Understanding attitudes towards housing in Australia

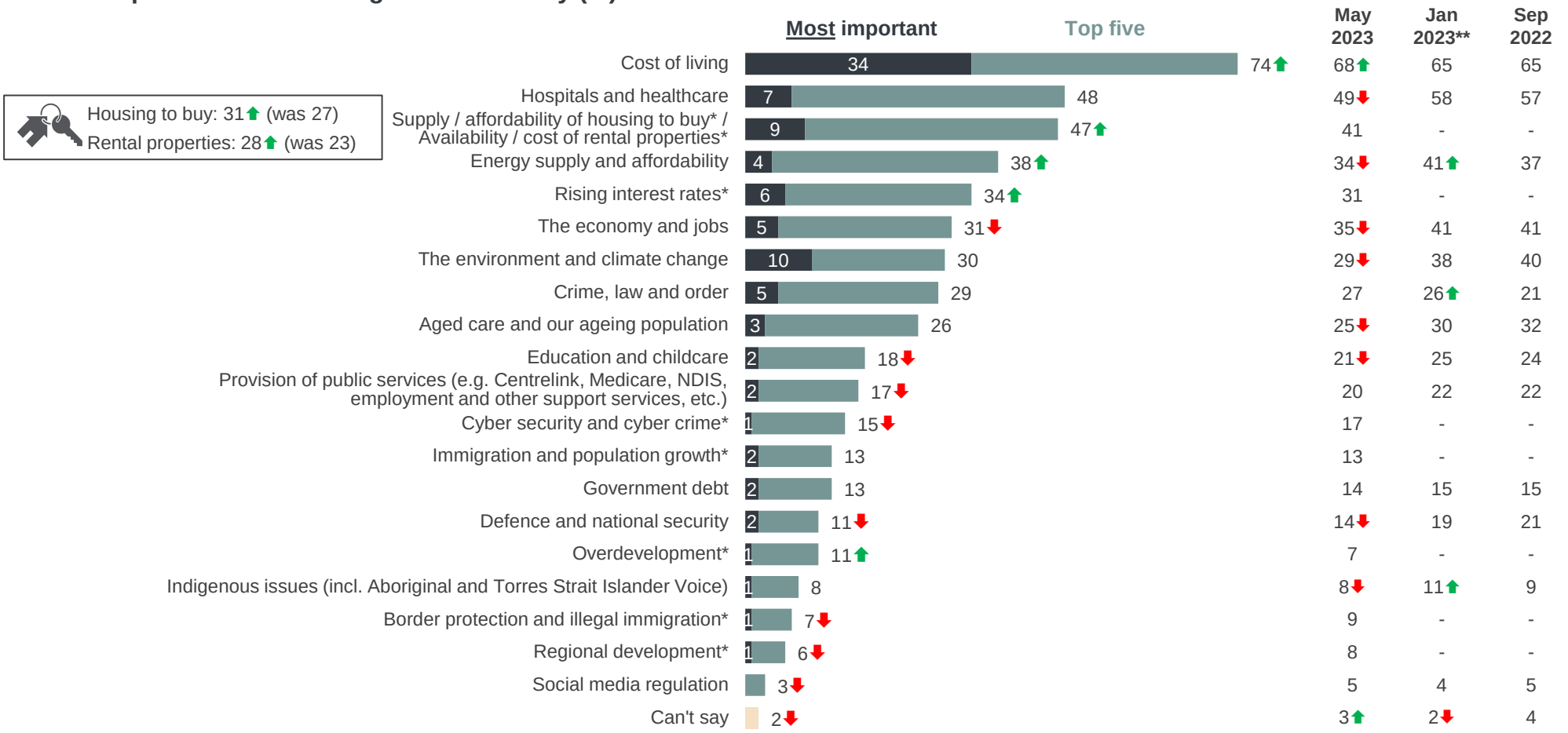
McKinnon Poll | Susan McKinnon Foundation

September 2023

Susan McKinnon Foundation

Cost of living increases the gap on all other issues facing Australia today

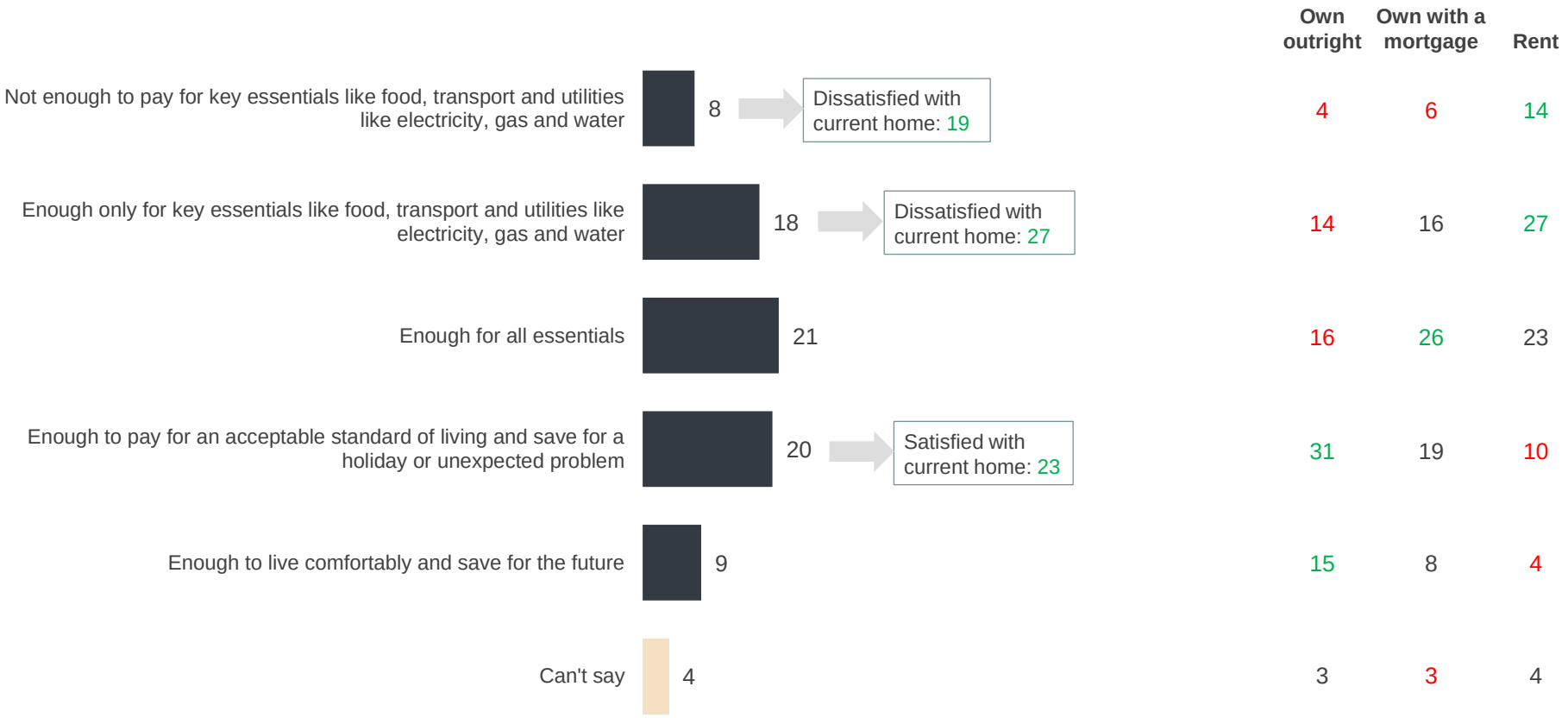
Most important issues facing Australia today (%)



**Added in May 2023.*
***January 2023 survey conducted among Australian eligible voters.*
Significantly higher ↑ / lower ↓ than the previous wave at the 95% confidence interval.
Q2. What are the most important issues facing Australia today and into the future that we should be doing something about? Please select your top five issues, in order of importance.
Base: All respondents – August 2023 (n=3,000); May 2023 (n=3,000); Jan 2023 (n=3,000); Sep 2022 (n=3,000).

Renters are significantly more likely to say their residual income is not or just enough to pay for key essentials

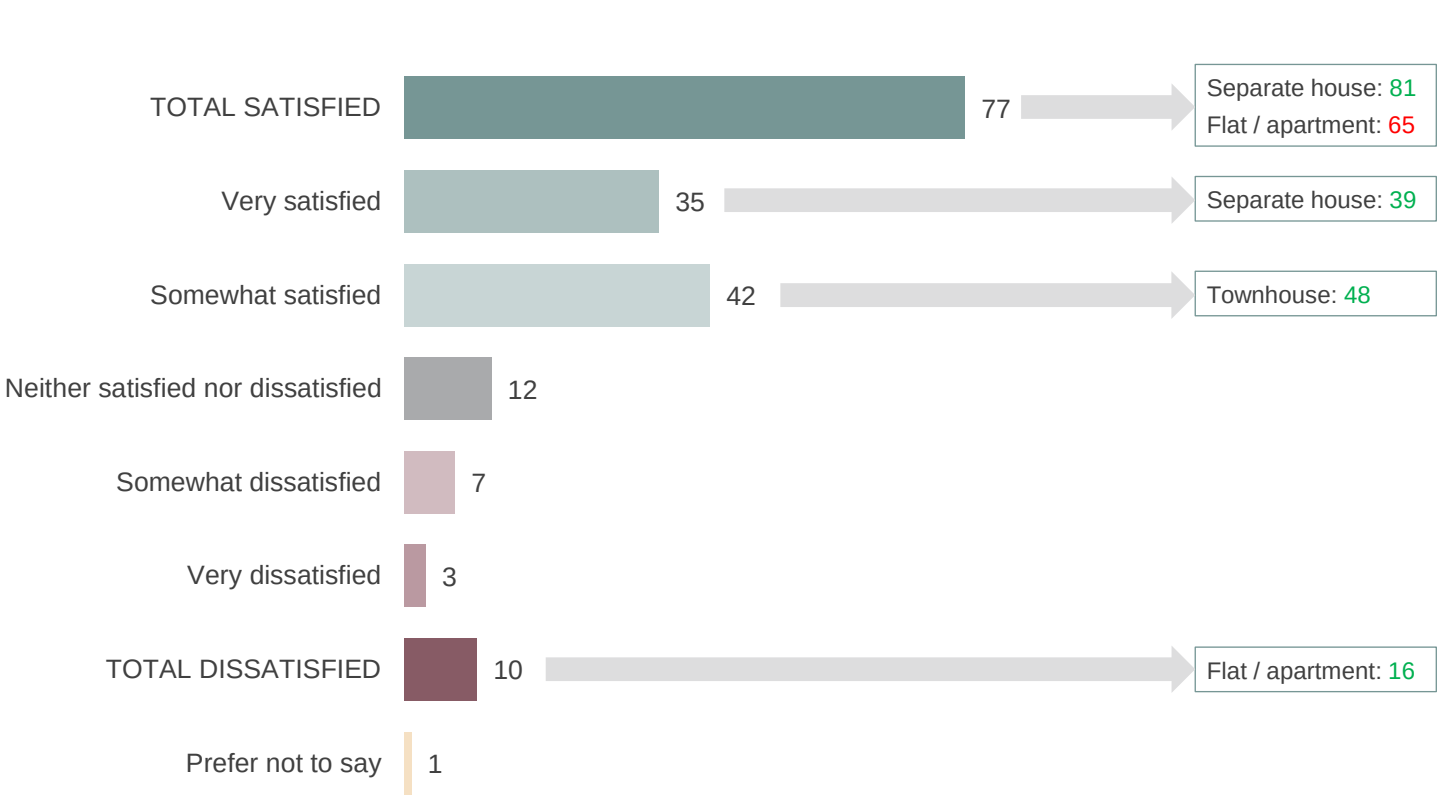
Money left over after meeting housing costs each month (%)



Significantly higher / lower than the total at the 95% confidence interval.
Q8. Please consider the amount of money you have remaining each month after you have paid for housing costs, including rental payments and / or mortgage repayments and associated taxes and levies like council rates, land tax and strata levies. After you have paid for housing costs, which of the following best describes how much money you have left each month?
Base: All respondents (n=3,000).

