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# Voice Referendum Poll

## Resolve Political Monitor

October 2023

PRESENTED TO THE SMH & THE AGE. COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE.

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# Headline Findings & Conclusions

This mid-campaign poll shows the Voice proposal continuing to fail the devilishly difficult ‘double majority’ test. There is a 56% No vote nationally following a 20-point drop for Yes in the last year, and No leads in five of the six states. In helping to explain this current position and the long-term trend leading to it, we make the following observations:

- The ongoing uplift in the No vote has coincided with growing awareness and understanding of the referendum vote and proposal, as well as increased exposure to political attention, campaign messaging and spokespeople. The inescapable conclusion is that the more Australians have seen and heard of this debate, and the more they have engaged, the more they have been turned off the proposition. This poll identifies a number of interrelated factors at play here.
- Most Australians still welcome national votes as a means to decide important issues, but this referendum is operating in an environment where voters are more concerned about issues closer to home, notably basic living costs. Only a minority of Australians know an Indigenous person and Indigenous affairs are of low salience in the general community, so there is a weak connection to this debate. Viewed through this prism, the referendum can be regarded as a ‘political distraction’.
- They also hold the political class in low regard, which constitutes a low trust environment in which to ask people to vote on principle first. Early polling showing strong majority support likely reflected the principle rather than endorsement of the Voice, and a failure to provide legislative detail up-front provided a vacuum for Voice opponents to fill with questions and claims not easily refuted. Most voters, including those voting Yes, could not explain the Voice and would like to have had the reassurance of greater detail, though this had to be balanced against the risk of overloading a disengaged electorate.
- Australians are more comfortable with simple recognition or grassroots policy advice, and less supportive of the combined offering. The vote choice is all about the Voice, not a rejection of recognition or of taking action. On a prompted basis, only a small minority actively prefer the embedded scope, reach and process of representations enabled by the amendment. That is, when detail is known the design of the ‘maximal model’ is an issue, and therefore the process that led to it was too (including a lack of government negotiation, public consultation and pre-testing). Even Yes voters harbour doubts here.



# Headline Findings & Conclusions

- Regardless, the Voice is considered a significant and important proposal, not a modest and simple one, and the call for 'permanent' enshrinement has undoubtedly magnified any perceived risk associated with change. As we have seen, there is little personally relevant reward to balance this risk, i.e. a 'burning platform' to act, and people remain unconvinced that it will have a practical impact on the ground or cut waste. Many do not believe that colonisation has had a negative effect or that dual sovereignty exists either, so any need to atone or reconcile will also be questioned or not even appreciated.
- The referendum vote breaks down into to a well-known series of progressive and conservative segments at either extreme, e.g. young versus old, inner city to regional / rural, political left and right. Any social change proposal of this sort must win both the progressives (who tend to support interventions that force equal outcomes) and a 'middle Australia' that is less concerned about ideology than they are about practical outcomes and equality of individual treatment. The Voice's proponents have failed to prove or satisfy those two points in the same way that same-sex marriage did so successfully.
- Nevertheless, there is empathy for Indigenous disadvantage and a want for action to close the gap, but it must be wanted by those it seeks to help. High profile Indigenous No campaigners (Price and Mundine) have had greater cut through than their counterparts in the Yes camp (Davis, Pearson, Langton, Parkin, Mayo, Burney), and will have personified the message that 'not all Indigenous people want this Voice', that Indigenous people already have a say, demonstrated that there is division and diversity of opinion (even within the Yes side) and that this may foreshadow how the Voice would function in practice. Thorpe and the 'Blak Sovereignty' movement would only have added to the melee.
- While lacking the same resources as the Yes campaign, there is clear evidence that the No campaign's year long 'slow burn' campaign (focused on the smaller states and using on-line and earned media) has had a greater effect than the Yes campaign's 'back weighted' national efforts to date (pre-campaign focus on recognition, history, legal points, corporates and celebrity was likely counterproductive). The campaign period may have been too long to retain an in-principle Yes and too short to allow for a deeper conversation on Indigenous Australia, i.e. there was no 'goldilocks' timing.
- The use of fewer consistent messages appears to have assisted the No case, with division, detail and efficacy all coming through stronger than more varied, sometimes contradictory Yes messages. Many Yes voters cannot justify their support.



# Headline Findings & Conclusions

- Perhaps just as consequential has been partisan political stances and campaigning, with each Opposition intervention and parliamentary event coinciding with a steeper drop in the Yes vote. This is particularly pronounced among right-of-centre voting blocs, and likely reflects the Voice and campaign being regarded as increasingly political in nature, a distraction for Labor, an indicator of relative competence or a framed ideological (values) alignment. It is pure conjecture to say there would have been bipartisan support with a different model, e.g. a minimalist approach with certain features legislated instead, but it would have at least reduced the justification for political and public opposition.
- Further, long-term trend data and respondent feedback strongly suggests that the fortunes of the Voice, the major parties and their campaigning leaders have become intertwined. Albanese's ratings and Labor's vote share have declined since the Liberals announced their opposing stance, with Dutton and the Coalition's stocks rising. It remains to be seen whether this has a lasting impact on political opinions and behaviours, i.e. if there is an enduring toll and/or dividend, and a great deal will depend on assignment of blame and future direction in this policy space.

To sum up the feelings of many Australians: 'a flawed process has led to an unacceptable product, one poorly marketed and ably opposed'. Remaining Yes voters are motivated by the sheer 'need to do something' in spite of the model, whereas No voters are voting against division, the perceived risk and questioned efficacy of the specific enshrined Voice proposal, rather than being anti-recognition or acting on issues *per se*. Both groups are motivated by fairness and equality, but place different emphasis on outcome and opportunity in their judgment.

The short-term trend in this final campaign track is relatively rare in that it shows the first stabilization of vote since April. It is too early to tell whether this is a brief hiatus, the switching of the 'progressive No', a 'bottoming out' or the beginnings of a 'bounce-back', but it may well reflect a dominant advertising spend and a more effective final appeal from the Yes campaign. While a turnaround to a Yes result is not impossible by 14<sup>th</sup> October, the scale and immediacy of the task (over the next two weeks, noting Israel-Gaza) makes this by far the least likely outcome.



# Introduction & Methodology

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# Introduction & Background

In 2017, a group of Indigenous leaders signed the Uluru Statement from the Heart which, among other things, called for a “First Nations’ Voice enshrined in the Constitution”.

This statement and request was endorsed by the Labor Party before the 2022 Federal election, and the newly elected Prime Minister conformed that a referendum to alter the Constitution would be held in their first term. He later released the wording of amendment and ballot question at Garma 2022, with only very amendments since then.

The period 2022-23 has seen an increasingly prominent and intense public debate about the Voice, taking place in the context of official Yes and No campaigns, partisan political activity and ongoing media attention.

There has been a great deal of published polling on this issue, much of it focused on the trend in voting intention.

Resolve’s polling, conducted independently for The SMH and The Age since Garma 2022, has sought to go deeper to explain campaign decisions, provide insights into the reasons behind vote, its change over time, key voting segments, and what the future holds post-referendum (to be held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2023).

This national mid-campaign poll is the culmination of our approach. It is the most comprehensive published poll of its type, employing the largest sample size of the campaign and asking numerous diagnostic questions beyond voting intention.

It seeks neither to simply predict a result ‘seconds before the final whistle’ nor to act as a strategic campaign device. Instead, it is our hope this ‘half-time commentary’ helps to inform the electorate before voting and acts as a post-mortem to determine the true nature of the result.

It contains the pollster’s interpretation, opinion and discussion for that purpose, which is naturally subjective but informed by experience in such contests, qualitative feedback from respondents, media and advertising monitoring. Our thanks go also to the various people and organisations from all sides of this debate – the campaigns, in media and politics, and involved in similar types of campaign – who contributed background and intelligence to inform this study’s design and interpretation.

# Summary Methodology

This report details the findings of a nationally-representative survey, conducted independently by Resolve on behalf of The SMH and The Age, in the lead up to the Voice referendum.

- The survey was conducted between 22<sup>nd</sup> September and 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023, i.e. mid-campaign (in weeks 2-3 of a four-week campaign proper), after the close of the electoral rolls and taking in the start of early, remote and postal voting.
- The survey has a total sample of n=4,728 adults aged 18+ years, including n=1,611 from our monthly 'RPM' tracking (28<sup>th</sup> Sep – 4<sup>th</sup> Oct.) combined with a further n=3,117 in a 'special' sample for greater accuracy and ability to breakdown results.
  - Vote questions and their breakdowns by geo-demographics, lifestyle and political views employ the total sample size of n=4,728 (with a notional error margin of +/-1.4%), but are usually filtered by enrolment and turnout (n=3,808, +/-1.6%).
  - Most other questions use the n=3,117 special sample, with a similar notional error margin of +/-1.8%. This included over-samples in the smaller states and for Indigenous Australians, which have been weighted back to population norms.
- Where common questions are asked with the RPM's main tracking programme we have provided trends, noting any variations in wording or sample. In all cases, the RPM samples are n=1,600+ (with a notional error margin of +/-2.4-2.5%).
- Detailed quotas and weighting were employed within each state for area, sex, age, education, income, etc., to ensure the samples truly reflected the population at large. Minimal data weighted was applied at this stratified level.
- Details of our raw samples, weighting and filtering are contained in the appendices.
- Both samples were conducted on-line using high-quality panels recruited primarily through random off-line techniques, e.g. telephone or face-to-face surveys. These features help to avoid biases from interviewer involvement and self-selection.
  - Respondents were not informed of the survey's topic(s) or publication prior to taking part to avoid response bias, e.g. a skew to the more engaged and/or informed, and had not taken part in an RPM survey in the past six months.
  - Security and quality control checks applied throughout, including screening out 'bots', timing tests, 'straight lining', etc.
- Percentages quoted without decimal places may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



# Resolve's Voice Vote Questions Explained

Q1504 The Federal Government has committed to a referendum – a national vote – on whether to enshrine an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Voice to parliament in the Constitution. This will take place on 14<sup>th</sup> October, though you can vote earlier.

Details of the proposed amendment to the Constitution are below if you would like to read them, but you do not have to.

*In recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia:*

- 1) *There shall be a body, to be called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.*
- 2) *The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice may make representations to parliament and the executive government of the Commonwealth on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*
- 3) *The parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws with respect to matters relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, including its composition, functions, powers and procedures.*

Please answer the referendum question... "A proposed law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

Do you approve this proposed alteration?"

N.B. If you have already voted please tick the option that best describes your vote, i.e. 'definitely' Yes or No. SINGLE RESPONSE / ORDERED

- Yes, definitely 1
- Yes, probably 2
- No, probably not 3
- No, definitely not 4
- Undecided / Will not vote 5

ASK Q1505 IF UNDECIDED AT Q1504 (CODE 5) AND D.P. TO CODE ALL YES AND NO AT Q1504 TO YES AND NO HERE, I.E. CODES 1-2=1 AND CODES 3-4=2

Q1505 While you may not be currently decided, it is compulsory that you vote. Even if it's a leaning... "do you approve this proposed alteration?" SINGLE RESPONSE (ALLOW NON-RESPONSE BUT DO NOT PROMPT) / ORDERED

- Yes 1
- No 2

Resolve designed a two-question measure to gain maximum information, most accurately about support for the Voice.

First, respondents are introduced to the fact a referendum is being held and are given the choice about whether to read the proposed amendment (to emulate the reality that not all will). They are then asked how likely they are to vote Yes or No, and are allowed to be uncommitted in their vote at that stage.

Second, those who are undecided initially are forced to choose between Yes or No, as is the reality of the ballot paper choice. In both cases 'Yes' stated first, as per the ballot paper.

This combination allows us to determine the strength of vote and leeway for change, but also provides a more reliable binary result than apportioning those who are undecided on the assumption that they will follow the same Yes/No split as others.

Both questions use the precise wording contained in the Constitutional amendment and referendum ballot paper in order to gauge support as closely as possible and without bias. They have been asked in much the same way since Garma 2022.

This consistency and approach is unique to Resolve. We believe it provides more insightful and accurate results and trends, particularly when combined with a large sample size, filters for enrolled citizens and those likely to turnout and cast a valid vote.



- National & State Vote (Binary)
- Enrolment & Formal Turnout
- Underlying Support Ratings
- Voter Group Breakdowns
- Vote Commitment



# Current Vote Position



# Current Vote Position

- Winning referendum proposals is difficult. The poor success rate of votes is well-documented – in part a product of ‘constitutional conservatism’ and the double majority test – and many more proposals fail to make it that far. Put simply, the default reaction to new propositions is No: a Yes must be earned through concerted explanation and persuasion.
- This poll – taken mid-campaign in weeks 2-3 of a four-week campaign – shows that the Voice proposal is currently failing in this task. Filtered to those enrolled and intending to turnout to cast a formal vote, i.e. those who actually make the decision rather than general public opinion, it finds No leading Yes 56% to 44% nationally and ahead in five states.
  - To put this current No result in context, it is greater than the rejection of a republic in 1999 (55% No) and is larger than any parties’ national TPP vote since 1966 (57% Holt-Coalition). Yes is shy of the 2017 same-sex marriage Yes vote (62%, though noting a lower turnout) and well below that of the 1967 referendum (91%), which created equal treatment for Indigenous people in the Constitution.
  - The result is based on enrolment of 98% and an 86% turnout, which would be similar to the 2022 federal election (90%). Even at the time of this poll, largely taken before pre-polling booths were open in many areas, 5% reported casting an early postal vote. These skew to No 59% to 41%, which tallies with partisan application activities and the older segment they appeal to, and may show up in later counting.
- Groups where Yes voters are in a majority include progressive voters (present in large numbers in the Greens and Labor voting blocs), 18-34 year olds, inner city dwellers, those on higher incomes, university educated and non-Christians. All other groups are voting No in the majority, with the strongest of them including conservative voters (reflected in the Coalition and minor party bases), 55+ year olds, Queensland and WA, regional / rural areas, Christians and those with trade certifications.
  - This is a common configuration of bases that we find time and again in political polling and opinions of social issues, such as same-sex marriage, Australia Day and the republic question. In all these cases the ordering of the spectrum is much the same, indicating an underlying ideology at work, with the overall position only shifting along it. In a compulsory voting system ‘winning the middle’ is key.
  - In this case, it appears that the Yes case has won over most progressives on the promise of positive discrimination that could lead to better outcomes for a disadvantaged group, but has failed to fully capture the middle-ground of more transactional, less ideological voters who we find are more concerned about practical benefits, risks and the equal treatment of individuals. Both are driven by values of fairness and equality but, unlike the 2017 same-sex marriage and 1967 Indigenous affairs referendum appeals of equality of both outcome and treatment, the Voice ticks only one of these boxes. It is telling that this campaign did not have a values-driven slogan as ‘Yes Equality’ did.

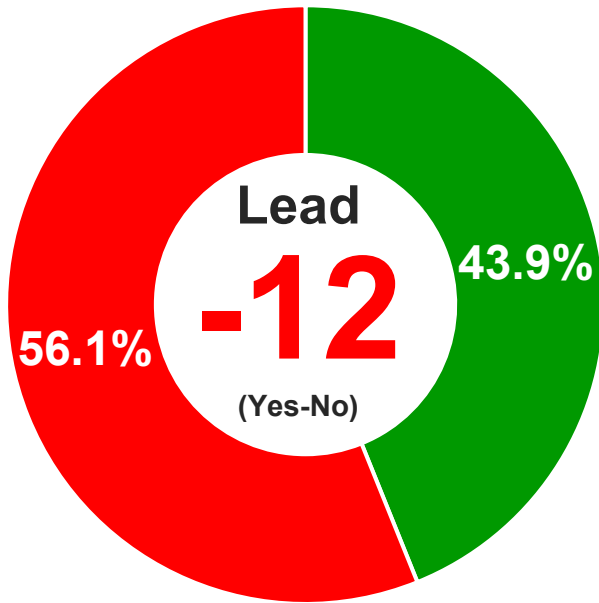
# Current Vote Position

- We make a special note that 59% of Indigenous Australians intend to vote Yes to the Voice. This is based on an n=420 over-sample in this key demographic, but will not adequately cover remote communities due to the difficulty of reaching them. We conclude that Indigenous people are significantly more likely to vote Yes, but that this is far from a universal view (noting differing views among Indigenous campaigners and the 'progressive No'). This is confirmed by anecdotal media coverage, and is perhaps not a surprise given past polling has always shown them to be 15-20 points above the national average for Yes, i.e. the support of Indigenous Australians has declined at a similar rate to the general population.
- Before filtering the binary result by those who are able and willing to vote we asked the general population their views (because you do not have to be an enrolled citizen to hold a view or take part in a debate), and here we found 48% siding with No (including 36% 'definitely'), 38% with Yes (25% 'definitely') and 14% undecided, with the later splitting fairly equally when forced to 'lean' to Yes or No.
  - Qualitative study has intimated that weaker rating voters can actually be firmer in their views but unwilling to admit it. We have therefore introduced a new measure of 'changeability' that asks people how likely they are to change their minds, and here 'softness' is 19% in total (compared to the traditional 'uncommitted', which sits at 38%). This presents a smaller target in the final week or two.
  - The softest vote groups tend to skew to Yes, i.e. they have more leeway to lose than gain vote, and include those disengaged from politics generally, non-Christians, 18-34 year olds, the inner city, Indigenous voters and those who count themselves as neither progressive nor conservative. It is by persuading soft groups like this that the vote will change, with turnout and enrolment now largely irrelevant.
- While this poll does not seek to be a precise predictor of outcome this far out from a vote on an issue with which many people are disengaged and that is taking place in a dynamic campaign environment, it is obvious that the current vote position makes a No result the most likely result on 14<sup>th</sup> October.
  - To get to 50% from here the Yes campaign would need to keep all its own soft voters (10%) and win over two-thirds of the soft No base (equal to 6% of total votes). They would then need to win over the remaining 3% soft No vote to come close to leading in four states.
  - This is improbable and perhaps even implausible, especially given the trends described in the next section, but it is not impossible.

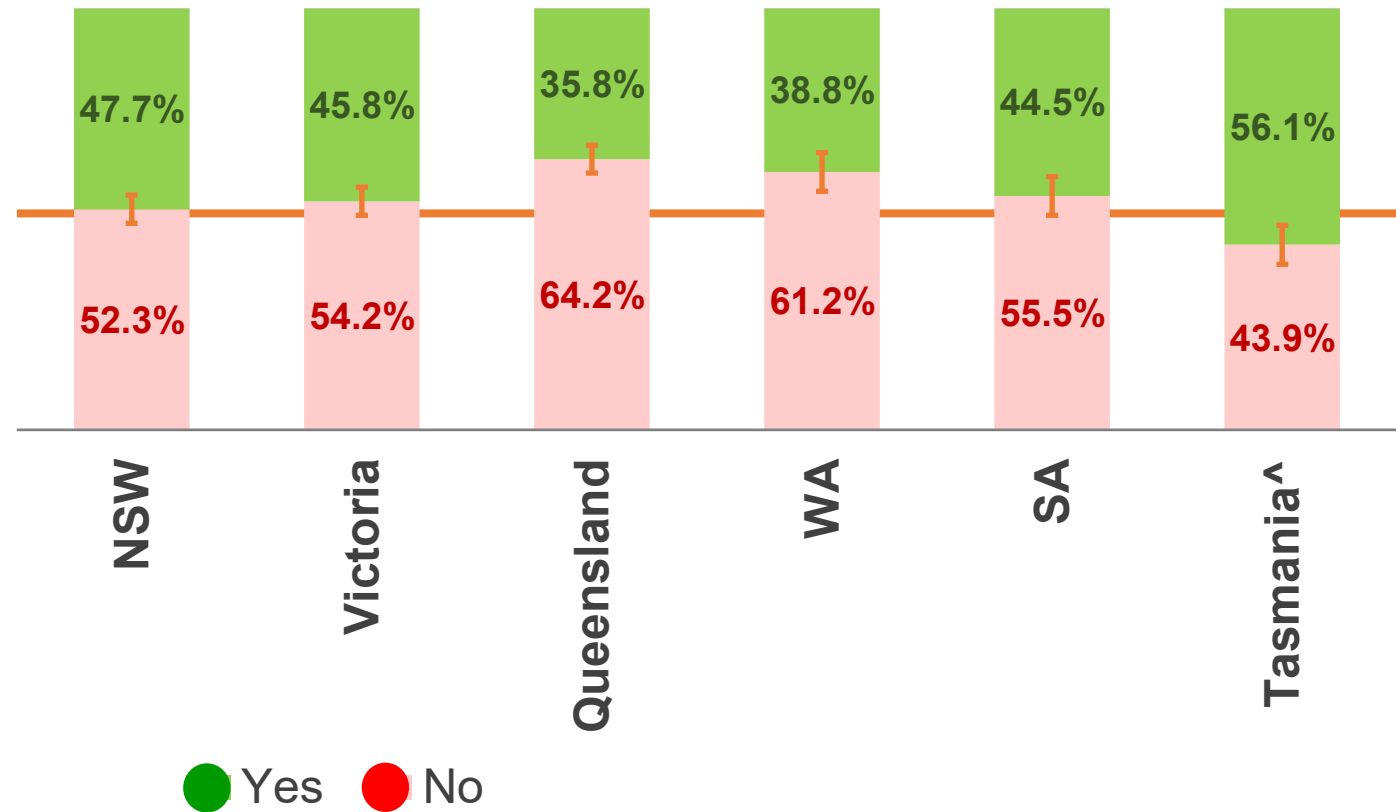


# Binary Vote: Double Majority Summary

### National Vote (Enrolled & Likely to Vote)



### State Vote (Enrolled & Likely to Vote)

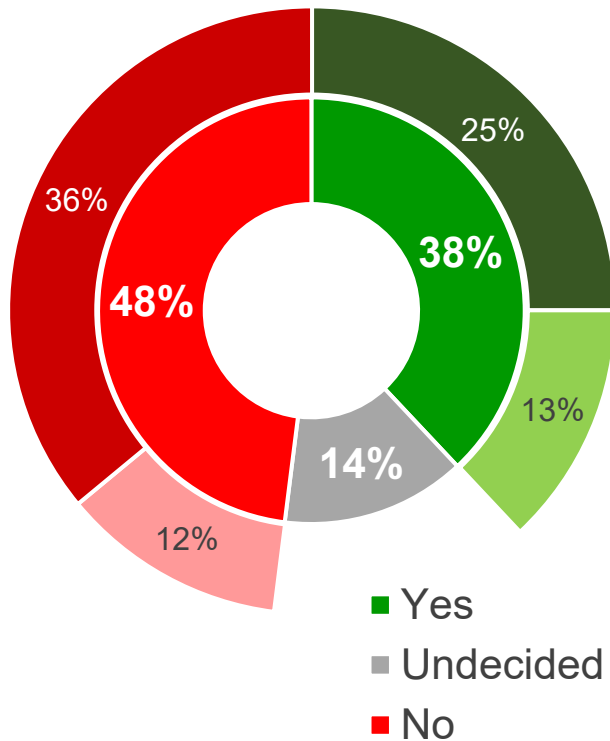


Q1504) The Federal Government is holding a referendum – a national vote – on whether to enshrine an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Voice to parliament in the Constitution. Details of the proposed amendment are below... Please now answer the referendum question. “A proposed law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?” Q1505) While you may not be currently decided, it is compulsory that you vote. Even if it’s a leaning... “do you approve this proposed alteration?” Base: Enrolled & Likely.

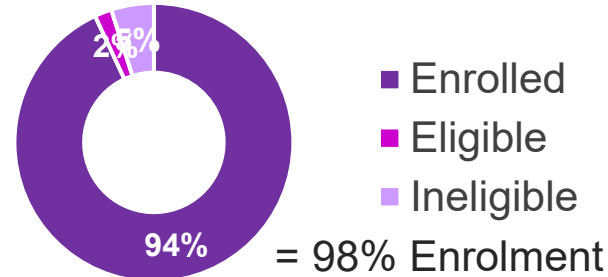
<sup>^</sup> The nature of on-line panels in Tasmania produce results in which we have less confidence than other states.

# Arriving at Binary Vote: Filtering Process

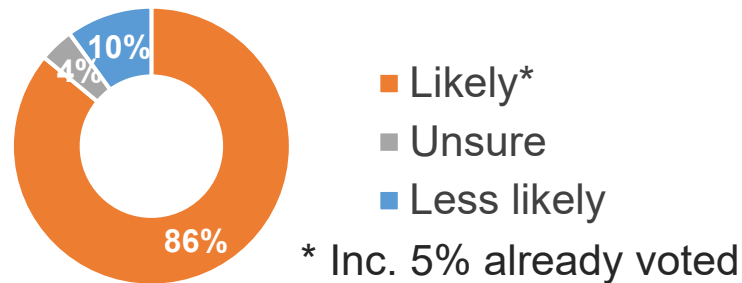
**Support: Opinion Rating**  
(Asked of All Adults 18+ - 'Public Opinion')



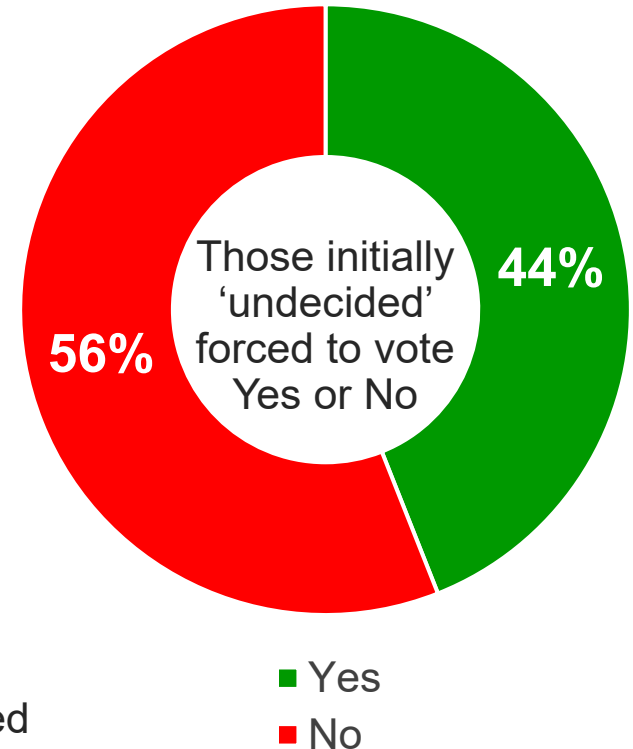
**Able: Enrolment**  
(Asked of All Adults 18+ - 'Public Opinion')



**Willing: Formal Turnout**  
(Filtered to those Enrolled - 'The Electorate')



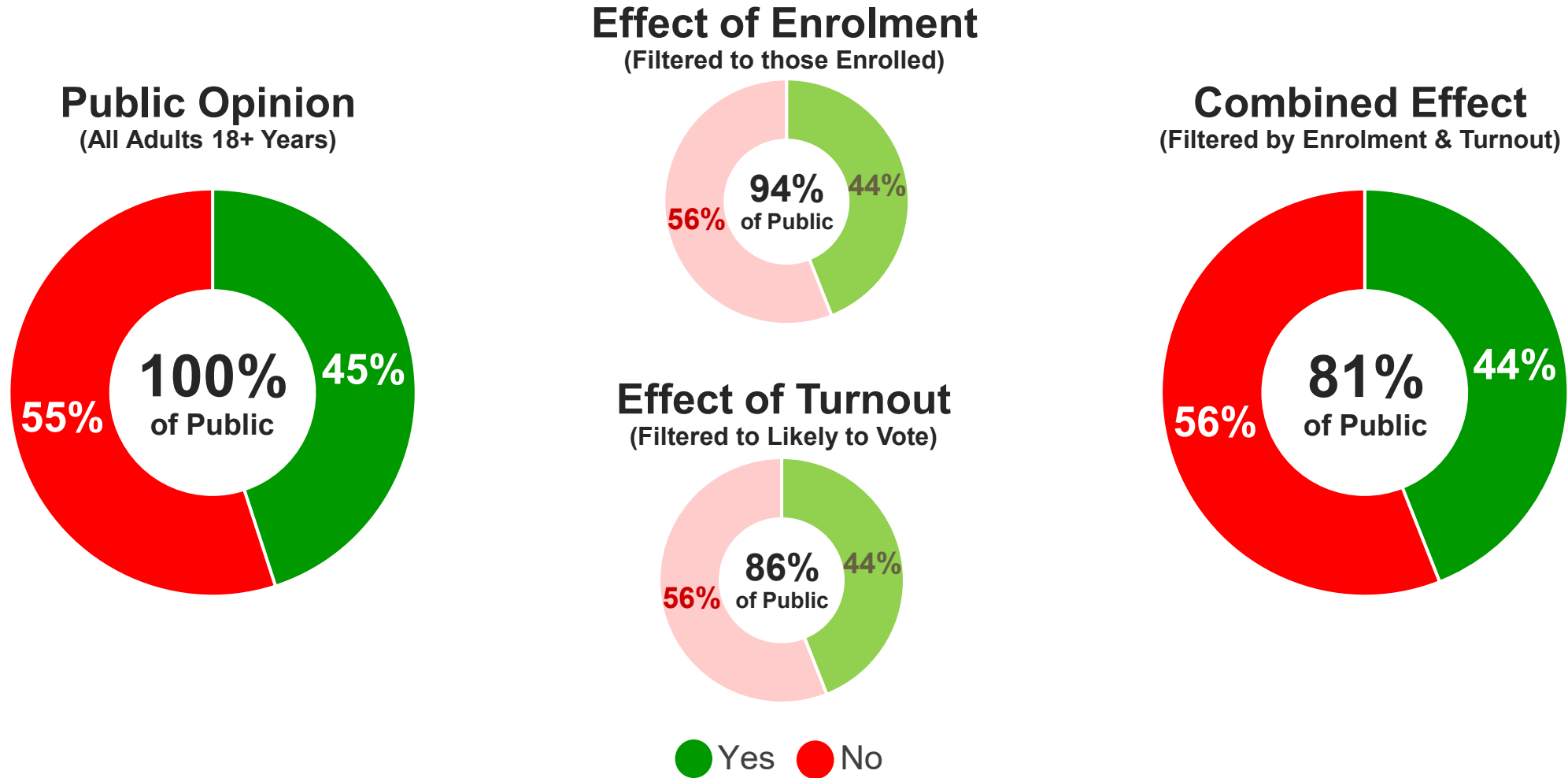
**Behaviour: Binary Vote**  
(Filtered to those 'Able & Willing Voters')



Q1504) The Federal Government is holding a referendum – a national vote – on whether to enshrine an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Voice to parliament in the Constitution. Details of the proposed amendment are below... Please now answer the referendum question. "A proposed law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?" Base: All. Q4) First, which of the following best describes you? Base: All. Q2301) While voting in the referendum is compulsory, some people either cannot vote or choose not to. This might be because they are not correctly enrolled to vote, or it could be that they are not interested enough to turnout or give a definitive answer. Being honest, how likely is it that you will be enrolled to vote and will turnout to cast a valid Yes or No vote in this referendum about the Voice? Base: Enrolled. Q1505) While you may not be currently decided, it is compulsory that you vote. Even if it's a leaning... "do you approve this proposed alteration?" Base: Enrolled & Likely.



# Effects of Enrolment & Turnout (Theoretical)



Q1504) The Federal Government is holding a referendum – a national vote – on whether to enshrine an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Voice to parliament in the Constitution. Details of the proposed amendment are below... Please now answer the referendum question. “A proposed law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?” Q1505) While you may not be currently 14 decided, it is compulsory that you vote. Even if it’s a leaning... “do you approve this proposed alteration?” Base: All (but variously filtered).



