

The Essential
Report –
White Ribbon
[National]
07 October 2020



The Essential Report

Date: 07/10/2020

Prepared By: Essential Research

Data Supplied by:



AMSRS 

Our researchers are members of the Australian Market and Social Research Society.



About this poll

This report summarises the results of a fortnightly omnibus conducted by Essential Research with data provided by Qualtrics. The survey was conducted online from 30th September to 5th October 2020 and is based on 1,074 respondents.

The methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix at the end of the report.

Note that due to rounding, not all tables necessarily total 100% and subtotals may also vary.

Key Insights

1. There is strong support for the criminalisation of coercive control

- Overall, the majority of people support the criminalisation of coercive control (70% somewhat support & strongly support to 15% somewhat oppose & strongly oppose).
- Women are significantly more likely to strongly support this proposition than men (53% vs 37% respectively).
- Those 55+ also more strongly support the criminalisation of coercive control than those 35-54 and 18-34 (58% to 47% and 28% respectively).
- There is very little opposition to the criminalisation of this behaviour – with just 15% opposing the change.

2. Most types of abusive behaviours are considered as domestic violence

- The highest acknowledgement are the more conventionally recognised forms of abuse such as physical abuse (e.g. hitting, punching, etc. or restraining in any way, 82%, and displaying threatening behaviour, 78%), emotional abuse (e.g. frightening, humiliating, degrading or punishing a person, 79%), and sexual abuse (74%).
- Notably, behaviours more typically associated with coercive control are also largely considered as domestic violence (e.g. isolating a person from their support network, 75%, controlling money, 74%, depriving or restricting a person's access to support services, 73%, and harassing a person electronically, 71%).
- Other forms of coercive control such as not letting a person practice their own religion or forcing them to follow one (68%), and controlling access to drugs or medication (65%) are considered as domestic violence by the fewest people.

3. Across all types of abusive behaviours, women and older people consistently consider more to be domestic violence than men and younger people respectively

- Women are especially more likely to consider coercive control behaviours as domestic violence than men, in particular isolating a person from their support network, not letting a person practice their own religion or forcing them to follow one, and controlling access to drugs or medication

- Older people consider more forms of abusive behaviours as domestic violence than younger people. The largest discrepancy between the oldest and youngest cohorts is seen in their consideration of harassing a person electronically as a form of domestic violence (with a 34%pt difference between those 55+ at 88% and 18-34 at 54%).

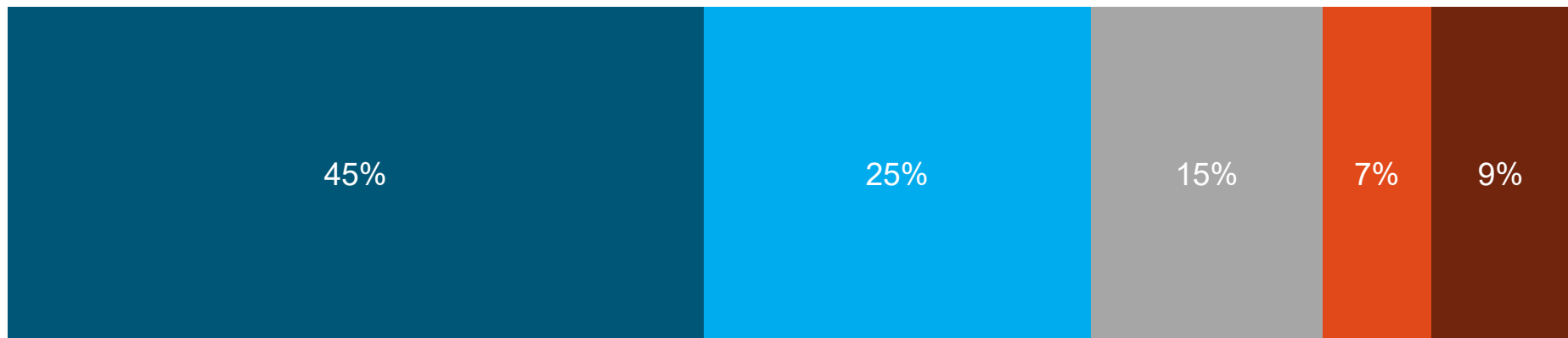
4. When presented with facts about domestic violence in Australia, most people believe the current landscape

- The majority of people believe all five facts about domestic violence in Australia presented to them to be true.
- There are no notable significant differences across demographics regarding belief in each fact.