Most Australians who own their home outright are ‘very’ satisfied, renters dissatisfied with current home

Satisfaction with current home (%)

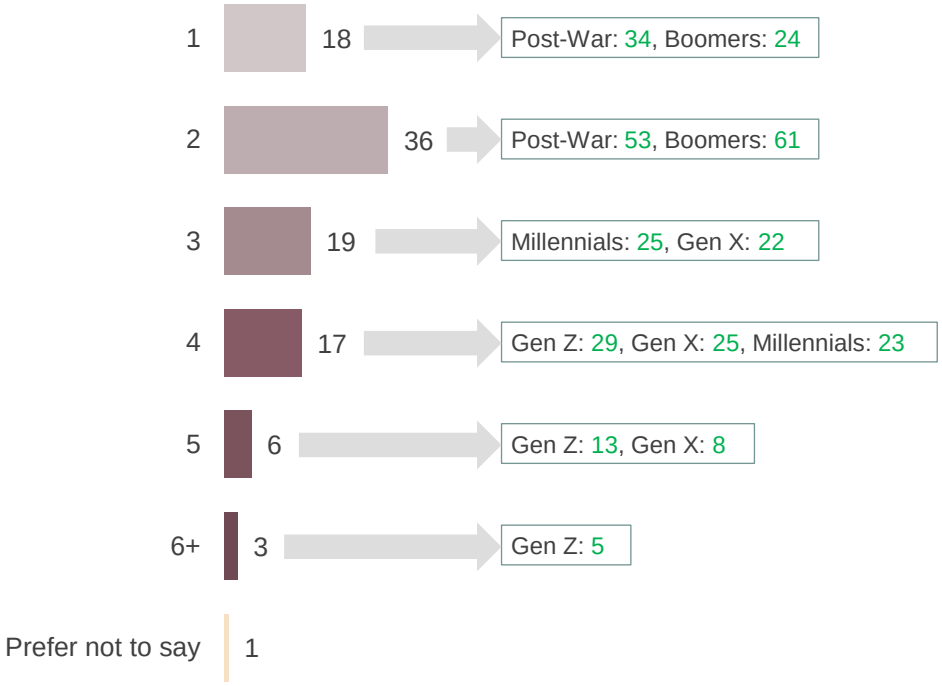


Significantly higher / lower than the total at the 95% confidence interval.
Q19. Overall, how satisfied are you with your current home?
Base: All respondents (n=3,000).

Most Australian households consist of close to three people and three bedrooms

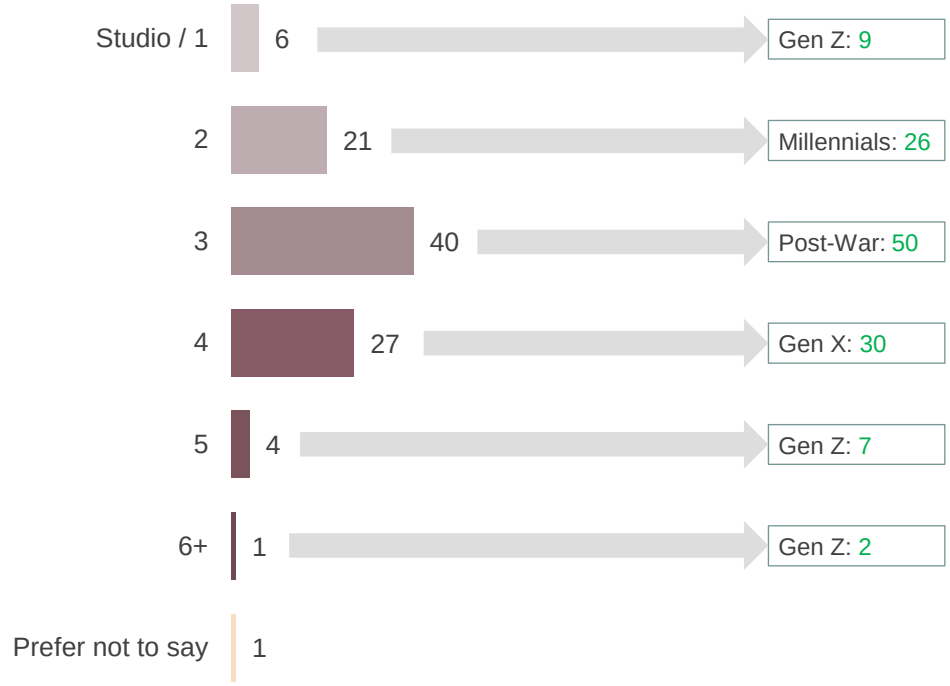
Number of people in the household (%)

Average household size: 2.6



Number of bedrooms (%)

Average number of bedrooms: 3.0



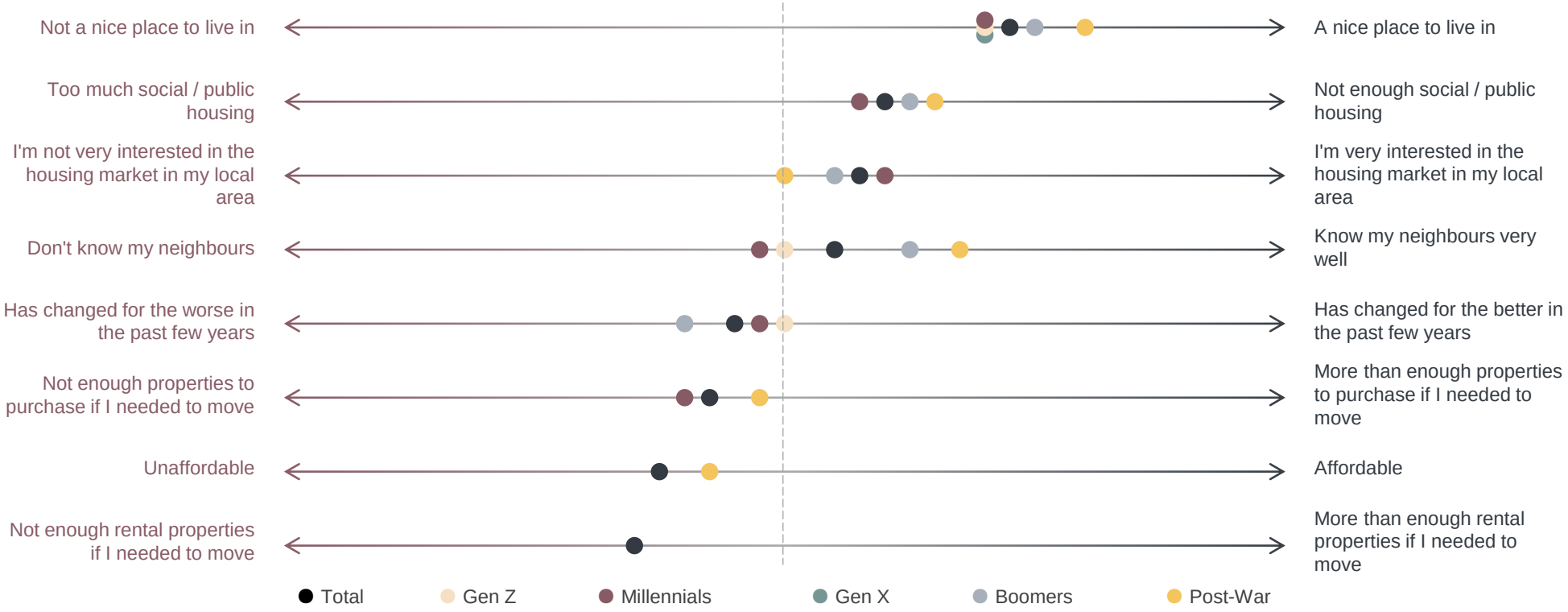
47% of adults live in homes with **more bedrooms than residents**:

- significantly more among Post-War (79%) and Boomers (69%)
- significantly less among Gen X (39%), Millennials (29%) and Gen Z (24%)

Significantly higher / lower than the total at the 95% confidence interval.
D1c. How many people currently live in your household (including yourself)? / Q13. How many bedrooms are there?
Base: All respondents (n=3,000).

Millennials tend to describe their local area less positively than others, but are most interested in its housing market

How people feel about their local area and suburb, including local housing* *(mean score, sliding scale)*



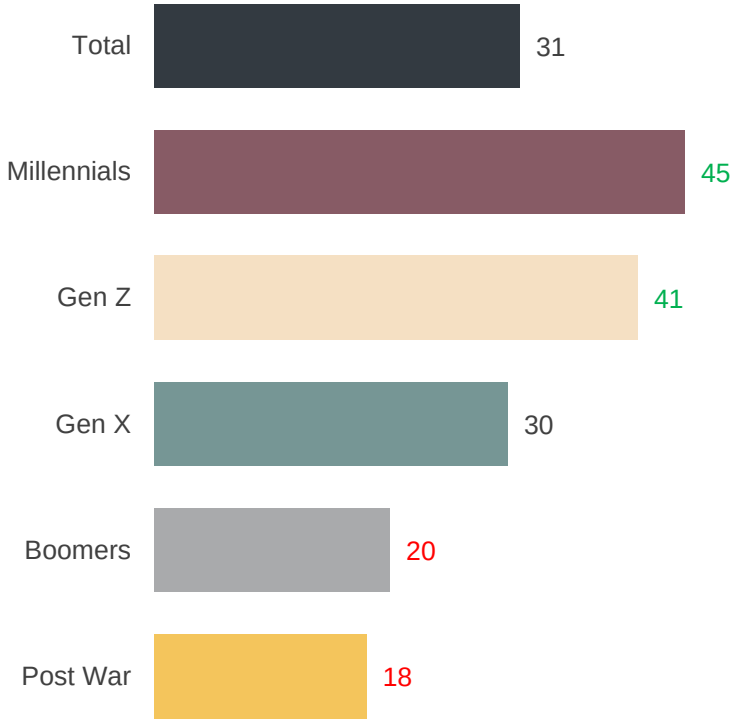
**Results shown are significantly higher / lower than the total at the 95% confidence interval.*
Q9. What words and phrases come closest to describing how you feel about the housing in your local area and suburb, and your local area or suburb itself? Use the slider to indicate where your opinion sits for each of the following pairs of words / phrases. Base: All respondents (n=3,000).

The rental experience

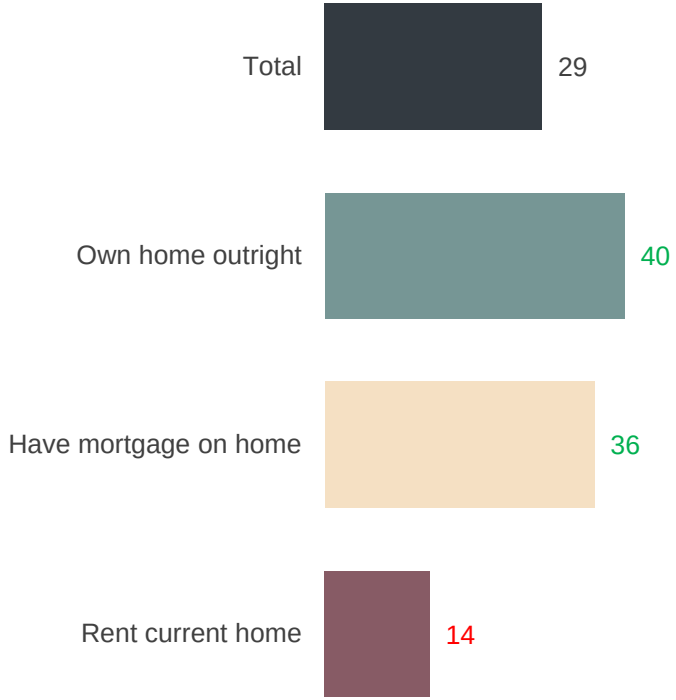
Under 40s more likely to be renting but some young renters have investment properties

Currently rent (%)

(through private, employer, Govt./ public/ social)



Ownership of residential property investments (%)

