

Partisanship, polarisation and social cohesion in Australia

McKinnon Poll | Susan McKinnon Foundation

August 2024



Research methodology



JWS Research has been commissioned to conduct public opinion research as part of this program.

JWS Research is an independent, privately and wholly Australian-owned research firm.

Established more than a decade ago, JWS Research has grown quickly to become an industry leader and one of the most respected firms in Australia for providing research-based advice to the government and business sectors, particularly on complex and challenging issues.

JWS Research is engaged by senior levels of business and government across Australia because they provide robust research and critical analysis to underpin strategic decision making and actions.

JWS pride themselves on their commitment to research design integrity to produce quality results and insights for their clients.

Qualitative

In-depth interviews and focus group discussions

n=6 in-depth interviews conducted via video conferencing with expert stakeholders

- Stakeholders comprised a range of experts on partisanship and polarisation.
- Approximately 45 minutes in duration.
- Conducted 30th April to 16th May 2024.

n=6 focus group discussions conducted via video conferencing

- Among adult Australians eligible to vote in Australian elections from across the country.
- Segmented by political affiliation (hard right vs hard left voters), level of engagement in politics (somewhat vs not at all engaged) and CALD background (Chinese vs other).
- 90 minutes in duration.
- Conducted 23rd May to 3rd June 2024.

Quantitative

Online survey

n=3,000 Australians aged 18 years and over

- Survey quotas on age, gender and location, and weighting applied at the analysis stage to actual age / gender / location proportions based on ABS census data.
- The maximum margin of error on the total sample of n=3,000 is +/-1.8% at the 95% confidence level.
- Differences of +/-1% for net scores are due to rounding.
- 15 minutes in length.

Conducted 16th to 28th July, 2024.

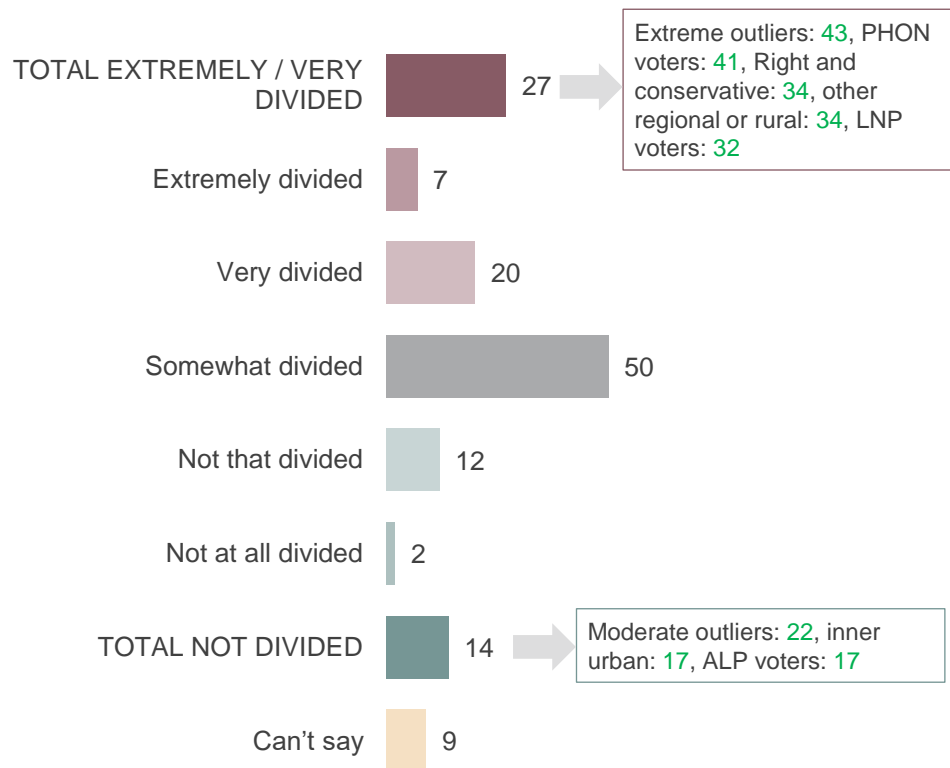
Where possible, results have been compared to previous surveys, also conducted among 3000 Australian adults in August, June and May 2023, and September 2022.

The research was conducted in compliance with AS-ISO 20252.