Support for the criminalisation of coercive control

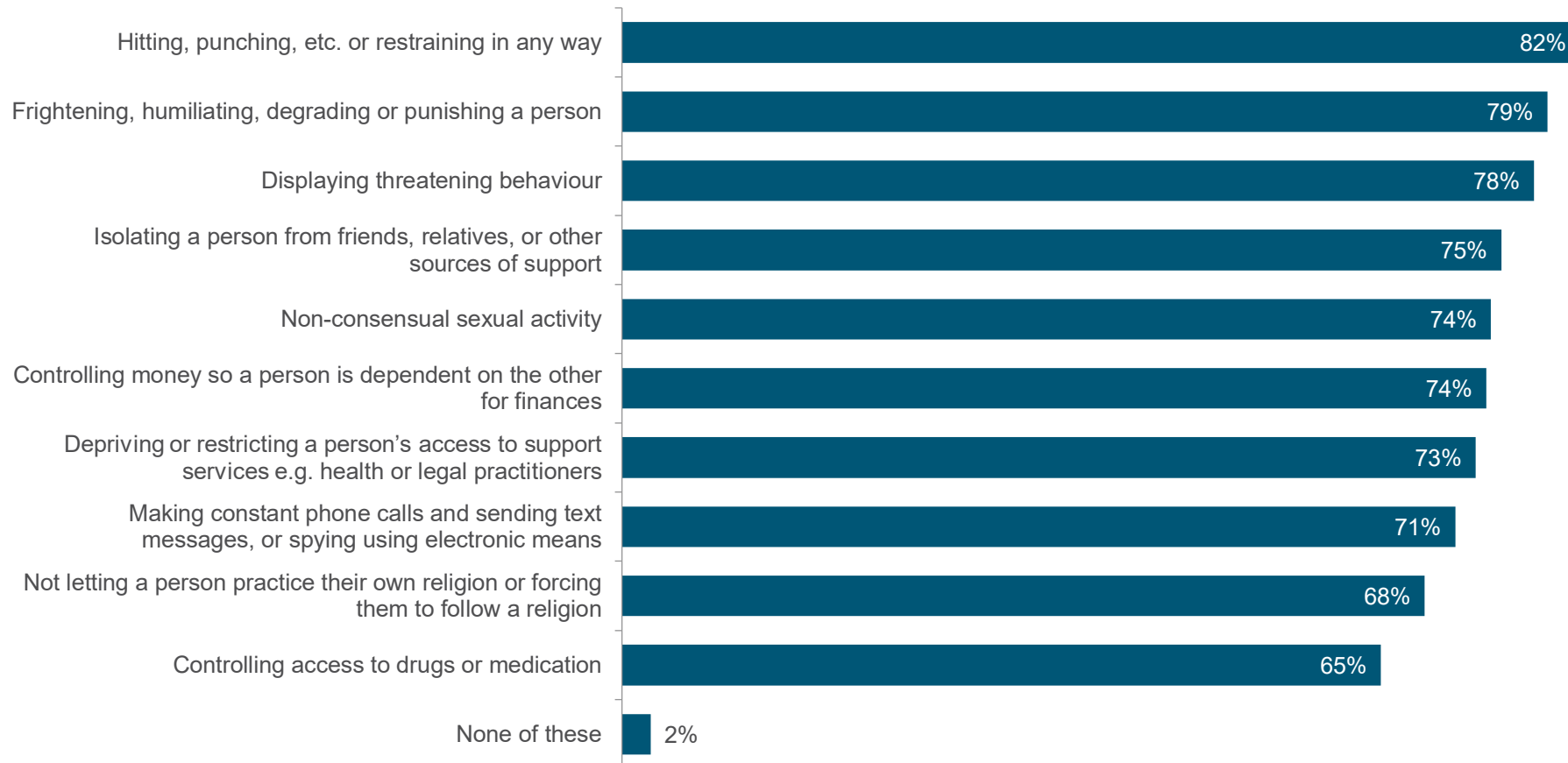
Q To what extent do you support or oppose the criminalisation of coercive control?



■ Strongly support ■ Somewhat support ■ Neither support, nor oppose ■ Somewhat oppose ■ Strongly oppose

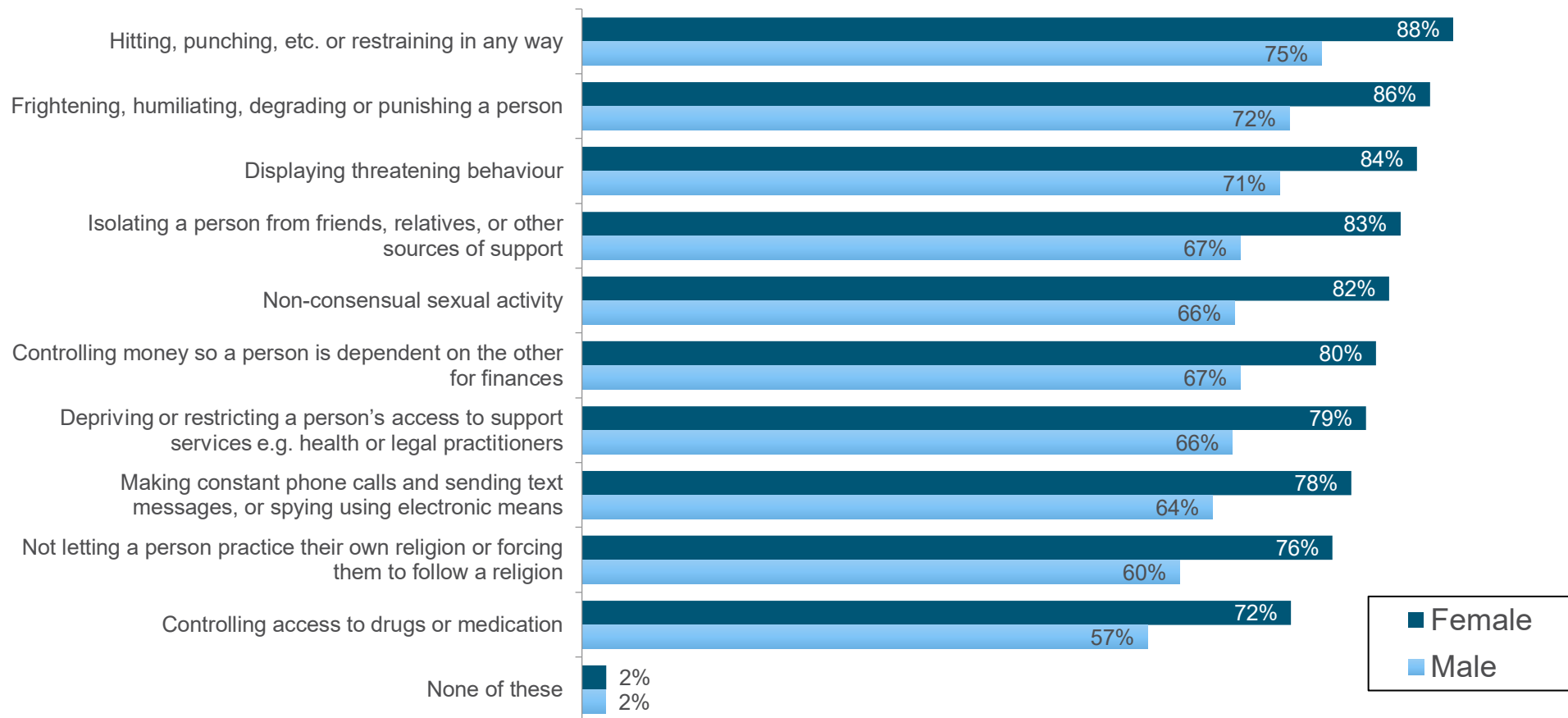
Behaviours considered as domestic violence

Q Which, if any, of the following behaviours do you think would be considered as a type of domestic violence?



