies could do more to resolve this issue, among those who have encountered racially insensitive content on TV and believe it is an issue.

► **Figure 13.5**
Do you agree that the following measures are needed to address the issue of racist or racially insensitive content on television? (%)



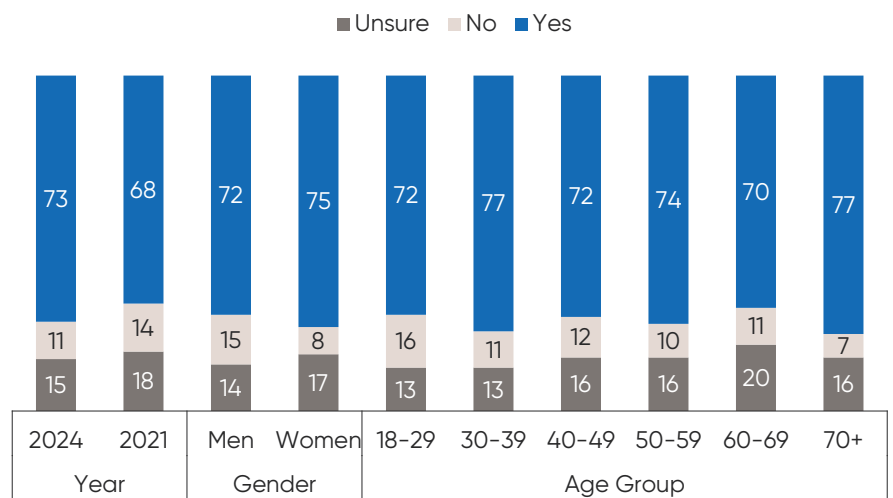
N = 1,626 (respondents who answered 'Yes' that action is needed to address this issue)

INCREASE IN CONCERN ABOUT ONLINE DATA PRIVACY AMONG AUSTRALIANS

Three quarters (73%) of adults believe that data privacy online is an issue that needs to be addressed (see **figure 13.6**). Only 11% disagree and 15% are unsure. There has been an increase since 2021 (+5%) (see **figure**

13.5). Men (15%) are more likely to think this is not an issue than women (8%). Younger adults are more likely to think this is not an issue: 16% for 18–29 year olds compared to 11% for older adults aged 60–69.

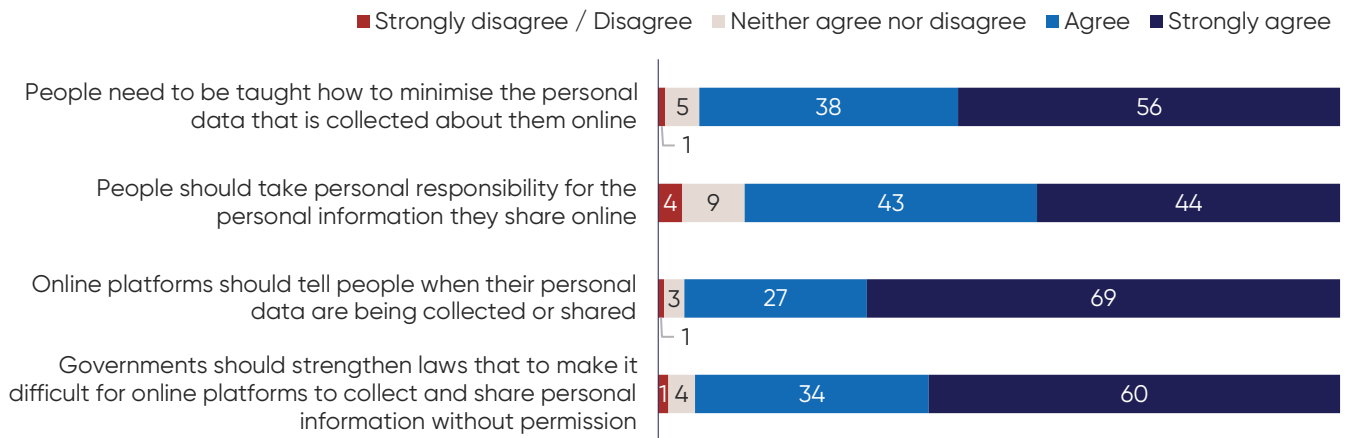
► **Figure 13.6**
Companies collect and share online data about people that may be considered sensitive or may violate people's privacy. Do you think this is an issue that needs to be addressed in Australia? By year (%)



Almost everyone (96%) who believes the issue of data privacy needs to be addressed agrees that online platforms should tell people when their personal data are being collected or shared (see **figure 13.7**). Three in four women (73%) strongly agree with this statement compared to only 66% of men. Older Australians aged 60–69 are more likely to strongly support this statement (74%) than younger adults aged 18–29 (63%). The vast majority (95%) of respondents who believe this is an issue also agree that governments should strengthen laws that make it difficult for online platforms to collect and share personal information without permission. Women are more likely to strongly agree with this (64%)

than men (56%). Again, older adults are more likely to strongly agree (age 60–69, 66%) than younger adults (age 18–29, 51%). More than nine out of ten (94%) of this cohort agree that people need to be taught how to minimise the personal data that is collected about them online. Female respondents (60%) and older adults aged 70+ (61%) are more likely to show strong support compared to men (52%). Eight in ten (87%) agree that people should take personal responsibility for the personal information they share online. Older adults aged 60–69 years are more likely to strongly agree (60%) with this statement than younger adults aged 18–29 (33%).

► **Figure 13.7**
Do you agree that the following measures are needed to address the issue of online data privacy? (%)



N = 2,829 (respondents who answered 'Yes' that action is needed to address this issue)

SUMMARY

Of the three issues we presented—misinformation on social media, offensive content on television and data privacy online—Australians think that the spread of misinformation is the most critical issue to be addressed in Australia, closely followed by data privacy. However, on the issue of data privacy, nearly one in five are unsure about it, suggesting that some people may not have enough knowledge or awareness on this topic.

In contrast, far fewer people believe racially offensive content on TV is an issue that needs to be addressed and many say they are unsure, indicating Australians may not feel sufficiently informed to form an opinion on this. This still remains an important issue for four in ten adult Australians, while six in ten CALD and First Nations respondents believe this issue needs to be addressed.

For those that believe each of these three issues need to be addressed, the vast majority support a multi-pronged approach: through government intervention, self-regulation of companies, media literacy support and individual efforts. This shows that rather than believing there is one solution to these problems, Australians are in favour of the whole of society responding to these issues. Media literacy can further support public discussion about these important issues by raising awareness about how these issues impact different groups of Australians and by highlighting opportunities and mechanisms for addressing the issues.