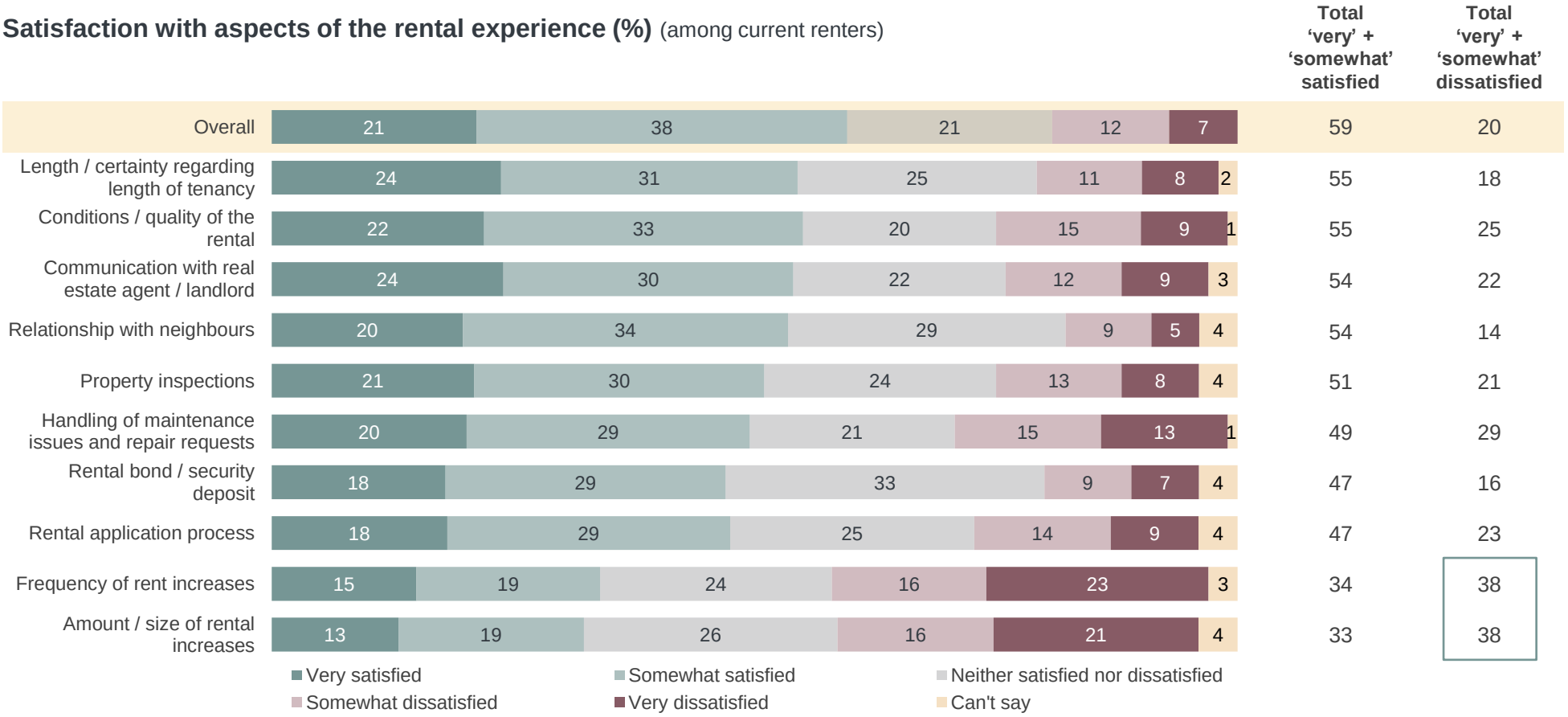


4% of total adults are 'Rentvestors' – around half of these are Millennials (51%) and most of the balance are Gen Z (23%) or Gen X (22%).

Significantly higher / lower than the total at the 95% confidence interval.
Q10. Do you own or rent the home you are currently living in? / Q27. Have you rented a home in the past? / D11. How many residential property investments, if any, do you have?
Base: Respondents who currently rent their home (n=953), All respondents (n=3,000).

Most current renters are satisfied with tenancy length, conditions, communication, neighbours and inspections

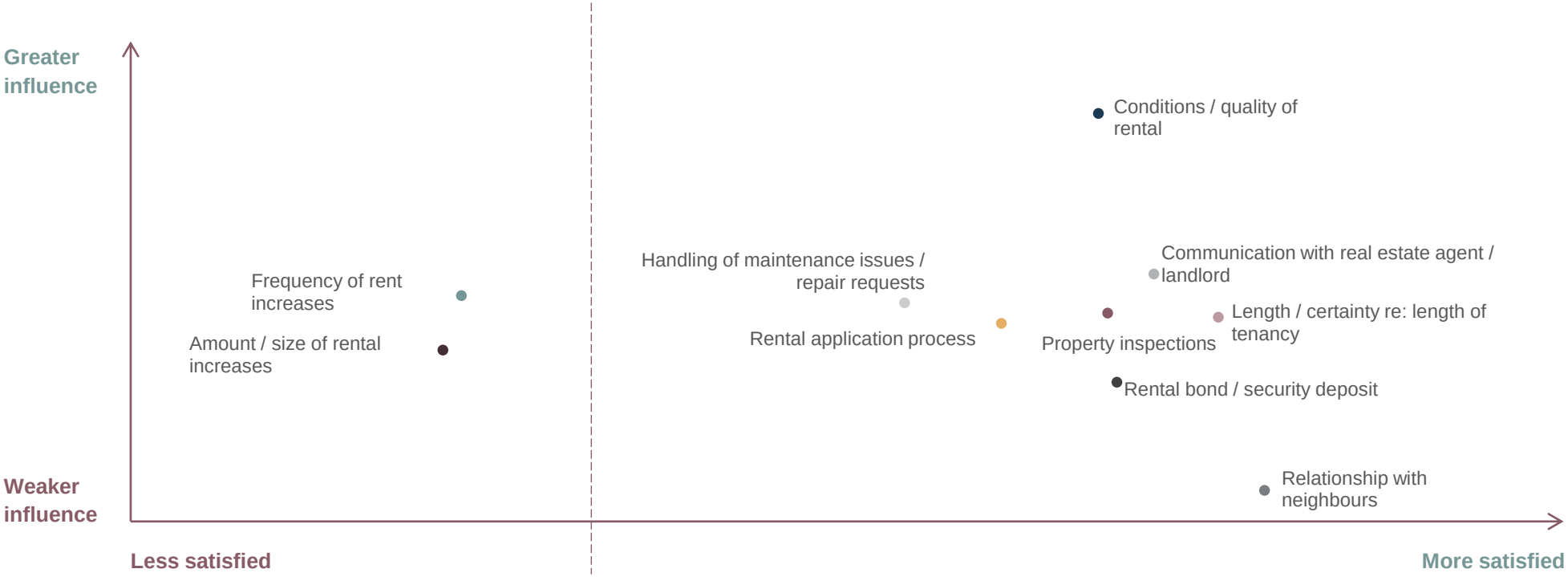
Satisfaction with aspects of the rental experience (%) (among current renters)



Q28. Overall, how satisfied are you with your rental experience / were you with your most recent rental experience? / Q29. How satisfied are / were you with the following?
Base: Respondents who currently rent their home (n=953).

Condition and quality of the rental property is the strongest influence on renter satisfaction

Drivers of satisfaction with rental experience among current renters

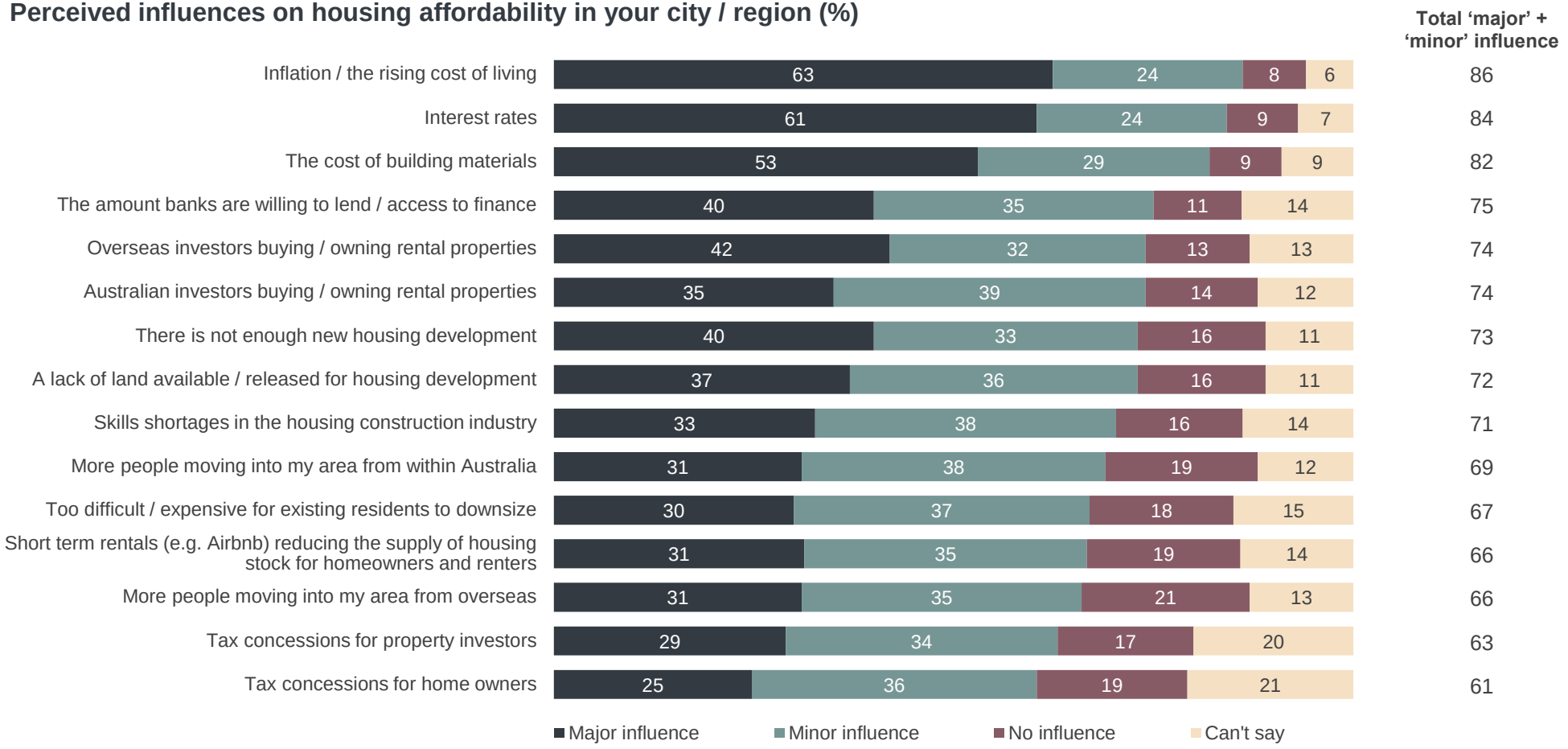


The multiple regression analysis model above has an R-squared value of 0.499 and adjusted R-squared value of 0.493, which means that 49% of the variance in overall satisfaction can be predicted from these variables. The overall model effect was statistically significant at p=<0.0001, F=81.33.
Base: Current renters (n=953).

Home ownership

Most Australians think inflation, interest rates and building material costs are major influences on housing affordability

Perceived influences on housing affordability in your city / region (%)