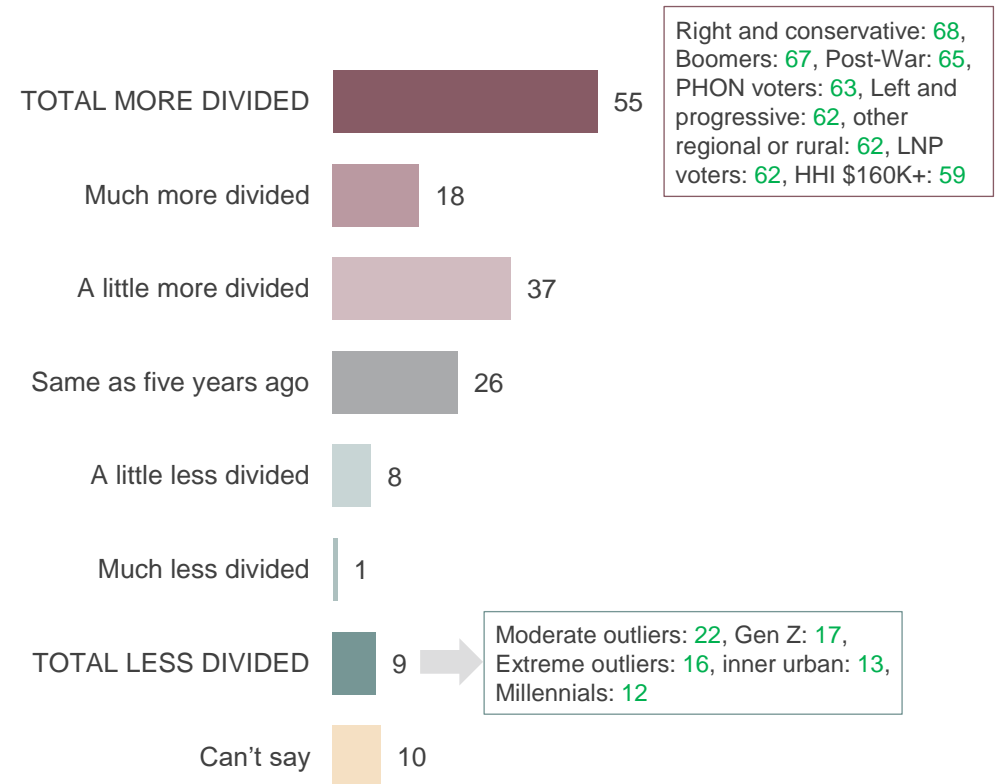


More than half of Australians believe the nation is more divided than five years ago

How divided Australians are on key political, economic and social issues (%)



How divided Australians today are compared with five years ago (%)



Significantly higher than the total at the 95% confidence interval.

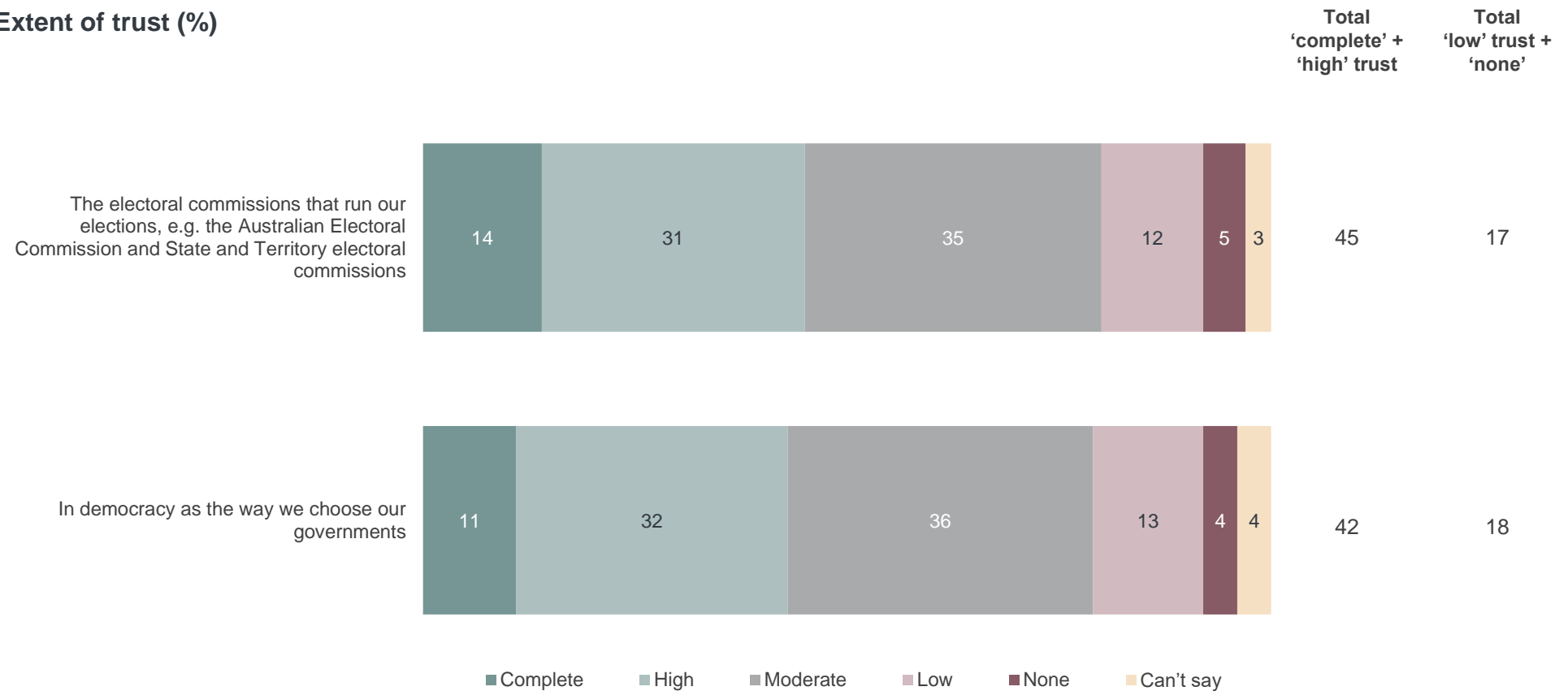
Q24. Overall, how divided do you think Australians are on key political, economic and social issues? / Q25. Compared with five years ago, do you think Australians today are more divided, less divided, or about the same as before?