MEDIA LITERACY AND LEARNING



ACCESS TO MEDIA LITERACY SUPPORT

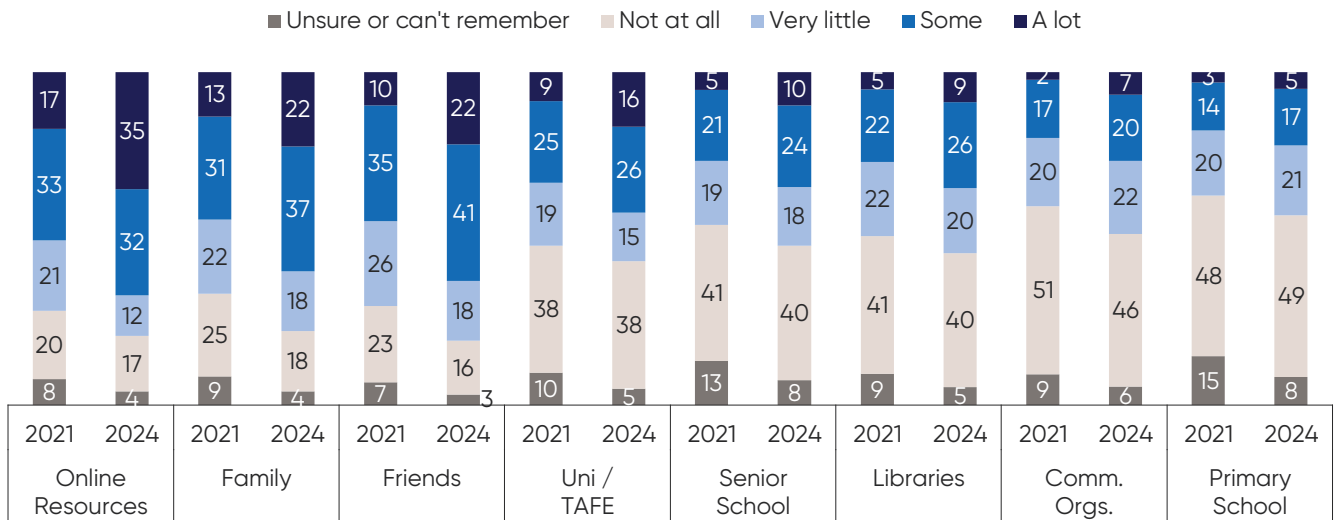
- » The most popular source of support adults have used to help them use media are online resources (67%), closely followed by friends (63%) and family (59%)
- » Those groups who are categorised as ‘high’ seekers of support are more likely to have a high level of confidence in their own media abilities
- » First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse respondents are more likely to seek support from libraries and community organisations

PEOPLE RELY ON ONLINE RESOURCES WHEN THEY NEED SUPPORT

We asked Australians if they had received any support to help them access, use, understand or create media across their lifetime. The most common source of support is online resources (67%, 'some' or 'a lot'), followed by friends (63%), and family (59%). The responses show that people are less likely to have received support from institutional or community-based resources. Of the formal sources of support we listed, tertiary institutions (university or TAFE) were reported to be of assistance to 42% of respondents.

Fewer people said that their schooling experience supported their media access, use or knowledge, with 34% saying that secondary school was a source of help, and only 22% saying that primary school supported them, though this was much higher for younger adults (38% for those aged 18–29 years). Meanwhile, just over one third (35%) said that they had used libraries for media support, and 27% said that community organisations had provided help at some stage in their lives (see **figure 14.1**).

► **Figure 14.1**
Across your lifetime, have any of the following provided you with support to help you access, use, understand and/or create media? By year (%)



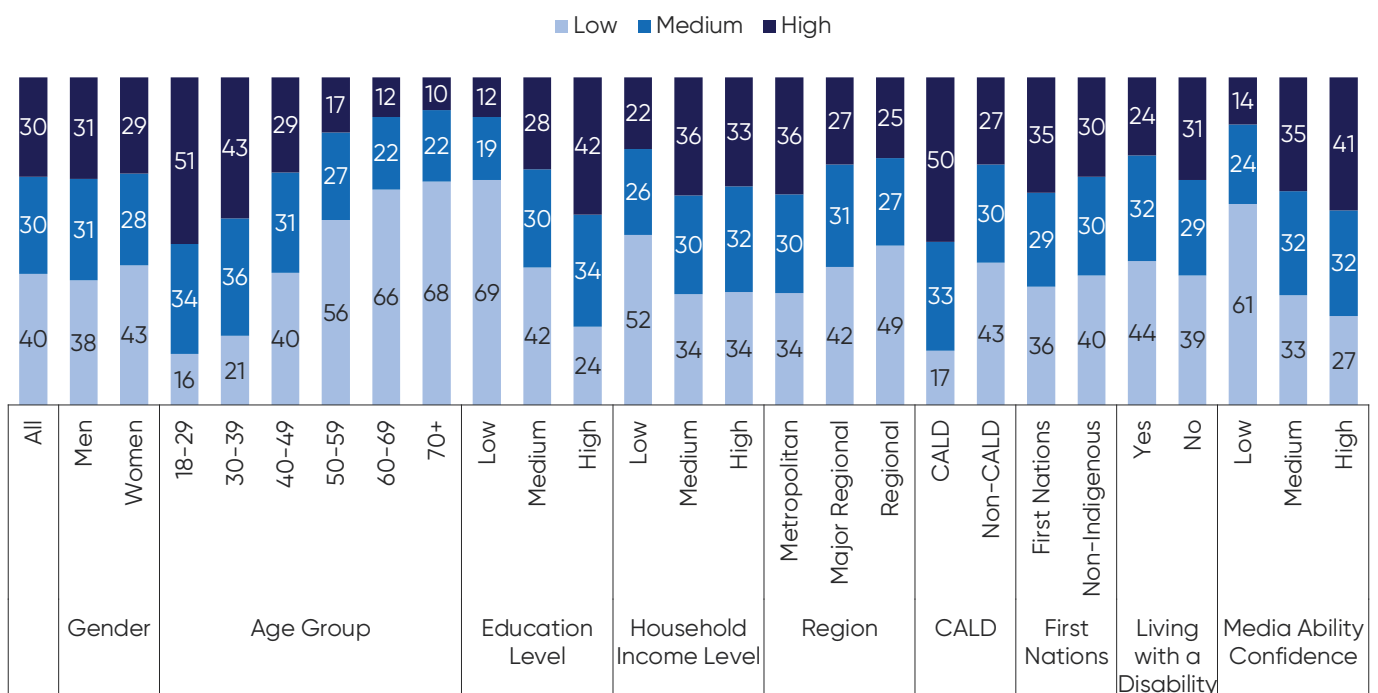
There has been a large increase in people reporting that they turn to online resources 'a lot' to support their media literacy since 2021 (35%, +18%). There were also significant increases in the number of people saying they get 'some' or 'a lot' of support from family (+15%) and from friends (+18%).