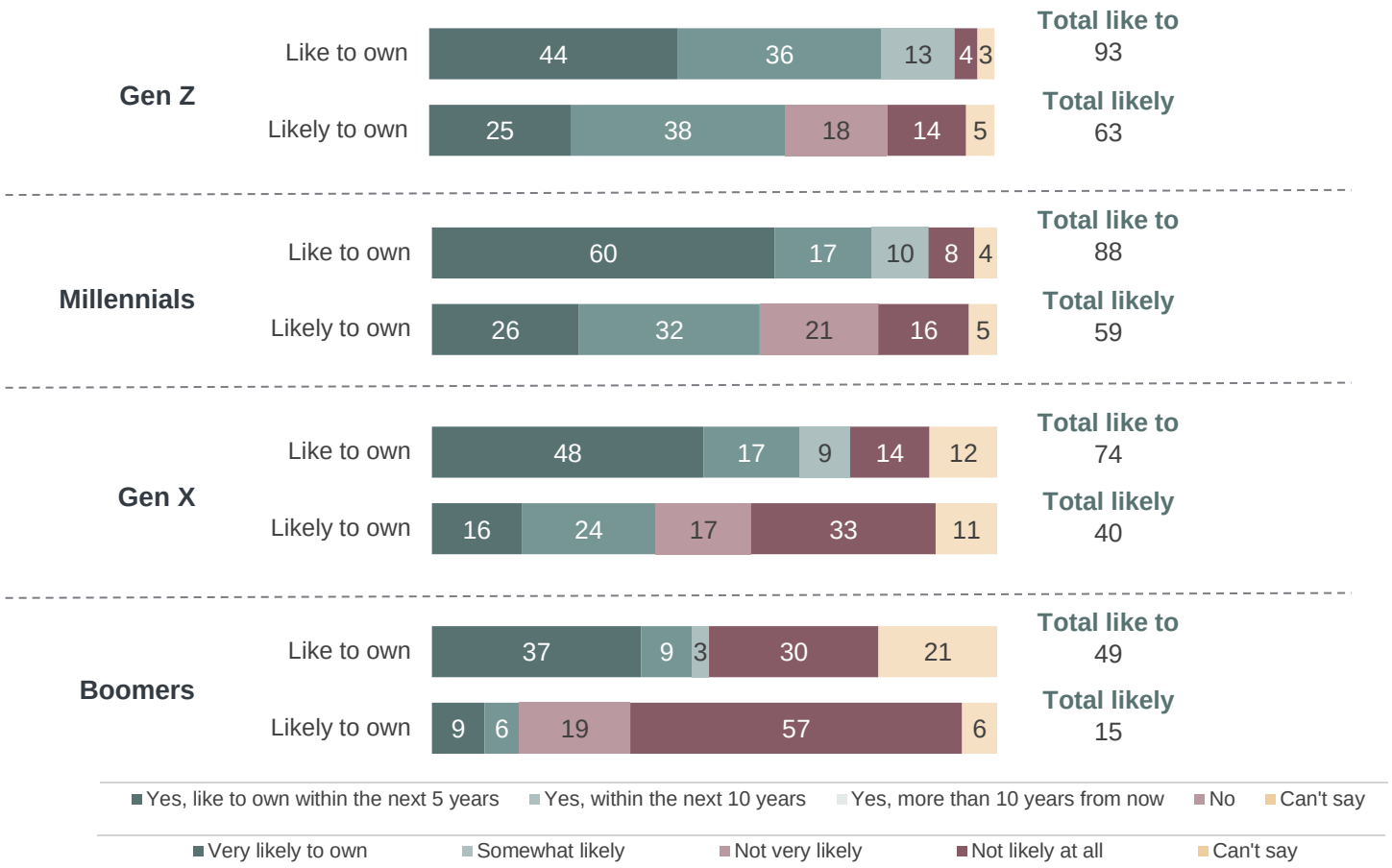


Q30. How much of an influence do you think each of the following has on housing affordability (for purchase and rental) in your city / region? Base: All respondents (n=3,000).

Large majority of Gen Z and Millennials want to own a home if feasible, and most think they are likely to do so

Whether would like to own a home / Perceived likelihood will own a home (%)

(among non-homeowners)

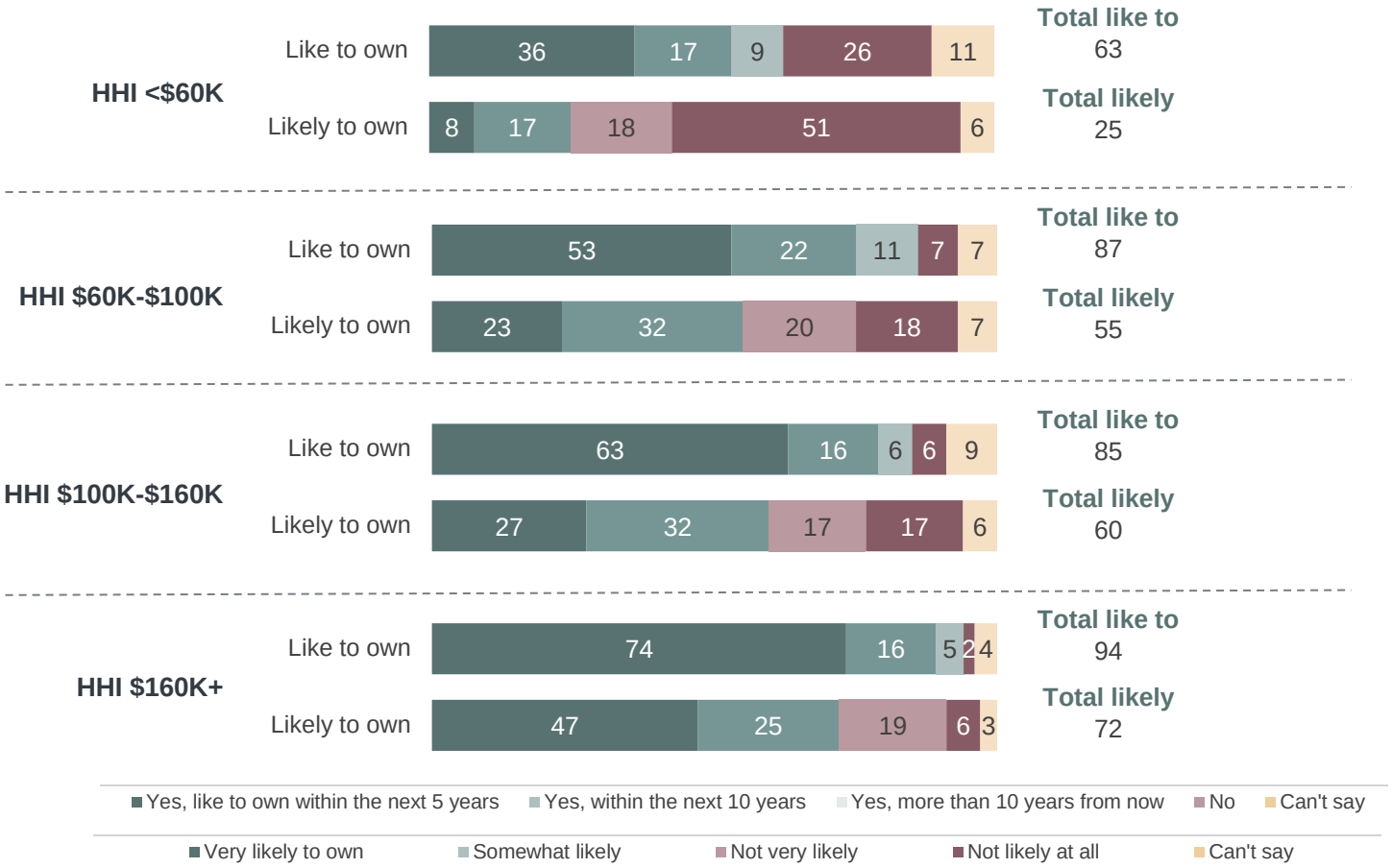


Q15. If feasible, would you like to own your own home? / Q16. And how likely is it that at some point you will own your own home?
Base: Respondents who do not own their home – Gen Z (n=193); Millennials (n=403); Gen X (n=237); Boomers (n=179).

Most Australians in low income households would like to own their own home, but only a quarter think it is likely

Whether would like to own a home / Perceived likelihood will own a home (%)

(among non-homeowners)

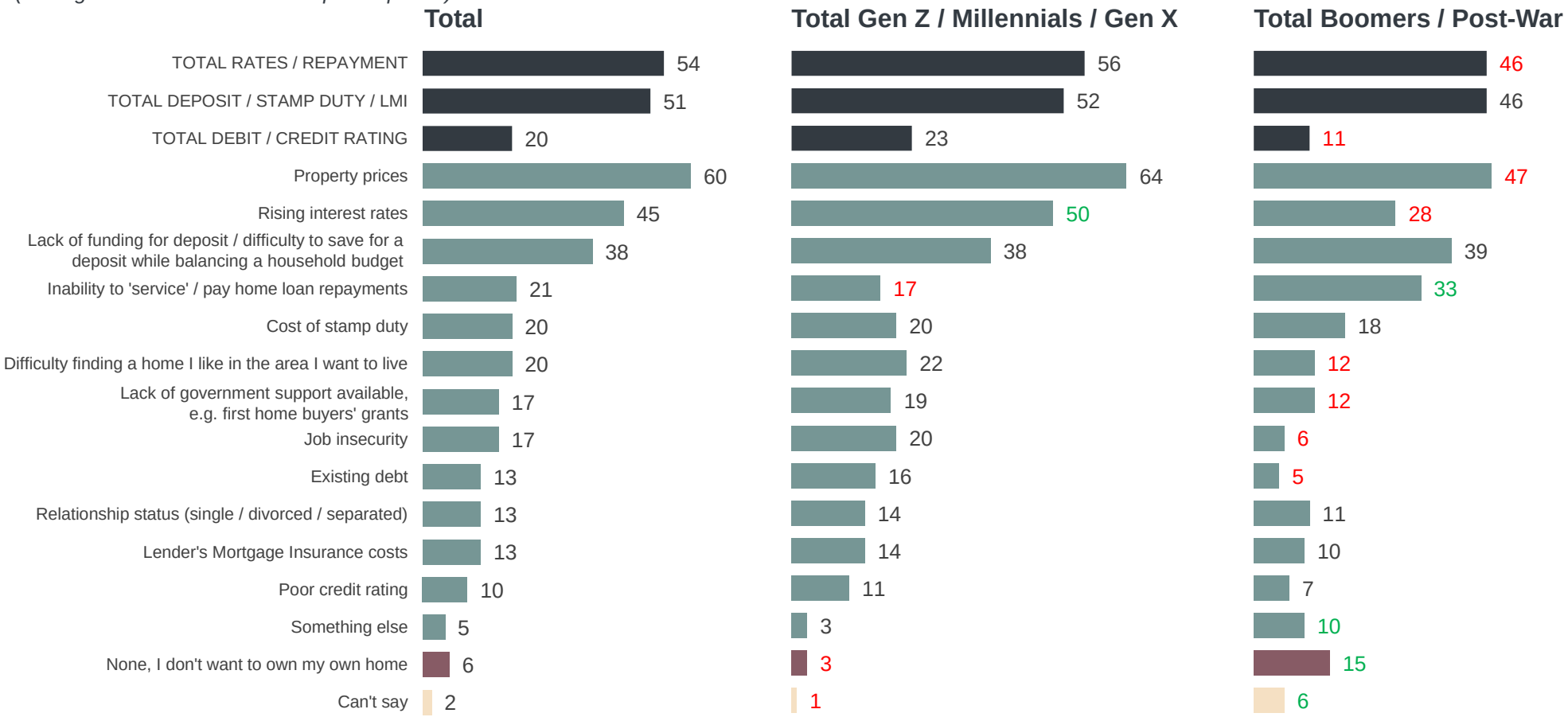


Q15. If feasible, would you like to own your own home? / Q16. And how likely is it that at some point you will own your own home?
Base: Respondents who do not own their home – HHI <$60K (n=408); HHI $60K-$100K (n=242); HHI $100K-$160K (n=210); HHI $160K+ (n=112).

Inability to service home loan repayments a greater barrier for older Australians

Biggest barriers to owning a home (%)

(among non-homeowners – multiple response)

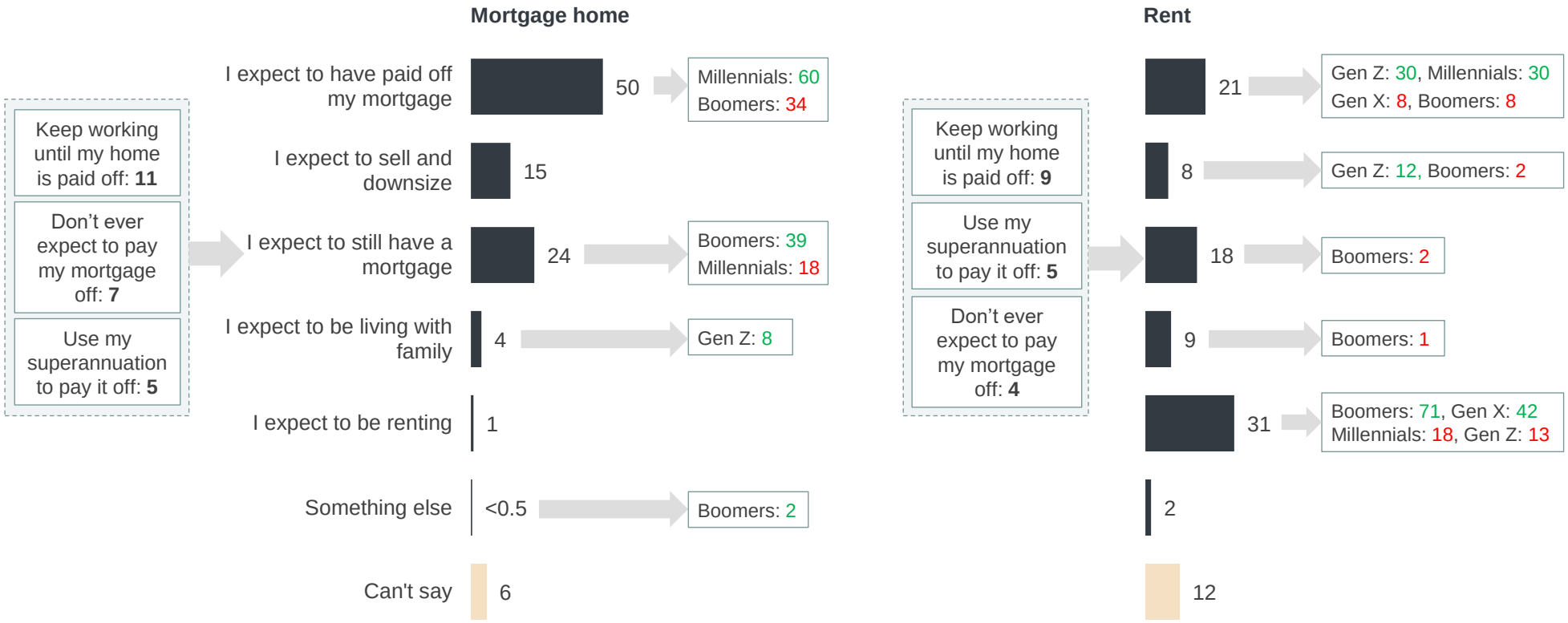


Significantly higher / lower than the total at the 95% confidence interval.
Q17. What are the biggest barriers to you owning your own home?
Base: Respondents who do not own their home (n=1,064); Gen Z / Millennials / Gen X who do not own their home (n=833); Boomers / Post-War who do not own their home (n=231).