Base: All respondents (n=3,000).

More people trust than distrust electoral commissions and democracy



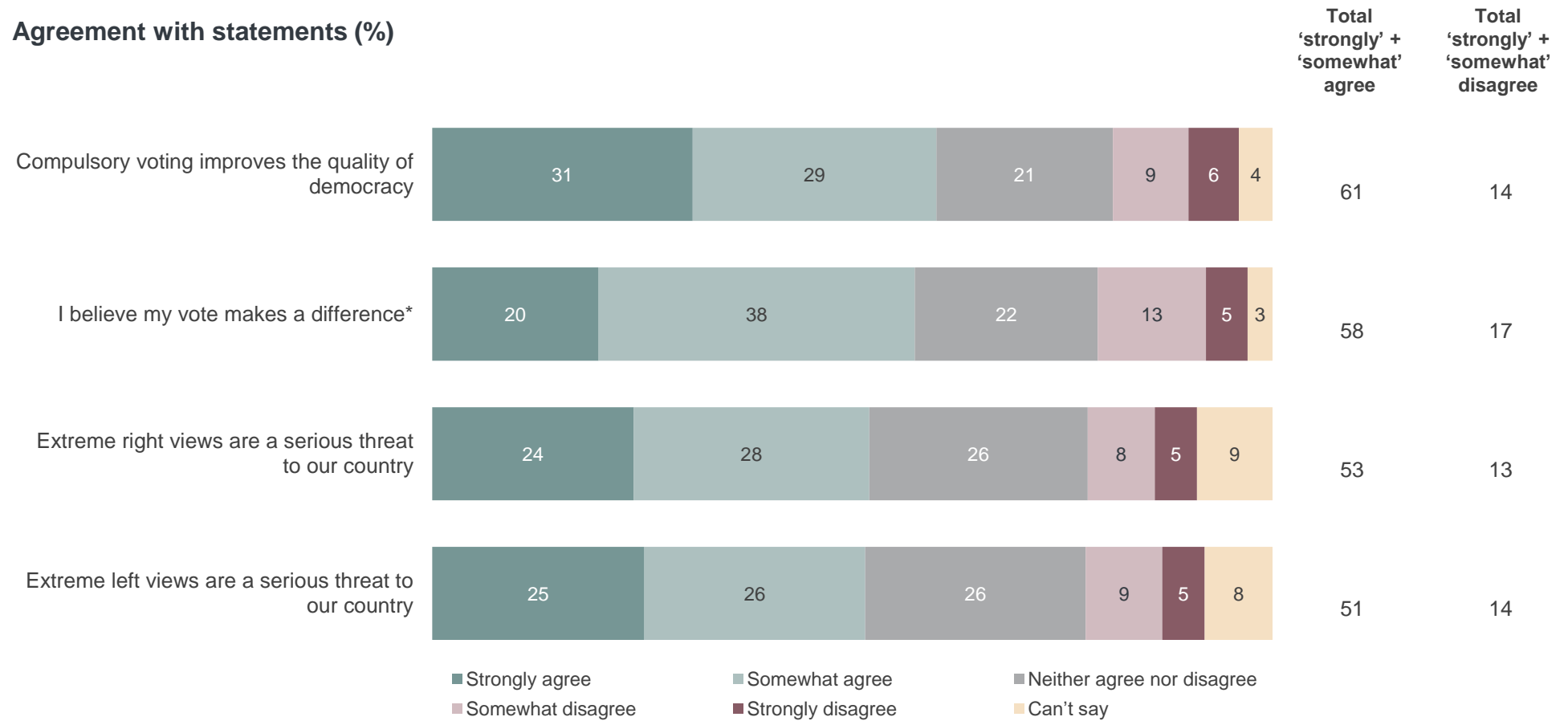
Extent of trust (%)



Q8c. How much trust do you have in each of the following?
 Base: All respondents (n=3,000).



