

KANTAR PUBLIC



Queensland
Government

Queenslanders' Perceptions & Attitudes to Science 2023

Kantar Public Research Report

Prepared for Queensland Government
Department of Environment and Science

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE AND INTEREST

Overall, around half of Queenslanders provided a correct or partially correct definition of STEM (unprompted), and this has remained steady following an increase in 2021. Consistently with previous years, science continues to be associated with school science subjects such as chemistry, biology and physics. Other associations include theories and experiments.

While three in five Queenslanders are generally interested in science, the proportion of those 'very interested' has softened and the proportion of those disinterested has continued to increase since 2016. Consistent with previous years, health & medicine and biology are the top two areas of interest, with astronomy replacing technology in third place. While both genders have similar interest levels for astronomy, females tend to be more interested in health and medicine, and biology. Males, those aged under 45, and highly educated respondents were likely to show interest in any area of science.

PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES

Nearly four in five Queenslanders believe that scientific development has a positive impact on society, a steady trend since 2018. The proportion who feel science has a significant negative impact remains low at around 4%. First Nations Peoples are significantly less likely to believe there has been a positive impact from scientific discovery.

The majority (80%) feel that science is critical for the Queensland economy, and a similar percentage of respondents believes science will enable a broad range of job prospects.

Some of the negative perceptions about science, such as 'school science programs are not engaging and interesting for students' and 'scientific developments will reduce the number of jobs' have seen a decrease in agreement since 2018.

Parental encouragement of children to study science, pursue a career in science, and be involved in extracurricular activities related to science remains high, however, the degree of encouragement has somewhat softened. The percentage of parents who would *discourage* their children is highest among young parents and those who did not study beyond high school.

MEDIA AND SCIENCE NEWS / INFORMATION

The majority still feel there is not enough information about science in the media, but this trend has been softening over the years, with one in three feeling content with the level of media coverage on science. This feeling is shared most among those aged 45 and 54 and among those currently working.

Most learn about local social events and activities via TV, followed by Facebook and other websites. While social media is more popular for those under 45, First Nations people and those currently working, TV is a more popular source of information about events for those aged 65 and over and retirees. There is an opportunity to increase awareness via social media channels, as those who use these channels regularly tend to find information through them.

SCIENCE ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

The majority (51%) feel there are not enough science events and activities in their area, with metro residents being less likely to feel this way. Males and those aged under 45 are significantly more likely to be content with the number of events offered.

Consistently with previous years, visits to zoos/animal parks/aquariums, museums, and guided nature tours/botanic garden visits remain the most popular science-based activities. Those aged under 45 were significantly more likely to have participated in any science-based activity and parents were significantly more likely to have attended most activities. Interest in science-based activities is moderate, with the highest level of interest being among younger people, parents, and tertiary educated people.

Awareness of both National Science Week and the World Science Festival has remained steady since 2021 with SEQ residents being more aware of the World Science festival. One in two say they would be interested in events such as National Science Week in the future. While overall interest is at a similar level to 2021, the degree of interest has shifted, with more saying they are 'somewhat interested' rather than 'very interested'. While awareness of Citizen Science has increased since 2021, only 30% of those have participated. This is a decline from 44% in 2021, driven by a decline in people participating in their local area.

SCIENCE IN QUEESLAND

One in five could name a scientist or scientific discovery. Mentions of scientists and medical / COVID-19 research increased significantly since 2021.

COMMON DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

There were some common demographic trends observed throughout, whereby certain groups consistently held greater interest and more positive perceptions towards science. These included: those aged between 25 and 54, tertiary educated, parents, and workers. Consistently with 2021, there were relatively few notable differences by region compared.

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THE RESEARCH

THE RESEARCH

Background

The Queensland Government envisions a future where the community values science and recognises the positive impact of science on developing solutions to society's challenges. A scientifically literate and engaged community will be more prepared to plan and react to future challenges and take advantage of new opportunities.

The four-year Engaging Queenslanders in Science strategy (2021-24) is an initiative of the Queensland Government, designed to increase awareness and understanding about the importance of science, innovation and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education.

This strategy has a larger goal of encouraging Queenslanders to engage in, recognise, support and advocate for science. Through engaging with science, Queenslanders' appreciation for science grows and will allow them to realise the benefits of science. This will build a community that uses, respects and advocates for science.

Since 2016, Kantar Public have conducted three studies among Queensland adults to measure and understand perceptions towards and engagement with science.

Following a review of the Engaging Queenslanders in Science strategy by the Office of the Queensland Chief Scientist (OQCS) based on previous research findings, the Engaging Queenslanders in Science Strategy 2021-24 was put in place.

The main objective of this research was to gain an updated view of Queenslanders' perceptions and attitudes towards science.

The 2023 survey aimed to continue measuring change since the implementation of the Engaging Queenslanders in science strategy.

THE RESEARCH

Methodology



1,242 Queensland residents aged 18 years and over took part.

Quotas were set to ensure all broad **Queensland regions** were represented (see next slide). Soft quotas on **gender and age** were also used to ensure a good spread of respondents.



Data was **post-weighted** to 2021 ABS Census data to ensure that the sample is representative of the population statistics in Queensland. Weighting was conducted by **age, gender and location** within Queensland.



The survey design from 2023 remained largely **consistent** with the previous two studies, with minor changes where relevant.



The **10 minute online survey** was scripted and hosted by Lightspeed Research, who also recruited participants from their panel partners.



The survey was in field from the **17th April** to the **30th April, 2023**.



Statistical significance testing has been based on demographic profiles and characteristics, namely: gender, age, region, parental status, education and employment status. For the purposes of this report, only statistically significant differences of interest are shown, as follows:

 Denotes figure is significantly higher or
 lower than all other subgroups at 95% CI

Where possible, comparisons have been made to the previous two studies, denoted by a dotted line: - - - -

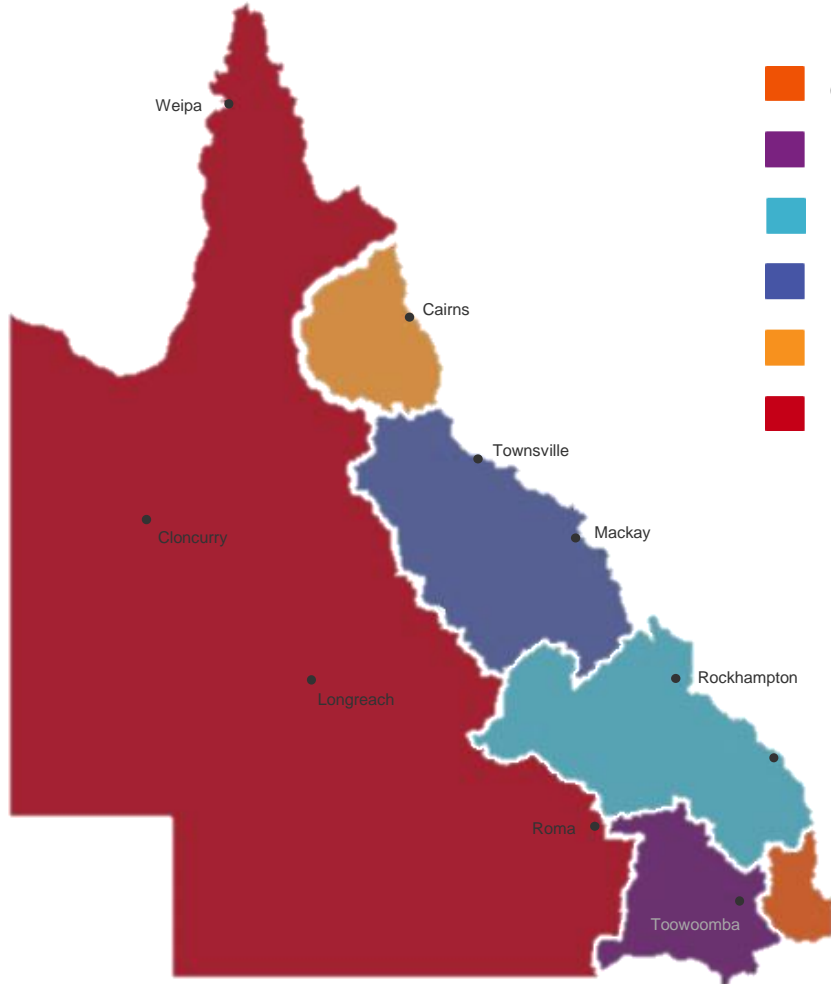
Caution is needed in interpreting data with small base sizes of n=30 and under.

The base note included on each page throughout the report represents the sample size; i.e., the number of respondents who answered the relevant question. On some charts, value labels below 3% have been removed for ease of reading.

Data shown in graphs and tables are rounded to the nearest whole number, and in some instances where results are summed, there may be a rounding error of $\pm 1\%$.

THE RESEARCH

Broad Queensland Regions



- Greater Brisbane/Gold Coast/Sunshine Coast
- Darling Downs *(includes Southern Downs, Western Downs, Toowoomba and Goondiwindi)*
- Fitzroy/Wide Bay/Burnett *(includes Rockhampton and Bundaberg)*
- Northern/Mackay *(includes Townsville and Mackay)*
- Far North Metro *(includes Cairns and Port Douglas)*
- Remote/Outback Queensland

Queensland region definitions are based on a combination of ABS Statistical Divisions and Queensland Government classifications. The map shows an approximate visual representation of each region.

Region quotas have been kept consistent to ensure results are comparable over the years.

	SEQ	Darling Downs	Fitzroy/Wide Bay Burnett	Northern/Mackay	Far North	Remote/Outback
2016	n=210	n=227	n=254	n=252	n=190	n=67
2018	n=251	n=217	n=268	n=240	n=174	n=78
2021	n=227	n=207	n=265	n=263	n=200	n=57
2023	n=302	n=194	n=249	n=279	n=169	n=49

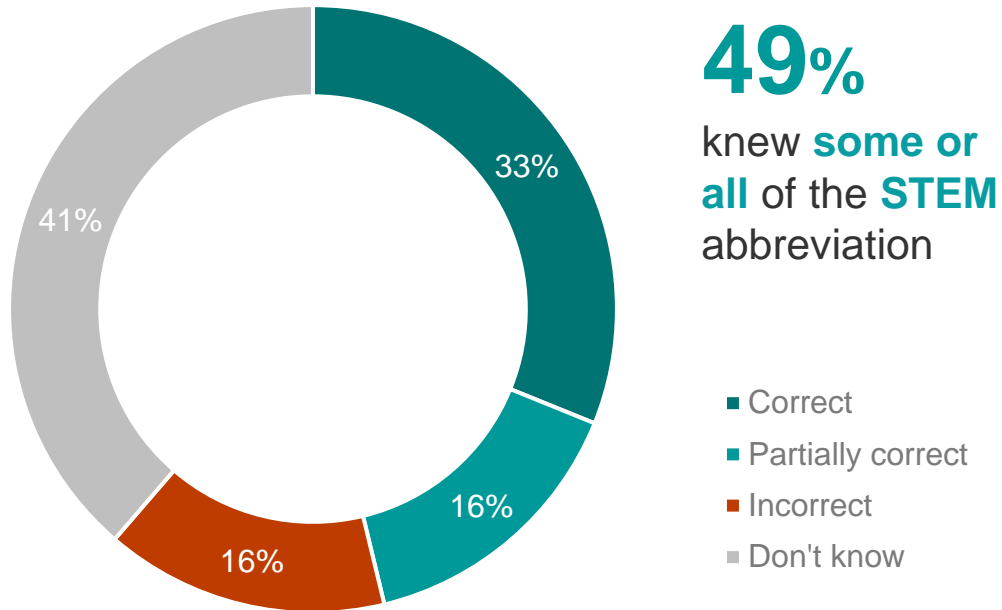
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AWARENESS,
KNOWLEDGE &
INTEREST IN SCIENCE

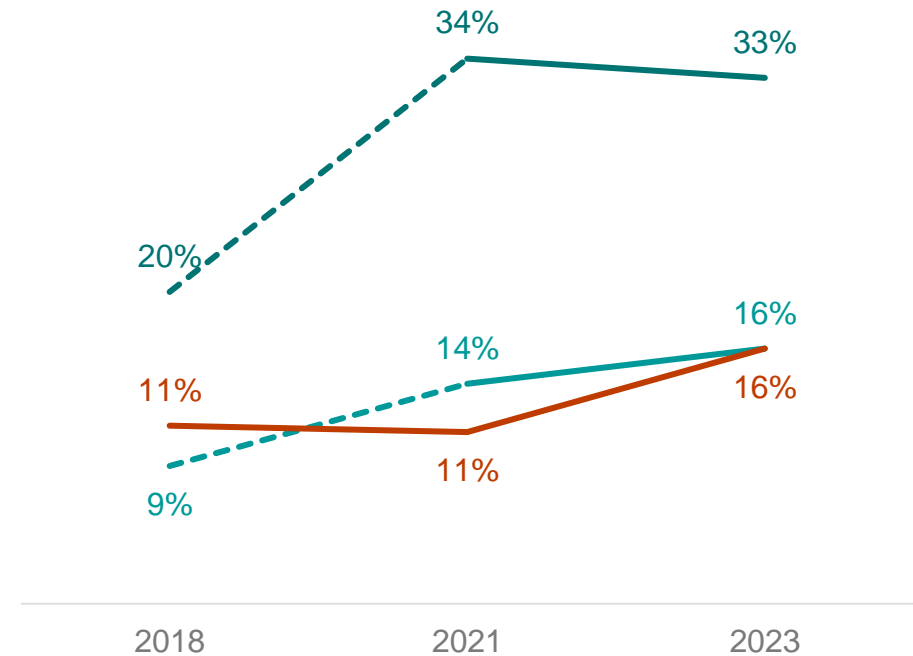
AWARENESS OF STEM ABBREVIATION

Almost half of Queenslanders know some or all of the STEM acronym, awareness having remained steady since 2021. English and Education were some commonly misattributed subjects.

AWARENESS OF STEM ABBREVIATION



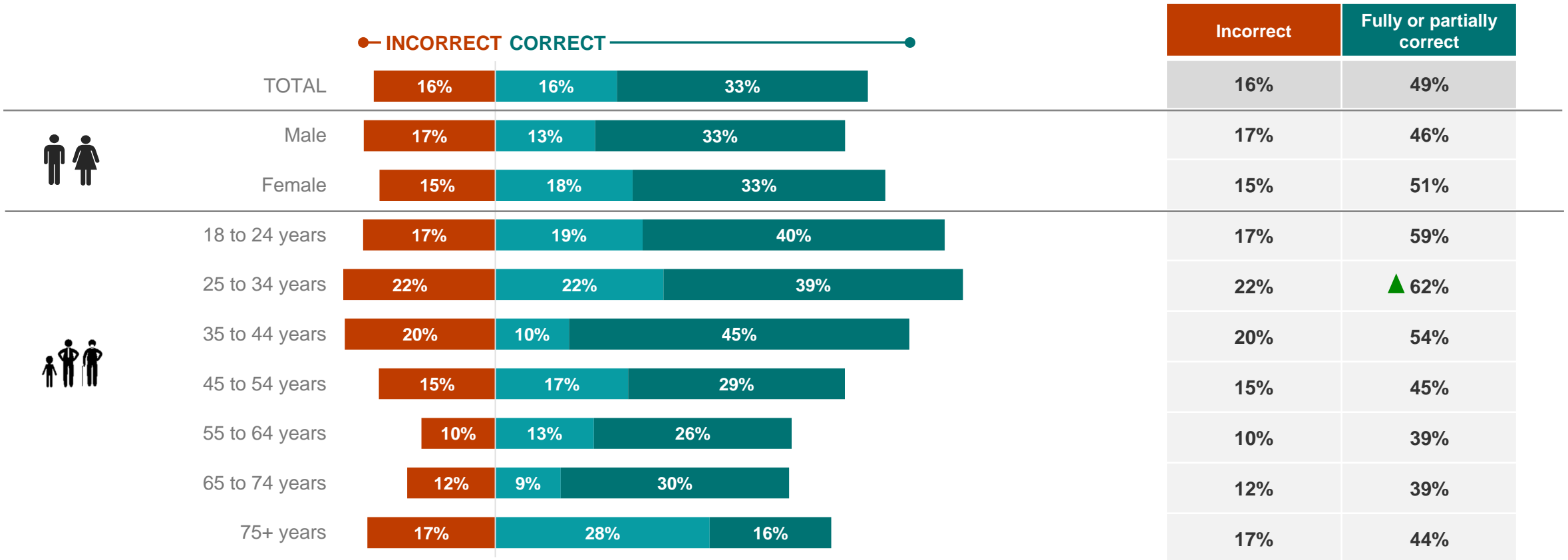
CHANGE IN AWARENESS OVER TIME



AWARENESS OF STEM ABBREVIATION

Correct knowledge of the STEM acronym was more likely among those aged under 35 years.

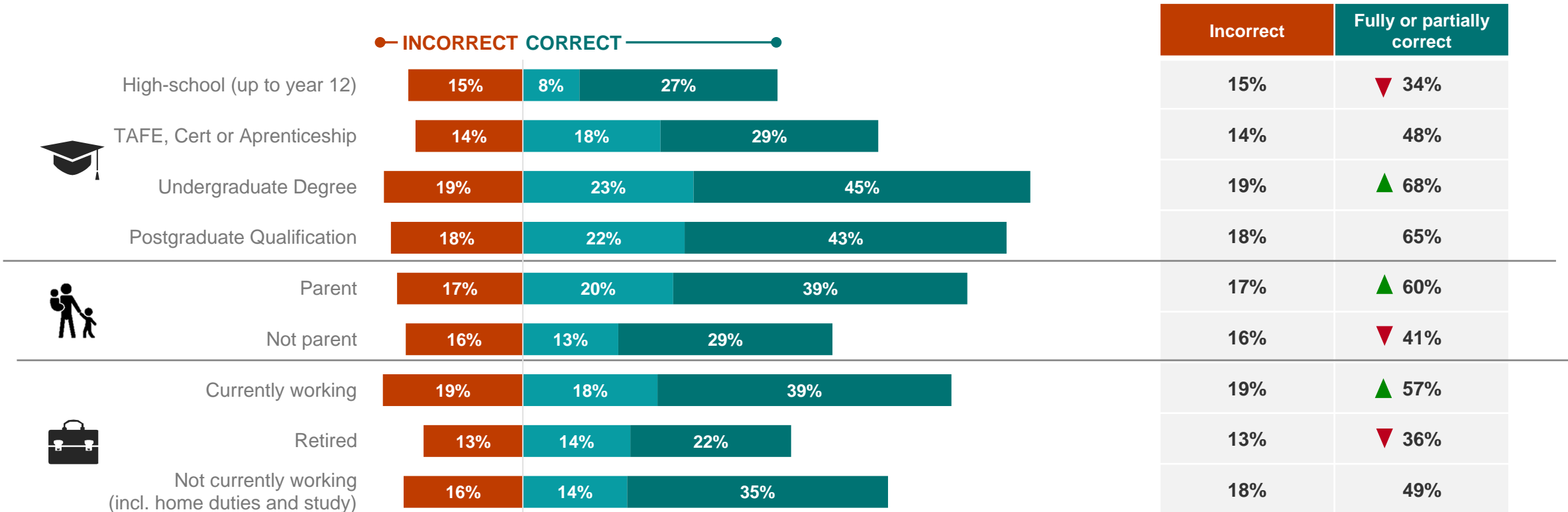
AWARENESS OF STEM ABBREVIATION BY DEMOGRAPHICS



AWARENESS OF STEM ABBREVIATION

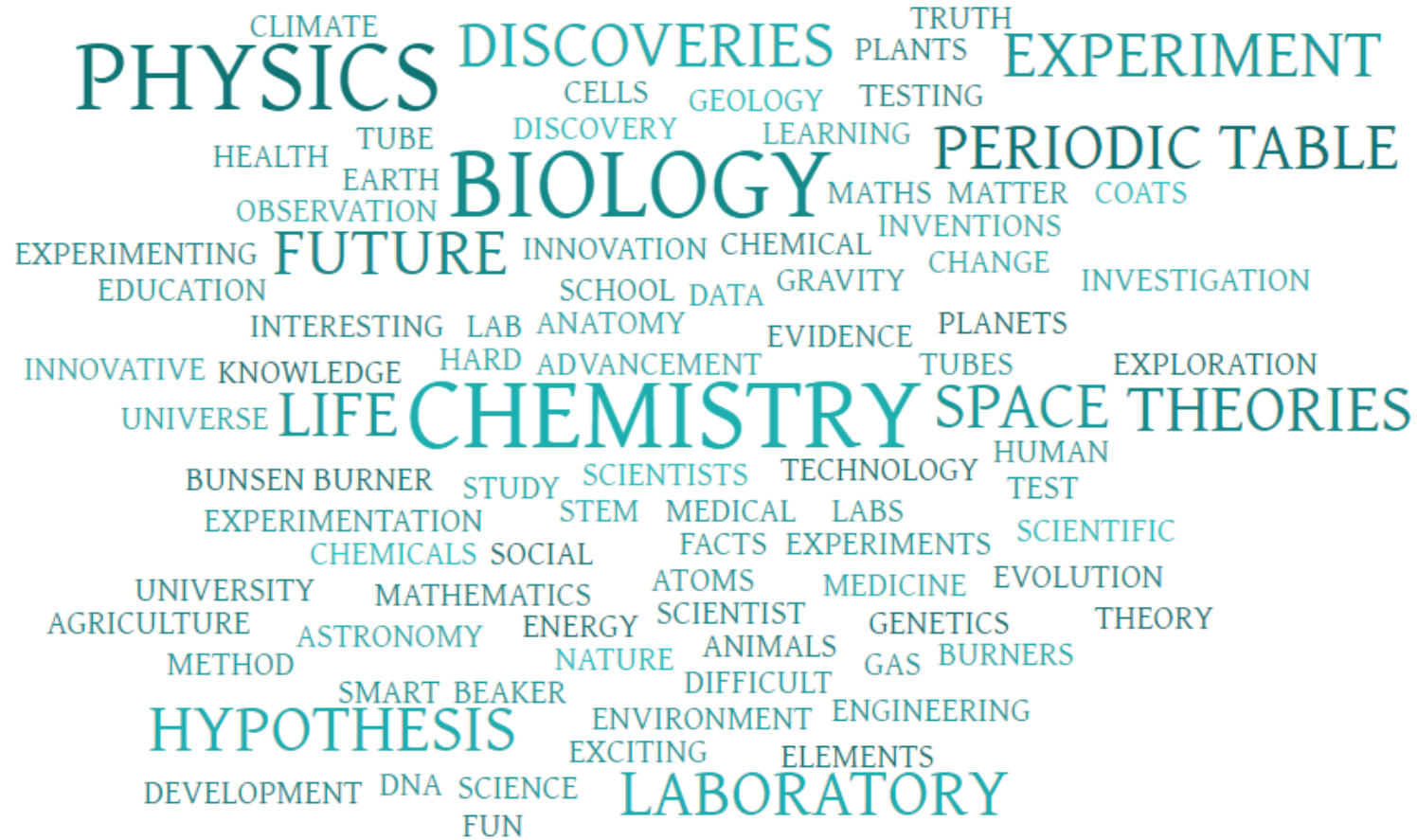
Those with higher education, those currently working or studying, as well as parents, were also more likely to know the acronym.