# Binary Vote for the Voice: Detail

	Y	N	Y-N		Y	N	Y-N		Y	N	Y-N
<b>Total</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>-12</b>	NSW	48%	52%	-5	School Qualification	41%	59%	-18
Males	42%	58%	-17	Victoria	46%	54%	-8	Trade Certification	37%	63%	-26
Females	46%	54%	-8	Queensland	36%	64%	-28	University Educated	55%	45%	+10
18-34 Years	62%	38%	+24	WA	39%	61%	-22	Employed	48%	52%	-3
35-54 Years	47%	53%	-7	SA	45%	55%	-11	Not Employed	50%	50%	-1
55+ Years	31%	69%	-37	Tasmania^	56%	44%	+12	Retired	31%	69%	-38
Inner City	54%	46%	+9	Labor Voters	67%	33%	+34	Lower Income	37%	63%	-26
Outer Suburbs	44%	56%	-13	Coalition Voters	16%	84%	-68	Middle Income	40%	60%	-19
Regional	38%	62%	-25	Greens Voters	80%	20%	+60	Higher Income	51%	49%	+2
Rural	37%	63%	-26	Other Voters	26%	74%	-48	Religious	36%	64%	-29
Indigenous~	59%	41%	+19	Uncommitted Voters	47%	53%	-6	Christian	32%	68%	-35
Anglo	42%	58%	-17	Progressive	75%	25%	+51	Non-Christian	66%	34%	+32
Other Background	47%	53%	-5	Conservative	22%	78%	-57	Non-religious	53%	47%	+6
Indigenous Friend	41%	59%	-18	Neither View	34%	66%	-31	Born in Australia	43%	57%	-14
Do Not Know Ind.	46%	54%	-9	Marginal Seats	39%	61%	-23	Born Overseas	48%	52%	-4

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# Binary Vote for the Voice: Larger States

## NSW

(Filtered to those Enrolled & Likely to Vote)

	Y	N	Y-N
<b>Total</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>-5</b>
Males	47%	53%	-6
Females	48%	52%	-4
18-34 Years	72%	28%	+45
35-54 Years	49%	51%	-3
55+ Years	33%	67%	-34
Inner City	59%	41%	+18
Outer Suburbs	46%	54%	-7
Regional	37%	63%	-27
Rural	46%	54%	-7
Labor Voters	70%	30%	+40
Coalition Voters	22%	78%	-56
Greens Voters*	80%	20%	+59
Other Voters*	32%	68%	-37
Uncommitted Voters	46%	54%	-7

## Victoria

(Filtered to those Enrolled & Likely to Vote)

	Y	N	Y-N
<b>Total</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>-8</b>
Males	45%	55%	-10
Females	47%	53%	-7
18-34 Years	62%	38%	+24
35-54 Years	48%	52%	-4
55+ Years	33%	67%	-34
Inner City	58%	42%	+16
Outer Suburbs	47%	53%	-6
Regional	48%	52%	-3
Rural	28%	72%	-44
Labor Voters	69%	31%	+37
Coalition Voters	16%	84%	-68
Greens Voters*	82%	18%	+64
Other Voters*	29%	71%	-42
Uncommitted Voters	60%	40%	+19

## Queensland

(Filtered to those Enrolled & Likely to Vote)

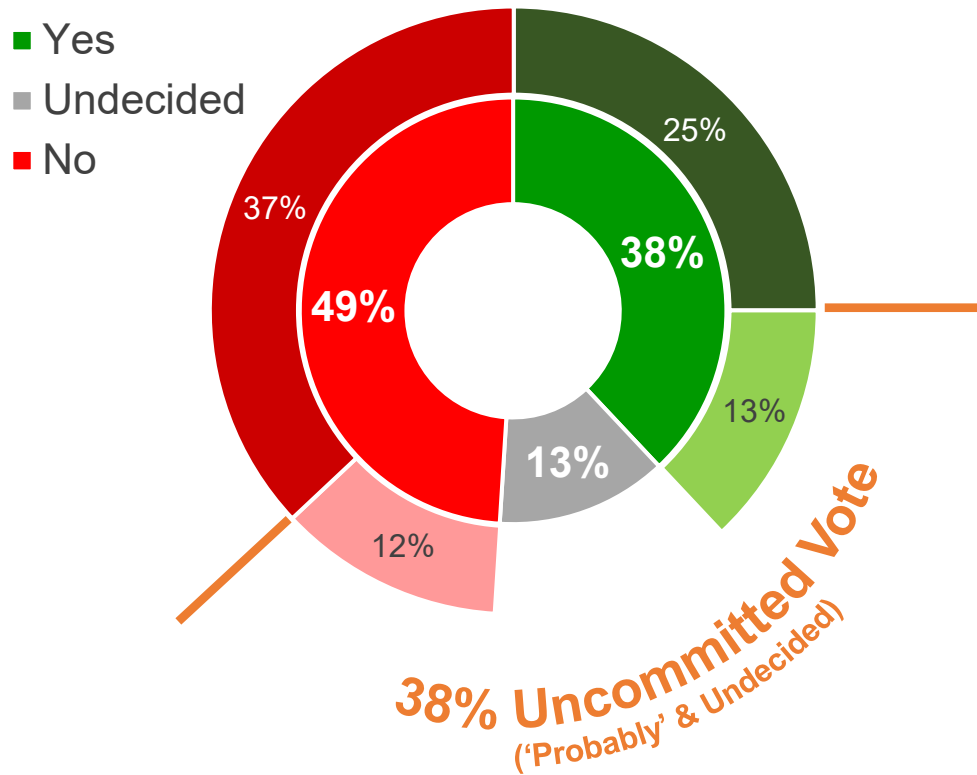
	Y	N	Y-N
<b>Total</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>-28</b>
Males	33%	67%	-35
Females	39%	61%	-23
18-34 Years	45%	55%	-9
35-54 Years	44%	56%	-12
55+ Years	25%	75%	-51
Inner City*	46%	54%	-8
Outer Suburbs	40%	60%	-21
Regional	29%	71%	-42
Rural	33%	67%	-34
Labor Voters	62%	38%	+24
Coalition Voters	10%	90%	-79
Greens Voters*	80%	20%	+59
Other Voters*	18%	82%	-65
Uncommitted Voters	38%	62%	-25

Q1504) The Federal Government is holding a referendum – a national vote – on whether to enshrine an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Voice to parliament in the Constitution. Details of the proposed amendment are below... Please now answer the referendum question. “A proposed law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?” Q1505) While you may not be currently decided, it is compulsory that you vote. Even if it’s a leaning... “do you approve this proposed alteration?” Base: Enrolled & Likely. \* Limited base size of <n=200 to be treated with caution (<n=100 excluded).

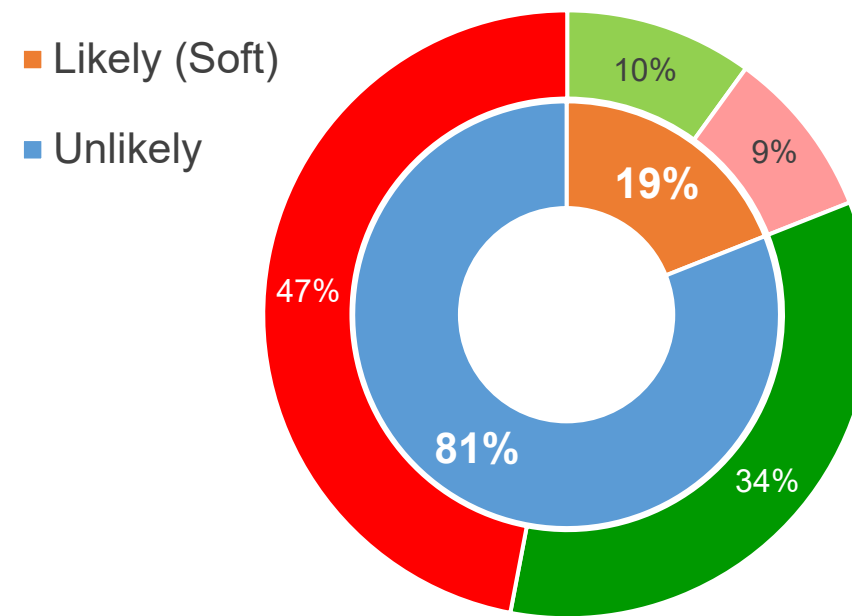


# Voting Commitment & Changeability

**Commitment: Opinion Rating**  
(Filtered to those Enrolled, but inc. Unlikely to Vote)



**Changeability: Likely to Change**  
(Asked of those Enrolled, inc. Unlikely to Vote)

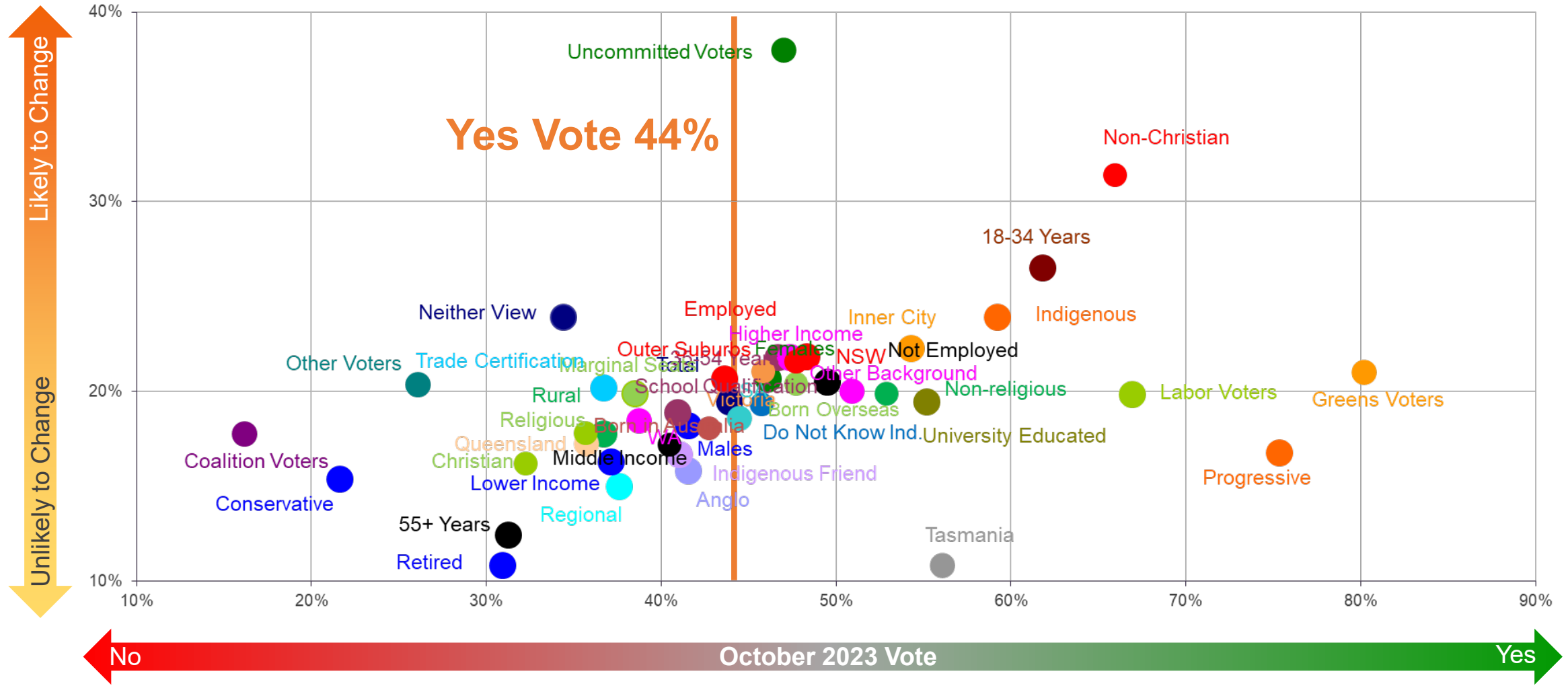


68% of voters report being completely locked into their vote choice

Q1504) The Federal Government is holding a referendum – a national vote – on whether to enshrine an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Voice to parliament in the Constitution. Details of the proposed amendment are below... Please now answer the referendum question. “A proposed law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?” Base: Enrolled. Q2504) And thinking again about your [YES / NO FROM Q1504/5] vote, how likely is it that you would change your mind and vote [YES / NO OPPOSITE OF Q1504/5] by the time of the referendum on 14th October? Base: Enrolled.



# Binary Vote & Changeability: Key Groups



Q2504) And thinking again about your [YES / NO FROM Q1504/5] vote, how likely is it that you would change your mind and vote [YES / NO OPPOSITE OF Q1504/5] by the time of the referendum on 14th October? Base: Enrolled. Limited base size of <n=200 to be treated with caution (<n=100 excluded). ^ The nature of on-line panels in Tasmania produce results in which we have less confidence than other states. ~ Indigenous sample will not adequately reflect remote communities.

- National Vote Trend (Binary)
- Underlying Support Trend
- Movement Breakdowns
- Key Events
- Published Polling
- Expected Outcome



# Vote Trend 2022-23



# Long-Term Vote Trend: 2022-23

- Early public opinion polling following the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart found strong in principle support for the proposal in the order of 75-80%. This buffer would have given the Yes case confidence in pursuing the core proposal publicly and a 'maximal model' in the subsequent design process.
- However, this was not a default Yes or a 'blank cheque': more of a gut reaction to the general idea when introduced in polling. Following Garma 2022 (where draft wording was announced) we found binary support had dropped to 64%. From there Yes vote has fallen steadily to its current mid-campaign position of 44% (a large 20-point drop), and it has never moved significantly in the other direction regardless of Yes campaign activity. That is, the Yes campaign has never persuaded a significant chunk of voters and has only ever failed to lose them.
  - Behind this long-term trend is a pattern of flow from uncommitted Yes and undecided vote moving to No, often directly to a committed No. Indeed, the most striking feature of the public opinion rating is the rise of committed No vote from 17% to 37% over the last year.
  - This underlying flow to No is further reinforced by undecided voters progressively moving from favouring a Yes vote in their leaning in 2022 (58% to 42%) to favouring No up until Aug-Sep. this year (54% to 46%).
- The general long-term trend in this poll is one confirmed by other published polls. Each has its own 'house effect' embedded in its design (something to be encouraged so that we may learn from their differences), but they have all shown a No vote climbing into majority throughout 2023. Clearly, the No campaign's year-long 'slow burn' campaign has been effective.
  - Despite the dramatic trend recorded in our tracking, Resolve's trend line is one of the shallowest – starting at 64% Yes in 2022 and ending at 40% Yes in mid-October. This may be a result of our consistent methodology (other polls have changed wording and approaches), but we do still see periods of steeper decline in the Yes vote. These tend to coincide with announcements of opposition or concentrated political activity, and in general the more voters have been exposed the proposal the more they have turned to No.
  - The effect of partisanship (and the values on which it is based) in the long-term campaign is given additional weight when we find that the groups most likely to have moved to No over the last year include Coalition and minor party voters, e.g. ONP and UAP, Christians and the traditionally more socially conservative states of Queensland and WA. In contrast, Greens and Labor voters have hardly moved.

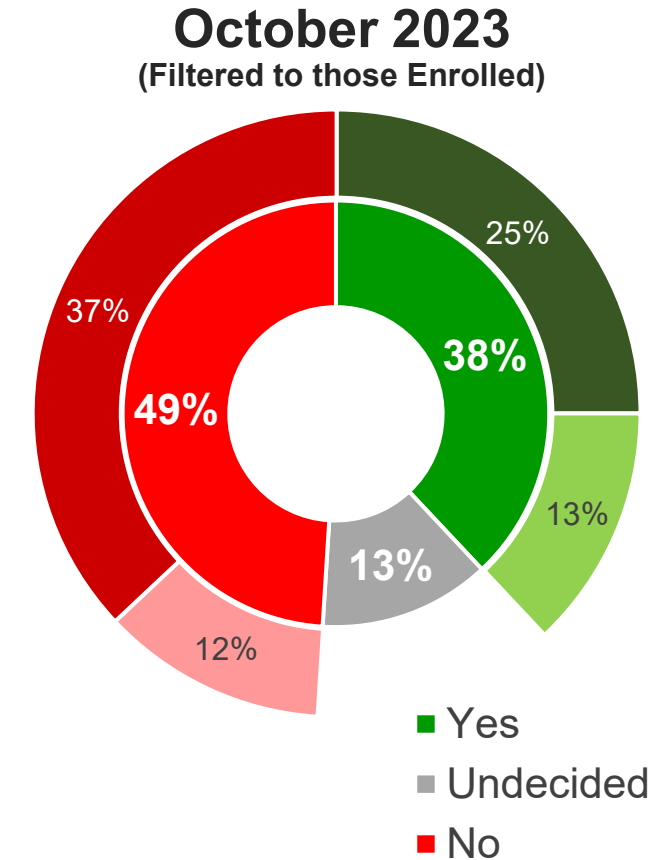
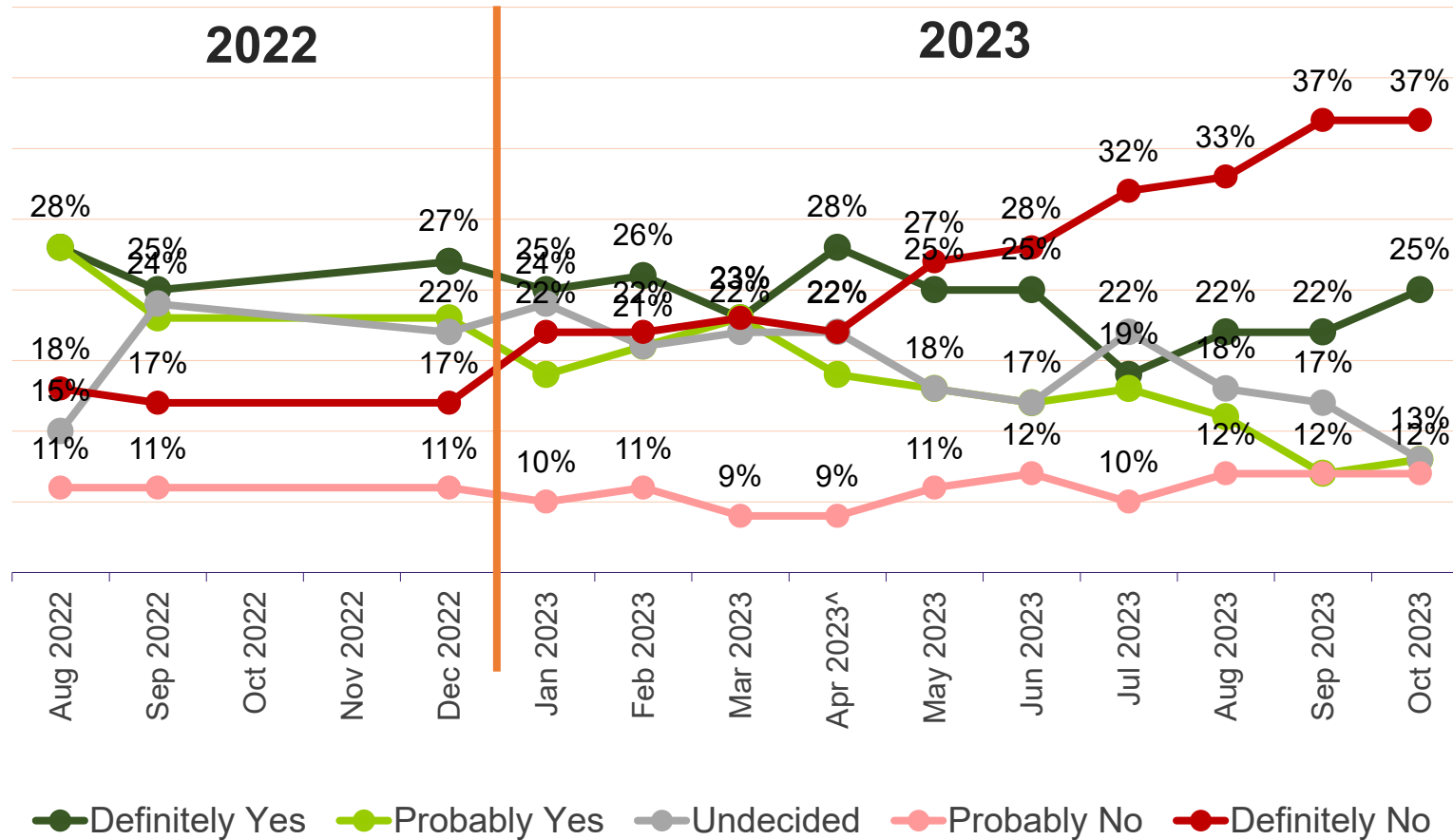


# Short-Term Vote Trend: Aug-Sep. & Oct. 2023

- Most Australians now expect the No case to win (51% versus 21% for Yes), this being both a sign of perceived performance and a measure of voting intention in people's wider social networks. Such expectations can also affect vote as they show voters whether there is a need for them to vote one way or another, or if they can 'send a message', e.g. a 'progressive No' vote if Yes is likely to win anyway.
- That is just one possible factor feeding into a short-term stabilization of voting intention in the campaign proper. It is too early to tell whether this is a brief hiatus, a 'bottoming out', a 'bounce back' or simply a result of the holiday period over which this poll was taken, but it is at the very least a respite in the long-term pattern of decline in the Yes vote.
  - Yes vote has increased 1-point to 44% since our September RPM track, and is the first movement in that direction for six months. This falls well within even this large poll's error margin, so is best thought of as a stabilization rather than any proven regain for Yes. Indeed, this could be said of every one of our tracks that have shown such a movement: Yes has never made a significant regain.
  - Breakdowns by sub-groups show that this short-term pause masks some small (still often insignificant) regains among progressive groups, such as Labor and Greens voters, 18-34 year olds and the inner city. It is possible that this reflects campaign activity that is 'preaching to the converted' (talking to its base) and/or a potential flow back of 'progressive No' vote in light of the expected outcome.
  - We note here that the Yes campaign has chosen to spend significant resources – advertising, on-line content, volunteers, etc. – in the final weeks of the campaign. This more traditional 'election bump' configuration sits in contrast to the more modestly funded 'slow burn' strategy of the No camp (itself concentrated in the smaller states and more reliant on social and earned media), and is akin to a 'tortoise and hare' race. We may well be seeing the effects of this late imbalance in campaign activity, though we caution that the task of Yes to win over four states (including the large NSW and Victoria) is an uphill task.
- Whatever the cause, it is noteworthy that the underlying siding of opinion with No has not changed at all (it is still at 49% among those enrolled). Instead, this is about undecided voters increasingly moving to (38%, up 4-points) or leaning towards (51%, up 5-points) Yes in the final weeks of the campaign. No voters are not being persuaded back to Yes.



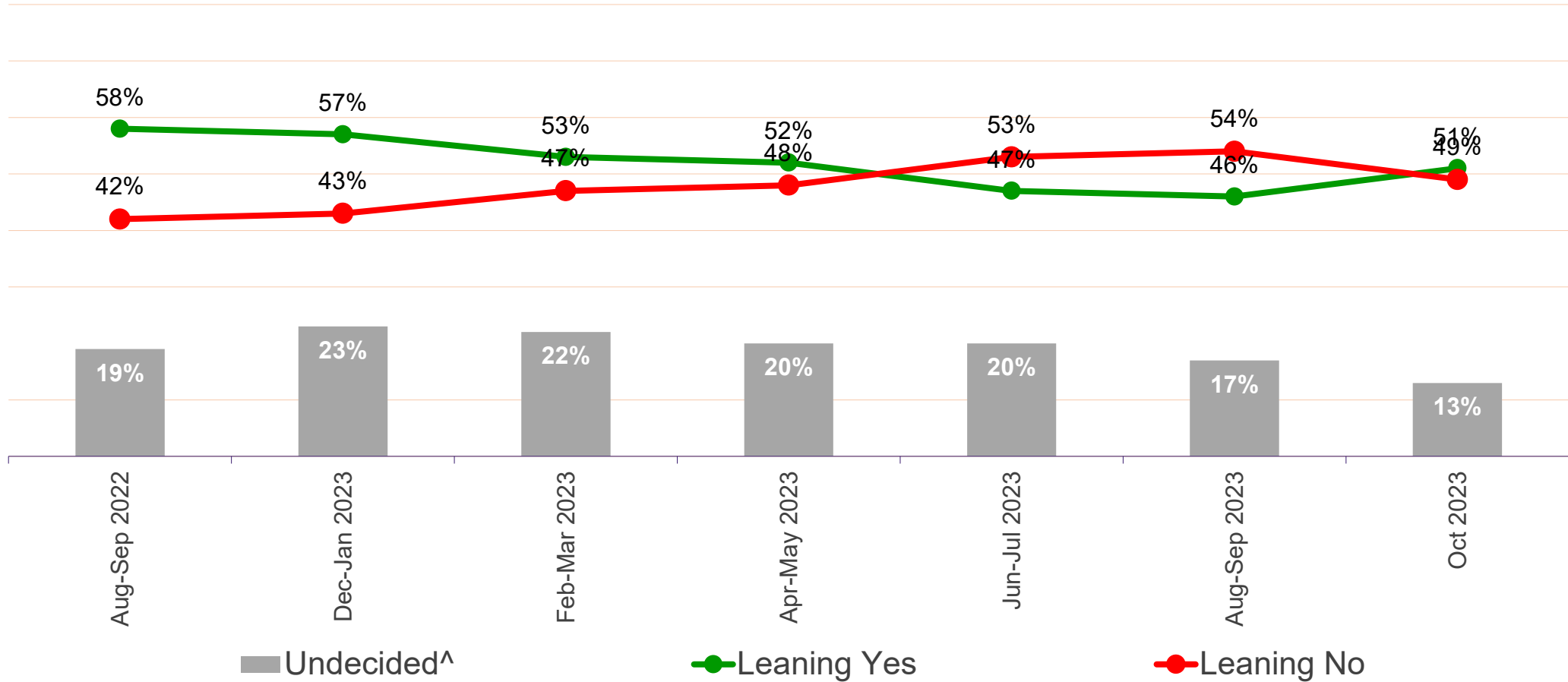
# Support Rating for the Voice: Trend



Q1504) The Federal Government is holding a referendum – a national vote – on whether to enshrine an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Voice to parliament in the Constitution. Details of the proposed amendment are below... Please now answer the referendum question. “A proposed law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?” Base: Enrolled. ^ Updated wording introduced from Track 23 (very similar to Garma 2022 announcement wording used previously).



# 'Undecided' Forced Leaning: Trend

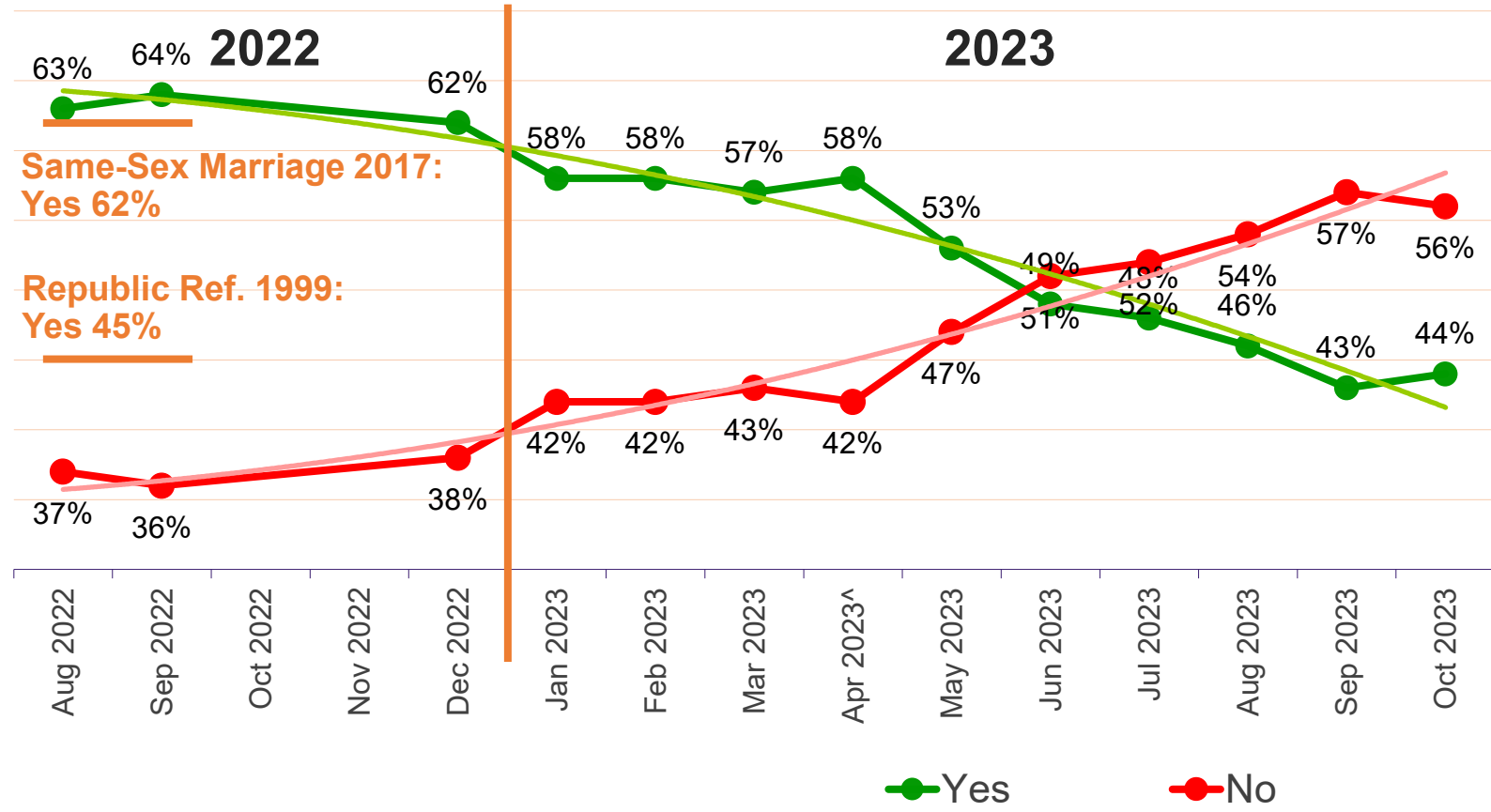


Q1504) The Federal Government is holding a referendum – a national vote – on whether to enshrine an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Voice to parliament in the Constitution. Details of the proposed amendment are below... Please now answer the referendum question. “A proposed law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?” Q1505) While you may not be currently decided, it is compulsory that you vote. Even if it’s a leaning... “do you approve this proposed alteration?”

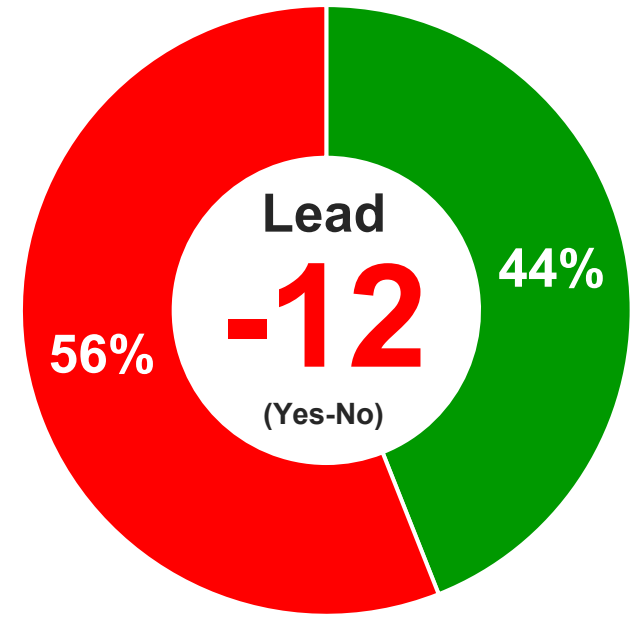
Base: Undecided on initial support rating. N.B. Tracks combined as sample sizes limited to 260-375 in each RPM track. ^ Undecided filtered to those enrolled.



# Binary Vote for the Voice: Trend



**October 2023**  
(Filtered to Enrolled & Likely Turnout)



Q1504) The Federal Government is holding a referendum – a national vote – on whether to enshrine an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Voice to parliament in the Constitution. Details of the proposed amendment are below... Please now answer the referendum question. “A proposed law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?” Q1505) While you may not be currently decided, it is compulsory that you vote. Even if it’s a leaning... “do you approve this proposed alteration?” Base: Enrolled & Likely (previous tracks may have been filtered to those unenrolled but eligible to be enrolled in time). ^ Updated wording introduced from Track 23 (very similar to Garma 2022 announcement wording used previously).





# Binary Vote for the Voice: Change 2022-2023

	2022	2023	22-23
<b>Total</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>-20</b>
Males	58%	42%	-16
Females	68%	46%	-22
18-34 Years	76%	62%	-14
35-54 Years	63%	47%	-16
55+ Years	54%	31%	-23
Inner City	69%	54%	-15
Outer Suburbs	62%	44%	-18
Regional	61%	38%	-23
Rural	60%	37%	-23
Indigenous~	N/A*	59%	N/A
Anglo	62%	42%	-20
Other Background	67%	47%	-20
Indigenous Friend	68%	41%	-27
Do Not Know Ind.	64%	46%	-18

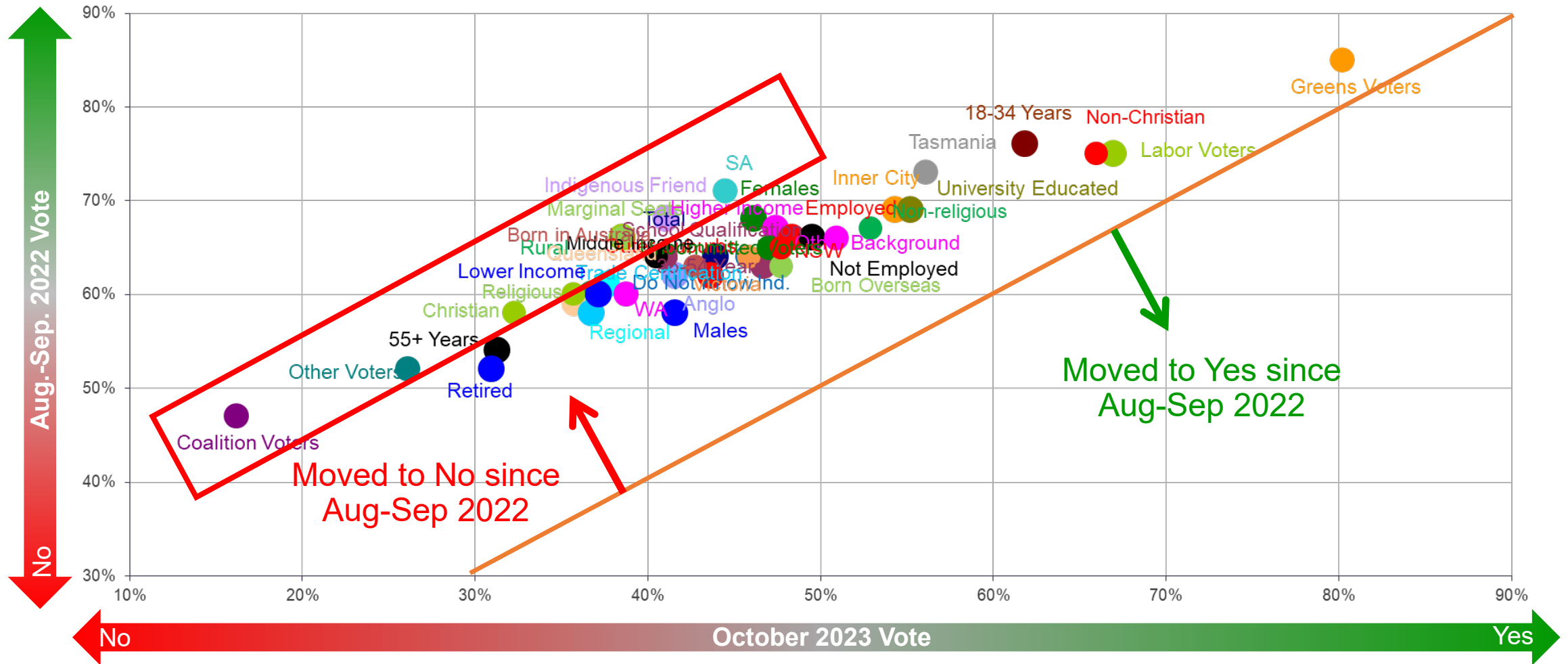
	2022	2023	22-23
NSW	65%	48%	-17
Victoria	64%	46%	-18
Queensland	59%	36%	-23
WA	60%	39%	-21
SA	71%	45%	-26
Tasmania^	73%*	56%	-17
Labor Voters	75%	67%	-8
Coalition Voters	47%	16%	-31
Greens Voters	85%	80%	-5
Other Voters	52%	26%	-26
Uncommitted Voters	65%	47%	-18
Progressives	N/A	75%	N/A
Conservatives	N/A	22%	N/A
Neither	N/A	34%	N/A
Marginal Seats	66%	39%	-27

	2022	2023	22-23
School Qualification	64%	41%	-23
Trade Certification	58%	37%	-21
University Educated	69%	55%	-14
Employed	66%	48%	-18
Not Employed	66%	50%	-16
Retired	52%	31%	-21
Lower Income	60%	37%	-23
Middle Income	64%	40%	-24
Higher Income	66%	51%	-15
Religious	60%	36%	-24
Christian	58%	32%	-26
Other Religion	75%	66%	-9
Non-religious	67%	53%	-14
Born in Australia	63%	43%	-20
Born Overseas	63%	48%	-15

Q1504) The Federal Government is holding a referendum – a national vote – on whether to enshrine an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Voice to parliament in the Constitution. Details of the proposed amendment are below... Please now answer the referendum question. “A proposed law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?” Q1505) While you may not be currently decided, it is compulsory that you vote. Even if it’s a leaning... “do you approve this proposed alteration?” Base: Enrolled & Likely (previous tracks may have been filtered to those unenrolled but eligible to be enrolled in time). \* Limited base size of <n=200 to be treated with caution (<n=100 excluded). ~ Indigenous sample will not adequately reflect remote communities. Very small samples for Indigenous through earlier RPM tracking with Yes results ranging between 63-87%, which is broadly consistent with the ~80% reported by other on-line polls. ^ The nature of on-line panels in Tasmania produce results in which we have less confidence than other states.



