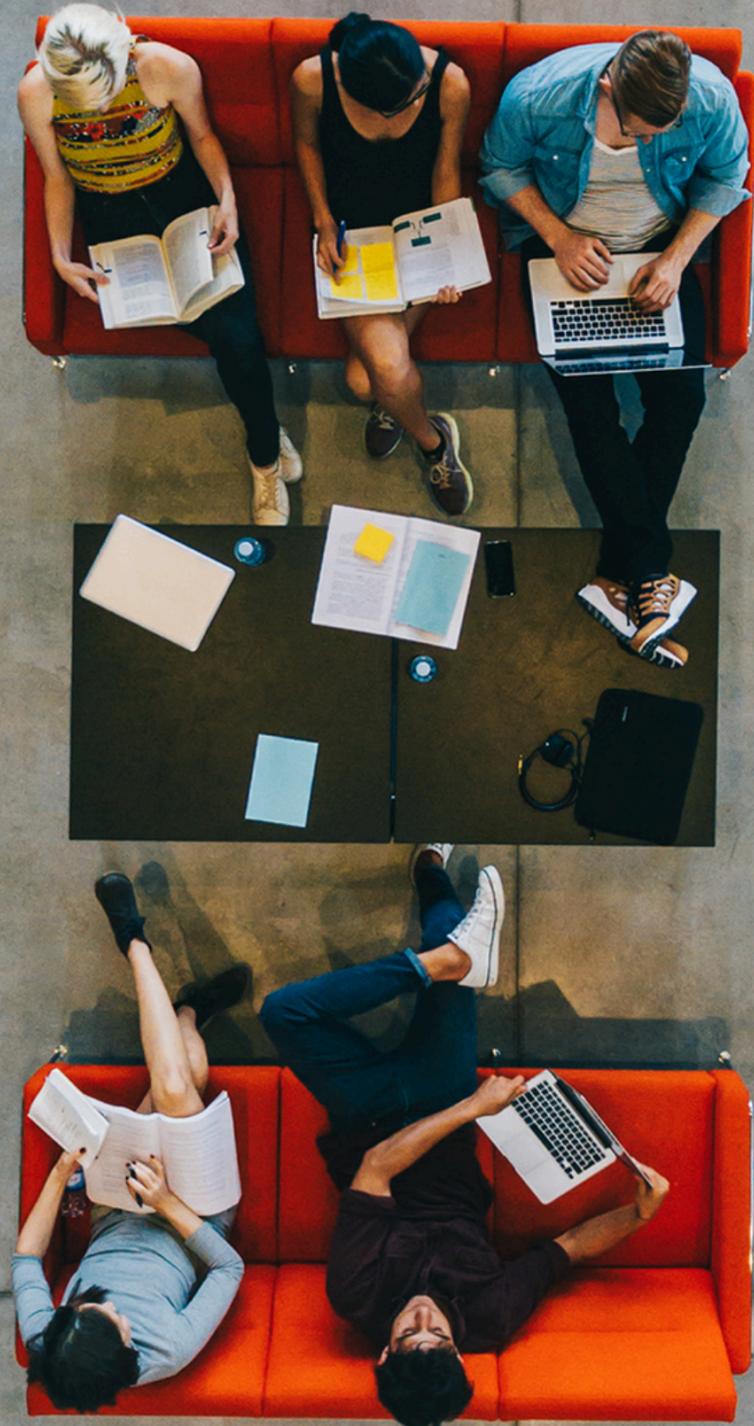


Gen Z on course

Perspectives, behaviours and aspirations of 2023 year 12s





About VTAC

VTAC's vision is to empower, connect, and support learners and providers to enable transparent and inclusive access to education.

Facebook: facebook.com/vtacguide

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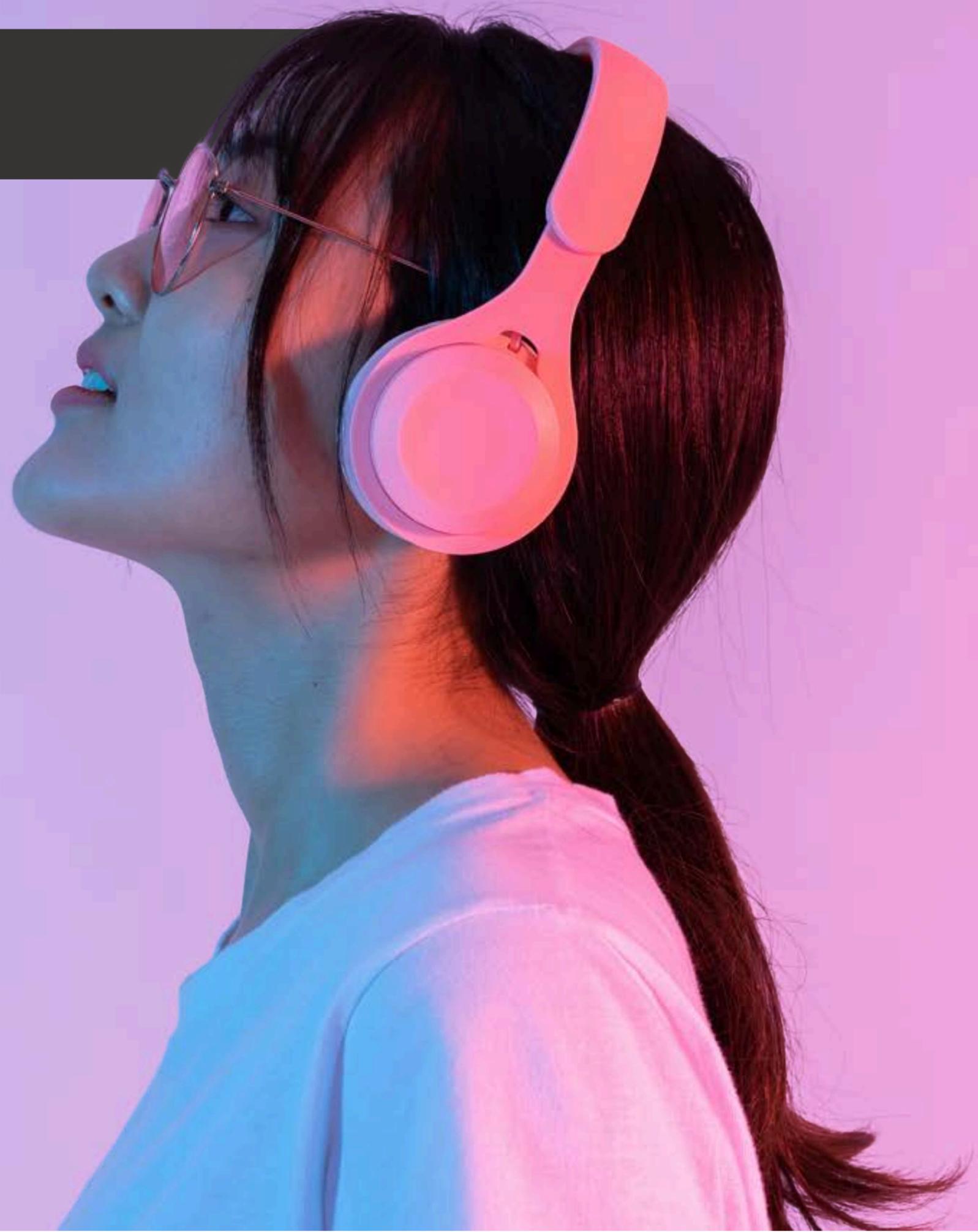


Introduction

Each year a new cohort of hopeful year 12 students conclude thirteen years of schooling and, with a mix of trepidation, excitement, and hope, begin making decisions that will shape their adult life. For those aiming to pursue higher education, VTAC is there to facilitate their journey and, while the tertiary application cycle follows a similar pattern every year, we find that each year 12 cohort is unique.

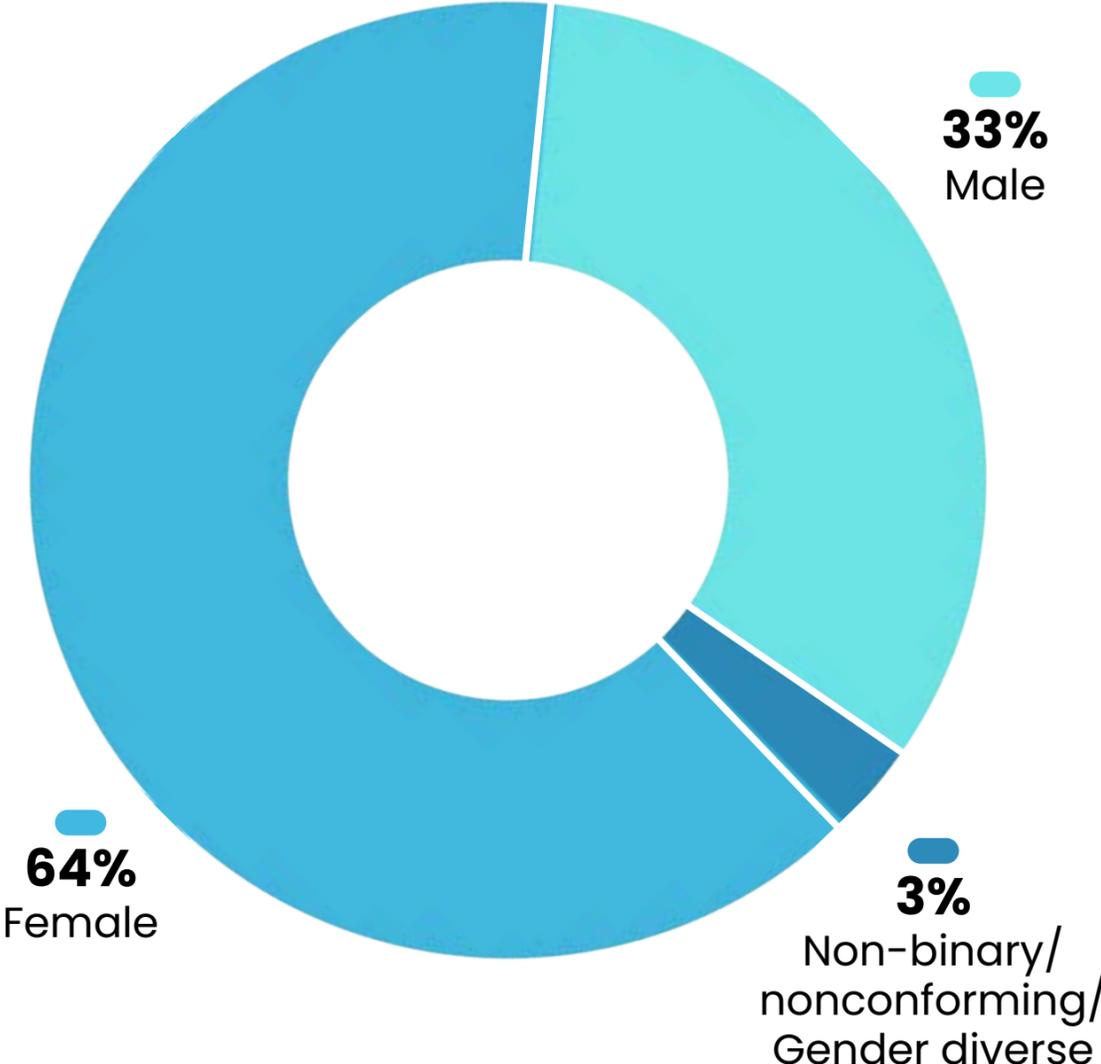
We understand this from our interactions with, and support of, these students: in person at expos and events, responding to their queries over social media and email, and guiding them through the application process when they call. However, while we can make assumptions about how the current year's cohort differs from the last, to better our knowledge of these students, and year 12s in general, we invite them to participate in our annual survey.

Gen Z On Course details the responses from 10,800 2023 year 12 students on questions about their motivations, perspectives, affinities and hopes for 2024.

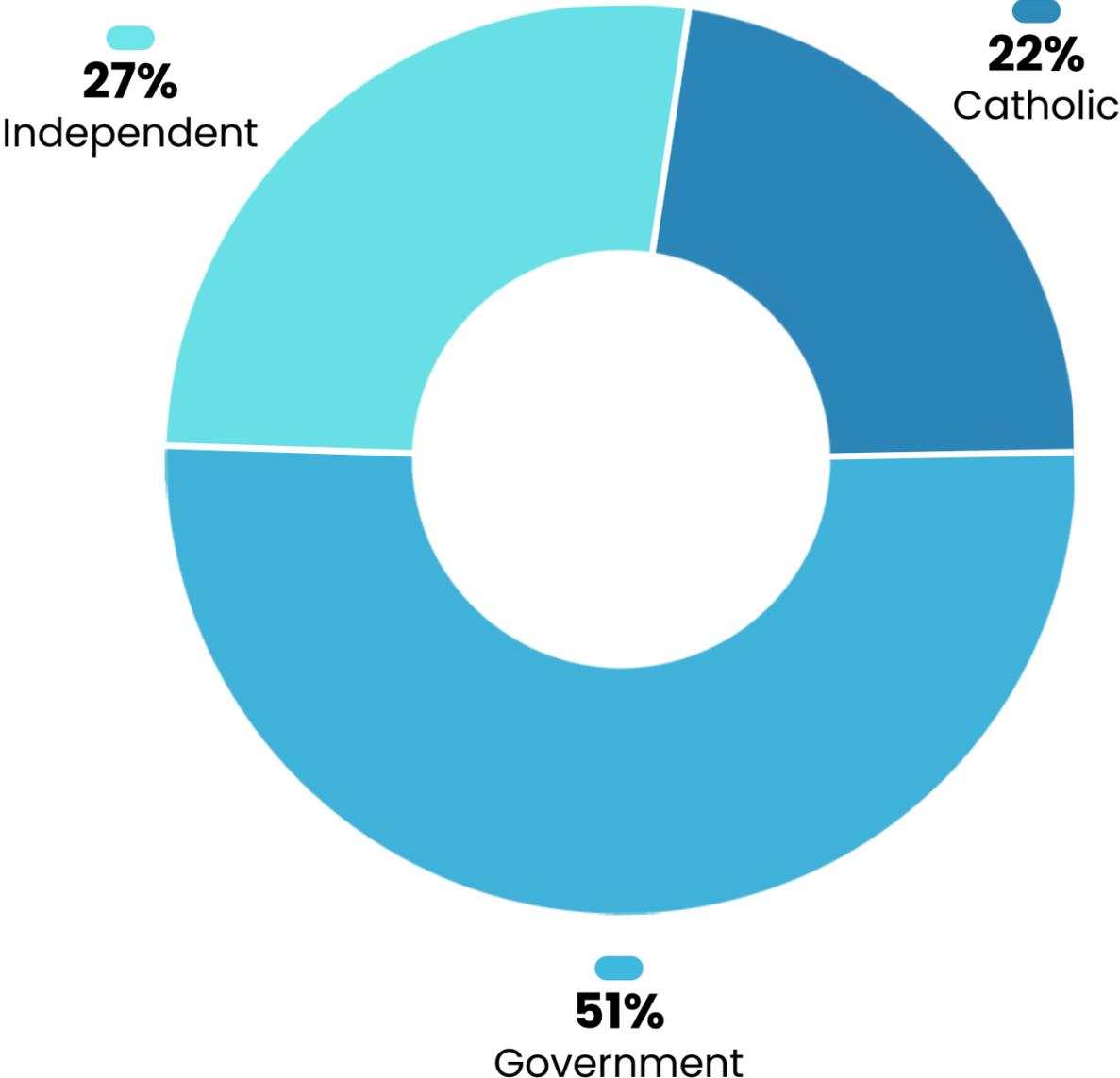


The 2023 year 12s we surveyed

Gender:



Breakdown of school type:



Pursuing higher education

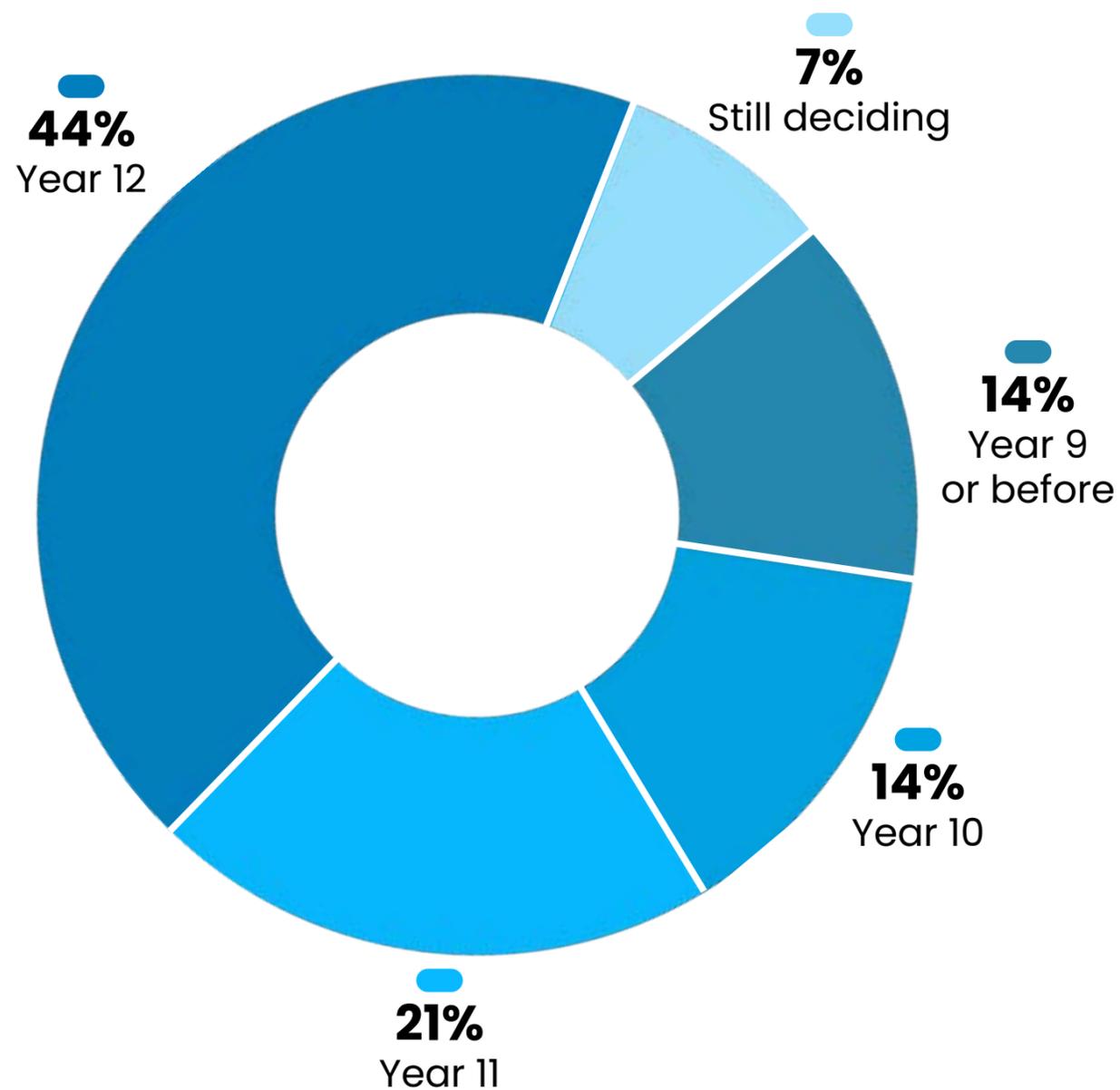
With 1,700+ courses detailed on VTAC's CourseSearch site, the scale of options can motivate and challenge our applicants. Almost half of our respondents had decided on their post-secondary path before year 12 and most chose courses to pursue a career path or better their employment prospects. Their decisions on courses and the institutions offering them were based mostly on practical concerns such as personal interest and location, though less so than the 2022 cohort.

On commencing higher education, respondents were most concerned about managing study and work commitments but looked forward to gaining independence and pursuing their interests through study. Interestingly, the prospect of meeting new people and making new friends was both a source of apprehension and excitement for this cohort.

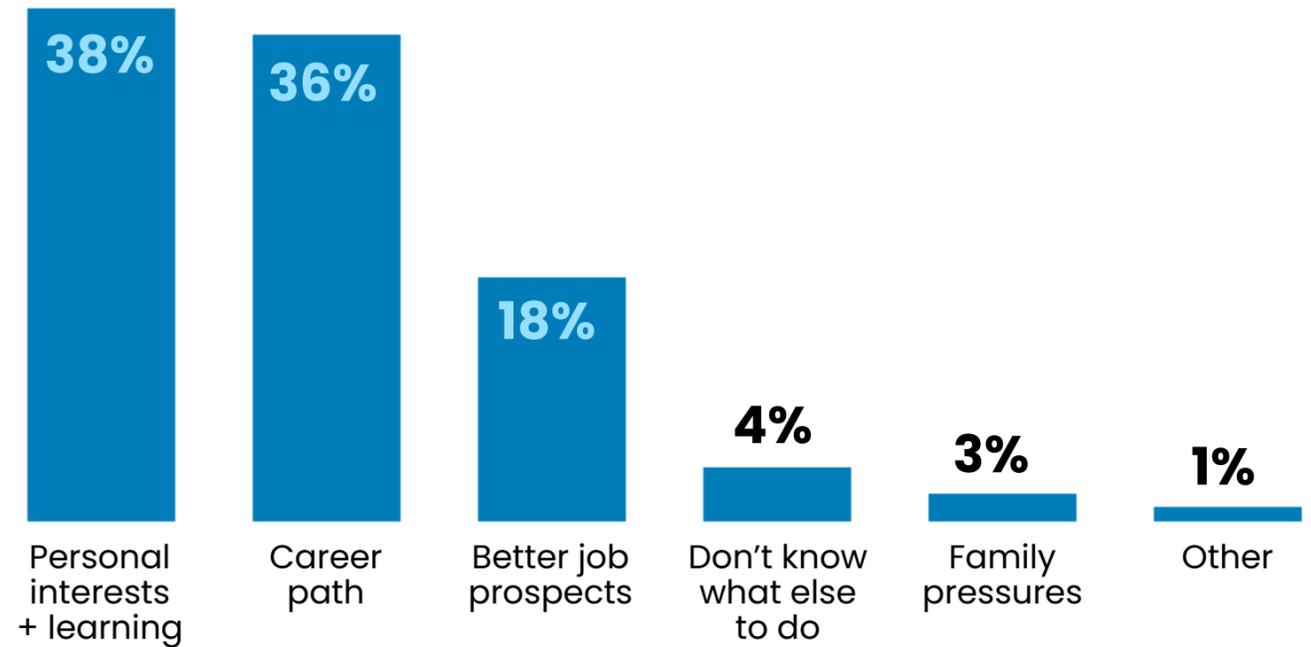
Overall, respondents anticipated the challenges of higher education, but balanced these concerns with the rewards, including independence, learning, and new friendships.



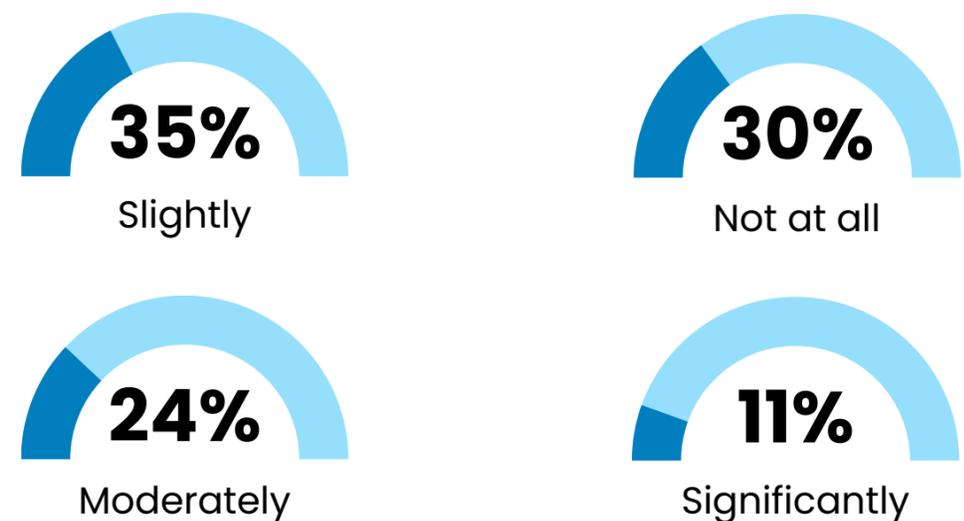
In which year level did you decide on the type of courses - or the type of job/vocation/career/trade - you wanted to pursue?



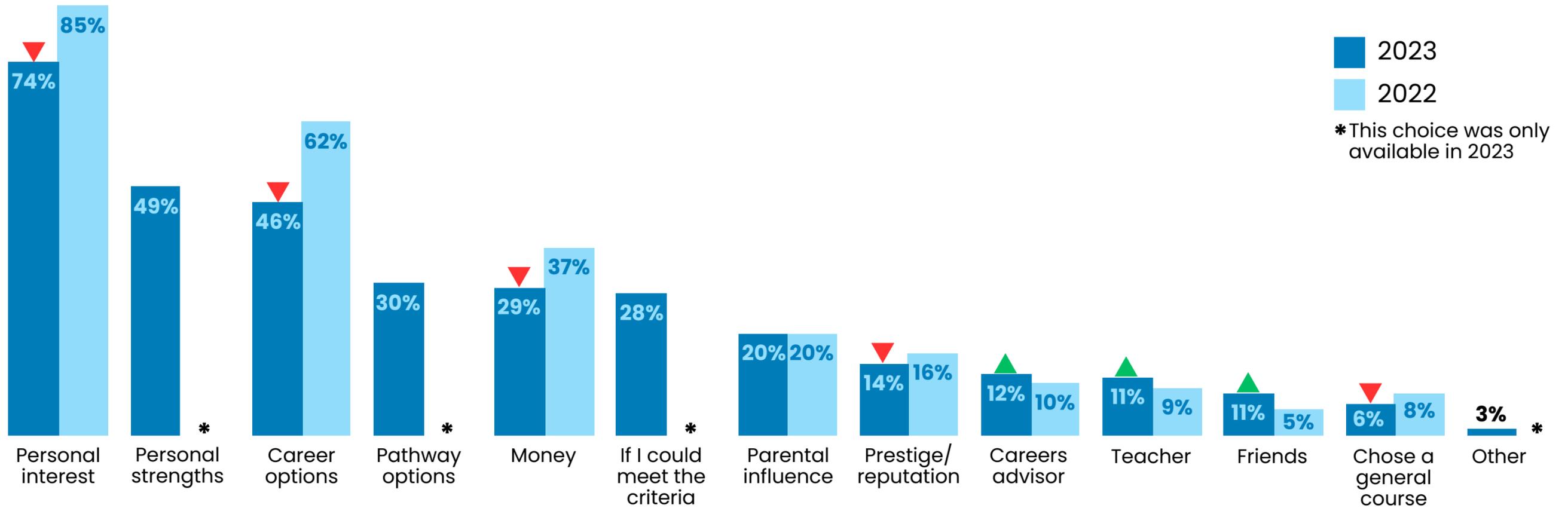
What is your main motivation in applying for further education?