Half of Australians expect to have paid off their mortgage by retirement, significantly more among Millennials

Expected housing situation at retirement (%)

(among those not retired)

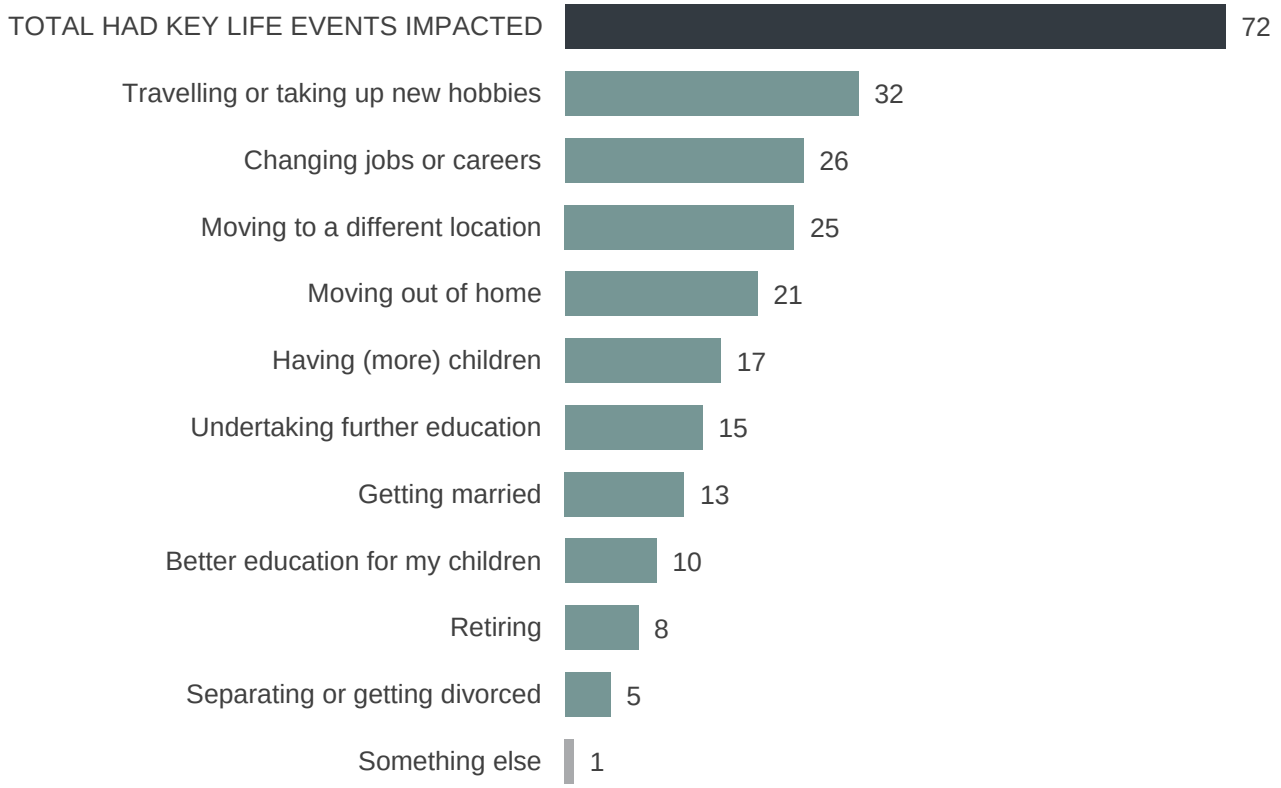


Significantly higher / lower than the total at the 95% confidence interval
Q18. What do you expect will happen by the time you reach retirement age?
Base: Respondents who are not retired and mortgage their home (n=924); Respondents who are not retired and rent (n=846).

Younger Australians had travelling, taking up hobbies, changing jobs/careers or moving out of home/different location impacted by cost of housing

Timing of key life events impacted by the cost of housing (%)

(among Gen Z and Millennials – multiple response)



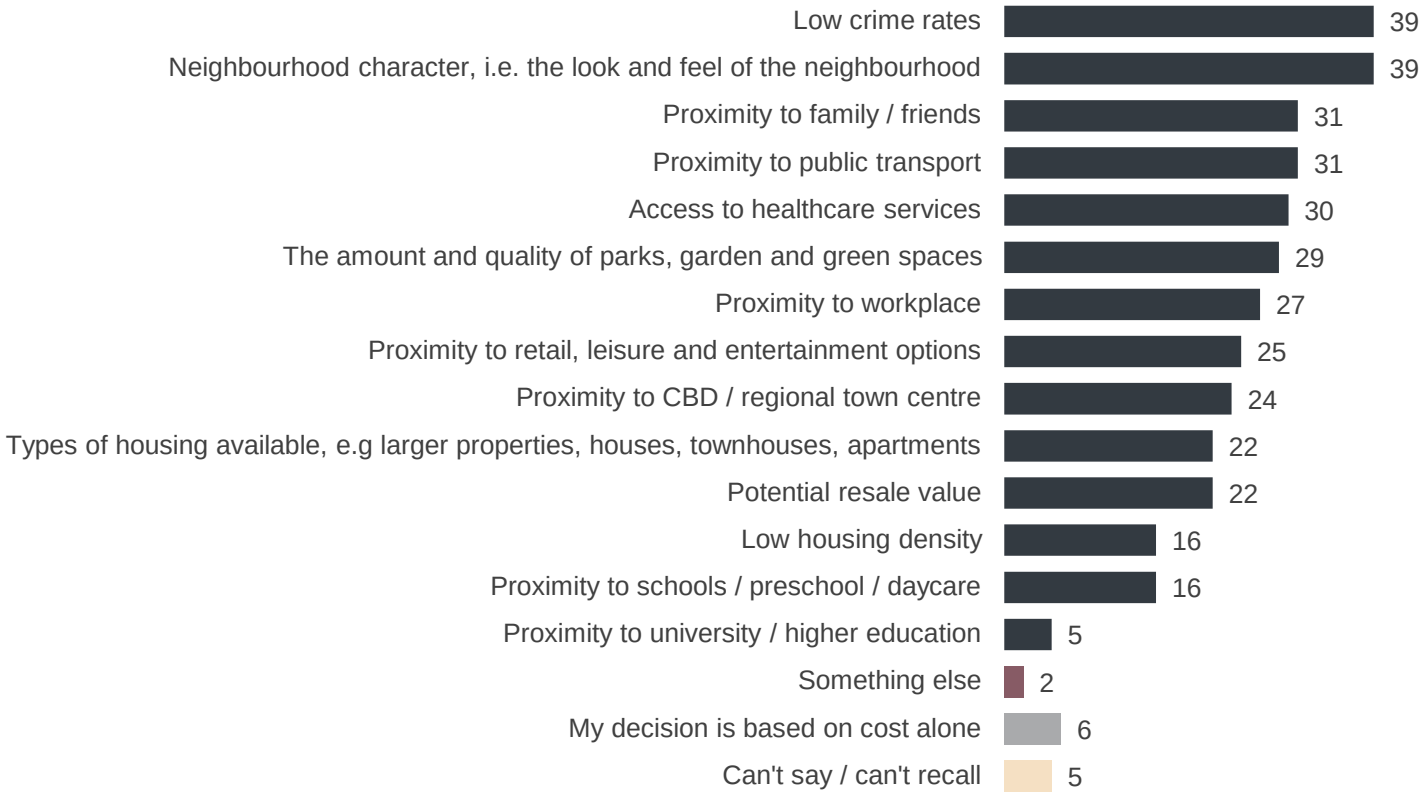
Q32. Has the cost of housing (e.g. rent / mortgage payments, saving for a mortgage deposit) affected the timing of any of the following major life decisions for you?
Base: Gen Z and Millennials (n=1,196).

Australians' housing priorities

Low crime and neighbourhood character are the top considerations when choosing where to live, within budget

Most important considerations when choosing an area or suburb to live in within your price range (%)

(Multiple response – up to five)



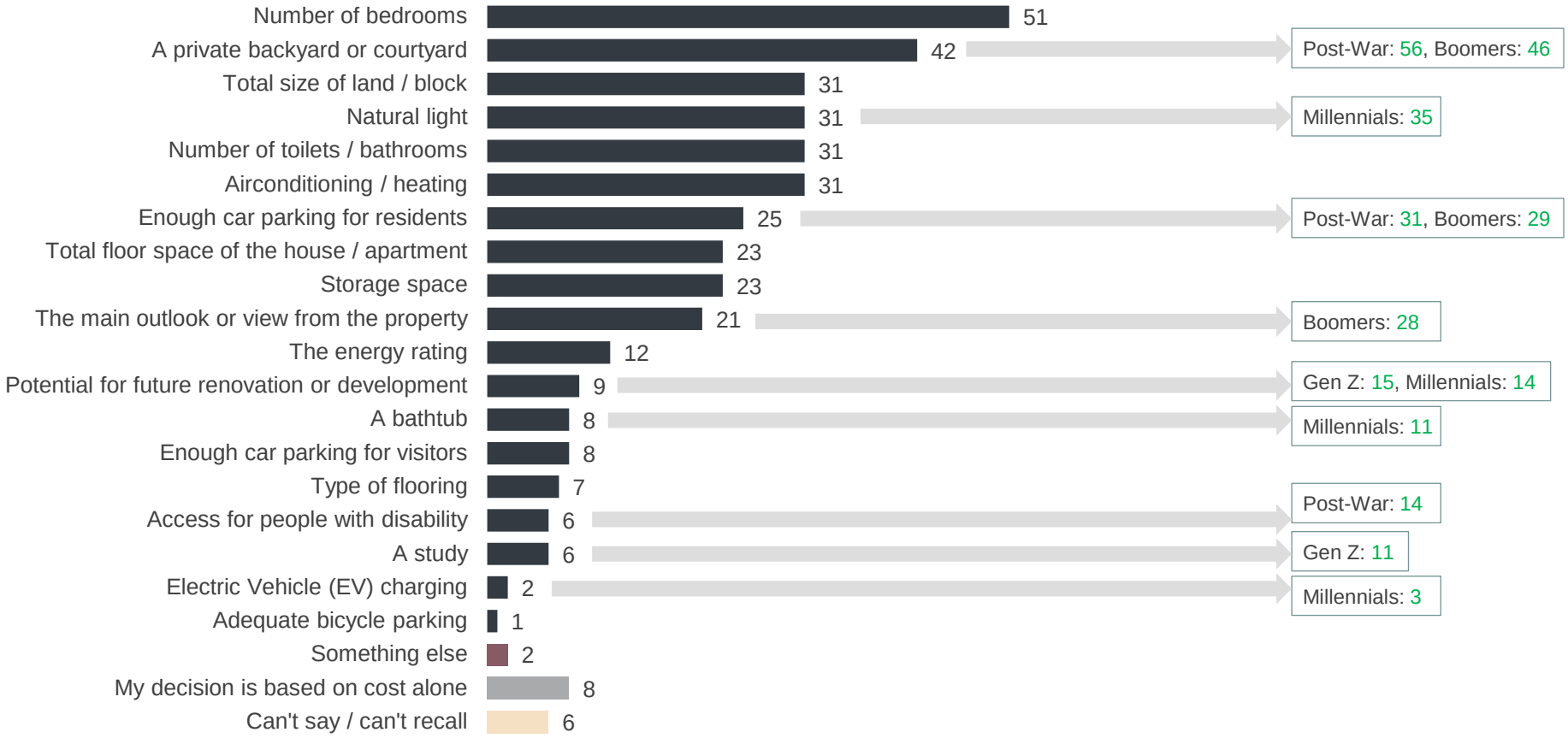
	Metro	Regional
Low crime rates	39	41
Neighbourhood character, i.e. the look and feel of the neighbourhood	37	42
Proximity to family / friends	33	29
Proximity to public transport	39	15
Access to healthcare services	29	32
The amount and quality of parks, garden and green spaces	30	27
Proximity to workplace	29	22
Proximity to retail, leisure and entertainment options	27	21
Proximity to CBD / regional town centre	24	24
Types of housing available, e.g larger properties, houses, townhouses, apartments	22	23
Potential resale value	22	21
Low housing density	14	19
Proximity to schools / preschool / daycare	17	13
Proximity to university / higher education	6	2
Something else	1	3
My decision is based on cost alone	5	9
Can't say / can't recall	5	7

Q20. Within your price range (mortgage payments or / rent), which of these are the most important reasons to you when choosing an area or suburb to live in?
Base: All respondents (n=3,000).