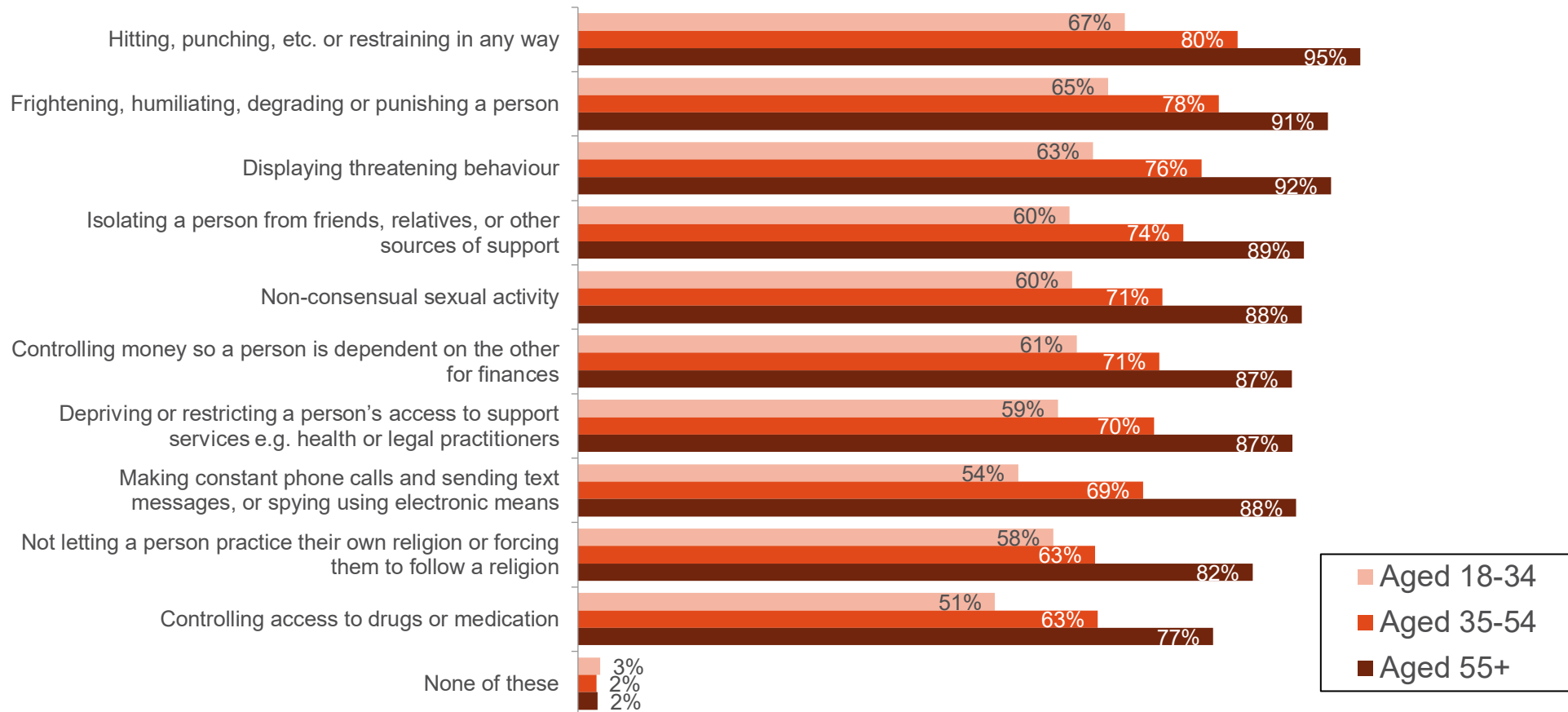
Behaviours considered as domestic violence – By gender

Q Which, if any, of the following behaviours do you think would be considered as a type of domestic violence?



Behaviours considered as domestic violence – By age

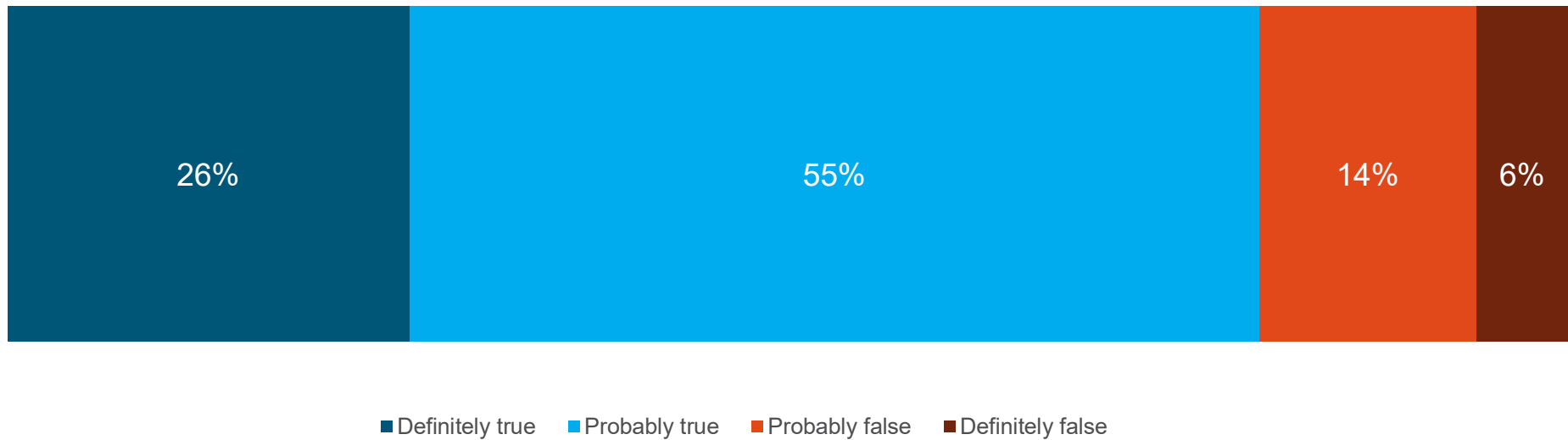
Q Which, if any, of the following behaviours do you think would be considered as a type of domestic violence?