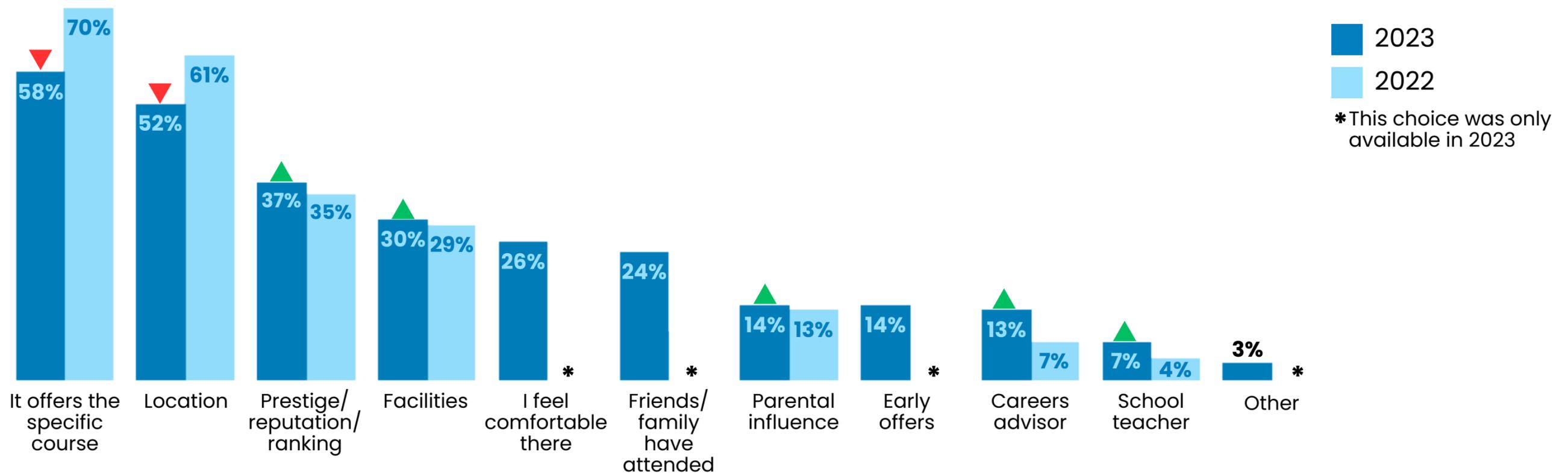
To what extent have costs, fees and potential debt influenced your decision to apply for specific courses?



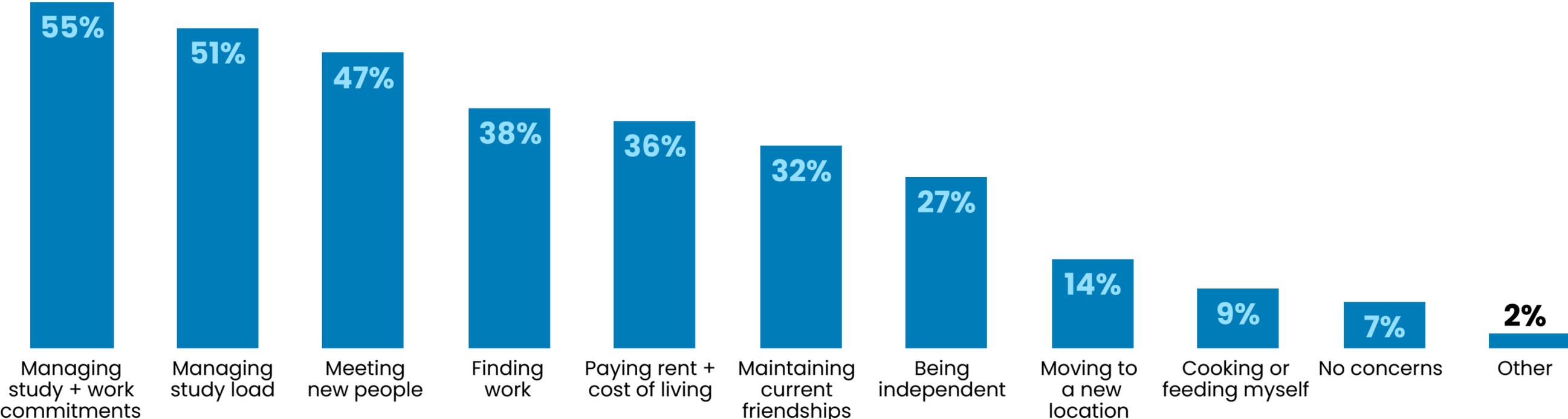
What were your biggest influences when choosing courses?



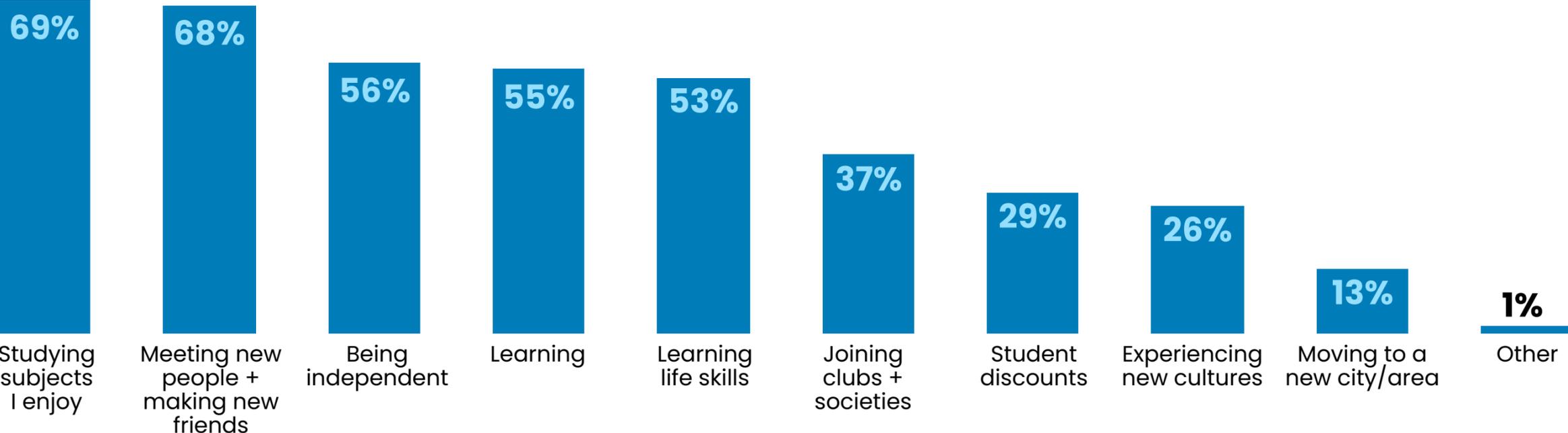
What were your biggest influences when choosing universities/TAFEs and/or private colleges?



Are there any aspects of undertaking further education that concern you?



What are you looking forward to about further education?



Spending and saving

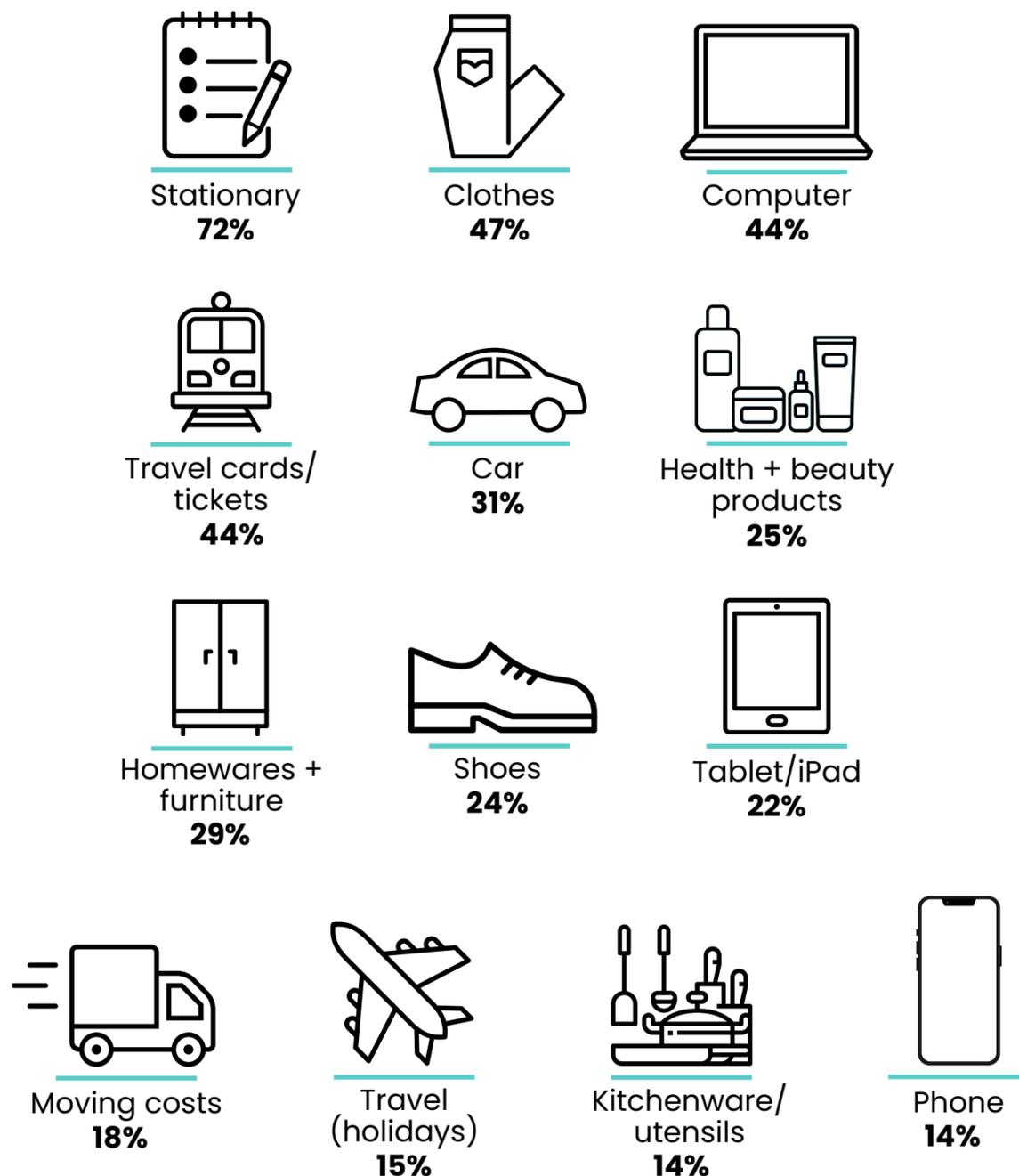
Entering adult life post-year 12 is a significant period of transition that affects all aspects of life, including daily routine, living arrangements and personal finances. The 2023 cohort are diligent in this approach, with 80% working and 95% indicating an intention to save their earnings.

In managing finances and spending, their priorities are dominated by essentials: transport, clothing and supermarket shopping, with respondents striving to find a medium between discounts and low prices, product quality and value for items purchased.

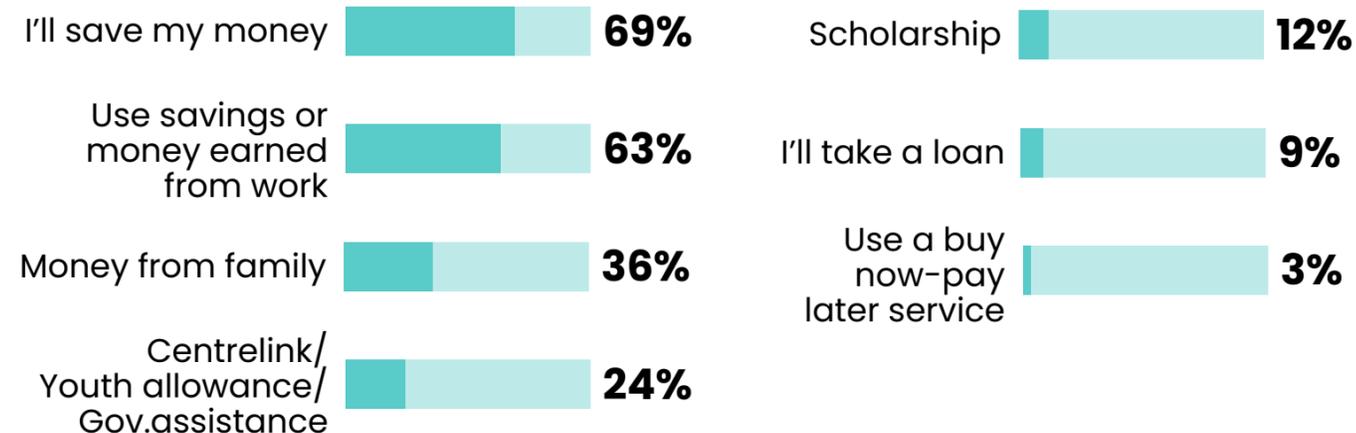
At the time of surveying, with course commencement imminent, purchases for 2024 were characterised by necessity and education readiness: stationery, computers, clothes and travel tickets. Reflective of the economic climate, discretionary spending on items such as food delivery, cinema and tech/gadgets saw significant decline.



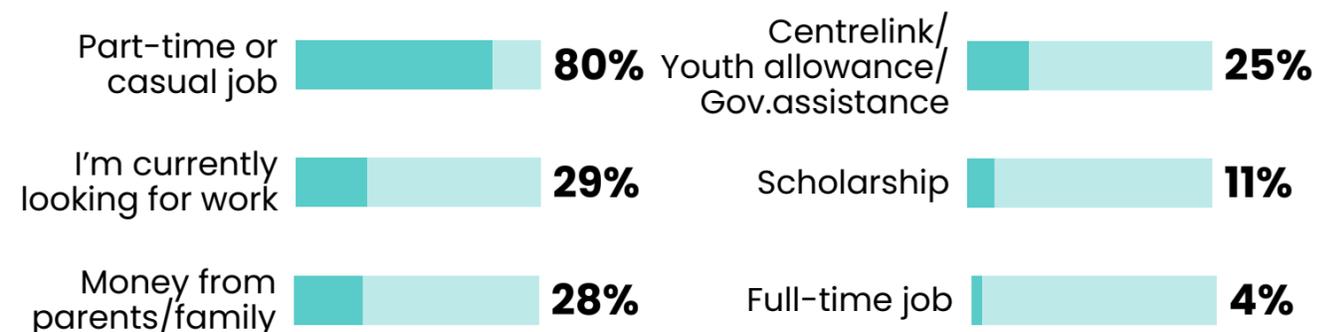
What will you purchase for 2024 higher study and general living needs?