Number of bedrooms the most important consideration when choosing a home to live in, followed by a private yard

Most important considerations when choosing a home to live in within your price range (%)

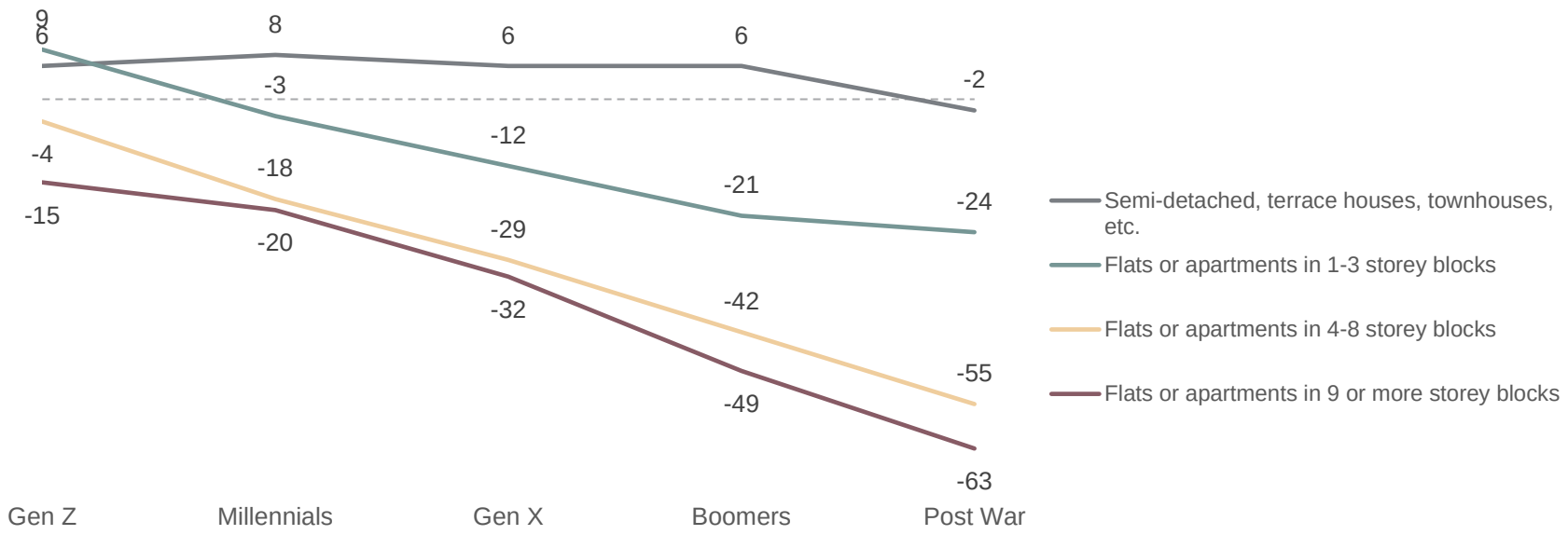
(Multiple response – up to five)



Significantly higher than the total at the 95% confidence interval
Q21. Within your price range (mortgage payments / rent), which of these are the most important to you when choosing a home to live in?
Base: All respondents (n=3,000).

Older cohorts more resistant to building more apartment buildings

Preferred amount in local area (% more - % less)

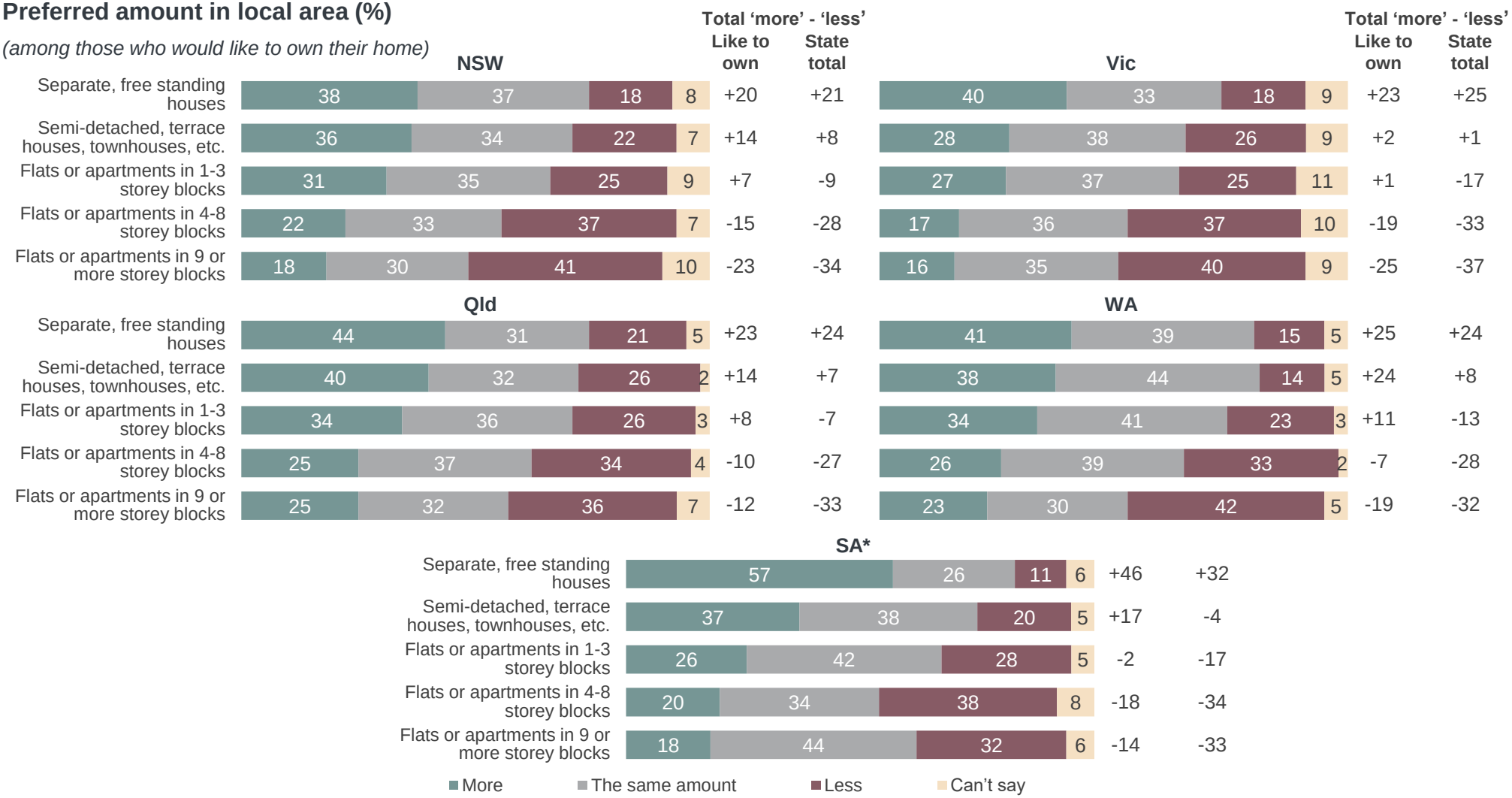


Q35. Would you like to see more, less or about the same amount as now of each of the following housing types in your local area?
Base: Gen Z (n=370); Millennials (n=826); Gen X (n=740); Boomers (n=826); Post-War (n=238).

Those not yet in the housing market are more open to increased higher density housing

Preferred amount in local area (%)

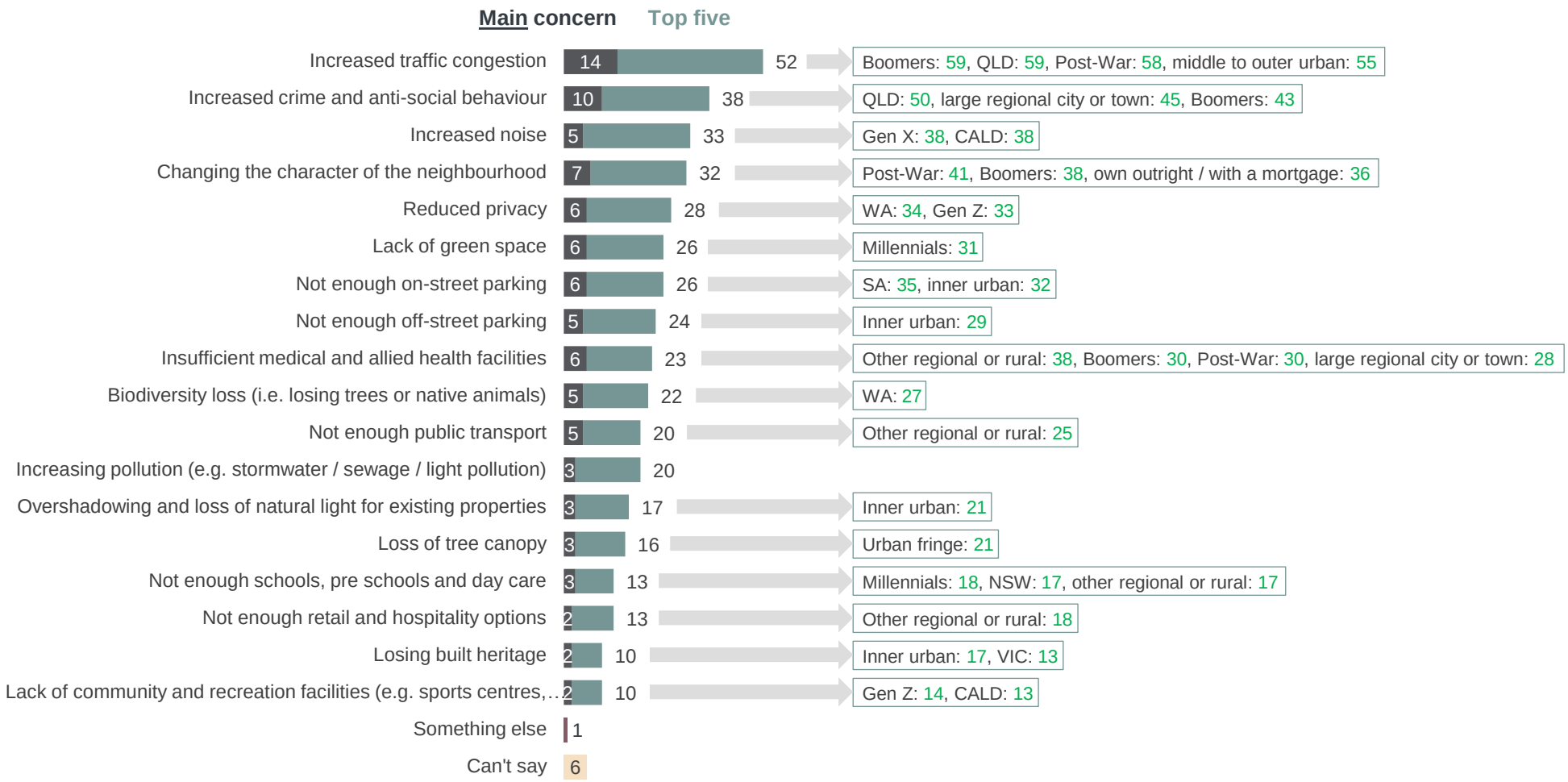
(among those who would like to own their home)



Q35. Would you like to see more, less or about the same amount as now of each of the following housing types in your local area?
*Base: Would like to own their home – NSW residents (n=270); Vic residents (n=190); Qld residents (n=146); WA residents (n=103); SA residents (n=65). * Caution: small sample size n<100.*
State total – NSW residents (n=960); Vic residents (n=750); Qld residents (n=600); WA residents (n=330); SA residents (n=210).