Awareness of gaps in the system regarding domestic violence

Q To what extent do you believe the following statements about domestic violence to be true or false?:

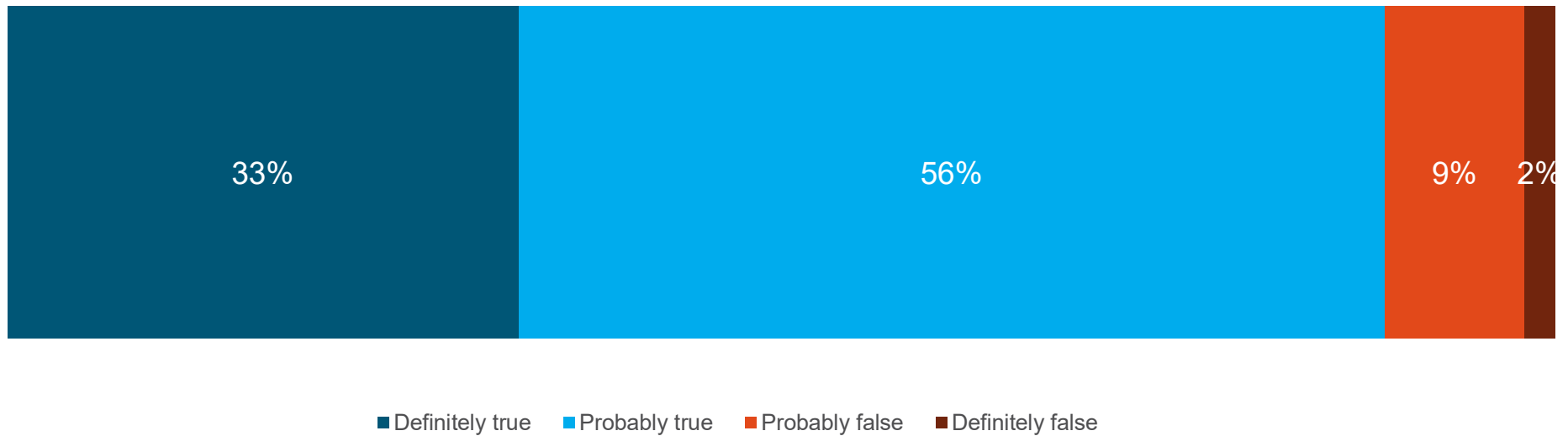
Unless perpetrators physically injure or stalk a person, breach a domestic violence order, or damage property, they are unlikely to be detected or charged



Awareness of emotional abuse rates

Q To what extent do you believe the following statements about domestic violence to be true or false?:

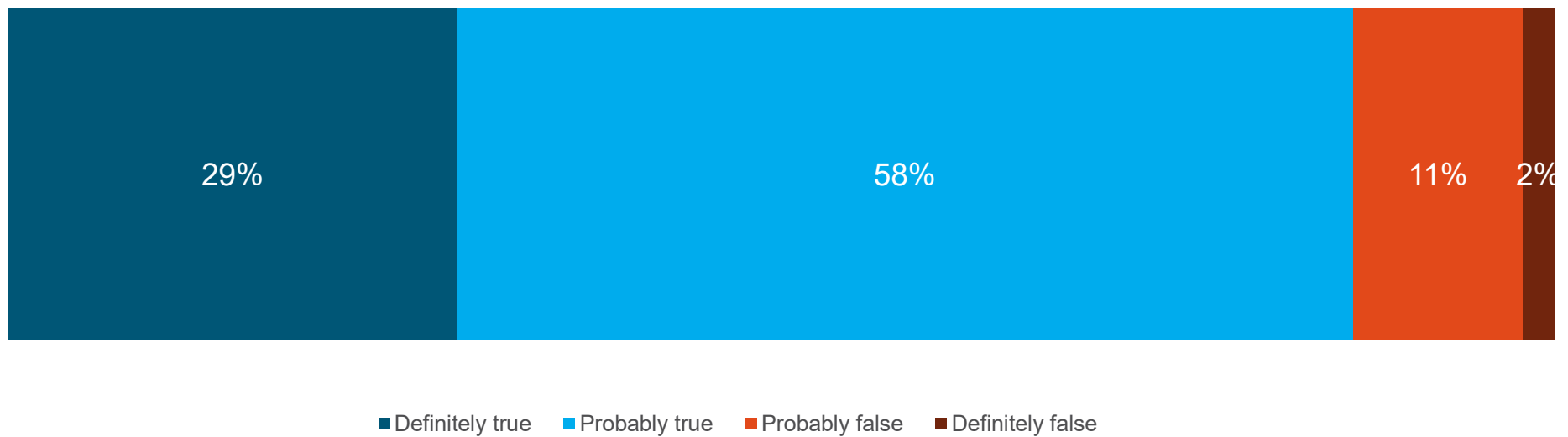
1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men have experienced emotional abuse by a current or previous partner since the age of 15