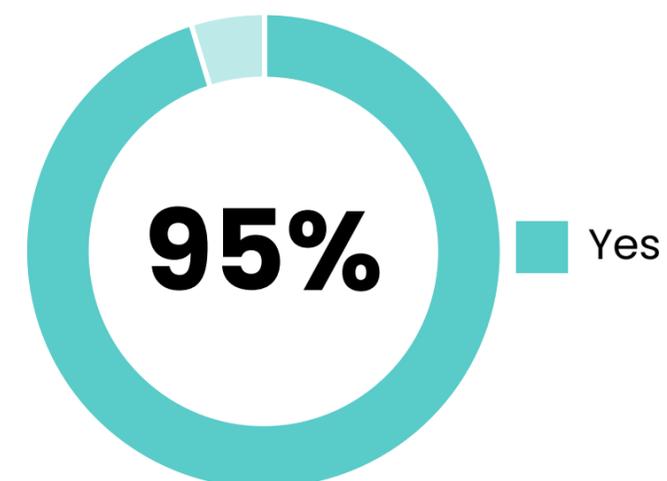
How will you pay for these?



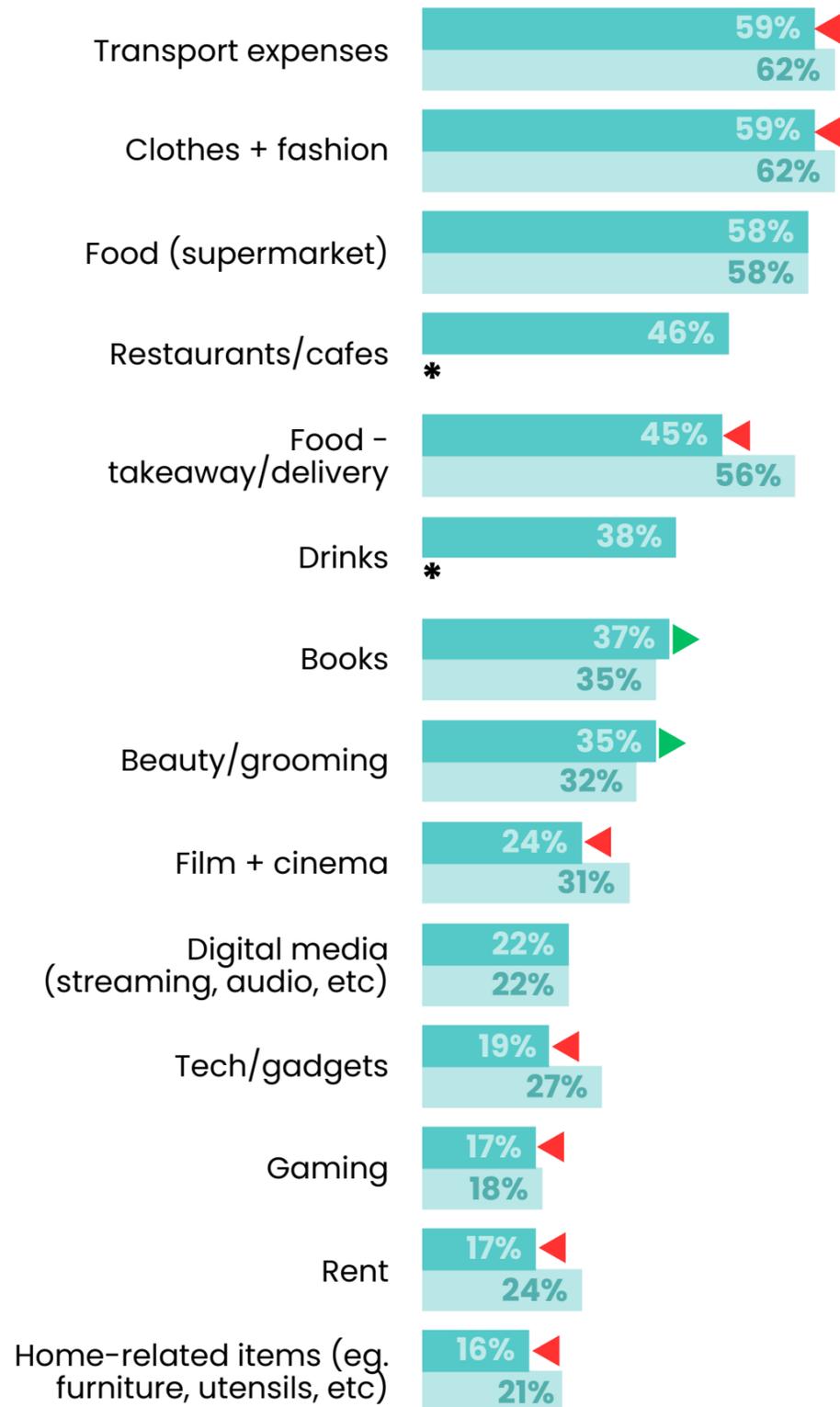
What are, and what will be in 2024, your sources of income?



Do you, or will you attempt to, save money each week or month?

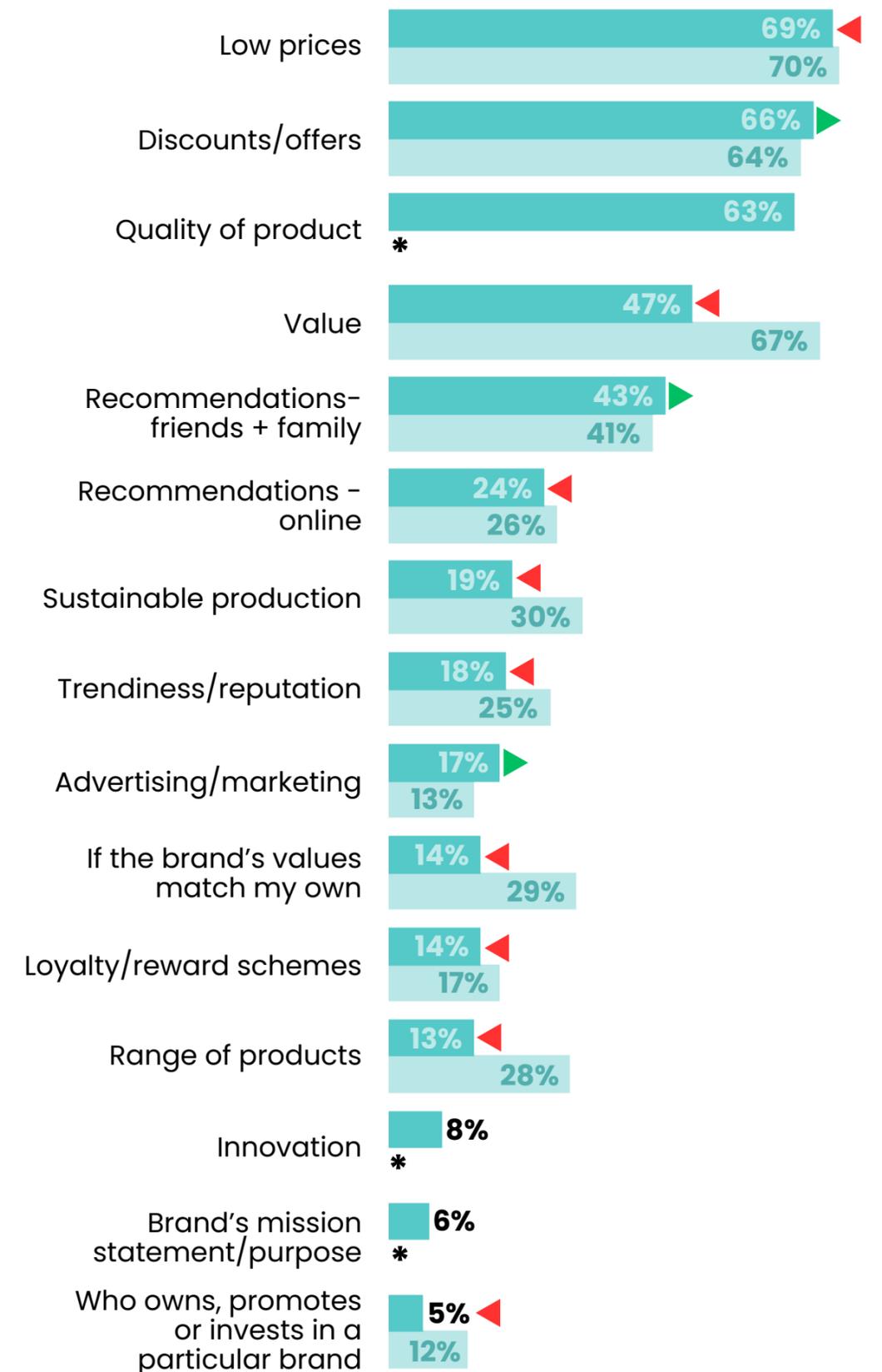


What do you spend your money on?