Six in 10 agree compulsory voting improves democracy but corruption in Australian politics is seen as a problem

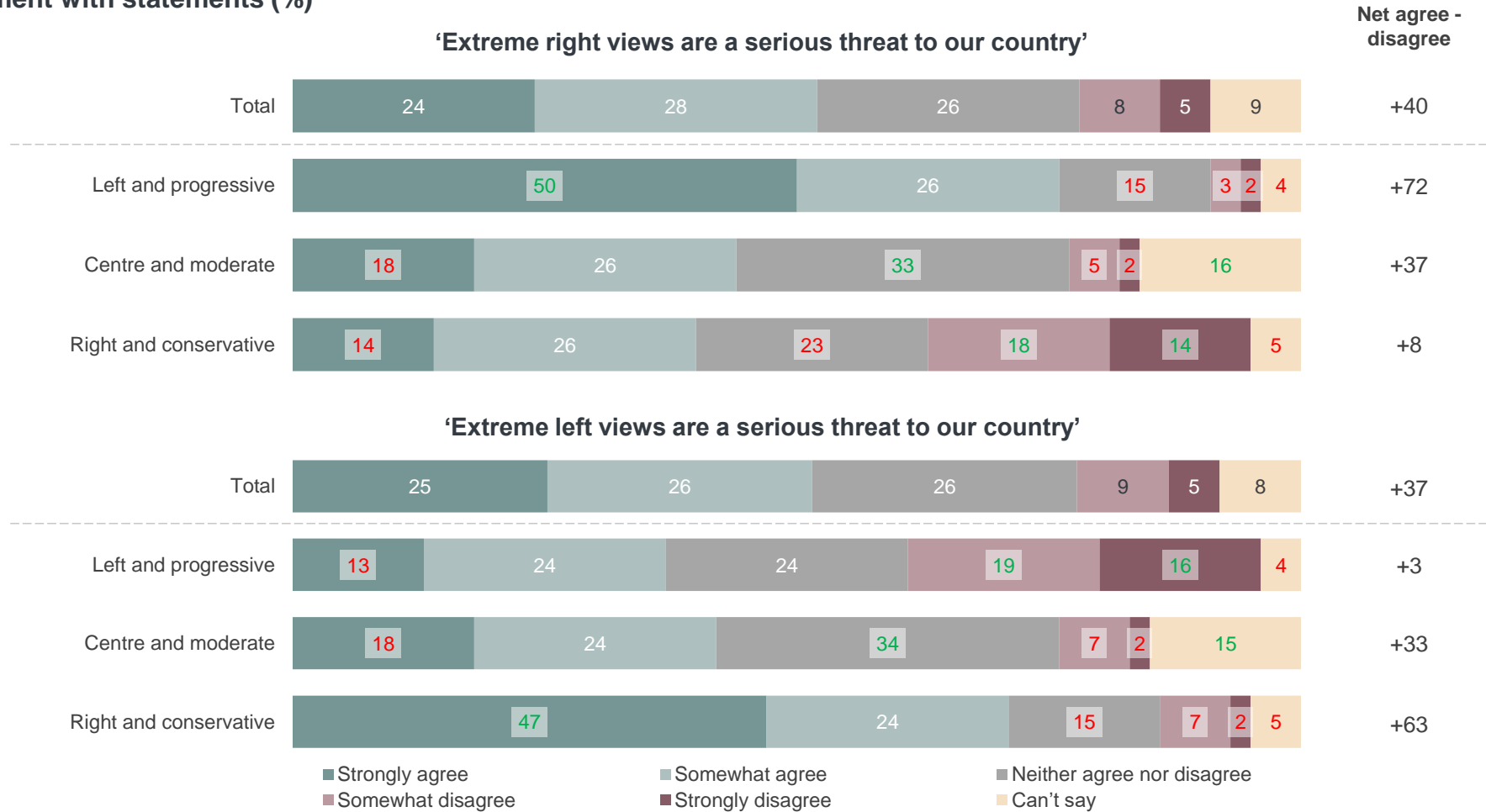


* Note: Statement asked of enrolled voters.
Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: All respondents (n=3,000); enrolled voters (n=2,817).