AWARENESS OF STEM ABBREVIATION BY DEMOGRAPHICS



UNPROMPTED UNDERSTANDING OF SCIENCE

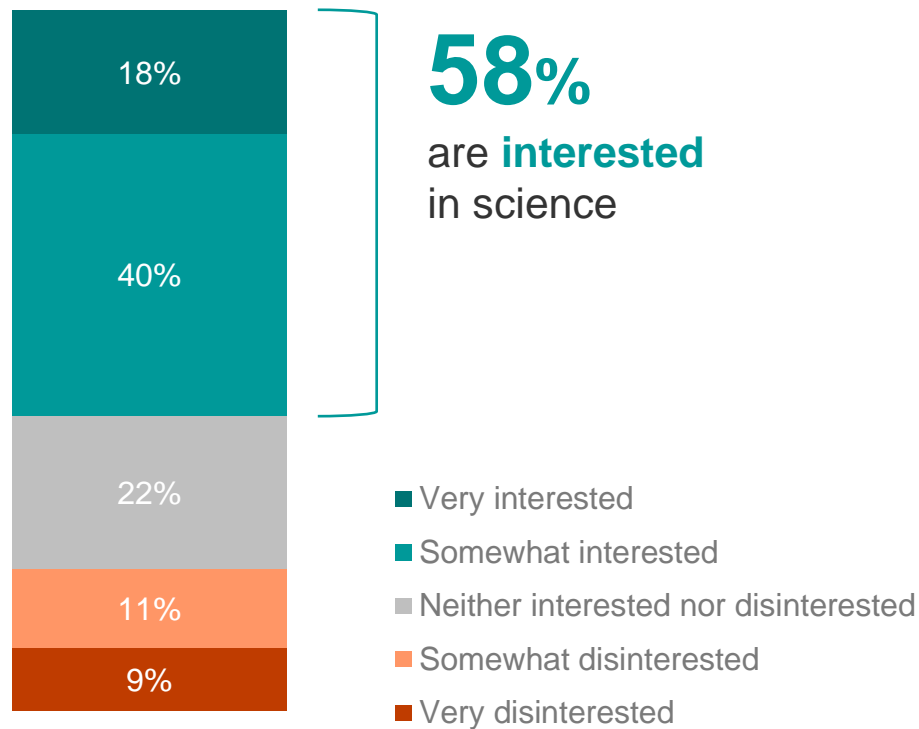
Science continues to be associated with school science subjects such as Chemistry, Biology and Physics, as well as theories and experiments.



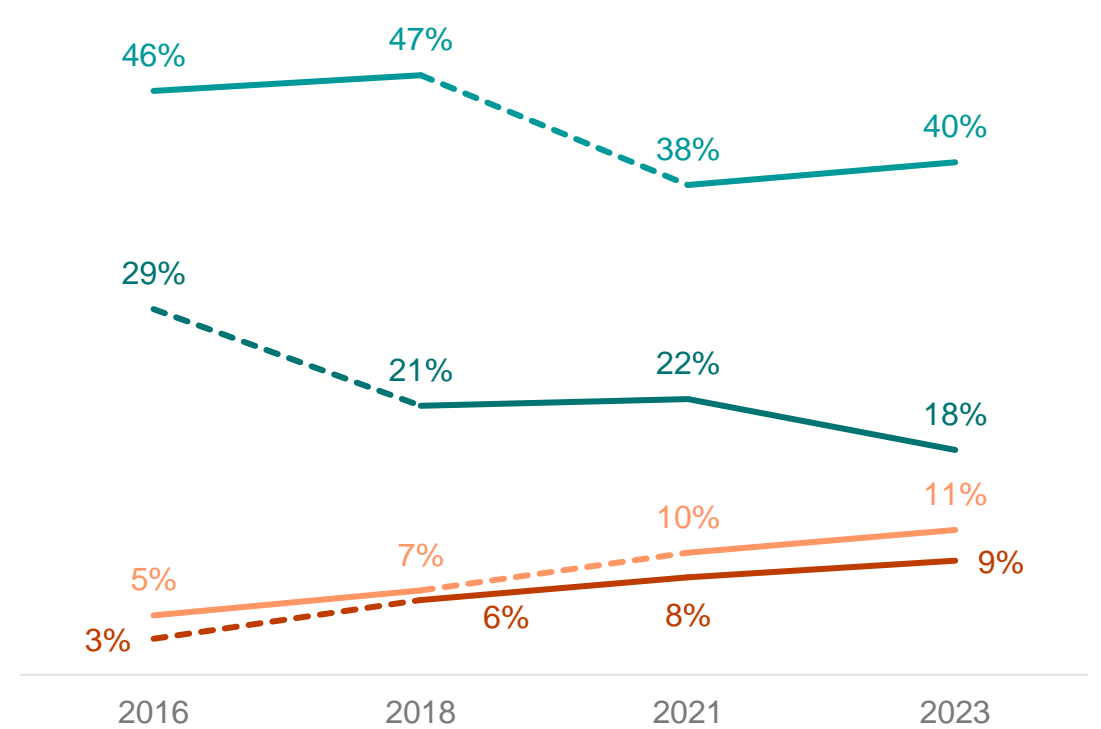
INTEREST IN SCIENCE

Nearly three in five Queenslanders state that they are generally interested in science. However, the proportion who feel disinterested continues to increase since 2016, and the proportion who are 'very interested' has softened.

INTEREST IN SCIENCE



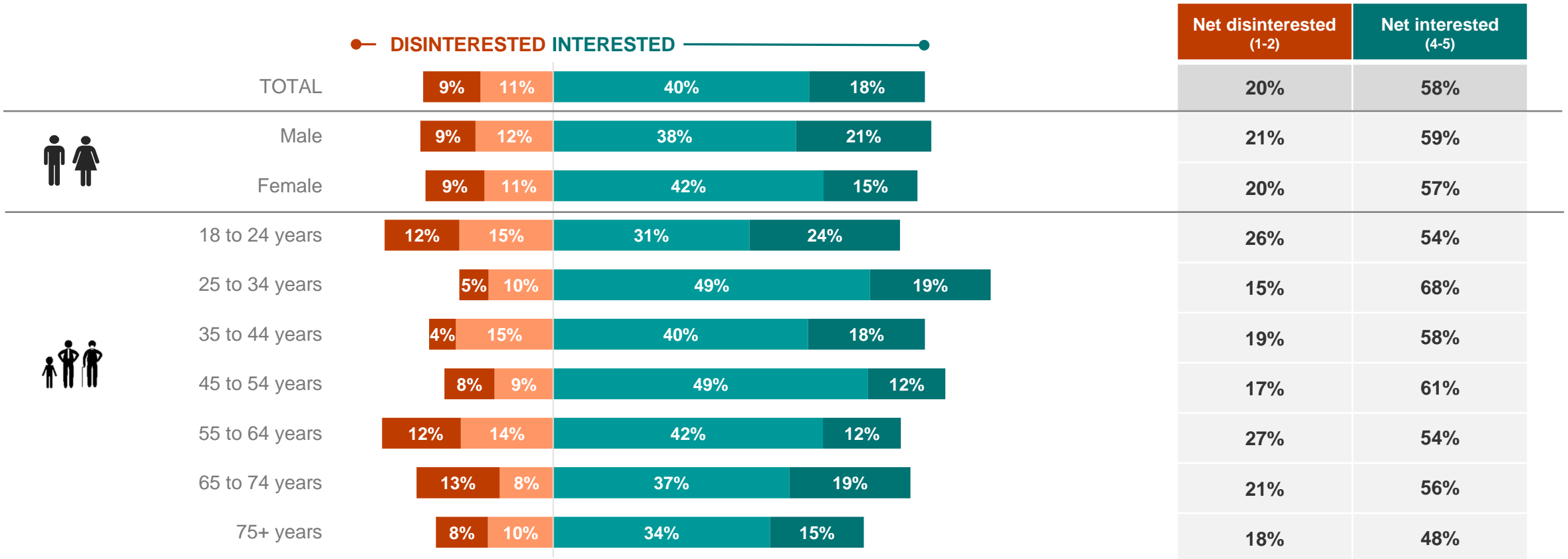
CHANGE IN INTEREST OVER TIME



INTEREST IN SCIENCE

Interest is somewhat stronger among those aged 25 to 54, while weaker for those younger and older. There continues to be a disinterest in science among those under 25.

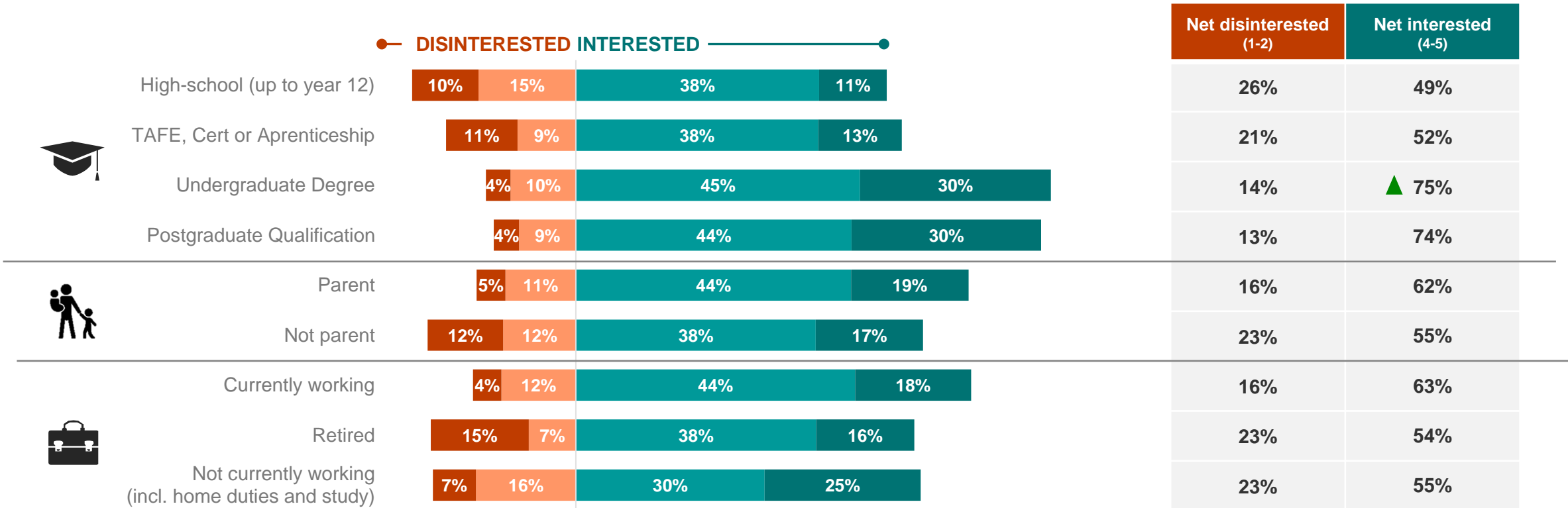
INTEREST IN SCIENCE BY DEMOGRAPHICS



INTEREST IN SCIENCE

Those with higher education are more interested in science in general. Parents and students also have a strong interest. Meanwhile, retirees and those not currently working are among the most disinterested groups.

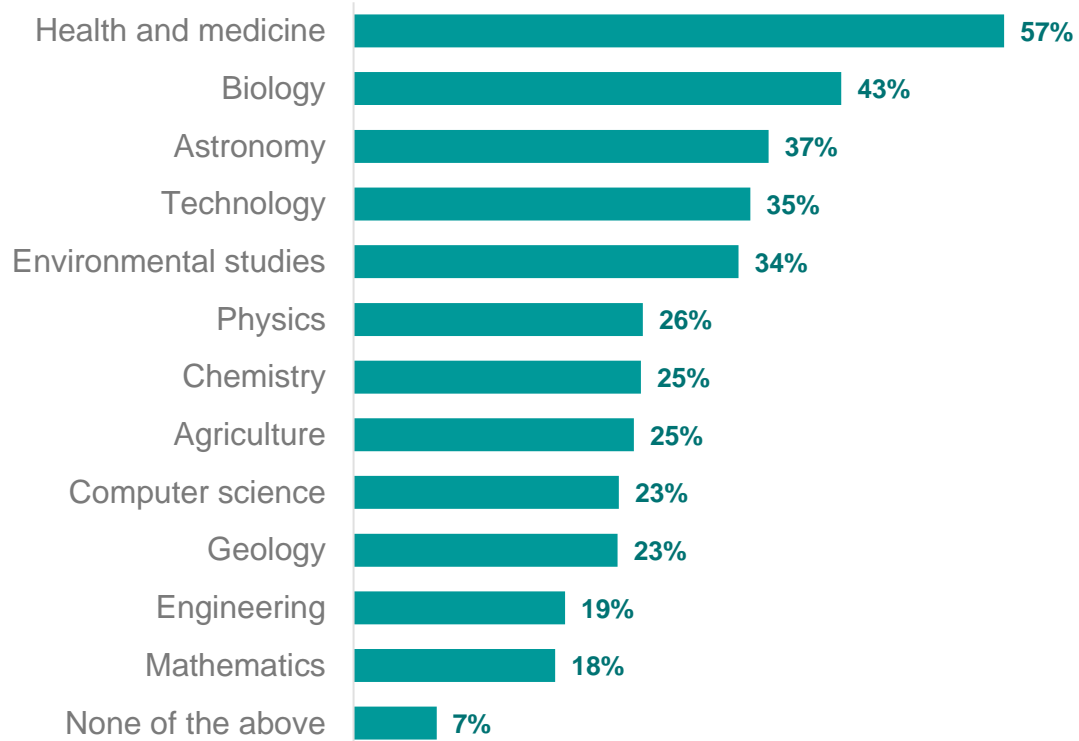
INTEREST IN SCIENCE BY DEMOGRAPHICS







AREAS OF INTEREST

Health and medicine, biology, and astronomy are the top 3 areas of interest for Queenslanders. Males, those under 45, and highly educated respondents were likely to show an interest in any area of science. The main difference between the top 3 areas is that females are more interested in health and biology than males, while both genders have a similar level of interest for astronomy.

INTEREST IN BROAD AREAS OF SCIENCE



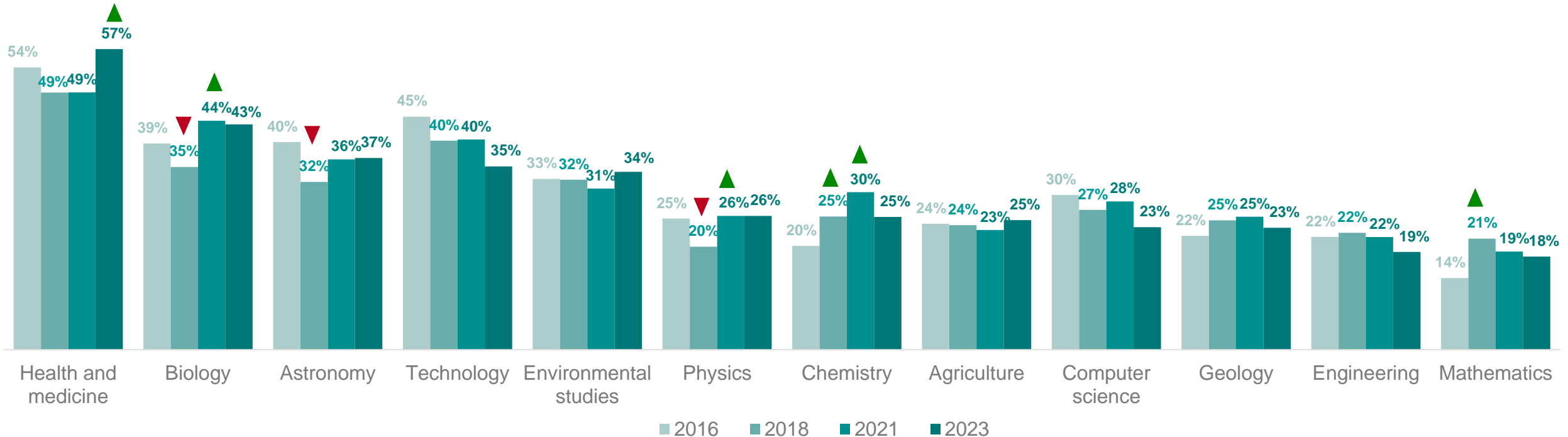
DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

				
ANY AREA	92% Male 94% Female	95% < 45 years 91% 45+ years	92% Parent 93% Not parent	▼ 88% High school 93% TAFE ▲ 99% Undergrad 98% Postgrad
HEALTH	▼ 38% Male ▲ 74% Female	▼ 47% < 45 years ▲ 66% 45+ years	56% Parent 59% Not parent	52% High school 63% TAFE 56% Undergrad 65% Postgrad
BIOLOGY	▼ 31% Male ▲ 53% Female	50% < 45 years 37% 45+ years	45% Parent 42% Not parent	42% High school 42% TAFE 47% Undergrad 48% Postgrad
ASTRONOMY	37% Male 36% Female	40% < 45 years 33% 45+ years	36% Parent 37% Not parent	42% High school 34% TAFE 33% Undergrad 37% Postgrad

AREAS OF INTEREST

Biology and Physics have seen increased interest over the years. Health and medicine has been the topic of greatest interest since 2016, having also seen a significant increase since 2021, while Technology has slipped to fourth position.