YOUNGER AND HIGHLY EDUCATED SEEK MORE SUPPORT

When we group people’s level of support-seeking into ‘low’, ‘medium’ and ‘high’, some specific trends can be observed. Younger people are much more likely to report accessing support than older adults. Of those aged 18–29, 51% are in the ‘high’ category for seeking support, while only 10% of those aged 70 and over are in the ‘high’ category. Education levels also play an important role, with highly educated adults much more likely to seek support (42% in the ‘high’ category), than those with a low level of education (just 12% in the ‘high’ category). Adult Australians living with a disability are less likely to be in the ‘high’ group for seeking support (24%) compared to people who report no disability (31%). Location plays a moderate role. Of those adults living in metropolitan areas, 36% are in the ‘high’ support-seeking group, while fewer adults living in regional areas are in this group (25%).

When we examine the association of support-seeking with the respondents’ media ability we see significant differences between those with low and high confidence in their media ability. Only 14% of those with low confidence are in the high support-seeking group, compared to 41% with high confidence. There is a similar association between media literacy support-seeking and media use. Heavy media users are much more likely to be in the high support-seeking group than light or infrequent media users (43% compared to 20%) (see **figure 14.2**).

► **Figure 14.2**
Level of support-seeking, by demographics and media ability confidence (%)

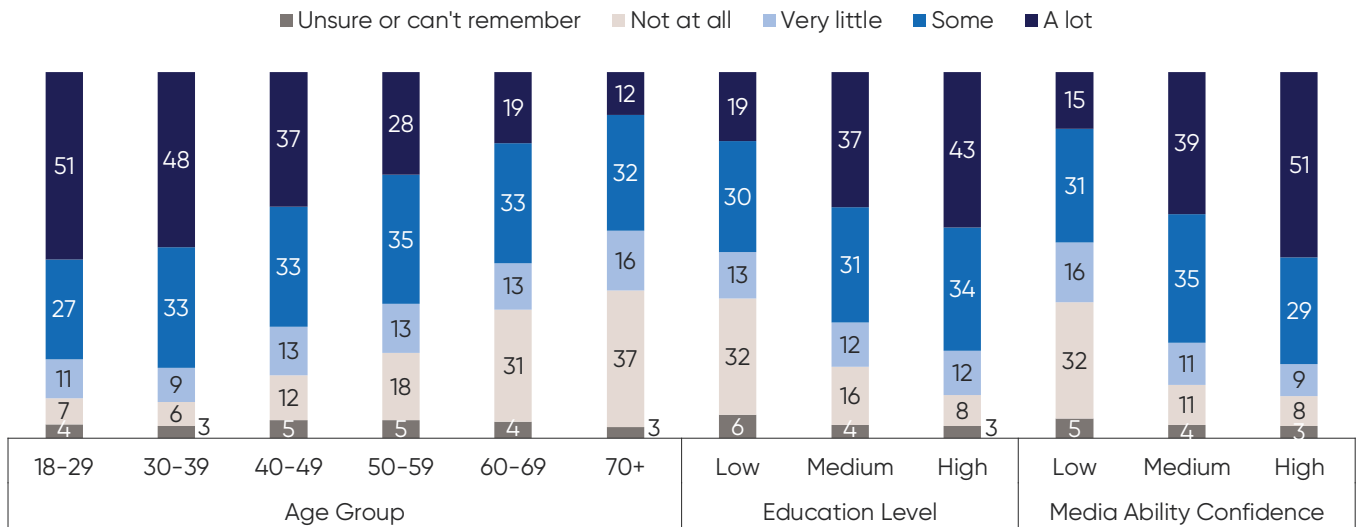


THOSE WITH HIGH CONFIDENCE IN THEIR MEDIA ABILITY SEEK SUPPORT FROM ONLINE RESOURCES

When we look more closely at who is using online resources to seek support ‘a lot’, we note a strong alignment to age and education level. Of those aged 18–29, 51% use online resources ‘a lot’ while this is only the case for 12% of respondents aged 70+. In addition, those with a high level of education are much more likely to use online resources a lot (43%) compared to those with a low level of education (19%).

People who have a high level of confidence in their media ability are much more likely to use online resources ‘a lot’ for support (51%) compared to those with low media literacy confidence (15%). In addition, the results show that those with high media usage use online resources ‘a lot’ for support (43%) compared to those with low media usage (28%) (see **figure 14.3**).

► **Figure 14.3**
Level of support from online resources, by age, education level and media ability confidence (%)