■ 2023
■ 2022
 * This choice was only available in 2023

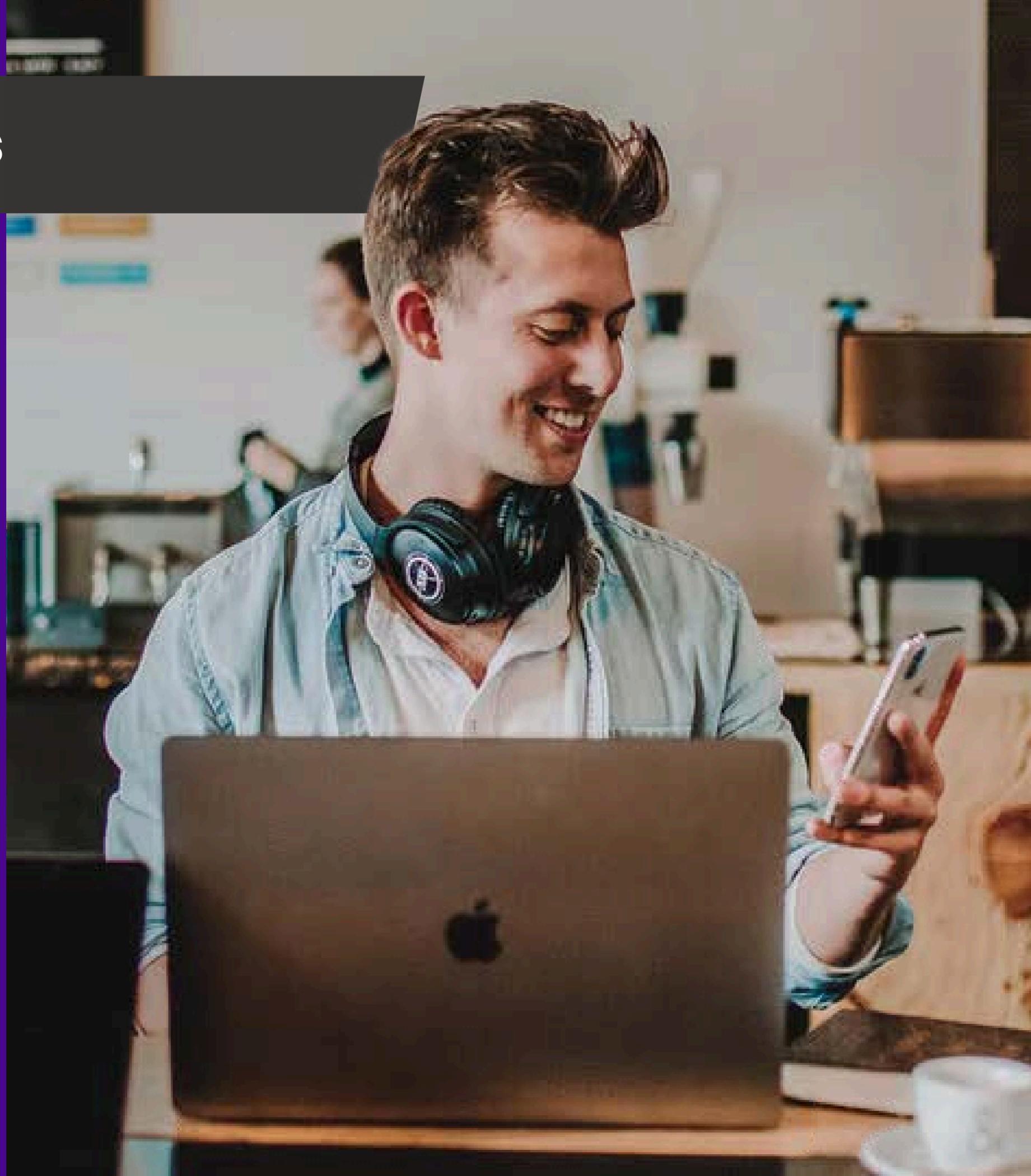
What influences your spending



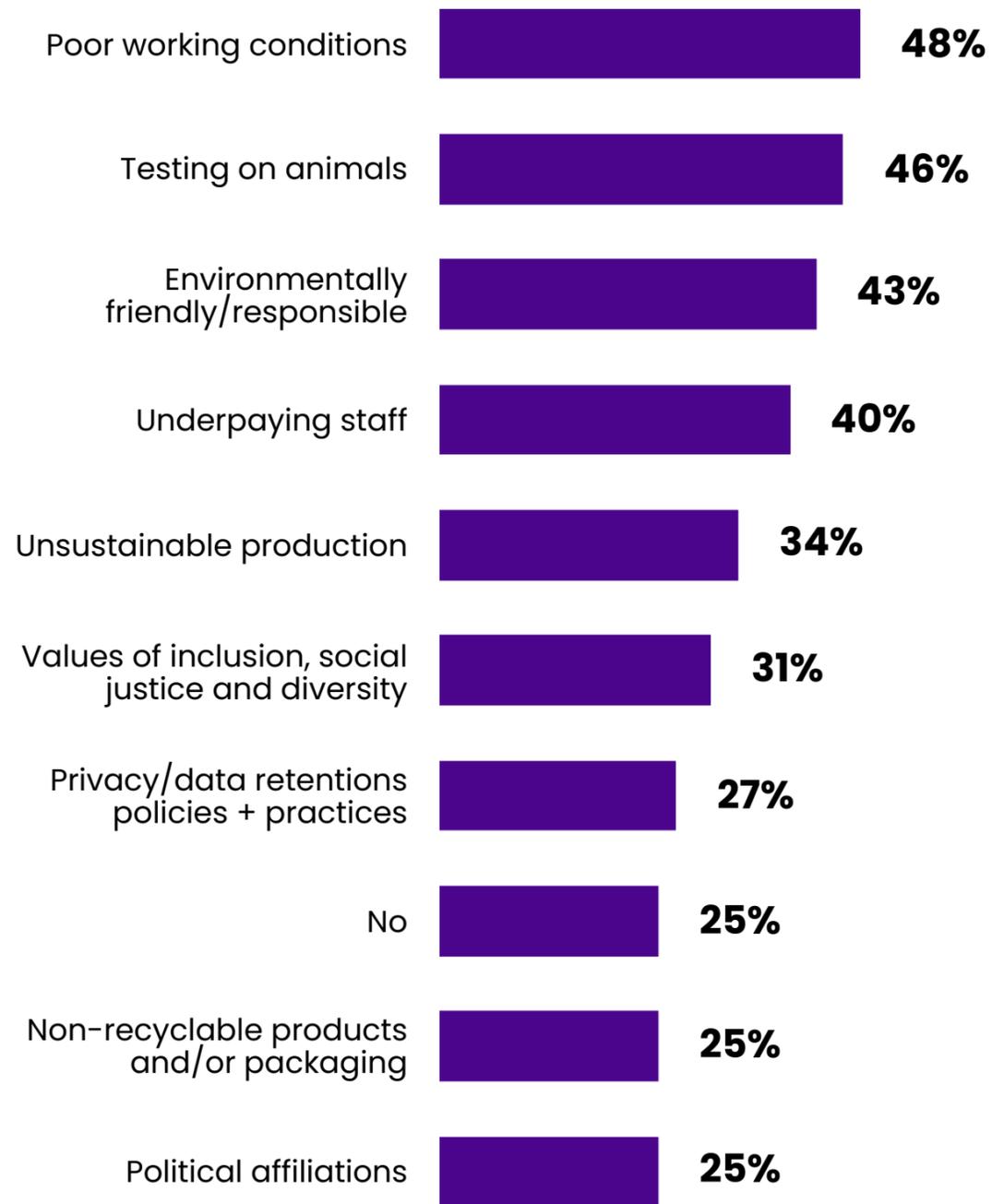
Brands and products

Brand affinities for our respondents were similar to those of the previous year, with two notable exceptions. For the most part, the same brands were present on the list. However Coles and Woolworths have dropped to an equal 9th position from #4 and #5 respectively. Both supermarket brands received the same number of responses, where last year Coles was identified more than Woolworths. The other brands moved up to assume the places left by the supermarkets, except for Uniqlo, which took a lead over MECCA this year.

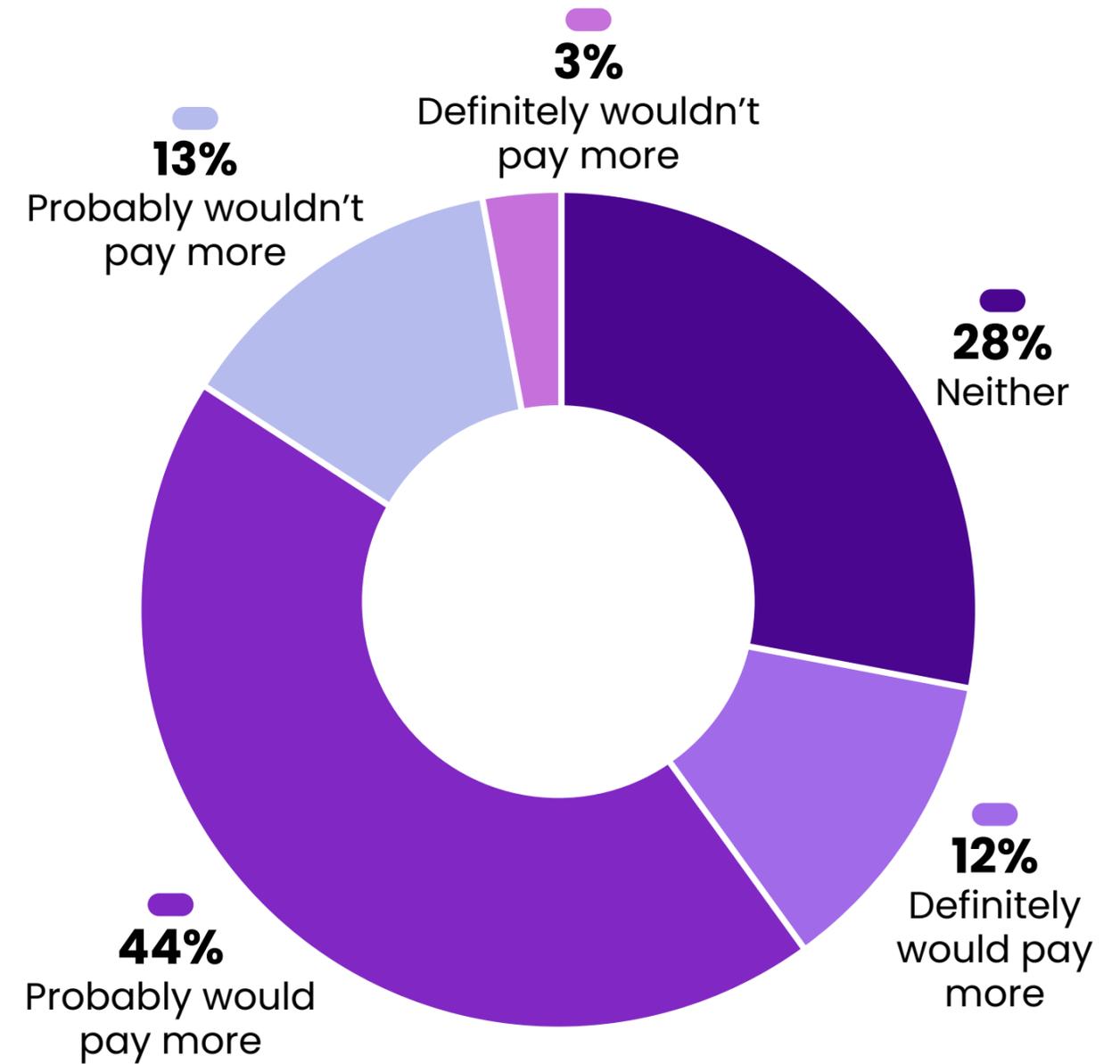
Many of our respondents took a brand's ethical record into account when deciding whether to purchase its products. Nearly two-thirds indicated they would be willing to pay more for a product or brand that aligns with their beliefs and values. When making purchase decisions, the most important factors were working conditions, animal testing practices and environmental policies.



Does a company/brand's policy, or record on, any of the below ever influence your decision to purchase their products?



Would you spend more for a product or on a brand that aligns with your beliefs and values?



What are your favourite brands?

Overall

1			6		▲ +2
2			7		▲ +3
3	COTTON:ON		8	MECCA	▲ +1
4		▲ +2	9	coles woolworths	▼ -5 ▼ -4
5	GLASSONS	▲ +2	10	KOOKAI	▲ New

What are your favourite brands?

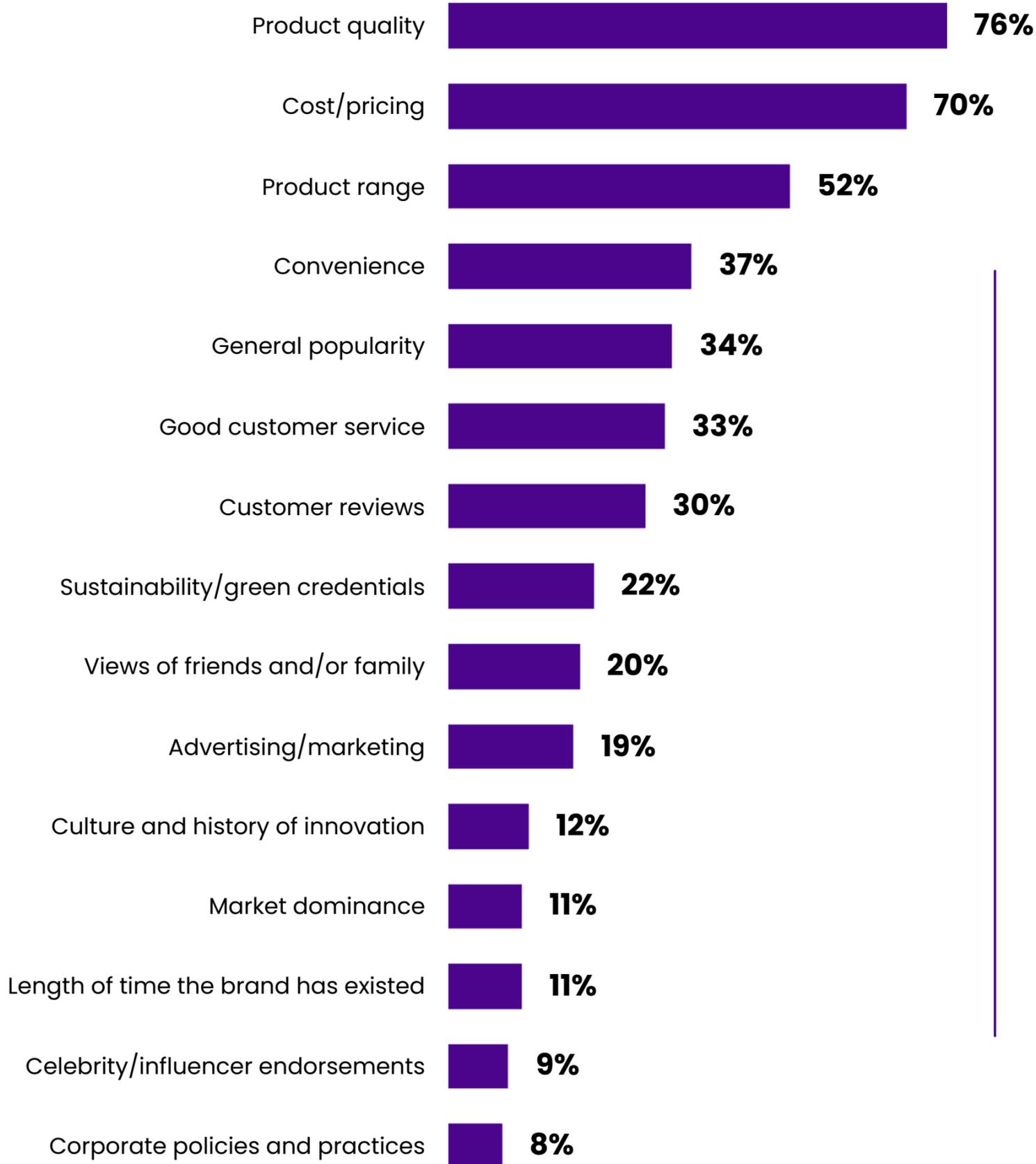
Tech

- 1 
- 2 **SAMSUNG**
- 3  Microsoft ▲ +1
- 4 **SONY** ▼ -1
- 5 Google

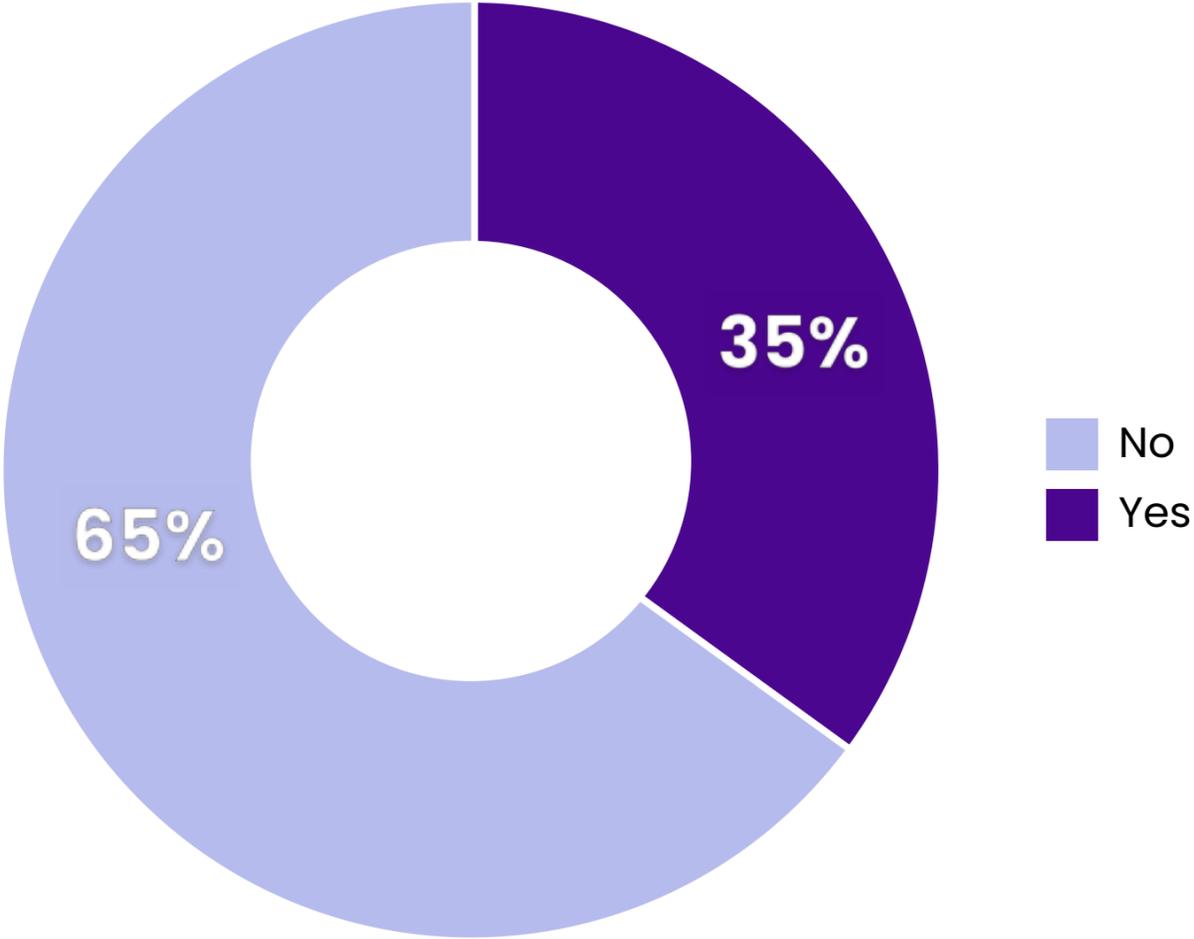
Fashion

- 1 **COTTON:ON**
- 2 
- 3 **GLASSONS**
- 4 
- 5 

Thinking about your favourite brands, what is their appeal to you?