INTEREST IN BROAD AREAS OF SCIENCE



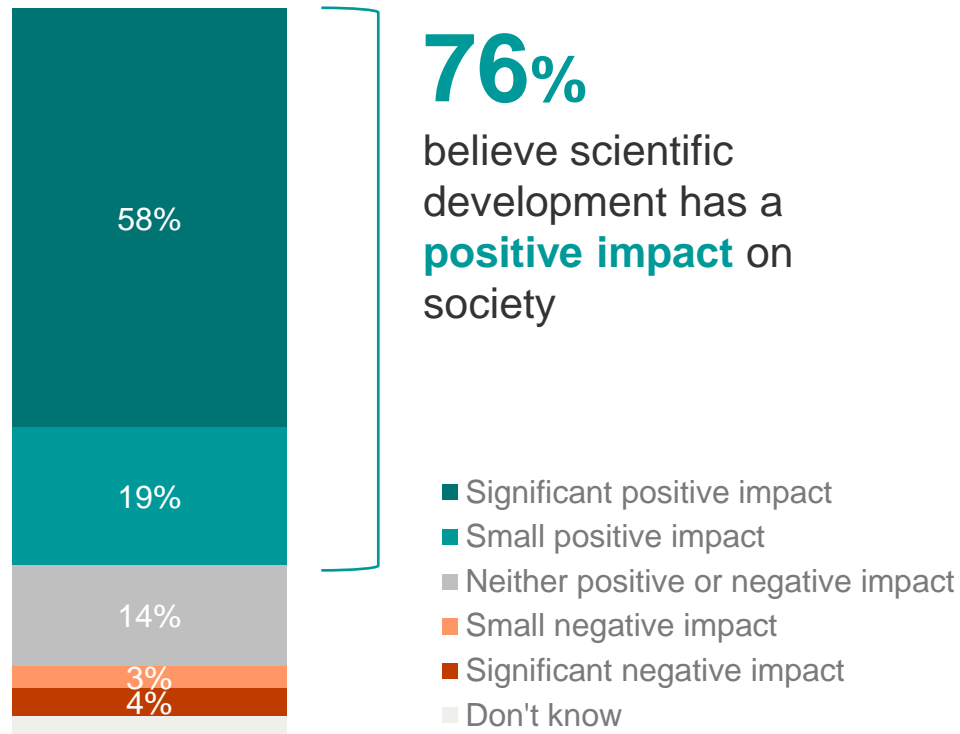
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PERCEPTIONS &
ATTITUDES TOWARDS
SCIENCE

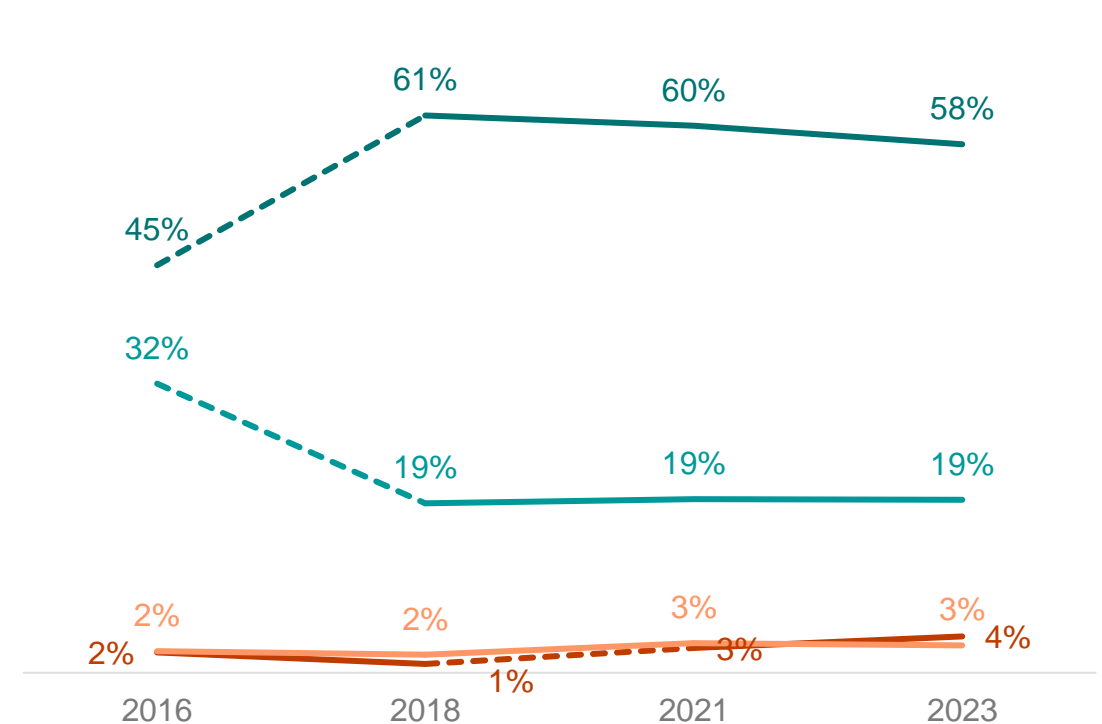
PERCEIVED IMPACT OF SCIENCE

Nearly four in five Queenslanders feel that scientific development has a positive impact on society, and this has remained stable since 2018.

PERCEIVED IMPACT OF SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENTS



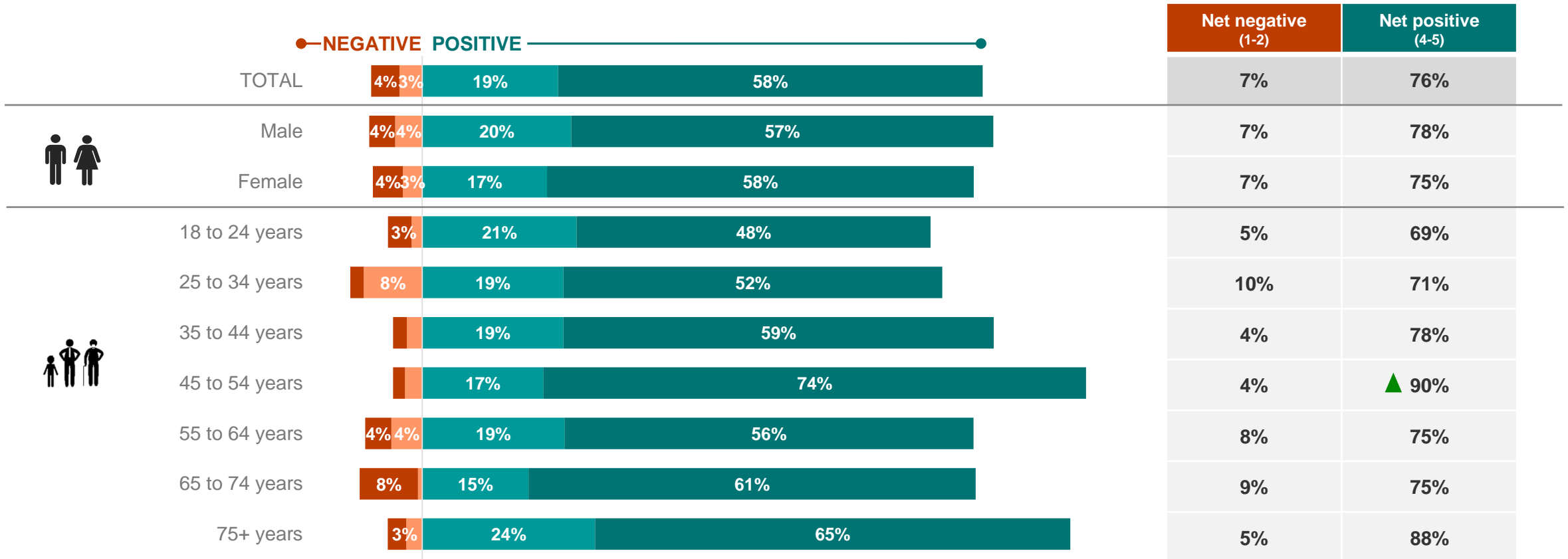
CHANGE IN PERCEIVED IMPACT OVER TIME



PERCEIVED IMPACT OF SCIENCE

Those aged 25 to 34 and those aged 65 to 74 are the most likely to believe there has been a negative impact from scientific discovery.

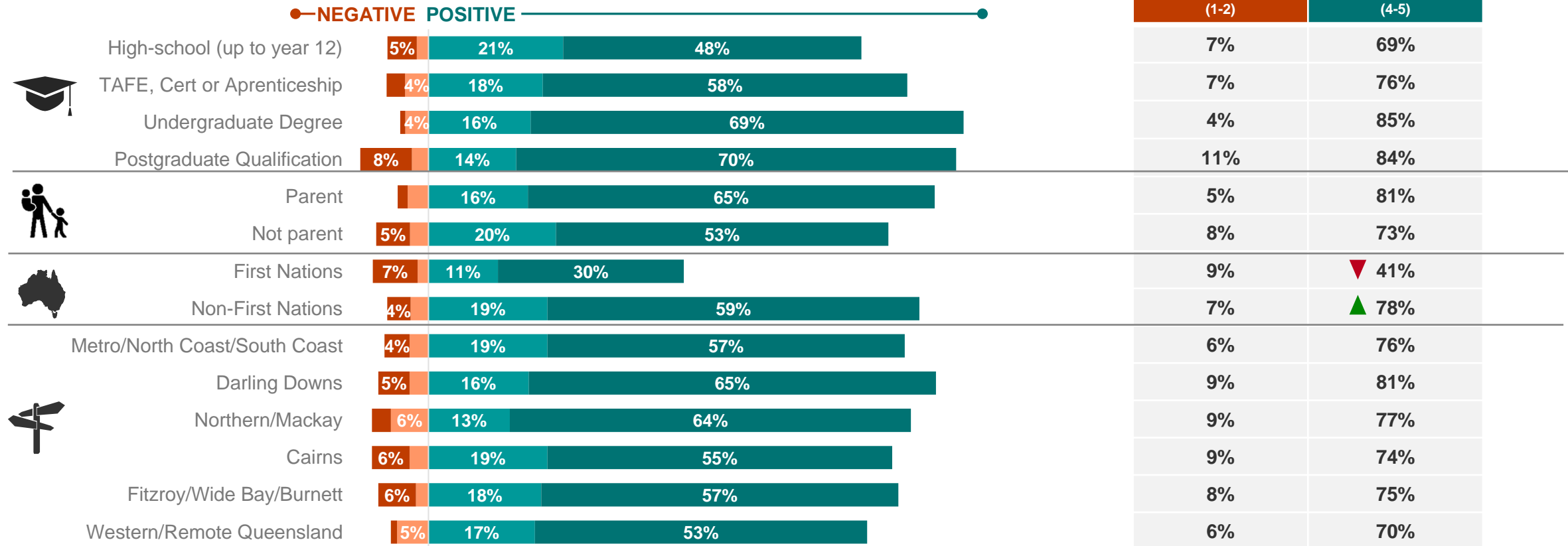
PERCEIVED IMPACT OF SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENTS BY DEMOGRAPHICS



PERCEIVED IMPACT OF SCIENCE

Those with postgraduate qualifications and First Nations Peoples are among the most likely to believe there has been a negative impact from scientific discovery, though the proportion is relatively low. First Nations people are significantly less likely to perceive a positive impact from science.

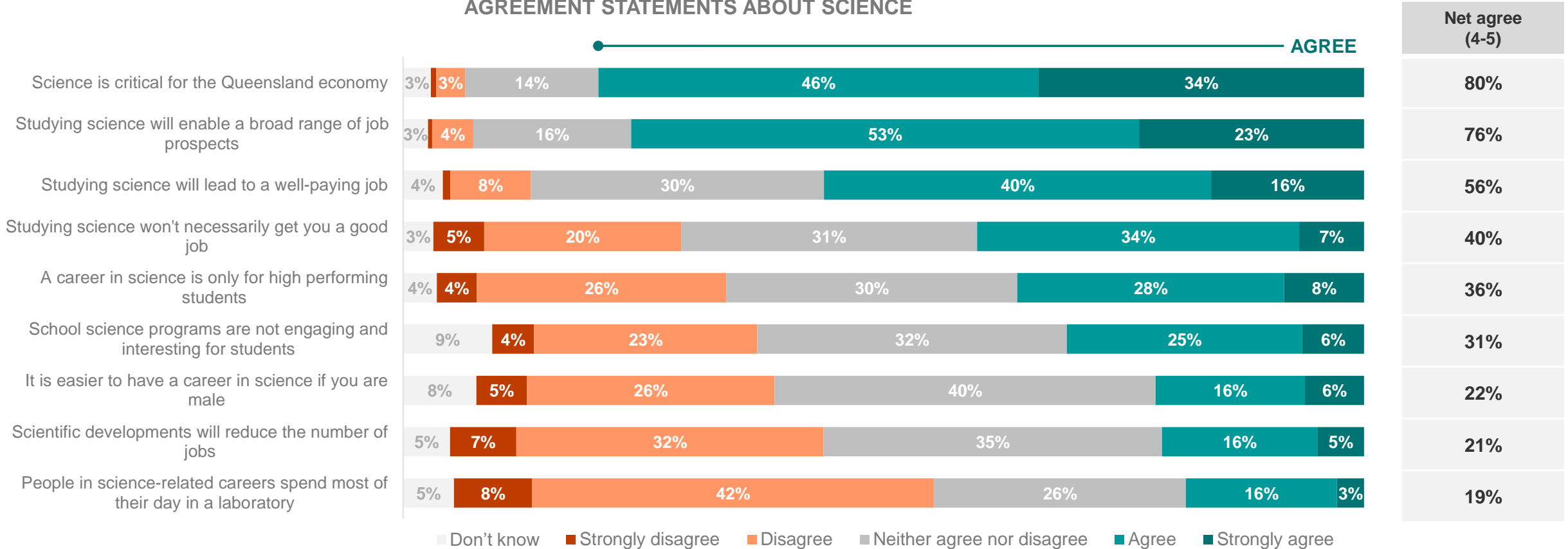
PERCEIVED IMPACT OF SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENTS BY DEMOGRAPHICS



GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS SCIENCE

Most agree that science is critical for the Queensland economy and will enable job growth. Only one in five agree with the stereotype that scientists spend 'most of their day in a laboratory'.

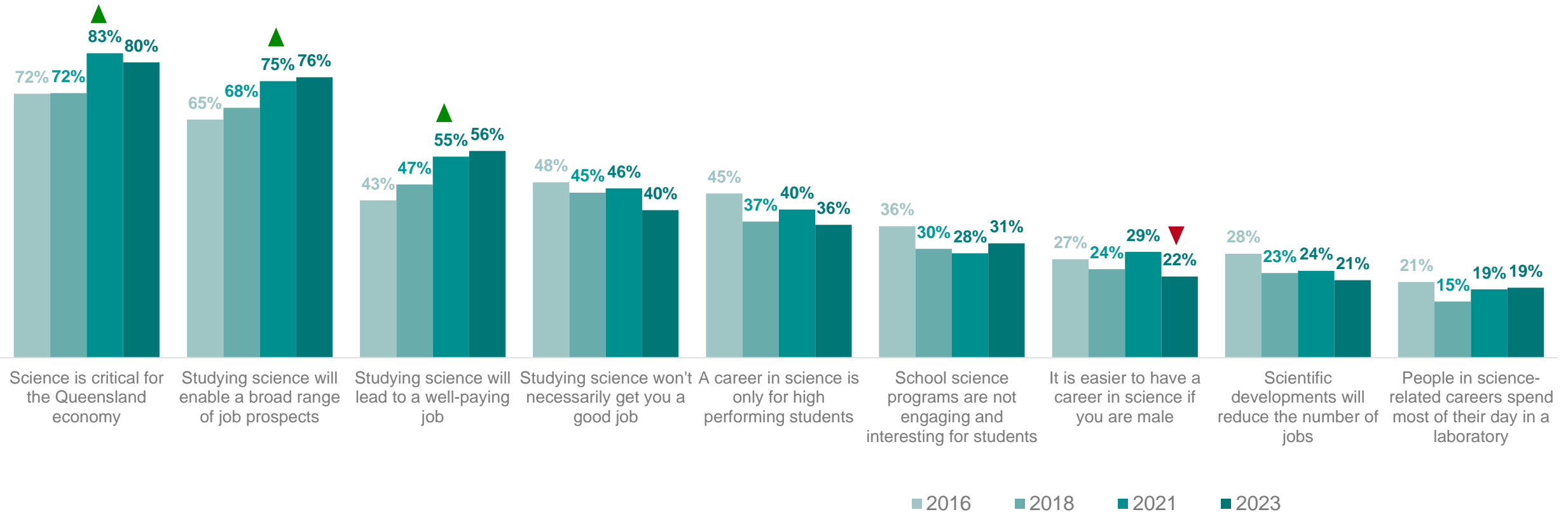
AGREEMENT STATEMENTS ABOUT SCIENCE



GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS SCIENCE

The perception that 'it is easier to have a career in science if you are male' has decreased, while other perceptions have remained at a similar level to 2021.

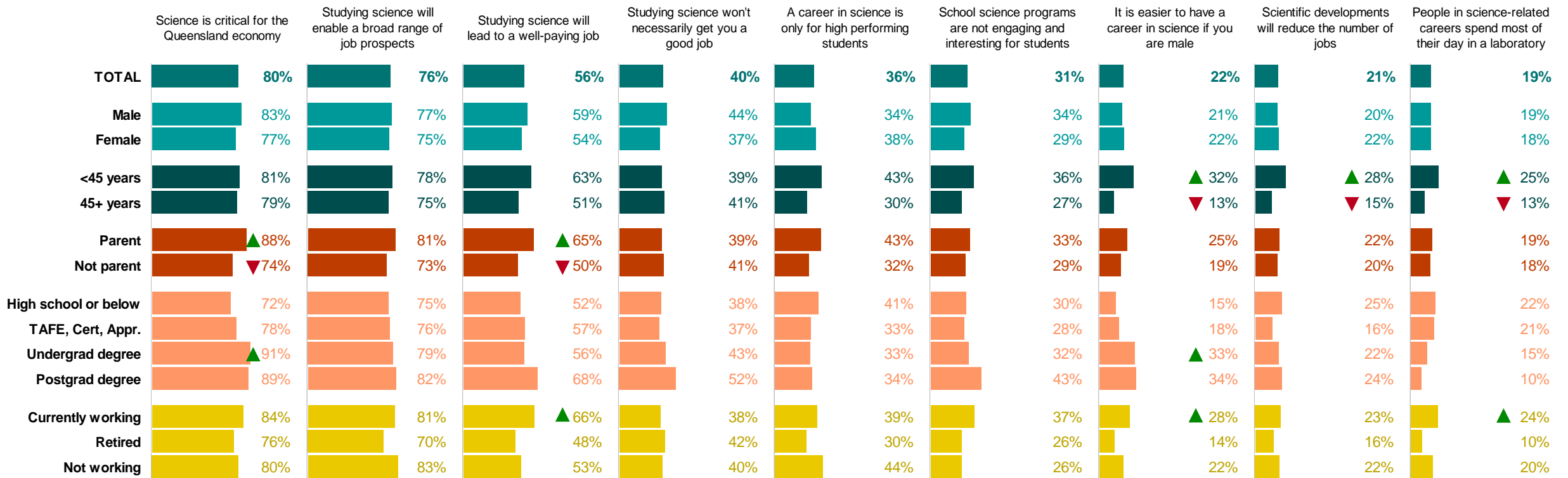
AGREEMENT STATEMENTS ABOUT SCIENCE (% AGREE 4-5)



GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS SCIENCE

Parents are significantly more likely to believe science is critical for the economy and that studying science will lead to a well-paying job. Those aged under 45 years are significantly more likely to believe a career in science is easier if you are male, scientific developments will reduce the number of jobs, and people in science-related careers spend most of their day in a laboratory.

AGREEMENT STATEMENTS ABOUT SCIENCE (% AGREE 4-5) BY DEMOGRAPHICS



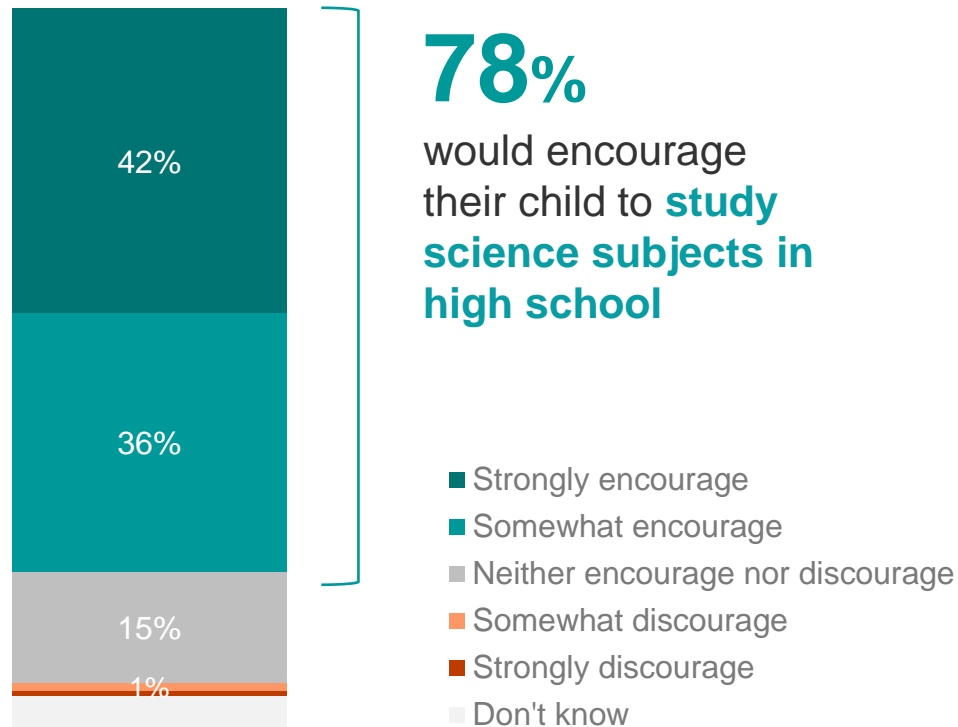
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PARENTS' ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