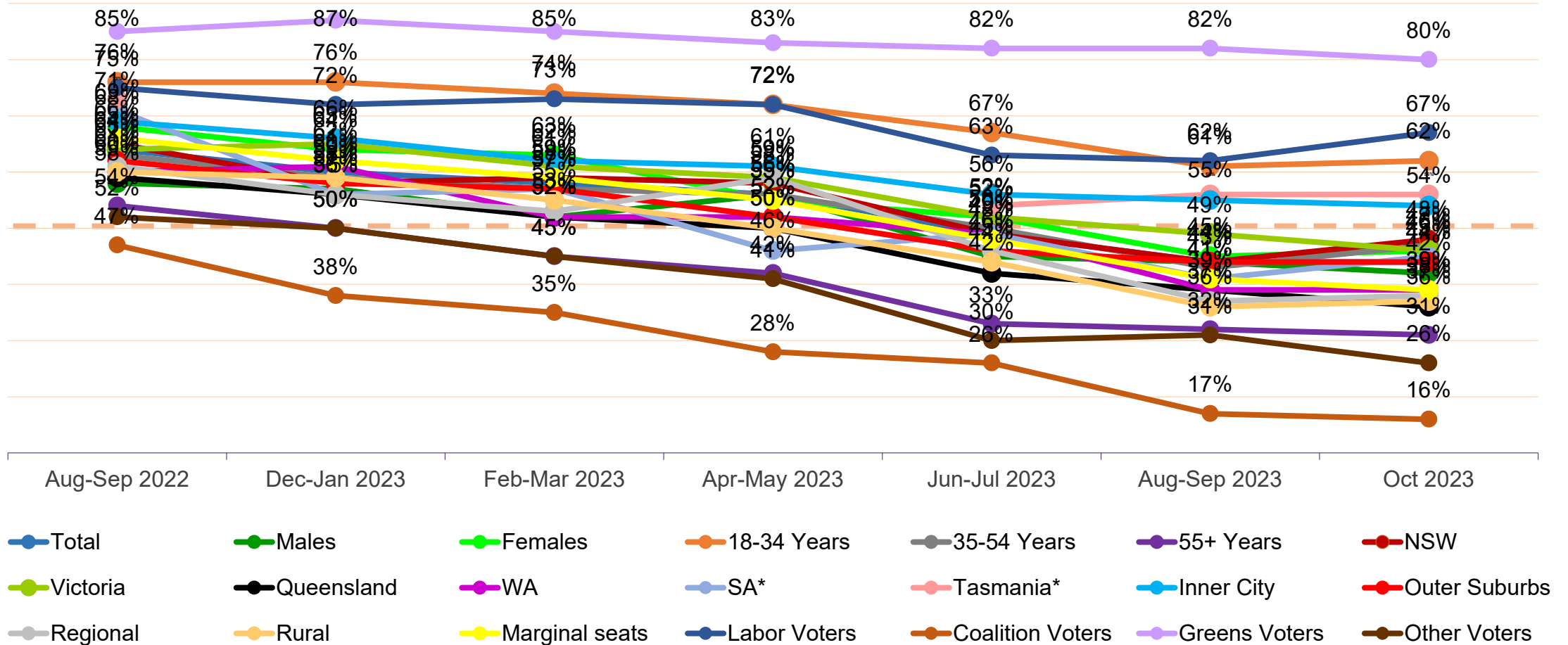
# Binary Vote for the Voice: Detail & Change



Q1504) The Federal Government is holding a referendum – a national vote – on whether to enshrine an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Voice to parliament in the Constitution. Details of the proposed amendment are below... Please now answer the referendum question. “A proposed law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?” Q1505) While you may not be currently decided, it is compulsory that you vote. Even if it’s a leaning... “do you approve this proposed alteration?” Base: Enrolled & Likely (previous tracks may have been filtered to those unenrolled but eligible to be enrolled in time). Limited base size of <n=200 to be treated with caution (<n=100 excluded). ^ The nature of on-line panels in Tasmania produce results in which we have less confidence than other states.



# Binary Vote for the Voice: Detail Trend



Q1504) The Federal Government is holding a referendum – a national vote – on whether to enshrine an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Voice to parliament in the Constitution. Details of the proposed amendment are below... Please now answer the referendum question. “A proposed law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?” Q1505) While you may not be currently decided, it is compulsory that you vote. Even if it’s a leaning... “do you approve this proposed alteration?” Base: Enrolled & Likely (previous tracks may have been filtered to those unenrolled but eligible to be enrolled in time). \* Limited base size of <n=200 in RPM tracking to be treated with caution (<n=100 excluded).



# Binary Vote for the Voice: Change Sep.-Oct. 2023

	Sep	Oct	S-O
<b>Total</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>+1</b>
Males	42%	42%	0
Females	43%	46%	+3
18-34 Years	58%	62%	+4
35-54 Years	42%	47%	+4
55+ Years	31%	31%	0
Inner City	53%	54%	+1
Outer Suburbs	43%	44%	+1
Regional	40%	38%	-2
Rural	39%	37%	-2
Indigenous~	N/A*	59%	N/A
Anglo	41%	42%	+1
Other Background	43%	47%	+4
Indigenous Friend	N/A	41%	N/A
Do Not Know Ind.	N/A	46%	N/A

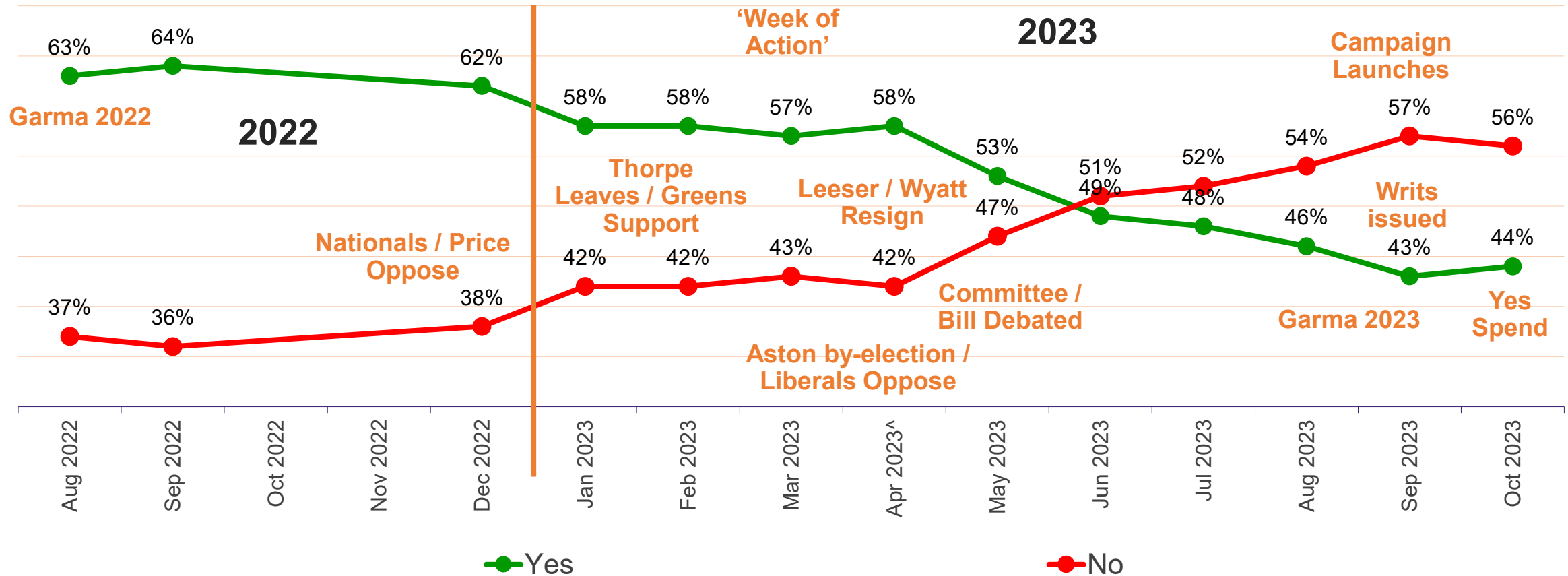
	Sep	Oct	S-O
NSW	46%	48%	+2
Victoria	46%	46%	0
Queensland	38%	36%	-2
WA	43%	39%	-4
SA	49%*	45%	-4
Tasmania^	N/A*	56%	N/A
Labor Voters	60%	67%	+7
Coalition Voters	16%	16%	0
Greens Voters	78%	80%	+2
Other Voters	30%	26%	-4
Uncommitted Voters	50%	47%	-3
Progressives	72%	75%	+3
Conservatives	22%	22%	0
Neither	37%	34%	-3
Marginal Seats	40%	39%	-1

	Sep	Oct	S-O
School Qualification	39%	41%	+2
Trade Certification	35%	37%	+1
University Educated	54%	55%	+1
Employed	45%	48%	+3
Not Employed	47%	50%	+3
Retired	31%	31%	0
Lower Income	37%	37%	0
Middle Income	40%	40%	0
Higher Income	48%	51%	+3
Religious	38%	36%	-2
Christian	34%	32%	-2
Other Religion	63%*	66%	+3
Non-religious	54%	53%	-1
Born in Australia	43%	43%	0
Born Overseas	51%	48%	-3

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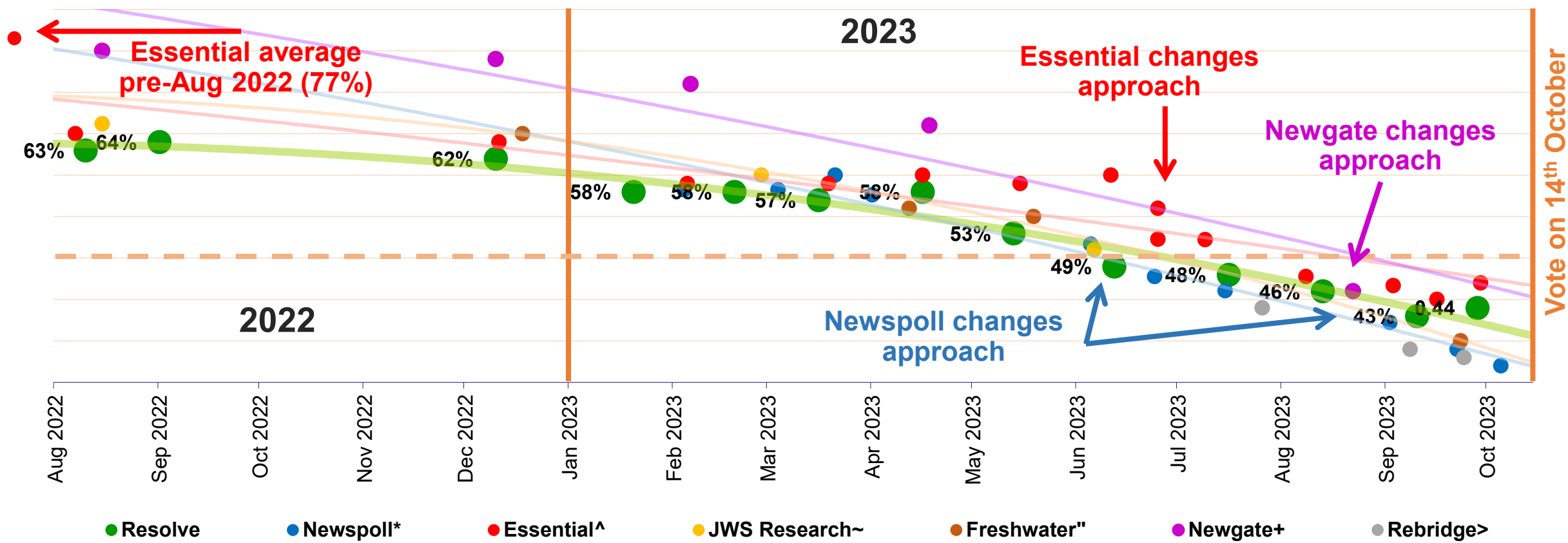
# Binary Vote for the Voice: Key Events



Q1504) The Federal Government is holding a referendum – a national vote – on whether to enshrine an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Voice to parliament in the Constitution. Details of the proposed amendment are below... Please now answer the referendum question. “A proposed law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?” Q1505) While you may not be currently decided, it is compulsory that you vote. Even if it’s a leaning... “do you approve this proposed alteration?” Base: Enrolled & Likely(previous tracks may have been filtered to those unenrolled but eligible to be enrolled in time). ^ Updated wording introduced from Track 23 (very similar to Garma 2022 announcement wording used previously).



# Binary Yes Vote for the Voice: Published Polling

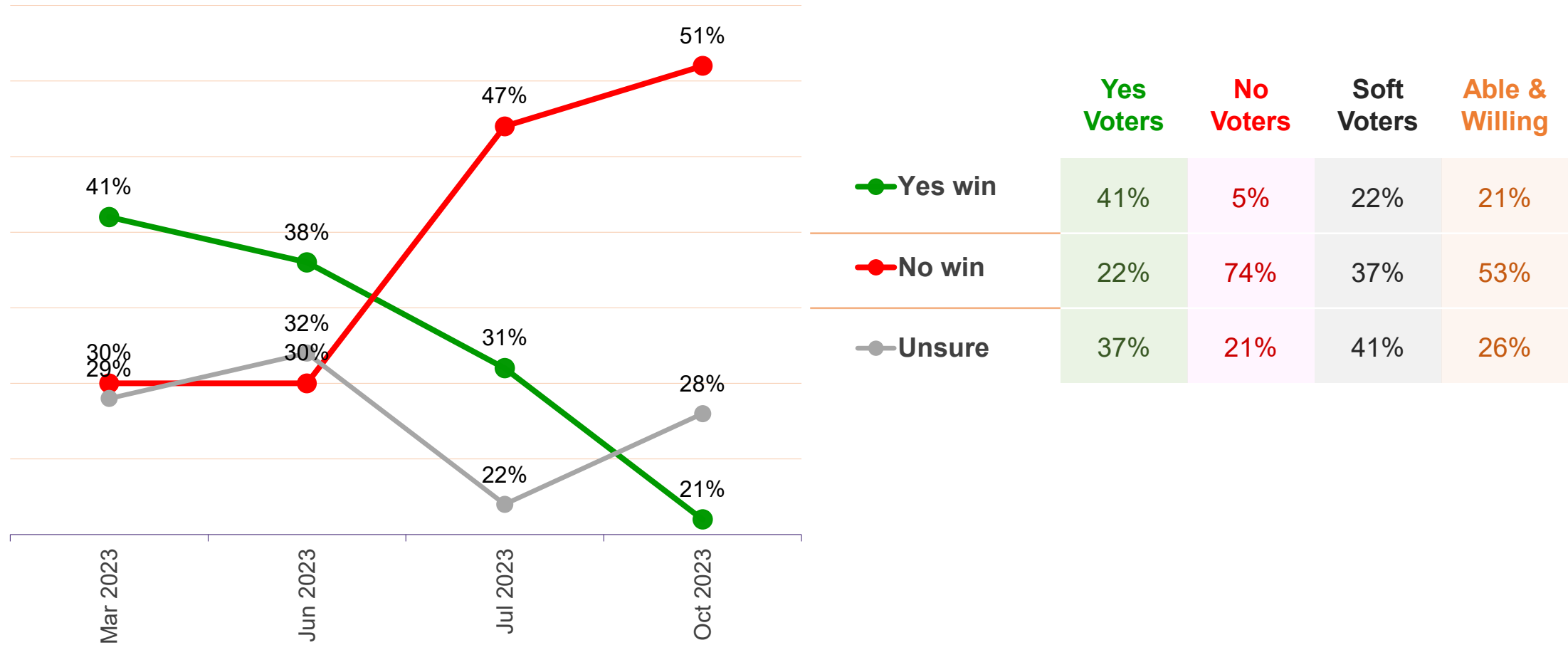


This chart displays the percentages Yes vote of official published polls, i.e. excludes those polls unpublished / non-commissioned or conducted by campaigns, in a binary Yes/No choice for valid comparison (including apportioning 'undecided' if that is included in the results) using their mid-fieldwork point. Most will have sample sizes of n=1,000+, but the filtering of these results by enrolled voters or those likely to turnout may vary, if applied at all. Trend lines have been provided for the more regular polls, and can include data pre-2022 in their calculation. \* Newspoll (The Australian) includes anything conducted under that brand by YouGov, Galaxy and Pyxis, noting a change of sampling / size from Sep 2023 and a change wording and response categories from Jun 2023. ^ Essential (Guardian Australia) changed wording and response categories from Jul 2023, and had Yes between 74-80% before 2022 (as did sporadic polls by Aus. Inst., Scanlon Inst., CT Group, Newgate, Omnipoll. ~ JWS (AFR) has no trend line given only three data points. " Freshwater (AFR at time of their polling) trendline added now that a fourth poll has been published. + Newgate (The Australian) changed wording and response categories from Aug 2023. > Redbridge (Telegraph) has no trend line given only three data points.

Vote on 14<sup>th</sup> October



# Expected Referendum Outcome



	Yes Voters	No Voters	Soft Voters	Able & Willing
Yes win	41%	5%	22%	21%
No win	22%	74%	37%	53%
Unsure	37%	21%	41%	26%

Q2201) Regardless of how you might vote in the Voice referendum, do you think the Yes case will win, i.e. achieve a majority of votes in a majority of states, or not? Base: Special sample.

- Ability to Explain the Voice
- Symbolism & Practicality
- Support for Recognition
- Support for Legislated Voice
- Significance of the Proposal
- Importance of the Issue



# Referendum Perspectives





# Referendum Perspectives

- The proposal has been billed as ‘recognition through the establishment of a Voice’, and therefore has both symbolic and practical dimensions. However, for most Australians this is more a practical request rather than a symbolic one (48% versus 29%), so it is the Voice that will be the main focus for them.
  - Basic awareness of the Voice is now almost universal (95%), but it is a significant finding that only 38% say they would be able to explain the concept to someone. That is, people have heard of this proposal but do not fully understand it in the main. In the absence of this basic building block, the default can be to vote No, i.e. ‘if you don’t know, vote no’.
  - This is especially the case if voters see risk in change, and Australians are certainly more likely to regard this referendum proposal as an important and significant one (44%) rather than a small, modest change (just 23%, in effect rejecting a key Yes framing). Further, it is likely that the permanency of enshrinement magnifies any perceived risk, as can the points of design being enshrined as rights. A No vote does not preclude a Voice or some other action being taken later on, but in this lopsided choice a Yes vote is not easily undone.
- Critically, we find that more Australians support both symbolic constitutional recognition of Indigeneity (as per the precursor Recognise campaign) and/or a legislated Voice for Indigenous people (58% and 41% respectively) than the current proposal that combines the two concepts (38% general population support), even in this febrile campaign environment.
  - This points squarely to the Voice’s enshrinement in the Constitution being a point of contention, with permanency without detail or a proven track record naturally amplifying the associated risk. While the need for a permanent institution was partially address during the campaign, the need for permanent design features was not.
  - It also suggests that the No case may have secured additional vote share had it more successfully reframed the choice from Yes/No on a Voice to Yes for an enshrined Voice versus no for a legislated one (or other action), in effect providing many of the desired benefits without the perceived risks associated with permanency. However, like change to the proposal on the Yes side, this may have split the campaign’s base.

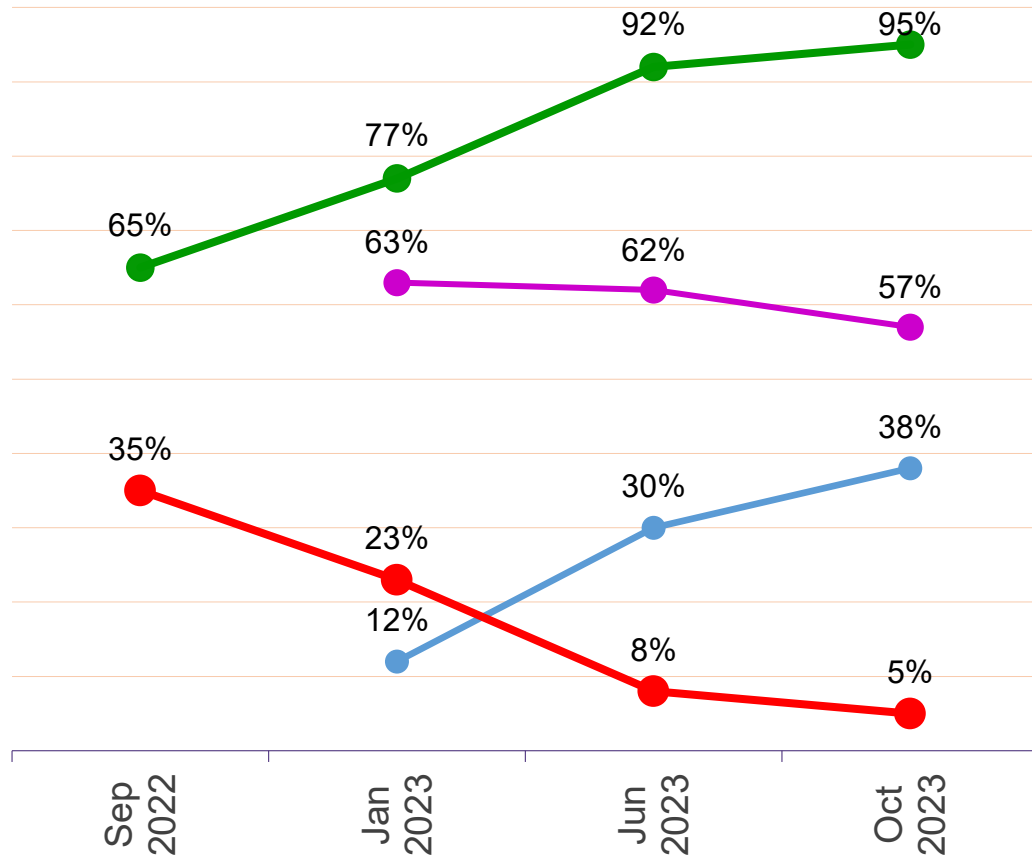


# Referendum Perspectives

- Experience has shown that the uncertainty associated with policy asks is a hurdle that can be overcome if the issue is salient enough to warrant urgent action, any action. That is, any perceived risk can be balanced if the reward outweighs it, with this figuring into the Yes campaign's message that 'a vote for No is a vote for no change'.
  - This does not appear to be the case here, with 'Indigenous issues and the Voice' being rated 'very important' by only 21% and as the top issue priority by only 1% of Australians. Both are up slightly in this month's RPM tracking consistent with its timing, but remain low order for most people compared to things like the rising cost of living (more than equaling all other priorities combined at 52%).
  - This perhaps reflects a lack of connection to Indigenous people and issues in their communities, with less than a third of Australians in this poll (31%) reporting that they know someone identifying as Indigenous. There may still be broad empathy, of course, but not the sympathy or salience that is born of shared experience. It is not that Indigenous Australians are 'unloved', but that they are unfamiliar.
- Governments make and deliver policy in areas that only a few people care about or have connections to everyday, of course, and it is entirely possible that a legislated Voice would have not even garnered the attention of the electorate. However, constitutional enshrinement dictates a referendum be held, and in turn forces the electorate's gaze. This process can act as a reason to lodge a protest (vote) in itself.



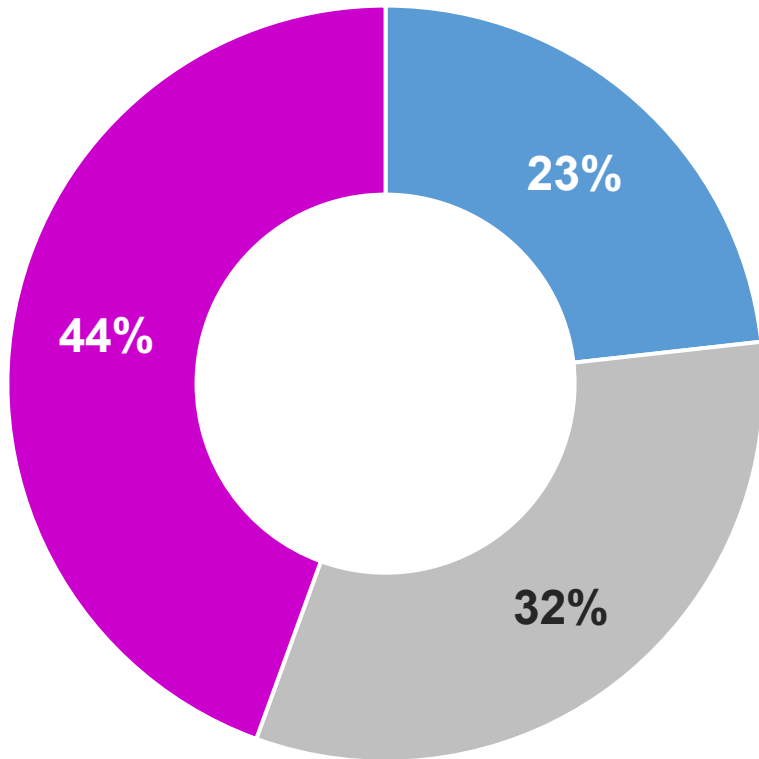
# Knowledge: Ability to Explain the Voice



	Yes Voters	No Voters	Soft Voters	Able & Willing
<b>TOTAL AWARE</b>	95%	94%	87%	97%
<b>Confident explaining</b>	45%	33%	17%	41%
<b>Struggle to explain</b>	50%	62%	70%	56%
<b>Never heard of it</b>	5%	6%	13%	3%

Q2002) Being honest, do you think you could confidently explain to a friend what the Indigenous Voice is, how it works and what powers it has?  
Base: Special Sample.

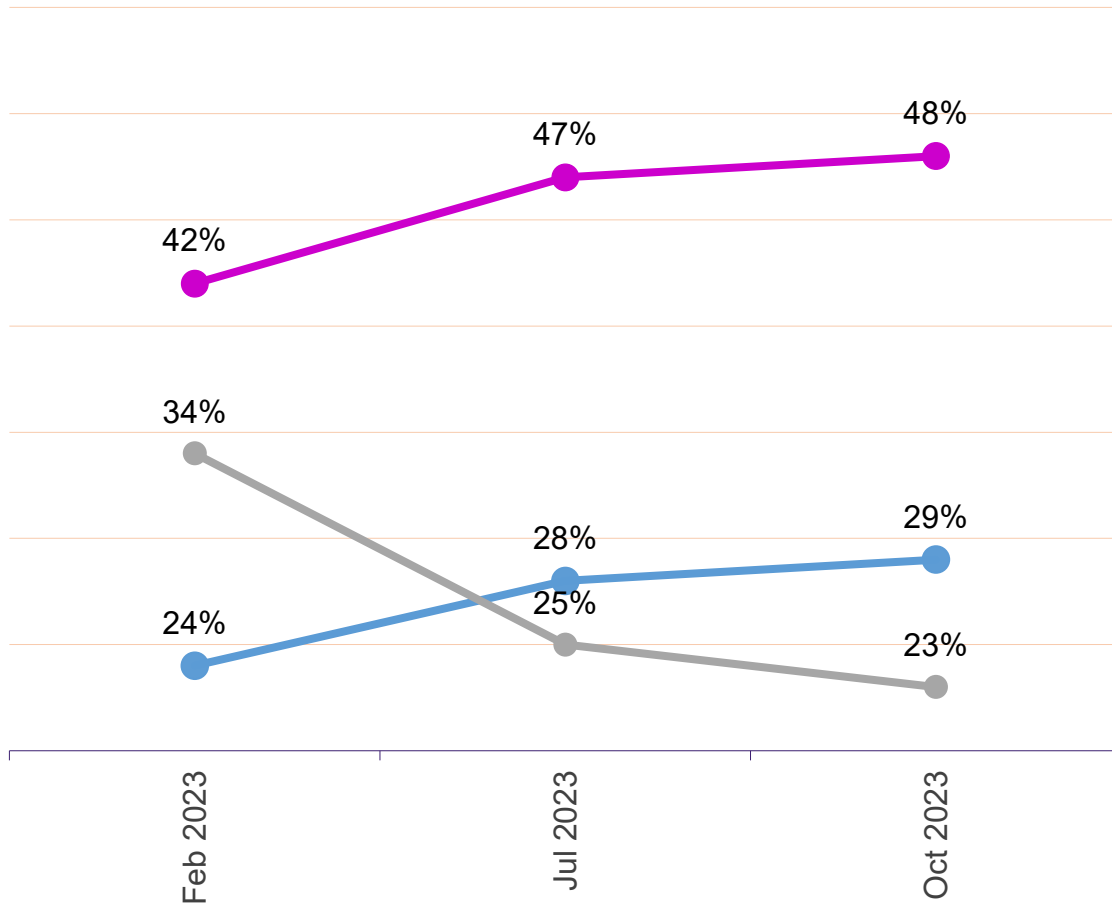
# Significance of the Proposal



	Yes Voters	No Voters	Soft Voters	Able & Willing
■ A small, modest change	34%	15%	25%	23%
■ Undecided	16%	46%	43%	30%
■ An important, significant change	50%	40%	32%	47%



# Symbolism V Practicality: Recognition & Voice

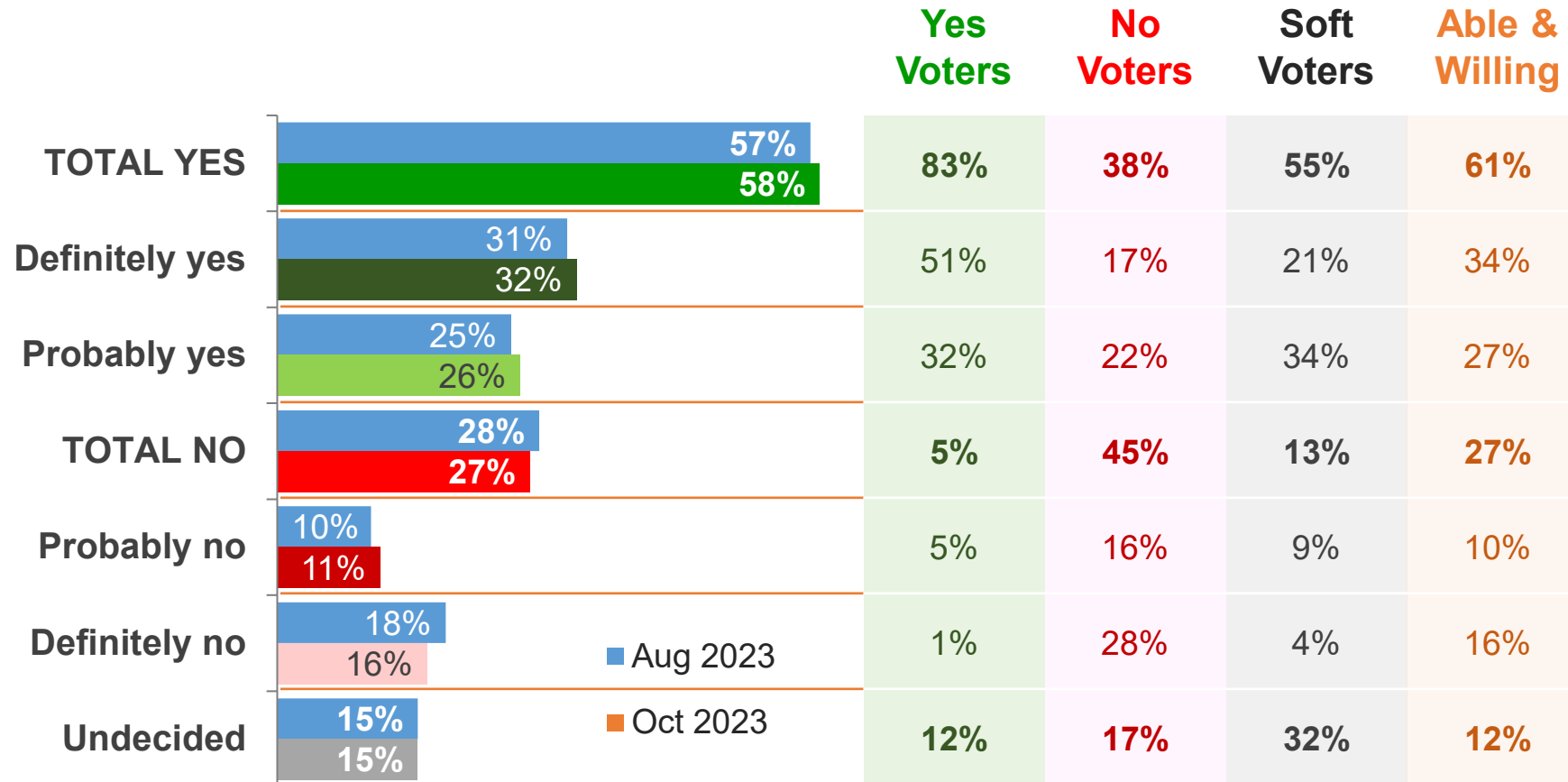


	Yes Voters	No Voters	Soft Voters	Able & Willing
Symbolic Recognition	28%	30%	29%	30%
Practical outcomes	61%	37%	41%	50%
Undecided	11%	33%	30%	20%

Q2110) The referendum combines two components; firstly, a symbolic recognition of Indigenous people as the first inhabitants in Australia's Constitution; and secondly, the setting up of a Voice to parliament on issues and policy. When considering how to vote in the referendum, what do you think the choice is more about? Base: Special Sample.