To most Australians, increased traffic congestion is a main concern regarding increasing housing density in their area

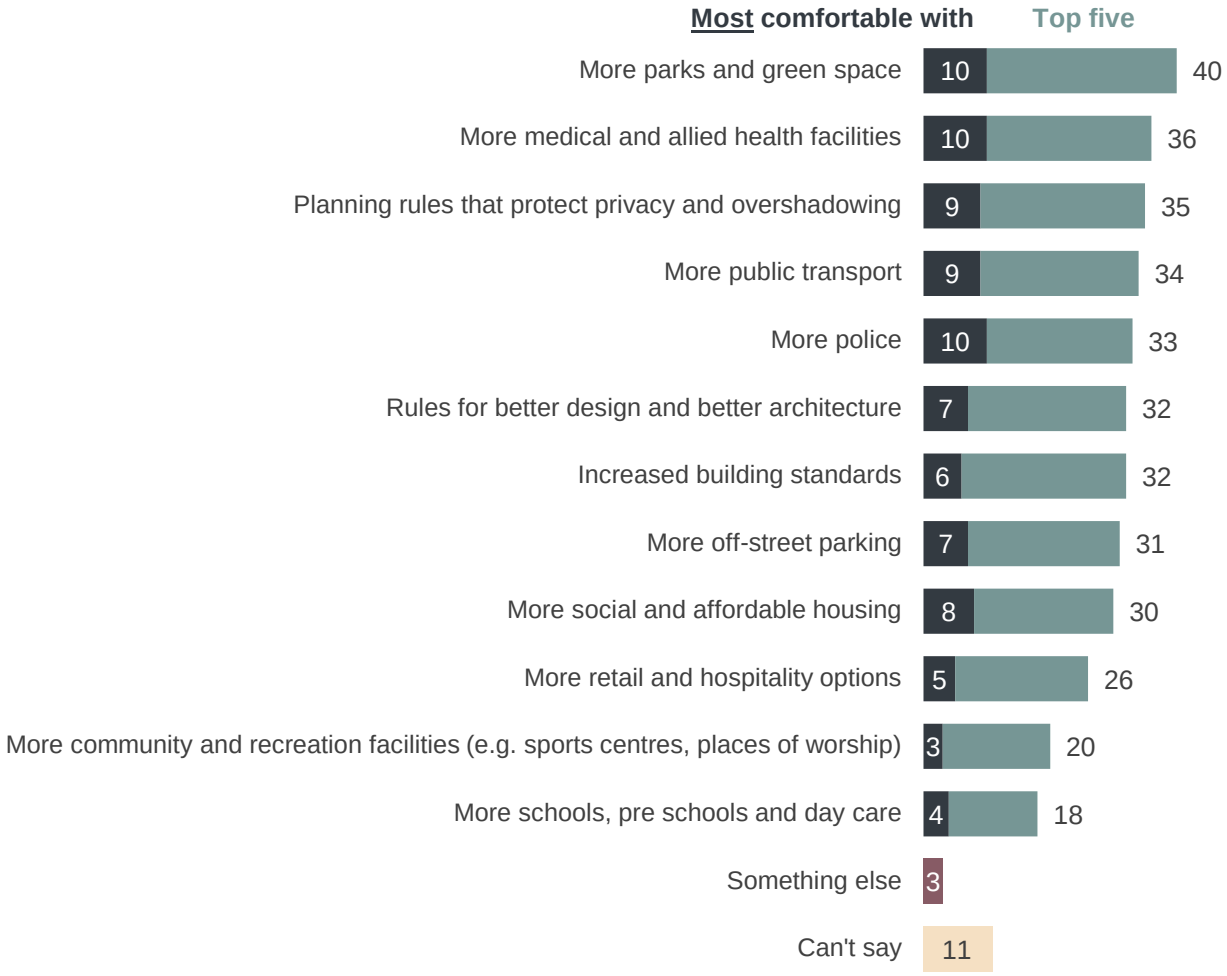
Main concerns about increasing the amount / density of housing in your area (%)



Significantly higher than the total at the 95% confidence interval. Q36. Which of the following are your main concerns about increasing the amount / density of housing in your area? Base: All respondents (n=3,000).

4 in 10 Australians would be more comfortable with increasing local housing density for parks and green space

Options which make you more comfortable about increasing the amount / density of housing in your area (%)



	Most comfortable with	Top five	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers	Post-War
More parks and green space	10	40	38	44	40	38	35
More medical and allied health facilities	10	36	31	30	34	44	46
Planning rules that protect privacy and overshadowing	9	35	28	31	33	40	46
More public transport	9	34	45	37	31	29	30
More police	10	33	24	29	34	37	42
Rules for better design and better architecture	7	32	32	31	31	32	36
Increased building standards	6	32	34	33	29	33	33
More off-street parking	7	31	30	32	30	31	30
More social and affordable housing	8	30	42	32	27	26	27
More retail and hospitality options	5	26	31	31	26	20	19
More community and recreation facilities (e.g. sports centres, places of worship)	3	20	26	25	22	15	14
More schools, pre schools and day care	4	18	22	26	20	11	6
Something else	3		1	1	2	6	7
Can't say	11		9	10	12	11	11

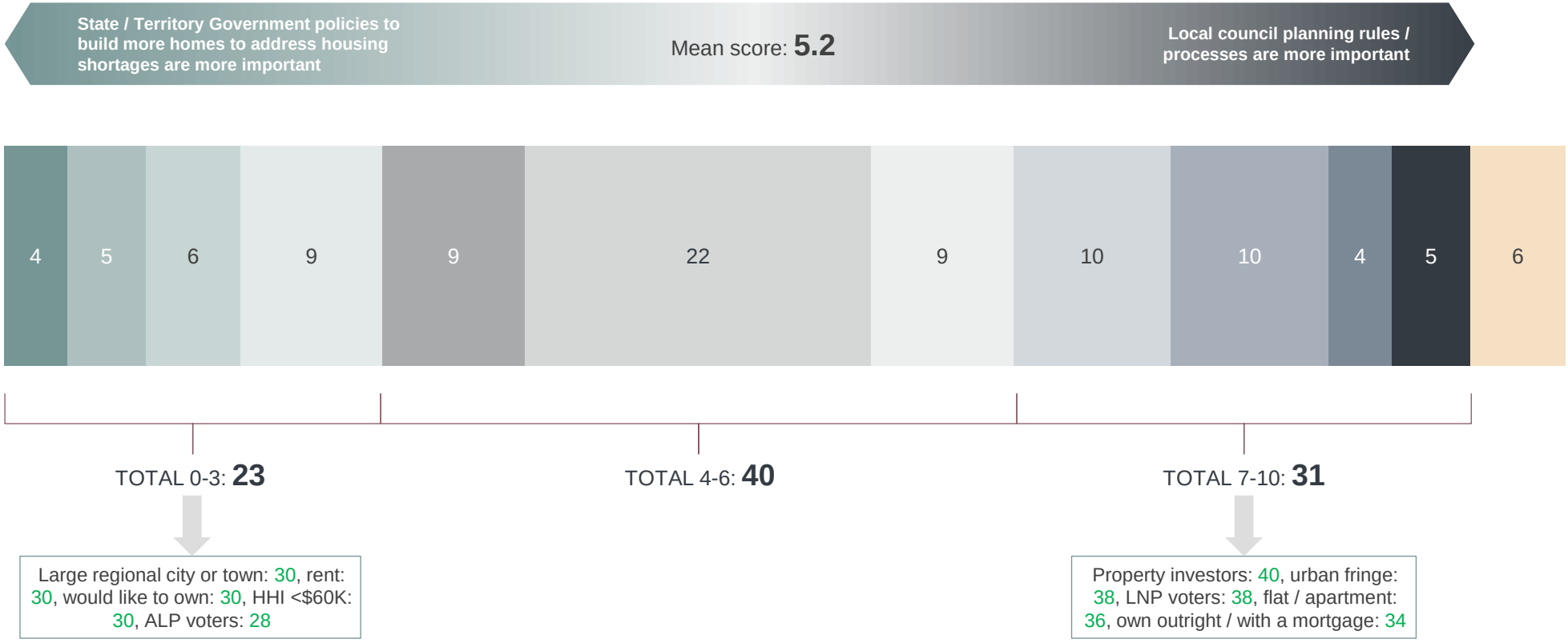
Significantly higher than the total at the 95% confidence interval. Q37. Which of the following would make you more comfortable with increasing the amount / density of housing in your area? Base: All respondents (n=3,000).

All in agreement that planning is the priority over speed but divide between the need for preservation and development

Q38. On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is 'preserving the character of my local area is more important' and 10 is 'providing more housing to meet the needs of our growing population is more important', how much would you prioritise preserving the character of your area versus providing more housing for our growing population? / Q39. On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is 'speed of more housing being built is more important' and 10 is 'planning and consultation is more important', how much would you prioritise speed versus planning and consultation? Base: All respondents (n=3,000).

Local council planning rules / processes are prioritised slightly ahead of more housing being built

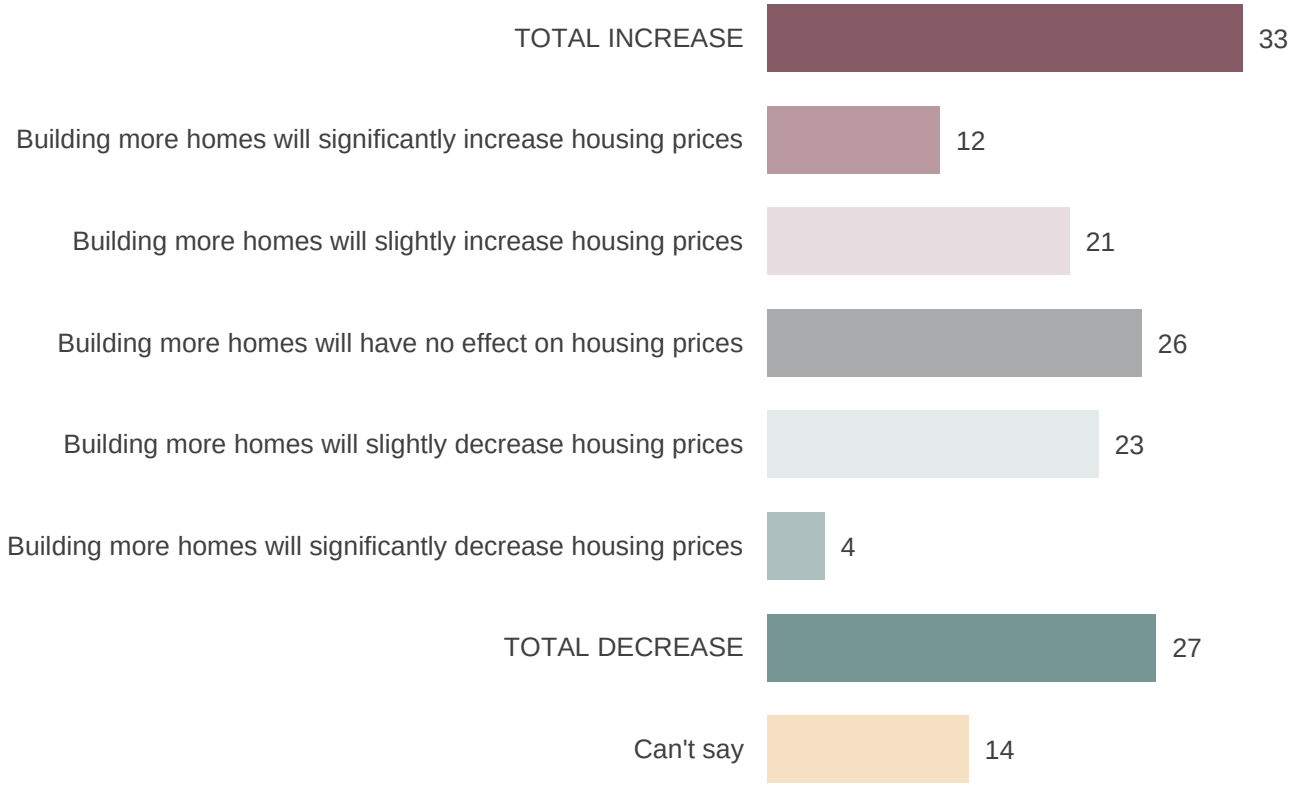
Importance of governments allowing more housing to be built versus prioritising local planning rules / processes (%)



Significantly higher than the total at the 95% confidence interval. Q42. To address the housing shortage, some State / Territory Governments have plans to allow extra housing to be built above the amount allowed by local councils. On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is 'allowing more housing to be built is more important' and 10 is 'local council planning rules / processes are more important', how much would you prioritise local planning rules / processes? Base: All respondents (n=3,000).