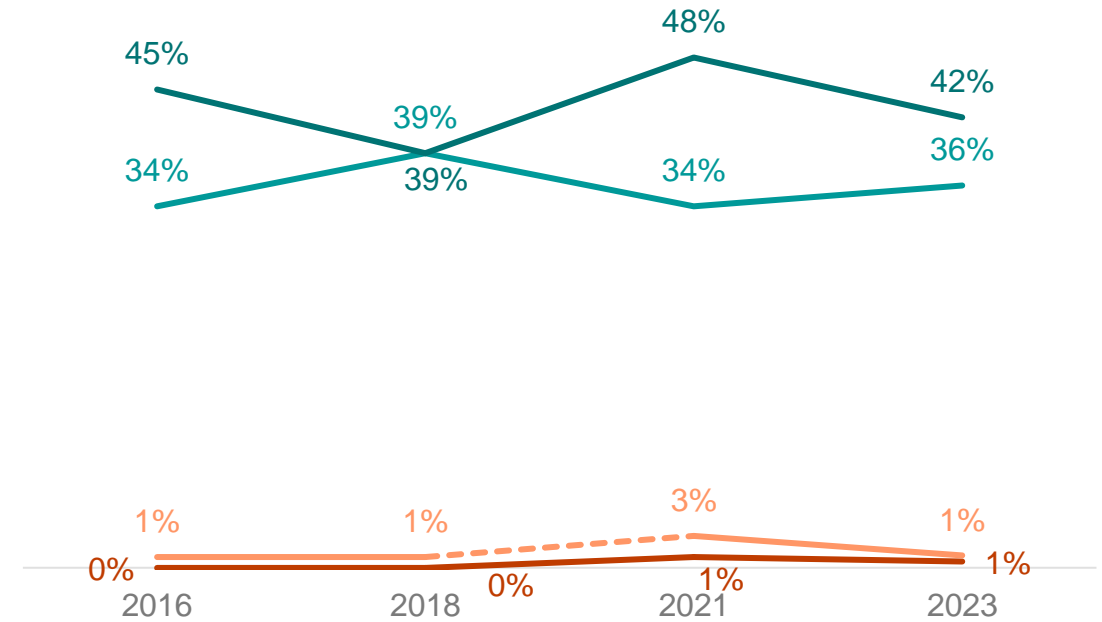
ENCOURAGEMENT OF STUDY

Nearly four in five parents would encourage their child/children to study science subjects in high school, though the level of encouragement is softening.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF CHILD STUDYING SCIENCE



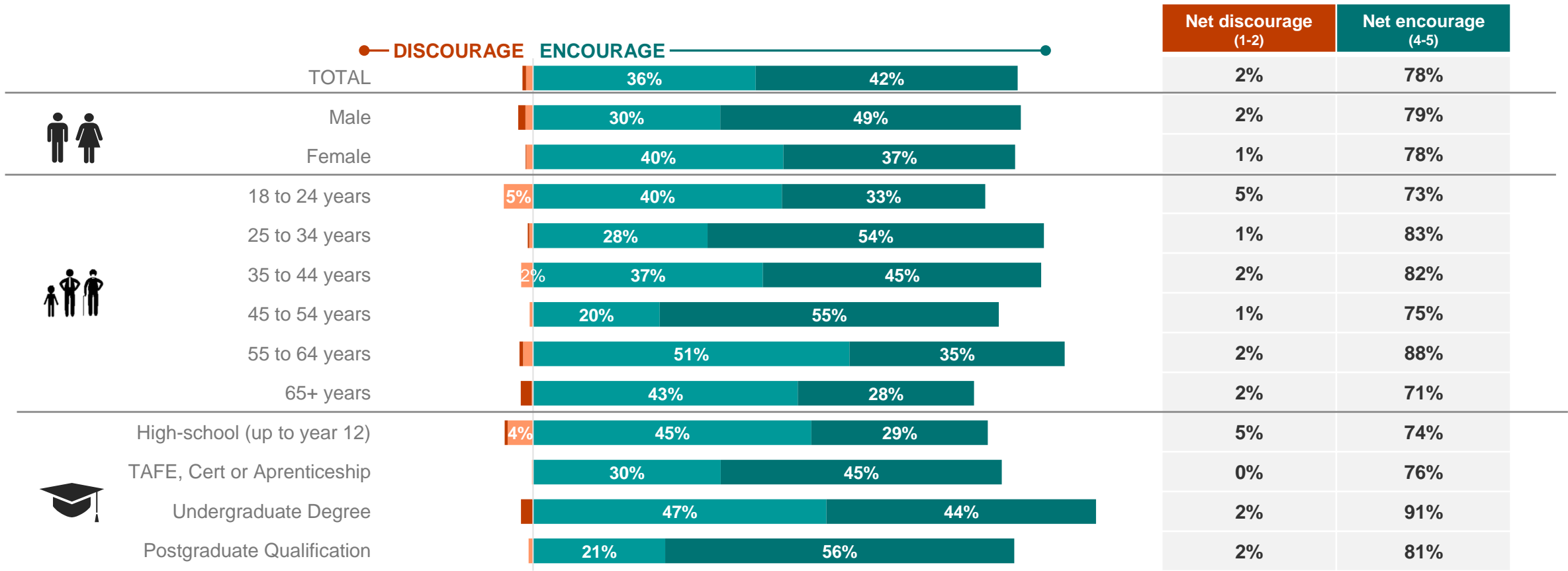
CHANGES IN ENCOURAGEMENT OVER TIME



ENCOURAGEMENT OF STUDY

Very few would discourage their children from studying science, though this is slightly more common among younger parents (aged 18-24) and those who did not study beyond high school.

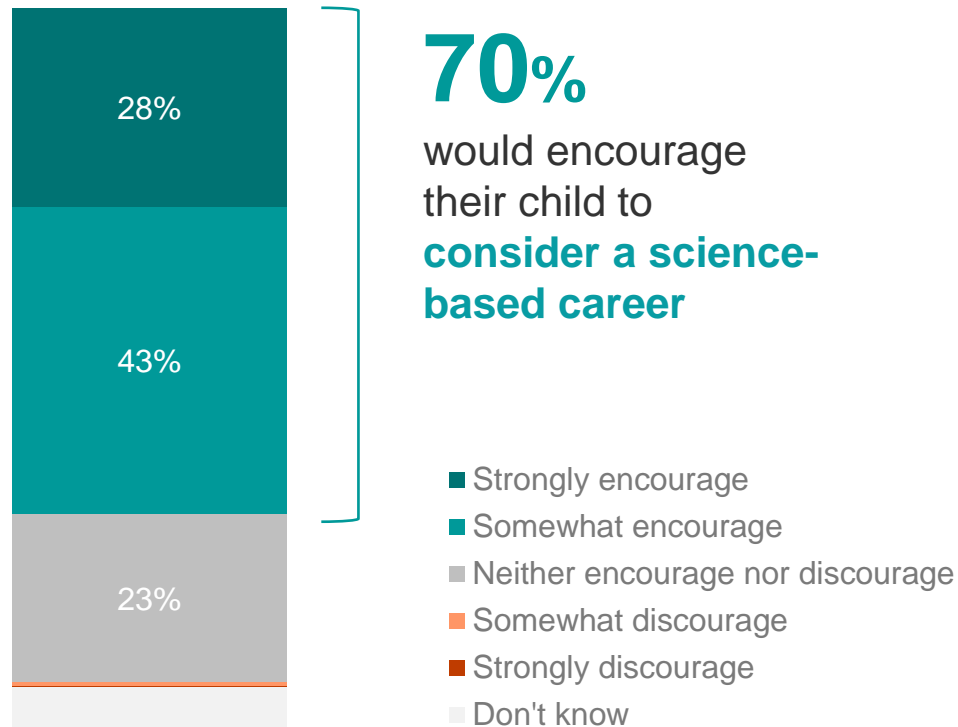
ENCOURAGEMENT OF CHILD STUDYING SCIENCE BY PARENT DEMOGRAPHICS



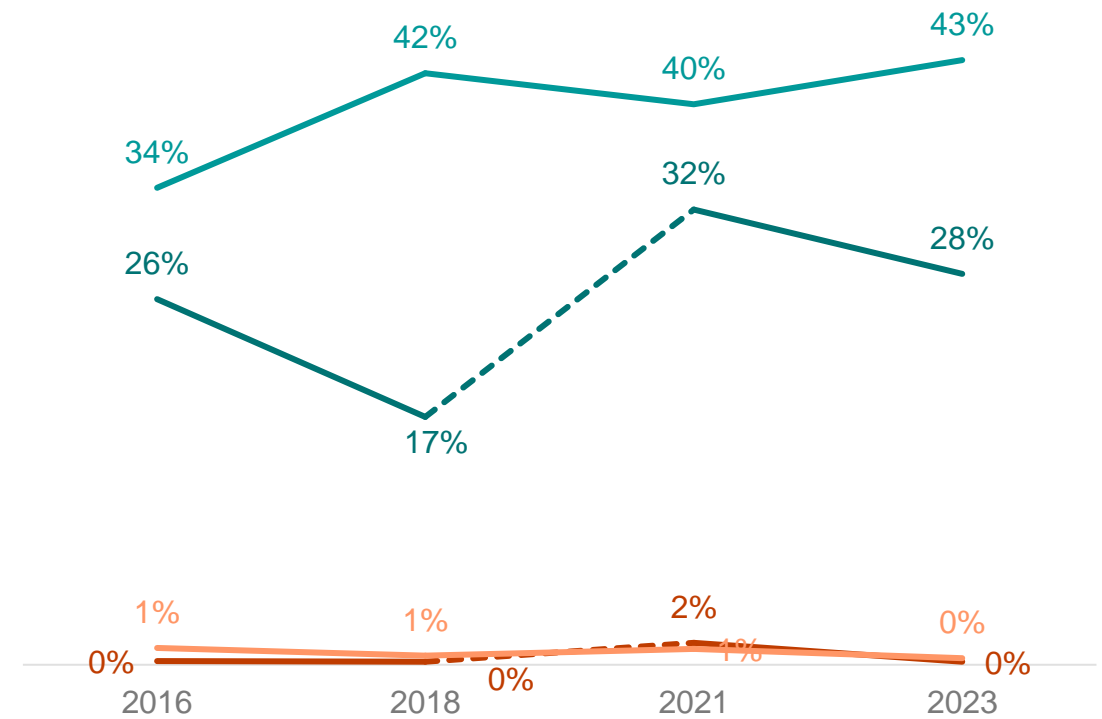
ENCOURAGEMENT OF CAREER

Seven in ten would encourage their child to pursue a career in science. Total level of encouragement remained stable since 2021 after an increase in 2018.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF SCIENCE-BASED CAREER



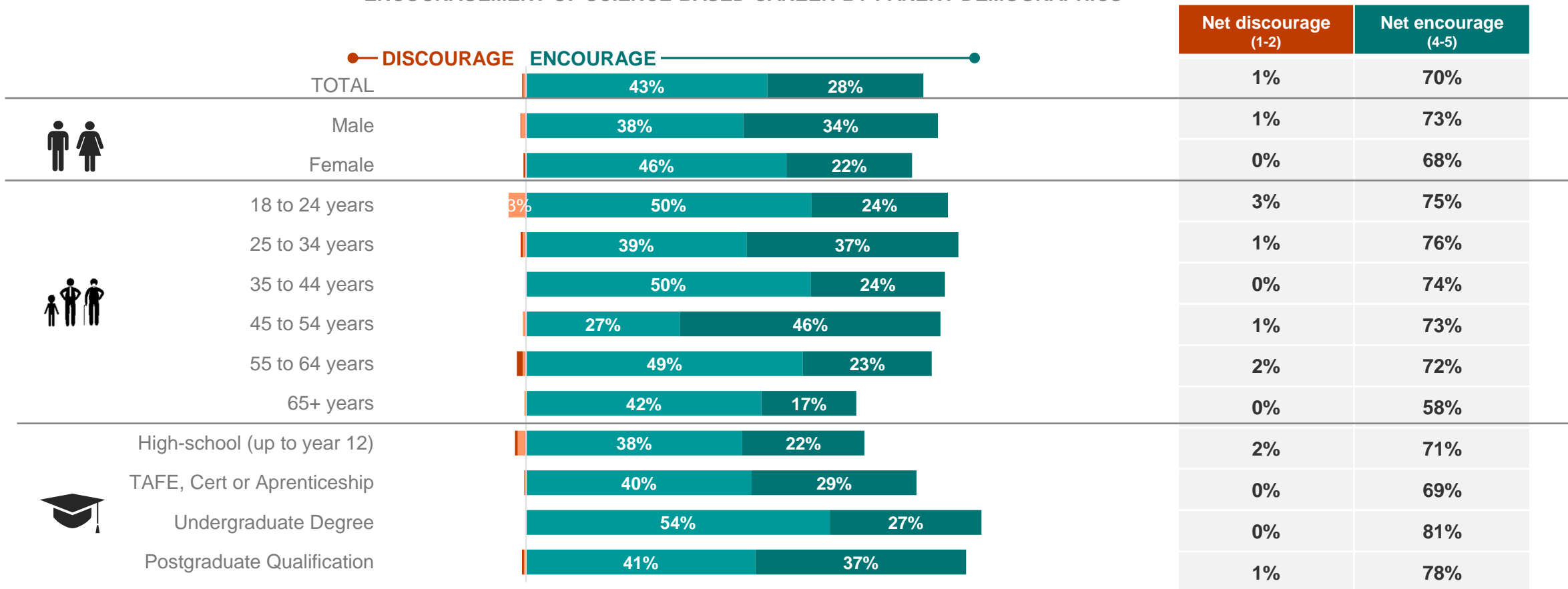
CHANGES IN ENCOURAGEMENT OVER TIME



ENCOURAGEMENT OF CAREER

Parents with university qualifications are among the most likely to encourage their children to pursue a science-based career.

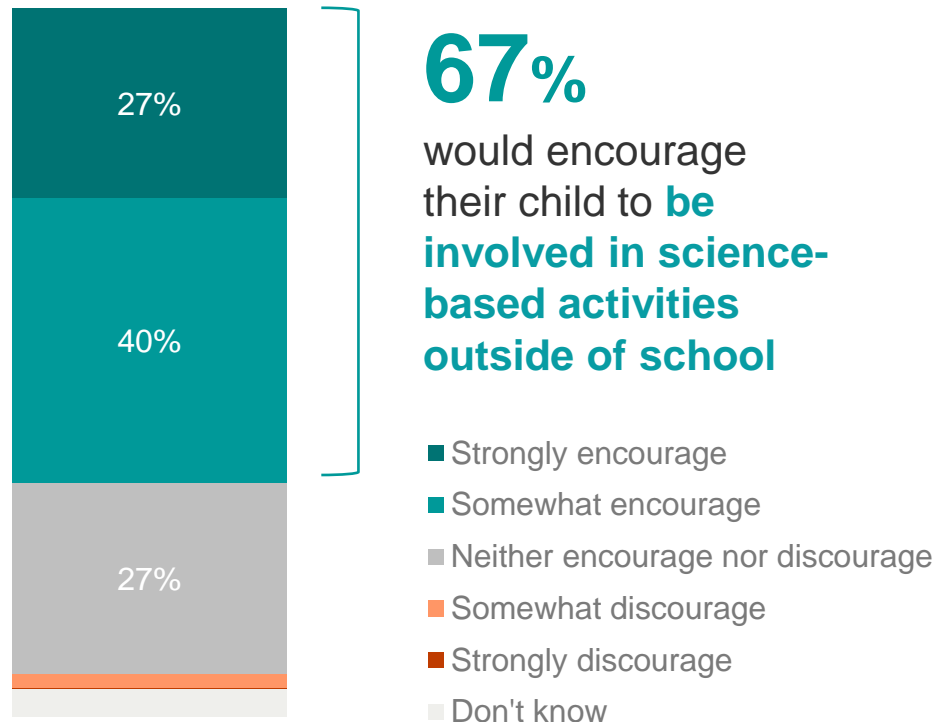
ENCOURAGEMENT OF SCIENCE-BASED CAREER BY PARENT DEMOGRAPHICS



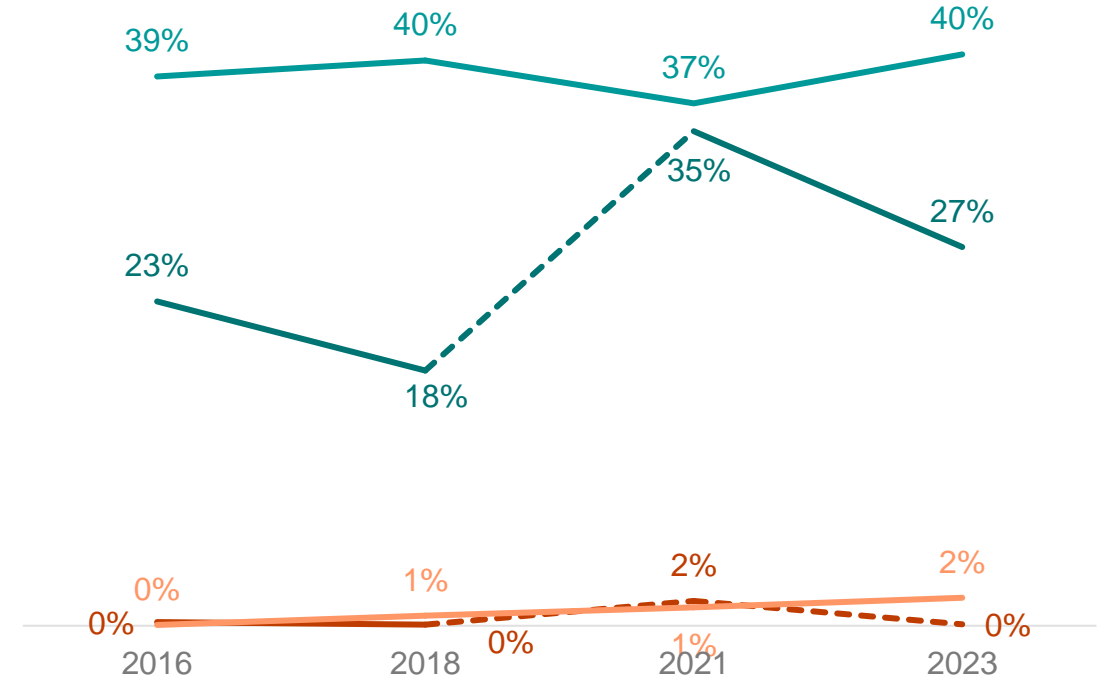
ENCOURAGEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Two in three parents would encourage their child to be involved in extra-curricular science activities. This remains a significant increase from 58% in 2018, despite a slight drop since 2021.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF SCIENCE-BASED ACTIVITIES



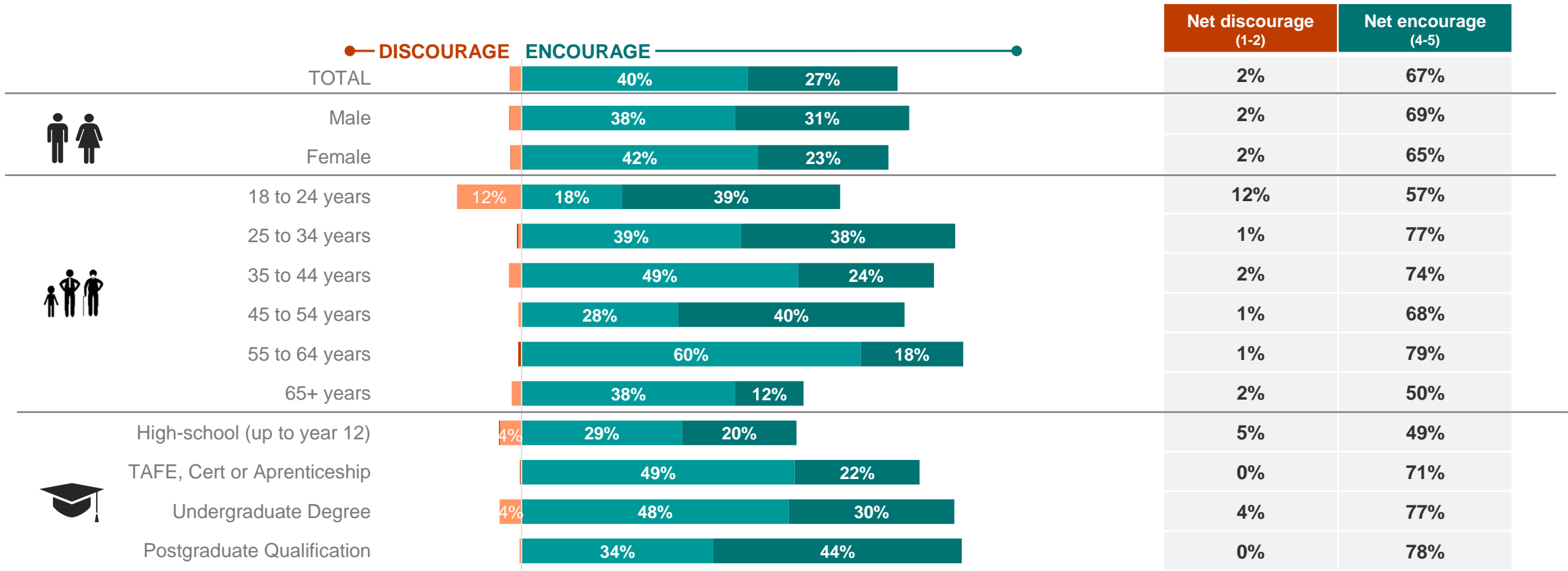
CHANGES IN ENCOURAGEMENT OVER TIME



ENCOURAGEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Parents aged under 25 are the most likely to actively discourage their children from partaking in extracurricular science-based activities, while parents aged between 25 and 64 are generally more encouraging.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF SCIENCE-BASED ACTIVITIES BY PARENT DEMOGRAPHICS