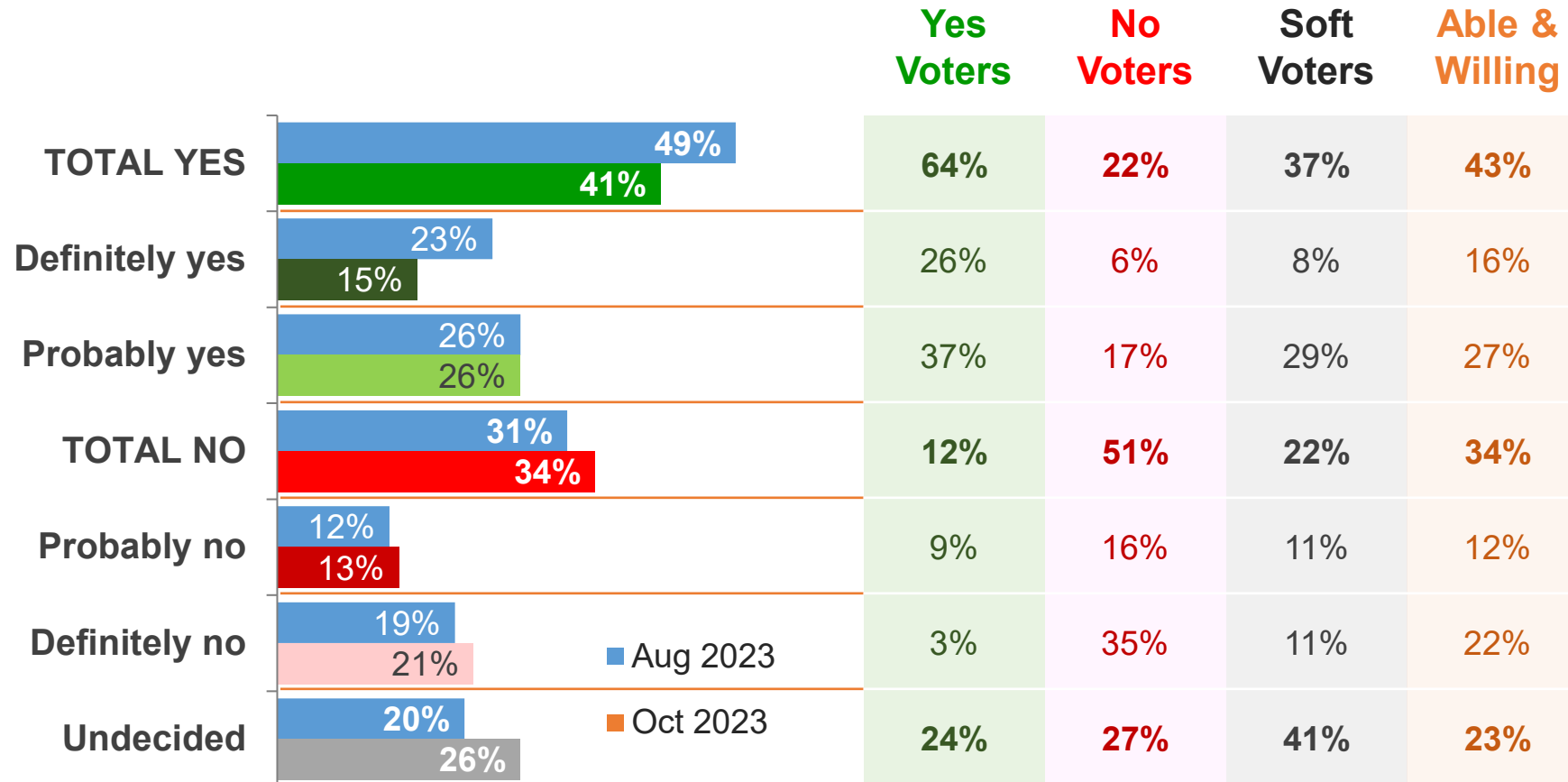
# Support for Constitutional Recognition



Q2003) Taking each of those components separately and in turn, would you support or oppose an alteration to the Constitution to include a recognition that Indigenous people were the first inhabitants of Australia? This is separate to the Voice. Base: Special sample.

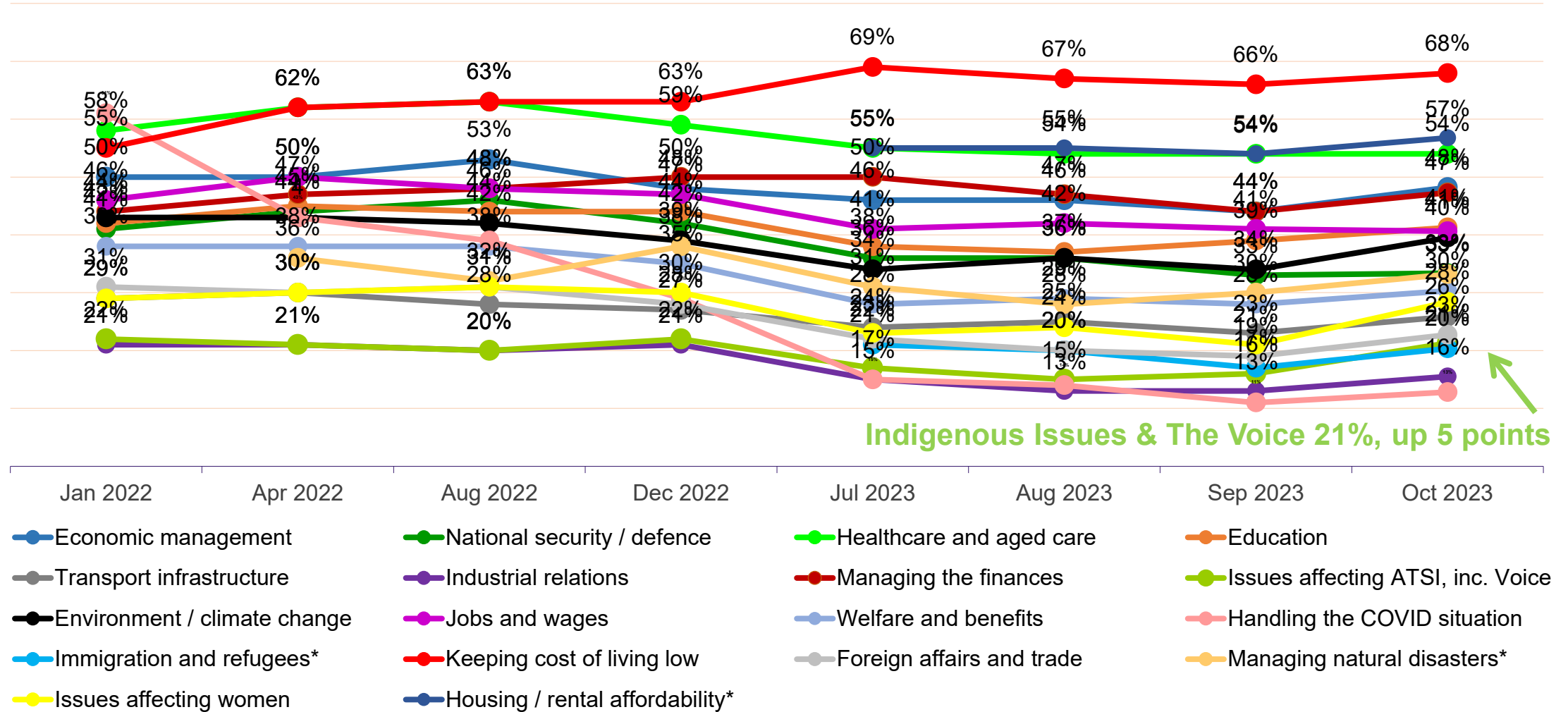


# Support for Legislating a Voice



Q2004) The Voice does not necessarily require a vote to happen – a body like a Voice can simply be legislated by parliament without becoming a permanent part of Australia’s Constitution. This is how other advisory bodies are formed. In this scenario, would you support the setting up of a legislated Voice to parliament to provide advice and guidance on issues and policy if it were not in the Constitution and did not require a vote? Base: Special Sample.

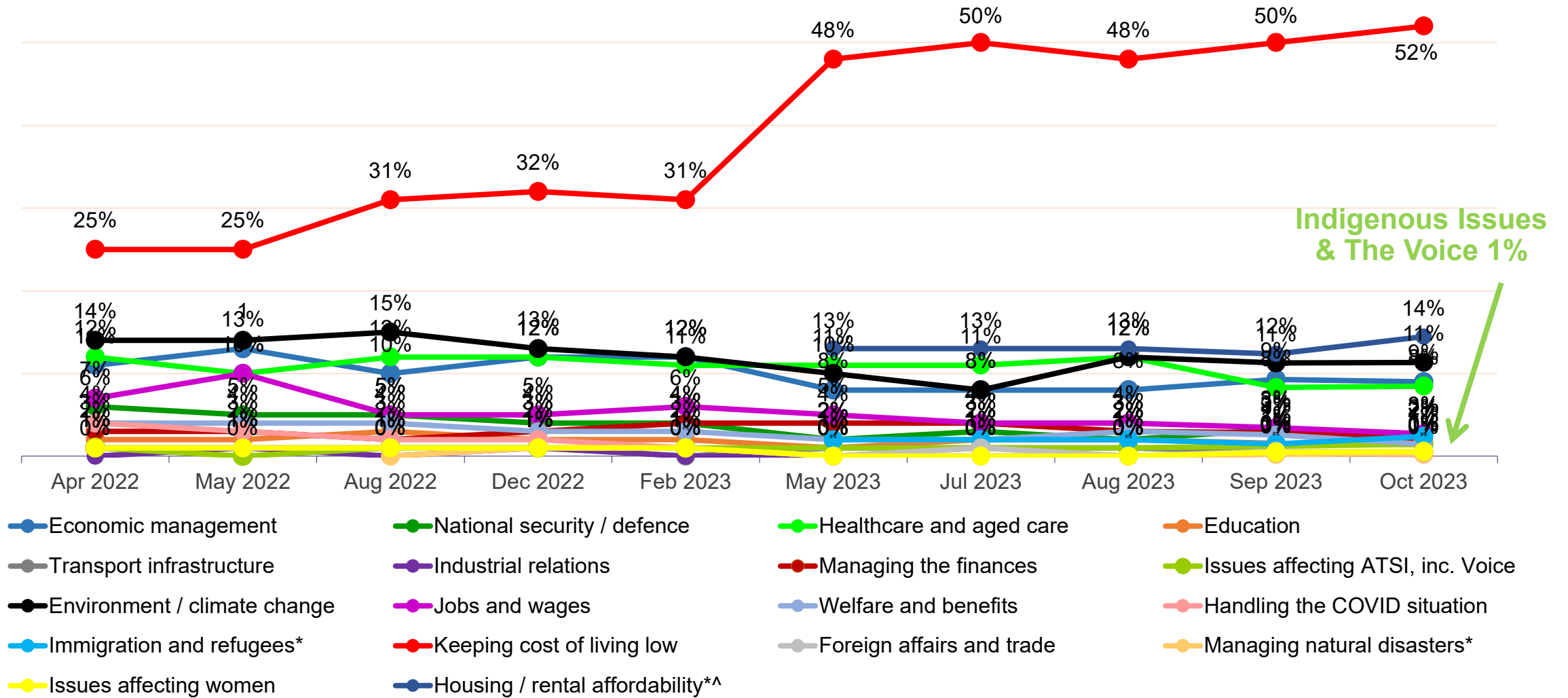
# Importance of Issues (Very Important)



Q18) Below are some issues that other people have said are important to them personally. For each, please tell us how important it is to you. Base: RPM  
 N.B. Uses % 'Very Important'. \* New or revised statement.



# Single Priority Issue



Q9) And of the issues you marked as important, which ONE do you think is the highest priority for you and your vote choice? Base: RPM.

\* New or revised statement. ^ Included in 'Cost of living' total.

- Desire for Information & Detail
- Most Influential Sources
- AEC Referendum Pamphlet
- Uluru Statement from the Heart
- Campaign Exposure
- Campaign Performance
- Campaign Spokespeople
- Corporate Involvement



# Information & Sources



# Information & Sources

- There has been a great deal of debate since the announcement of the referendum about how much detail should be provided in advance; the Yes case arguing that the vote should be one of principle before the Voice is designed by legislation post-vote; the No case arguing that people should have detail or default to No in its absence.
  - This poll finds that 60% of Australians would still like more information (29% are happy to vote on principle and existing information), and even half of current Yes voters (48%) would like more detail. The failure to design and consult pre-vote has created a product that the largely non-Indigenous electorate has not vetted or seen in action. It has also presented an information vacuum that the No campaign has been able to fill, with uncertainty and perceptions of 'hiding something' feeding the risk of change.
  - Asked what information they would like before voting, voters spontaneously requested; a clear explanation of the proposal, a justification of it being needed and why it is the best solution; a confirmation that most Indigenous people desire this; details of how the Voice will operate, i.e. its design and function, how effective and efficient it will be in reality (outcomes); plus, how the Voice relates to other requests made by the Uluru Statement from the Heart (notably treaties). A lot of this appears to be about providing reassurances.
- Many voters have received information or appeals from official sources, the campaigns and the media. In fact, Yes, No and soft voters have generally been exposed to the same things, but are looking for and taking from them what they want.
  - 62% of voters report receiving the AEC's referendum pamphlet, but just 36% have read it to date. This is consistent across Yes and No voters, but those reading the pamphlet (who may be older and more attuned to paper-based communications) are more likely to vote No.
  - Just 16% have read the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which lays the foundational case and call for an enshrined Voice, and a third (34%) have never heard of it. These figures have not changed dramatically since January 2023, suggesting that many Australians have failed to engage fully in the debate and may not connect with the concepts and language that are assumed by historical exposure. Those that have read it are more likely to vote Yes, but again this may be due to the nature of those seeking out such information.
  - Reflecting the more concentrated campaign period, a majority of voters (58%) have now been exposed to advertising. This is skewed to Yes campaign creative on TV and on-line (52% versus 29% for No, primarily on-line), but that lopsided exposure does not seem to have resulted in any boost in the Yes vote. Indeed, there are indications that at least some Yes adverts may have done more harm than good.
  - 14% now report being contacted directly by one of the campaigns, and here we do find that the Yes vote is higher. Conversations with Yes campaigners does seem to have moved the dial, and many also seem to have rejected approaches made by the No campaign.



# Information & Sources

- The clear trend in vote and expected outcome leads to the unsurprisingly opinion that the No campaign has performed better (42% versus 24% for Yes). However, we find that the most useful information to voters has been less partisan in nature.
  - Australians nominated free-to-air TV news and current affairs, friends and family, social media and newspapers as the sources found most useful in helping them to make up their minds (all 13-27%). This is true for both voting intentions, noting that they may seek out or naturally be most exposed to perspectives that align with their own.
  - Yes campaign activity and content was influential for 11% and No campaign activity for 9%, i.e. roughly on par despite differing reach and the No campaign focusing on smaller states and on-line rather than nationwide or broadcast media.
- In a further sign of disengagement from the official campaigns, most Australians fail to recognize the large number of key Yes campaign figures and organisations. Instead, it is the political Yes advocates that are higher profile.
  - A majority of Australians (56-75%) report being unfamiliar with key Yes figures and organisations, such as Yes23, Uphold & Recognise, Mayo, Parkin, Davis, Langton, Anderson and even Pearson, and many more rate them neutrally. Media exposure has not meant cut through, and the highest profile interventions have tended to be controversial in nature, e.g. 'divisive' attacks or contradictions.
  - In fairness, it should be noted that many spokespeople (as opposed to strategists) in the Yes camp are not 'professional persuaders' in the mould of a politician. They are lawyers, academics, activists and unionists more adept at talking to informed, friendly and forgiving constituencies. Their usual operating environment allows for shared axioms and knowledge, complex 'insider' terminology and concepts, equivocation and debating (questions and challenges) and a robust partisan tone, whereas public-facing politics requires clarity, plain-speaking, consistency and an inclusive tone. In short, broad campaigning requires a different skills set.
  - And in political campaigns distracting people and controversial messages can be hidden or disowned, but in a campaign that is all about self-determination and being heard, it would be inappropriate (even if a hierarchical structure existed to enforce such action).
  - Independent politicians, the Labor and Greens parties and their respective leaders do have a higher profile, but have a mixed reception in the electorate as one might expect, and so will have contributed to a mixed political effect on referendum vote. Burney has a surprisingly low profile (30% were able to give an opinion of her) for the Minister of this high-profile portfolio, so has failed to contribute significantly.

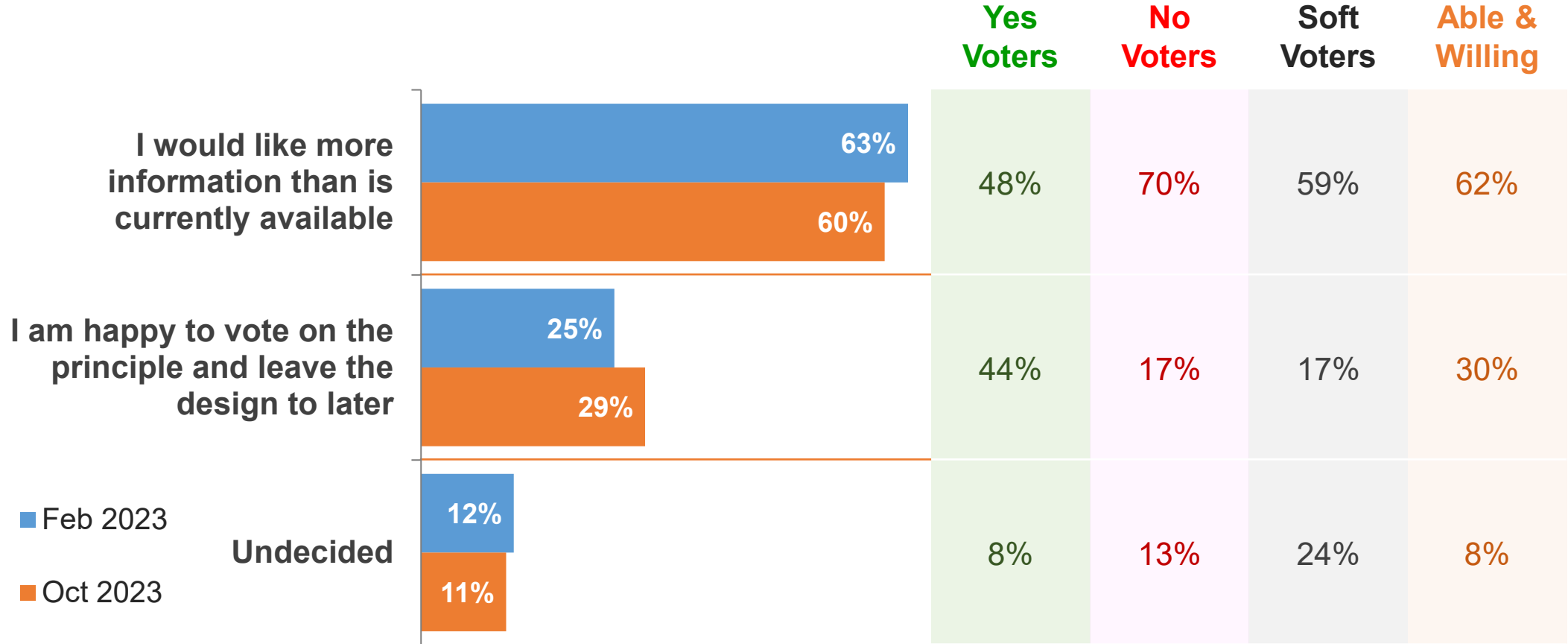


# Information & Sources

- Further, corporate support – in word and/or deed – is likely to have had a negative impact on the Yes vote, hence these sources been much quieter in the closing weeks. However, financial contributions may well have had a balancing effect in terms of campaign capacity. The banks, supermarkets and miners are the most negative group tested for the Yes camp (-18 points), only 4% say they have been influenced by them either way, and just 29% believe it was appropriate that they took a side in this debate.
- The No campaign seems to have benefited from a tighter group of advocates (using a smaller number of consistent messages), with Price and Mundine known to 64% and 47% respectively and both rated positively (+10 and +9 points likeability respectively).
  - They may have acted as proof incarnate that ‘not all Indigenous people agree’, as would a less popular Thorpe (-23 points) coming from the Blak Sovereignty movement perspective, and squarely refuted the argument that ‘all No voters or advocates are racists’. Indeed, we believe that early positions taken by Price and Mundine would have lent legitimacy to an opposing perspective.
  - Again, we suggest that the less positive and partisan ratings for right-of-centre parties and politicians will have had a mixed effect on Voice vote. But mainstream parties taking a position does give a similar permission to hold a ‘mainstream view’.



# Desire for Information & Detail



Q2108) There has been some debate about how much detail about the Voice should be released before the referendum vote. As someone who may vote in the referendum, would you prefer more detail is released before you vote or are you happy to vote on the principle and let parliament decide on the detail afterwards?  
 Base: Special Sample.

# Types of Information Desired

- Need for basic information about the proposal and/or more information:
  - “Just a clear explanation of what this is all about. I still haven’t got one!”
  - “Something clear and concise that sums up the case. It’s all been waffle.”
  - “A live debate between the Yes and No sides so that we can test each other’s arguments.”
  - “I want to know it all! Just tell us everything. There’s nothing out there but broad statements.”
  - “As much detail as possible so that I can actually make an informed decision.”
- Justifying the need for action and the rationale for the Voice as a solution:
  - “I don’t know why we need to separate any groups. Why aren’t we aiming for equality?”
  - “A better understanding of why it’s necessary, really. What’s the point if it has no powers?”
  - “What are the issues they are trying to address? That would dictate if it’s need and how it works.”
  - “Why does it need to be in the Constitution? We should try it out first.”
  - “How this will be better than what’s happening now. How will it be more effective?”
- Confirming what Indigenous people on the ground want and whether it is worth division:
  - “A real statistical breakdown on how many Indigenous people want this or not.”
  - “Knowing what people in remote communities think, not the activities campaigning for this.”
  - “Why we have Indigenous people campaigning against this. Why don’t they agree?”
  - “Why it’s necessary to divide us by race to get a solution to these issues.”



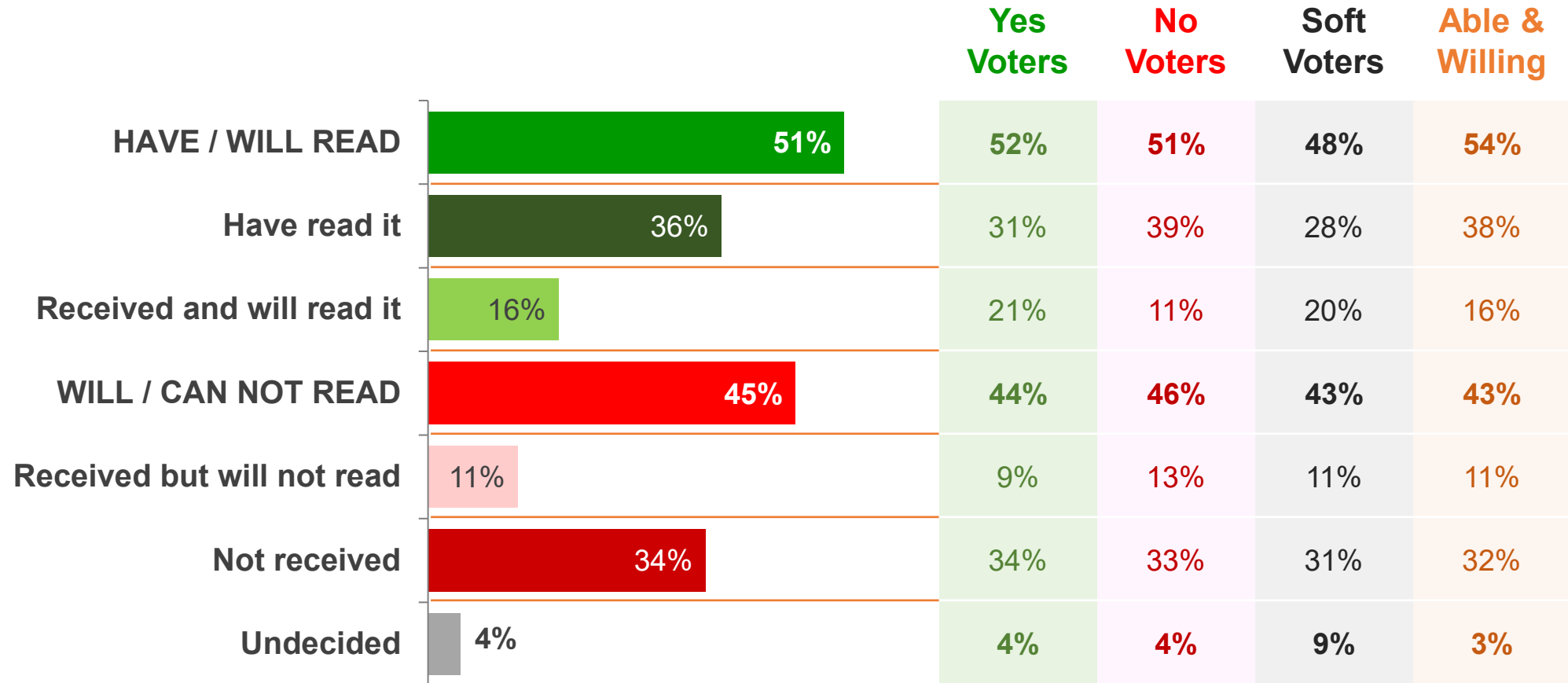
# Types of Information Desired

- Details of how the Voice will operate:
  - “How is it going to be set up? How will it be run? What are its responsibilities? Powers?”
  - “How it will fit in with the bureaucracy, I guess.”
  - “How would you qualify to be counted as Indigenous? Is it identity or ancestry?”
  - “Some real detail. Who will be on it? How many? What can they do? Who do they report to?”
  - “Who will lead it and how much power will it have? How will people be chosen?”
  - “What are the requirements for candidates and voters for the Voice? Who is eligible?”
- Whether it will be effective at tackling Indigenous issues, and how efficiently it will achieve that:
  - “A detailed plan of what it will aim to do. A roadmap. It seems directionless at present.”
  - “What are the outcomes going to be? Give us some examples to show us it’s worth it.”
  - “How is this going to help Indigenous people on the ground? What’s the point otherwise?”
  - “How much is this all going to cost? Not just on the Voice, but also the things it recommends.”
- How relates to Uluru Statement, including treaty and truth-telling:
  - “What is meant by treaty? How will it work negotiating treaties for so many groups?”
  - “There are mutterings of reparations. Is that true?”





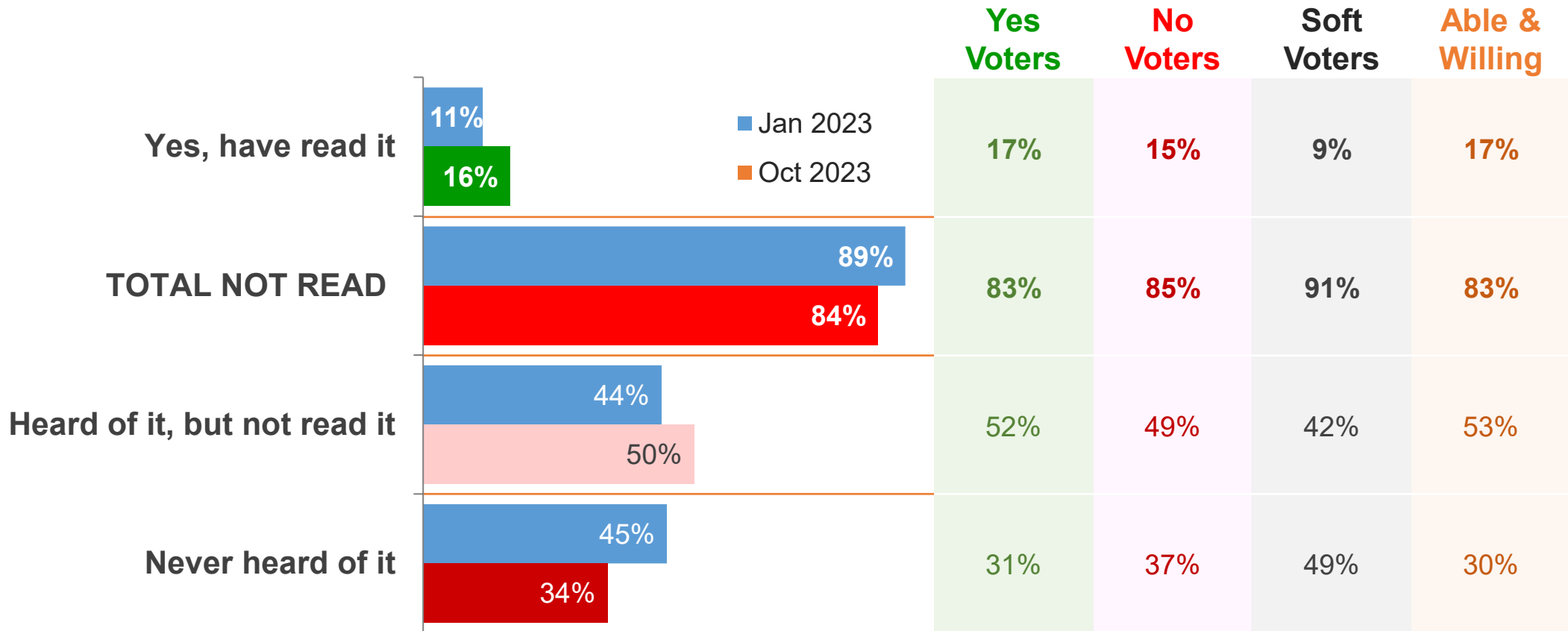
# AEC Referendum Pamphlet



QX007) The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) has mailed a pamphlet explaining the referendum and outlining the case for a Yes and No vote. It is pictured below. Have you received or read this booklet yet? Base: Special Sample.