Awareness of physical and sexual violence rates

Q To what extent do you believe the following statements about domestic violence to be true or false?:

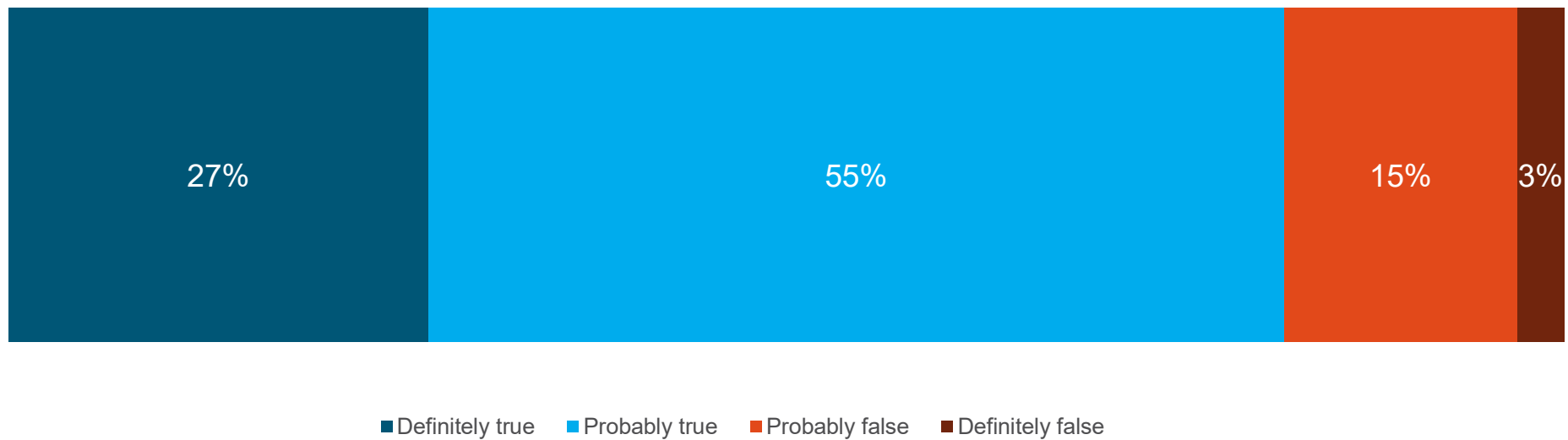
1 in 6 women and 1 in 16 men have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or previous partner since the age of 15



Awareness of high incidence of male perpetrators

Q To what extent do you believe the following statements about domestic violence to be true or false?:

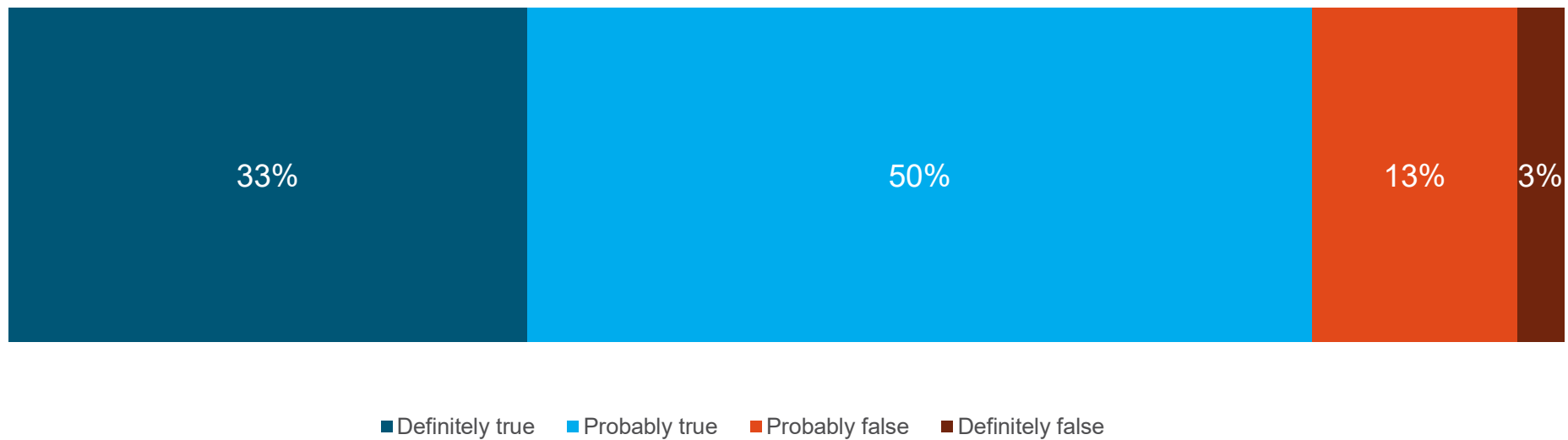
Around 95% of all victims of violence, whether women or men, experience violence from a male perpetrator



Awareness of high incidence of women's deaths caused by domestic violence

Q To what extent do you believe the following statements about domestic violence to be true or false?:

On average one woman per week is killed by a current or former partner



Support for the criminalisation of coercive control

Q To what extent do you support or oppose the criminalisation of coercive control?