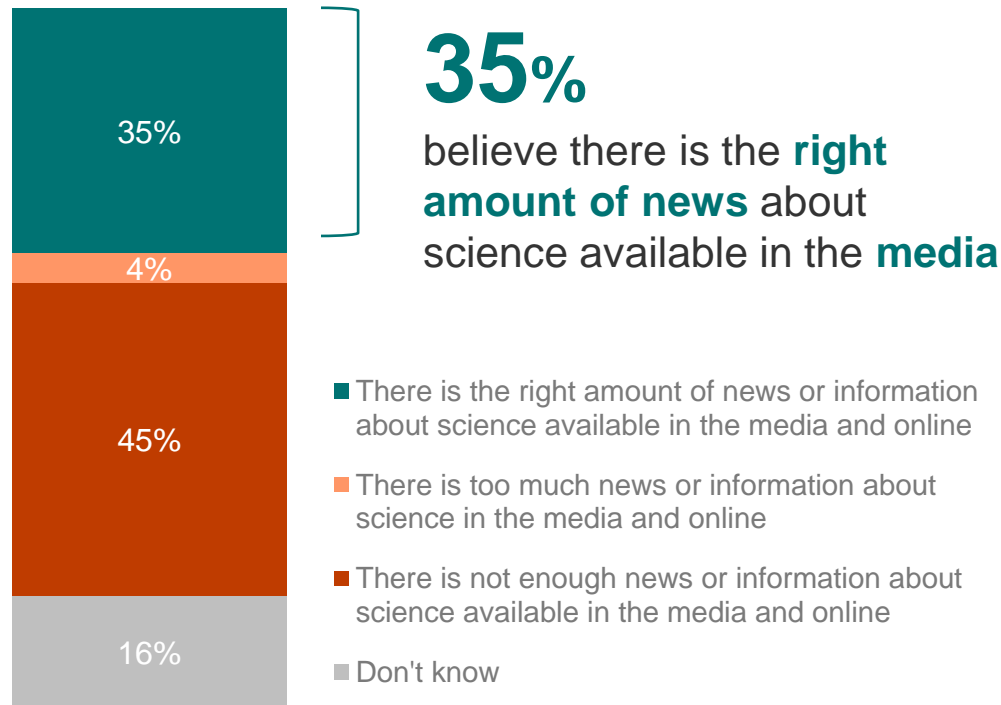
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SCIENCE IN THE MEDIA

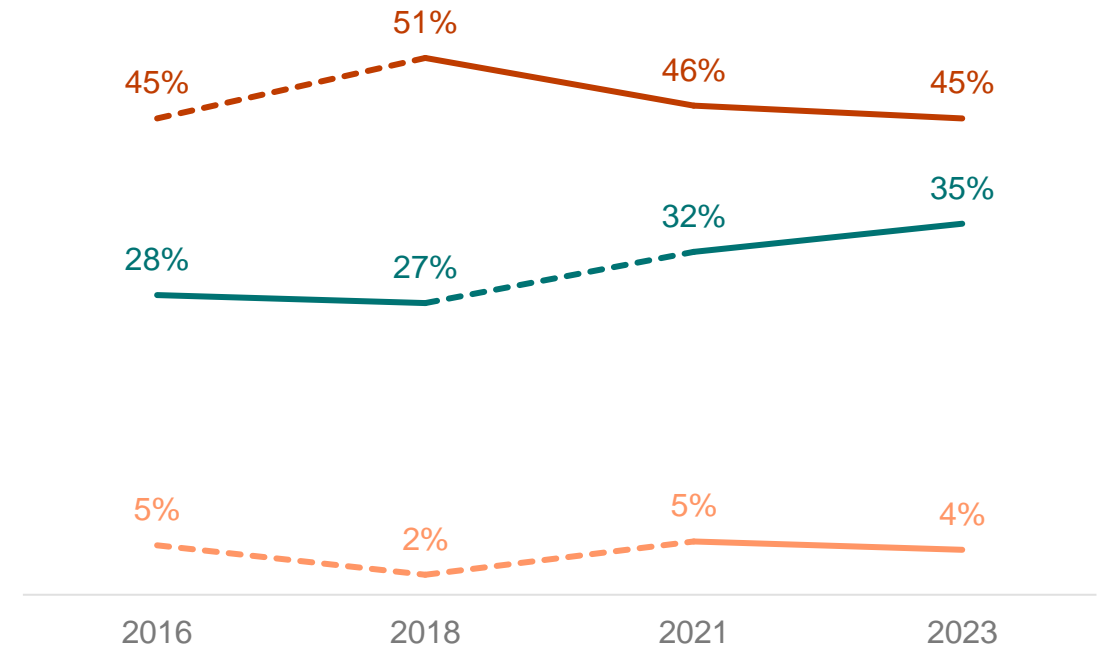
AMOUNT OF MEDIA

One in three feel the amount of news they hear about science in the media is adequate, and this has remained stable since 2021. The majority still feel there is not enough information, however this has been softening over the years.

PERCEPTIONS OF MEDIA COVERAGE

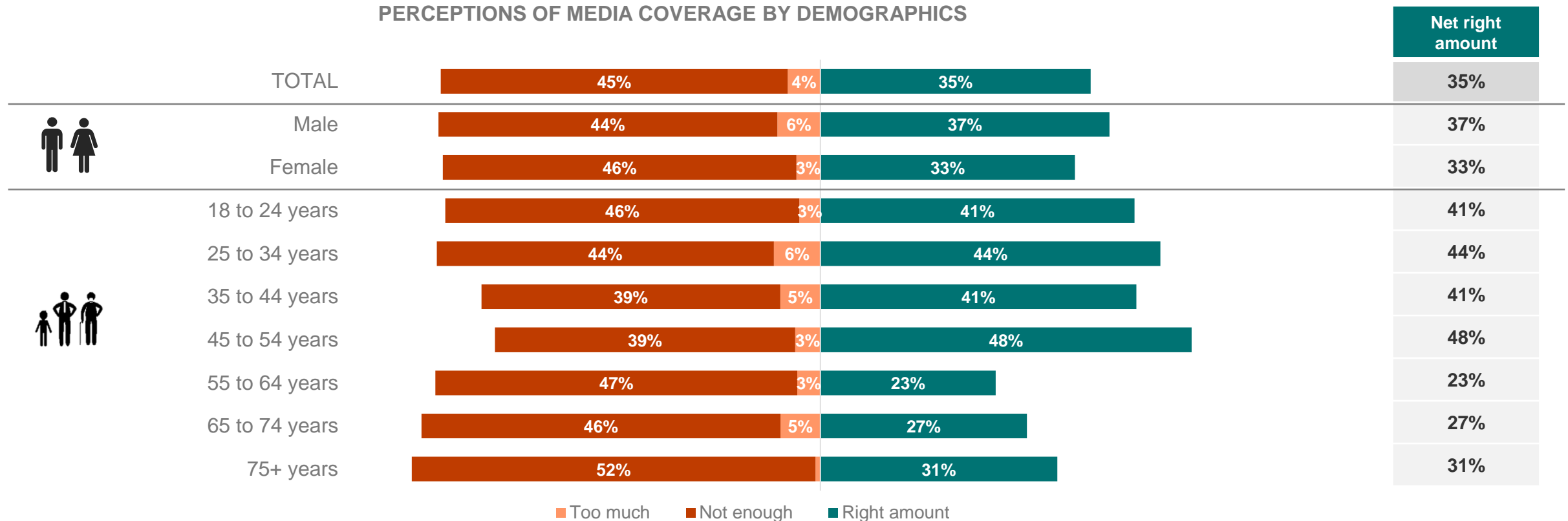


CHANGES IN PERCEPTIONS OVER TIME



AMOUNT OF MEDIA

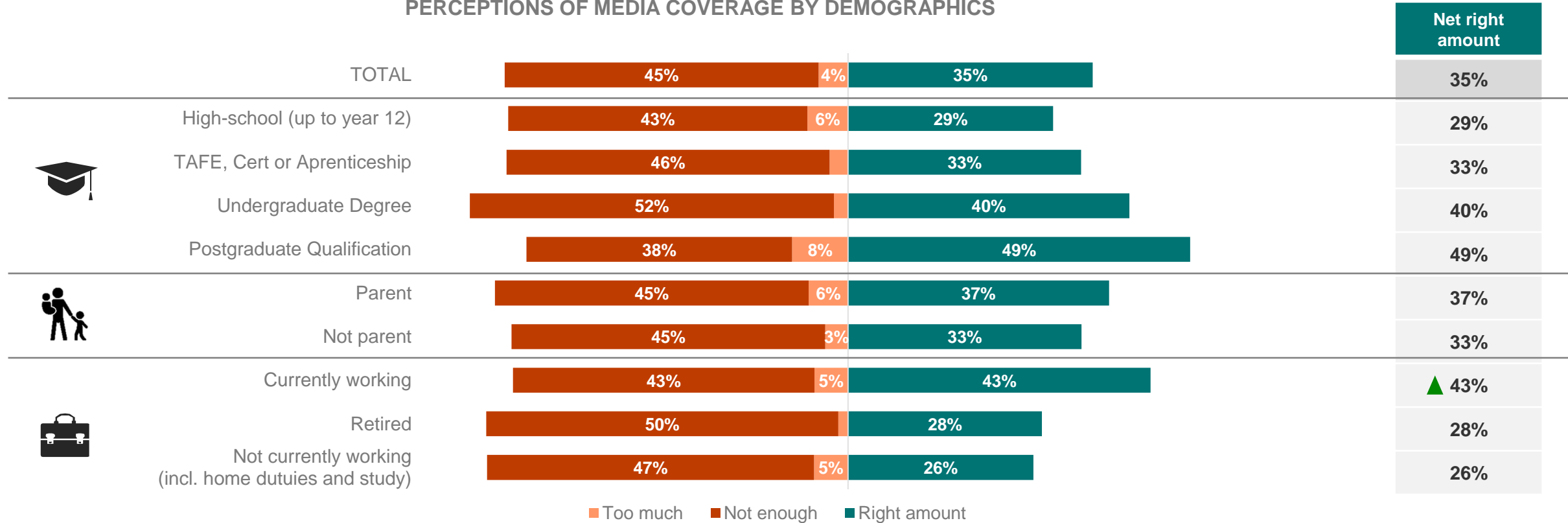
Those aged between 45 and 54 are the most content with the level of media coverage about science.



AMOUNT OF MEDIA

Those currently working are significantly more likely to feel they are getting the right amount of information.

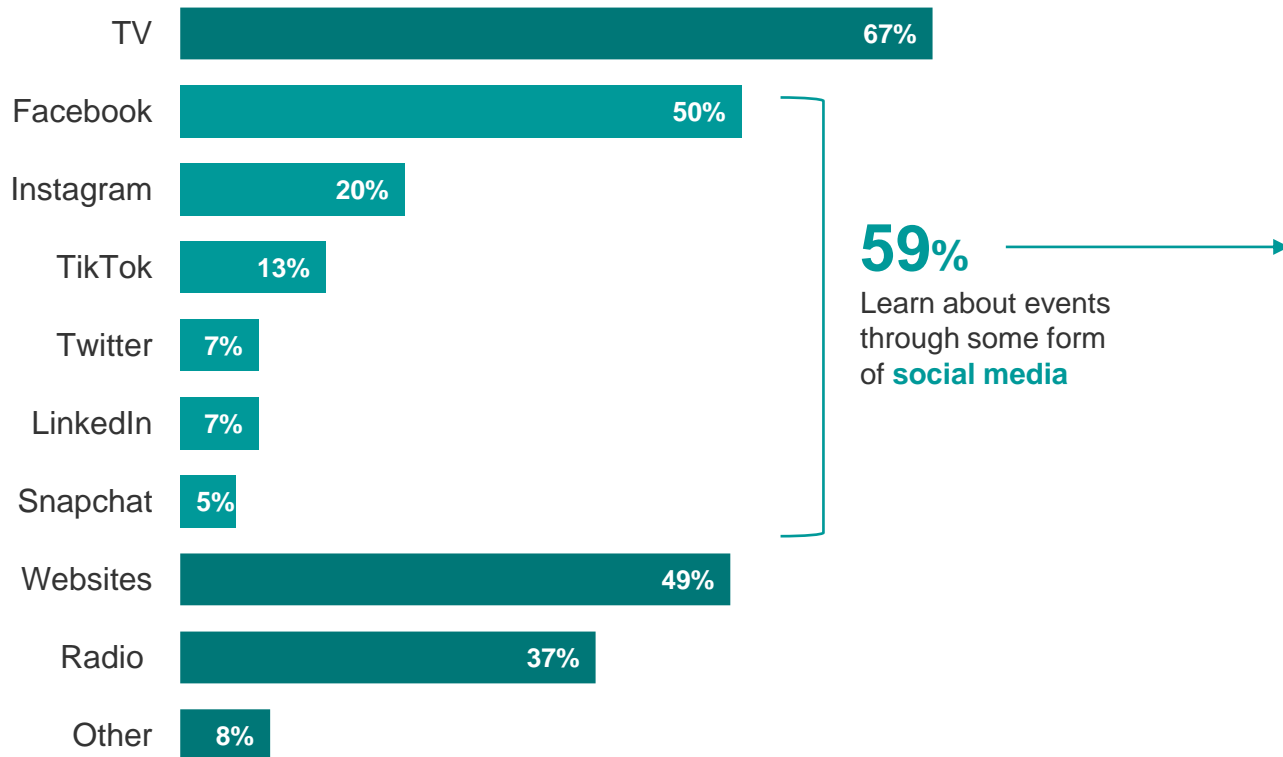
PERCEPTIONS OF MEDIA COVERAGE BY DEMOGRAPHICS



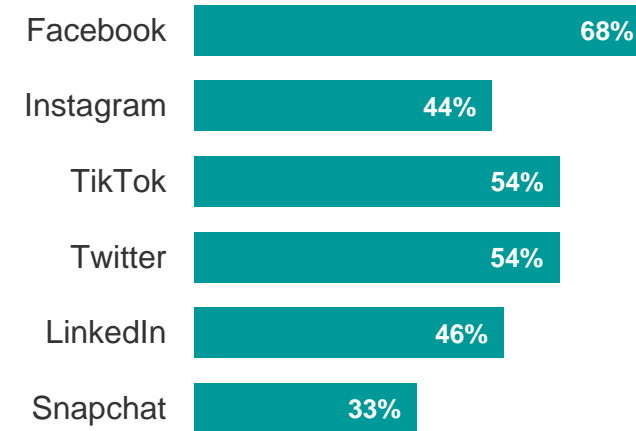
MEDIA SOURCES

Two in three learn about events in their area via TV, and half via Facebook or other websites. For those who use TikTok and Twitter, over half say they learn about events in their area through these channels.

MEDIA SOURCES OVERALL



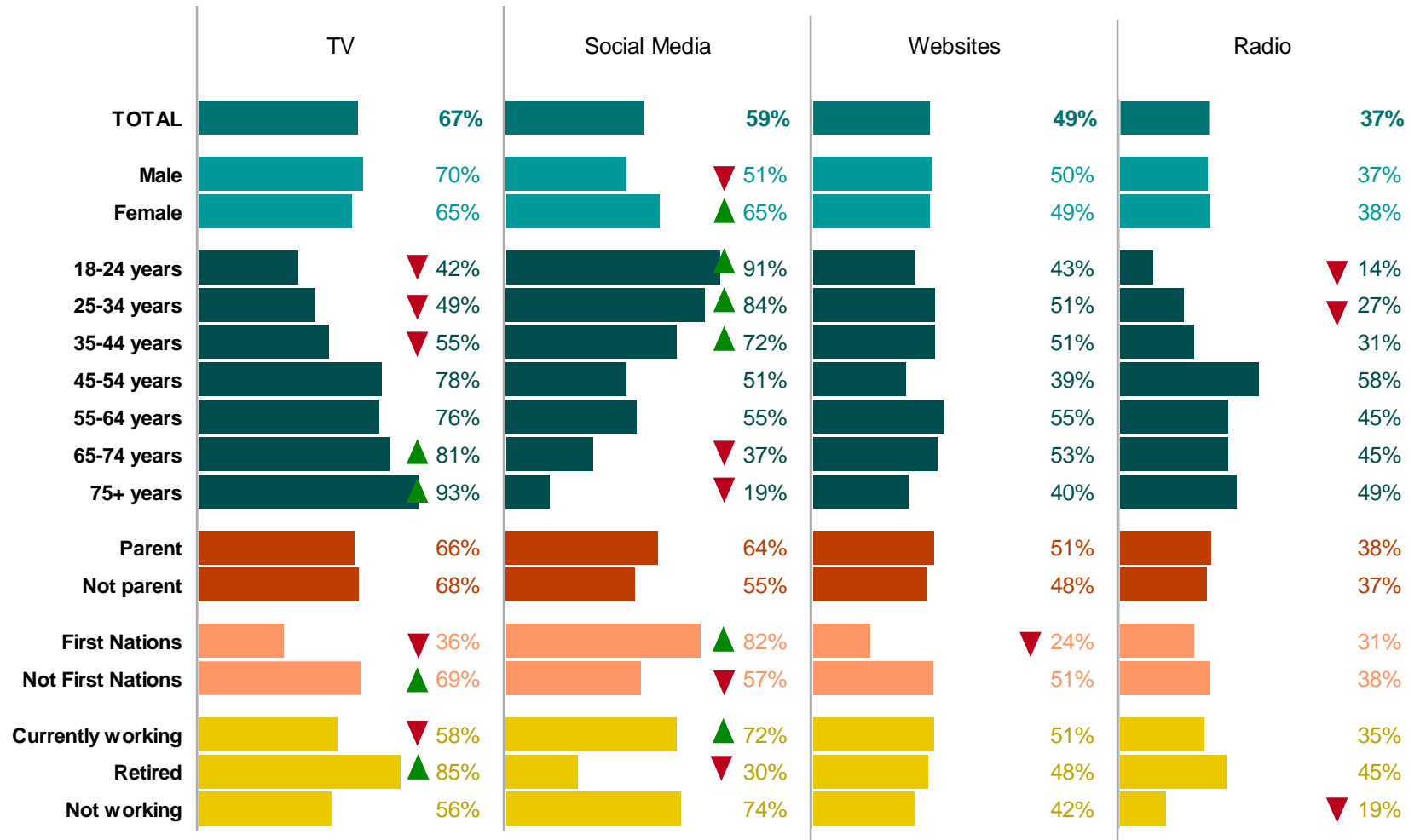
USAGE BY THOSE WHO REGULARLY USE EACH



MEDIA SOURCES

TV is a more popular source of information about events for those aged 65 and over and retirees.

Social media is more popular for those under 45, First Nations people and those currently working.



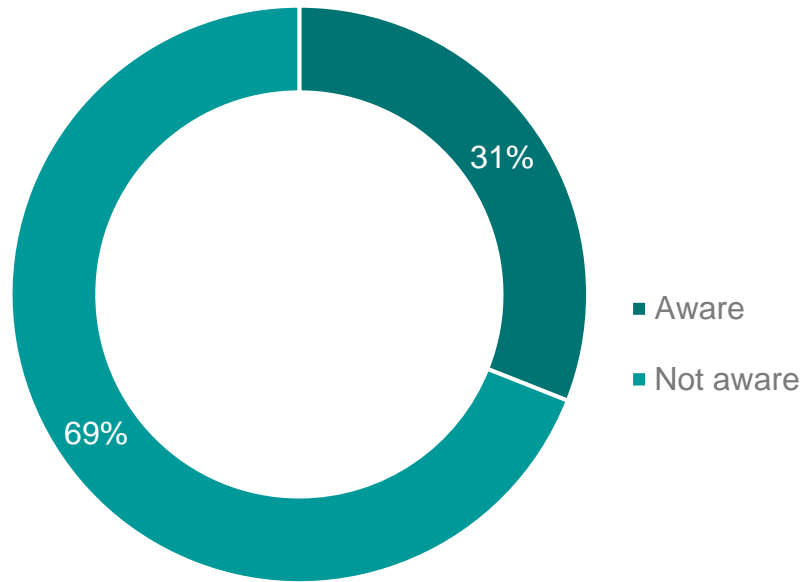
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SCIENCE ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

UNPROMPTED AWARENESS OF ACTIVITIES

More than a third of Queenslanders could name a science-related event or activity they noticed in their local area in the past 1-2 years.