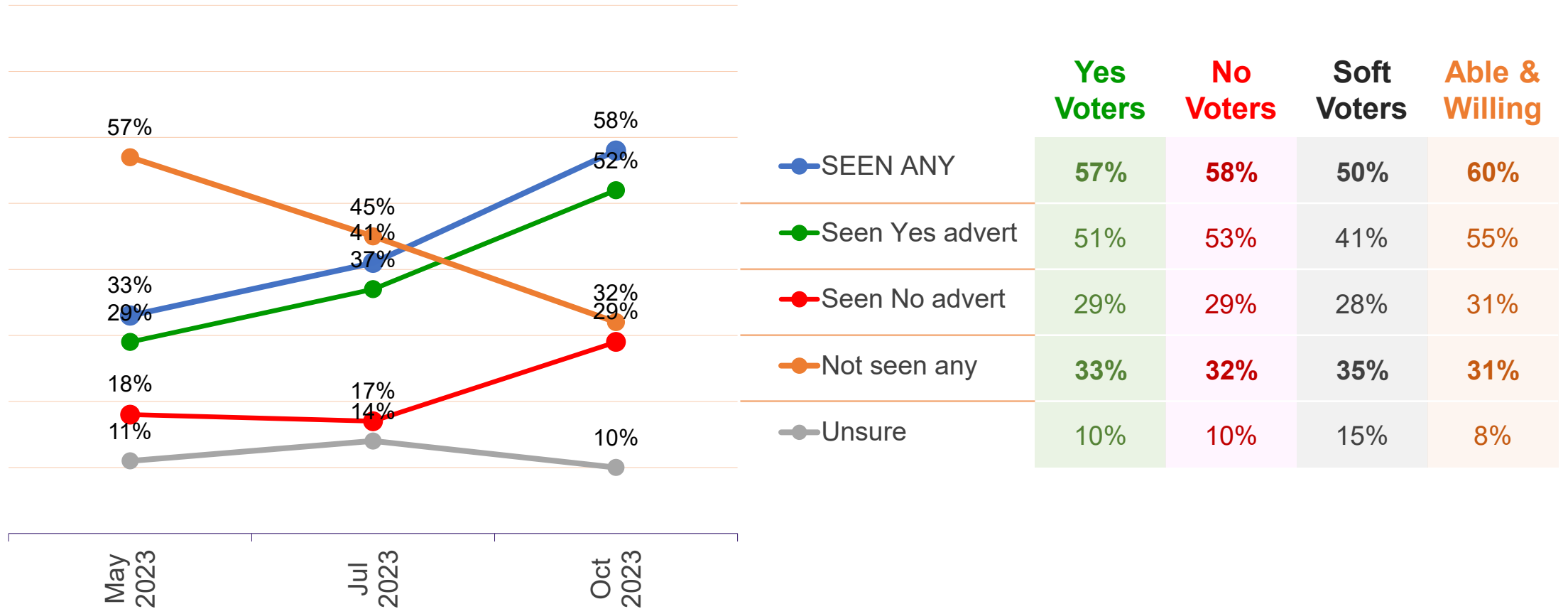
# Read Uluru Statement from the Heart



Q1904) The idea of an Indigenous Voice came from the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart, a declaration that was the product of consultation and dialogues involving Indigenous leaders. Have you read or heard of this statement before? Base: Special Sample.



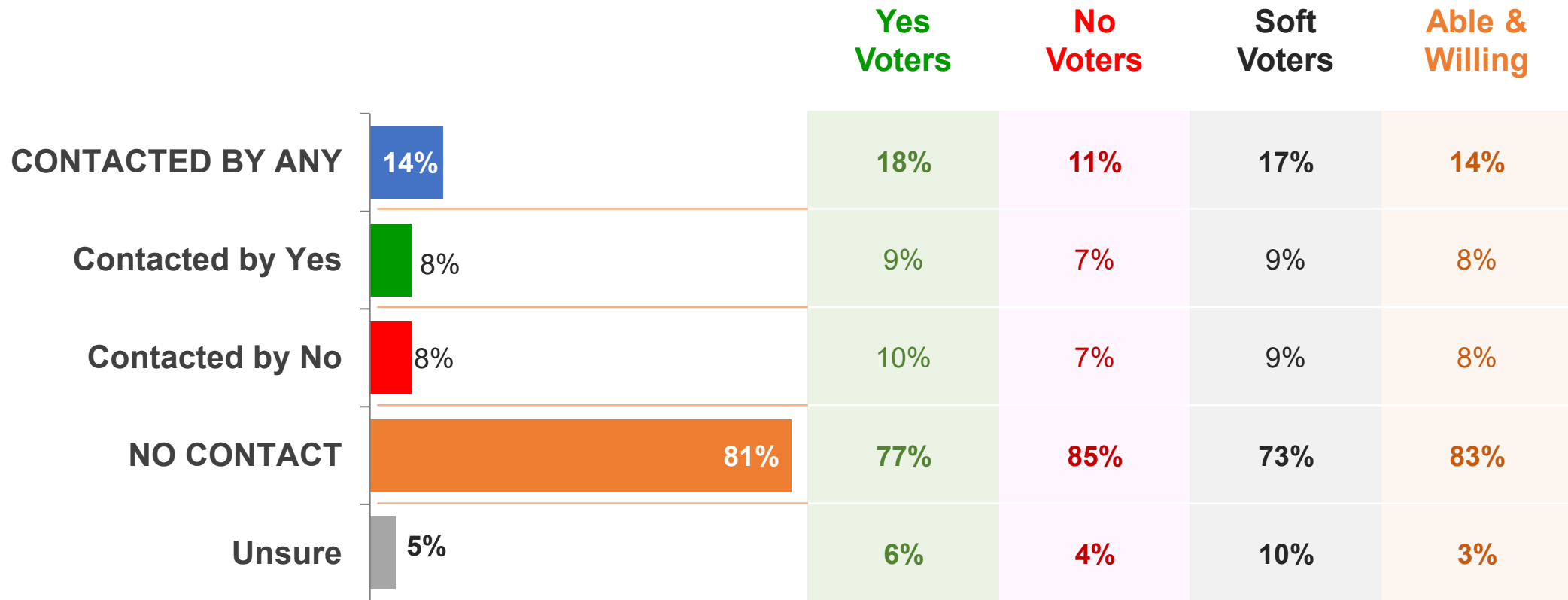
# Exposure to Campaign Adverts



Q2403) The Yes and No sides of this debate have begun showing adverts making their case on TV, on-line, on radio and in outdoor settings. Have you seen any of these campaign adverts in the last month or so? Base: Special Sample.



# Exposure to Direct Campaign Contact



QX001) Over the last couple of months, the Yes and No campaigns have also been using volunteers to contact people to talk about the Voice. This includes people knocking on doors, calling, texting, standing at shopping centres or stations, and organising community events. Have you been contacted in any these ways yet?

Base: Special Sample.

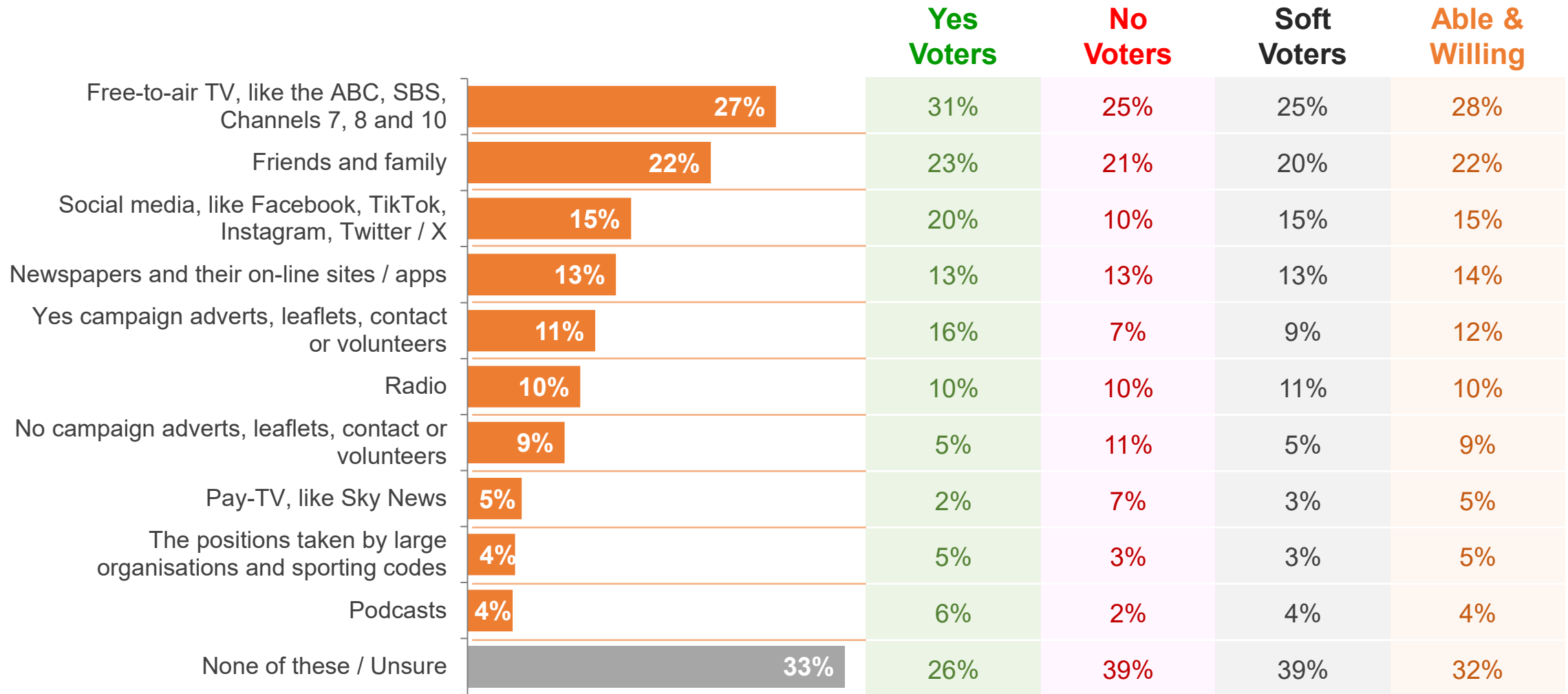


# Vote by Information & Campaign Exposure

	Yes	No
<b>Total</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>Read Uluru Statement</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>53%</b>
Did Not Read Uluru Statement / Unsure	42%	58%
<b>Read AEC Pamphlet</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>61%</b>
Did Not Read AEC Pamphlet / Unsure	46%	54%
<b>Saw Yes Campaign Advertising</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>Saw No Campaign Advertising</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>57%</b>
Did Not See Any Advertising / Unsure	44%	56%
<b>Contacted by Yes Campaign</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>Contacted by No Campaign</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>47%</b>
Not Contacted by Any Campaign / Unsure	41%	59%

Q1504) The Federal Government is holding a referendum – a national vote – on whether to enshrine an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Voice to parliament in the Constitution. Details of the proposed amendment are below... Please now answer the referendum question. “A proposed law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?” Q1505) While you may not be currently decided, it is compulsory that you vote. Even if it’s a leaning... “do you approve this proposed alteration?” Base: Enrolled & Likely. \* Limited base size of <n=200 to be treated with caution (<n=100 excluded). ^ May contain a cumulative effect by being exposed to both Yes and No campaign adverts / contact.

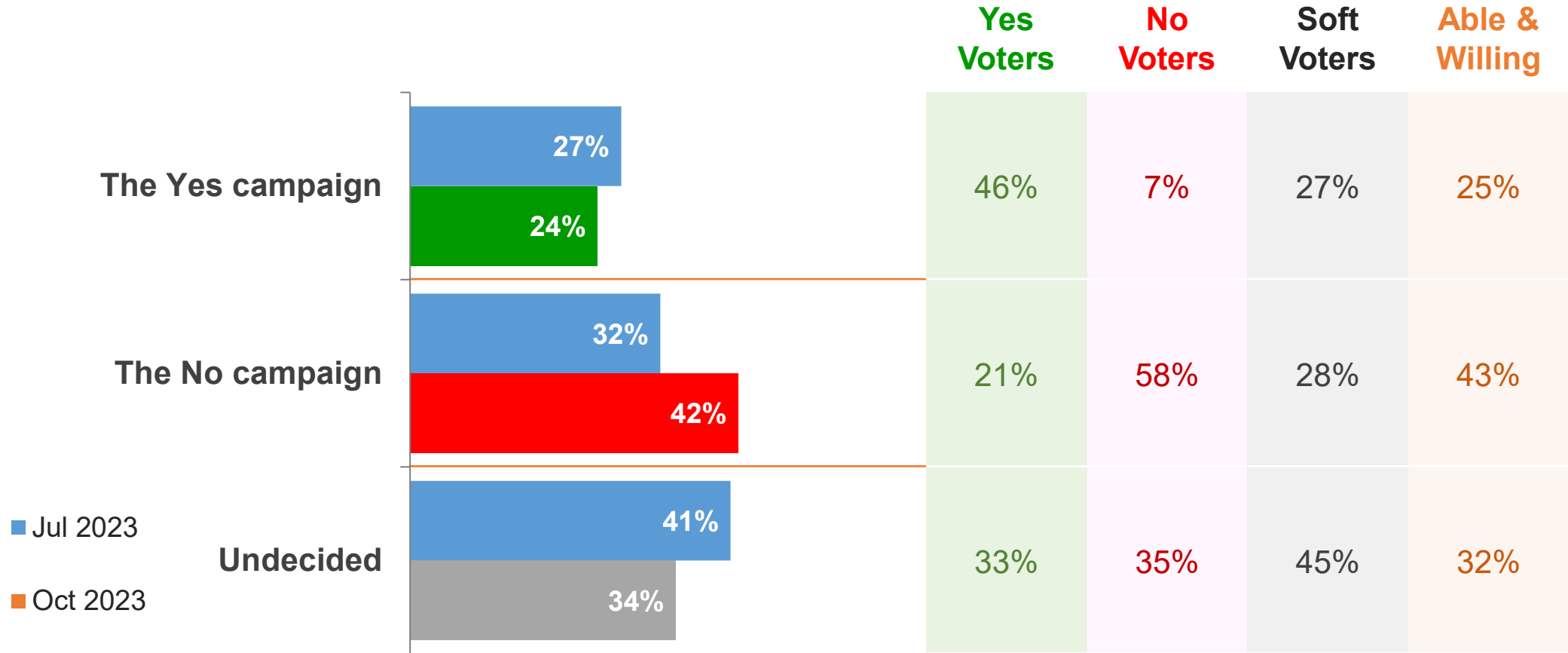
# Information Sources of Most Use



QX009) And what sources of information, if any would you say have helped you most to make up your mind about how to vote? You can tick up to three choices.  
Base: Special Sample.

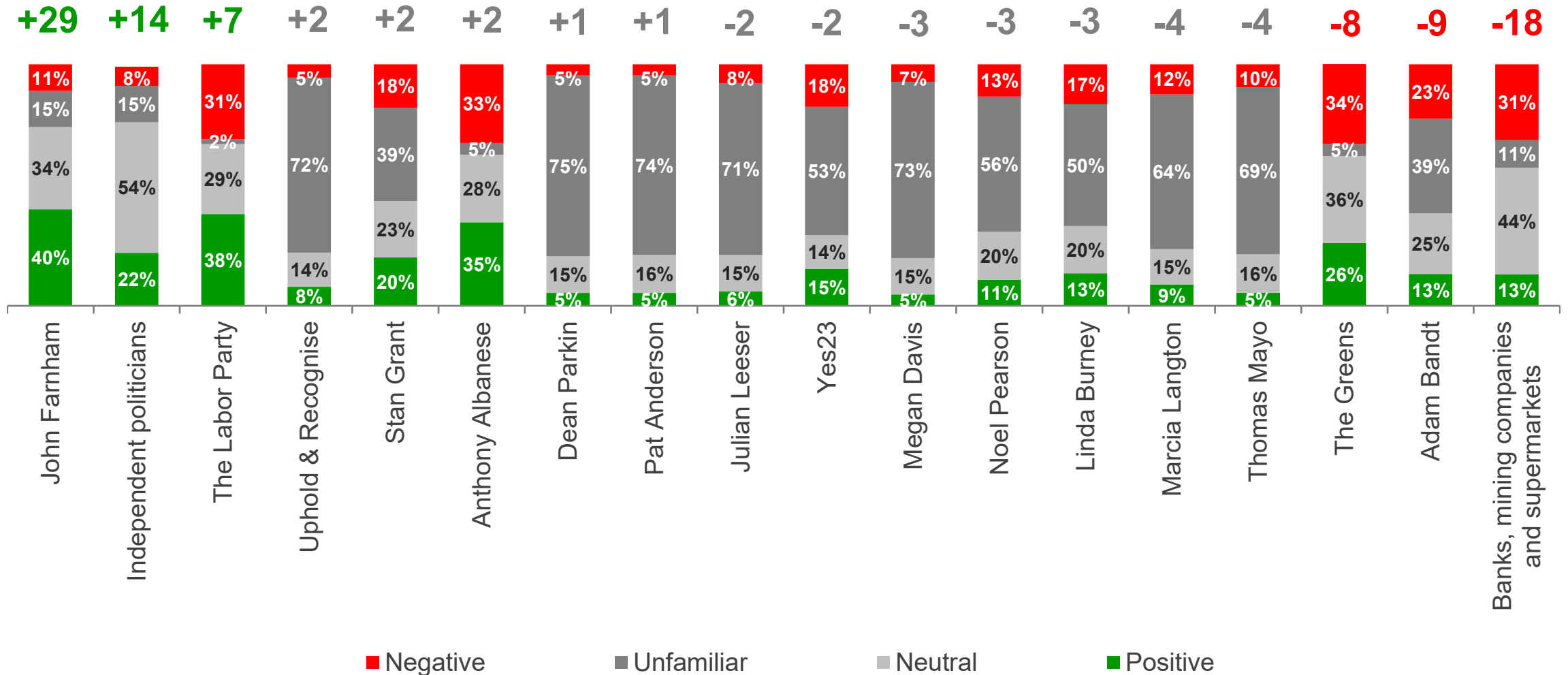


# Campaign Performance



Q2601) And which campaign do you think is performing better, i.e. running the better campaign? Base: Special Sample.

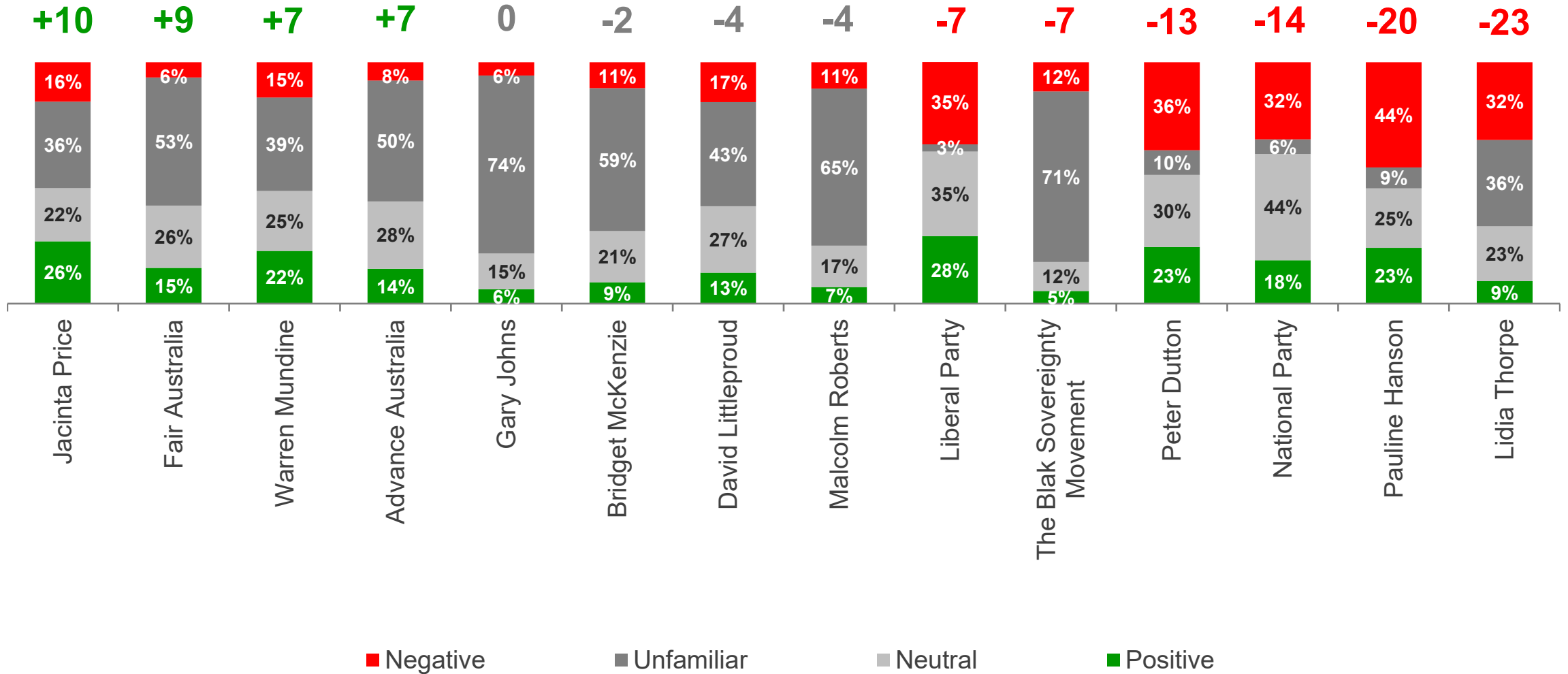
# Likeability of Key Yes Players



Q20) Below is a list of people and organisations that are active in politics and public life and the Voice campaign. For each, please tell us whether you have heard of them and, if so, whether you have a favourable, neutral or unfavourable view of them. Base: Special sample (All for leaders). Net Likeability = % Positive - % Negative



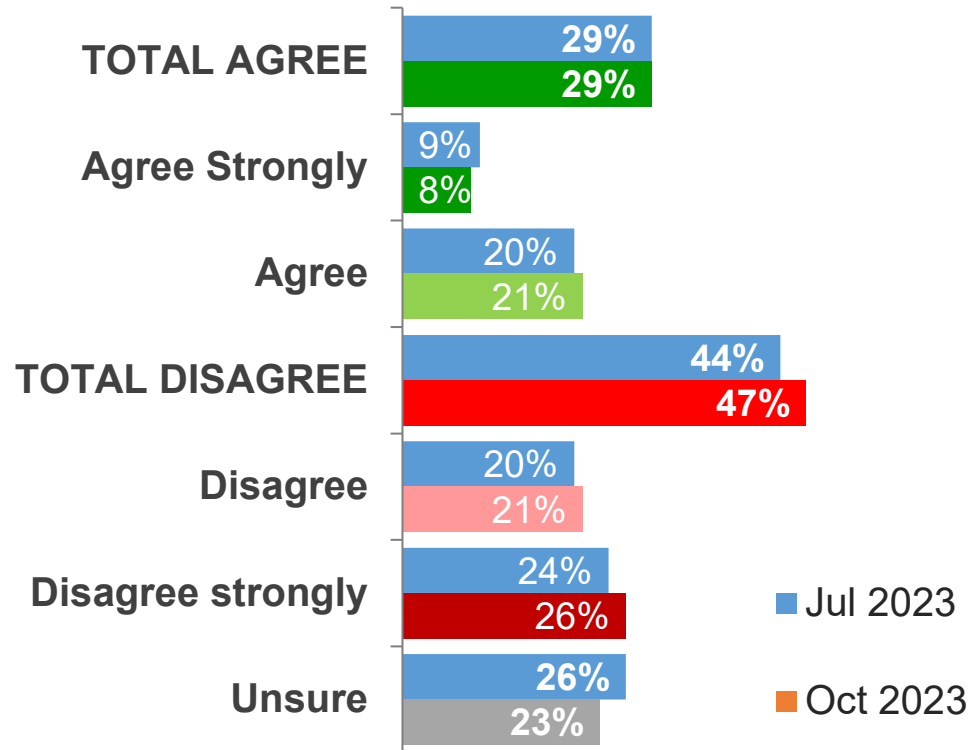
# Likeability of Key No Players



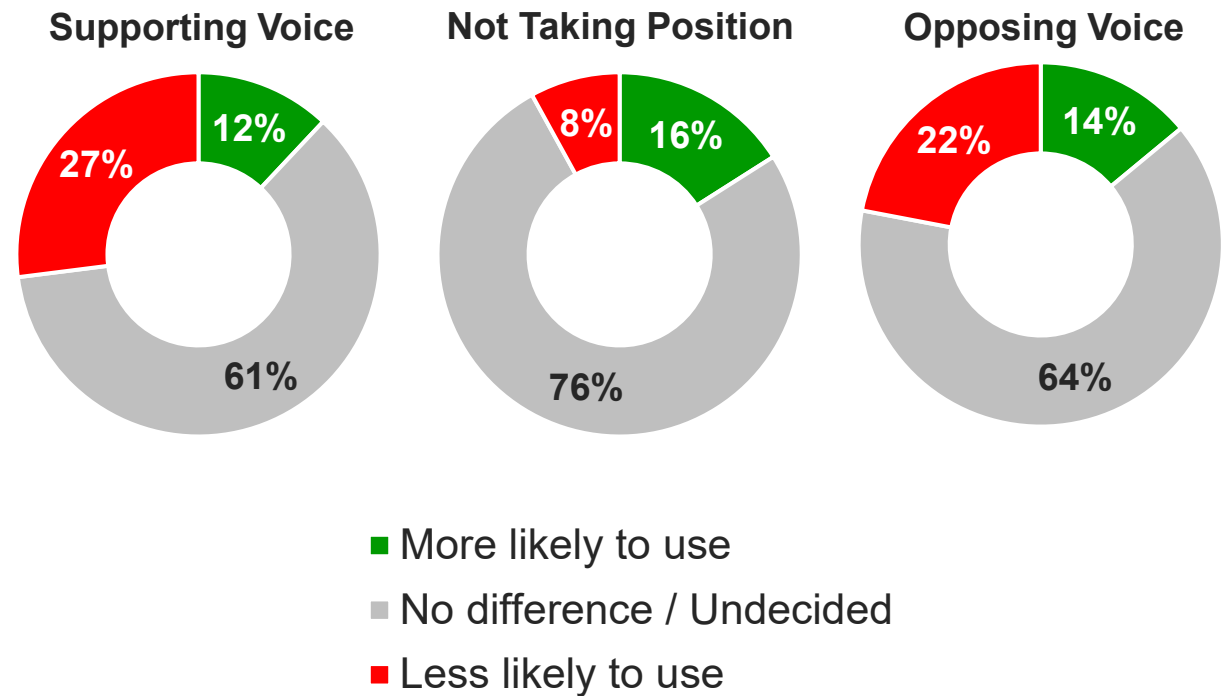
Q20) Below is a list of people and organisations that are active in politics and public life and the Voice campaign. For each, please tell us whether you have heard of them and, if so, whether you have a favourable, neutral or unfavourable view of them. Base: Special sample (All for leaders). Net Likeability = % Positive - % Negative

# Corporate Involvement

## Corp. Involvement Appropriate



## Effects of Corporate Involvement



Q2612) Several large companies, such as the major banks, mining companies and supermarkets, and sporting codes have pledged their support for the Voice, and have either campaigned for or donated to the Yes campaign. Do you agree or disagree that it is appropriate for such organisations to take a side or play a role in the Voice campaign? Q2613) While those organisations support the Yes side, a few have taken the opposite view, and many are simply remaining neutral on this issue. Realistically, would you be more or less likely to use organisations that took the following stances on the Voice? Base: Special Sample. 58

- Top-of-Mind Reasons for Vote
- Key Vote Considerations
- Too Far V Not Far Enough
- Perceived Efficacy
- Perceived Efficiency



# Influences & Drivers

# Influences & Drivers

- Asked why they are voting Yes, the common themes cited by voters tend to focus on recognition, reconciliation and the generic process of consultation, rather than practical outcomes or the Voice's design and enshrinement. History and the Uluru Statement are very rarely mentioned either. This lack of a clear anchor or justification for the specific proposal is reflected in few of the Yes campaign's arguments being rated as convincing. Instead, many Yes voters seem to be voting on 'the vibe': the signal and 'doing something' rather than a clear outcome.
  - Half of Australians (50%) do not find any of the Yes case's arguments convincing, and the vast majority of No voters reject them all outright (81%). We note that the multiple campaign voices have sometimes carried mixed, even contradictory or condescending messages, again highlighting division, uncertainty and potentially creating an expectation that the Voice would be similarly riven by disagreement.
  - The most convincing for Yes voters are that it is a practical means of recognition (19%), that it will help to solve disadvantage (12%), that No means no change (12%) or that listening to Indigenous people will lead to better policy (12%). That is, Yes voters would like to think that the Voice will bring better outcomes, but this is rarely the way they actually justify or prove their vote choice.
  - The 'Yes23' brand and simple 'Yes' logo fail to encapsulate any single message or values-laden appeal as 'Yes Equality did in 2017.
- The top-of-mind justifications for voting No centre around themes of division and inequality (by race, indigeneity or ancestry), including division in the debate and Indigenous people being divided acting as exemplars. It not being needed given current efforts and parliamentary representation, plus a lack of detail and the distraction from other issues (almost becoming an annoyance in the tone of comments), are also present. In contrast to the Yes messages, these can relate to the risks posed by the specific proposal and are concerns often shared by Yes voters too.
  - Only 22% found none of the No cases arguments persuasive, and only 36% of Yes voters are able to ignore all of them. They are voting Yes in spite of these doubts, and their power is confirmed by the time wasted by the Yes camp defensively trying to refute them.
  - 33% of No voters regard the proposal being divisive as the most convincing argument against it, but this is less important to Yes voters (8%) who we have found tend to be more accepting of positive discrimination and 'social justice'. Both camps find the lack of detail (15%), not all Indigenous people supporting the Voice (8%), there being better ways (6%) and it potentially not working (6%) convincing.
  - The 'Fair Australia' brand, 'Don't Know, Vote No' and 'Vote No To The Voice of Division' appeals encapsulate several of these points.

# Influences & Drivers

- In both voting blocs we find that the focus of concern and risk is on the Voice potentially having a negative effect, rather than it being too weak or having too little an effect. This feeling may have been reinforced by a lack of negotiation or consultation the proposal outside the working groups, i.e. 'proving and testing', but shows up in just 5% of No voters saying that the proposal goes too far, which (along with Greens No vote of 25%) would indicate that the current 'progressive No' vote is around 2-3% of voters.
- This is not to say that efficacy and efficiency of the Voice are not background concerns though. After all, if it does not achieve better outcomes why do it, or at least why make it permanent? Here, voters do harbour doubts:
  - Only half (50%) of Australians believe that the Voice will achieve anything at all, with 24% expecting that it will achieve both symbolic recognition and practical outcomes, 18% only the former and 7% only the latter. Yes voters are naturally more convinced, but even 37% of them do not think it will result in any practical change. They are voting on 'the vibe' or because to do nothing is not acceptable.
  - This finding is reinforced by only 27% of Australians believing its practical activities will have any effect in closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Only 5% believe it is very likely to work in this capacity, including 10% of Yes voters. Pessimism about the model's efficacy is rife.
  - Further, regardless of how it performs in tackling Indigenous issues, a key litmus test is whether it does so more efficiently than current programmes and services. This is a theme present in both the Yes and No campaigns, i.e. 'saving money' versus 'a new bureaucracy'. Yes and No voters do differ in their views here, but only 20% think it will reduce waste and inefficiencies overall.
  - We note that these views will undoubtedly have combined with the 'permanency' of constitutional enshrinement to create greater risk in people's minds. It is not uncommon to find such views in comments submitted by respondents, e.g. 'If it works to close the gap why would it need to be permanent?' and, conversely, 'If it's not effective we can't get rid of it'.
- In short, it seems that many Australians do not believe that the path to equality includes a route passing through discrimination, even positive discrimination on the basis of indigeneity. They may be willing to forgive such an embedded design feature if the solution works, but without proof many are left unconvinced that this is 'worth the risk'.

# Common Reasons for Voting Yes

- Having a greater say in policies and government (process, rather than outcomes):
  - “Aboriginal people deserve to be heard in government as much as anyone else. Perhaps more so.”
  - “Only they can tell us what they need and how to do it in a culturally appropriate way.”
  - “We’re just allowing people to have a say in things that affect them. What’s wrong with that?”
  - “They are rarely heard, so need something like this.”
- Reconciling on the basis of poor treatment / troubled history / reconciliation through equal treatment:
  - “Indigenous people have been discriminated against and disadvantaged through history.”
  - “We stole their land, and this is giving something back so we can come together.”
- Simple recognition in the Constitution:
  - “It’s a simple fact that they are the first peoples, and we should recognise that in the Constitution.”
  - “This is how we can all embrace Australian heritage. Otherwise, we’re separate.”
- Doing something / a morally correct course of action that will make us feel better:
  - “They were the first people here. It was their land, so it’s only right and proper...”
  - “This aligns with my values. It helps people. That’s got to be good.”
  - “It’s not perfect, but it’s better than doing nothing.”
- Bring about equality / unity (of treatment, rather than outcomes):
  - “They deserve some positive discrimination for a change from the negative.”
  - “Everyone should have an equal right and opportunity to be heard.”



# Most Persuasive Argument to Vote Yes

		Yes Voters	No Voters	Soft Voters	Able & Willing
This is a practical way to recognise Indigenous people in our Constitution	10%	19%	3%	11%	11%
The Voice's advice will help solve Indigenous disadvantage and 'close the gap'	7%	12%	3%	6%	7%
Voting No means nothing changes and that's not good enough	7%	12%	3%	8%	7%
Listening to Indigenous people will lead to better government policy	6%	12%	2%	4%	6%
The Voice was requested and is supported by most Indigenous people	5%	9%	2%	6%	5%
Indigenous people have had a rough deal, so this is the right thing to do	4%	6%	1%	4%	4%
If we don't do this now, we will not have a chance to do something for a generation	3%	6%	1%	5%	3%
The Voice will bring our country together and make us all feel better	3%	6%	1%	4%	3%
This is a step on the way to a treaty	3%	5%	2%	4%	3%
The Voice will make sure money gets to people on the ground and spent wisely,...	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
None of these are persuasive	42%	4%	72%	21%	43%
Unsure	8%	7%	9%	24%	6%

QX004) Below are some of the common reasons people have told us why they will be voting Yes at the referendum. Regardless of how you might vote, please read through them and tell us which ONE of these is the most persuasive for you. Base: Special Sample.