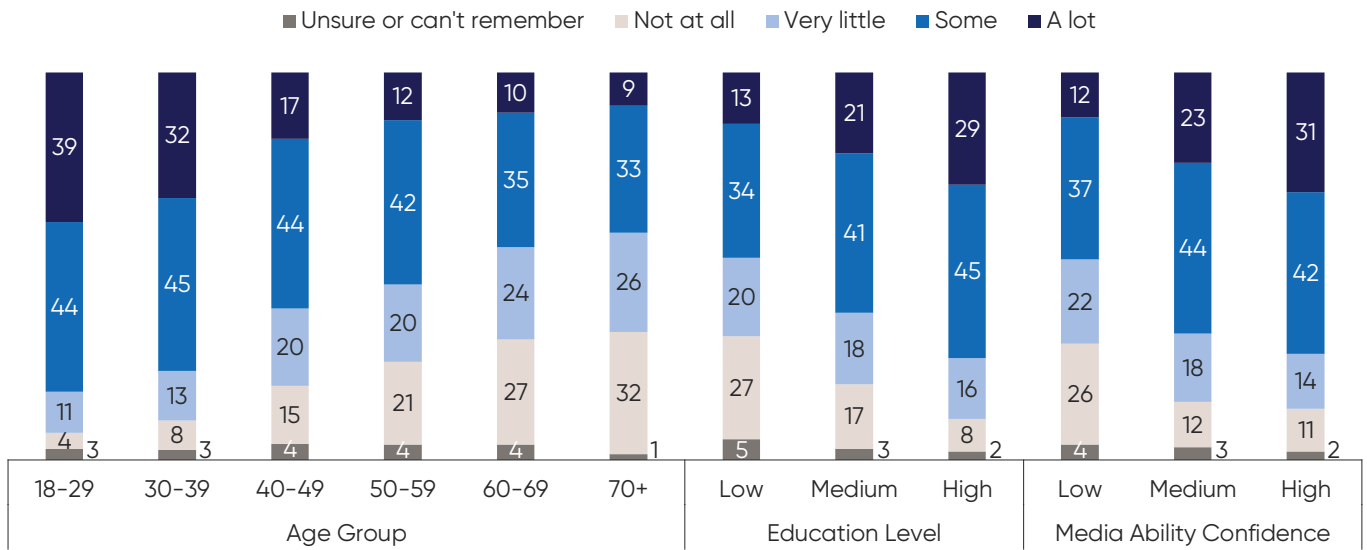


YOUNGER PEOPLE SEEK SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS

There are distinct differences between younger and older adults when it comes to seeking support from friends. Of the 18–29 age group, 39% seek support from friends ‘a lot’ while only 9% of those aged 70 and above do this. There is also a significant alignment to educational level, with highly educated people turning to friends ‘a lot’ (29%), compared to those with a low level

of education (13%). Those living in metropolitan areas turn to friends more than those living in regional areas (25% compared to 17%) (see **figure 14.4**).

► **Figure 14.4**
Level of support from friends, by age, education level and media ability confidence (%)



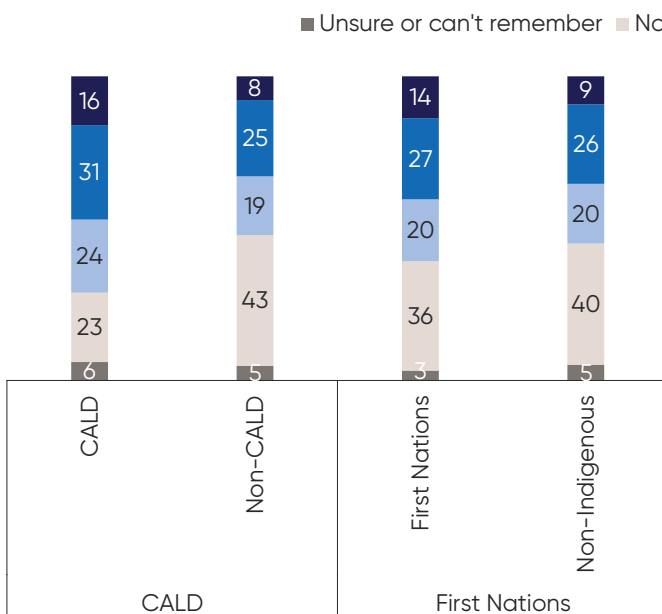
CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE AND FIRST NATIONS AUSTRALIANS ARE MORE LIKELY TO SEEK SUPPORT FROM LIBRARIES AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

The results show that both First Nations and CALD respondents are more likely to seek support from libraries and community organisations.

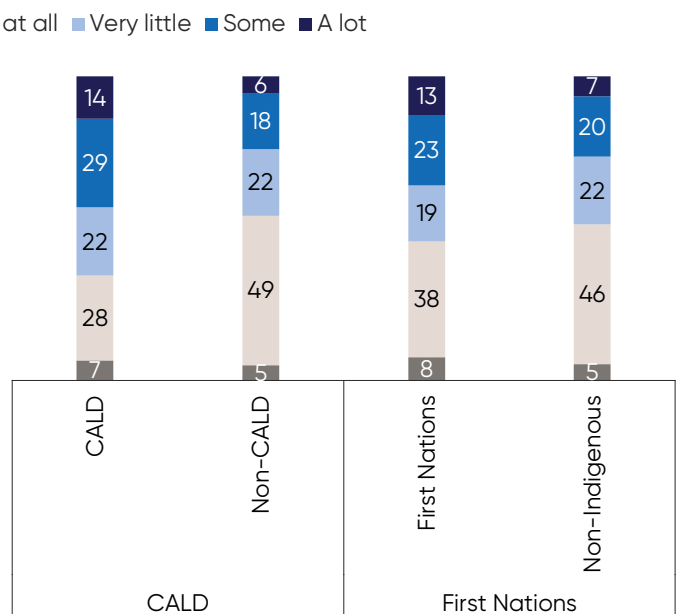
A significant percentage of First Nations respondents (14%) say they will turn to libraries 'a lot', compared to non-Indigenous Australians (9%)

(see **figure 14.5**). A similar margin is reported for seeking support from community organisations (13% compared to 7%) (see **figure 14.6**).

► **Figure 14.5**
Level of support from libraries, by CALD and First Nations (%)



► **Figure 14.6**
Level of support from community organisations by CALD and First Nations (%)

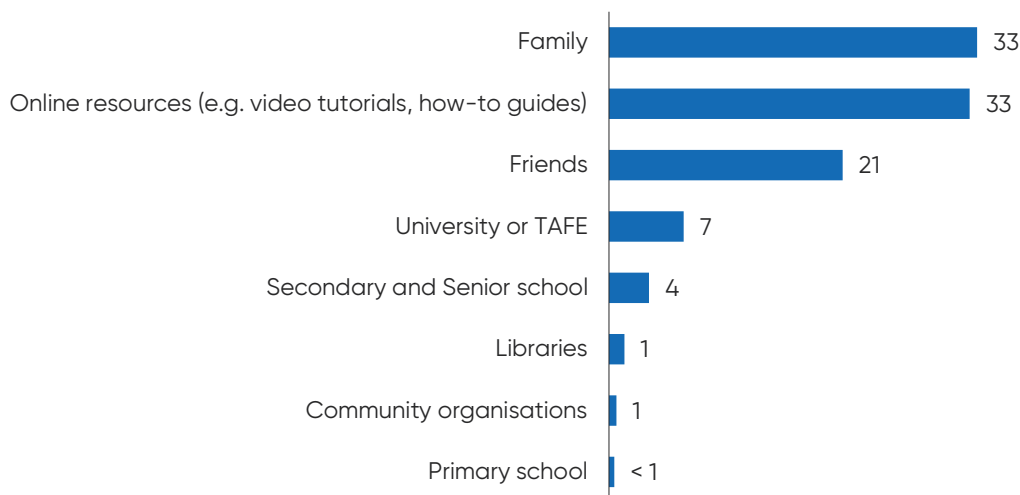


SOURCES OF THE MOST SUPPORT

When asked about the source from which they receive the most support to access, use, understand or create media across their lifetime, adult Australians are evenly split between online resources (33%) and family (33%) (see **figure 14.7**). The next most likely source of support are friends (21%). All other sources are selected at a much lower rate as the source that provides the most support (all are below 7%).