The self-selected 'Left' and 'Right' believe extreme views from the other side are the threat

Agreement with statements (%)

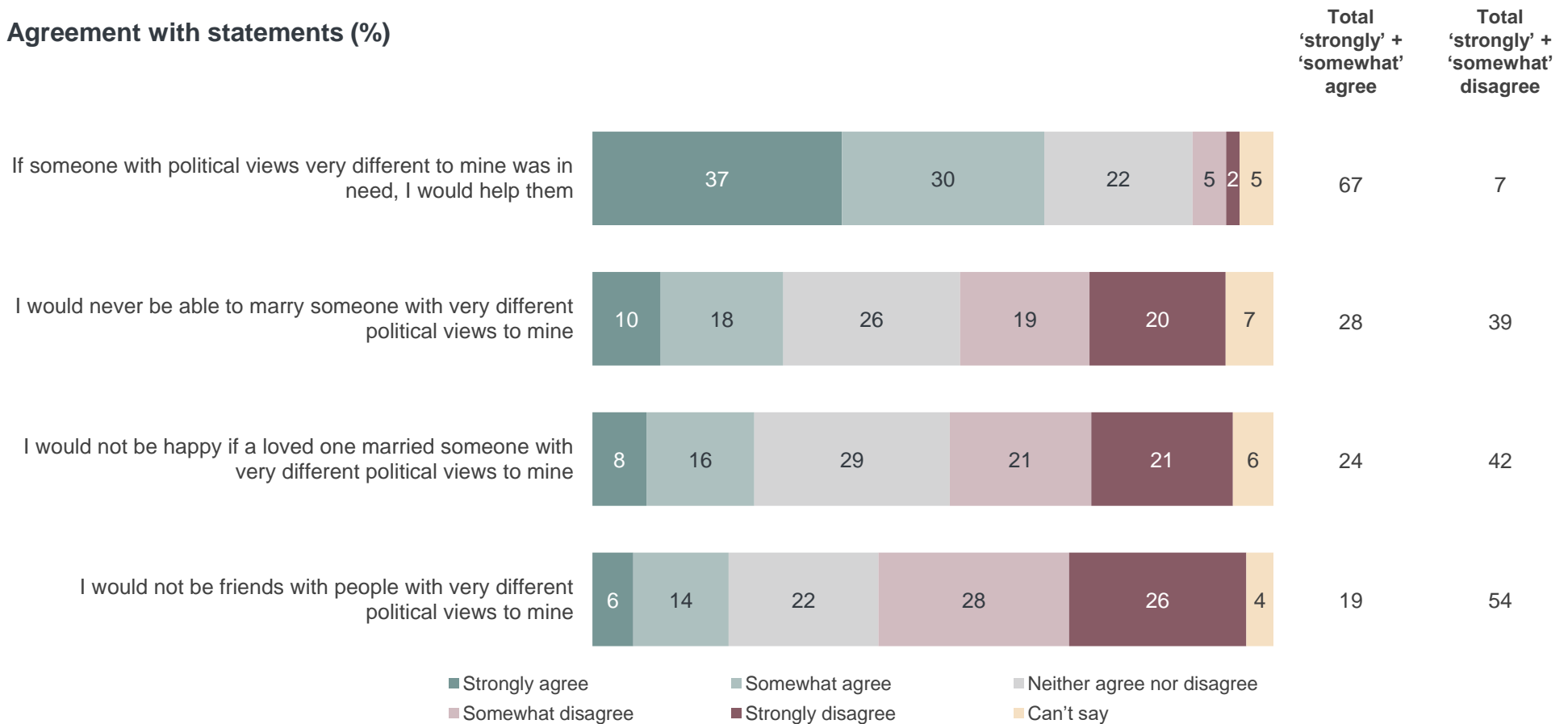


Significantly *higher* / *lower* than the total at the 95% confidence interval.
 Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 Base: All respondents (n=3,000).

Most people are tolerant of friendships with people holding different political views



Agreement with statements (%)