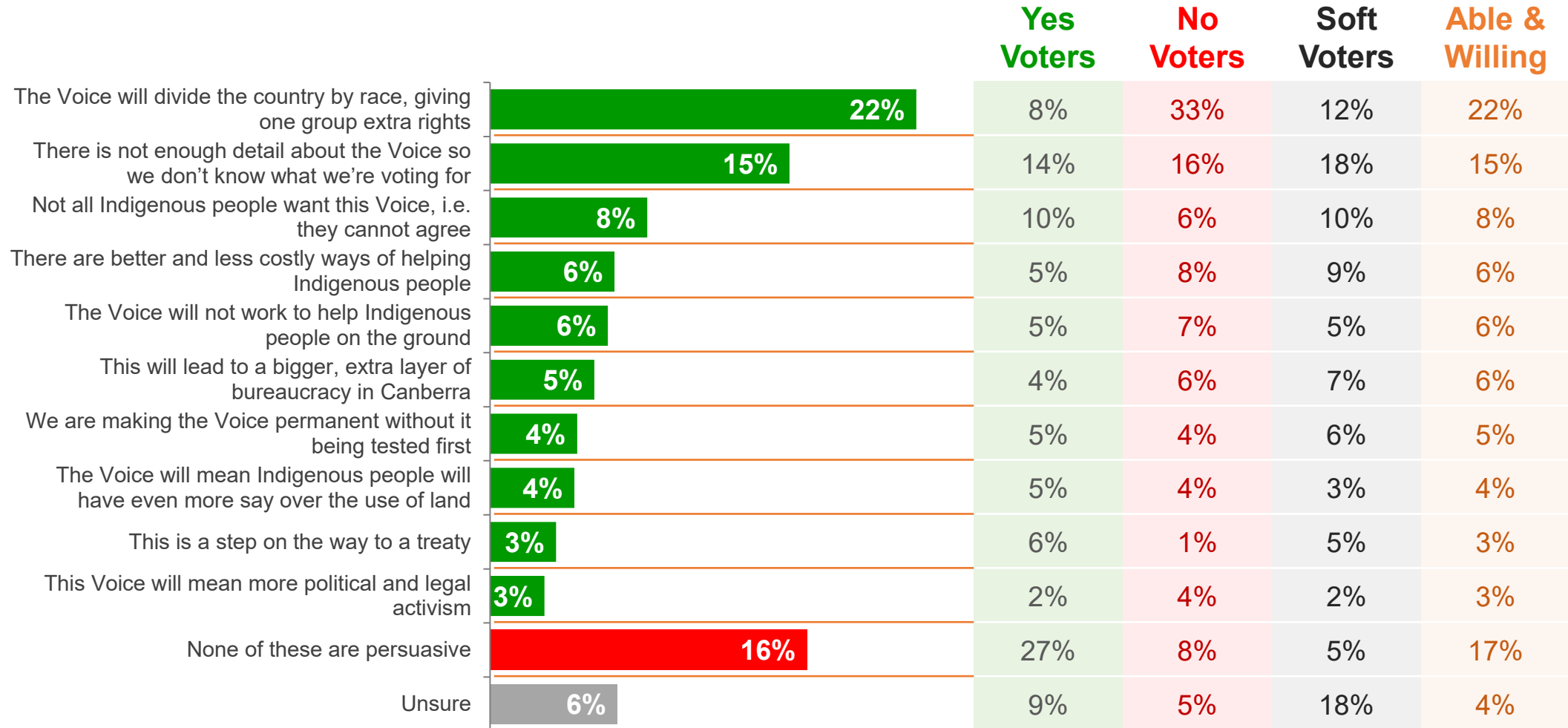


# Common Reasons for Voting No

- Division / inequality built into the proposal:
  - “A yes vote will split the nation in two.. The campaign has already stated to do that... them and us.”
  - “Everyone should be treated the same. It’s central to Australian values...”
  - “This is discriminatory by definition, and I’m against racism. Why would we even consider this?”
- All Indigenous people are not behind / do not want this (fairly rare):
  - “A lot of elders don’t seem to want this. And the No campaigners are all Aboriginal.”
  - “Many Aboriginal people are saying no to this, so why should other people support it?”
- Not needed / they are represented / already receive preferential treatment:
  - “Aboriginal people already have the same Voice as everyone else in parliament. And a Minister!”
  - “Communities already have a lot of input at a state and territory level, which is where it’s needed.”
  - “They already have enough privileges and money spent on them. They don’t appreciate it.”
- Political motivations and a distraction from important issues:
  - “This is Labor trying to distract everyone from their failure to address living costs.”
  - “It’s a wedge that’s gone wrong. It’s completely backfired on Albo.”
  - “They are being very shady about it all. Why won’t they answer basic questions?”
- No detail / confused or problems with the design / permanency:
  - “I don’t understand the concept. If they can’t be bothered to explain it, I’ll vote no.”
  - “This is going to be a complete waste of time and money. It’s not going to work...”

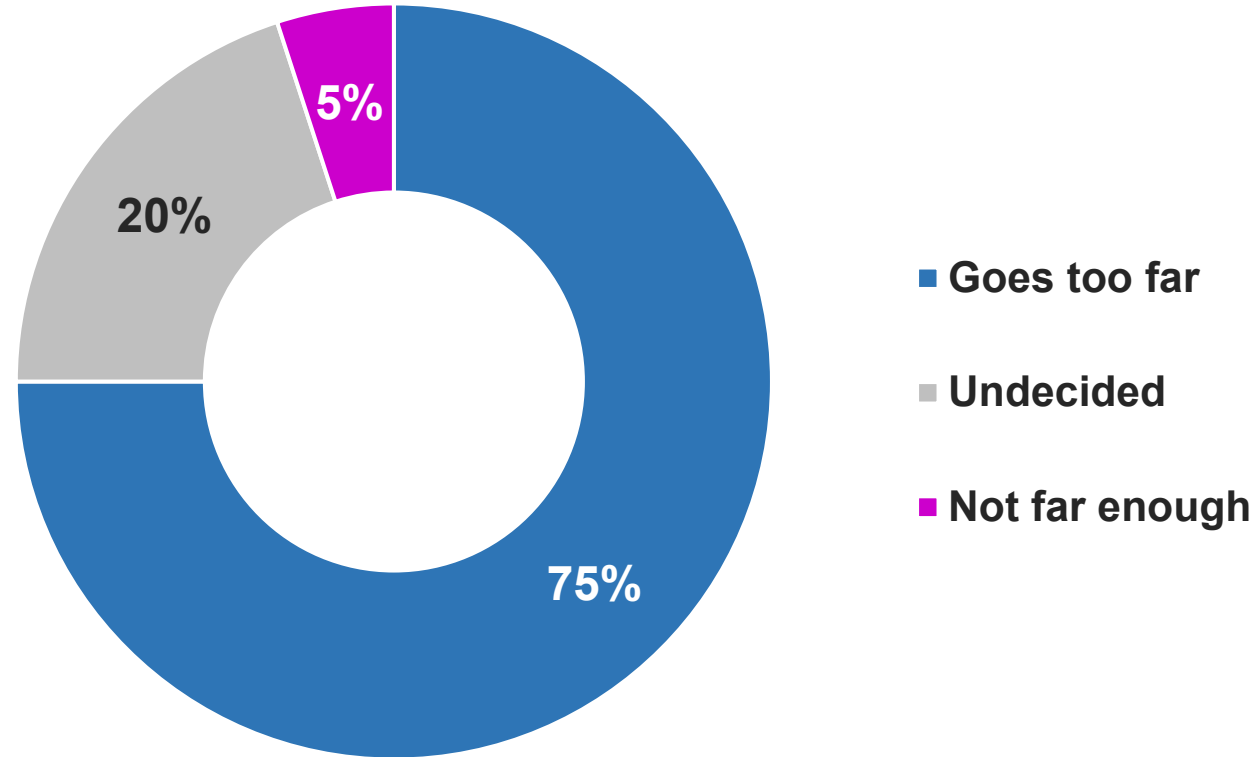


# Most Persuasive Argument to Vote No





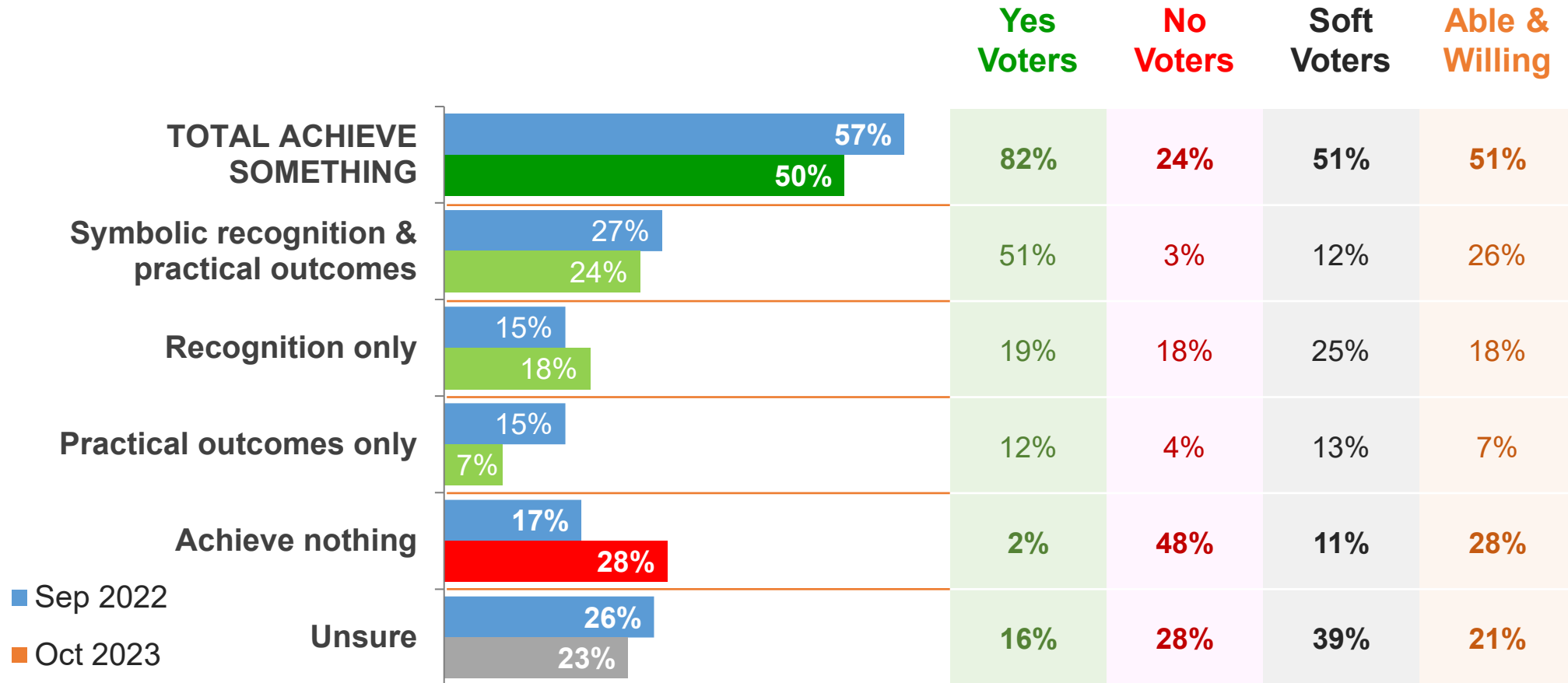
# Too Far V Not Far Enough (Voting No)



QX006) Some people have said they are considering voting No because the Voice goes too far or because it is permanent, whereas other say they are considering voting No because it does not go far enough, and either more is needed or a treaty should come first. What is your own view? Base: Special Sample & No Voters.



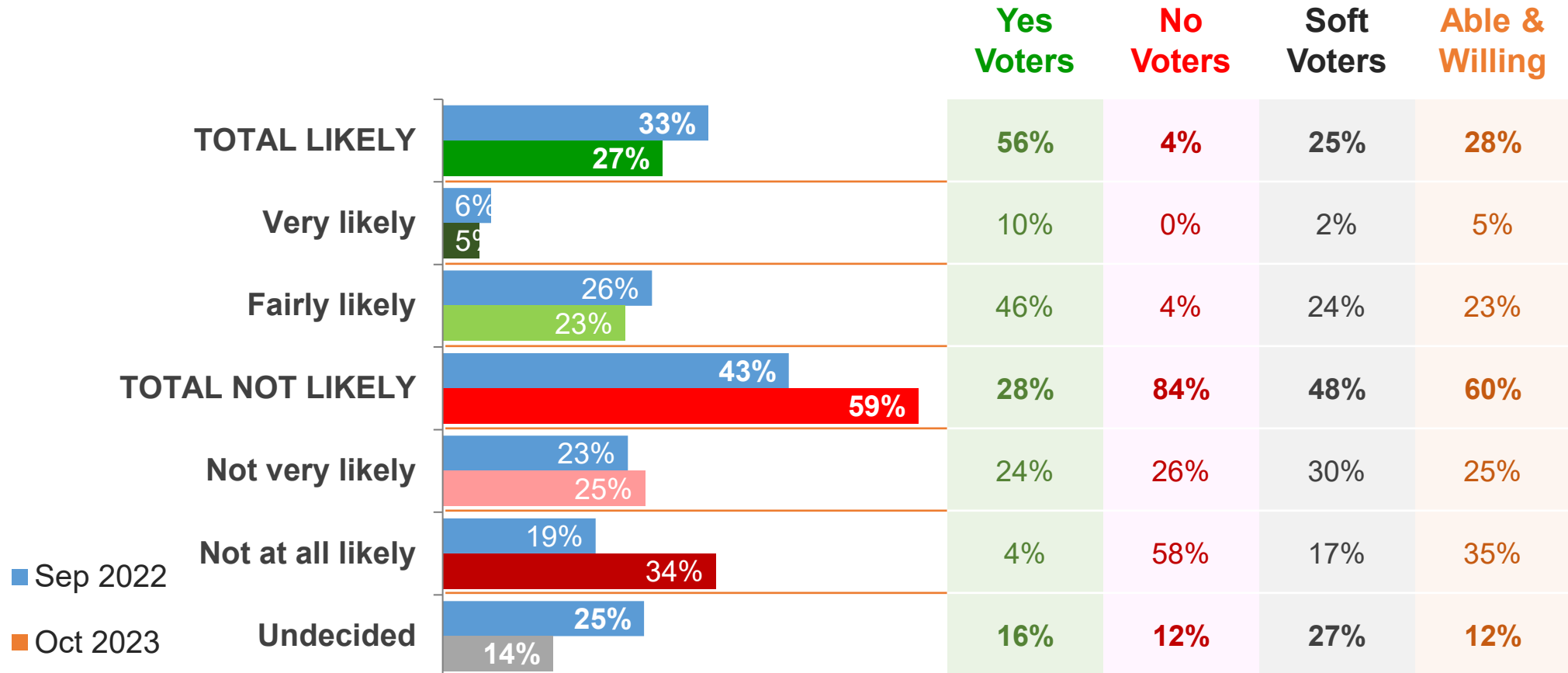
# Perceived Efficacy: Recognition & Outcomes



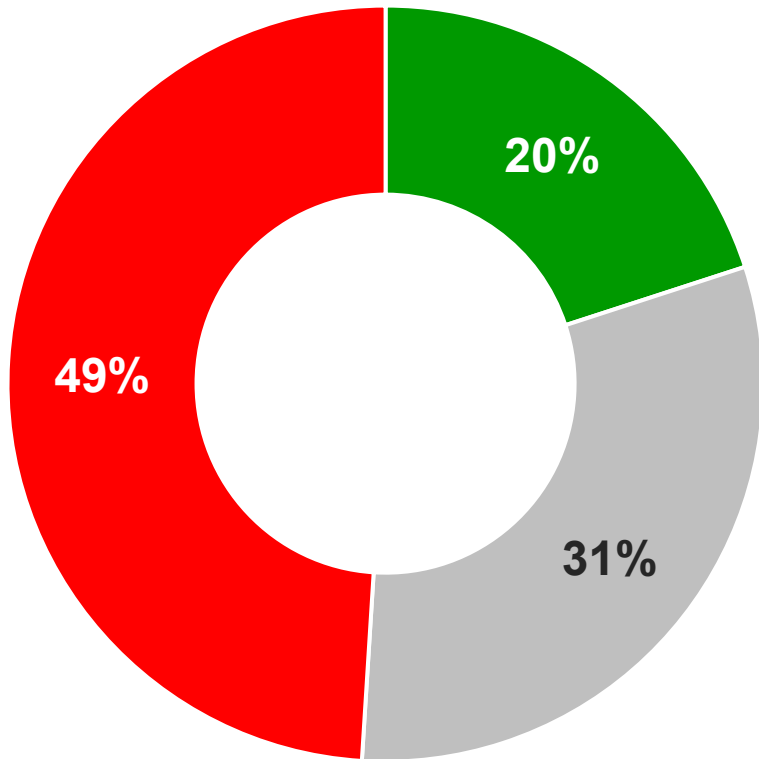
Q1602) Regardless of what it is more about, some people in this debate value the symbolic nature of recognising indigenous people in the Constitution for the first time, while others value the practical outcomes they see might come from an advisory body to parliament, such as 'closing the gap' or reducing waste. Which of the following statements best describes what you think this particular proposal might achieve, if anything? Base: Special Sample.



# Perceived Efficacy: Practical Outcomes



# Perceived Efficiency



	Yes Voters	No Voters	Soft Voters	Able & Willing
■ Will reduce waste and inefficiencies	43%	2%	12%	21%
■ Unsure	42%	21%	51%	28%
■ Will create waste and inefficiencies	15%	77%	36%	51%

- Delaying or Cancelling the Vote
- Changing the Proposal
- Preferred Scope of Issues
- Preferred Extent of Reach
- Preferred Process of Advising

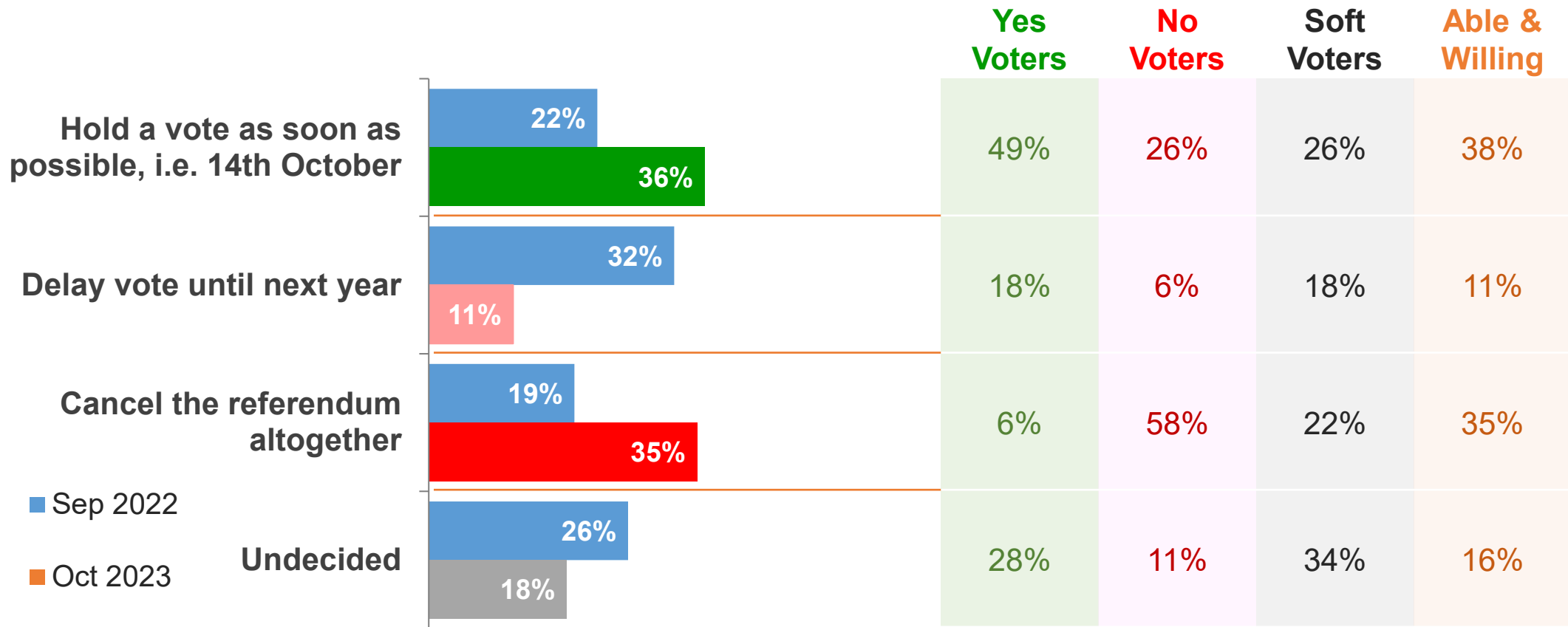


# Preferences for the Voice

# Preferences for the Voice

- Realistically, it is obviously now too late to change or cancel the referendum proposal – to do so would be counterproductive to the Yes case and Government who control those decisions in any case – but this study has repeated questions asked earlier in our RPM tracking on these points for the purpose of identifying underlying opinions and prejudices.
- Despite the nearing vote, just 36% would prefer that it is held on 14<sup>th</sup> October. This is well below the Yes vote, i.e. at least some yes voters do not want to vote on this now, and most likely reflects fear of a loss and the repercussions that might have, hence almost half (46%) preferring that the vote is deferred or cancelled.
- However, only 19% would like to see the proposal changed to increase its chances of winning. This was also the view a year ago, so it is unlikely to simply be a practical consideration of time. Instead, we believe it reflects the view of 44% that it should be retained because it is what Indigenous people have asked for. What is the point voting on something they have not requested or do not agree with? Even if No voters disagree with the proposition, it is this or nothing at all.
- This want to hear and vote on an authentic proposal should not be confused with an endorsement of the proposal in its entirety. Indeed, the views of Australians squarely point to preferences that are misaligned with the Voice amendment:
  - On a prompted basis, just 17% prefer the Voice being able to provide representations on a broad range of issues that affect both Indigenous Australians and others. 21% would prefer it is curtailed to issues only or primary Indigenous in nature. Remote health, community, policing, justice, education, land, housing, welfare and jobs are the priorities (all 13-34%).
  - Only 19% prefer the amendment's reach covering both parliament and executive government, with 14% preferring that it is restricted to the parliament only, and 22% would prefer that the Voice could provide representations and advice pro-actively, whereas 16% prefer that it is asked to contribute.
  - In each case, 34-40% find any of these options unacceptable, likely concerned that it may go beyond policy advice to socio-political influence. Conversely, 11-14% state they would vote Yes regardless of these design features, i.e. have no preference or do not care.
- We can only speculate as to whether a changed proposal would have received bipartisan support, but it is likely that a more minimalist model (which could still allow such features in legislation or practice) could have garnered greater public support. However, we believe it likely that the Indigenous leader 'base' requesting this may have split if faced with such change.

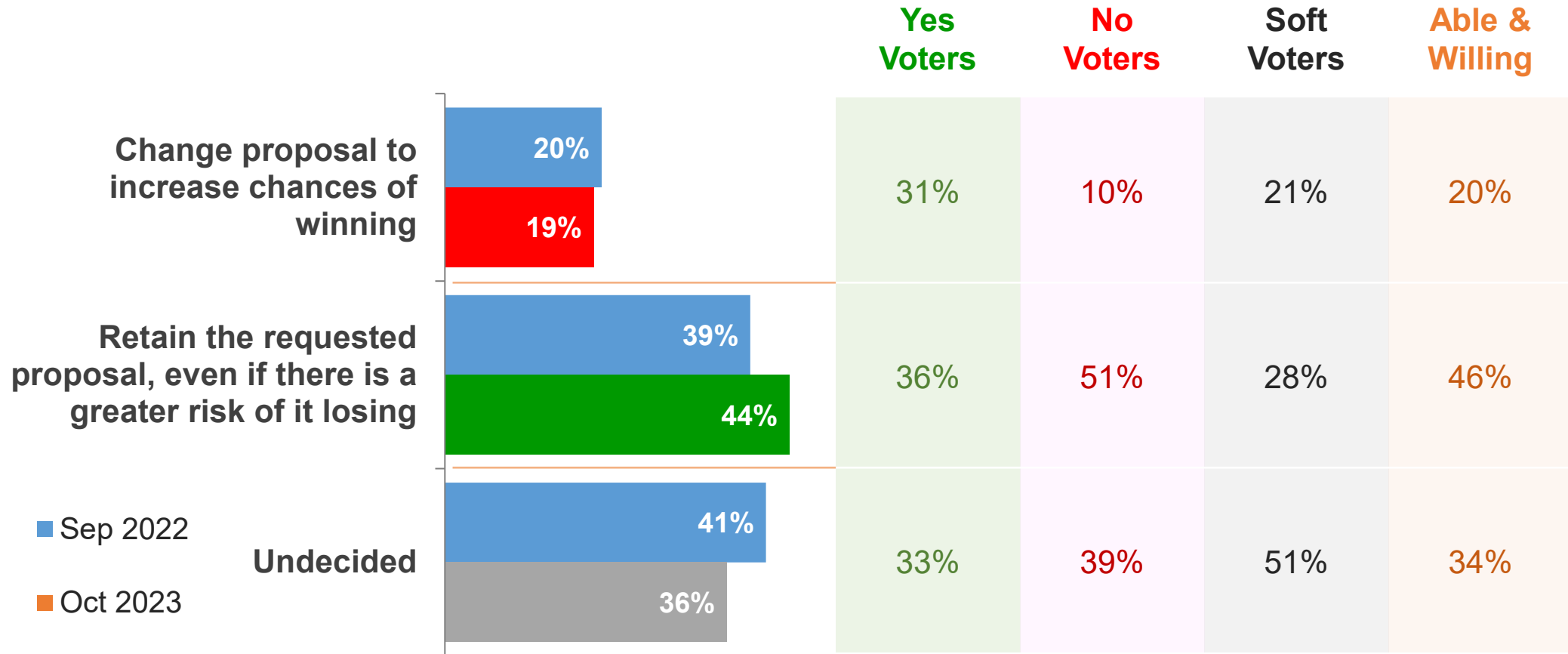
# Delaying or Cancelling the Vote



Q1605) On timing, some people would like to hold the referendum vote on this issue as soon as possible, i.e. on 14th October, regardless of what the result is predicted to be, while others would prefer that the vote is delayed or cancelled rather than risk a No result. What is your own preference? Base: Special Sample. N.B. Wording and options slightly changed from Sep 2022 to reflect new timing of vote.

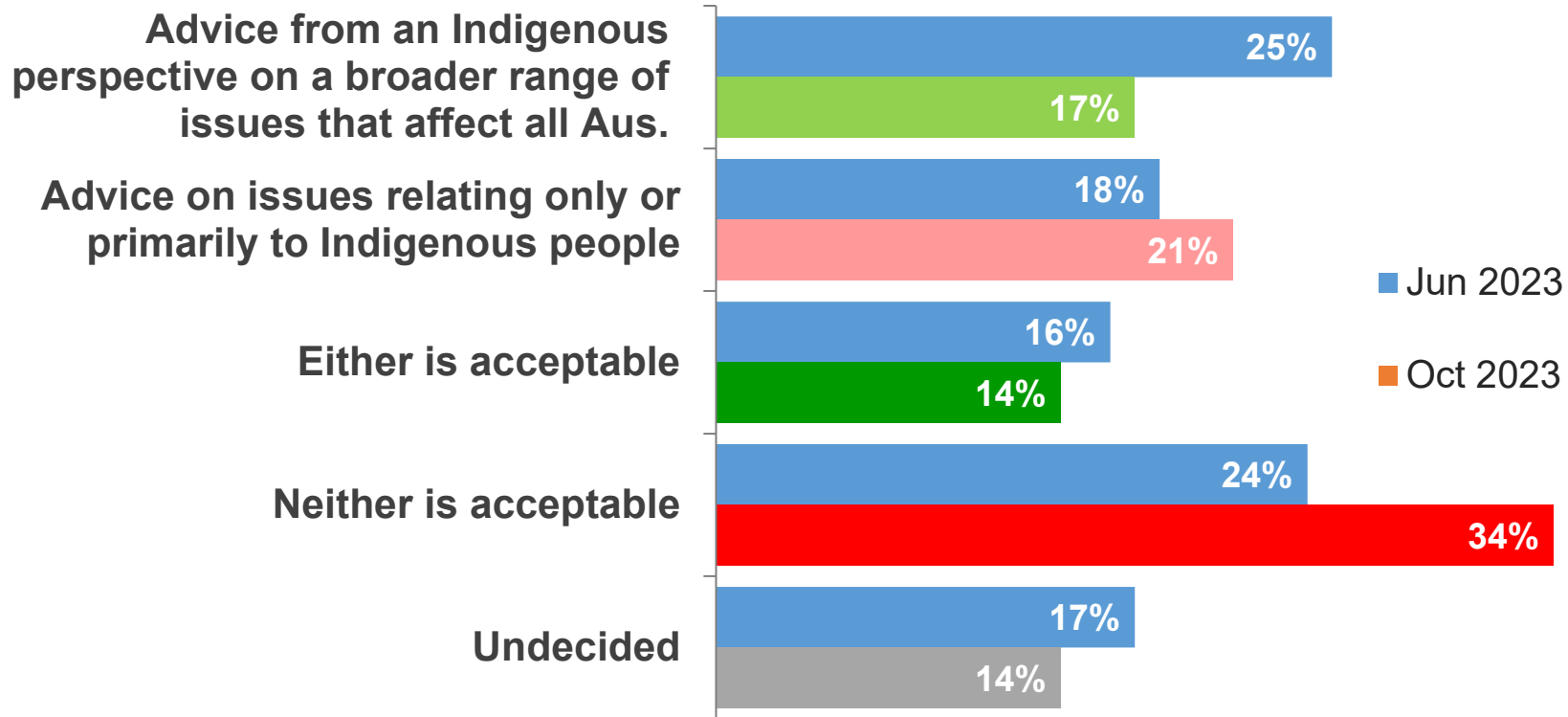


# Changing the Proposal



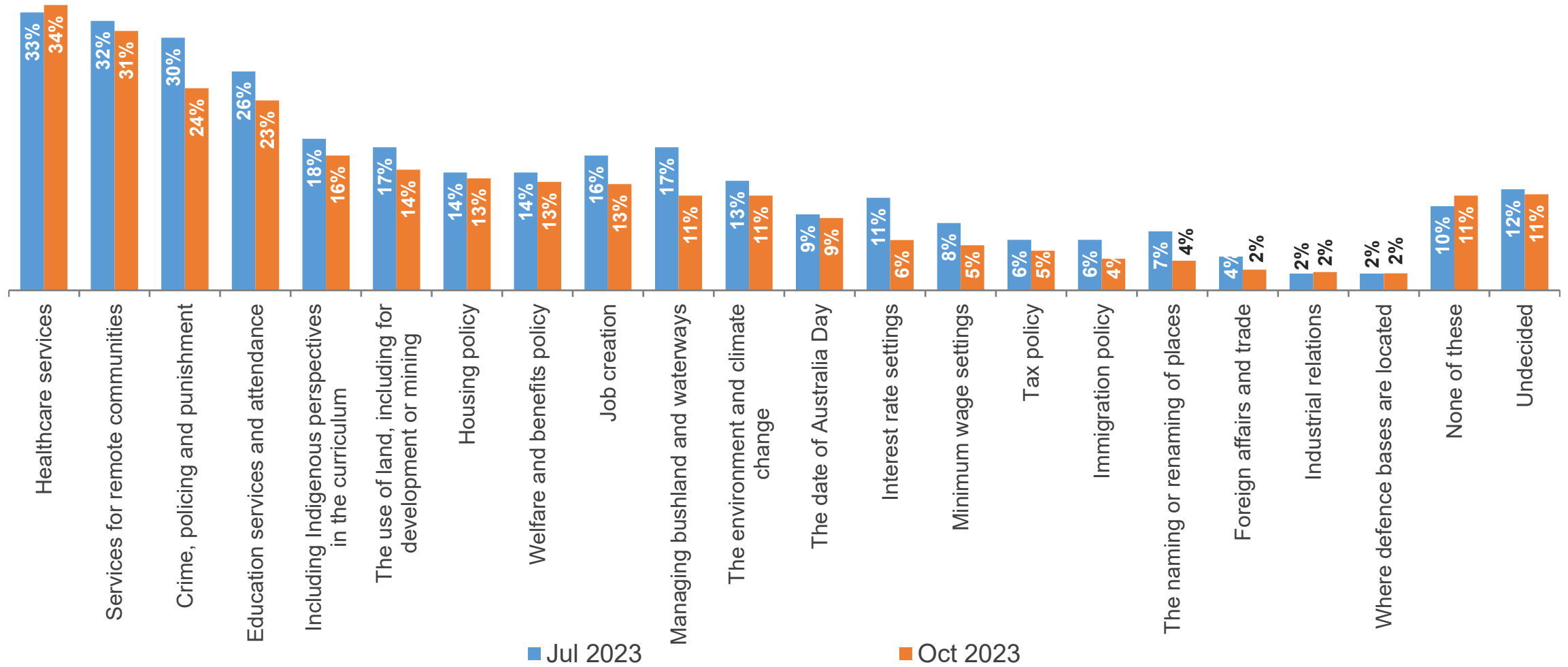
Q2404) During a government review earlier this year, some people on both sides of the debate argued that the proposal should be changed in order to address common concerns and make a Yes outcome more likely. Others believe that the original proposal should be retained because it is what Indigenous leaders have asked for, even if that means there is greater risk of a No outcome. What is your own view? Base: Special Sample.