Those aged 60 and above are much more likely to nominate family as their first source of support (56% for those aged 70+ versus 49% for those aged 60+). Younger adults aged 18–29 years are most likely to say friends (29%) followed by online resources (28%). Those with a low level of education are most likely to turn to family (51%), and those with a low level of confidence in their media ability (49%) are also most likely to turn to family.

► **Figure 14.7**
Which has provided you with the MOST support to help you access, use, understand and/or create media? (%)



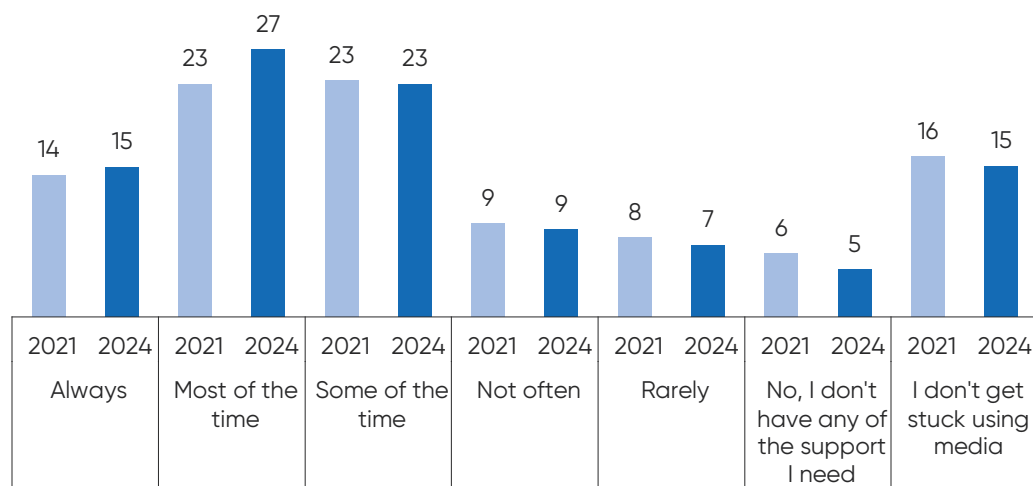
N = 3,192 (respondents who had used one or more sources of support)

ACCESS TO TIMELY MEDIA LITERACY SUPPORT IS LACKING

Since media engagement takes place in the context of people's busy everyday lives, it is important that adults can access support in a timely way, when and where they need it. When we asked adult Australians if there is someone they can turn to for support 'always', or 'most of the time', 41% responded positively, a 5% increase from 2021 (**figure 14.8**).

We found a significant difference between those with a high and low confidence in their media literacy ability. Almost half (49%) of those with high confidence said they could seek support always or most of the time, compared to 33% for those with low confidence. In part, this may reflect that those with high confidence say they are more likely to use online sources, which are more immediately available to them.

► **Figure 14.8**
Thinking about NOW,
when you are stuck
using media, is there
anyone you can ask for
help? By year (%)



SUMMARY

Australians tend to independently solve their media-related challenges through self-education via online sources, or turn to people they know, with whom they have trusted relationships. They are less likely to say that they have learnt about media from their formal educational experiences or from opportunities within the community, such as in libraries. This is not surprising given how few opportunities exist for adult media literacy education in Australia. There are some exceptions to this, including older people, First Nations respondents, and culturally and linguistically diverse respondents, who are more likely to turn to library and community spaces.

The reliance on family by those groups who have the lowest levels of confidence in their media ability, have the lowest level of education, and are older, suggests that there is an opportunity for media literacy policy developers, advocates and support organisations to offer alternative forms of support.

Seeking support is an important indicator of people's attitudes towards media literacy learning. Those who are high support seekers are those most interested in improving their media knowledge and skills, or have the confidence and ability to seek assistance. Our findings indicate a challenge for Australian society because a process of reinforcement is evident. The higher a person's level of confidence in their media ability, the more likely they are to use media and to seek support. Thus, they are more likely to further increase their knowledge and skills. Those Australians who are participating less in media activities and have less confidence in their abilities, such as lower income Australians and those who have lower levels of education, are at risk of falling further behind.

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DEMAND FOR MEDIA LITERACY SUPPORT

- » There is very strong support for media literacy in schools (84% agree or strongly agree)
- » There is very strong support for media literacy programs to be available for adults (82% agree or strongly agree)

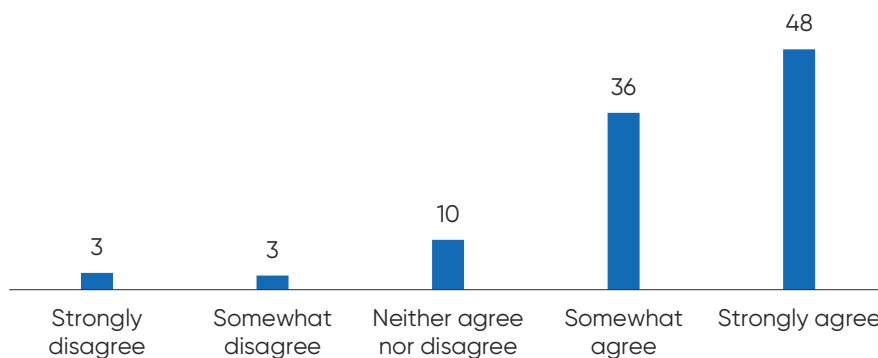
There is strong support amongst adult Australians for the provision of media literacy education in schools. For the purpose of this survey, we defined media literacy for respondents as the ability to access, use, create and analyse media. Overall, 84% agree that children and young people should have access to this form of learning (48% strongly agree and 36% somewhat agree). Only 6% disagree that this should occur (see **figure 15.1**).