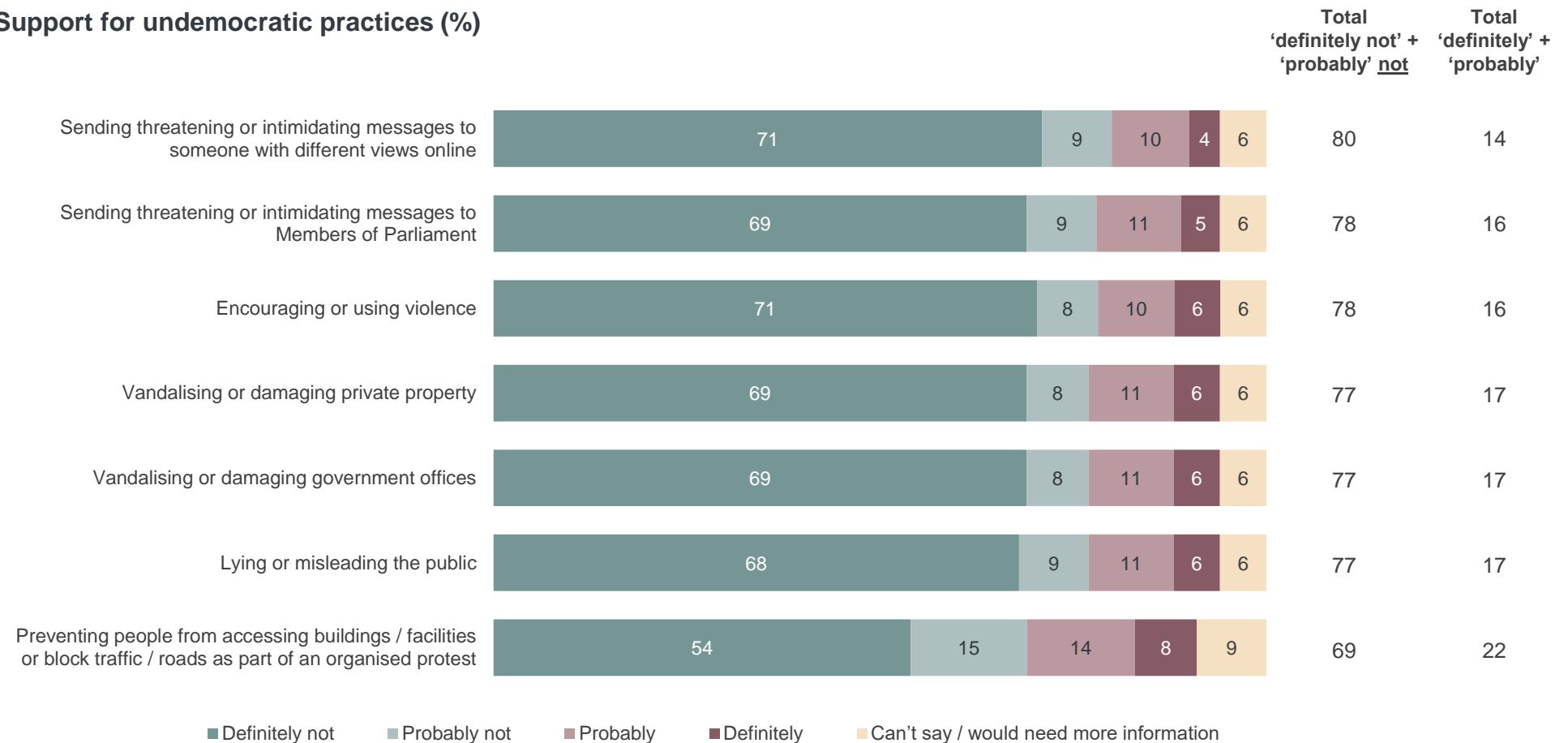


Q22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 Base: All respondents (n=3,000).



At least one in ten Australians support all manner of undemocratic practices to advance a cause they care about

Support for undemocratic practices (%)



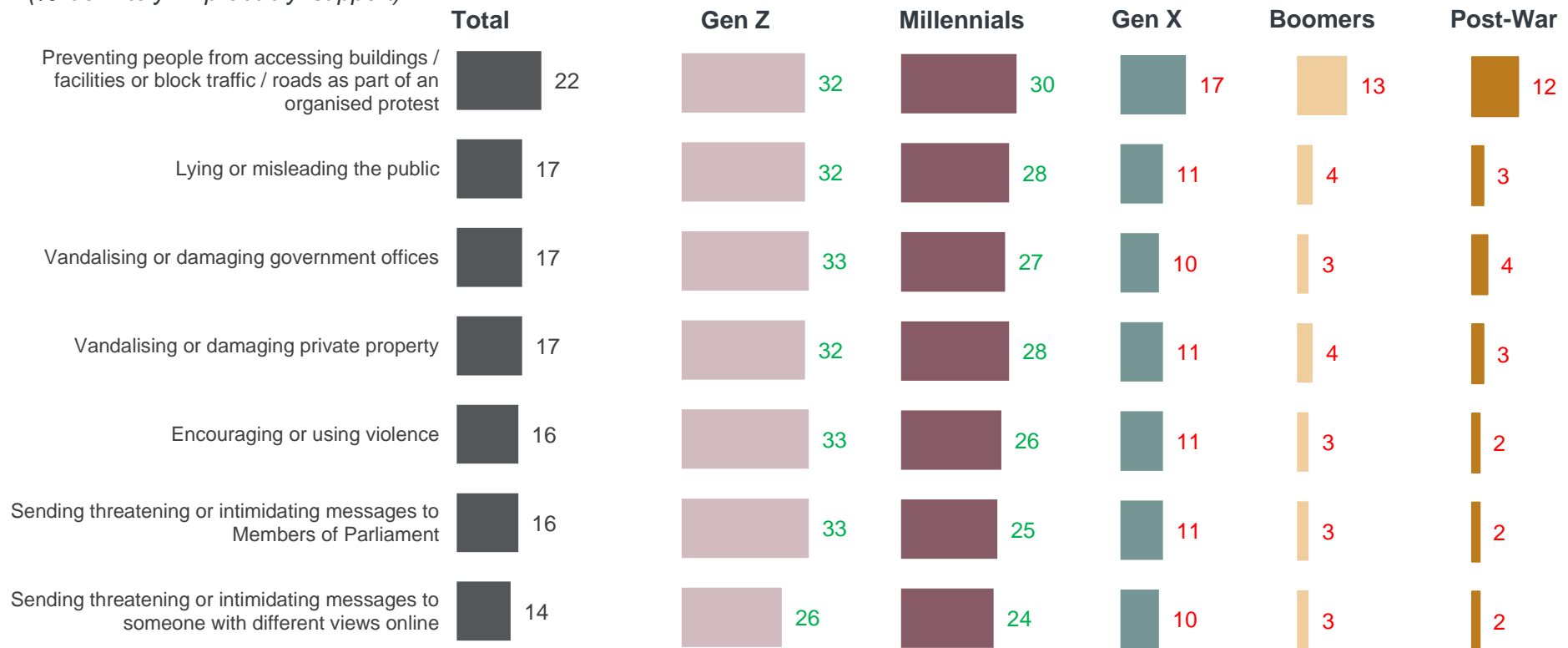
Q40. Would you support any of the following activities to advance a cause that you care about?
Base: All respondents (n=3,000).