# Preferred Scope of Issues

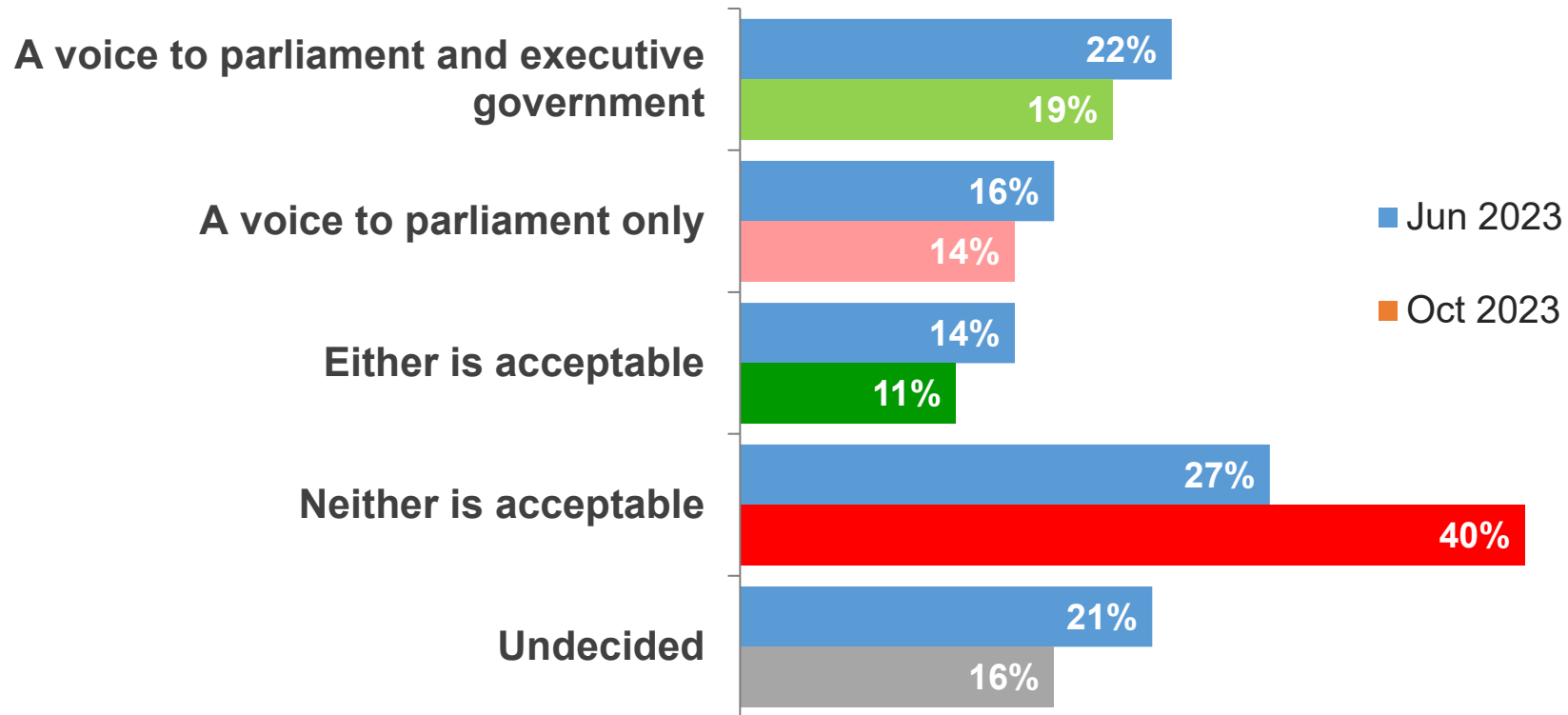


Q2204) Some people say that the Voice should provide advice on issues that relate only or primarily to Indigenous people, such as land rights, cultural matters, remote communities, land use and mining decisions, and ‘closing the gap’ in areas like health and education. Others say that the Voice should have an ability to provide an Indigenous view or perspective on a broader range of issues that might affect all Australians, like welfare, defence, foreign policy, housing and transport. What is your own preference? Base: Special Sample.

# Priority Issues for the Voice

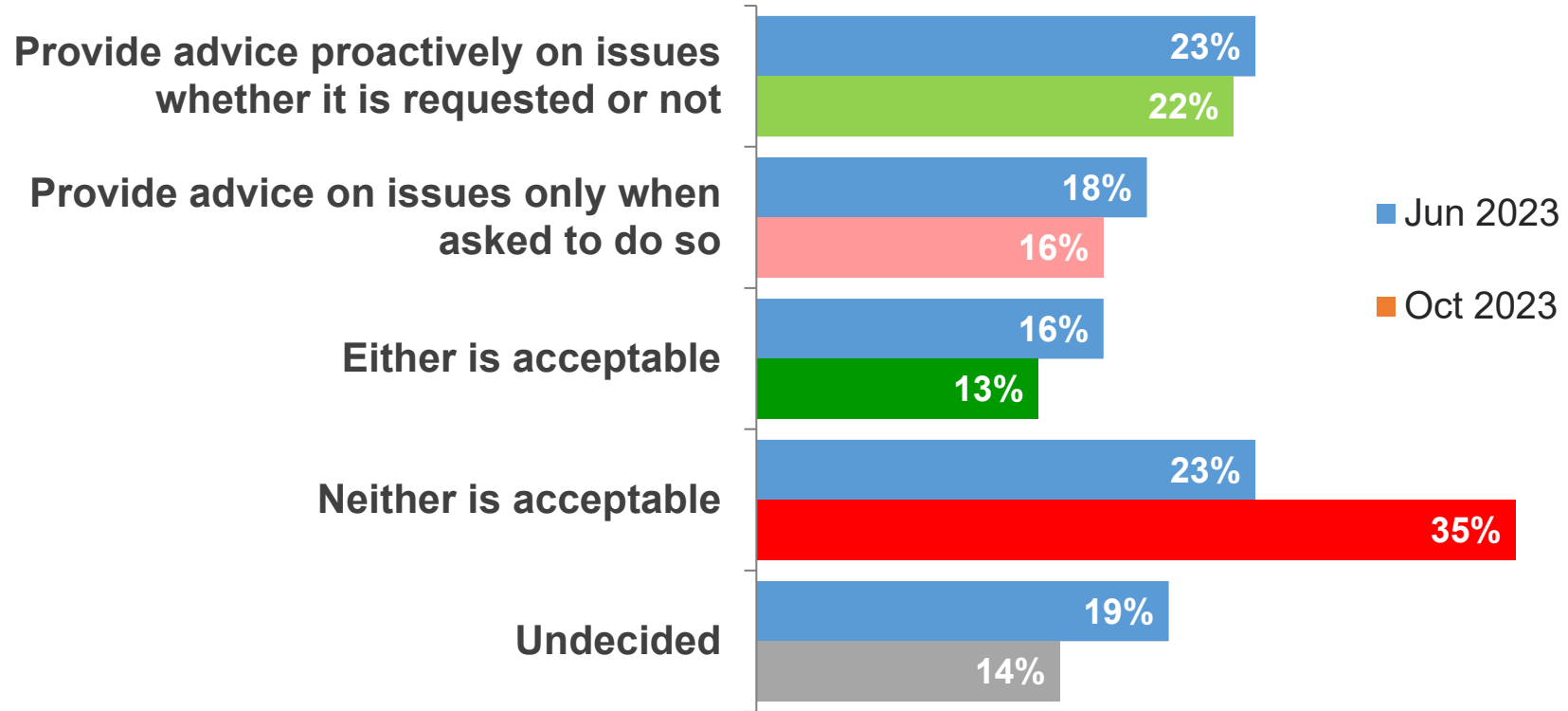


# Preferred Extent of Reach



Q2203) And some people say that the Voice should advise only Parliament to ensure it does not become a bureaucracy attached to government and the public service or risk greater legal action. If it needed to advise government in a particular circumstance it could still be invited to do so. Others say that the Voice should have a greater role in advising both Parliament and government, including ministers and public servants, so that people are heard at all levels of the departments and agencies that actually deliver policy and services. They say this power should be written into the Constitution. What is your own preference? Base: Special Sample.

# Preferred Process of Advising



- Ethnic Minority Assistance
- Inter-generational Trauma
- Truth-Telling (Makarrata)
- Negotiating Treaties
- Concepts of Sovereignty
- The Future of National Votes



# Related Issues

# Related Issues

- Although not strictly related to the Voice or the referendum vote itself, a number of other concepts and debates have opened up organically covering racism, sovereignty, treaty, truth-telling and the use of national votes. This section of the study seeks to provide feedback on public sentiment in these areas, in the process learning about how they may have impacted on the outcome and also pointing to how they might figure in policy directions post-referendum.
- Taking first some of the concepts outlined in the Uluru Statement from the Heart and Indigenous activism, we find fairly weak support for truth-telling and treaties, as well as rejection of the idea of dual sovereignty. That is, if the Voice fails it will not be the only request or foundational idea that fails to immediately resonate with Australia's largely non-Indigenous population.
  - Only a third (34%) support the idea of 'truth-telling' via a Makaratta Commission, a quarter (26%) oppose it and 40% remain uncommitted. Those strongly supporting or opposing are in the extremes (12% and 14% respectively), reflecting a nescient argument. Even fewer (27%) support a Commonwealth treaty or treaties with indigenous peoples, dropping 11-points in the last three months. 35% are actively opposed to the idea, with 38% undecided.
  - In both cases, No voters are much more likely to reject these notions, indicating that such tangentially connected proposals and world-views have likely contributed to the No vote, e.g. rejection of the Voice can reflect a rejection of treaties or more focus on Indigenous affairs. That is, the more questions asked by the No campaign the more likely the answer would be No, especially if later decisions are not controlled by the voter.
  - At a more basic level, only a fifth (21%) of Australians believe that a dual sovereignty exists between government and Indigenous nations, with half (48%) rejecting the idea outright. Though many people are now used to seeing icons of traditional ownership – welcome to or acknowledgement of country, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands flags, 'never ceded' and 'always was, always will be', for example – we have found that sovereignty is a novel and somewhat alien idea for most, even in its most basic 'spiritual connection' interpretation.
- Much the same might be said of views espoused by Price on the impact of colonization, with 38% agreeing that the impact on Indigenous Australians has been mostly positive (23% negative), but 40% also agreeing that there is exists intergenerational trauma as a result (28% disagree). Such conflicting views are not uncommon and highlight community confusion in this area.



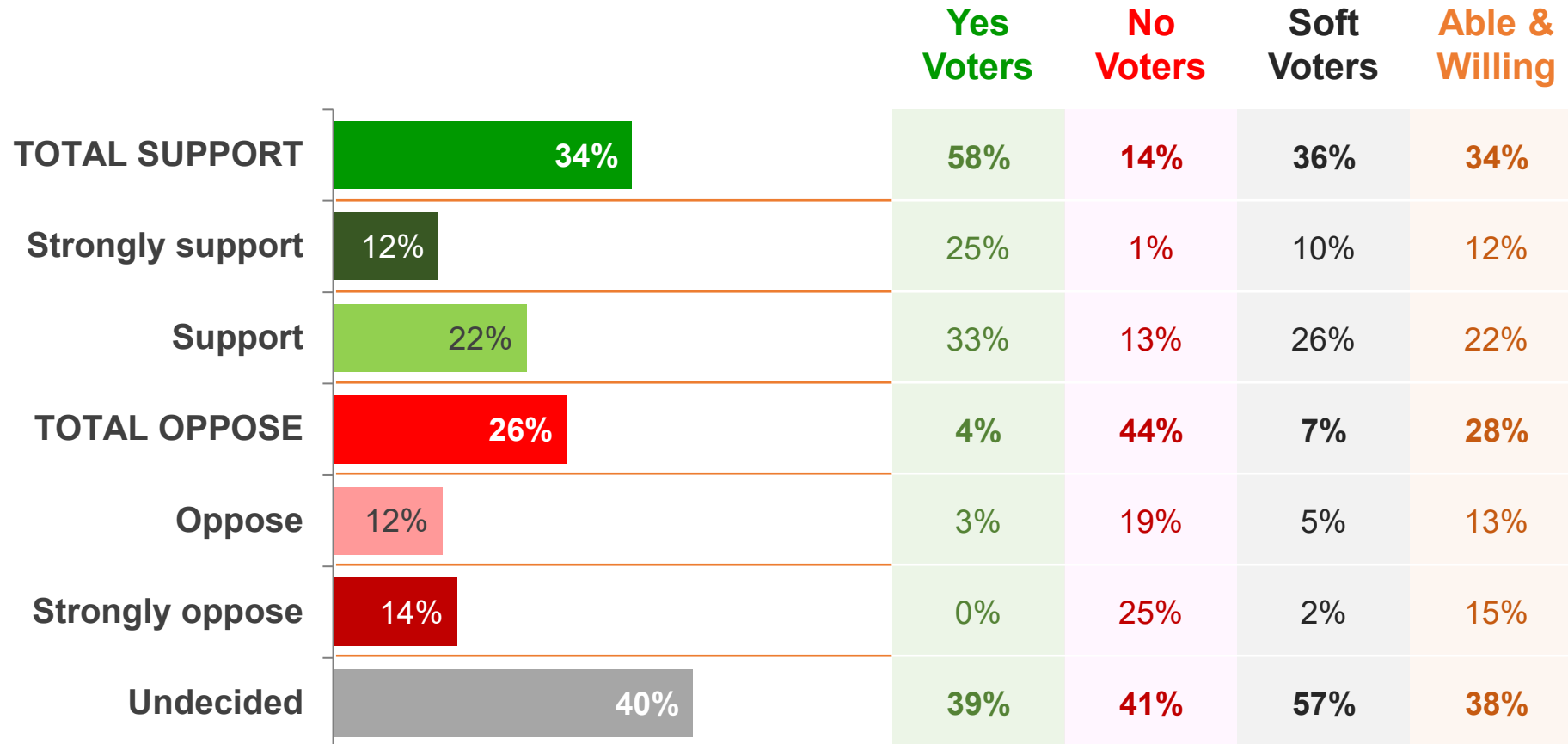
# Related Issues

- In light of all this, one might be forgiven for thinking that Australians would hold national votes in low regard, but this is far from the truth. Even now, 44% believe Australia should hold more public votes to decide important issues (just 21% would prefer fewer votes). However, we caution that our polling has shown mixed support for a republic, and much lower than the Voice's starting point.
- There has also been some commentary about whether any referendum or constitutional change is possible if this proposal fails. It would mark the ninth failure of 45 votes, and an almost fifty years without a success. While there is some merit in discussing how referendum votes might be conducted in the future, we caution against this defeatist view.
  - In 2017, just as the Uluru Statement from the Heart was being signed, a vote was held on same-sex marriage. This was not a referendum, but it received a good turnout, was passed nationally, in every state and in every territory. It passed the double majority test and surpassed it with two more states and two extra territories. That is, a successful vote akin to a referendum has been held in the last six years.
  - Further, it is instructive that many of the same campaign strategists, researchers and politicians figured in these votes, using much the same media channels, strategies and tactics, with the Yes campaign holding more corporate, celebrity support and funding than its opposition, and starting with a large lead in public opinion. The difference lays not in the methods or means, but in the proposal itself and the way its promotion is prosecuted.
  - Specifically, we believe this indicates that an acceptable proposal given to an informed electorate with bi-partisan support (the Coalition instigated the vote and it had the support of PM Turnbull) can still win. Other factors may play a part, but it must satisfy these basic requirements, i.e. they are a necessary but not sufficient conditions for success.





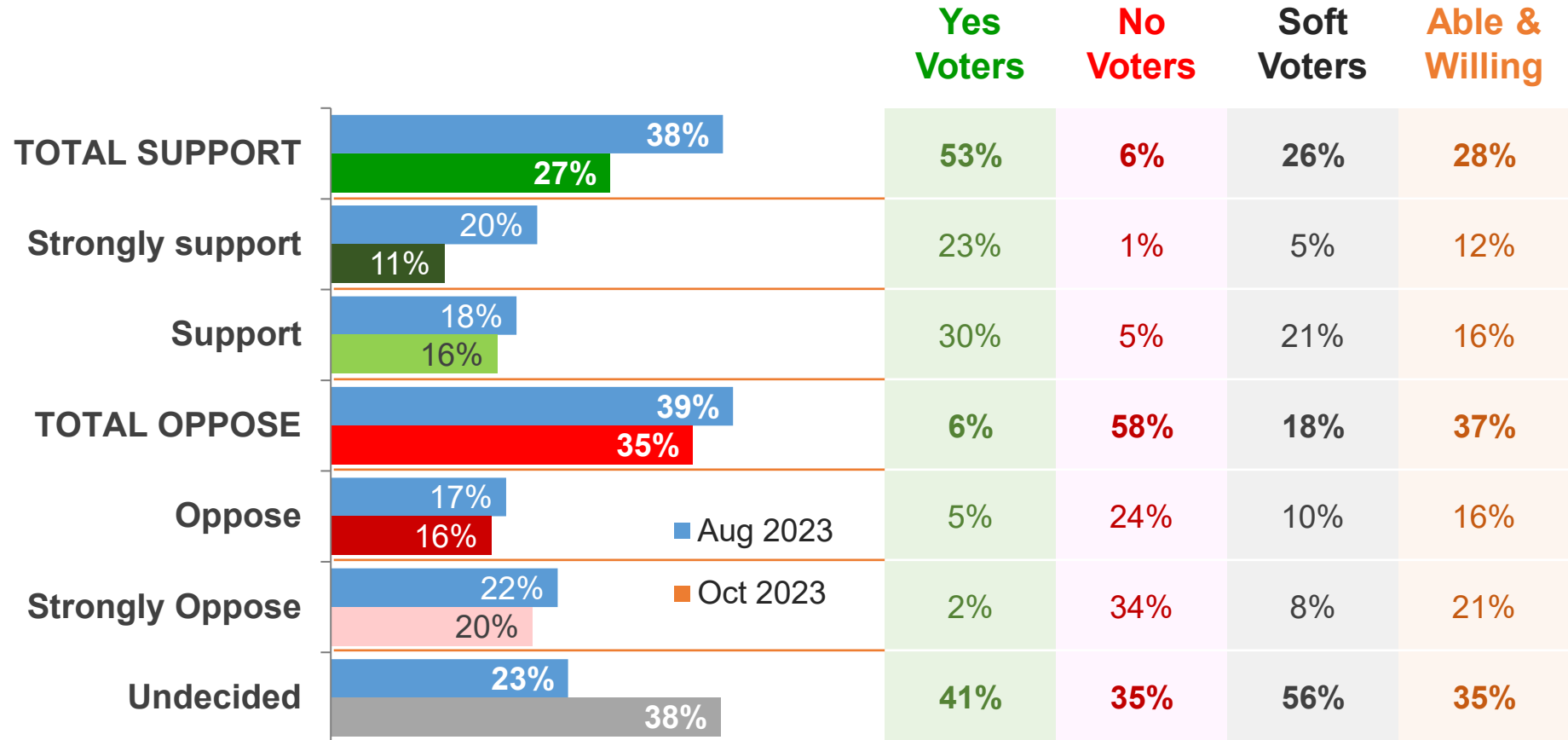
# Support for Truth-Telling via Makaratta Comm.



QX008) And the Uluru Statement from the Heart also called for a 'truth-telling' process run by a commission, sometimes referred to as a Makaratta Commission. This would hear stories from Indigenous Australians about their history, experiences and treatment since colonisation, and may also inform policy, events, speeches, school history teaching, etc., based on that information. Do you support or oppose such a Makaratta Commission being set up? Base: Special Sample.

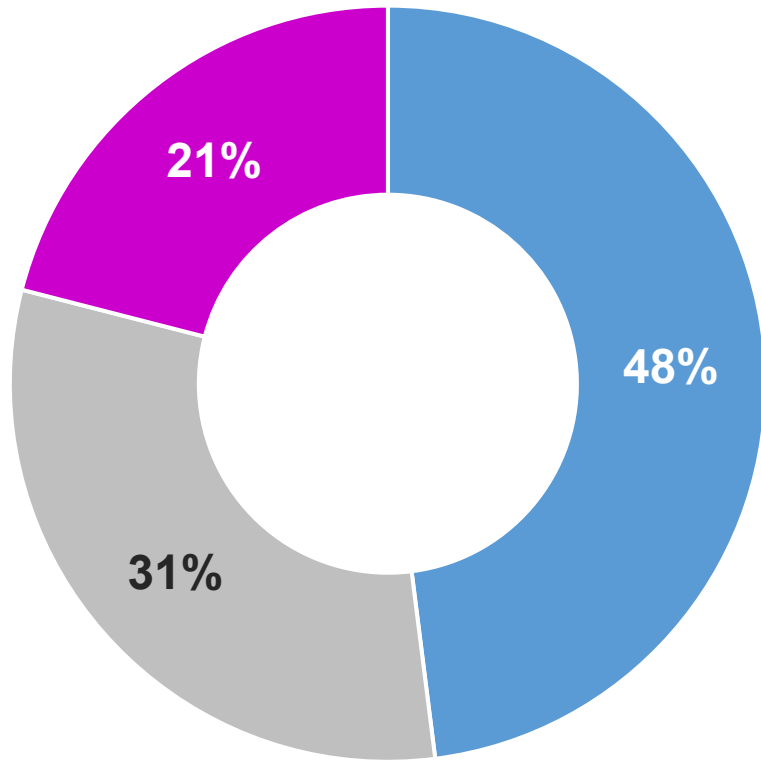


# Support for Commonwealth Treaty



Q2721) The Voice was part of a larger proposal for reconciliation contained in the Uluru Statement from the Heart. This also called for a treaty (or treaties) between the Australian Government and Indigenous peoples... Do you support or oppose such a treaty being made between the Australian Government and Indigenous peoples?  
 Base: Special Sample.

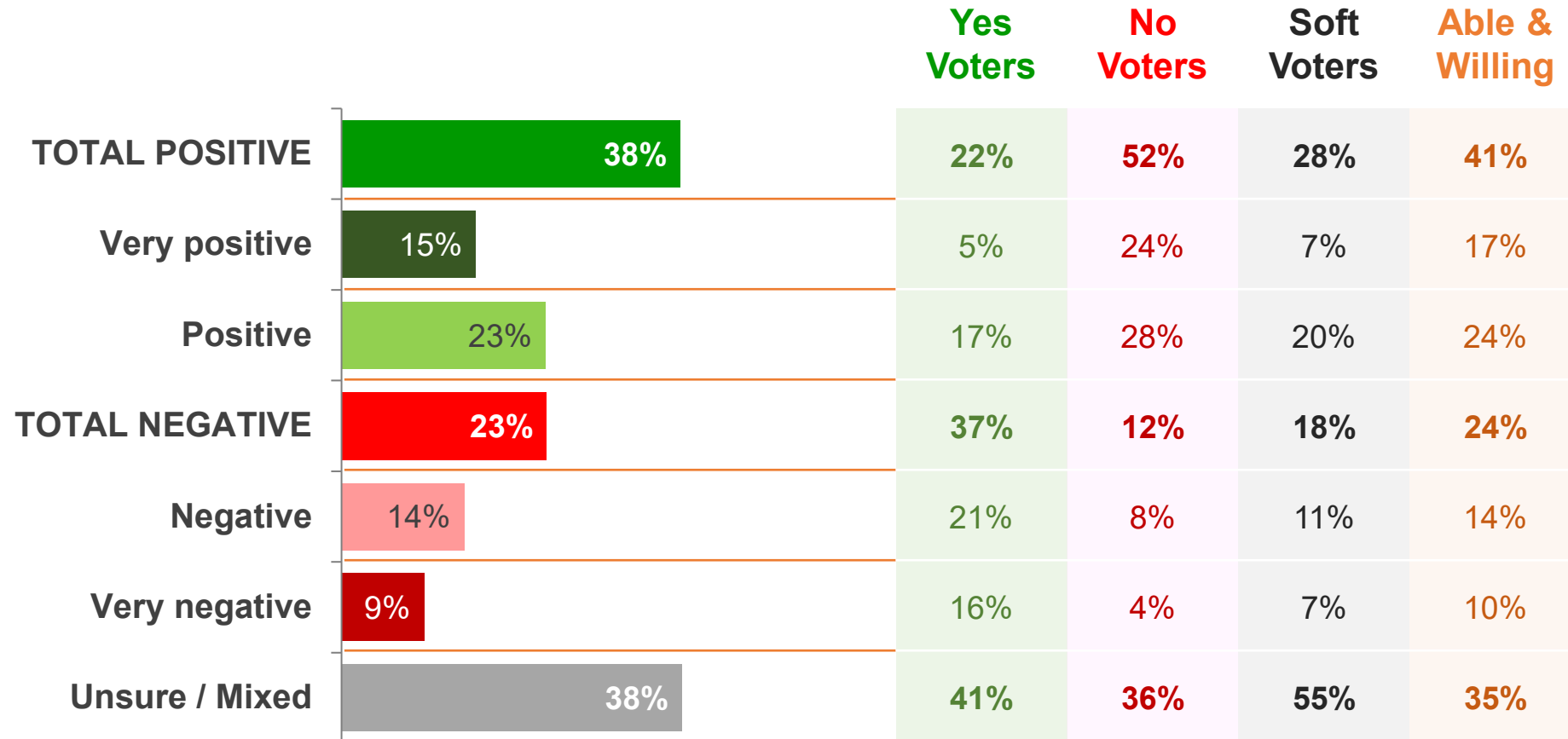
# Dual Sovereignty



	Yes Voters	No Voters	Soft Voters	Able & Willing
■ Single sovereignty held by government	35%	58%	36%	51%
■ Unsure	33%	30%	44%	28%
■ Dual sovereignty shared between gov. and Indigenous peoples	32%	12%	20%	21%

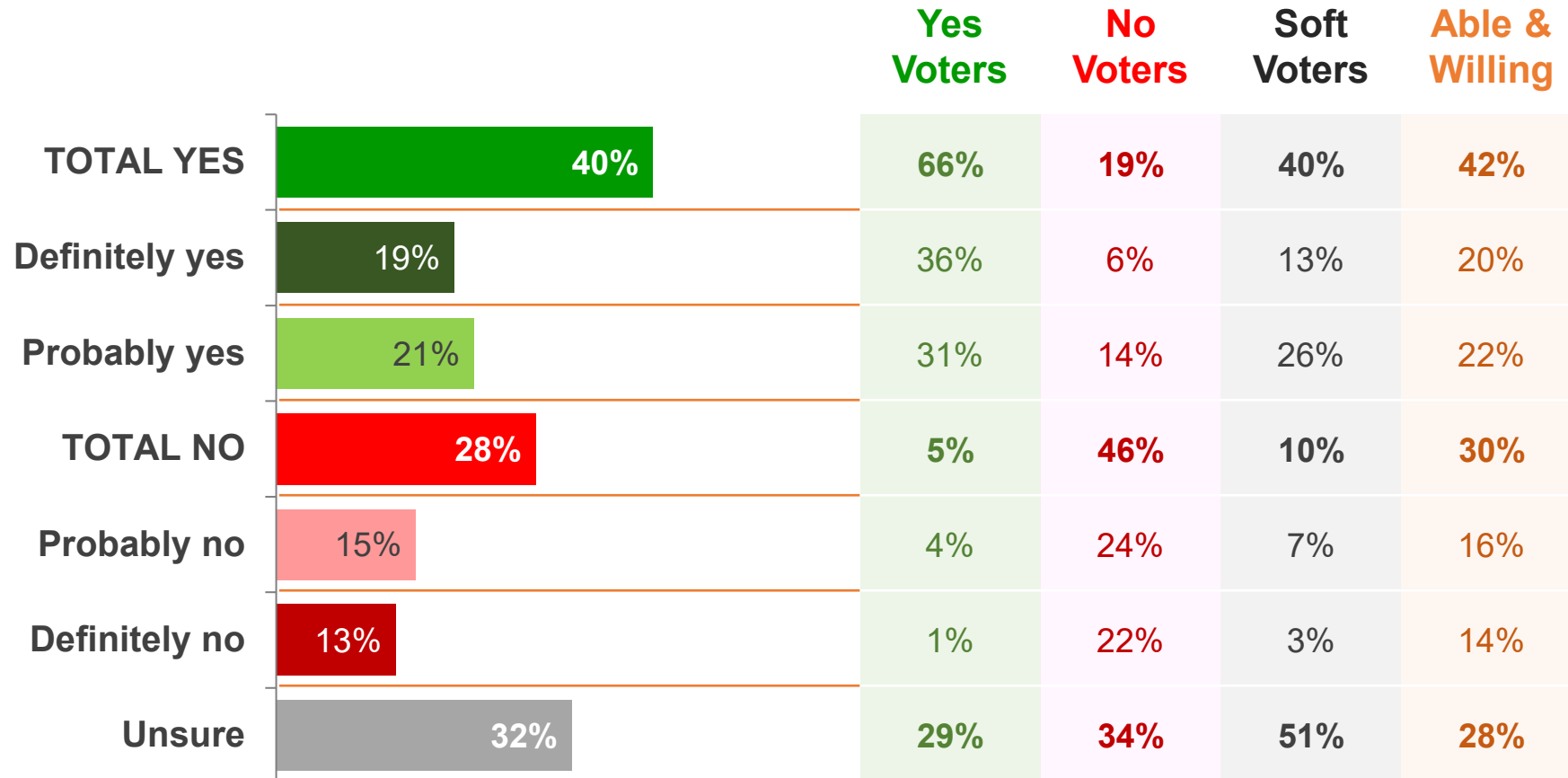
QX011) The need for treaties stems in part from the idea of ‘dual sovereignty’, which is a sharing of rights over Australia between governments and Indigenous peoples, who argue that they never surrendered their ownership of the land to governments during the colonisation process... In your view, what is the status of Australia?  
 Base: Special Sample.

# Impact of Colonisation on Indigenous Aus.



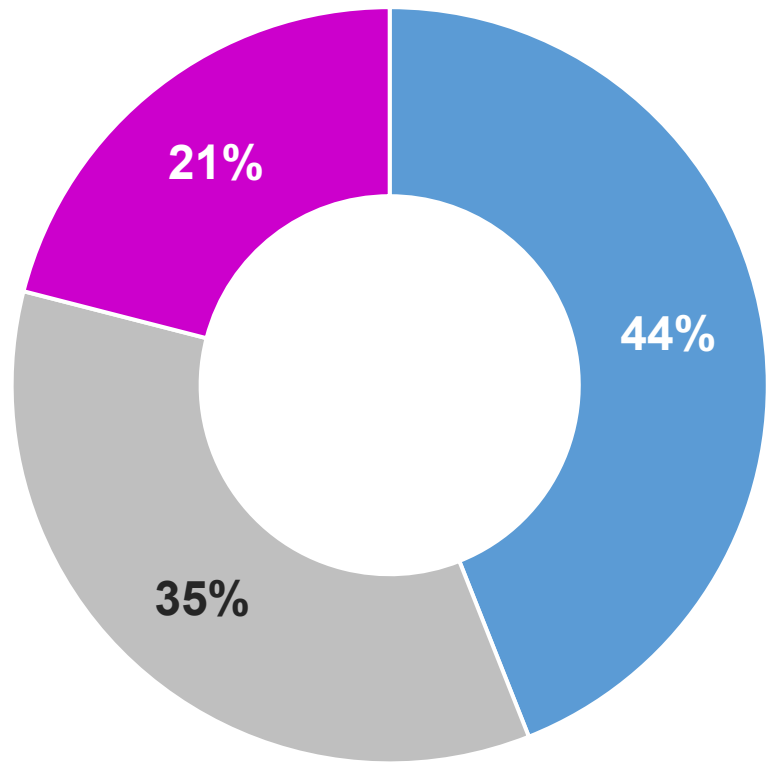
QX010) Many people campaigning for the Voice say that colonisation (the arrival of non-Indigenous people) from 1788 had a negative impact on Indigenous people. However, Jacinta Price, an Indigenous leader campaigning against the Voice recently said that it had had a positive impact, citing examples like having running water, abundant food, higher life expectancy and lower infant mortality than in 1788. On the whole, do you think the impact of colonisation since 1788 has been a positive or a negative one for Indigenous people? Base: Special Sample.

# Colonisation & Inter-generational Trauma



QX010a) Similarly, many people campaigning for the Voice say that colonisation has resulted in inter-generational trauma for many Indigenous people. Again, Jacinta Price denies this is the case. Do you think colonisation has resulted in inter-generational trauma for Indigenous people? Base: Special Sample.

# The Future of National Votes



	Yes Voters	No Voters	Soft Voters	Able & Willing
More votes	52%	38%	38%	46%
Undecided	34%	35%	47%	32%
Fewer Votes	14%	27%	15%	22%

Q2914) The current referendum is an example of a 'single issue' vote where voters are asked to give their views on a particular issue, policy or change. In addition to referendums, there are other types of national votes, such as plebiscites that are a simple, non-binding national vote that does not aim to change the Constitution, and on-line or postal surveys of all voters, like the same-sex marriage survey in 2017... What is your own preference on the use of 'single issue' votes, like referendums, plebiscites and surveys? Base: RPM.

- Leader Performance & Likeability
- Political Positionings
- Policy Positionings
- Policy Performance
- Future Political Stances



# Political Stances & Impacts



# Political Stances & Impacts

- The primary objective of this poll was to measure awareness, opinions and behaviours relating to the Voice referendum, and identify the key values, thoughts, drivers, influences, events and people playing a part in them. It is not a political polling document, but we cannot ignore the reality of tandem politics and the intertwined effects of partisan campaigning.
- We have already seen that the trend in referendum voting intention does show periods of more rapid change that coincide with political attention and partisan campaigning, notably; the Nationals and Liberals formally opposing the Voice, the parliamentary view of the proposal and debating of the referendum bill, plus the campaign proper in the short-term.
  - At the most basic level, each of these events appears to have drawn attention to what is a distracting issue for many, and exposed them to a model and proposal that this study shows many take issue with. We believe this to have had a broad cumulative effect, as will the campaign operating in a 'low trust' environment, i.e. unpopular leaders may not be trusted to design and implement a Voice after the event.
  - But right-leaning and transactional voters in the middle look to have moved against the Voice to a greater extent, and we feel it is likely this is due to partisan stances (and the values on which they are predicated) providing justification and permission for them to do so. This is similar in impact to Indigenous figures, like Price, Mundine and Thorpe, giving legitimacy to an opposing perspective.
  - In any case, the end result is that most people are voting the way that their chosen political party is campaigning on the Voice.
- One can argue cause and effect, of course, but the RPM trends suggest that the decline in the Voice proposals' fortunes have taken a toll on Albanese-Labor (acting as a values misalignment, a 'distraction', judgement and/or a competence metric) and resulted in a dividend for the Liberals and Dutton. Some prophesized that any result would harm the Coalition if they opposed, but it is difficult to see how aligning with a majority while demonstrating political competence would have such an effect.
  - Since Garma 2022, Albanese's personal net likeability has dropped from a stellar 'honeymoon' +34 points to +1 point, and his net performance has similarly dropped from +39 points to +2 points. He is now a neutral figure in the eyes of Australians overall.
  - He continues to lead Dutton on both measures, but since announcing the Liberals' opposition to the Voice Dutton's net likeability has gone from -25 to -12 points and his net performance from -28 to -13 points. In September's track he drew level with Albanese on performance.
  - The impact on primary vote is less pronounced – this being a 'stickier' behaviour measure that builds in a relative preference judgment – but even here Labor has dropped down from a high of 42% to 37%. This has paused this month in line with the Voice vote hiatus.