There are some differences amongst groups who support the need for media literacy education in schools. Australians with high levels of education are more supportive than

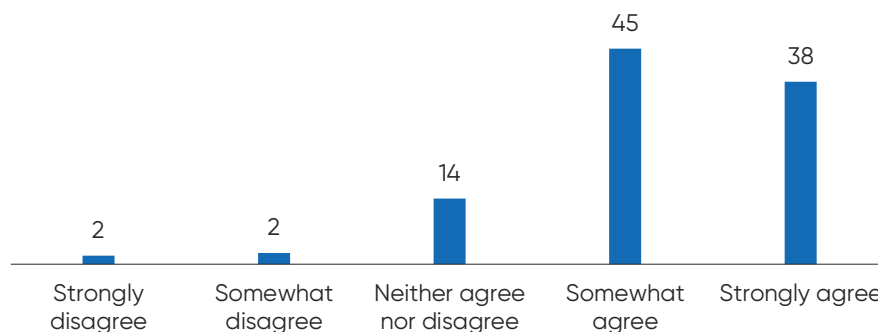
those with lower levels of education, although both groups agree that it is important overall. Of the highly educated group, 87% agree, while 77% of those with low levels of education agree. Meanwhile, 60% of those with a high level of confidence in their media ability, strongly agree compared to 41% of those with low confidence.

There is also a high level of support for media literacy education to be made available to Australian adults, with 82% either strongly agreeing (38%) or somewhat agreeing (45%) (see **figure 15.2**). Only 4% disagree with media literacy education being provided to adult Australians.

► **Figure 15.1**
Do you agree that children should receive media literacy education at school? (%)



► **Figure 15.2**
Do you agree that there is a need for media literacy education for adults? (%)



SUMMARY

We are encouraged that Australians overwhelmingly see the value in learning about media literacy at all stages of life. This high level of support for media literacy education for both children and adults suggests there is an important role for government, State Education Departments, media and technology companies, and community organisations to work together to develop comprehensive media literacy education programs.

Although the Australian Curriculum allows teachers to address media literacy in the curriculum, we know that only about a quarter of young people say they experienced media literacy education at school in the past year in relation to identifying misinformation online.

In addition, although teachers value media literacy, they face significant challenges in implementing it in schools.¹ More needs to be done to ensure that the potential for media literacy education provided by the Australian Curriculum is realised. In addition, we need much more concerted efforts to support adult media literacy at the community level.

¹ See the News and Young Australians in 2023 survey <https://apo.org.au/node/324686> and News and Teachers Australian teachers survey <https://apo.org.au/node/306894>

16

WHAT PEOPLE WANT TO LEARN ABOUT

- » Adult Australians prioritise learning about protection from scams and online predators (60%), learning to find reliable and trustworthy news (51%), and how to identify and respond to misinformation (51%)
- » Those with a high level of education are much more likely to want to learn about new technologies like generative AI (52%)
- » Most people would prefer to learn media literacy skills from online tutorials (52%), followed by short YouTube and TikTok style videos (28%)

People have clear preferences about which media literacy knowledge and skills they would like to improve. We provided respondents with ten options to choose from, and respondents were able to choose multiple options (**figure 16.1**).

The most popular topic selected was 'Protecting oneself from scams and predators' (60%), followed by 'Learning how to find news that is reliable and trustworthy' (51%), and 'How to identify and respond to misinformation' (also 51%). Learning how to use new technologies like

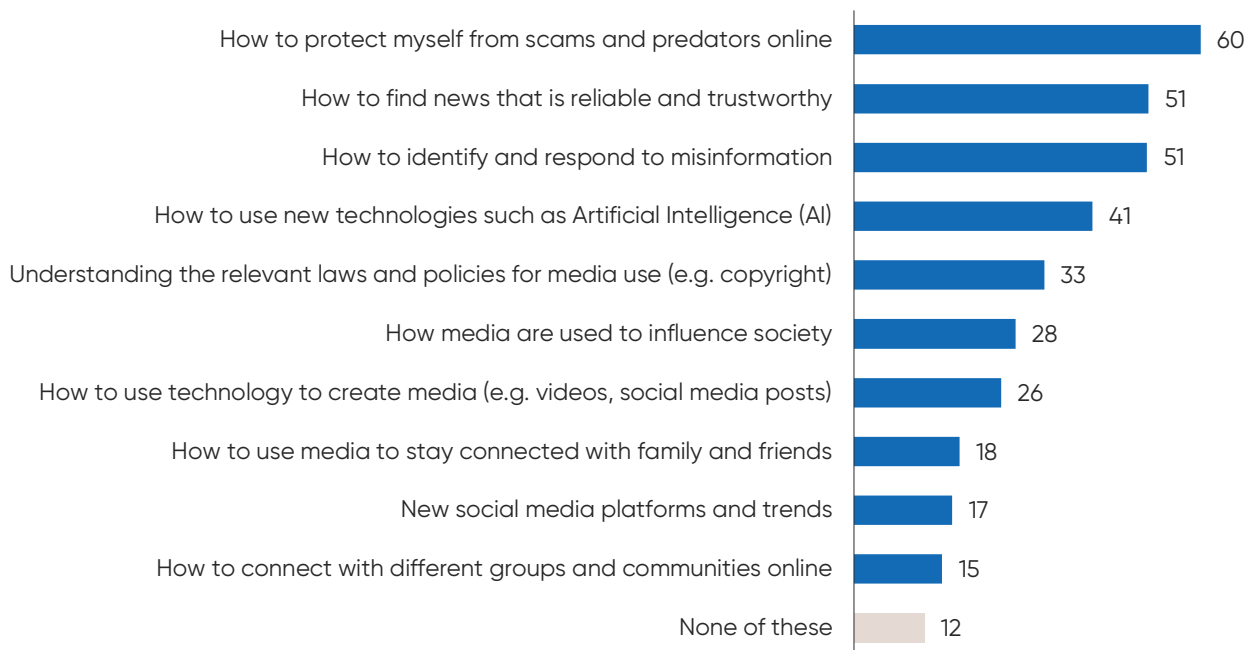
generative AI was chosen by 41% of respondents and one third (33%) said they wanted to understand more about relevant laws and policies. Only 12% of respondents did not select any of the ten items.

On average, people selected an average of 3.5 items that they wanted to learn more about, with young people aged 18–29 selecting more items (3.8), while just 7% of this group were not interested in any of the listed topics (see **figure 16.2**). In contrast, those aged 70 and over were interested in an average of 3.1

topics, and 16% had no interest in any of the topics. Less educated adults were interested in fewer topics (2.9), with 17% having no interest in any of the topics, compared to those with a high level of education who were interested in 3.8 topics, with just 7% not interested in any of these. Those with high media use were interested in 4.0 topics, with just 6% not interested in any of these. Those with low media use were interested in 2.9 topics, with 20% not interested in any.