	Total	Gender		Age			Education		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Secondary Education	Professional Qualifications	University Education
Strongly support	45%	37%	53%	28%	47%	58%	49%	48%	40%
Somewhat support	25%	27%	23%	24%	26%	25%	24%	24%	26%
Neither support, nor oppose	15%	17%	13%	24%	13%	9%	17%	13%	14%
Somewhat oppose	7%	10%	4%	13%	6%	2%	4%	6%	8%
Strongly oppose	9%	10%	7%	11%	9%	6%	6%	8%	11%
TOTAL: Support	70%	64%	76%	53%	72%	83%	73%	72%	67%
TOTAL: Oppose	15%	19%	11%	23%	15%	8%	10%	14%	19%
Base (n)	1,074	532	542	340	349	385	231	374	447



	Location		Employment Status		
	Capital City	Non-Capital City	In paid employment	Not in paid employment	Retired
Strongly support	43%	50%	39%	46%	59%
Somewhat support	27%	21%	26%	23%	25%
Neither support, nor oppose	15%	15%	16%	17%	8%
Somewhat oppose	7%	6%	9%	5%	4%
Strongly oppose	9%	8%	10%	9%	4%
TOTAL: Support	70%	71%	65%	70%	84%
TOTAL: Oppose	16%	14%	19%	13%	8%
Base (n)	725	349	597	222	228

	Federal Voting Intention				Household Income*			Household Composition	
	Labor	Liberal + National	Greens	TOTAL: Other	TOTAL: Lower Income	TOTAL: Mid Income	TOTAL: High Income	Dependent Children	No Dependent Children
Strongly support	50%	40%	48%	46%	48%	42%	45%	42%	47%
Somewhat support	22%	31%	18%	20%	25%	28%	23%	24%	26%
Neither support, nor oppose	15%	11%	16%	16%	14%	14%	14%	16%	15%
Somewhat oppose	6%	7%	8%	9%	4%	8%	9%	8%	5%
Strongly oppose	7%	10%	10%	9%	9%	9%	10%	11%	7%
TOTAL: Support	72%	71%	66%	66%	73%	69%	68%	66%	73%
TOTAL: Oppose	13%	18%	18%	18%	13%	16%	19%	19%	13%
Base (n)	335	434	92	112	357	319	320	401	673



Behaviours considered as domestic violence

Q Which, if any, of the following behaviours do you think would be considered as a type of domestic violence?

	Total	Gender		Age			Education		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55-64	Secondary Education	Professional Qualification	University Education
Hitting, punching, etc. or restraining in any way	82%	75%	88%	67%	80%	95%	88%	84%	75%
Frightening, humiliating, degrading or punishing a person	79%	72%	86%	65%	78%	91%	83%	84%	72%
Non-consensual sexual activity	74%	66%	82%	60%	71%	88%	80%	79%	66%
Controlling money so a person is dependent on the other for finances	74%	67%	80%	61%	71%	87%	81%	78%	66%
Displaying threatening behaviour	78%	71%	84%	63%	76%	92%	83%	81%	72%
Making constant phone calls and sending text messages, or spying using electronic means	71%	64%	78%	54%	69%	88%	78%	76%	62%
Isolating a person from friends, relatives, or other sources of support	75%	67%	83%	60%	74%	89%	82%	79%	68%
Not letting a person practice their own religion or forcing them to follow a religion	68%	60%	76%	58%	63%	82%	72%	76%	60%
Controlling access to drugs or medication	65%	57%	72%	51%	63%	77%	69%	73%	56%
Depriving or restricting a person's access to support services e.g. health or legal practitioners	73%	66%	79%	59%	70%	87%	77%	78%	66%
None of these	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
Base (n)	1,074	532	542	340	349	385	231	374	447



	Location		Employment Status		
	Capital City	Non-Capital City	In paid employment	Not in paid employment	Retired
Hitting, punching, etc. or restraining in any way	81%	82%	75%	85%	96%
Frightening, humiliating, degrading or punishing a person	78%	80%	71%	83%	93%
Non-consensual sexual activity	73%	75%	66%	78%	89%
Controlling money so a person is dependent on the other for finances	72%	77%	67%	76%	90%
Displaying threatening behaviour	77%	78%	71%	82%	91%
Making constant phone calls and sending text messages, or spying using electronic means	70%	72%	64%	71%	88%
Isolating a person from friends, relatives, or other sources of support	75%	75%	67%	79%	89%
Not letting a person practice their own religion or forcing them to follow a religion	67%	72%	63%	69%	84%
Controlling access to drugs or medication	64%	66%	59%	66%	79%
Depriving or restricting a person's access to support services e.g. health or legal practitioners	72%	74%	66%	74%	90%
None of these	3%	2%	3%	2%	1%
Base (n)	725	349	597	222	228



	Federal Voting Intention				Household Income*			Household Composition	
	Labor	Liberal + National	Greens	TOTAL: Other	TOTAL: Lower Income	TOTAL: Mid Income	TOTAL: High Income	Dependent Children	No Dependent Children
Hitting, punching, etc. or restraining in any way	83%	82%	76%	74%	84%	83%	74%	78%	84%
Frightening, humiliating, degrading or punishing a person	79%	80%	82%	71%	83%	79%	72%	75%	81%
Non-consensual sexual activity	76%	74%	72%	69%	78%	75%	67%	68%	78%
Controlling money so a person is dependent on the other for finances	74%	75%	72%	69%	78%	73%	68%	68%	77%
Displaying threatening behaviour	79%	78%	74%	68%	81%	78%	72%	73%	80%
Making constant phone calls and sending text messages, or spying using electronic means	69%	73%	68%	62%	73%	73%	65%	66%	74%
Isolating a person from friends, relatives, or other sources of support	75%	75%	77%	69%	81%	77%	65%	70%	78%
Not letting a person practice their own religion or forcing them to follow a religion	66%	70%	74%	60%	72%	71%	61%	66%	70%
Controlling access to drugs or medication	63%	66%	69%	57%	69%	65%	58%	60%	67%
Depriving or restricting a person's access to support services e.g. health or legal practitioners	69%	74%	80%	72%	75%	74%	67%	67%	76%
None of these	2%	2%	0%	4%	3%	2%	1%	3%	2%
Base (n)	335	434	92	112	357	319	320	401	673