Have you ever decided to purchase a product based on an 'influencer's' endorsement?*



* By influencer, we mean an individual with a large social media presence who may encourage you to buy a certain product

Social media

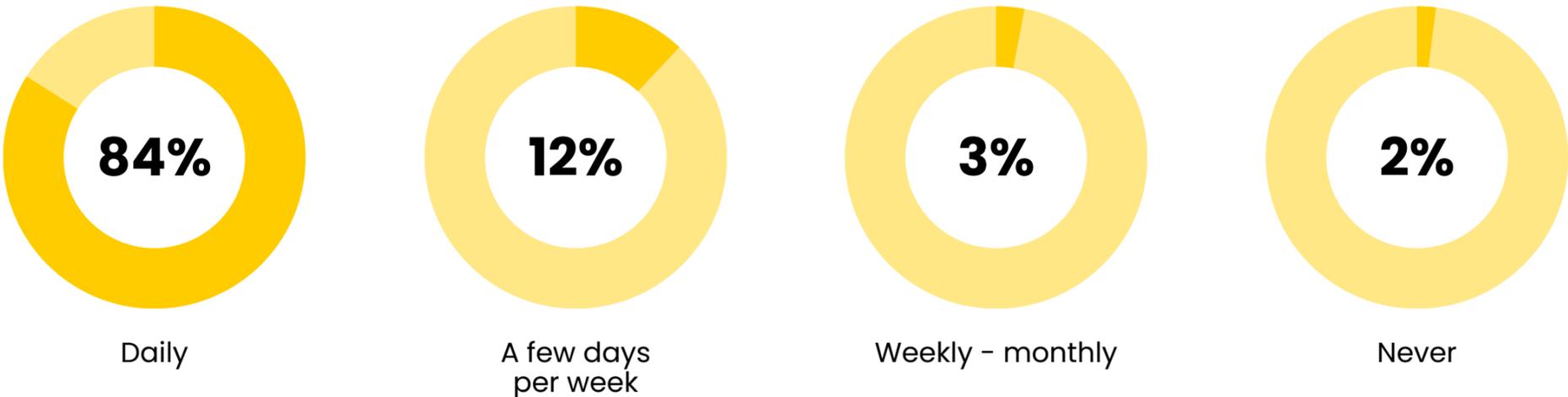
This is the first generation for whom social media has been a constant presence. Providing powerful outlets for self-expression, sources for entertainment, and having become mandatory use to maintain friendships, their lives have become integrated with these platforms and look to remain so.

Although respondents acknowledge social media's role in their lives, reservations about their prevalence are present. Platforms' apparent inability to stem misleading information, the mental health toll they exact and the proliferation of content encouraging unrealistic and harmful body images rating highly amongst our cohort's concerns.

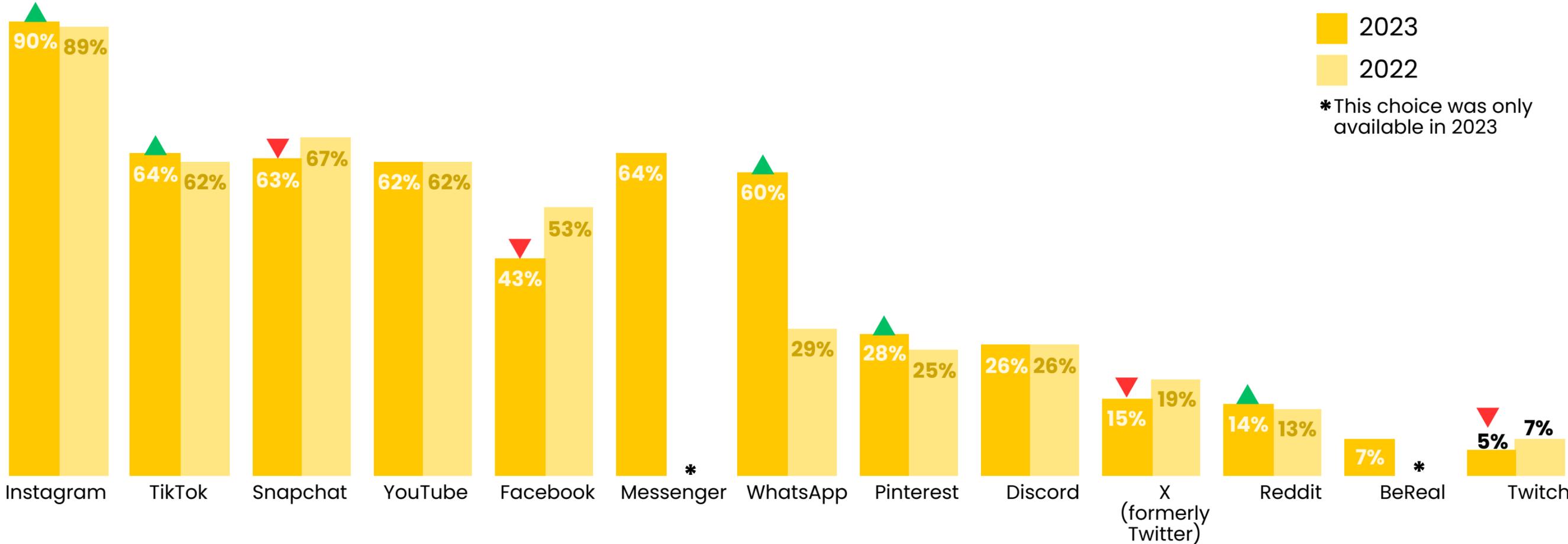
In regard to use, Instagram has extended its lead as the most favoured platform, followed by TikTok which appears to have increased its popularity at Snapchat's expense. WhatsApp surged year-on-year, increasing its use by over 30% and Facebook continues its decline amongst younger users.



How often do you use social media?



Which social media platforms do you log on to or check at least once per week?



Which social media platform do you use most?



Instagram

2023: **34%** ▲
2022: **30%**



TikTok

2023: **25%** ▲
2022: **24%**



Snapchat

2023: **17%** ▼
2022: **20%**



YouTube

2023: **12%**
2022: **12%**



Discord

2023: **5%** ▼
2022: **6%**



WhatsApp

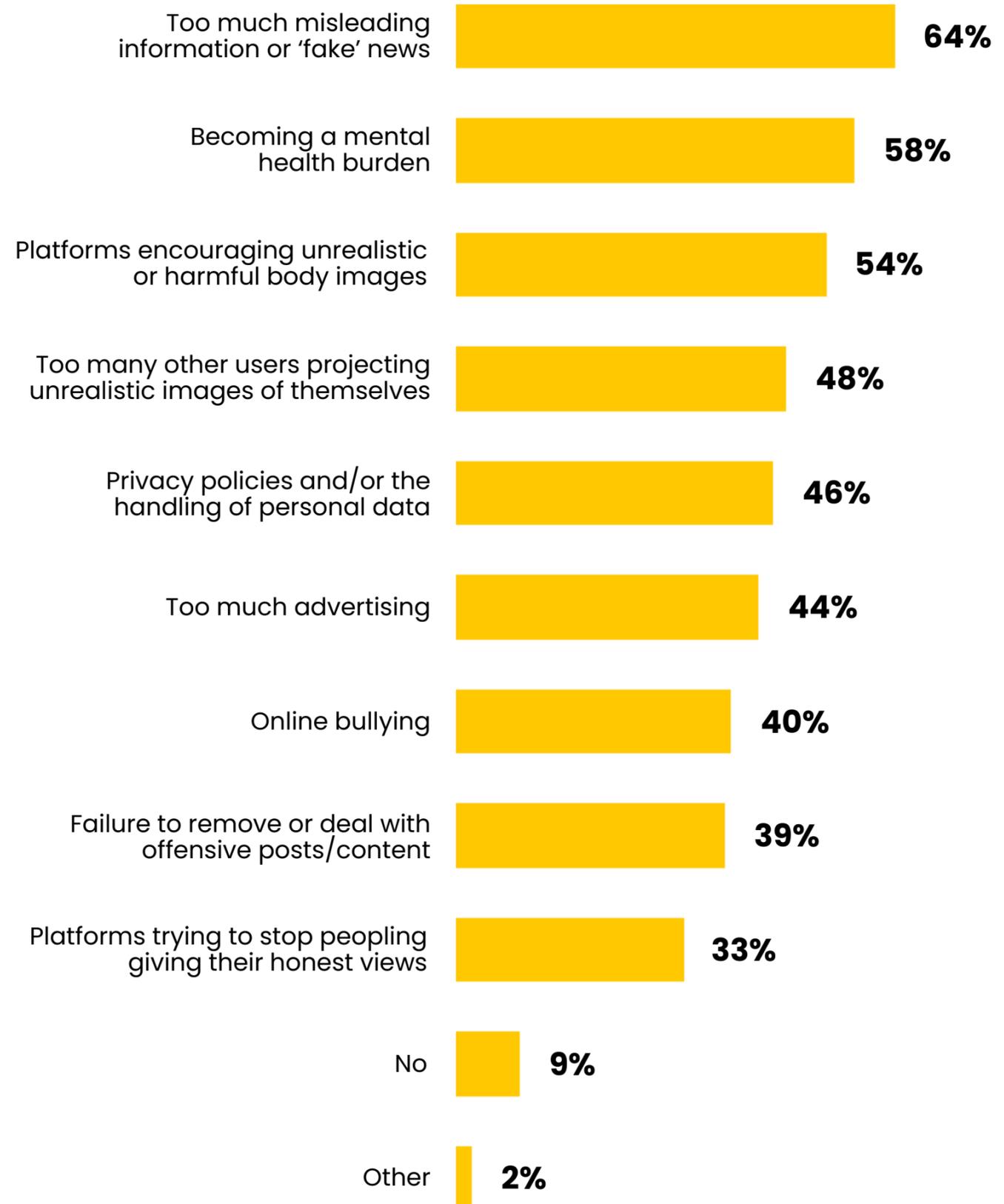
2023: **2%**
2022: **2%**



Facebook

2023: **1%** ▼
2022: **2%**

Do any of the below concern you about social media?



Devices + tech

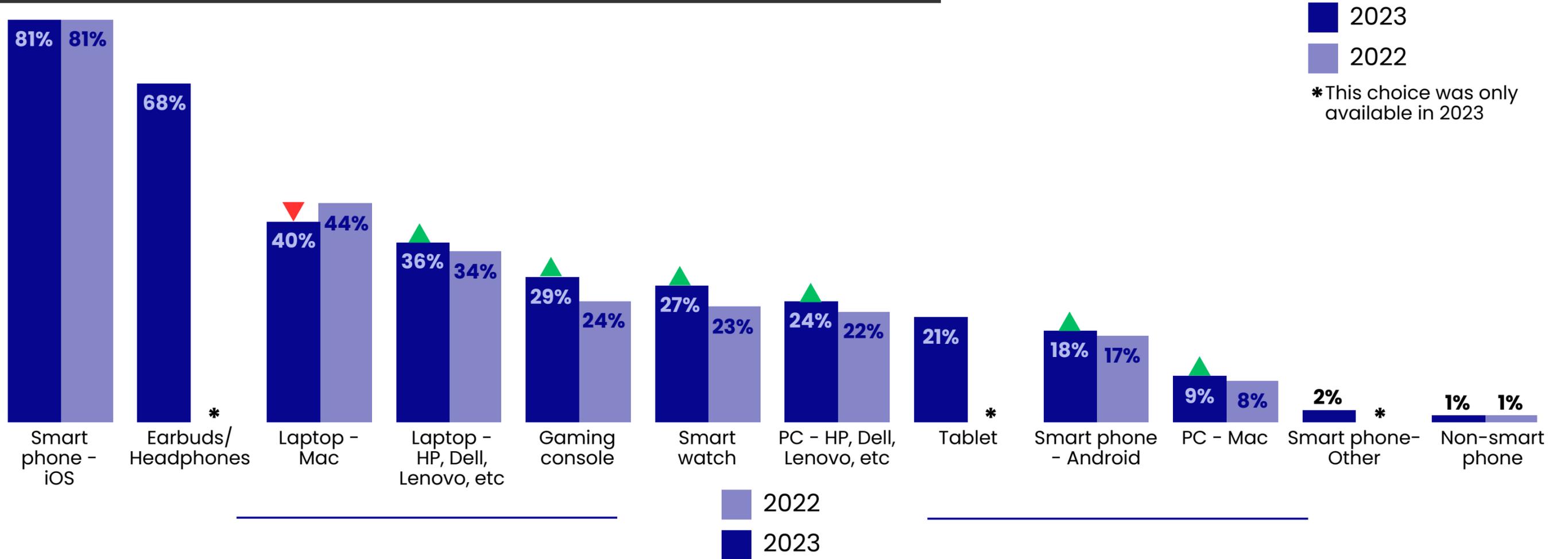
Born into a world of constant technical innovation, this generation have become naturals at integrating technology and devices into their daily lives, using them to manage relationships, source entertainment and access educational resources.

Apple's iPhone is dominant in our respondent's tech/device access, however their lead in the laptop market is narrowing with Windows-based competitors making small gains. Gaming consoles and smart watches saw notable year-on-year increases.

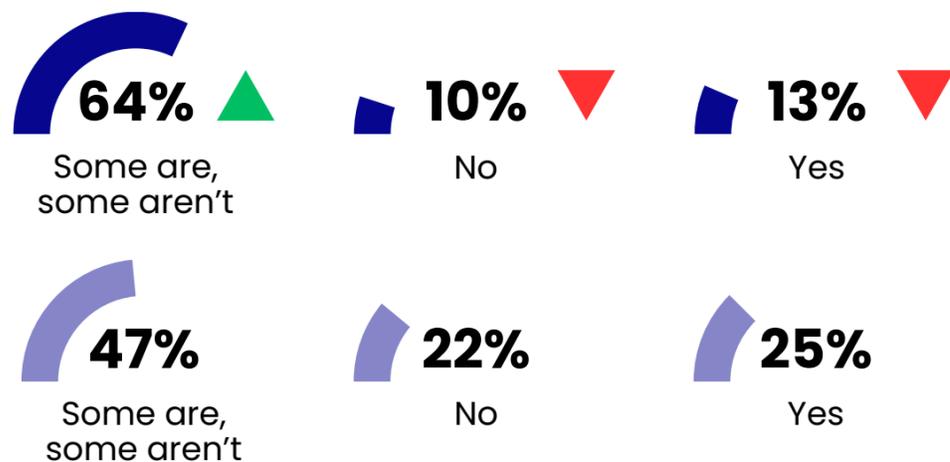
Perhaps reflecting cost-of-living pressures, a greater number of respondents now possess second-hand devices compared to the previous year. Additionally, they own a blend of older and newer technology and have acquired fewer devices brand new.