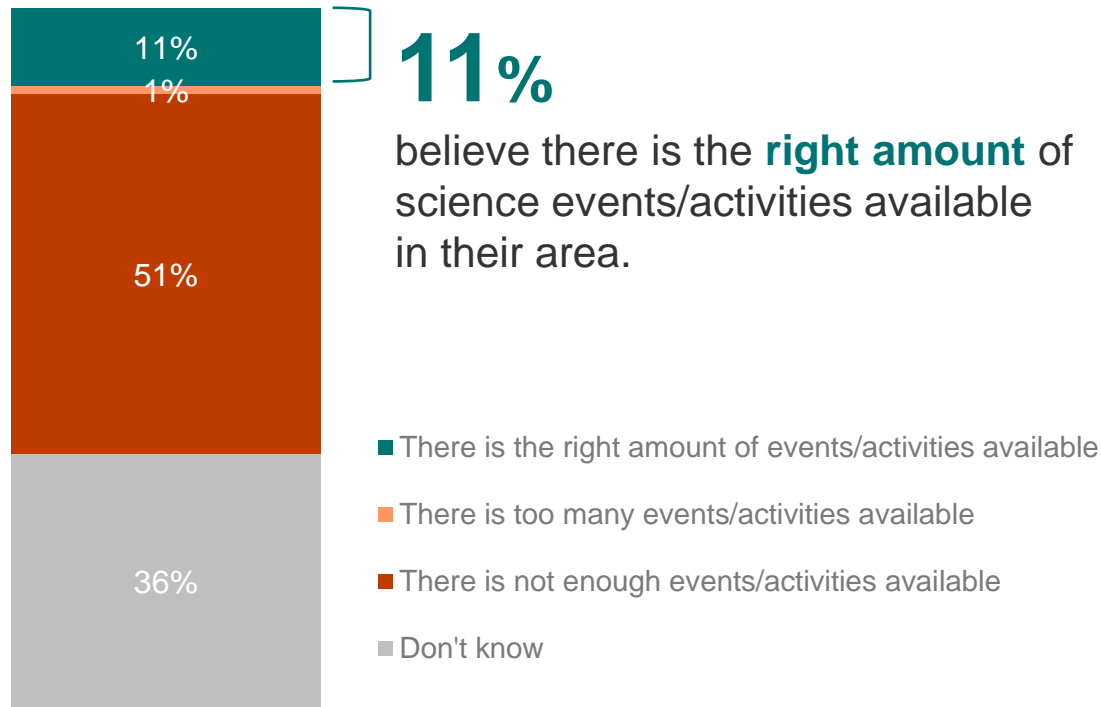
UNPROMPTED AWARENESS OF ACTIVITIES



AMOUNT OF SCIENCE EVENTS

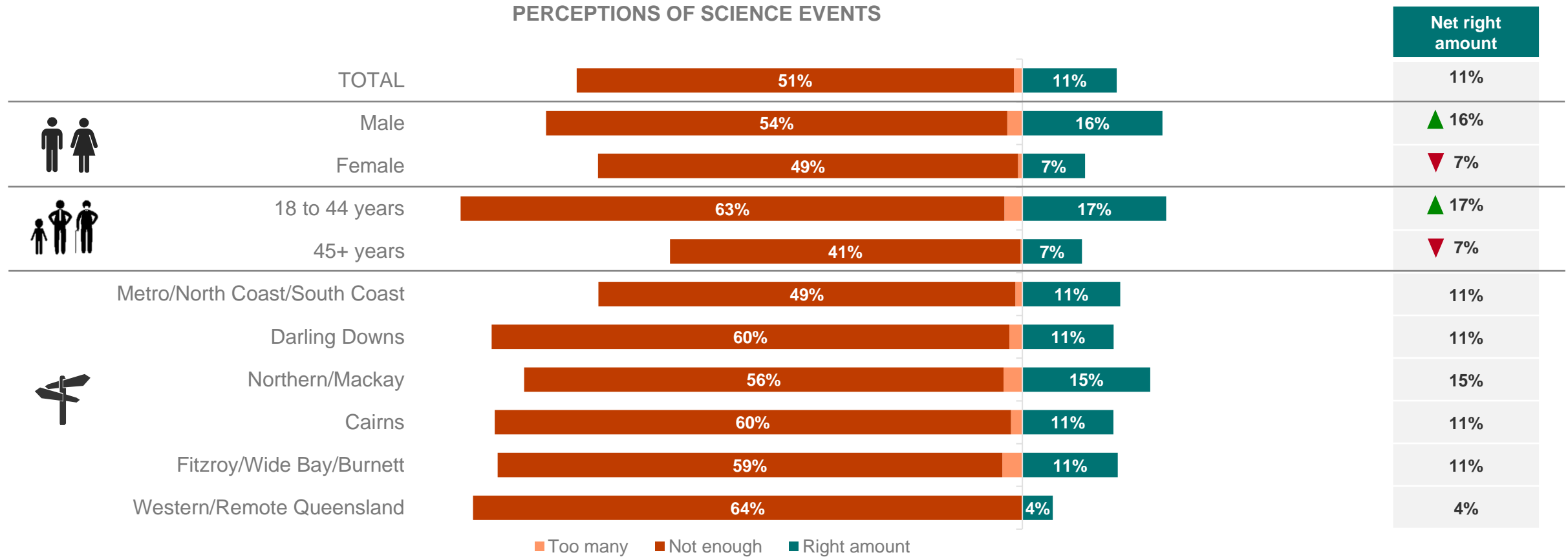
Only one in ten feel the amount of science events and activities in their area is adequate. The majority feel there is not enough events/activities available.

PERCEPTIONS OF SCIENCE EVENTS



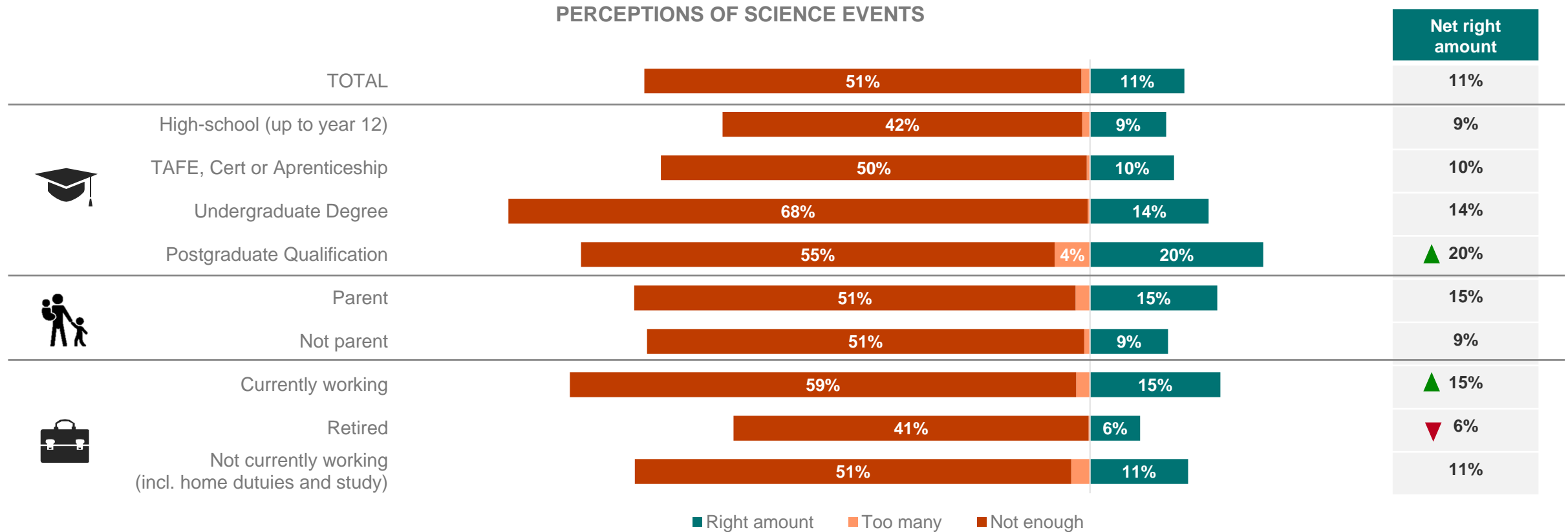
AMOUNT OF SCIENCE EVENTS

Males and those aged under 45 are significantly more likely to feel they have the right amount of science events and activities in their area. Those in metro locations are less likely to feel there are not enough.



AMOUNT OF SCIENCE EVENTS

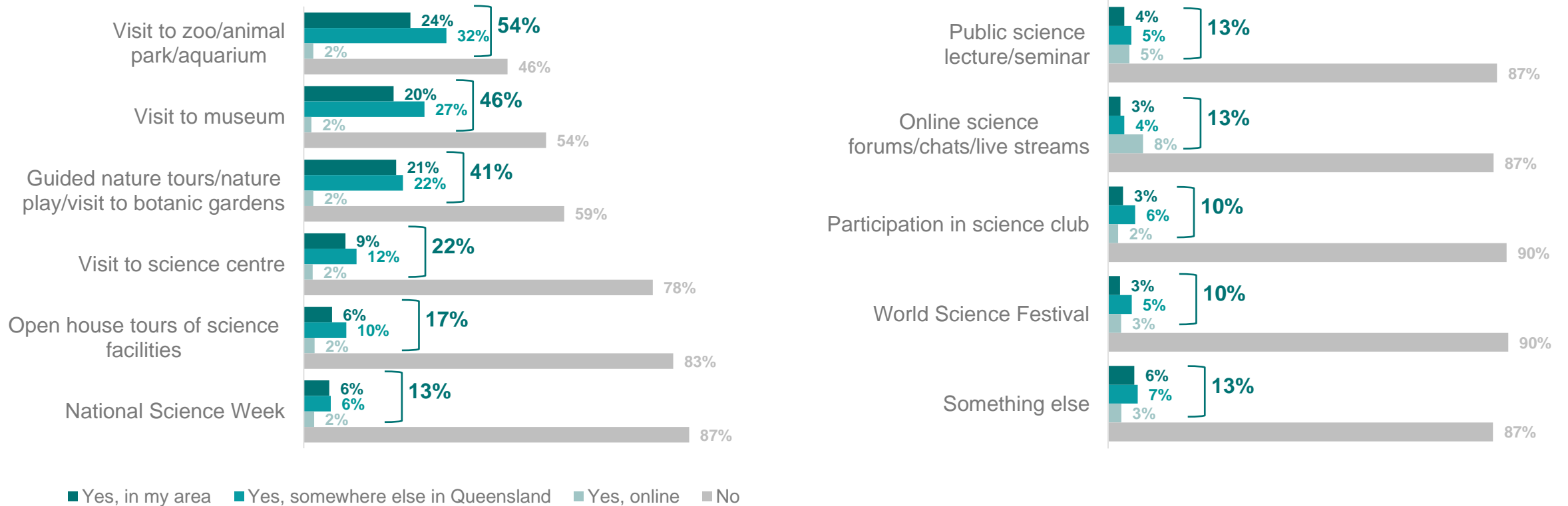
Postgraduates and those currently working are significantly more likely feel they have the right amount of science events and activities in their area.



PARTICIPATION IN SCIENCE-BASED ACTIVITIES

The most common activity for Queenslanders in the past 12 months has been visiting a zoo/animal park/aquarium. One out of two did this activity, with most of these having gone elsewhere in Queensland to do so. Only a small number of people participated in activities online.

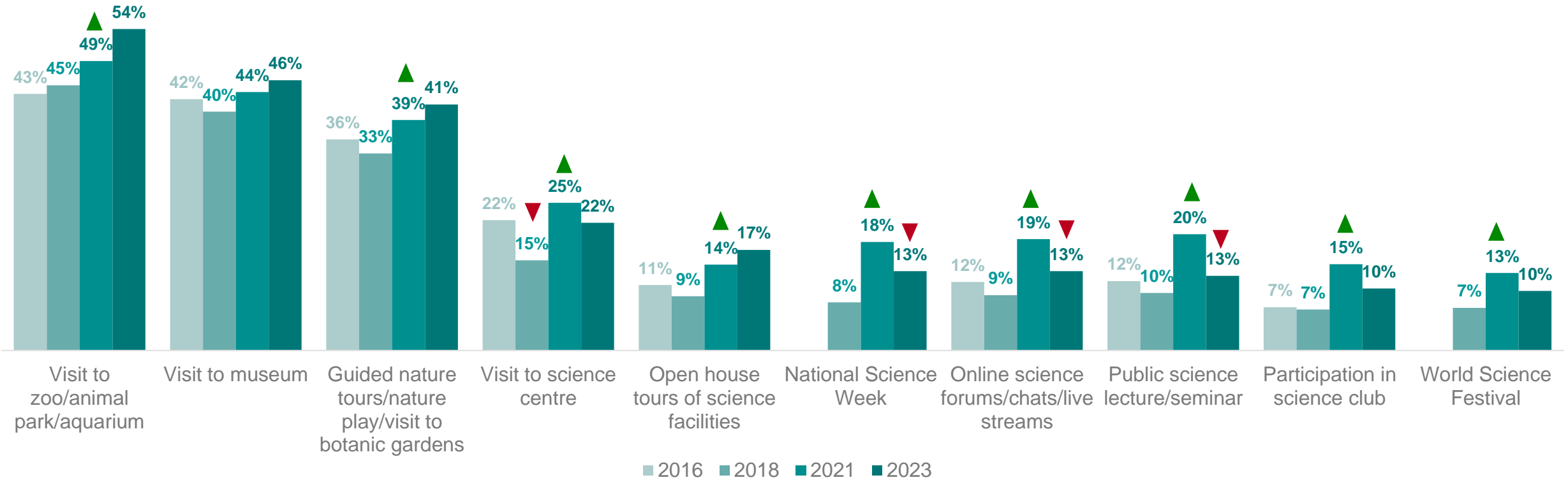
PARTICIPATION IN SCIENCE-BASED ACTIVITIES



PARTICIPATION IN SCIENCE-BASED ACTIVITIES

Visits to a zoo/animal park/aquarium, museums and guided nature tours/botanic garden visits remain the most popular science-based activities. Participation in National Science Week, online science forums/chats/streams and public lectures/seminars saw decreased participation this year.

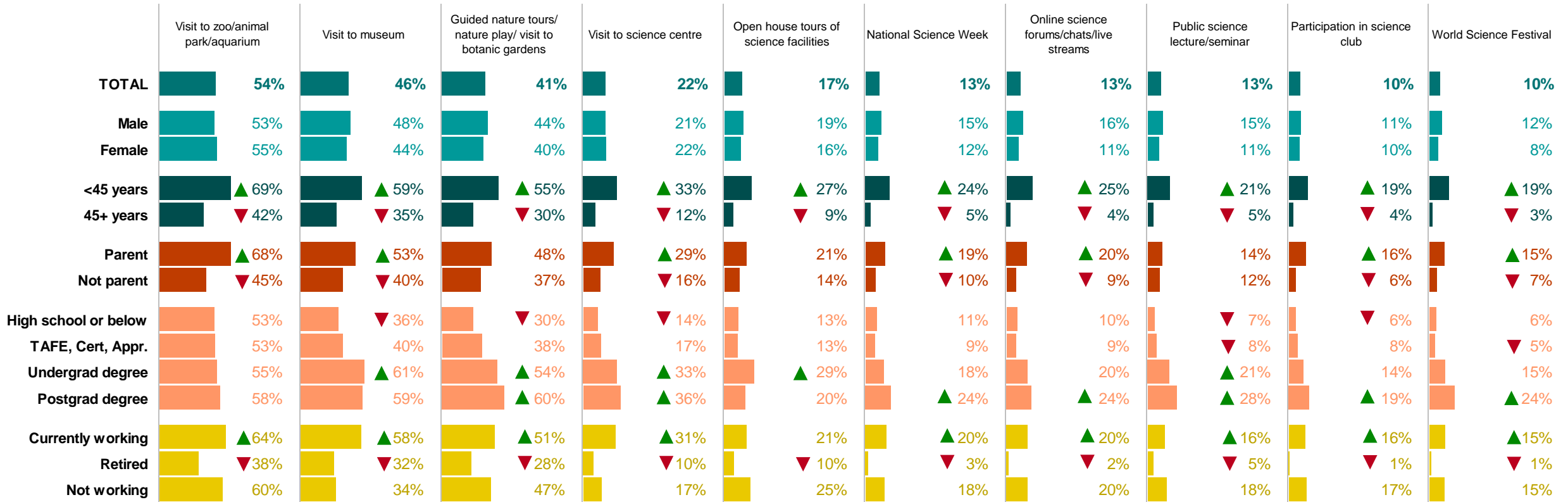
PARTICIPATION IN SCIENCE-BASED ACTIVITIES (TOTAL % PARTICIPATED)



PARTICIPATION IN SCIENCE-BASED ACTIVITIES

Those aged under 45, parents, tertiary educated and those currently working are consistently more likely to have participated in events and activities.

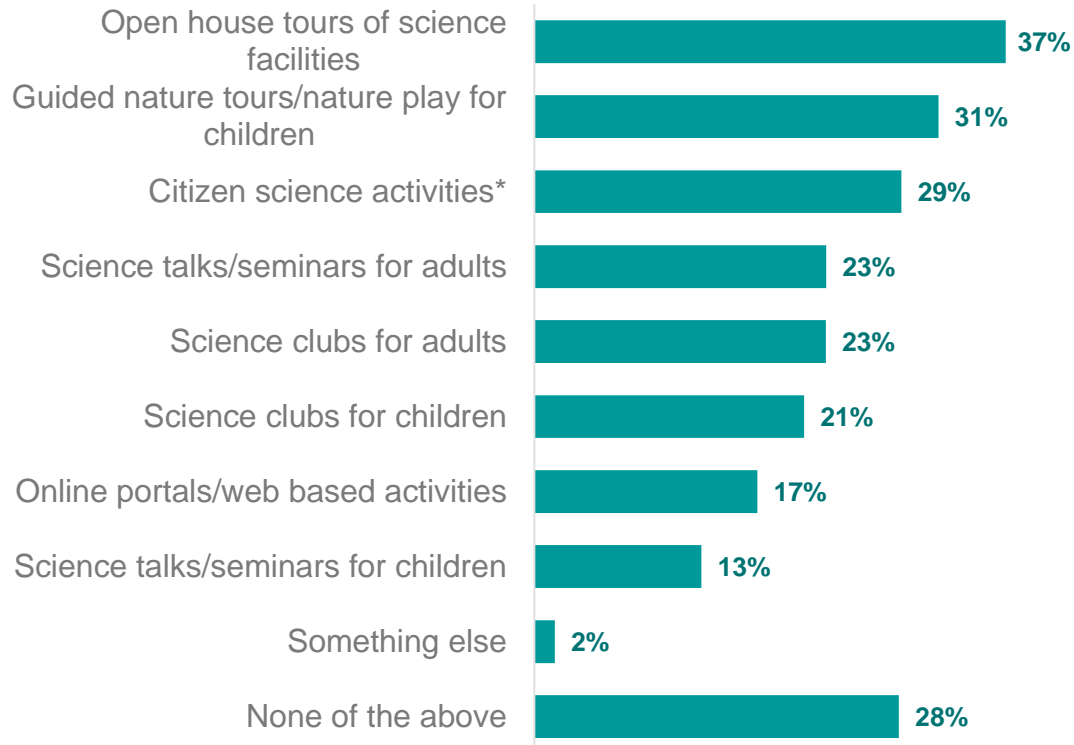
PARTICIPATION IN SCIENCE-BASED ACTIVITIES (TOTAL % PARTICIPATED) BY DEMOGRAPHICS



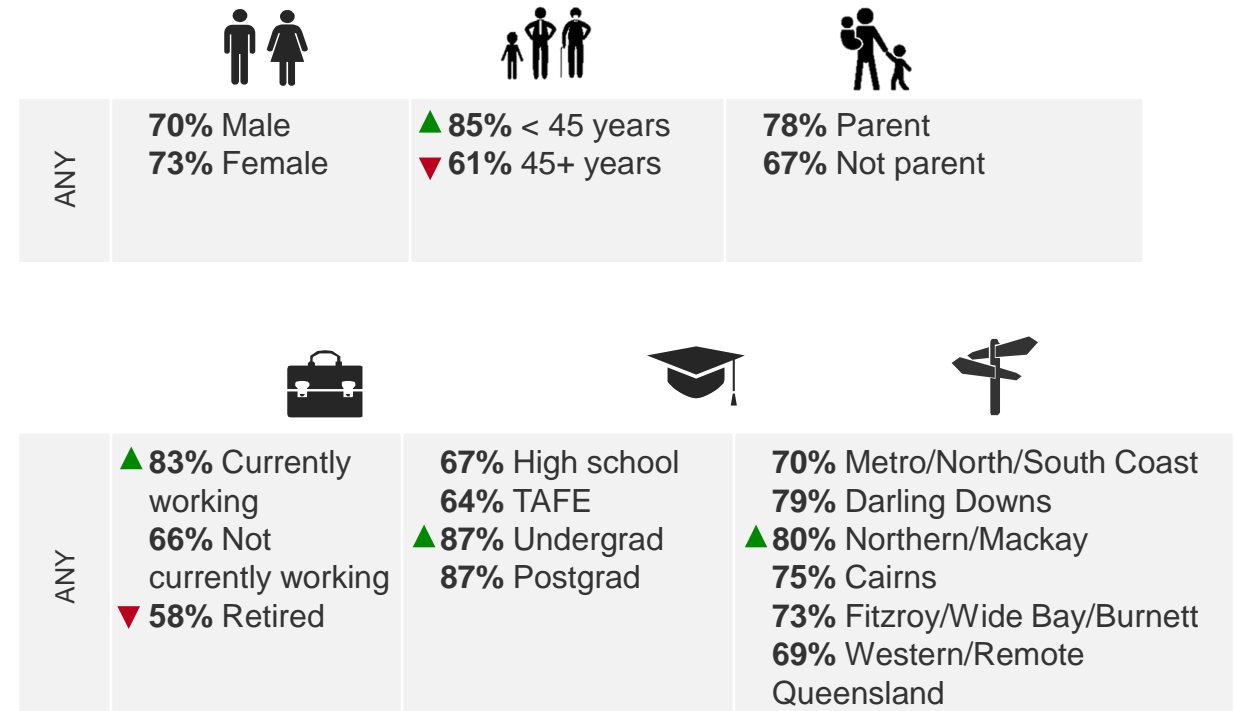
INTEREST IN SCIENCE-BASED ACTIVITIES

Interest in science-based activities is moderate, with the highest level of interest being among younger people, parents, and tertiary educated people. Retirees are among the least interested.