Support for undemocratic practices correlates with lifestage; Gen Z most supportive, Post-War least

Support for undemocratic practices

(% 'definitely' + 'probably' support)



Significantly *higher* / *lower* than the total at the 95% confidence interval.

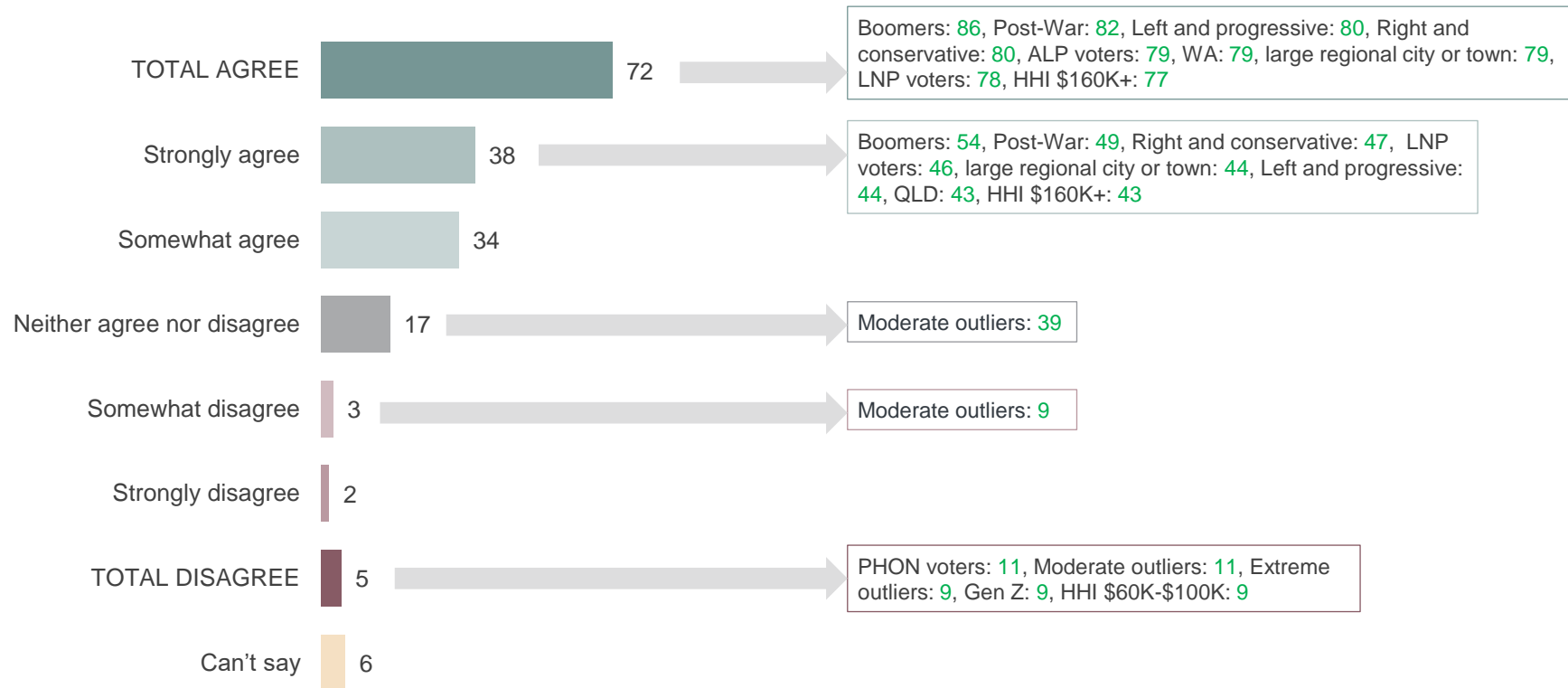
Q40. Would you support any of the following activities to advance a cause that you care about?