Awareness of gaps in the system regarding domestic violence

Q To what extent do you believe the following statements about domestic violence to be true or false?:

Unless perpetrators physically injure or stalk a person, breach a domestic violence order, or damage property, they are unlikely to be detected or charged

	Total	Gender		Age			Education		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Secondary Education	Professional Qualifications	University Education
Definitely true	26%	26%	27%	29%	27%	24%	23%	31%	25%
Probably true	55%	53%	56%	48%	55%	60%	57%	52%	55%
Probably false	14%	16%	12%	17%	13%	10%	12%	12%	15%
Definitely false	6%	6%	5%	6%	5%	6%	8%	5%	5%
TOTAL: True	81%	79%	83%	77%	82%	84%	80%	83%	80%
TOTAL: False	19%	21%	17%	23%	18%	16%	20%	17%	20%
Base (n)	1,074	532	542	340	349	385	231	374	447



	Location		Employment Status		
	Capital City	Non-Capital City	In paid employment	Not in paid employment	Retired
Definitely true	26%	28%	28%	28%	22%
Probably true	55%	54%	52%	54%	63%
Probably false	14%	12%	14%	13%	11%
Definitely false	5%	6%	6%	5%	4%
TOTAL: True	81%	82%	79%	82%	85%
TOTAL: False	19%	18%	21%	18%	15%
Base (n)	725	349	597	222	228

	Federal Voting Intention				Household Income*			Household Composition	
	Labor	Liberal + National	Greens	TOTAL: Other	TOTAL: Lower Income	TOTAL: Mid Income	TOTAL: High Income	Dependent Children	No Dependent Children
Definitely true	28%	27%	31%	27%	27%	25%	29%	26%	27%
Probably true	54%	55%	46%	52%	57%	56%	49%	52%	56%
Probably false	13%	12%	19%	15%	11%	14%	15%	16%	12%
Definitely false	5%	6%	4%	6%	5%	5%	6%	6%	5%
TOTAL: True	82%	82%	77%	79%	84%	81%	79%	78%	83%
TOTAL: False	18%	18%	23%	21%	16%	19%	21%	22%	17%
Base (n)	335	434	92	112	357	319	320	401	673



Awareness of emotional abuse rates

Q To what extent do you believe the following statements about domestic violence to be true or false?:

1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men have experienced emotional abuse by a current or previous partner since the age of 15

	Total	Gender		Age			Education		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Secondary Education	Professional Qualifications	University Education
Definitely true	33%	30%	35%	31%	32%	35%	31%	40%	28%
Probably true	56%	57%	56%	52%	58%	59%	60%	51%	59%
Probably false	9%	11%	7%	14%	8%	5%	7%	7%	11%
Definitely false	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	1%	2%	2%	3%
TOTAL: True	89%	87%	91%	83%	90%	94%	91%	91%	86%
TOTAL: False	11%	13%	9%	17%	10%	6%	9%	9%	14%
Base (n)	1,074	532	542	340	349	385	231	374	447



	Location		Employment Status		
	Capital City	Non-Capital City	In paid employment	Not in paid employment	Retired
Definitely true	33%	32%	31%	38%	30%
Probably true	57%	56%	57%	51%	62%
Probably false	8%	10%	10%	8%	7%
Definitely false	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%
TOTAL: True	90%	88%	88%	89%	92%
TOTAL: False	10%	12%	12%	11%	8%
Base (n)	725	349	597	222	228

	Federal Voting Intention				Household Income*			Household Composition	
	Labor	Liberal + National	Greens	TOTAL: Other	TOTAL: Lower Income	TOTAL: Mid Income	TOTAL: High Income	Dependent Children	No Dependent Children
Definitely true	37%	30%	37%	29%	33%	36%	30%	36%	31%
Probably true	54%	59%	47%	58%	57%	55%	56%	53%	59%
Probably false	7%	10%	10%	8%	7%	8%	11%	9%	9%
Definitely false	2%	1%	5%	5%	3%	1%	3%	3%	2%
TOTAL: True	91%	89%	84%	87%	90%	91%	86%	89%	90%
TOTAL: False	9%	11%	16%	13%	10%	9%	14%	11%	10%
Base (n)	335	434	92	112	357	319	320	401	673



Awareness of physical and sexual violence rates

Q To what extent do you believe the following statements about domestic violence to be true or false?:

1 in 6 women and 1 in 16 men have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or previous partner since the age of 15

	Total	Gender		Age			Education		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Secondary Education	Professional Qualifications	University Education
Definitely true	29%	25%	34%	26%	31%	31%	31%	35%	24%
Probably true	58%	59%	56%	57%	55%	61%	60%	54%	60%
Probably false	11%	12%	9%	13%	12%	7%	7%	10%	13%
Definitely false	2%	3%	1%	4%	2%	1%	2%	1%	3%
TOTAL: True	87%	85%	90%	83%	86%	92%	91%	89%	84%
TOTAL: False	13%	15%	10%	17%	14%	8%	9%	11%	16%
Base (n)	1,074	532	542	340	349	385	231	374	447



	Location		Employment Status		
	Capital City	Non-Capital City	In paid employment	Not in paid employment	Retired
Definitely true	29%	30%	29%	32%	25%
Probably true	58%	56%	55%	58%	66%
Probably false	10%	11%	13%	10%	7%
Definitely false	2%	2%	3%	0%	2%
TOTAL: True	87%	87%	84%	90%	91%
TOTAL: False	13%	13%	16%	10%	9%
Base (n)	725	349	597	222	228