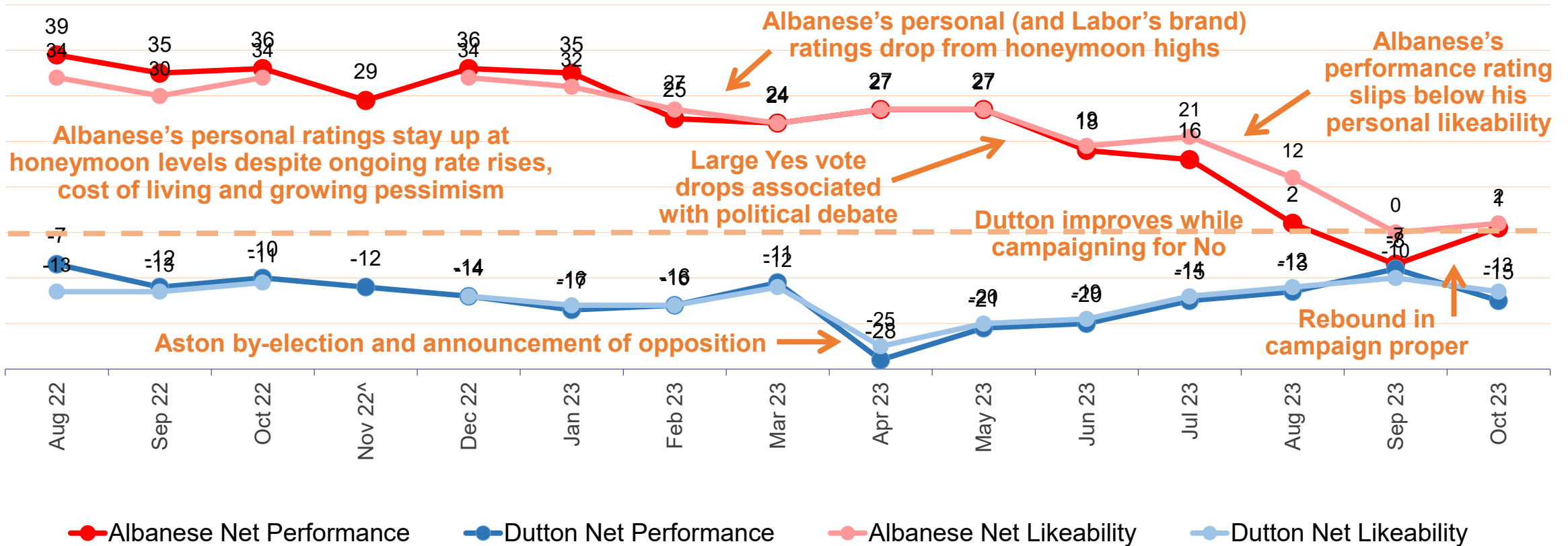




# Political Stances & Impacts

- Importantly, the Voice proposal in itself does not appear to be driving vote choice significantly because Labor hold a lead on ‘doing something’, so we conclude that it is what this proposal and debate has demonstrated about Labor that is at issue. This may indicate a dim realization that the Labor Government have chosen to act as enabler in all this; not forming, negotiating or testing a proposal on their own, but putting forward a request from Indigenous leaders at Uluru to voters.
- It remains to be seen whether there is any enduring toll or dividend for the parties and leaders post-referendum, but we suggest that a lot will depend on the blame assigned and future policy direction in this area, i.e. what comes next.
  - Noting the stated policy of the Liberals is to legislate local voices and Labor’s is to ‘respect the result’ and not legislate, we may well encounter the perverse outcome that the Opposition now campaigns for a similar instrument (albeit local and legislated) to that they have been critical of, while Labor campaigns against the very thing they have promoted as so valuable and essential to tackling disadvantage.
  - In any case, such complex and hypothetical political scenarios have been omitted from this poll as we do not feel voters are in the right headspace to provide reliable feedback at this time.
  - It is not known where Indigenous Yes advocates would land post-referendum, only to say that there are likely to be differing opinions. South Australia has legislated a voice and symbolically recognised Indigenous people in its own Constitution, but this combination is not what was requested at a national level. Indeed, the earlier ‘Recognise’ campaign was explicitly rejected by the Uluru signatories.
- In closing, we make the obvious observation that it is incumbent upon our political leaders to deal with the aftermath of what has at times been a heated debate cutting across partisan, ideological, geographical and demographic lines. This is standard practice after elections, i.e. a switch from winning for and from a base to framing the result’s meaning and governing for all, and should be the template for the post-referendum period. To ignore this requirement risks lingering resentment.

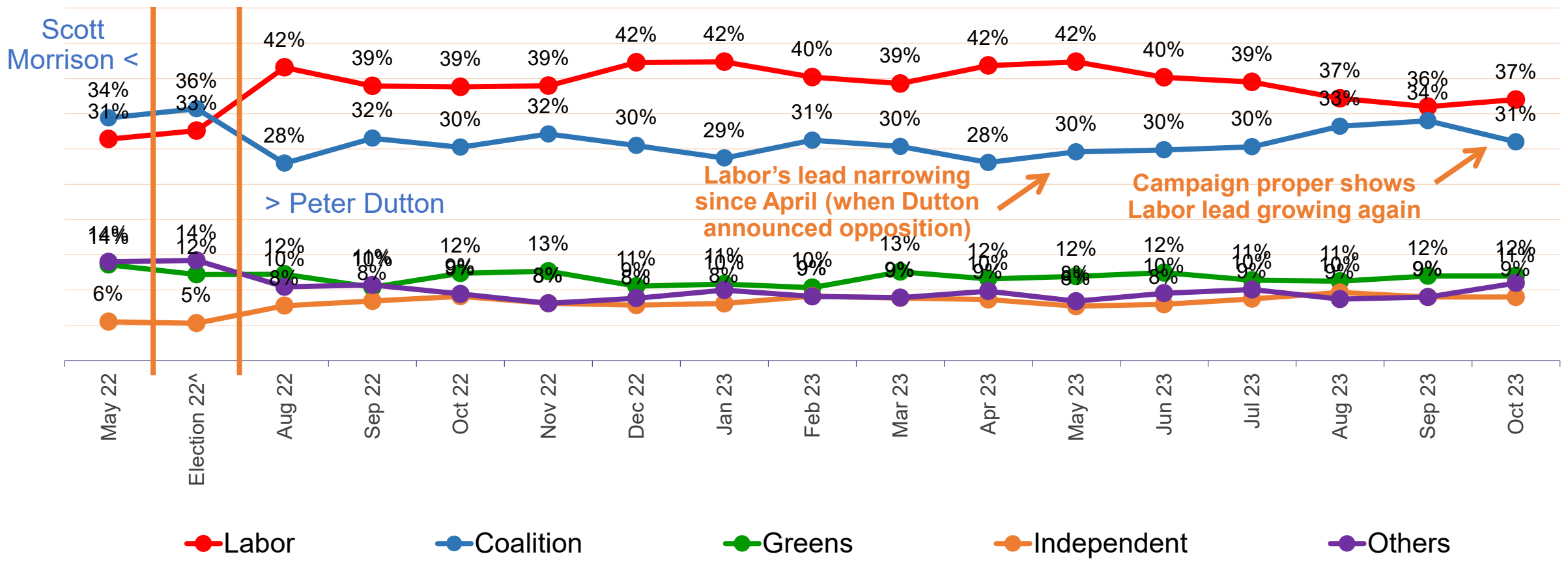
# Leader Net Performance & Likeability: Trend



Q17) Thinking about Anthony Albanese, the leader of the Labor Party, how would you rate his performance as Prime Minister in recent weeks? Base: RPM. Q15) Thinking about Peter Dutton, the leader of the Liberal Party, how would you rate his performance as Opposition Leader in recent weeks? Base: RPM. Net Performance = % Good - % Poor. Q20) Below is a list of people and organisations that are active in politics and public life and the Voice campaign. For each, please tell us whether you have heard of them and, if so, whether you have a favourable, neutral or unfavourable view of them. Base: All. Net Likeability = % Positive - % Negative. N.B. Likeability not asked in November 2022.



# Federal Primary Vote: Trend



Q5) In Federal elections the ballot paper asks you to number each party and their candidate in order of your choice, where 1 is your first choice, 2 is your second choice, etc. If a FEDERAL election were being held TODAY, please number the following boxes from 1-6 in the order of your choice. Base: Eligible to enroll. ^ Actual election result (Australian Electoral Commission).



# Indicative Comments about Voice & Politics

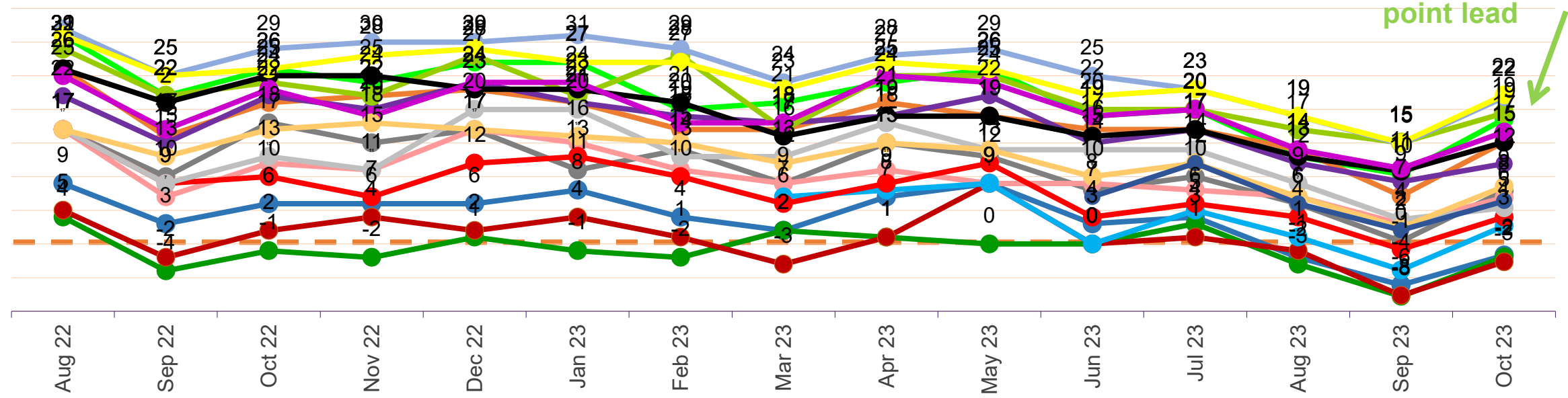
- “Labor are too focused on the yes/no referendum vote. There are more pressing matters!”
- “As a rusted-on Labor voter, I’m going against everything I believe to vote for Dutton because of the Voice.”
- “Disappointed with the PM’s performance so far. Especially on cost of living and electricity costs.”
- “Dutton actually seems to be talking more sense!”
- “I’ve had enough of Albo’s obsession with the Voice. Just get back to governing.”
- “I don’t agree with wasting money on this vote. It’s a distraction.”
- “I think he [Albanese] has a social conscience and is doing his best to look at the most vulnerable.”
- “[Albanese] Appears to have the nation’s interests at heart...”
- “He’s [Dutton’s] handled the Voice debate pretty poorly. He hasn’t provided an alternative platform.”
- “[Dutton] Reflexively disagrees with any social change, like the Voice.”
- “All this money being spent on the voice, and he [Albanese] can’t even tell us the implications.”
- “His [Albanese’s] priorities are in the wrong place.”
- “Just working on a load of pet projects and doesn’t care about what we actually want from him [Albanese].”
- “[Labor’s] Achieving nothing and going nowhere, like the Voice.”
- “[Labor’s] Doing some things that might not be popular, but are for the good of the country.”
- “Labor aren’t doing enough to solve the problems we have. It’s all about the referendum.”
- “The way the Coalition have responded to the Voice has left me less likely to vote for them.”

Q9) What is the main reason that you have reconsidered your vote recently? Q18) Please provide a short explanation in the box below as to why you think Anthony Albanese’s performance has been [ANSWER FROM Q17] recently? Q16) Please provide a short explanation in the box below as to why you think Peter Dutton’s performance has been [ANSWER FROM Q15] recently? Base: RPM.



# Political Policy Positioning: Trend

Indigenous Issues & The Voice +19 point lead

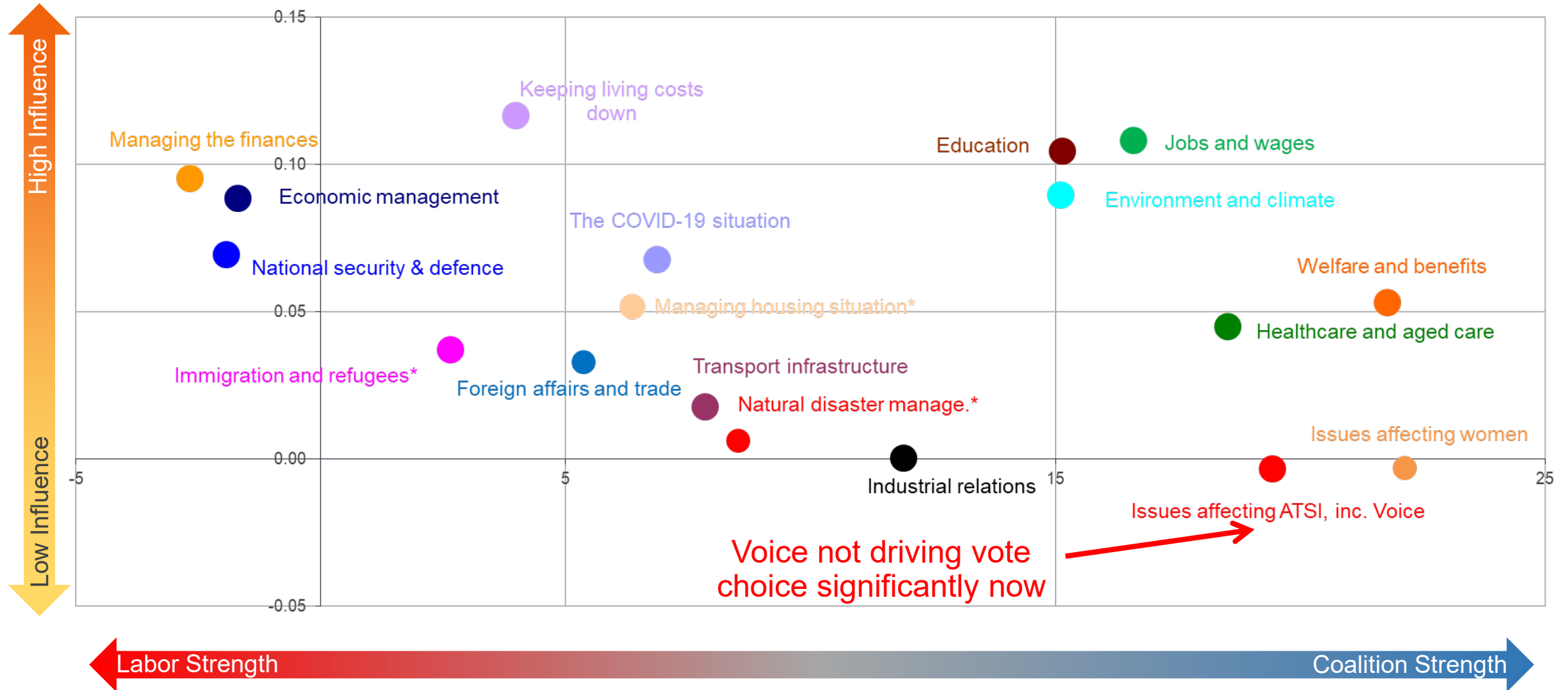


- Economic management
- Education
- Managing the finances
- Jobs and wages
- Immigration and refugees\*
- Natural disaster manage.\*
- National security & defence
- Transport infrastructure
- Issues affecting ATSI, inc. Voice
- Welfare and benefits
- Healthcare and aged care
- Industrial relations
- Environment and climate
- The COVID-19 situation
- Foreign affairs and trade
- Keeping living costs down
- Issues affecting women
- Managing housing situation\*

Q21a) Below is a list of policy areas. For each, please tell us which party and leader you think would perform best in each area. Base: RPM. \* Not asked in all tracks. Net positioning = % ALP – % LNP. \* New or revised statement.

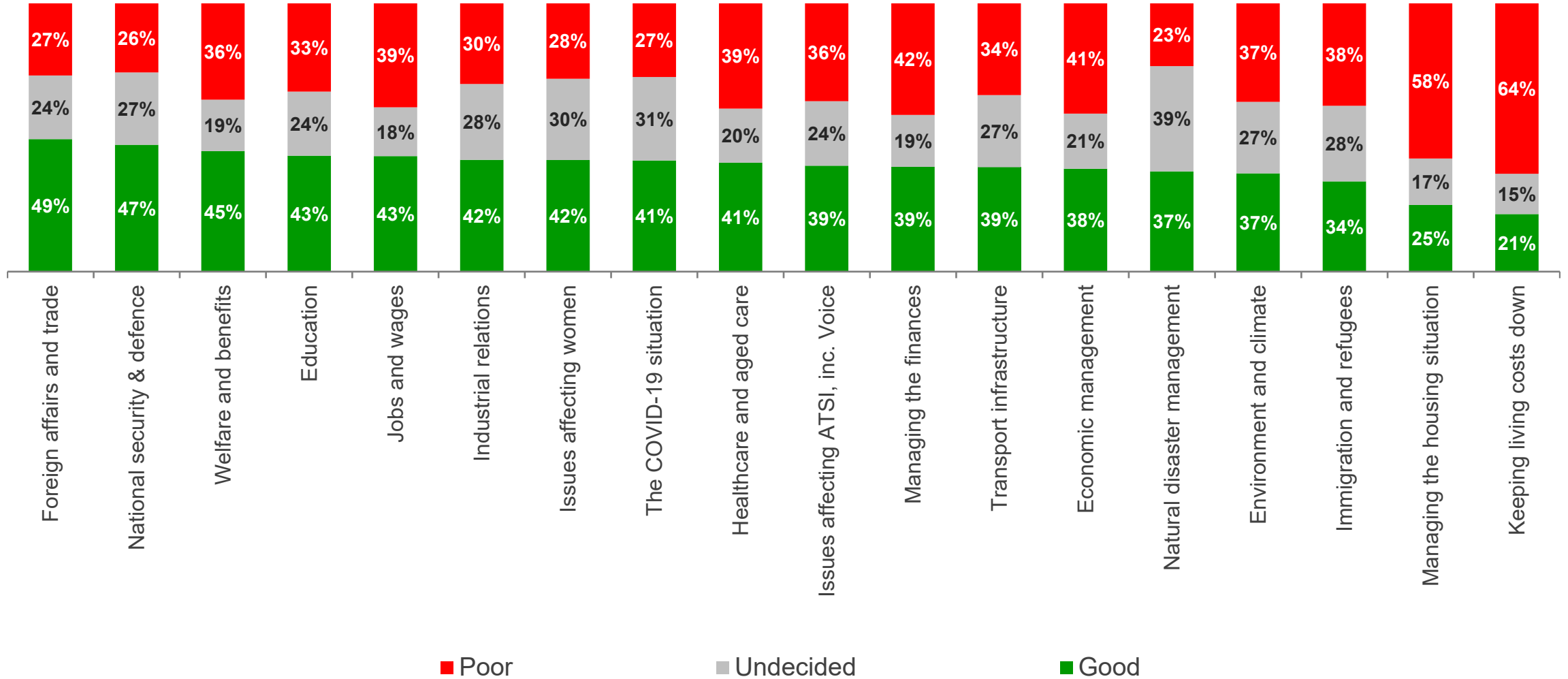


# Political Policy Positioning: Regression



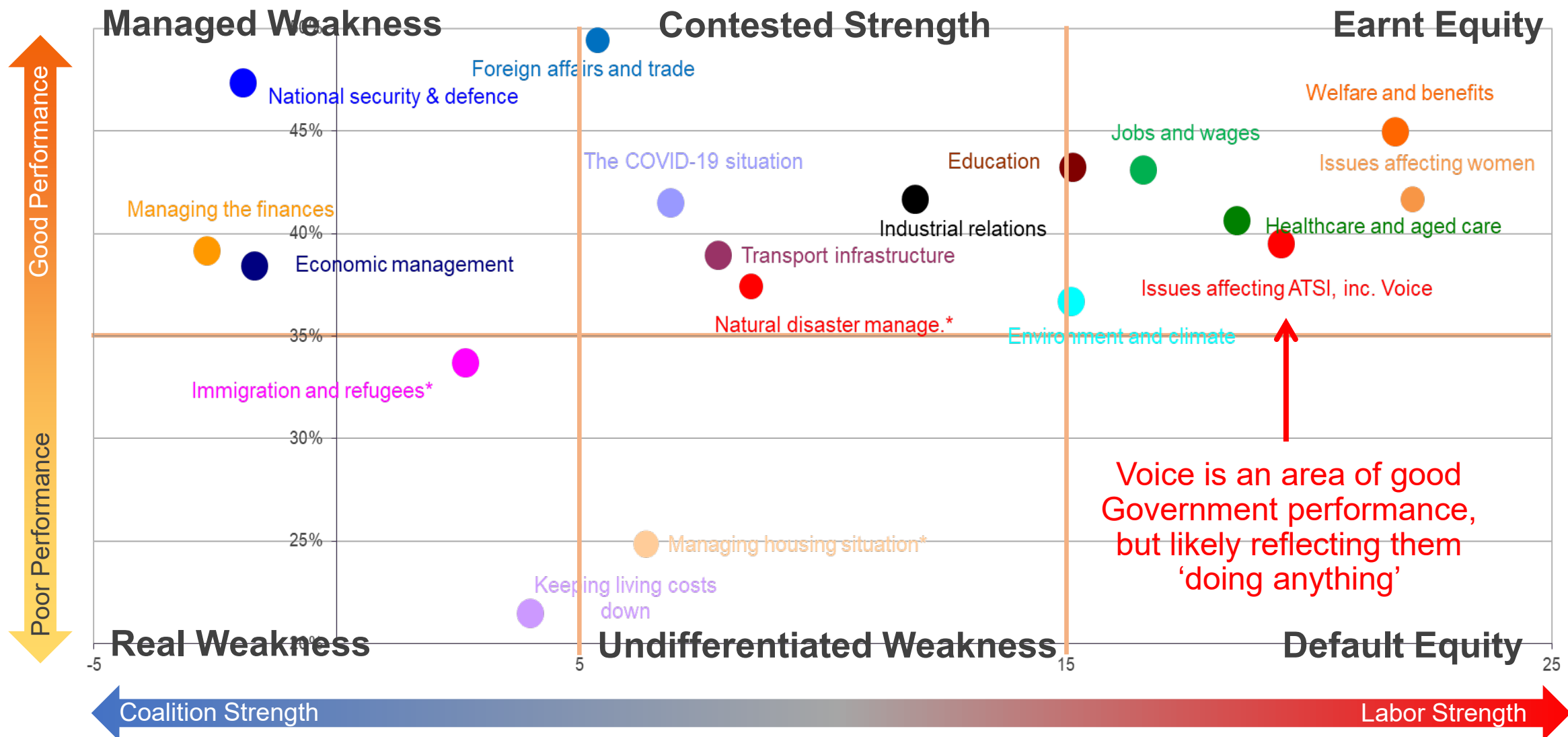
Q21a) Below is a list of policy areas. For each, please tell us which party and leader you think would perform best in each area.  
 Base: RPM. \* Not asked in all tracks. Net positioning = % ALP – % LNP. \* New or revised statement.

# Political Policy Performance: Government





# Political Policy Positioning & Gov. Performance

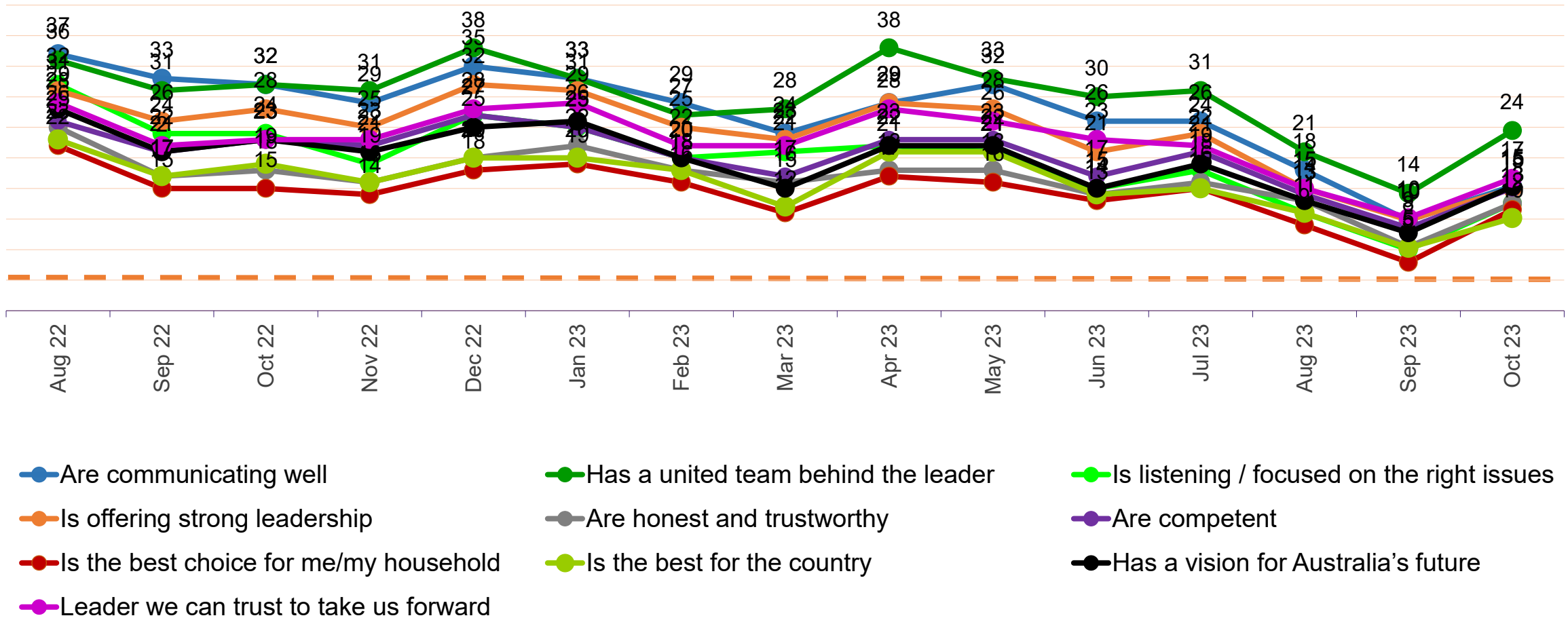


Voice is an area of good Government performance, but likely reflecting them 'doing anything'

Q21a) Below is a list of policy areas. For each, please tell us which party and leader you think would perform best in each area. Base: RPM. \* Not asked in all tracks. Net positioning = % ALP – % LNP. Q2901) Although we have already asked you which party is best to handle certain issues and policy areas, please can you now rate the Albanese-Labor Government on how well it is performing in each of the following areas. Base: RPM.



# Political Performance Positioning: Trend



Q21a) Below is a list of policy areas. For each, please tell us which party and leader you think would perform best in each area.  
 Base: RPM. \* Not asked in all tracks. Net positioning = % ALP – % LNP. \* New or revised statement.



# Appendices

- Overall Sample
- Over-samples
- RPM Tracks

# Overall Sample: Sample Sizes

Samples (n=)	Unweighted (inc. over- samples^)	Weighted to General Population	Filtered by Enrolment & Turnout	Samples (n=)	Unweighted (inc. over- samples^)	Weighted to General Population	Filtered by Enrolment & Turnout	Samples (n=)	Unweighted (inc. over- samples^)	Weighted to General Population	Filtered by Enrolment & Turnout
<b>Total</b>	<b>4728</b>	<b>4728</b>	<b>3808</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>1079</b>	<b>1503</b>	<b>1222</b>	<b>Yes Voters</b>	<b>2219</b>	<b>2122</b>	<b>1673</b>
Males	2222	2306	1863	<b>Victoria</b>	<b>1022</b>	<b>1216</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>No Voters</b>	<b>2509</b>	<b>2606</b>	<b>2135</b>
Females	2506	2422	1945	<b>Queensland</b>	<b>1051</b>	<b>951</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>Soft Voters</b>	<b>936</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>538</b>
18-34 Years	1367	1372	933	<b>WA~</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>376</b>	Employed	3009	2870	2232
35-54 Years	1617	1600	1266	<b>SA~</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>283</b>	Not Employed	813	914	709
55+ Years	1744	1755	1609	<b>Tasmania~</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>94</b>	Retired	1050	1116	1038
Inner City	1556	1404	1087	Labor Voters	1652	1657	1379	Lower Income	967	1139	915
Outer Suburbs	1344	1363	1098	Coalition Voters	1392	1405	1235	Middle Income	1220	1113	944
Regional	744	781	670	Greens Voters	574	536	439	Higher Income	2032	1918	1543
Rural	1084	1180	954	Other Voters	872	914	755	Religious	2265	2292	1912
Indigenous~	420	129	96	Uncommitted Voters	1052	1051	738	Christian	1994	2015	1718
Anglo	2638	2727	2378	Progressives	1507	1501	1203	Other Religion	271	277	193
Other Background	2035	2156	1639	Conservatives	1174	1208	1027	Non-religious	2321	2296	1817
Indigenous Friend	1678	1460	1240	Neither	2047	2018	1578	Born in Australia	3460	3452	2976
Do Not Know Ind.	2843	3039	2439	Marginal Seats	1377	1379	1120	Born Overseas	1075	1079	723

^ The combined survey sample used to analyse voting questions includes over-samples in smaller states as well as for Indigenous Australians (~). These have been weighted back to population norms, and will therefore reduce the overall 'effective sample size'.

# State & Indigenous Over-Samples

## Special Sample

Samples (n=)	Unweighted (inc. over- samples^)	Weighted to General Population	Population Proportion with Weighting
<b>Total</b>	<b>3117</b>	<b>3117</b>	<b>100%</b>
NSW	530	991	32%
Victoria	472	801	26%
Queensland	817	627	20%
WA~	392	323	10%
SA~	417	222	7%
Tasmania~	465	70	2%
Territories*	24	83	3%
Indigenous~	380	79	3%
<b>Other Common Breakdowns</b>			
Yes Voters	1440	1392	45%
No Voters	1677	1725	55%
Soft Voters	615	663	21%

## RPM Sample

Samples (n=)	Unweighted (inc. over- samples^)	Weighted to General Population	Population Proportion with Weighting
<b>Total</b>	<b>1611</b>	<b>1611</b>	<b>100%</b>
NSW	549	512	32%
Victoria	550	441	27%
Queensland	234	324	20%
WA~	123	167	10%
SA~	81	115	7%
Tasmania~	36	36	2%
Territories*	38	43	3%
Indigenous~	40	50	3%
<b>Other Common Breakdowns</b>			
Yes Voters	779	730	45%
No Voters	832	881	55%
Soft Voters	321	324	20%

N.B. The combined overall survey sample and special Voice sample includes over-samples in smaller states as well as for Indigenous Australians (~). These have been weighted back to population norms, and will therefore reduce the overall 'effective sample size'. \* Territories (ACT and NT) are too small to analyse separately, but do contribute to the national total (as is the case in the referendum result).



# RPM Samples: Dates & Sample Sizes

Track No.	Fieldwork Dates	Total Sample Size (n=)	Notional Error Margin (+/-)
Track 15	17 <sup>th</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup> August 2022	2,011	2.2%
Track 16	14 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> September 2022	1,607	2.4%
Track 17	5 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	1,604	2.4%
Track 18	26 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	1,611	2.4%
Track 19	30 <sup>th</sup> Nov. – 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	1,611	2.4%
Track 20	17 <sup>th</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2023	1,606	2.4%
Track 21	15 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> February 2023	1,604	2.4%
Track 22	12 <sup>th</sup> – 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2023	1,600	2.5%
Track 23	12 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> April 2023	1,609	2.4%
Track 24	10 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2023	1,610	2.4%
Track 25	6 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	1,606	2.4%
Track 26	12 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2023	1,610	2.4%
Track 27	9 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> August 2023	1,603	2.4%
Track 28	5 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	1,604	2.4%
Track 29 <sup>^</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup> Sep. – 4 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	1,611	2.4%

This table provides details of the monthly Resolve Political Monitor (RPM) survey tracks conducted since the May 2022 federal election. These have been used in providing long-term trends and supporting data for October 2023. <sup>^</sup> October track combined with the special sample for vote analyses.



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# Voice Referendum Poll

## Resolve Political Monitor

October 2023

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