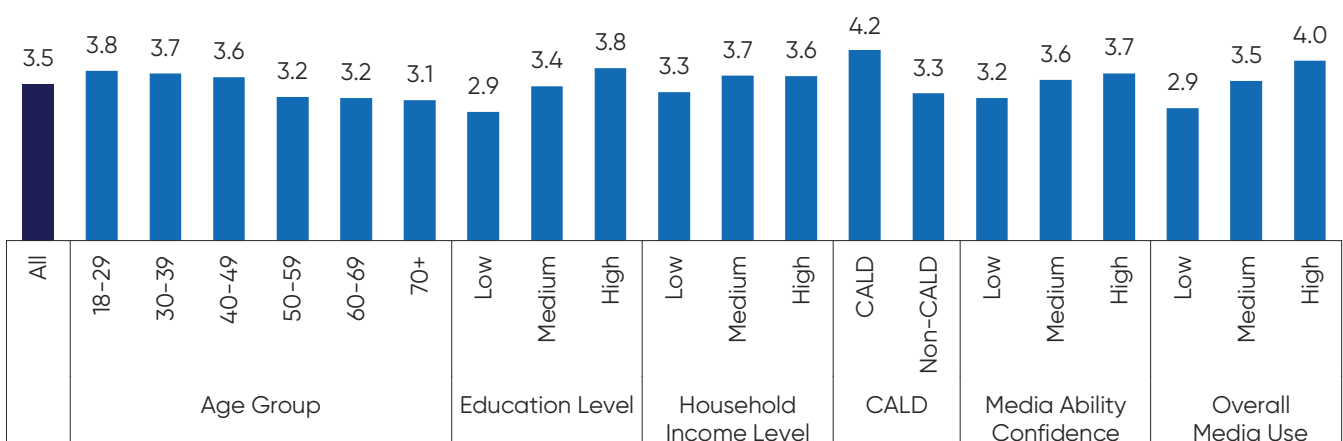
► **Figure 16.1**

Which among the following would you like to learn more about? (%)



► **Figure 16.2**

Number of topics interested in learning more about, by demographics, media ability confidence and overall media use (average)

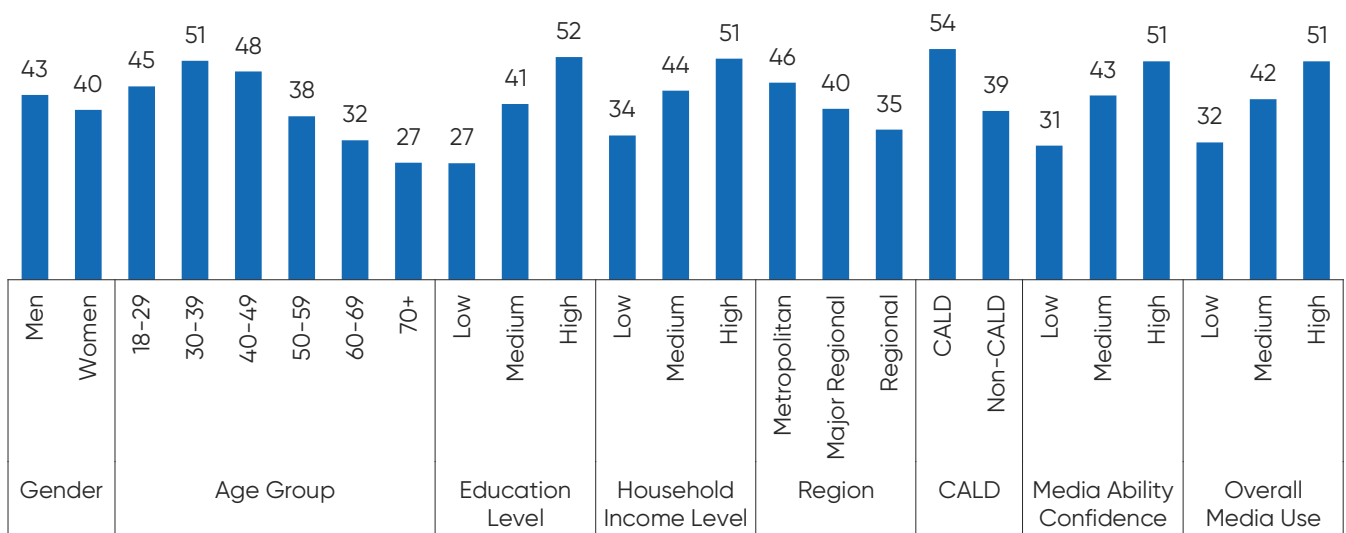


INTEREST IN LEARNING ABOUT NEW TECHNOLOGIES LIKE GENERATIVE AI

When it comes to learning about new technologies like generative AI, similar patterns emerge related to age, education level, income, and confidence in media abilities (see **figure 16.3**). For instance, of those aged 30–39, 51% are interested in learning about this, compared to 32% of the 60–69 age bracket, and 27% of the 70 and over age group. Those with a high level of education are much more likely to want to

learn about new technologies like generative AI than those with a low level of education (52% compared to 34%). Those with a high household income were more interested in learning about new technologies like generative AI than those with low household incomes (51% versus 34%) and those with high confidence in their media ability are much more interested than those with low confidence (51% versus 31%).

► **Figure 16.3**
Interest in learning about how to use new technologies such as generative AI, by demographics, media ability confidence and overall media use (%)

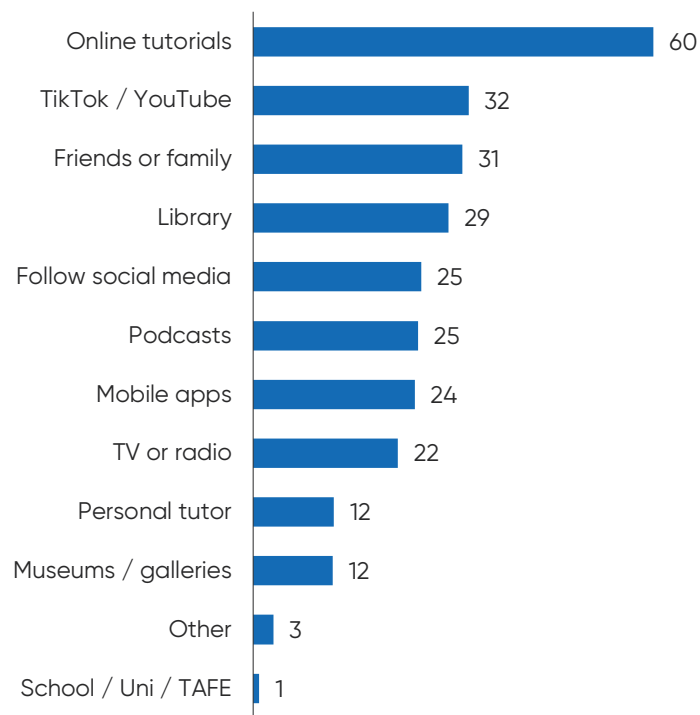


HOW PEOPLE WANT TO ACCESS MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION

Adult Australians have some clear preferences for how they would like to learn more about media topics of interest (see **figure 16.4**). Overall, people prefer online tutorials to learn about topics (60%), followed by YouTube and TikTok style short videos (32%). Short video formats are much more popular among younger adults, with 53% of those aged 18–29 preferring this format, compared to

just 15% of those aged 60 and over. Libraries are a preferred learning space selected by older people, with 38% of those aged 60+ wanting to learn in libraries, compared to 22% of those aged 18–29. Television and radio are also preferred by a greater percentage of older adults (26%), compared to just 19% of the 18–29 age group.