	Federal Voting Intention				Household Income*			Household Composition	
	Labor	Liberal + National	Greens	TOTAL: Other	TOTAL: Lower Income	TOTAL: Mid Income	TOTAL: High Income	Dependent Children	No Dependent Children
Definitely true	33%	26%	35%	28%	30%	28%	30%	31%	29%
Probably true	58%	58%	52%	58%	57%	61%	55%	55%	59%
Probably false	7%	13%	11%	11%	10%	10%	12%	11%	10%
Definitely false	2%	2%	2%	4%	3%	1%	3%	3%	2%
TOTAL: True	91%	85%	87%	86%	87%	89%	85%	86%	88%
TOTAL: False	9%	15%	13%	14%	13%	11%	15%	14%	12%
Base (n)	335	434	92	112	357	319	320	401	673



Awareness of high incidence of male perpetrators

Q To what extent do you believe the following statements about domestic violence to be true or false?:

Around 95% of all victims of violence, whether women or men, experience violence from a male perpetrator

	Total	Gender		Age			Education		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Secondary Education	Professional Qualifications	University Education
Definitely true	27%	27%	28%	23%	30%	29%	27%	28%	27%
Probably true	55%	53%	56%	55%	55%	55%	54%	55%	55%
Probably false	15%	17%	13%	18%	13%	15%	18%	13%	16%
Definitely false	3%	3%	2%	4%	2%	1%	2%	3%	2%
TOTAL: True	82%	80%	84%	78%	84%	84%	80%	83%	82%
TOTAL: False	18%	20%	16%	22%	16%	16%	20%	17%	18%
Base (n)	1,074	532	542	340	349	385	231	374	447



	Location		Employment Status		
	Capital City	Non-Capital City	In paid employment	Not in paid employment	Retired
Definitely true	26%	29%	29%	25%	25%
Probably true	57%	51%	55%	53%	55%
Probably false	14%	17%	14%	19%	18%
Definitely false	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%
TOTAL: True	83%	81%	84%	78%	81%
TOTAL: False	17%	19%	16%	22%	19%
Base (n)	725	349	597	222	228

	Federal Voting Intention				Household Income*			Household Composition	
	Labor	Liberal + National	Greens	TOTAL: Other	TOTAL: Lower Income	TOTAL: Mid Income	TOTAL: High Income	Dependent Children	No Dependent Children
Definitely true	30%	27%	29%	25%	25%	33%	26%	27%	28%
Probably true	52%	55%	57%	52%	56%	52%	55%	56%	55%
Probably false	15%	15%	13%	20%	17%	13%	16%	15%	15%
Definitely false	2%	3%	1%	3%	2%	2%	4%	3%	2%
TOTAL: True	83%	82%	86%	77%	81%	85%	80%	82%	82%
TOTAL: False	17%	18%	14%	23%	19%	15%	20%	18%	18%
Base (n)	335	434	92	112	357	319	320	401	673



Awareness of high incidence of women’s deaths caused by domestic violence

Q To what extent do you believe the following statements about domestic violence to be true or false?:

On average one woman per week is killed by a current or former partner

	Total	Gender		Age			Education		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Secondary Education	Professional Qualifications	University Education
Definitely true	33%	30%	36%	27%	36%	35%	36%	37%	29%
Probably true	50%	52%	49%	50%	47%	54%	50%	50%	50%
Probably false	13%	14%	13%	18%	14%	9%	13%	8%	18%
Definitely false	3%	4%	2%	5%	3%	2%	1%	5%	3%
TOTAL: True	83%	82%	84%	77%	83%	89%	86%	87%	79%
TOTAL: False	17%	18%	16%	23%	17%	11%	14%	13%	21%
Base (n)	1,074	532	542	340	349	385	231	374	447



	Location		Employment Status		
	Capital City	Non-Capital City	In paid employment	Not in paid employment	Retired
Definitely true	31%	37%	32%	35%	33%
Probably true	50%	51%	49%	49%	56%
Probably false	16%	9%	16%	12%	9%
Definitely false	3%	3%	3%	4%	2%
TOTAL: True	81%	88%	81%	84%	89%
TOTAL: False	19%	12%	19%	16%	11%
Base (n)	725	349	597	222	228

	Federal Voting Intention				Household Income*			Household Composition	
	Labor	Liberal + National	Greens	TOTAL: Other	TOTAL: Lower Income	TOTAL: Mid Income	TOTAL: High Income	Dependent Children	No Dependent Children
Definitely true	37%	31%	37%	34%	35%	34%	30%	34%	32%
Probably true	46%	52%	48%	53%	50%	50%	50%	49%	51%
Probably false	14%	13%	13%	9%	11%	13%	16%	14%	13%
Definitely false	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	2%	4%	3%	3%
TOTAL: True	83%	83%	85%	86%	85%	85%	80%	83%	84%
TOTAL: False	17%	17%	15%	14%	15%	15%	20%	17%	16%
Base (n)	335	434	92	112	357	319	320	401	673



Appendix: Household income definitions*

TOTAL: Lower Income	Up to \$51,999 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)
TOTAL: Mid Income	\$52,000 to \$103,999 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)
TOTAL: High Income	More than \$104,000 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)

Appendix: Methodology, margin of error and professional standards

The data gathered for this report is gathered from a fortnightly online omnibus conducted by Qualtrics.

Every two weeks, the team at Essential considers issues that are topical, and a series of questions are devised to put to the Australian public. Some questions are repeated regularly (such as political preference and leadership approval), while others are unique to each week and reflect current media and social issues.

The response rate varies each week, but usually delivers 1000+ interviews. In theory, with a sample of this size, there is 95 per cent certainty that the results are within 4.5 percentage points of what they would be if the entire population had been polled. However, this assumes random sampling, which, because of non-response and less than 100% population coverage cannot be achieved in practice. Furthermore, there are other possible sources of error in all polls including question wording and question order, interviewer bias (for telephone and face-to-face polls), response errors and weighting.

The online omnibus is live from the Wednesday night and closed on the following Sunday. Incentives are offered to participants. Essential Research uses the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to analyse the data. The data is weighted against Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data.

All Essential Research staff hold Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS) membership and are bound by professional codes of behaviour.