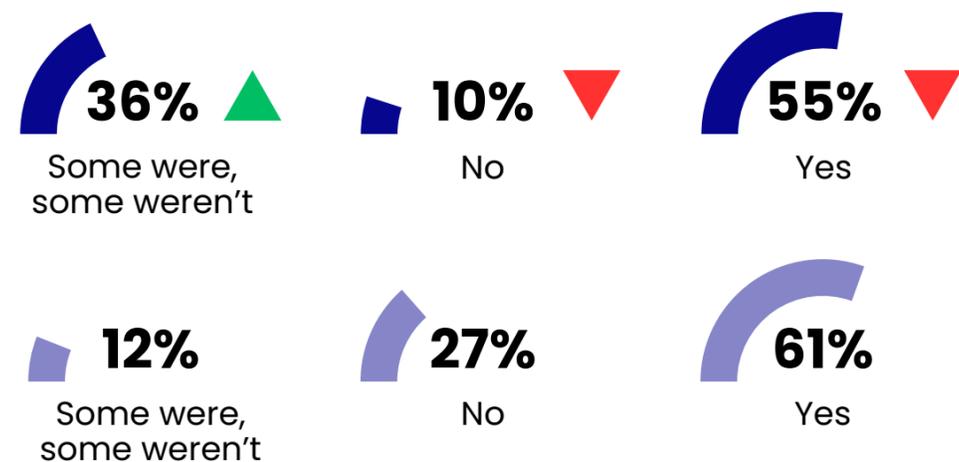
What devices/tech do you currently have regular access to?



Are these less than 3 years old?



Were they acquired brand new?



Leisure

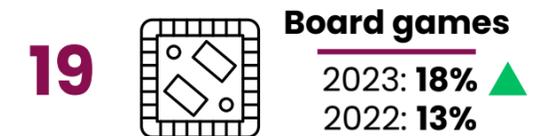
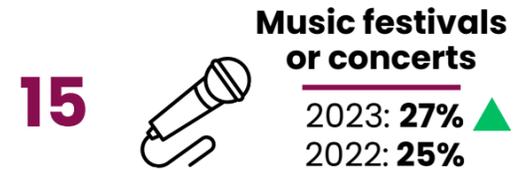
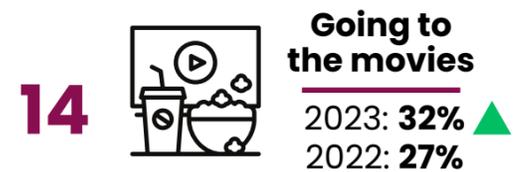
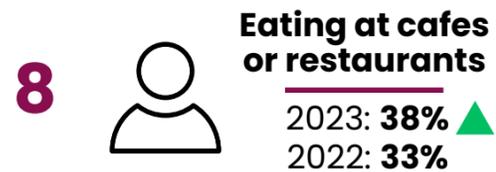
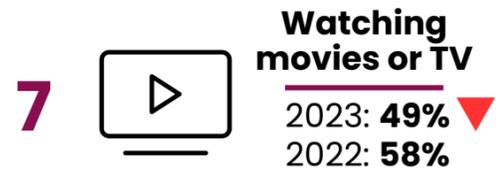
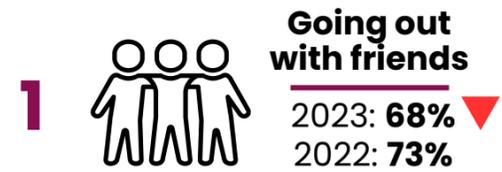
When not studying or working, our respondents' idea of leisure spans the digital, physical and relationship based. Although going out with friends declined year-on-year, time spent with family increased. Enjoying music, film and television were a common favourite, whilst exercise in the forms of walking, cardio and other gym-related activities are most popular.

Accustomed to a broad range of on-demand video and audio entertainment options, respondents have a strong affinity for streaming services. For music and audio access, Spotify continues its dominance. The video streaming space has become more competitive, with Amazon Prime Video making a noticeable 9% gain year-on-year. YouTube also saw a 5% gain, while Netflix declined.

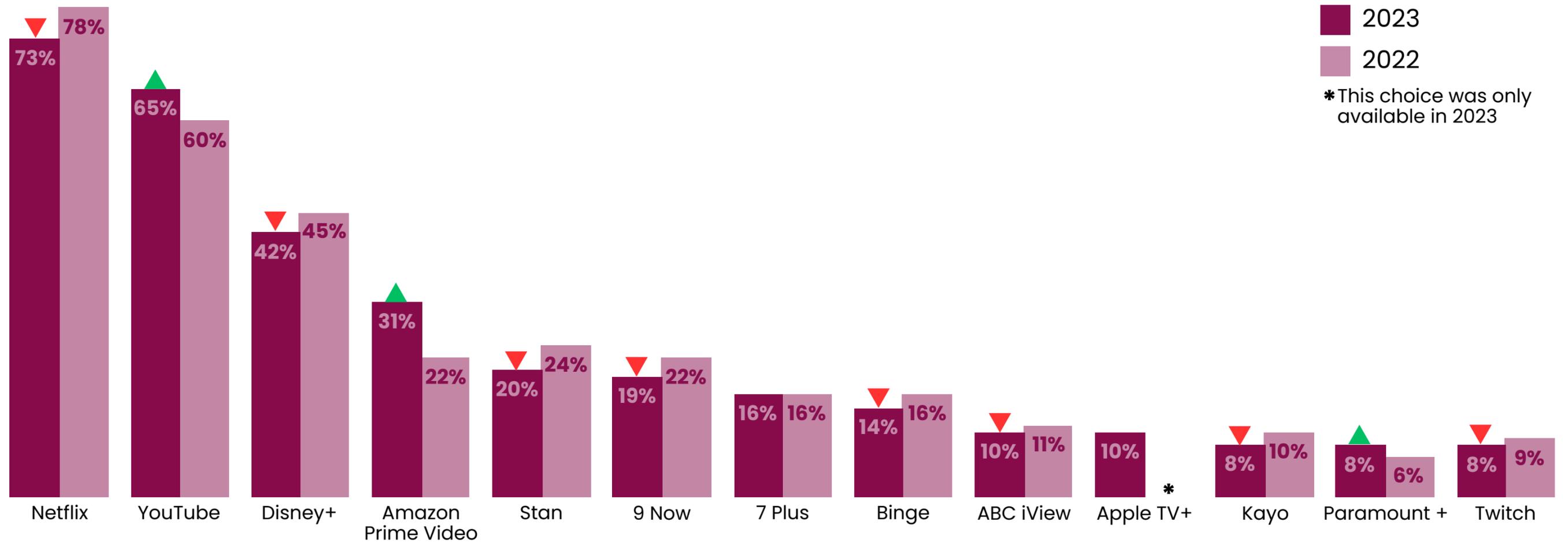
Having expanded into video entertainment, the social media platforms are a close third to mainstream video options of YouTube and Subscription Video On Demand options. This area, with its abundance of user-generated content will warrant further observation in future surveys and research.



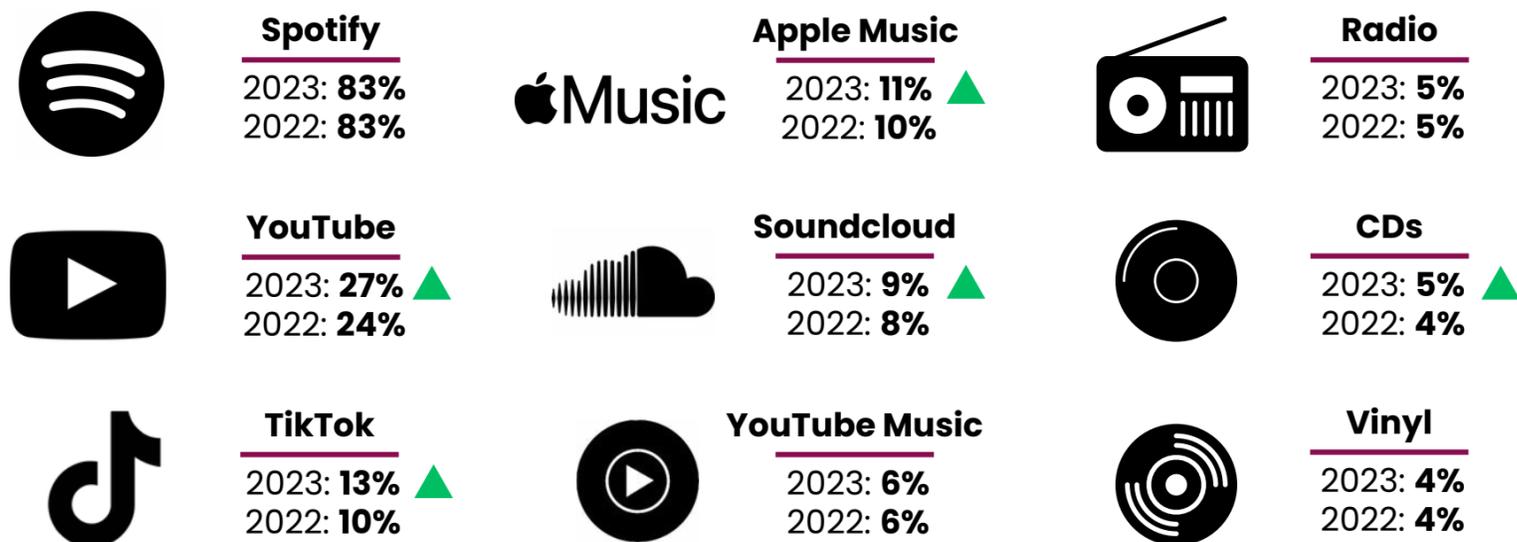
How do you like to spend your free time?



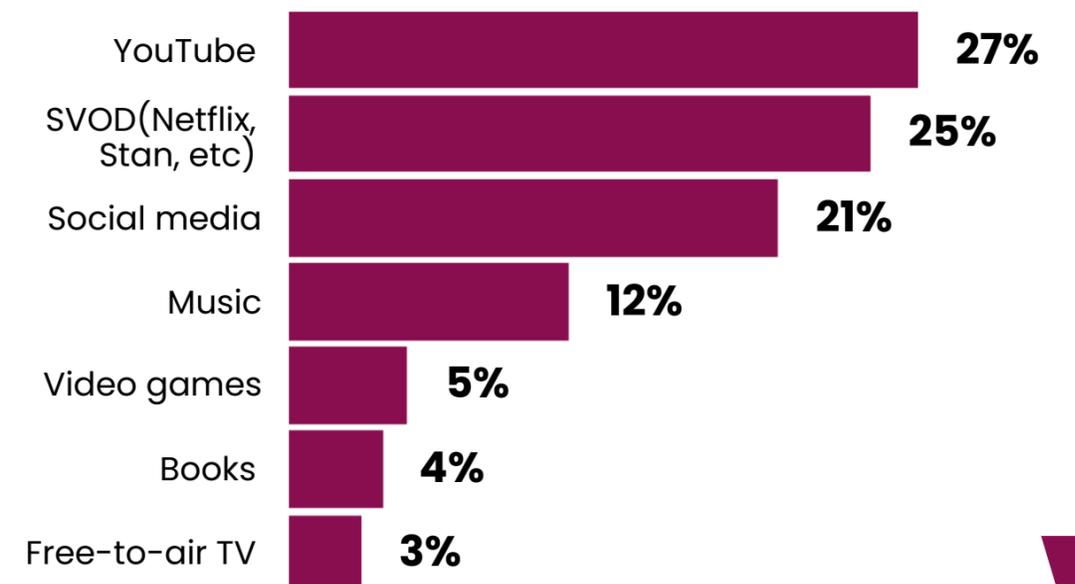
Which video streaming platforms do you use?



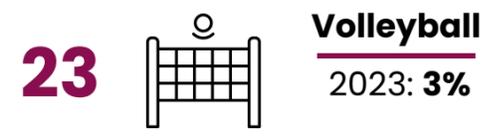
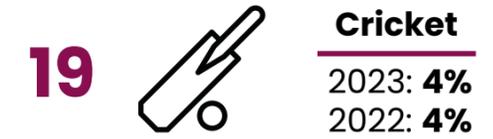
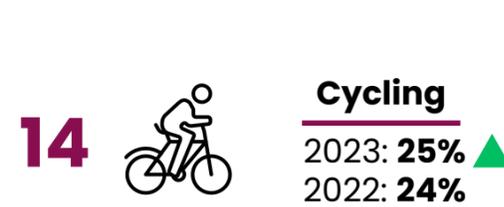
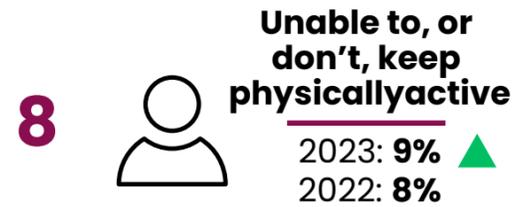
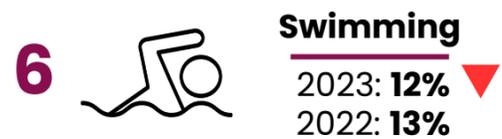
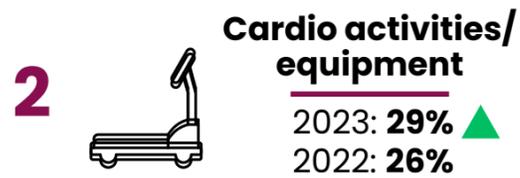
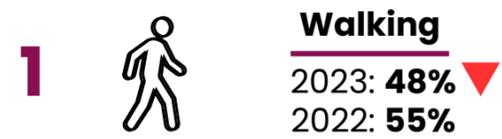
How do you listen to music?