More Australians expect an increase on housing prices than a decrease with more homes being built in their area

Expected impact on housing prices of building more homes in your city / suburb / neighbourhood (%)



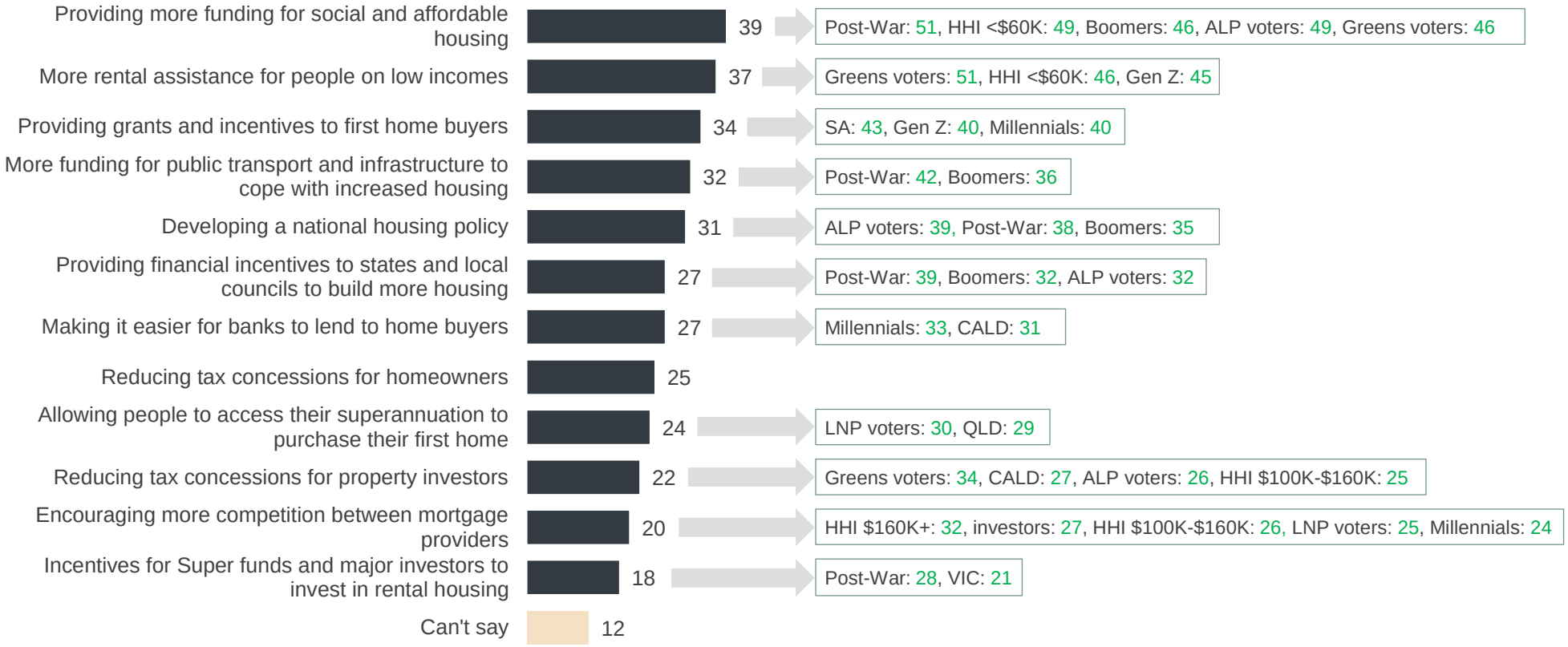
Significantly higher than the total at the 95% confidence interval.
Q31. In your opinion, what impact will building more homes in your city / suburb / neighbourhood have on housing prices?
Base: All respondents (n=3,000).

Policy responses

Social and affordable housing and rental assistance for low-income earners seen as leading priorities for the Aus. Govt.

Main housing priorities for Federal Government (%)

(Multiple response – up to five)

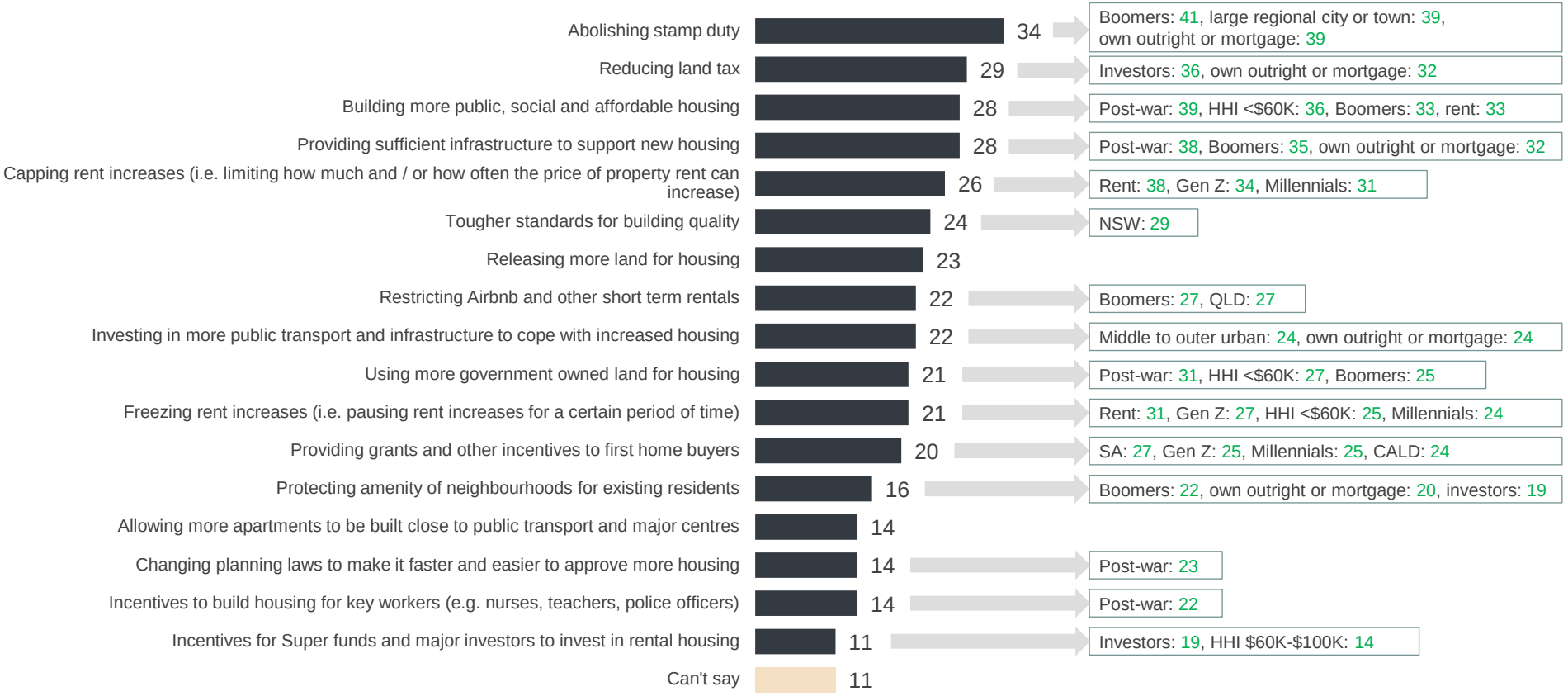


Significantly higher than the total at the 95% confidence interval. Q43. Which of the following should be the main priorities for the Federal Government in Australia in relation to housing? Base: All respondents (n=3,000).

Australians think abolishing stamp duty should be a main priority for State / Territory Governments regarding housing

Main housing priorities for State / Territory Governments (%)

(Multiple response – up to five)

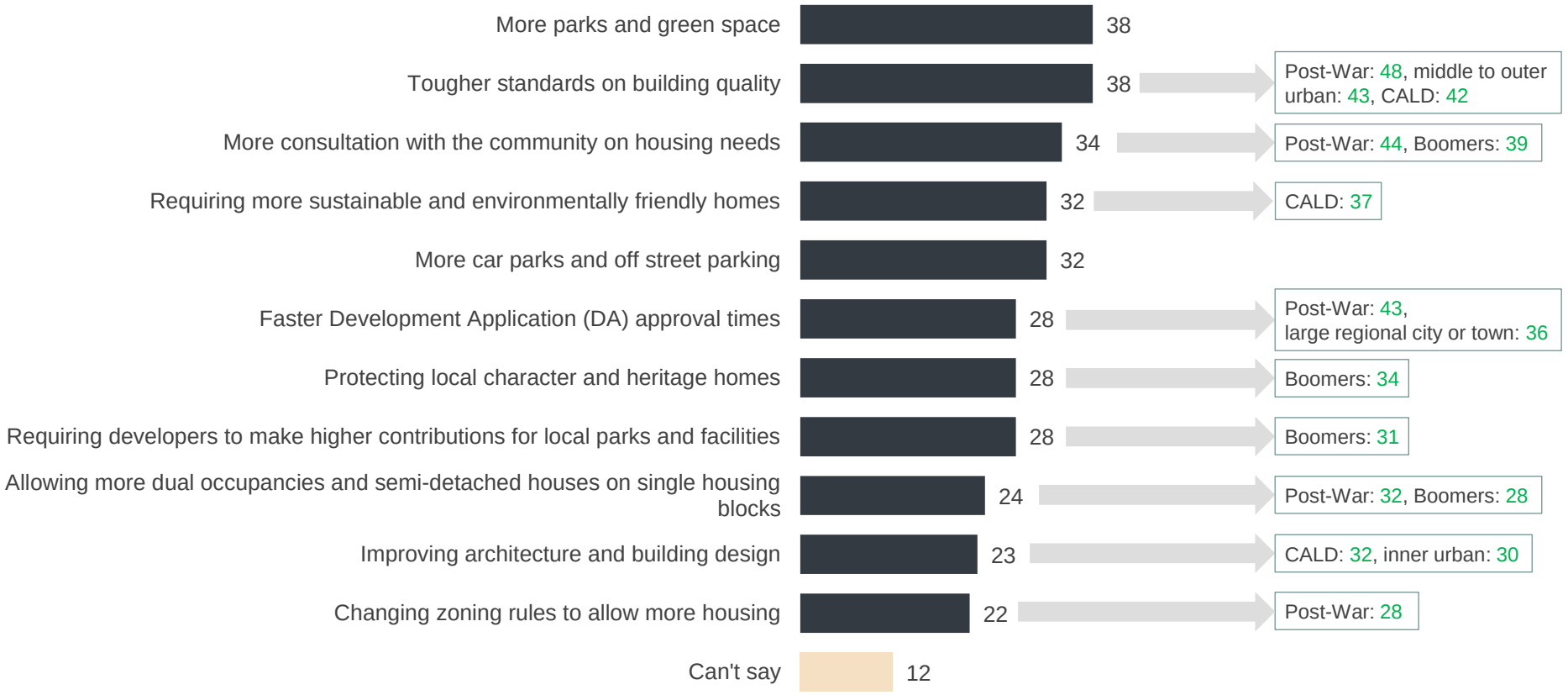


Significantly higher than the total at the 95% confidence interval . Q44. Which of the following should be the main priorities for State / Territory Governments in Australia in relation to housing? Base: All respondents (n=3,000).

More parks and greenspace and tougher building quality standards are seen as the main priorities for local councils

Main housing priorities for local councils (%)

(Multiple response – up to five)



Significantly higher than the total at the 95% confidence interval. Q45. Which of the following should be the main priorities for local councils in Australia in relation to housing? Base: All respondents (n=3,000).

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