INTEREST IN SCIENCE-BASED ACTIVITIES



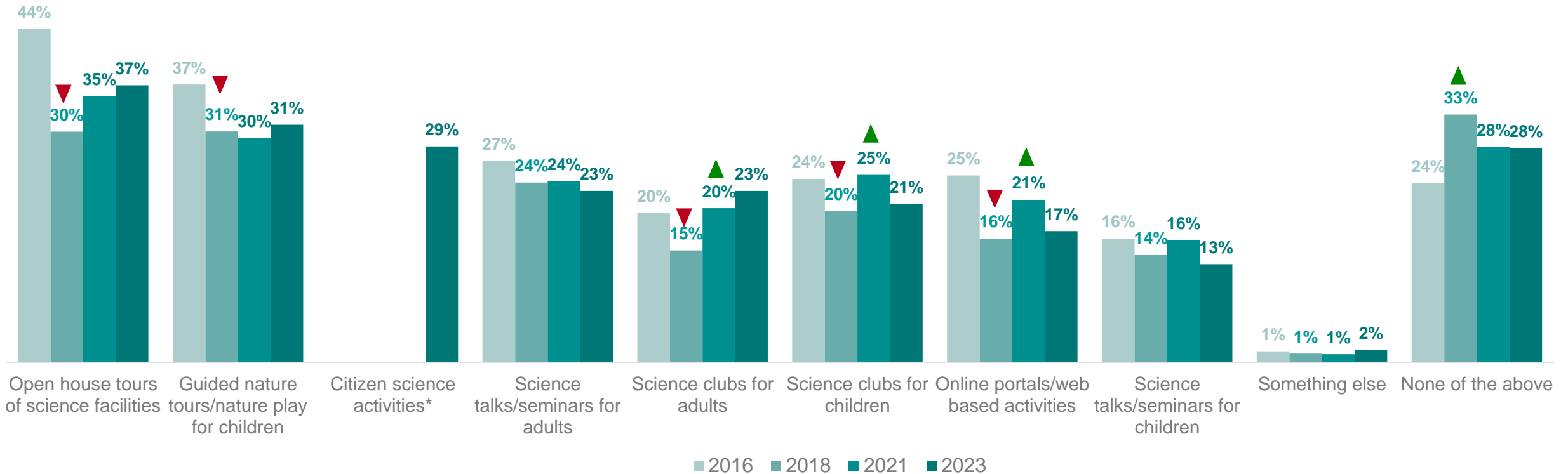
DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES



INTEREST IN SCIENCE-BASED ACTIVITIES

Interest in open house tours continues to increase, while interest in science clubs for adults and children, and online portals/web based activities, have reverted to similar levels seen in 2018 following a spike in 2021.

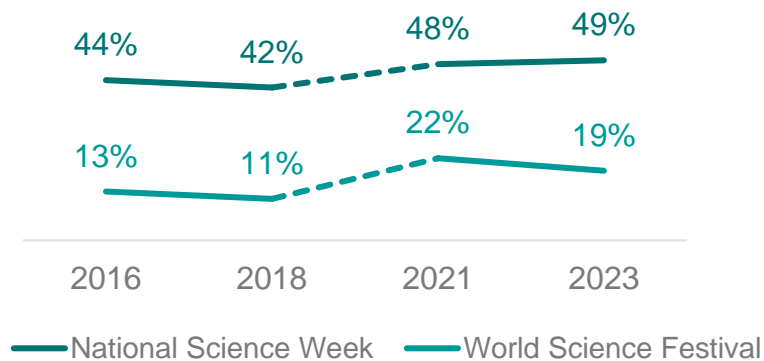
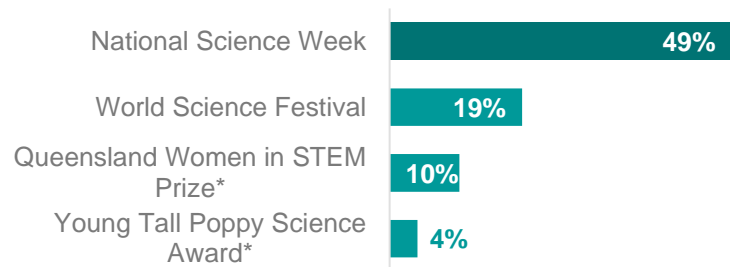
INTEREST IN SCIENCE-BASED ACTIVITIES



AWARENESS OF QUEENSLAND SCIENCE EVENTS

One in two have heard of National Science Week, and one in five have heard of World Science Festival. Awareness of each has remained stable since 2021. Regional and SEQ residents have similar awareness levels of National Science week, but those in the South-East have stronger awareness of World Science Festival.

AWARENESS OF QUEENSLAND SCIENCE EVENTS



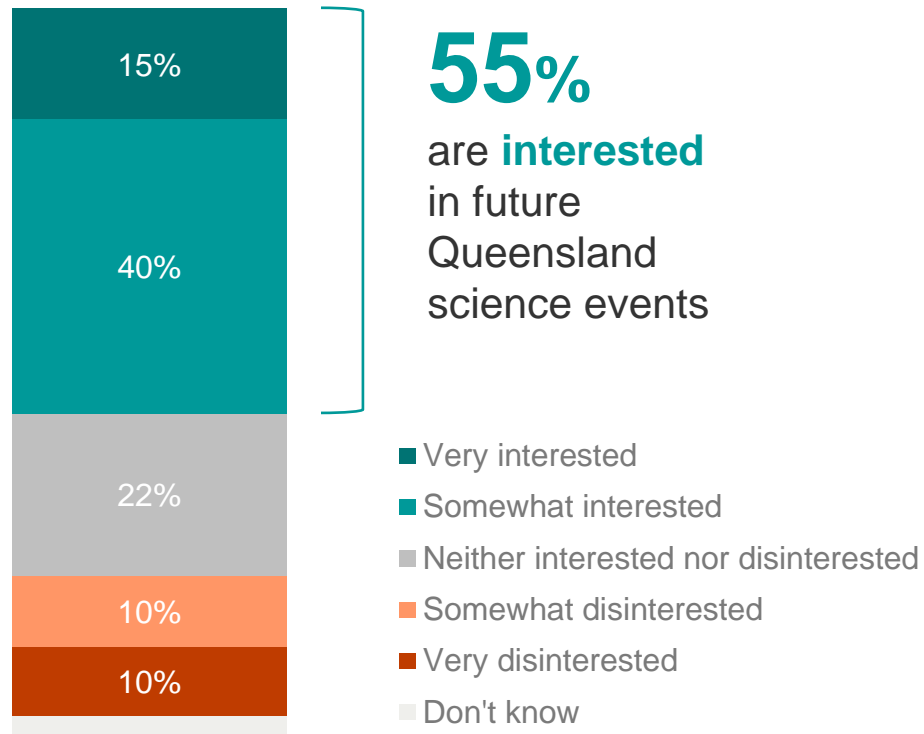
DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK	45% Male 53% Female	48% < 45 years 50% 45+ years	51% Parent 48% Not parent	50% Currently working 50% Retired 40% Not currently working	49% Regional 49% SEQ
WORLD SCIENCE FESTIVAL	23% Male 16% Female	▲ 26% < 45 years ▼ 14% 45+ years	20% Parent 19% Not parent	24% Currently working 13% Retired 20% Not currently working	▼ 12% Regional ▲ 25% SEQ

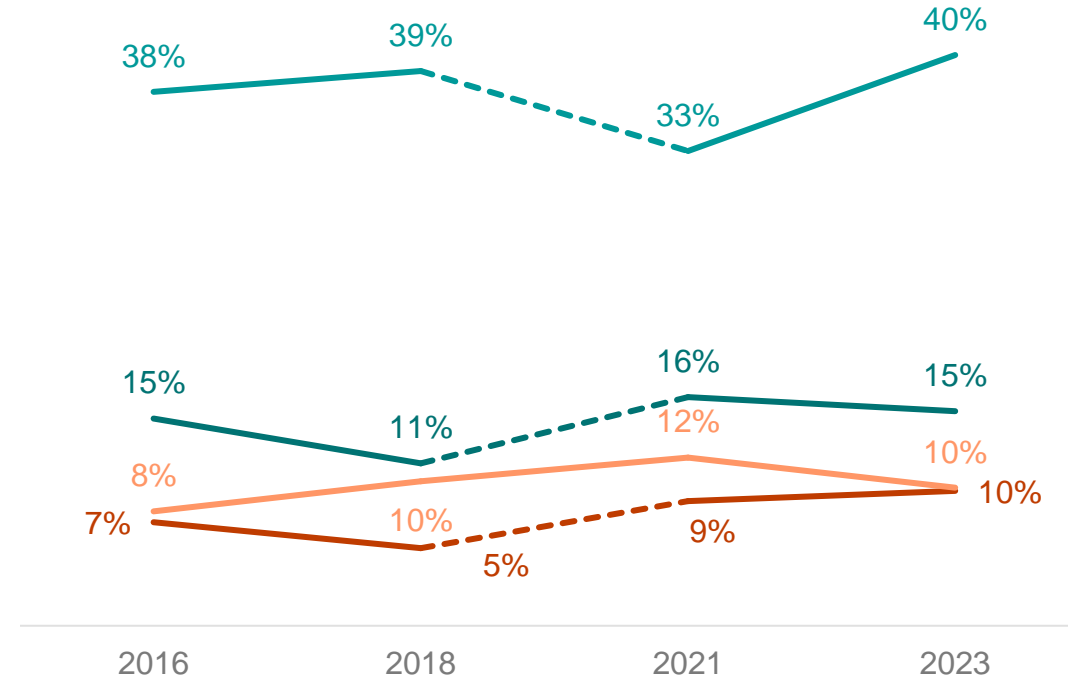
INTEREST IN FUTURE QUEENSLAND SCIENCE EVENTS

One in two say they would be interested in events such as National Science Week in future. While overall interest is at a similar level to 2021, the degree of interest has shifted, with more saying they are 'somewhat interested' rather than 'very interested'.

INTEREST IN FUTURE QUEENSLAND SCIENCE EVENTS



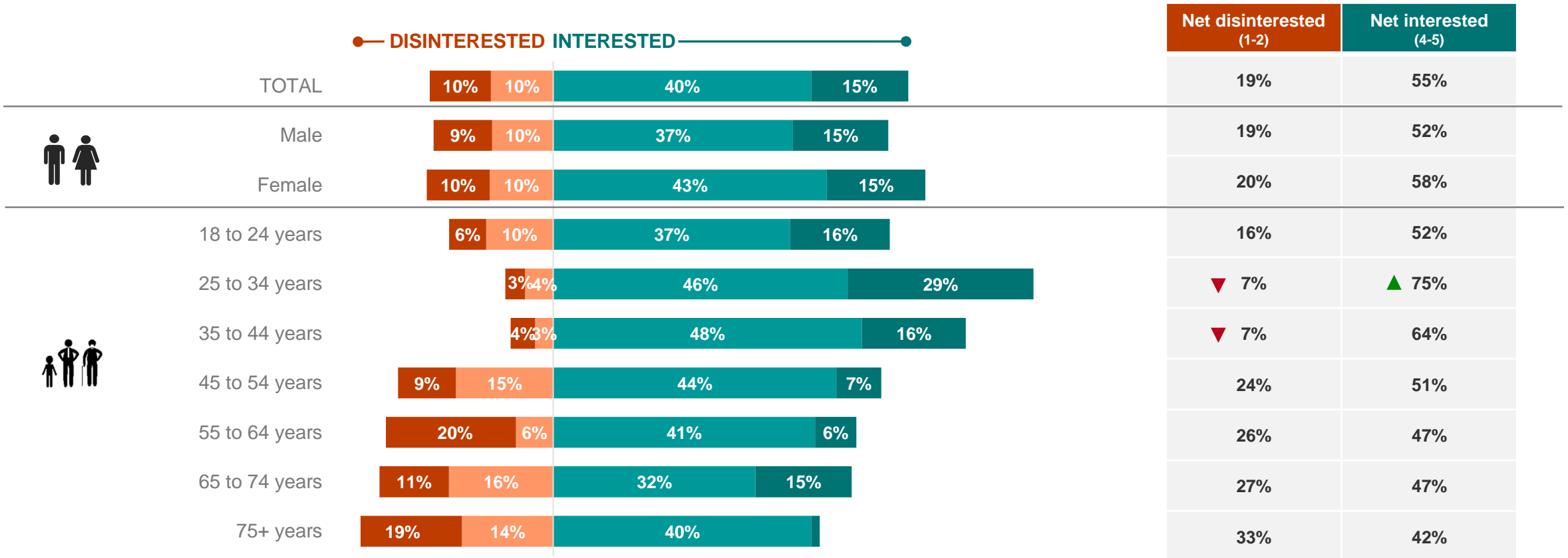
CHANGE IN INTEREST OVER TIME



INTEREST IN FUTURE QUEENSLAND SCIENCE EVENTS

Interest in attending events like National Science Week is highest among those aged 25 to 34. Those aged 45 and over tend to be more disinterested in events.

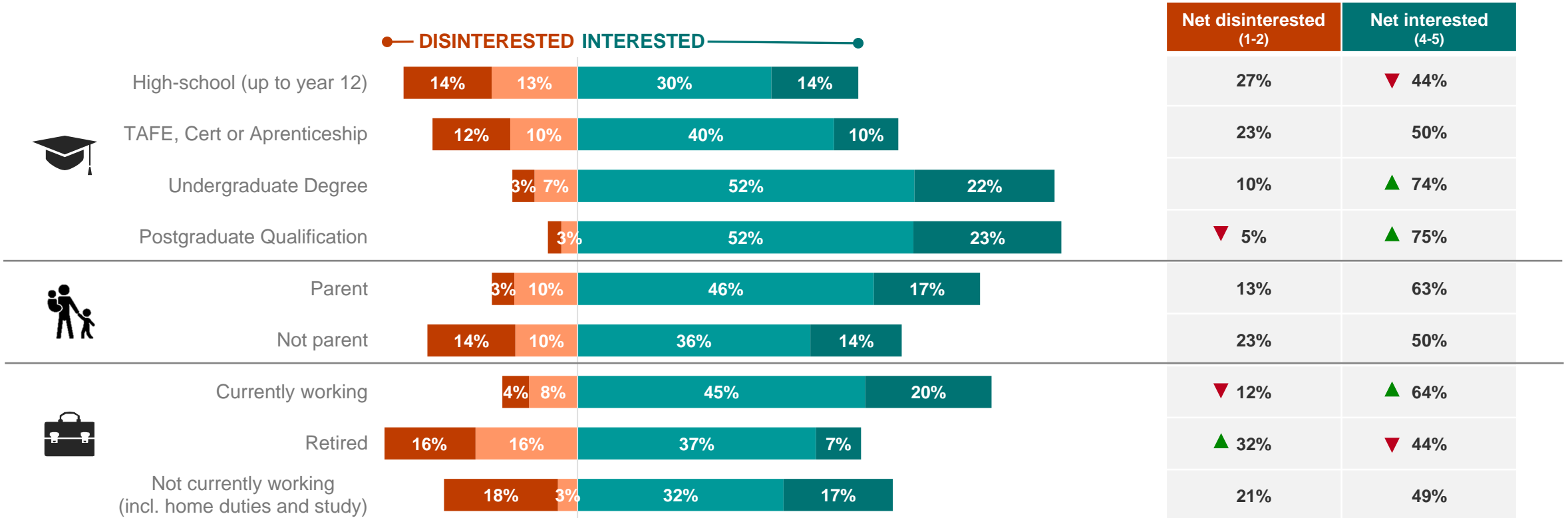
INTEREST IN FUTURE QUEENSLAND SCIENCE EVENTS BY DEMOGRAPHICS



INTEREST IN FUTURE QUEENSLAND SCIENCE EVENTS

Tertiary educated people and workers are significantly more interested in events.

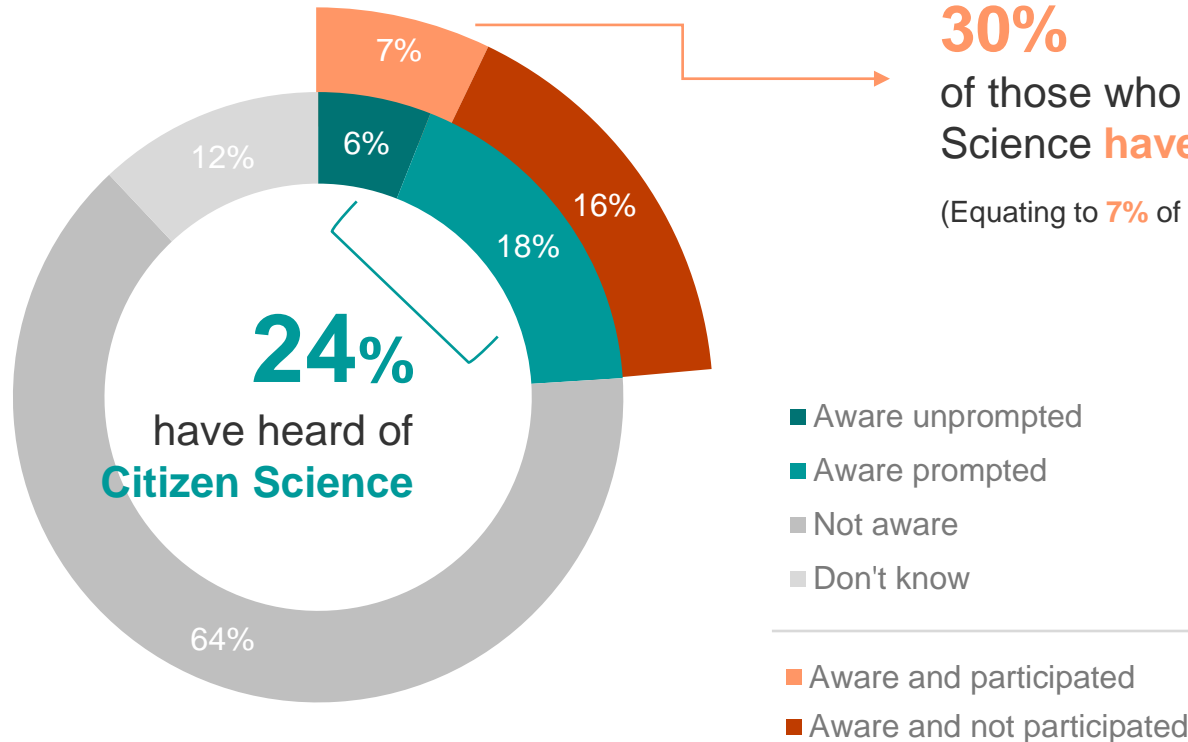
INTEREST IN FUTURE QUEENSLAND SCIENCE EVENTS BY DEMOGRAPHICS



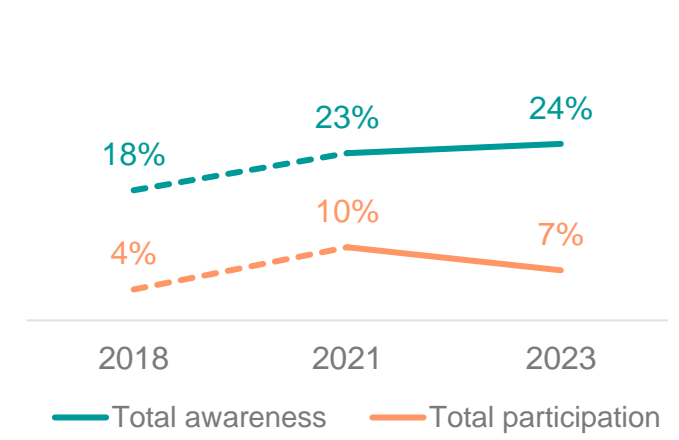
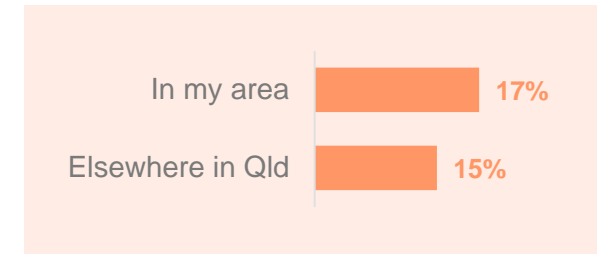
CITIZEN SCIENCE

Almost one in four Queenslanders have heard of Citizen Science, with only 30% of those having participated, a decline from 44% in 2021, driven by a decline in people participating in their local area (17% in 2023, down from 35% in 2021). Awareness, however, has increased slightly since 2021.