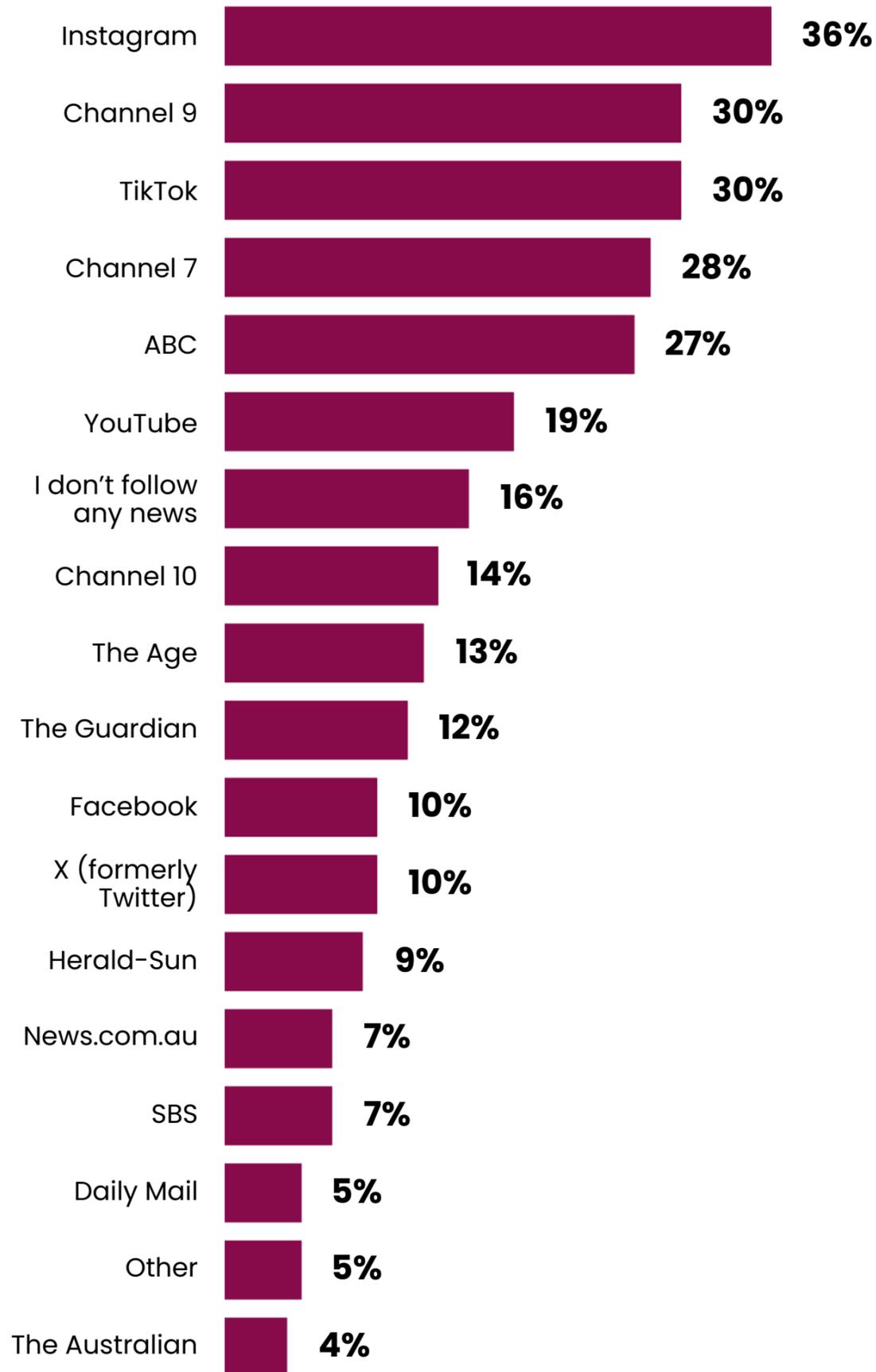
What media/entertainment do you consume most?



How do you keep fit and stay active?



Where do you get your news from?



Top 3 most trusted news outlets



24% trust the ABC most



15% trust Channel 7 most



14% trust Channel 9 most

Plans and hopes for 2024

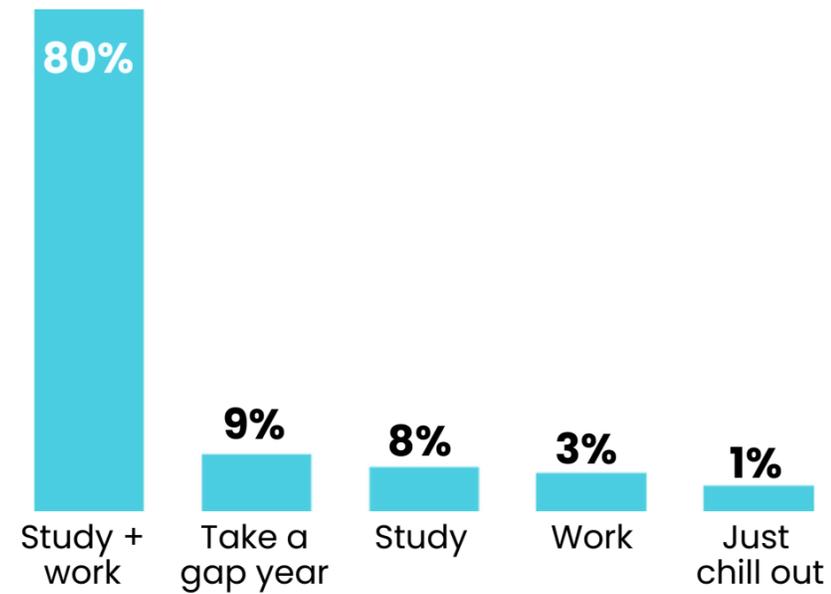
Our 2023 year 12 respondents are characterised by their motivation and strong sense of purpose for 2024 and beyond. With nearly 80% intent on work and further education, productivity, diligence and ambition are driving forces for this cohort.

Travel is a common goal, with 75% expressing an intent to explore Australia or the world this year or next. Europe, Asia and destinations around Australia emerged as the top three destinations. When given the opportunity to outline their hopes and plans for 2023, their sentiments are overwhelmingly positive, with clear and aspirational objectives.

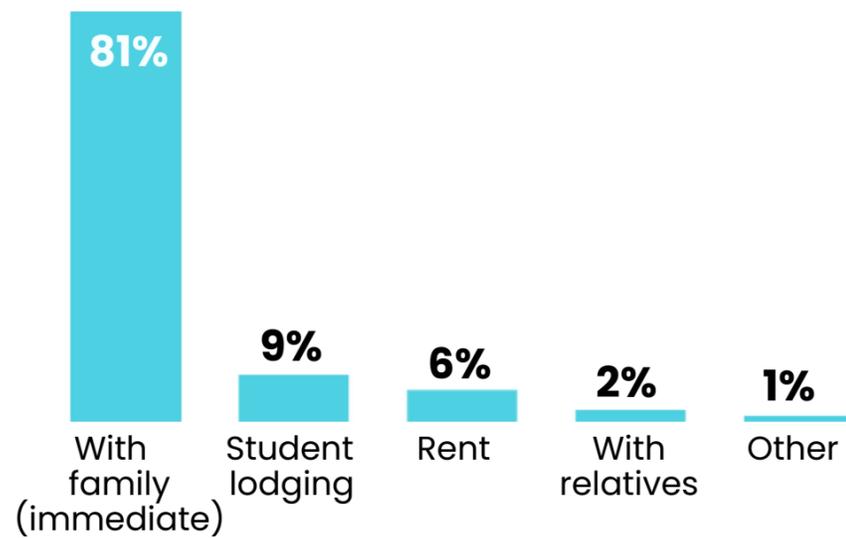
Our respondents show great promise and we at VTAC wish them every success and opportunity for 2024 and beyond.



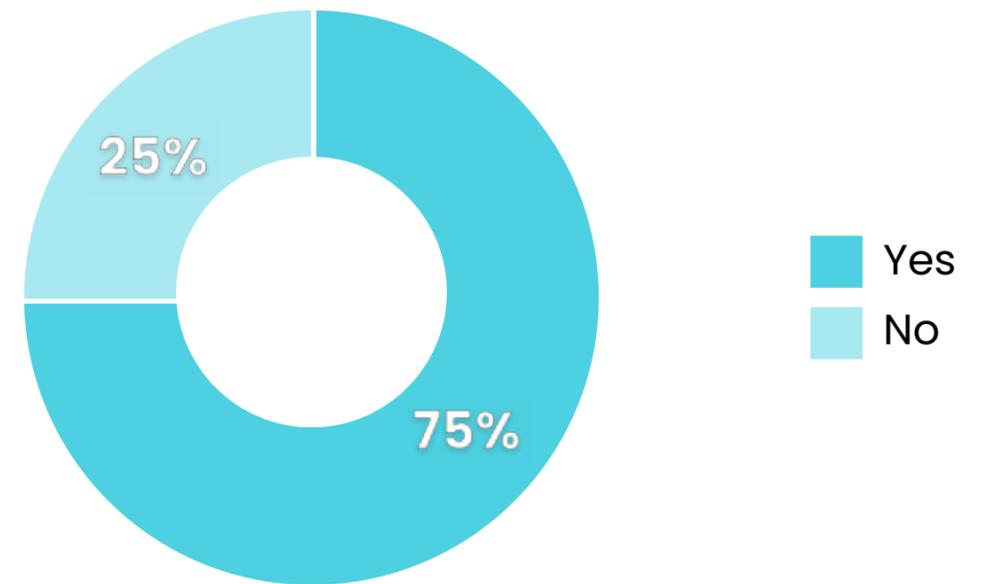
What are your plans for 2024?



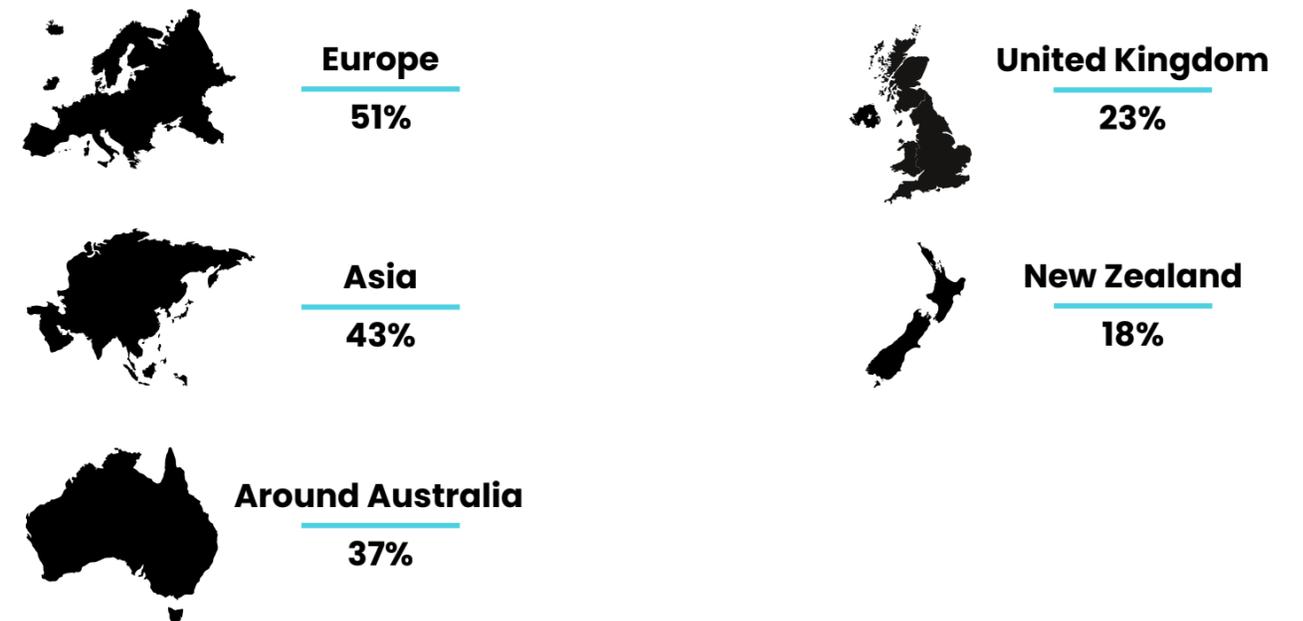
Where will you mostly live in 2024?



Do you intend, or hope, to travel in the next 12-18 months?



Top 5 destinations



What is your biggest plan for 2024?

Study

“to have fun, make friends and be happy whilst learning through my degree”

“To achieve academic excellence across my chosen undergraduate degree whilst continuing to volunteer and support the elderly within my region”

Hopefully to get into an effective routine and do well in university while taking care of my mental health

“Improve on my holistic and financial health, study and achieve good grades, and help my people”

Get the most out of my course and get as much money as i can so i can afford a house when I can

Save/financial

To study, save money and better myself mentally and physically

“to live without financial hardship whilst I’m in a private rental”

Get a full time job, get my drivers license, save money to travel Europe, have a new routine and improve health

“Finish my first year of uni successfully Save up to get driving lessons and a car”

Save money, catch up weekly with friends as well as balance my university degree.

Travel

“Studying and hopefully travelling with my mother/ bestie for the restie”

“Planning to go over to Thailand in the summer holidays.”

“Holidays (Europe and Adelaide), work and not be burnt out in first year uni.”

“Travel to Vietnam explore the culture as I have never traveled before.”

“Travel to Europe. Join the Army reserves”

“To enjoy life while having a work life balance so that I can earn money and save up to travel to Japan.”

Work

“Get a car and work.”

“Complete my first year of my bachelor degree and work in my free time to save money.”

“Make money and work hard. Try my best at uni and hopefully make new friends.”

“Work Life Balance. Be happy.”

“To successfully juggle my work responsibilities whilst maintaining good results at university.”

“Meet new people and expand my world through university and work.”



Thanks for reading!

**Want to discuss our findings or other
information within this report?**

Contact: advertising@vtac.edu.au