► **Figure 16.4**
How would you like to learn about these topics? (%)



SUMMARY

Adult Australians indicate that they would like to learn more about the things that are likely to do them harm, such as scams and online predators, misinformation, and poor quality news and information. A significant percentage also want to learn about new technologies such as AI and a range of other topics, indicating a curiosity about how the media operate in society. We find this encouraging as it indicates an appetite for media literacy education.

There is a challenge for those who wish to offer media literacy education experiences, though, as most people indicate that they prefer to learn from online resources, including short form videos. This may reflect the ever increasing amount of informational and informal learning resources available on platforms like YouTube and TikTok, and the growing genre of 'infotainment'. The entertainment content associated with those platforms also makes them attractive places to spend time, and provide convenience and timeliness for people. This requires new ways of thinking about the provision of media literacy programs and how to measure their reach and effectiveness.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Tanya Notley

Tanya Notley is Associate Professor in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts and a member of the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University where she leads the Advancing Media Literacy in Australia research program. She is internationally recognised in the field of engaged, practice-based media research in areas of digital inclusion, media literacy, and human rights media. Tanya has worked extensively with a range of organisations to use media to address inequalities. She has led 10 media literacy research projects since 2017 including two longitudinal national media literacy surveys (one for children and another for adults). She currently leads a national adult media literacy project that collaborates with national public cultural institutions to develop evidence-based interventions. Tanya is a founding member of Australian Media Literacy Alliance and served as Co-Chair 2020–23.

Simon Chambers

Simon Chambers is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the MARCS Institute at Western Sydney University (WSU). His research is primarily in the field of cultural sociology, focussing on investigating the dynamics of fields of cultural production and how they are engaged with by audiences. Simon has been part of WSU's media literacy research team since 2020, having contributed to the design, analysis and reporting of a range of research projects. He has previously worked at ABC Radio National and Classic FM, APRA AMCOS and the Australian Music Centre. He has also worked on a range of Australian Research Council projects spanning Australian cultural fields, the development of digital cultural research infrastructure, the value of music exports and the development of personalised recommendation algorithms.

Sora Park

Sora Park is a Professorial Research Fellow and Professor at the News & Media Research Centre, University of Canberra. She has published widely on the impact of digital technology on audiences, with a special focus on digital and social exclusion and the distribution of opportunities and privileges in society. She has extensive international experience in policy research and consultancy. She is the project leader of the Digital News Report Australia. She is currently leading an Australian Research Council Discovery Project 'The rise of mistrust: Digital platforms and trust in news media' and an Australian Research Council Linkage Project 'Heartbeat of Australia: Tracking, Understanding and Engaging News Audiences'.

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Michael Dezuanni is Professor in the School of Communication at Queensland University of Technology. He is program leader for the Creating Better Digital Futures program in QUT's Digital Media Research Centre and he is a Chief Investigator in the ARC Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child. Michael has been a media literacy educator, teacher educator and researcher for over 30 years, and is a founding member of Australian Media Literacy Alliance. Michael was an expert advisor and writer for the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority for Media Arts for the development of the Australian Curriculum, and he regularly advises ACARA on the development of media literacy in the curriculum. He is a past president of Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) and he is internationally recognised for his work in media literacy, digital inclusion and children's participation on digital platforms.

METHODOLOGY

SURVEY DESIGN

The survey was initially designed in 2020 through a consultation process and was updated in 2024 (see Acknowledgements for more detail). The survey questionnaire aimed to be inclusive and broad to capture the different needs of all population groups. However, we also acknowledge the limits of conducting an online survey to represent the views and experiences of all Australians. Some of the limits of a survey approach were minimised through applying quotas, collecting additional booster samples and by weighting the data. See the earlier section on Defining Media Literacy for an explanation on the range of question sets we used and the rationale for these.

DATA COLLECTION

The data for the general population sample for this report was collected from an online survey conducted between January 24 and February 18, 2024. The survey was administered by one of Australia's largest and most experienced panel-based online survey providers.

The survey sample was selected to be reflective of the Australian population by using demographic quotas set according to the ABS 2021 Census data:

- » age (18–29; 30–44; 45–59; 60+)
- » gender
- » state and territories
- » education

For the main survey, three online panels were included in the recruitment. Quality control checks removed 170 responses (e.g. speeders, straight lines). A total of N = 3,852 completed survey responses were retained for inclusion in the general population sample.

We conducted additional booster surveys with people from CALD communities (N = 295) and First Nations people (N = 275). Data was collected March 26 to April 21, 2024. These booster samples sought to better understand the experiences of groups that are usually under-represented in online surveys. We provide more information about this in the 'Reading the Data' section of this report.

For these two booster samples, we combined a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) method and online surveys. For the online surveys, we either invited respondents from online CALD or First Nations panels.

For CALD groups we included eight groups (Arabic, Chinese, Filipino/Tagalog, Hindi, Punjabi, Korean and Vietnamese speakers) from the most widely spoken languages after English in Australia. In addition to the English language survey, the questionnaire was offered in Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Arabic.

When conducting the analysis, we applied a weight to adjust the main sample (excluding First Nations and CALD booster samples) to be reflective of the Australian adult population. All reporting of First Nations and CALD group responses are based on unweighted data. Unless noted otherwise, all other reporting of frequencies and percentages in this report are based on the weighted responses from the main sample.

Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent and therefore may not add up to 100.

LIMITATIONS

We note that those who do not have access to the internet or who are not equipped with digital skills are under-represented in our survey.

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Aimee Hourigan, Western Sydney University
Anita Planchon, Tasmania Department for Education, Children and Young People and AMLA member
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T.J. Thomson, RMIT University

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