Base: All respondents (n=3,000).



Strong agreement among Australians that the Government needs to take action on extreme views and intolerance

Agreement that the Government should take further action to address extreme views and intolerance in our community (%)



Significantly **higher** than the total at the 95% confidence interval.

Q41. Do you agree or disagree that the Government should take further action to address extreme views and intolerance in our community?

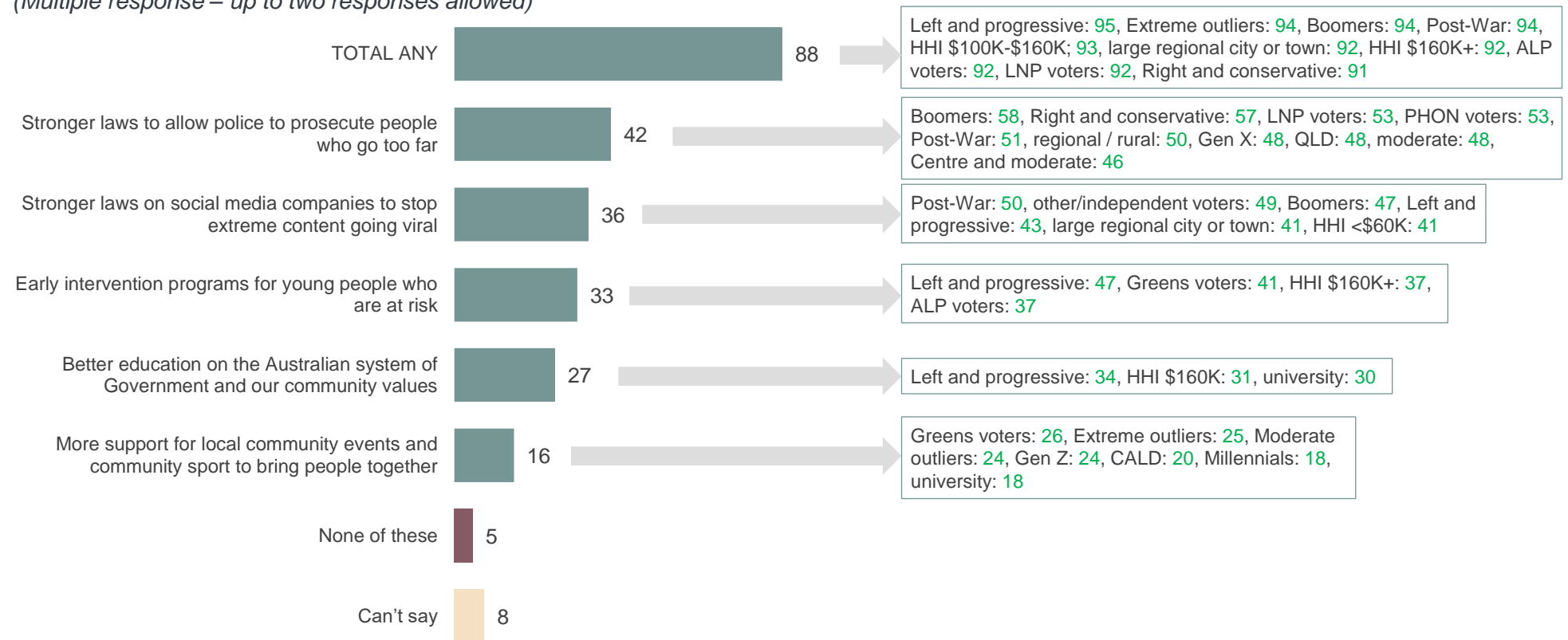
Base: All respondents (n=3,000).



More people believe stronger laws rather than intervention and education will be effective on intolerance

Actions most effective to address extreme views or intolerance in our community (%)

(Multiple response – up to two responses allowed)



Significantly **higher** than the total at the 95% confidence interval.

Q42. Which of these actions do you think would be **most** effective to address extreme views or intolerance in our community? Please select up to **two**.

Base: All respondents (n=3,000).



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