CITIZEN SCIENCE AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION

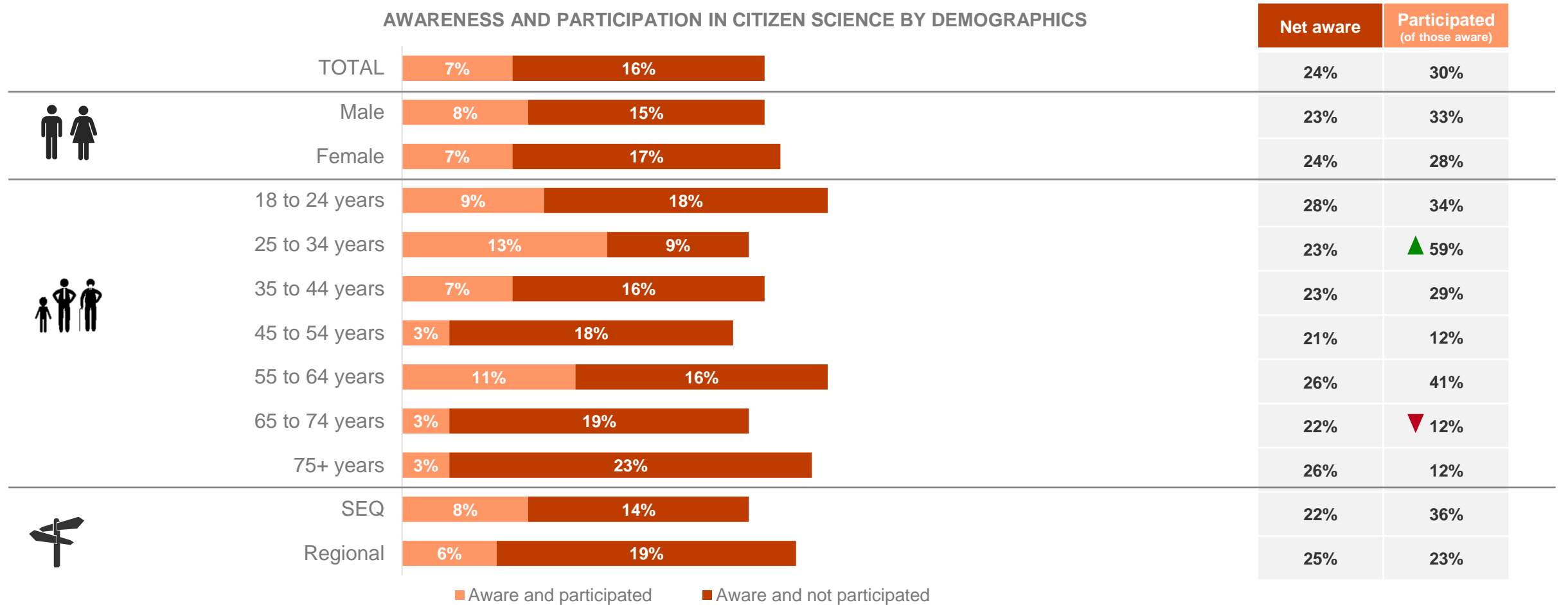


30% of those who have heard of Citizen Science **have participated**
(Equating to **7%** of Queenslanders)



CITIZEN SCIENCE

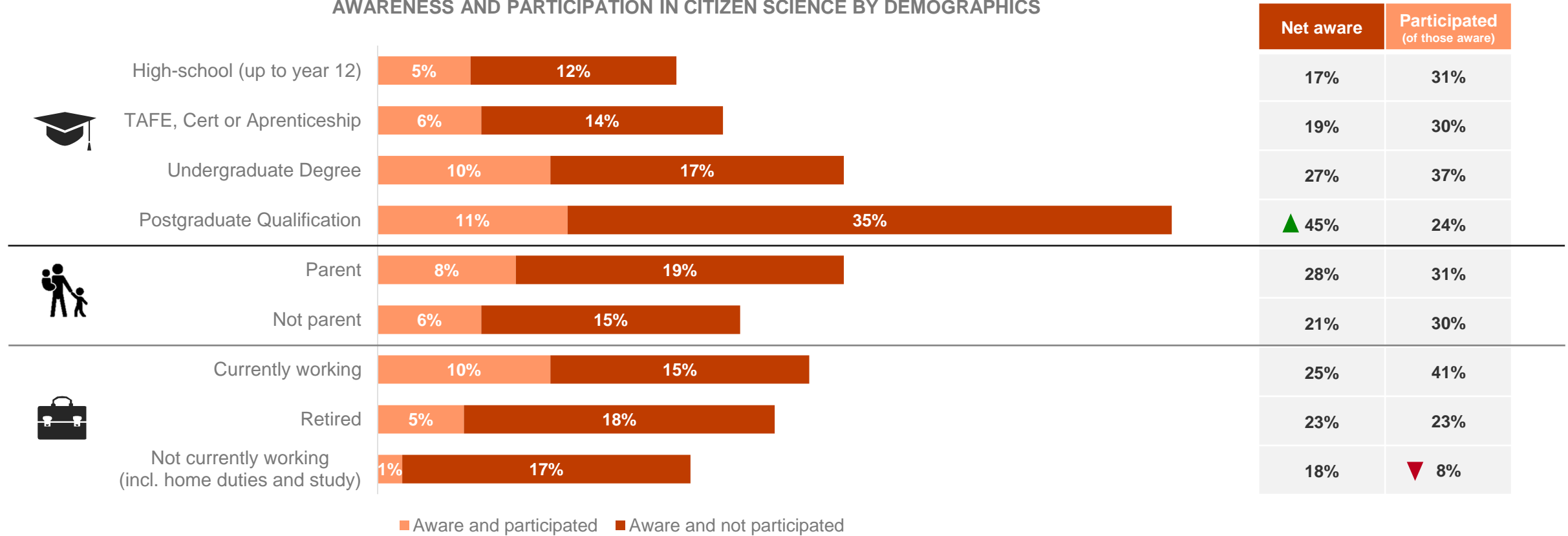
Those aged 25 to 34 years are significantly more likely to have participated in Citizen Science activities.



CITIZEN SCIENCE

Those with postgraduate qualifications are significantly more likely to have heard of Citizen Science, though only one in four have participated.

AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION IN CITIZEN SCIENCE BY DEMOGRAPHICS



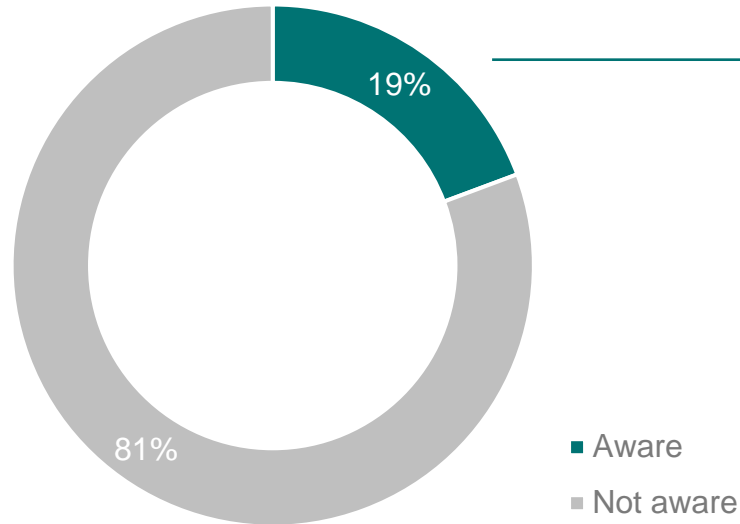
8

SCIENCE IN QUEENSLAND

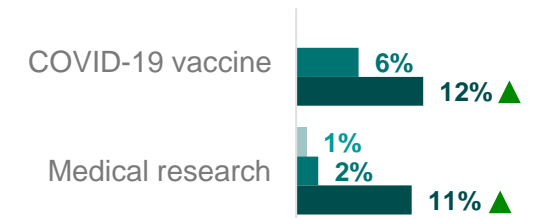
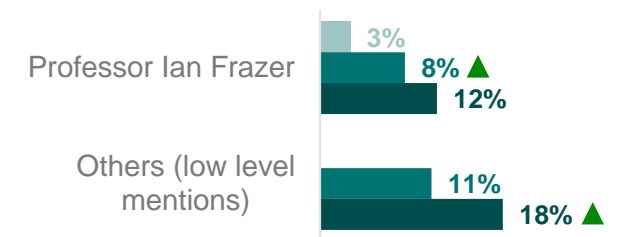
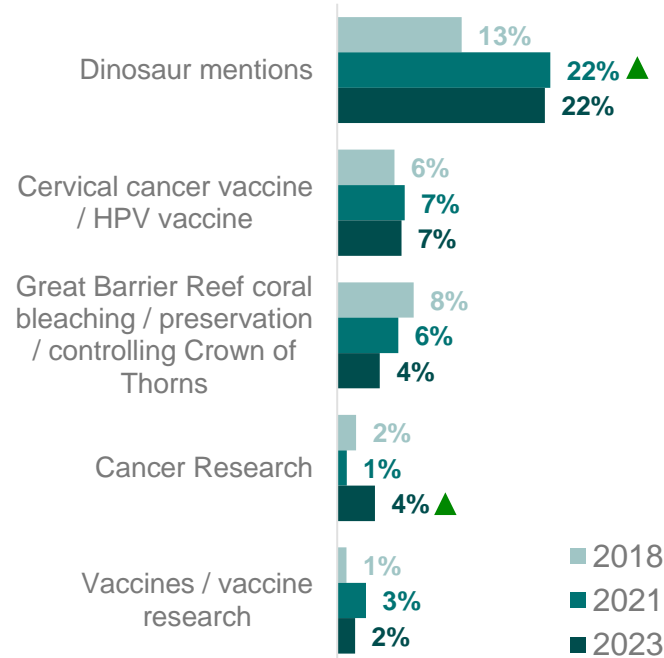
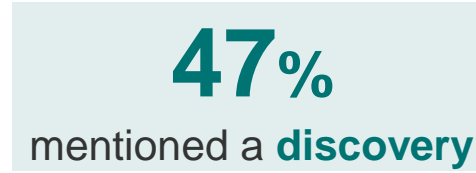
UNPROMPTED AWARENESS OF QUEENSLAND SCIENCE

One in five Queenslanders could name a Queensland scientist or scientific discovery. Of these, around half mentioned a discovery. Mentions of scientists and medical / COVID-19 research increased significantly since 2021.

UNPROMPTED AWARENESS OF QUEENSLAND SCIENTISTS AND SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES



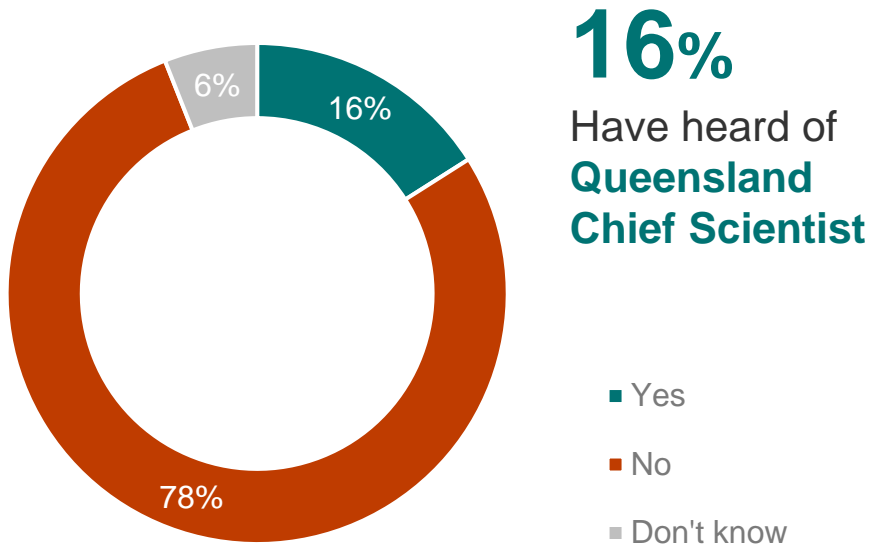
Of those aware of Queensland scientists and discoveries...



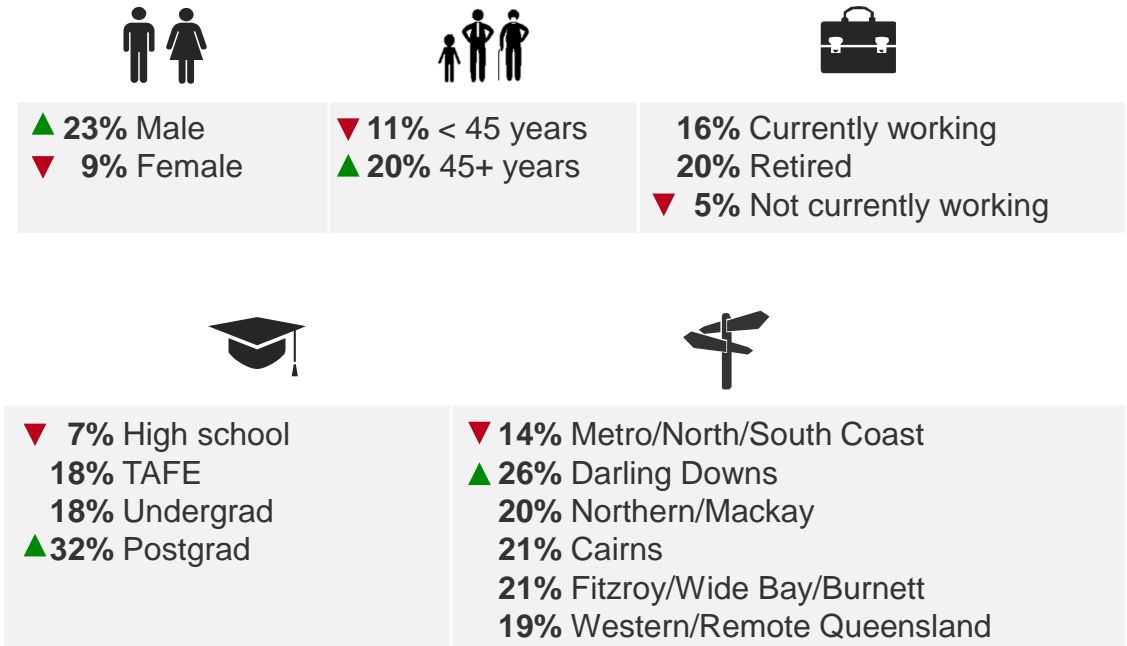
AWARENESS OF CHIEF SCIENTIST

One in seven had heard of Queensland Chief Scientist before. Males, those aged 45 years and over, postgraduates and those located in Darling Downs were significantly more likely to have heard of the Chief Scientist.

AWARENESS OF CHIEF SCIENTIST



DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES



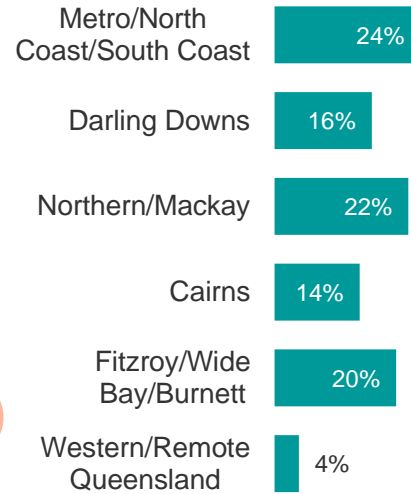
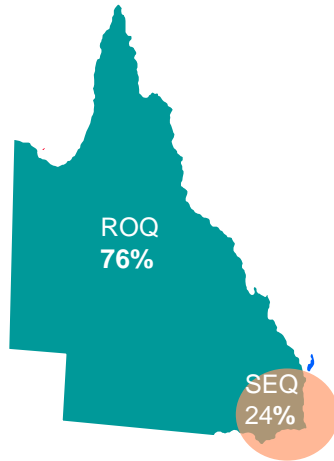
9

DEMOGRAPHICS

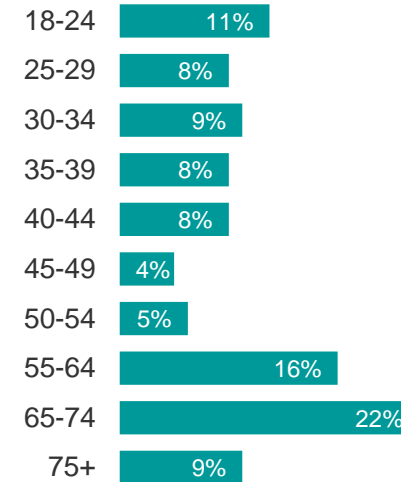
Demographic Data: Location, Age, Gender

Unweighted Data

Location (%)



Age (%)



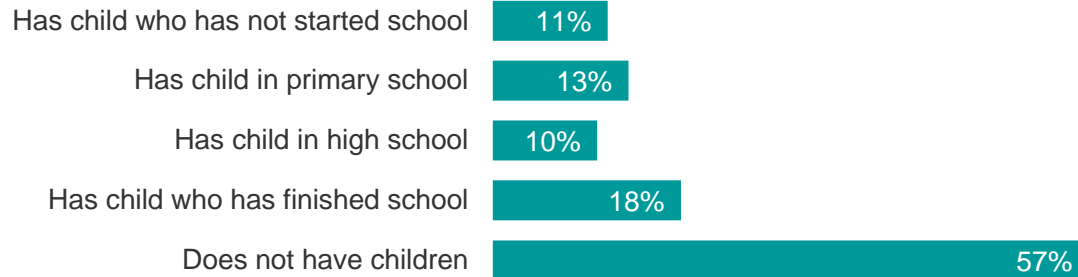
Gender (%)



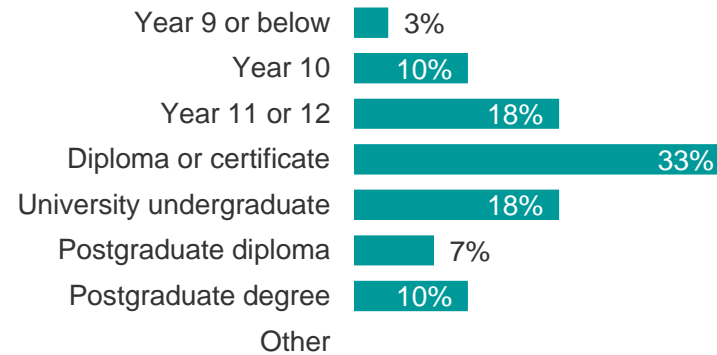
Demographic Data: Parental status, Education, ATSI

Unweighted Data

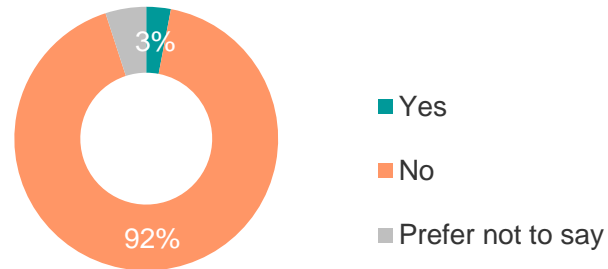
Parental status (%)



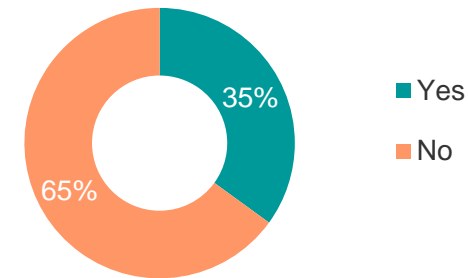
Education level (%)



Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (%)



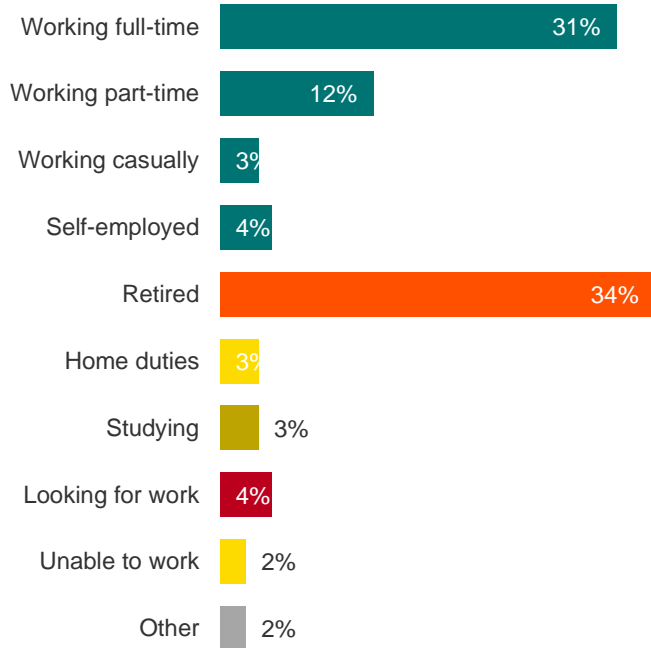
Participation in post-school science course (% of those who have studied post-school)



Demographic Data: Employment Status

Unweighted Data

Employment Status (%)



16% of those currently working work in a science-related job



10% of those currently retired worked in a science-related job



69% of those currently studying are studying a science-related course



11% of those currently looking for work are looking for science-related work

G4. Which of these best describes your current employment status?
 G5. Are you currently working in a science-related job?
 G6. Before retirement, did you work in a science-related job?
 G7. Are you currently studying a science-related course?
 G8. Are you currently looking for science-related work?
 BASE: All respondents (2023 n=1,242).

Thank you



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